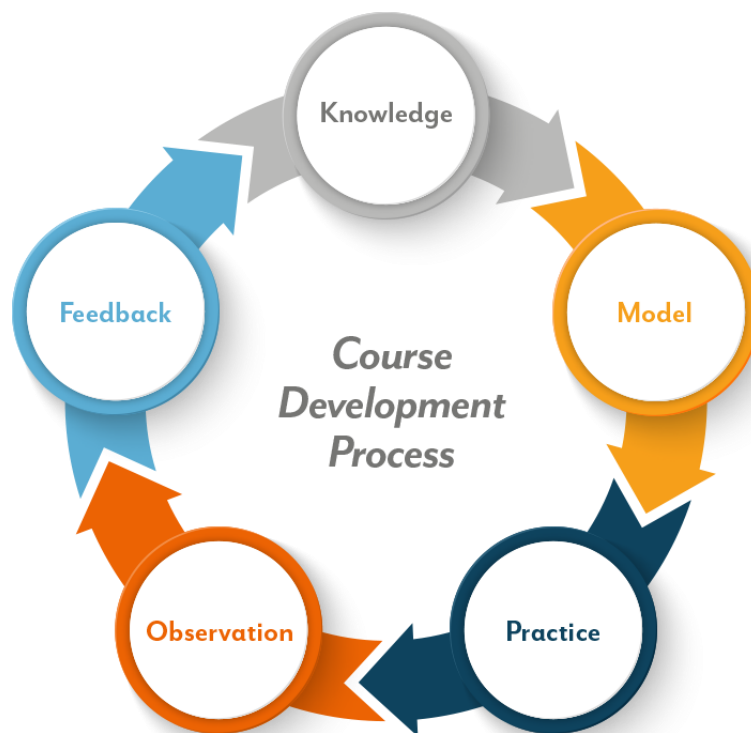


# Female Food Entrepreneurship



## Training Guide

*Course Development*

## Foreword

The Training Guide has been developed as a primary output of the Erasmus+ funded project “*Educate to innovate – Developing and Sustaining Female Food Entrepreneurs*”. The project is led by the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) Ireland, in partnership with the Baltic Education Technology Institute (BETI) Lithuania, Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori Toscana (CIA Toscana) Italy, Comunitatea Pentru Invatarea Permanenta (CPIP) Romania and The Polish Farm Advisory and Training Centre (PFA) Poland.

The main aim of the *Educate to Innovate* project is to develop and support the growth of Female Food Entrepreneurs (FFE) by equipping Vocational Education and Training (VET) educators with an innovative pedagogy guide and a resource platform; aimed at developing female-focused entrepreneurial training influenced by food entrepreneurs. In summary Entrepreneurs helping to develop Entrepreneurs.

The project is developed in line with the objectives and recommendations made in the Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in VET for 2011-2020 in particular fostering innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. The project outputs including the Training Guide are aligned to the European Commission Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality (2016-19) which specifically identifies the need to develop and support female entrepreneurs. It also outlines that this support is a key requirement in achieving the goal of sustainable and inclusive growth set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. Furthermore, the European Commission has identified that ‘when establishing and running a business, women face more difficulties than men mainly in access to finance, training, networking and in reconciling family commitments. The Training Guide will aid VET providers in developing a course that will equip FFEs to overcome those difficulties.

The Training Guide together with the associated project outputs will seek to foster and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation in FFEs by providing VET trainers with innovative teaching methods and training resources that are specifically tailored to females in the agri-Food sector. The resources and methods outlined in the Training Guide have been tested and validated by trainers and FFEs across Europe and are designed to develop an entrepreneurial mind-set and to foster innovative thinking. The overarching objective of the project is to enhance the sustainability and longevity of Europe’s agri-Food sector by equipping VET trainers with the skills required to teach and foster female food entrepreneurs.

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## OVERVIEW

The Training Guide has been developed for VET providers to enable them to deliver an entrepreneurial peer-led (also referred to as peer-to-peer learning), work-based programme that is aimed at recruiting FFEs. Peer-led training in this instance refers to food entrepreneurs learning from food entrepreneurs. Peer-to-peer learning provides an informal and encouraging learning environment, fostering creative thinking and practical learning.

The training guide has been developed in consultation with industry experts, food entrepreneurs, and academics. The guide was informed by the results of a survey carried out with existing and potential FFEs across Europe ensuring that courses developed using the guide will meet the training needs of this unique group. The type of training methodology introduced in the guide moves away from the traditional theory-based classroom style teaching. It explores practical learning methods of teaching and learning i.e. enabling potential female food entrepreneurs to learn from existing entrepreneurs.

In addition to this, the training guide introduces a range of innovative teaching mechanisms aimed at boosting female food entrepreneurship across Europe by providing suggested materials and resources that will help overcome the identified challenges faced by FFEs. The guide provides a variety of information to VET providers on how to pitch suitable training content and deliver peer-led and practical work-based training that will provide participants with the supports required for successful growth in this sector. The guide also includes a sample curriculum that can be used as a reference point when developing a training course.

In summary, the Training Guide provides VET trainers with the knowledge and resources required to develop a training course that will:

- provide entrepreneurial training specific to females in the food sector;
- introduce innovative, flexible and practical methodologies of training delivery;
- involve academic educators, successful entrepreneurs and mentors;
- meet the identified needs of the target audience (FFE).

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COURSE DEVELOPMENT

The overall aim of the Training Guide is to support VET trainers in developing a training course for FFEs that incorporates practice-based, real-world, collaborative approaches with industry. In structure the course should be timetabled to facilitate workshop based practical learning with an element of self-directed learning for the students to undertake between sessions. Ideally, the training course should move away from the theory-heavy traditional style of teaching and incorporate a peer-led flexible approach that focuses on facilitating the needs of the learners.

The training course should be designed to attract females that are interested in developing new or existing careers in the agri-food industry. The main outcome of the course will be the development of an entrepreneurial mind-set that can be applied to current or new food business ventures. The student archetype can range from a female farmer/ food producer lacking the entrepreneurial skillset, to females looking to develop opportunities and want to explore the food industry as an option for employment/ self-employment. The research carried out by the project consortium for this project indicated that many female farmers and food producers may have a good product or business idea but lack the confidence, know-how, business and marketing skills that are required to take the business to the next stage.

As part of this Erasmus-Funded '*Educate to Innovate*' project, the project team carried out primary research with FFEs to determine what barriers and challenges they experience when setting up and developing a food business. The results of the survey detailed throughout the guide will aid VET trainers in developing a training course tailored to meet the unique training needs of FFEs.

The sample curriculum includes recommended content and teaching methods for VET trainers to consider when developing the training course for FFEs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sample curriculum – page 19

## RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR COURSE DESIGN

### FACILITATION AND TRAINING

The training course should take the approach of combining industry relevant skillsets with soft skills development related to enhancing entrepreneurial mind-sets. The course should build knowledge and expertise of entrepreneurship through topics such as creative thinking, customer discovery, personal development and communications. Introducing experiential and challenge-based learning will enhance the participants learning experience and will give them opportunity to put theory into practice. As mentioned previously, this approach requires a non-traditional learning environment that blends teaching and assessment techniques. If the course is being taught face to face, the classroom should be a flat room with moveable furniture to ensure that the students can engage and interact with each other at a significant level. Peer-to-peer and experiential learning should be at the core of the course and facilitation will play a significant role in the student learning.

Entrepreneurs have many heterogeneous traits along with a unique mind-set that enables the visualisation of new ideas, harnessing opportunities that present, thus leading to change for the entrepreneur and their environment. They play a significant role introducing new innovations and modifications to benefit and boost the economy, the agri-food sector and the European market. Systems **specifically tailored to entrepreneurial development** will be vital to adequately cultivate and nurture this diverse ecosystem. Entrepreneurs are perceived as risk-takers and are highly motivated individuals, while their mind-set has presented to be very practical, analytical and composed<sup>2</sup>. Entrepreneurship is a creative process of idea development to execution. It requires space and freedom to thrive, with the addition of appropriate levels of engagement and support to develop and mature<sup>3</sup>. This process like any other can be improved in FFE students through the creation and implementation of both a practical and facilitated learning environment<sup>4</sup>.

Fostering entrepreneurship requires the development of both hard and soft skills which should be nurtured in the training course. Resilience, an example of a crucial soft skill required to act and see through challenges during the implementation/development of an idea/ venture; this skill will mature with the relevant stimulus and self-belief. Incorporating challenge-based tasks will expose students

<sup>2</sup> Kerr *et al.* (2019). 'Risk attitudes and personality traits of entrepreneurs and venture team members '.

<sup>3</sup> Harries, S. (2012). 'Innovation and change: ideas, networks and communities '. Records Management and Knowledge Mobilisation, 115–141. doi:10.1016/b978-1-84334-653-1.50006-8

<sup>4</sup> Creating Entrepreneurs in Food (CEF) Erasmus+ Project (2019) – Please see - Appendix 3 & Reference list p. 80

Please see reference list p. 80.

to real- life difficult business scenarios and enable them to navigate through them using practical learning techniques to overcome them. Adequate facilitation and reflective practices will provide the students with the ability to create an awareness around current resilience levels/ weaknesses and to further develop and harness a key platform of skills for taking on their new venture. This example can be replicated for many other transversal skills development (i.e. decision-making, negotiation, empathy, networking, time management, project and resource planning etc).

## INDUSTRY EXPERTS

### Mentors

To engage in high level experiential learning, the course requires the ability to engage with industry experts to deliver certain aspects of the learning outcomes.

Each module should be developed in consultation with academics, industry experts and mentors to ensure a real sense of authenticity. Input from the multidisciplinary team will ensure that a more complex course is developed ensuring that the needs of the participants are met, and that the learnings achieved will support and develop their business ideas. Incorporating industry experts and mentors in the delivery of the course will also provide FFEs with the opportunity to build a network of peers and like-minded people, an essential element to establishing a business. Forming connections and liaising with mentors and successful food entrepreneurs will provide the FFEs with the encouragement many of them require to further develop their business and become successful in the field. The connections made throughout the course will provide them with an initial network of people and expertise that can support and guide them along their journey.

Analysis of the survey completed when developing the training guide indicated that **16%** of FFEs wanted to access female mentors that were knowledgeable in the Agri food sector. Survey participants felt this measure would help in overcoming the challenges they face in setting up and running their businesses. Research conducted with rural female entrepreneurs in Ireland identified that there is a need for relevant mentoring i.e. mentoring that is matched to the specific business' stages and sector<sup>5</sup>. To date mentoring has taken a one size fits all approach despite business location, sector or business goals. This has been a common trend across Europe. A recent study by Klofsten et al. (2019) identified case studies on different entrepreneur mentoring systems<sup>6</sup>. A Swedish initiative; 'Innovation Growth' developed an innovative council to facilitate mentor matching using a case-by-case method with interviews for entrepreneurs to address inadequate mentoring systems and peers to address problems that occurred for the entrepreneurs given their rural locations. This could be considered in the development and creation of relevant mentoring for FFEs taking part in this prospective course and is discussed further below.

<sup>5</sup> EMPOWER Research Focus Groups (2019).

<sup>6</sup> Klofsten *et al.* (2019). 'Support and development of small new firms in rural areas: a case study of three initiatives'.



## Mentor Criteria

When selecting mentors to contribute to the course, it is advised to try and build a multidisciplinary team to ensure the specific training needs of the group are met. The team should include a council/panel of academics, food entrepreneurs and valuable business mentors. The panel should be of **mixed gender**.

Below is a suggested list of skills criteria to refer to and consider when selecting food entrepreneurs and mentors to be involved in the course:

### Communication

- Demonstrate an understanding and have the skills to communicate effectively with FFEs in a peer-based learning environment;
- Design and deliver a professional oral presentation to females,
- Demonstrate effective communication strategies that will aid females in developing and promoting their business;
- Communicate with confidence, on their product, vision, brand and points of value;
- Written and oral communication skills;
- Online communication skills – use of social media for business promotion and development;
- Each mentor should be in a position to provide examples of real-life situations of where implementing communication strategies were key to developing, growing and sustaining their business.

### Mentoring

- Select a person who understands the challenges faced by the FFEs. Non-bias judgment-free mentorship is a great advantage. Having the opportunity to share expertise and soft skills can be greatly satisfying for established female entrepreneurs in the food sector. The mentoring process should include examples of when the **FFE/ Entrepreneurs/ Mentors had similar struggles**. Learning how a peer food entrepreneur dealt with and overcame similar challenges and barriers will give participants the encouragement and practical advice on how to deal with similar challenges. This reinforces the *“if she can see it, she can be it”* initiative.
- A **competent** mentor can make the difference between success and failure for emerging FFEs.
- Mentors should provide encouragement. Many females have great business ideas, but a lack of courage or an unhealthy amount of self-doubt often cause females to give up on those ideas. Entrepreneurship requires taking large risks to seek larger rewards.

- Not risk averse – females should be encouraged by successful entrepreneurs to aspire to take the risk. Taking the risk will serve as a series of valuable lessons. Success is not linear.
- Mentors should be **proactive** in their approach to mentoring FFEs – open to helping females that are reluctant to ask for help. Research<sup>7</sup> has indicated that the fear of being rejected or ridiculed is high amongst FFEs.
- Trainers/ mentors need to be **approachable**. Having an open-door policy will encourage more engagement with the mentor - that opening move creates an opportunity for a mentoring relationship to begin.
- FFE **Mentoring in a group** - One-to-one contact can be very intense and might be intimidating for some FFEs. Group mentoring sessions may prove just as successful. A mentor can create a platform where the FFEs can meet online as many may be experiencing similar challenges.
- The mentor should play more of a facilitating role with the FFE i.e. start the session, give advice and guidance, and then open the floor for discussion.
- Have the ability to give **honest feedback** even when it's negative.
- One of the most important aspects of a mentoring relationship is feedback. The FFEs should **learn from their successes and mistakes**. Having a mentor who shy's away from pointing out shortcomings is not beneficial to the FFE.
- **Sharing real-life experiences and frustrations** is a key component of effective mentorship.
- **Gender-related issues** are still a struggle for many female entrepreneurs despite gender equality legislation in many countries. It is often still difficult for females to enter male-dominated industries. In some societies, females have traditional responsibilities like housekeeping and childrearing to contend with while climbing the ladder to success. Discussing how to balance work and life will give the students strength to persevere.
- **Empathic** mentoring is an effective approach. It requires empathy from the mentor to understand the mentees feeling and see it from their perspective. The mentor listens but also provides validation to the mentee's feelings and experiences<sup>8</sup>. Way for the mentor to say, "Over my career I have been through the same things as you, I know how you feel, I know it's challenging, but I am here to help". Empathic mentoring makes the student **feel reassured and secure in the relationship without judgement**. Feeling safe in the space created by the mentor will make the student more likely to share everything instead of holding back. The skills needed for this approach may not come naturally to the mentor

<sup>7</sup> Educate to Innovate Survey, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Mondisa, 2018. *Examining the Mentoring Approaches of African American Mentors*.

Please see reference list p. 80

however they will develop with time understanding and patience<sup>9</sup>.

### Some encouraging words for potential Mentors:

Many mentors use the opportunity to mentor to foster self-growth and rediscover themselves in the process. A female entrepreneur who has felt a need to mentor someone should take the leap of faith and do it.

*Another woman's life may be forever changed by it.*

### Additional Skills and Criteria (desirable, not essential)

- Evaluation skills;
- Creative Thinking;
- Flexible/Adaptable Approach;
- Practical Learning;
- Relevant Certification/Qualification.

<sup>9</sup> Block-Lerner *et al.* (2007). "The case for mindfulness-based approaches in the cultivation of empathy: Does non-judgemental, present-moment awareness increase capacity for perspective-taking and empathic concern?"

Please see reference list p. 80.

## INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Consultation with industry experts and a review of the survey results indicated that FFEs are most likely to engage in a flexible learning environment. Balancing family life and a new business does not allow a lot of free time to engage with training, so it is imperative that educators implement different methods of course delivery to enable students such as FFEs to engage in training.

With ICT playing a central role in education today, it is suggested that integrating ICT in the course pedagogy be considered as a means of creating such a flexible learning environment. This will enable FFEs to learn at a pace that suits them and at a time that is convenient to them. With a wide range of ICT tools and resources available to training institutes, online and blended (both classroom and online) learning is quickly becoming the normal method of course delivery.

The following sample of ICT tools have been used by the project team during delivery of associated peer led training courses and introduced to VET educators and FFE's during project activities.

### Online learning platforms

#### *Moodle<sup>10</sup>*

An online learning platform such as Moodle is a learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a **single robust, secure and integrated system** to create personalised learning environments. Moodle is one of the world's leading learning platforms.

These types of platforms enable trainers and learners to engage with one another virtually without the need to be in a physical classroom. The platforms have a range of functions and resources available including live engagement with students in class, recording of lessons, live quiz's and polls, chat options and discussion forums. It also allows students to submit their work and allows trainers to grade and release results.

Access to online library's and resources are also available. Using a learning platform allows for high level of student engagement and provides a safe and secure learning environment.

#### *Microsoft Teams<sup>11</sup>*

Microsoft Teams often referred to as Teams is also a very popular platform for educators. It serves as a collaborative platform for trainers and students to engage with one another. It allows

<sup>10</sup> Moodle Pty Ltd. (2020). Moodle [Online teaching, learning content sharing platform].

<sup>11</sup> Microsoft 365 (2020). Microsoft Teams [Online teamwork hub].

for the creation of a secure virtual classroom where trainers and student can engage as a group just as easily as if they were in a physical classroom. The tool also has a wide range of functions including the use of breakout rooms to allow for online group/project work, discussion forums and chat, recording of lessons and materials and integration of assessments.

*Slack*<sup>12</sup> and *Zoom*<sup>13</sup> are also very well-established platforms for training and learning offering similar functions and features to Moodle and Teams. It is important to review the learning platforms available to find the most suitable for course delivery and the cohort of students.

### ICT tools for course delivery

Student engagement is key to the successful delivery of a blended learning course. Enhancing student engagement can be easily achieved by introducing technology in both the physical and virtual classroom. Using tools such as *Paddlet*<sup>14</sup> and *Socrative*<sup>15</sup> enables students contribute to the lesson in a relaxed and creative way.

These tools can be used to run polls and surveys and will be useful tools for FFEs during lessons such as Customer Discovery. In this instance, it is noted from the survey that FFEs often feel isolated with lack of support or access to mentors. This can be easily overcome by introducing the following tools:

- Creating online discussion groups/forums on particular topics enabling students to engage with one another and with mentors and trainers;
- Create an online learning community and network;
- Provide links to case studies of successful food entrepreneurs/female entrepreneurs; reiterating the message of if she can see it, she can be it;
- Using Technology for Reflective Learning (E-Portfolios, Blogs/Reflective diaries);
- Using Podcasts and Vlogs;
- Self-Assessment tools to determine skillsets i.e. *iMA strategies*<sup>16</sup>;
- *Canva*<sup>17</sup> - Graphic design platform for content and promotional/ social media material.

<sup>12</sup> Slack Technologies (2020). Slack [Online project communication platform].

<sup>13</sup> Zoom Video Communications (2020). ZOOM [Online video conferencing platform].

For above platforms please see reference list p. 80.

<sup>14</sup> Padlet. (2020). Padlet [Engagement, creativity, activity and sharing platform].

<sup>15</sup> Showbie Inc. (2020). Socrative [Online assessment engagement platform].

<sup>16</sup> iMA Strategies (2020). iMA Strategies [Self-assessment/ learner type tool].

<sup>17</sup> Canva (2020). Canva [Online graphic design platform].

## Digital Education Resource – iNOTE

iNOTE is a resource that provides opportunities for institutes and educators to transform the higher education experience for learners. It was developed by GMIT, IT Sligo and LYIT in Ireland. GMIT's Teaching and Learning Office is leading the development of DigitalEd.ie. There are three digital education pathways in the iNOTE project including: Academic; Professional Services; and Higher Education Manager. Please see follow [this link](#) to explore this platform.

DigitalEd.ie is a Digital Teaching and Learning education platform, providing access to the digital learning pathways and a suite of resources. The site provides a gateway to help academic and educational staff build digital capabilities and pedagogic expertise, in order to design, deliver and support flexible and online learning programmes for students.

The DigitalEd.ie site follows a 6 step pathway:

Step 1 Complete the Digital Discovery Tool in section Are you ready to teach online?

Step 2 Explore the Digital Resources Directory and watch some Digital Stories

Step 3 Register to access an online Learning Pathway

Step 4 Book a Workshop to develop your digital skills and support your engagement with the online Learning Pathways

Step 5 Join DigitalEd.ie community and start discussions on digital teaching and learning topics

Step 6 Find out, who are the Digital Champions in your school/dept.

Making small changes such as incorporating the use of animation or voice over on Microsoft PowerPoint slides will also keep students engaged. This is particularly useful and beneficial for online course delivery. It provides students with the opportunity to engage with the lesson at a time that suits them and allows them to listen to the lesson as often as required to gain a full understanding of the lesson. Using animation, links to case studies and resources, podcasts and videos all contribute to student engagement, both in the classroom and online.

For above platforms please see reference list p. 73.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional resources to be considered when developing the training course include:

- An accessible library complete with resources and relevant literature. An online library would be beneficial if possible, to compliment the flexible learning environment.
- Student services and support services are vital in supporting the development of any learner. Ensuring access to such services should be considered when developing any training course.

## DELIVERY METHODS

Below is a brief description of the variety of delivery methods that can be implemented by trainers. The consortium tested the methods below during a pilot study<sup>18</sup> and found combining given methods to be the most effective for the learner:

- *Peer-to-peer learning:*

Peer-led training (food entrepreneurs learning from food entrepreneurs) has been tried and tested during pilot studies by the consortium and has been found to be the most effective learning method. Peer-to-peer learning provides an informal and encouraging learning environment. The potential benefits of peer-to-peer teaching are documented in the educational literature as active-learning approaches. Educational researchers and theorists who are proponents of peer-to-peer teaching, emphasize the importance of developing a good design of this strategy to achieve the desired learning outcomes<sup>19</sup>.

- *Experiential Learning:*

This approach requires a non-traditional learning environment that blends teaching and assessment techniques. It is recommended that peer and experiential learning are at the core of the course modules enabling the student to benefit from a practical but safe learning environment thus still exposing them to real life business challenges.

- *Classroom:*

Traditional style training that is used at a low proportion to the entire course content.

<sup>18</sup> GMIT piloted training methods from 2016-2018 with 65 students in the Certificate in Food Innovation and Entrepreneurship training course. It was also piloted by GMIT as part of the Erasmus+ funded Creating Entrepreneurs in Food European project with 40 European Farmers during a project training activity.

<sup>19</sup> Shohel & Kirkwood (2012). 'Using technology for enhancing teaching and learning in Bangladesh: challenges and consequences'

Please see reference list p. 73.

- *Online Learning:*

Access to learning activities and experiences via the use of some technology through online classroom Learning, video, webinars, podcast and other useful channels.

- *Student Reflection:*

The practice of reflection should be commonplace in the course to ensure the students are analysing their relationship with the content and context of the course. It also serves as a reference guide after the course has been completed.

- *Facilitation:*

Effective facilitation by lecturers and mentors will drive a significant portion of the learning outcomes. The facilitators should guide and allow discussions, debates and student interactions to help the group achieve learning goals.

- *Self-Directed learning:*

Timetabled learning where the students, with guidance from the teacher/ mentor, decide what and how they will learn. It can be done individually or with group learning, but the overall concept is that students take ownership of their learning.

From reviewing the research conducted by the project consortium and the FFE survey analysis, it is recommended that the training course should use a mixed/ combined approach in its delivery and achievement of the learning outcomes. 28% of the FFEs surveyed chose peer led learning, 25% practical learning and 46% chose a combination as preferred learning delivery methods<sup>20</sup>. A combined approach will provide students with the opportunity to acquire the transversal skills required to become a successful food entrepreneur. Implementing a combine approach will result in creating a practical work environment whereby students can work through a real life business problem, building a network with likeminded people, engaging with mentors and the idea of mentorship programmes and collaborative approaches to business will provide FFEs with the support and guidance they require to sustain a food business.

<sup>20</sup> Educate to Innovate Survey, 2019



## ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

The assessment of entrepreneurial thinking is difficult to achieve, and for this reason a non-standard technique is advocated for this proposal. It is recommended that a mixed approach to assessment be taken rather than incorporating a final exam.

### Recommended Assessment strategy

#### *Reflection Documents*

The reflection document is a detailed description of the student's insights in relation to the course topics. This is a personal reflection and therefore answers/content from students will vary. Reflections would be normally graded on the pass or fail basis.

#### *Project Report*

The course should encompass a group project, ideally at the beginning of the course. A pilot study carried out by some of the consortium members used a host company as the basis for the group project enabling the students to get exposure to some real-life problems experienced by a start-up food company. The application of a similar approach would benefit FFE students. There should be a written report as a component to the group project that requires a description of the project methodologies, its outcomes and recommendations. This project should be assessed on a percentage basis based on a marking scheme, which will be developed by course providers. Some suggested areas of marking include; understandings of the host company and their problems, innovations or solutions developed significant to the host company and overall report quality.

#### *Project Presentations*

Project presentations are core to the success of the course with students being required to present the results of their project in a team and as individuals. The presentations should be assessed on content, relevance and presentation skills. Marks should be awarded on presentation quality, use of visual aids and time keeping.

#### *Continuous Assessments*

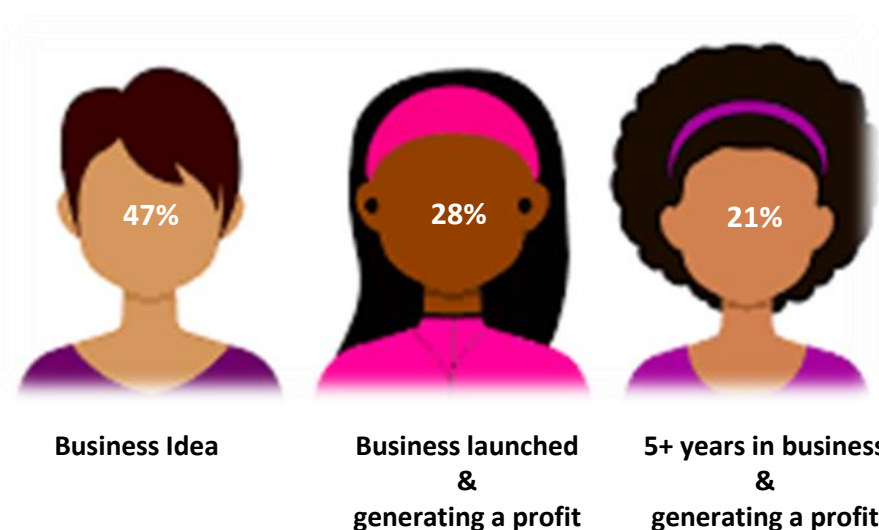
The course should include assessment of industry specific skills; i.e. continuous assessments on the skills discussed and highlighted in their development throughout the course (i.e. finance, HACCP, food regulations).

## STUDENT PROFILE

The general profile for students engaging in a Female Food Entrepreneurship course will be females that have an interest in developing new or existing careers in the food industry. The main product of the course will be the development of an entrepreneurial mindset that can be applied to a business venture or as an employee. The student archetype can range from farmers with major food resources but lacking the entrepreneurial skillset to develop opportunities to a female that wants to explore the food industry as an option for employment or self-employment.

Reinforcing that profile are the results from the survey conducted with 109 females across Europe's agri-Food sector i.e.:

- 47% are at the business idea stage;
- 28% have set up their business, launched their product and are generating sales;
- 21% have been in business for 5 or more years and are generating profits.



The responses collated from the closing question of the survey identified how many of the females perceived themselves to be female food entrepreneurs. Interestingly, 87 (80%) females considered themselves to be FFEs while 22 (20%) did not. Additionally, 93% confirmed that access to female entrepreneurship training would support the growth of FFEs indicating the need for female specific entrepreneurial training.

## IDENTIFIED BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES FOR FFEs

Barriers and challenges are present for all individuals starting out and progressing in business. However, females face unique challenges in comparison to males when setting up a food business especially in the Agri food sector. The FFEs surveyed have helped identify some of those barriers and challenges that have had an impact on progressing their business.

The FFE sample identified challenges in the areas of personal belief, access to finance, access to relevant business information and training, society supports and the access to networks and likeminded people in their communities.

**The perceived thoughts – fear of failure, lack of self-belief and confidence** can have a detrimental impact on entrepreneurs starting out and in progressing their business<sup>21</sup>. This was highlighted in the FFE cohort across Europe that took part in the survey<sup>22</sup>. The FFEs identified that lack of know-how contributed to their poor self-belief with evidence showing that women do have reduced self-confidence in their own abilities as entrepreneurs compared to men<sup>23, 24</sup>. It is, therefore indicated that developing a training course specifically for FFEs that will enhance personal skills such as self-confidence, self-motivation, resilience and communication will help support the growth of FFEs in Europe. Females can also be less assertive by nature; this can be evident when it comes to valuing their skills, time and product(s), often resulting in the under-pricing of their services<sup>25</sup>.

Addressing these personal barriers and exploring topics like personal and professional development, business planning and opportunity recognition will create a supportive environment for FFEs to thrive.

<sup>21</sup> Fitzsimons & O’Gorman. *Entrepreneurship in Ireland 2018 –GEM Report*.

<sup>22</sup> Survey Monkey Inc, 2019 (appendix 1)

<sup>23</sup> Camelo-Ordaz *et al.* (2016). ‘*The influence of gender on entrepreneurial intention: the mediating role of perceptual factors*’..

<sup>24</sup> Kirkwood (2009). ‘*Is a lack of self-confidence hindering women entrepreneurs?*’

<sup>25</sup> EMPOWER – Rural Ireland Focus Group Data (2019)

For above please see reference list p. 80.

**Finance** can be often difficult to access, apply for and tedious to draw down. How to access finance, grants and relevant funding agencies are all topics for consideration during course development. It is imperative that the FFEs are knowledgeable on where and how to access funds on completion of the course. Females can face issues in obtaining bank loans and raising capital for their projects, often being given less consideration than their male counterparts. However, the majority of countries across the EU have a range of funding grants and resources available for females in business and in particular females in the food business. Providing information on how to access such funds should be integrated into the training course<sup>26</sup>.

**Access to Mentors and a Support Network:** Many of the FFEs surveyed<sup>27</sup> indicated that lack of access to likeminded people or networks can be a challenge as an FFE, often leading to the feelings of loneliness, isolation and low motivation. Although the number of businesswomen in Europe is on the rise, it can still be difficult to find fellow entrepreneurs to connect with. In this regard, peer-to-peer support, female mentorship, and access to business networks are strongly encouraged in pedagogy. Networking supports will provide females in the agri-food sector with the opportunity to share knowledge and business know-how in their sector, share successes and failures and offer support and guidance to one another. This is a vital resource for any businessperson despite their sector or gender<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Please see [Nurturer website](#) for references and resources

<sup>27</sup> Educate to Innovate Survey 2019 - Appendix 1, Q3.

<sup>28</sup> Seanad Public Consultation Committee (2019). *Report on Small and Medium Sized Businesses in Ireland*.

## Barriers accessing training

The survey<sup>29</sup> indicated that FFEs across Europe are presented with barriers that result in limited access to training opportunities. Such barriers include cost (44%), time (36%) and the availability of relevant training that was pitched for their needs as a food entrepreneur (20%). Each of these barriers play a major role in impacting in the development and sustaining of FFEs across Europe.

These barriers should be addressed by VET providers during the course design and a blended learning environment should be considered with the use of online learning and assessment methods that facilitate location, cost and time disparities. Below are some recommendations on how to overcome these barriers to FFEs:

- Ensure that the course is affordable and, where possible that there are government funds available to FFEs, i.e. allowances for the self-employed or unemployed, funding streams, government agencies, grants, etc.
- Develop time management strategies for course work and learning that complement females that may have limited time due to home commitments, work commitments and other issues. Incorporate a flexible approach to learning i.e. using a blended nature of programme delivery (i.e. using a combination of face-to-face sessions, practical learning, online learning which may include recorded webinars, podcasts and other interactive channels).
- Ensure that the course content is relevant to FFEs:
  - Address the challenges and barriers facing FFEs in Europe and provide solutions, methods and resources that will help in overcoming these barriers. Peer and experiential learning methods will be vital in achieving this.
  - Highlight the importance of building a network for support, providing access to relevant mentors and collaborative working opportunities.
  - Incorporate learning outcomes for each stage of business – Early idea, Start-up and in the first 5+ years of business.
  - Foster and encourage entrepreneurship and innovative thinking through experiential learning.

Other obstacles and barriers indicated by the surveyed FFEs included; added stress due to their business market and competition, balancing business duties on their own, trying to fit business

<sup>29</sup> Educate to Innovate Survey 2019 - Appendix 1, Q9.

around family needs, lack of financial skills, and trying to do it all resulting in burn out.

Many of these barriers affect both genders but they tend to be more prominent for women. This is due to a variety of factors, such as less available supports for FFEs, lack of contacts, information gaps, difficulties in balancing work and family obligations, and poor business environments.

It is recommended that VETs consider the survey results in appendix 1 during the development stage of the training course in ensuring that the course addresses the barriers identified for FFEs. The course should provide resources and methods that will aid females in overcoming the barriers and challenges they face in developing a food business. Contributions from mentors and food entrepreneurs will be vital in supporting the growth of the FFEs.

## SAMPLE CURRICULUM

The sample curriculum has been designed to meet the needs identified by the surveyed FFEs. The learning outcomes have been developed to overcome the barriers and challenges identified by the FFEs across Europe, in addition to extensive research carried out by the project consortium.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT METHOD	DELIVERY METHOD
<b>Knowledge</b> <p>Have an awareness and insights of entrepreneurial personal, interpersonal and professional traits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soft and hard skills development i.e. empowerment, empathy, problem solving</li> <li>Team dynamics</li> <li>Resilience</li> </ul>	<p>Reflection document</p> <p>Project presentation</p>	<p>Classroom learning</p> <p>Experiential learning: engaging with Mentors, Industry Experts and use of case studies, podcasts, Ted Talks, Self Assessment Tools</p>
<p>Develop core insights into the customer development process specific to food businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer identity</li> <li>Market sizing</li> <li>Retain and grow their customer base</li> <li>Empathy</li> <li>Design Thinking</li> </ul>	<p>Reflection document</p> <p>Project presentation</p> <p>Business Plan</p>	<p>Classroom learning</p> <p>Experiential learning</p> <p>Reflection</p> <p>Peer-to-peer</p> <p>Mentorship</p> <p>Networking</p>
<p>Have an awareness of food business creation dynamics and the ability to generate food business models applicable to FFE businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food chain and relationship with agriculture</li> </ul>	<p>Reflection document</p> <p>Project presentation</p>	<p>Classroom learning</p> <p>Experiential learning</p> <p>Reflection</p> <p>Peer-to-peer</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality systems in the food chain</li> <li>• Develop application and testing of food business models</li> <li>• Implement Lean Start Up Principles</li> <li>• Evaluate relevant Business Models for Food Business</li> </ul> <p>Ability to create new food business concepts or the ability to develop business concepts from other opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food market identification</li> <li>• Recognition of collaborative opportunities</li> <li>• Food product testing</li> <li>• Prototyping of food product</li> </ul>	<p>Reflection document Business Plan</p>	<p>Classroom learning Experiential learning Reflection Peer-to-peer Mentorship</p>
<p><b>Know-how</b></p> <p>Evaluate customer discovery techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding target/potential customers wants and needs</li> <li>• Solving markets potential problems</li> <li>• Empathy mapping</li> <li>• Value proposition development</li> <li>• Surveying</li> <li>• Customer interviews</li> <li>• Ethnography</li> </ul> <p>Have a working understanding of various effective food business models and the 'lean</p>	<p>Project presentation Project report</p> <p>Reflection document Project</p>	<p>Classroom learning Peer-to-peer Experiential learning</p> <p>Classroom learning Reflection Experiential learning</p>



<p>start up tools<sup>30</sup>. Through using frameworks to have the ability to create insights and interpretations for a food business venture creation process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Product market fit</li> <li>• Market validation</li> <li>• Business model adaptation</li> <li>• Business model canvas</li> </ul>	<p>Presentations Project reports Business Plan</p>	
<p>Understand the concept of Social Entrepreneurship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Societal Needs</li> <li>• Added value for community/community groups</li> </ul>	<p>Business Plan Project report Reflection documents</p>	<p>Peer to Peer Classroom and Online learning Self Directed Learning</p>
<p>Design and implement marketing strategies in the uncertain context of business creation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PR campaigns</li> <li>• Low budget marketing</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Venture community building</li> </ul>	<p>Project presentation Project report Reflection documents</p>	<p>Peer-to-peer Classroom learning Self Directed Learning</p>
<p>Develop insights into brand awareness and skills to formulate brand strategies and prepare plan for brand development with their food product or idea in mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand communication</li> <li>• Brand strategy</li> <li>• Personal brand management</li> </ul>	<p>Project presentation Project report Reflection documents</p>	<p>Classroom learning Experiential learning</p>

<sup>30</sup> 'Lean Start Up' concept – Created by Eric Ries. Please see reference list p. 80.

<p>Evaluate options for advanced food product design and testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food innovation</li> <li>• Food science</li> <li>• Novel packaging techniques</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous assessment Project report</p>	<p>Classroom learning Tutorials Self-directed</p>
<p>Interpret food law, HACCP<sup>31</sup> and Hygiene standard and apply to product/ service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food labelling</li> <li>• Food production systems</li> <li>• Allergen control</li> <li>• HACCP Implementation</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous assessment</p>	<p>Classroom learning Workshops</p>
<p>Create the ability to interpret a basic financial needs assessment, specific to new food ventures. Develop the ability to conduct financial planning, control and pricing for business growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profit and loss interpretation</li> <li>• Cash flows interpretation</li> <li>• Reading Balance sheets</li> <li>• Product pricing</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous assessment</p>	<p>Classroom learning Workshops Tutorials</p>
<p>Have a critical understanding of business planning and growth; specific to the food sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a business plan</li> <li>• Utilising state supports</li> <li>• Resource planning</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous assessment Project report</p>	<p>Classroom learning Workshops tutorials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Guest Speakers</li> <li>• Investors</li> </ul>

<sup>31</sup> HACCP (Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point) procedures and principles make up your food safety management system. Please see reference list p. 80.

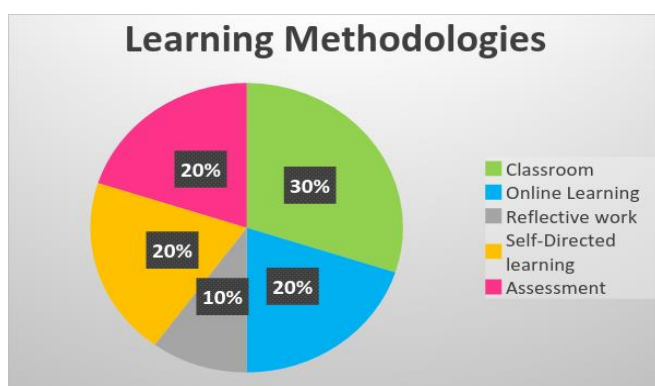
<p><b>Competence</b></p> <p>Problem solving ability through a range of tools and thinking techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analytical thinking</li> <li>Problem recognition</li> <li>Idea generation</li> <li>Idea selection</li> </ul> <p>Have systematic knowledge of design thinking as a tool to developing products or services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer empathy</li> <li>Design based thinking</li> <li>Design innovation</li> </ul> <p>Have critical awareness of the creative thinking process and with ability to demonstrate a range of tools and techniques used to stimulate creative thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Idea generation</li> <li>Idea selection</li> <li>Lateral thinking</li> </ul> <p>Analyse teamwork skills and apply analysis to own food business, personal or inter-personal situations and leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills recognition</li> <li>Team management</li> <li>Team selection</li> </ul> <p>Develop optimal presentation skills required in developing and communication of food business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation planning</li> <li>Presentation</li> </ul>	<p>Reflection document Project presentations</p> <p>Project presentation Project report Reflection document</p> <p>Reflection document</p> <p>Reflection document Group Project</p> <p>Project Presentations as outlined above</p>	<p>Facilitation and reflection Peer-to-peer</p> <p>Workshop Reflection Experiential learning Peer-to-peer</p> <p>Reflection and facilitation</p> <p>Experiential learning Reflection Peer-to-peer</p> <p>Reflection and facilitation</p>
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<p>techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audience empathy</li> </ul> <p>Analyse emotional intelligence, empathy and use a self-evaluation tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-awareness</li> <li>• Self-Evaluation assessment</li> </ul>		
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## SAMPLE MODULE STRUCTURE AND DESCRIPTOR<sup>32</sup>

Module Title:	Digital Skills for Female Food Entrepreneurs
Description:	The digital landscape is changing rapidly. New channels, strategies and benchmarks appear on a daily basis. A practical 'Digital Skills' module should be developed to encapsulate FFEs specific needs and enable them to thrive in the food industry. A comprehensive overview of the core resources available in a relevant country/across Europe should be introduced together with developing a detailed digital and media marketing strategy.
Learning Outcomes:	<p>On completion of the module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrate a clear understanding of marketing principles for launching a start-up food business as an FFE;</li> <li>- Formulate brand strategies;</li> <li>- Design and implement both traditional and digital marketing strategies;</li> <li>- Understand and use social media and digital marketing tools for business and brand development;</li> <li>- Be familiar with cyber security and ethics issues and regulations;</li> <li>- Build an online professional business profile;</li> <li>- Prepare and deliver business presentations/pitches.</li> </ul>

## Learning Methodologies



	Total Hours
Classroom	15
Online learning	10
Reflective work	5
Self-directed learning	10
Assessment	10
<b>Total:</b>	<b>50</b>

The module requires a minimum 10 hours self-directed learning during which, students are encouraged to read and review the recommended resources.

<sup>32</sup> Creating Entrepreneurs in Food (CEF) Erasmus+ Project (2019). Digital skills development module curriculum and syllabus. Please see Appendix 3 and reference list p. 80.

## Assessment Strategy

### Reflection document

This will be required for all modules. The reflection will be a detailed description of the students' insights in relation to the course topics. This is a personal reflection and, therefore, answers vary. Reflections would be normally graded on the pass or fail basis and is the preferred method in this course.

### Social Media Marketing Campaign

Students are required to develop a detailed plan for a comprehensive social media campaign including a calendar for the launch and development for their business.

Marks will be awarded for:

- Short/long term objectives and goals of the campaign
- Research behind the platforms chosen
- Development of social media profile
- Content calendar and social media management tools
- Current results, trends and analytics

### Marketing Activity and Budget Calendar

To aid with the development of the final business plan students will be required to submit a detailed annual marketing activity and budget calendar based on a distributed template. The students marketing and brand strategy should be reflected in the budget and associated activities.

### Assessment Breakdown

- Social Media Marketing Campaign 50%;
- Marketing Activity and Budget Calendar 20%;
- Personal reflective document 30%.

## Module Structure

### Session 1: Marketing

#### Description

Session 1 introduces FFEs to the general marketing principles of launching a start-up food business. The aim of the module is to provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of the core principles of marketing and an understanding of digital skills required for venture creation.

#### Learning Outcomes

On completion of session 1, students will be able to:

- Understand general marketing principle and how to apply them to a food business;
- Gain an understanding of digital marketing;
- Develop a marketing strategy for a food business;
- Understand the importance of marketing for business development.

#### Indicative Syllabus

Topic	Methodology	Activities	Resources
General Marketing Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is marketing</li> <li>➤ Purple Cow Theory</li> <li>➤ Accelerating Diffusion of Innovation Theory</li> <li>➤ Marketing Mix (The 5 P'S Price, Product, Place, Promotion, People)</li> <li>➤ Market Touch Points</li> </ul>	Classroom and Online lecture Self-directed	Each student will pitch and upload a video of them explaining why their business is a purple cow  Complete a marketing mix template for inclusion in business plan  Set up and or modify their social media platforms  Set up a class blog platform and thread	Purple Cow, New Edition: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable – Seth Godin, 2010  Foundations of Marketing - Jobber, J. D. & Fahy, J., 2012  Principles of Marketing, Global Edition - Philip Kotler. Gary Armstrong, 2013  Emerald Insight - European Marketing Journal  Inside the Tornado: Marketing Strategies from Silicon Valley's Cutting Edge  The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference - Malcolm Gladwell  Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create

			<p>Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant - R. Mauborgne and W. C. Kim</p> <p>Entrepreneurship and Small Business - Paul Burns</p>
<p>Digital marketing</p> <p>Use of social media and business management platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Facebook</li> <li>➤ LinkedIn</li> <li>➤ Twitter</li> <li>➤ Instagram</li> <li>➤ Blogs</li> <li>➤ Website</li> </ul> <p>Online consumer behaviours</p>	<p>Classroom and Online lecture</p> <p>Self-directed</p>	<p>Set up business profiles on selected platforms</p> <p>Research the difference, specific advantages and disadvantages of creating an online Blog vs. Business website as a FFE</p>	<p>Unlock your Social Media strategy: <a href="http://www.designangler.com/blog/unlock-your-social-media-strategy">http://www.designangler.com/blog/unlock-your-social-media-strategy</a></p> <p>Deliver happiness to your audience - <a href="https://www.womensinspirenetwork.com/post/happiness-the-key-to-success-in-digital-marketing">https://www.womensinspirenetwork.com/post/happiness-the-key-to-success-in-digital-marketing</a></p> <p>Social Media management tools: <a href="http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/5-social-media-management-tools-to-save-time/">http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/5-social-media-management-tools-to-save-time/</a></p> <p>Social media marketing – get clear first - <a href="https://www.womensinspirenetwork.com/post/back-to-the-basics-of-marketing-start-by-getting-your-message-clear-before-you-do-anything-else">https://www.womensinspirenetwork.com/post/back-to-the-basics-of-marketing-start-by-getting-your-message-clear-before-you-do-anything-else</a></p> <p>Twitter lists – <a href="https://www.womensinspirenetwork.com/post/how-to-use-twitter-lists">https://www.womensinspirenetwork.com/post/how-to-use-twitter-lists</a></p> <p>Digital Marketing Strategy, Implementation &amp; Practice - Dave Chaffey &amp; Fiona Ellis-Chadwick</p> <p>Digital Marketing Strategy: An Integrated Approach to Online Marketing - Simon Kingsnorth</p> <p>Marketing with Social Media: A LITA Guide, Second Edition Beth C. Thomsett-Scott</p> <p>7 Steps to Starting a Small Business Online - <a href="https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/175242">https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/175242</a></p> <p>How to (Realistically) Start an Online Business That (Actually) Grows in</p>



			<p>2020</p> <p><a href="https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/how-to-start-online-business/#14-steps-to-launching-an-online-business">https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/how-to-start-online-business/#14-steps-to-launching-an-online-business</a></p> <p>The Streetwise Guide to Being Enterprising: Increase Your Career, Business or Social Enterprise Prospects by Using the e-Factor, Oak Tree Press – David Gibson (2010)</p> <p>Feeney, M.K., Bozeman, B. (2008) 'Mentoring and network ties', Human Relations</p> <p>E-Commerce 2019: Business, Technology and Society, 15th Edition - Kenneth C. Laudon, Azimuth Information Systems</p> <p>Using the Canva platform for digital marketing and visual content- <a href="https://designschool.canva.com/tutorials/getting-started/">https://designschool.canva.com/tutorials/getting-started/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.canva.com/learn/the-beginners-guide-to-small-business-marketing-online/">https://www.canva.com/learn/the-beginners-guide-to-small-business-marketing-online/</a></p>
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## Session 2: Branding and Digital Security

### Description

Session 2 will focus on developing a branding strategy for the business, assessing and managing the digital security and risk associated with online businesses.

### Learning Outcomes

On completion of session two, students will be able to:

- Understand the importance of branding;
- Develop a brand strategy for the business;
- Understand the importance of digital security, risk management and implement tools that will protect their online consumers.

Indicative Syllabus			
Topic	Methodology	Activities	Relevant Resources
<p>Branding – perceptions and images that represent a business/service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Advertising</li> <li>➤ Demos</li> <li>➤ Recommendations</li> <li>➤ Brand Strategy</li> <li>➤ Brand Metrics</li> </ul>	<p>Blended - Classroom and online lectures</p> <p>Self-Directed</p>	<p>Group exercise on developing a brand strategy for a fictional business</p> <p>Group activity – analyse and discuss the brand metrics for a popular company i.e. Whole foods, Starbucks, McDonalds, Pepperidge Farm (make Milanos) and Auntie Anne’s.</p>	<p>Brand Zero: the complete branding guide for start-ups – Tai, Jackey Entrepreneurship and Small Business - Paul Burns</p> <p>The Streetwise Guide to Being Enterprising: Increase Your Career, Business or Social Enterprise Prospects by Using the e-Factor, Oak Tree Press - Gibson, 2010</p> <p>Onward: How Starbucks Fought for Its Life without Losing Its Soul – Howard Schultz</p> <p>Designing Brand Identity: An Essential Guide for the Whole Branding Team, 4th Edition – Alina Wheeler</p> <p>Creating Powerful Brands – De Chernatony, Leslie and Malcolm McDonald, 2005</p> <p>Brand Culture – Schroeder Jonathan, Miriam Morling Salzer (Eds) 2006</p> <p>Strategic Brand Management – Keller, Lane, 2003</p> <p>Branding with Canva design school - <a href="https://designschool.canva.com/courses/branding-design/?lesson=whats-a-brand">https://designschool.canva.com/courses/branding-design/?lesson=whats-a-brand</a></p>
<p>Financial transactions (How to set up bank accounts, PayPal, how to protect your customers etc)</p> <p>Digital security –Security and Rick Management</p>	<p>Online lecture</p>		<p>Auditing Social Media: A Governance and Risk guide - IIA Staff, J. Mike Jacka, and Peter R. Scott</p> <p>The PayPal official guide to Internet Security - Michelle Savage</p> <p>The E-Myth Revisited, by Michael Gerber</p> <p>Pricing – know your worth - <a href="https://www.womensinspirenetwork.com/post/pricing-the-elephant-in-the-room">https://www.womensinspirenetwork.com/post/pricing-the-elephant-in-the-room</a></p>

### Session 3: Communications

#### Description

Building an online business profile and communicating to customers and stakeholders are vital for any business to become successful. Session 3 will focus on providing students with the skills necessary to develop a professional online business profile. Business pitching, delivering professional business presentations and creating a curriculum vitae will also be core to this session.

#### Learning Outcomes

On completion of session 3, students will be able to:

- Plan, design and deliver effective oral presentations, using appropriate medium for current business practices;
- Describe and evaluate the importance of online media communication is to business development;
- Develop an online business and personal profile/ brand.

#### Indicative Syllabus

Topic	Methodology	Activities	Resources
Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Pitching: elevator and 3-minute pitching</li> <li>➤ Presentation – visual aids</li> </ul>	Classroom and Online lecture  Self-Directed	Students will be required to deliver an elevator pitch in class incorporating their goal, target audience and USP (unique selling point)	Best Pitch Deck Templates: <a href="http://business.tutsplus.com/articles/15-best-pitch-deck-templates-for-business-plan-powerpoint-presentations--cms-26433">http://business.tutsplus.com/articles/15-best-pitch-deck-templates-for-business-plan-powerpoint-presentations--cms-26433</a>  The Only 10 Slides You Need in Your Pitch: <a href="http://guykawasaki.com/the-only-10-slides-you-need-in-your-pitch/">http://guykawasaki.com/the-only-10-slides-you-need-in-your-pitch/</a>  Google Slides themes and PowerPoint templates: <a href="http://www.slidescarnival.com/category/free-templates/startup-presentations">http://www.slidescarnival.com/category/free-templates/startup-presentations</a>  The Best Start-up Pitch Decks: <a href="http://bestpitchdecks.com/">http://bestpitchdecks.com/</a>  6 Elevator Pitch Examples to Inspire Your Own: <a href="https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/elevator-pitch-examples">https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/elevator-pitch-examples</a>

<p>Building an Online Business Profile &amp; audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Communication via blogs, and other social media sites</li> </ul>	<p>Classroom and Online lecture</p> <p>Self-Directed</p>	<p>Review case studies of local food entrepreneurs</p> <p>Develop a social media content calendar</p>	<p>The Dynamics of Business Communication: How to Communicate Efficiently and Effectively – Kennedy &amp; Lawlor</p> <p>Customer, LLC: The Small Business Guide to Customer Engagement &amp; Marketing (2016) by Hillary Berman</p> <p>Blog, Inc. Blogging for Passion, Profit, and to Create Community – Joy Deangdeelert Cho, Meg Mareo Ilascc, Grace Bonney (2012)</p> <p><a href="https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnrampton/2014/07/09/100-ways-to-build-your-business-online/#4934446a7bb6">https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnrampton/2014/07/09/100-ways-to-build-your-business-online/#4934446a7bb6</a></p> <p>Templates for Social Media Content Calendar:</p> <p><a href="https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Social+Media+Content+Calendar&amp;FORM=RESTART">https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Social+Media+Content+Calendar&amp;FORM=RESTART</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.thinkbusiness.ie/articles/a-free-content-calendar-template-and-guide/">https://www.thinkbusiness.ie/articles/a-free-content-calendar-template-and-guide/</a></p> <p>Essential reads for FFEs -</p> <p><a href="https://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/12-must-read-books-for-women-entrepreneurs-written-by-women-entrepreneurs.html">https://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/12-must-read-books-for-women-entrepreneurs-written-by-women-entrepreneurs.html</a></p> <p>Productivity tools -</p> <p><a href="https://www.thebalancesmb.com/productivity-tools-for-smart-entrepreneurs-4126676">https://www.thebalancesmb.com/productivity-tools-for-smart-entrepreneurs-4126676</a></p> <p>Female in businesses top productivity podcasts -</p> <p><a href="https://startupsavant.com/women-in-business-podcasts-to-boost-productivity">https://startupsavant.com/women-in-business-podcasts-to-boost-productivity</a></p> <p>Free Female entrepreneur webinars</p> <p><a href="https://startupsavant.com/free-webinars-for-women-in-business">https://startupsavant.com/free-webinars-for-women-in-business</a></p> <p>Google Small Business YouTube</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/GoogleBusiness">https://www.youtube.com/user/GoogleBusiness</a></p>
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			<p>Rework business platform <a href="https://rework.withgoogle.com/">https://rework.withgoogle.com/</a></p> <p>Shopify food business resources: <a href="https://www.shopify.ie/blog/213396233-how-to-start-a-food-business">https://www.shopify.ie/blog/213396233-how-to-start-a-food-business</a></p> <p>Female Foodie podcasts: <a href="https://www.foodboro.com/2020s-top-podcasts-for-food-entrepreneurs/">https://www.foodboro.com/2020s-top-podcasts-for-food-entrepreneurs/</a></p> <p>The One Hour Content Plan: The Solopreneur's Guide to a Year's Worth of Blog Post Ideas in 60 Minutes and Creating Content That Hooks and Sells (2017) by Meera Kothand</p> <p>Facebook social marketing video - <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_IGA69QN8A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_IGA69QN8A</a></p> <p>How to use Instagram: <a href="https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/351696">https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/351696</a></p> <p>Use Pinterest for online strategies - <a href="https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-use-pinterest-for-business/">https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-use-pinterest-for-business/</a></p> <p>Best social platforms to date - <a href="https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/351042">https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/351042</a></p> <p>Digital food marketing with canva <a href="https://www.canva.com/learn/food-design/">https://www.canva.com/learn/food-design/</a></p> <p>Just begin – don't judge - <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHH35BwQc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHH35BwQc</a></p> <p>Starting your SME blog - <a href="https://smallbusiness.co.uk/start-a-new-business/setting-up-your-business/">https://smallbusiness.co.uk/start-a-new-business/setting-up-your-business/</a></p> <p>Start a food blog - <a href="https://cookieandkate.com/how-to-start-a-food-blog/">https://cookieandkate.com/how-to-start-a-food-blog/</a></p>
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THINK

**Success**

KEEP ON DOING

AND AGAIN ← DO AGAIN

DO

## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX 1 – Survey Analysis

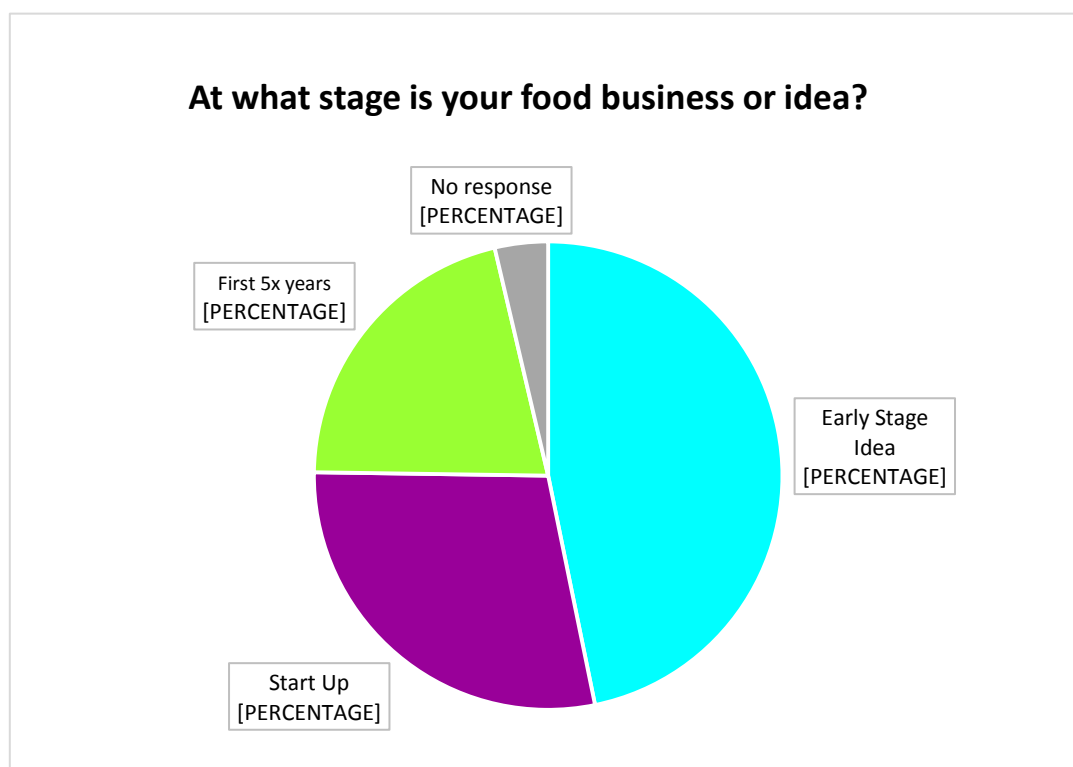
*The survey was developed using an online platform and was conducted with 109 Female Food Entrepreneurs across the five consortium countries: Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Romania. The survey took place from June – August 2019. The lead partner, GMIT (IRL) analysed and produced the following data.*

#### Females profile and entrepreneurial stage

The first question was designed to identify the business/ idea stage of each participant:

1. Early Stage – Needs more market research;
2. Start Up – have a product and some sales;
3. Business is in its first 5x years or more.

96% of participants responded to this question:

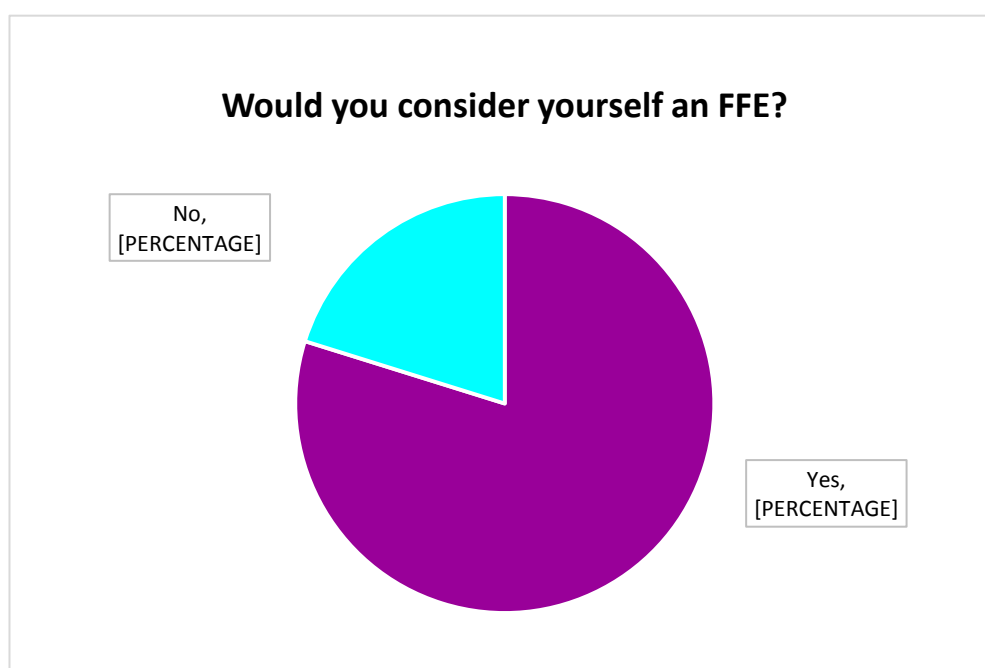


These results indicated that any training developed should encapsulate and be aimed at females at all business and idea stages with a focus on early stage and at start-up phase.

The closing question was important to gauge and access what the respondent's perception of a Female Food Entrepreneur was and if they considered themselves to be one.

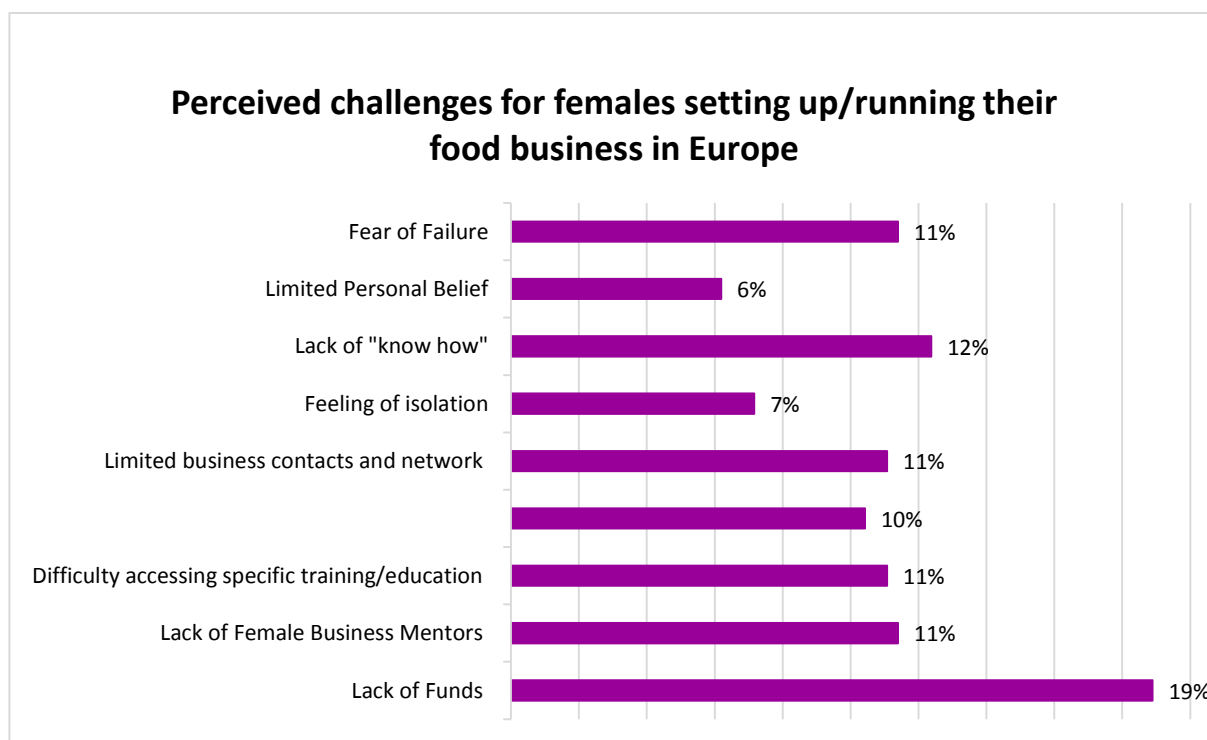
Of the 109 women surveyed there was a full response to this question, so it was a true representation to the sample.

- 87, responded - Yes
- 22, responding – No



## Identified Challenges

Question two sought to identify the perceived challenges that females face when setting up/running their own food business. This was a multiple-choice question.

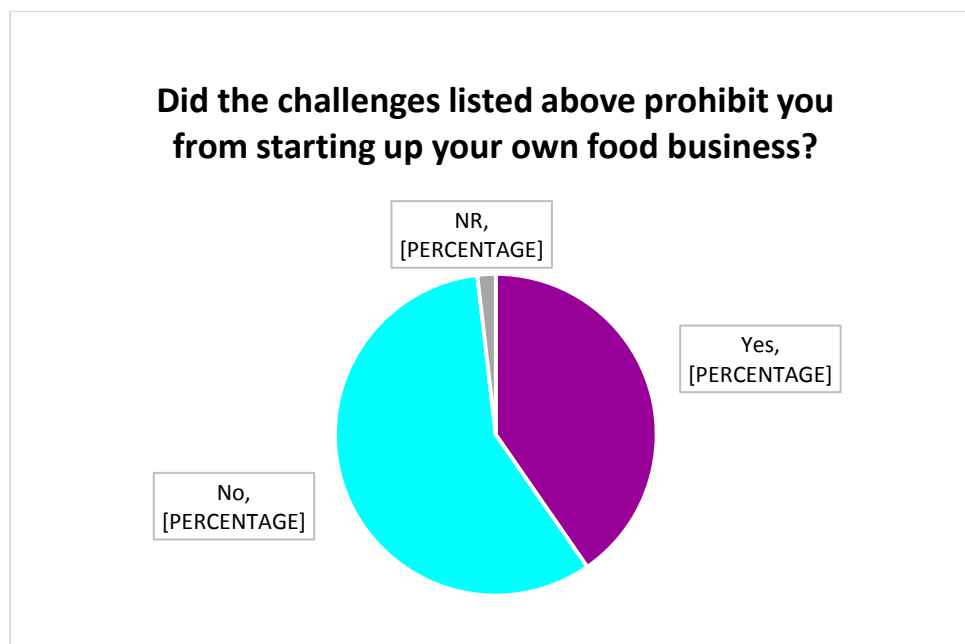


The results indicated that **'Lack of Funds'** at **19%** was the most significant challenge for those surveyed. Lack of know-how and fear of failure both relating to self-belief and knowledge were also noteworthy factors; evidence that women do have reduced self-confidence in their own abilities as entrepreneurs compared to men (Kirkwood, 2009).

Limited business networks and lack of female mentors also featured in the top-ranking challenges.

It is recommended that VETs should consider the survey results during the development stage of the training course and ensure that the course addresses the barriers identified. The course should provide solutions and resources that will aid FFEs in overcoming them i.e. using specifically female mentors and peers in the delivery of the course, providing information on adequate resources, support hubs, available grants and supports available across Europe, creating networks, creating and fostering entrepreneurship and innovative thinking.





Interestingly, over half (58%) of the women surveyed felt that the challenges previously listed were not relevant to them and that they would not prohibit them starting up their business.

However, a significant 40% felt these challenges would impact the start up and running of their new/ current food business. Bearing in mind 29% of women surveyed had a food product or service at its start-up stages and 21% were in business 5 or more years making profits. For this reason, the yes replies are important to consider vs the no replies and these statistics should inform the content of the training course.

**Females were then asked what they thought “would help overcome the challenges that females face in setting up a business in Europe's Food Industry?”**

84/109 FFE participants in Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Italy commented on this question and the following resources below were listed and mentioned.

**Mentoring**

In Ireland females mentioned the access to female mentors was important. Specifically, mentors that were knowledgeable in the agri-food sector, as they would help in overcoming challenges, they once may have faced in setting up. It was highlighted that mentors needed to be specific to the sector to give adequate useful advice and have knowledge concerning food products/ the female’s product to steer them in the right direction to start ups successfully. Females want 1-1 mentoring that is matched, to their needs – an example; FFE would be matched with a suitable mentor for their business needs, type and direction.

In Lithuania 30% of the females surveyed mentioned that mentoring was important to allow them to learn from other females, specifically females who are successful FFEs.

### Supports for the FFE

Females highlighted the need for more supports for the entrepreneur – as they commented that ‘it’s a very lonely space’. One lady specifically commented that - the loneliness ‘would stop me in future from ever entering my food business’. FFEs voice their need more belief and support from the internal family especially in childcare. While governmental and legislation need to be supportive for FFEs in agricultural enterprises as traditional farming does not currently do this. FFEs need to be promoted and supported globally.

Italian females highlighted the relevant need for more state supports for families and the working mother. While financial services and supports for the management of children or the elderly care in the family are also an issue.

### Network/ community

FFEs would like a network and community of supporting likeminded females to join forces with, to help and support one another across their sector. To allow for the sharing of knowledge and business know how to help one another grow and overcome challenges. This was also seen as a need by FFEs across Europe - a network for FFEs to meet one another, share stories, successes failures, tips and provide support for one another.

### Development of personal skills

This was highlighted by 5 (14%) females whom mentioned that access to training to help develop and instil important personal skills was important. Skills such as; self-confidence (being the main one), self-motivation, determination, resilience and strength in themselves and their enterprise. Development of personal qualities such as self-confidence which was mentioned with value by FFEs specifically in Romania and Lithuania.

### Education/ training

Education and training specifically aimed at females in the food sector. Relevant training that was accessible in how to do important business acumen duties like a business plans, finances and marketing for and from real life businesses. Education around entrepreneurship and the creation of

the entrepreneurial mindset to being at childhood to nurture instil and develop key qualities for success and personal belief.

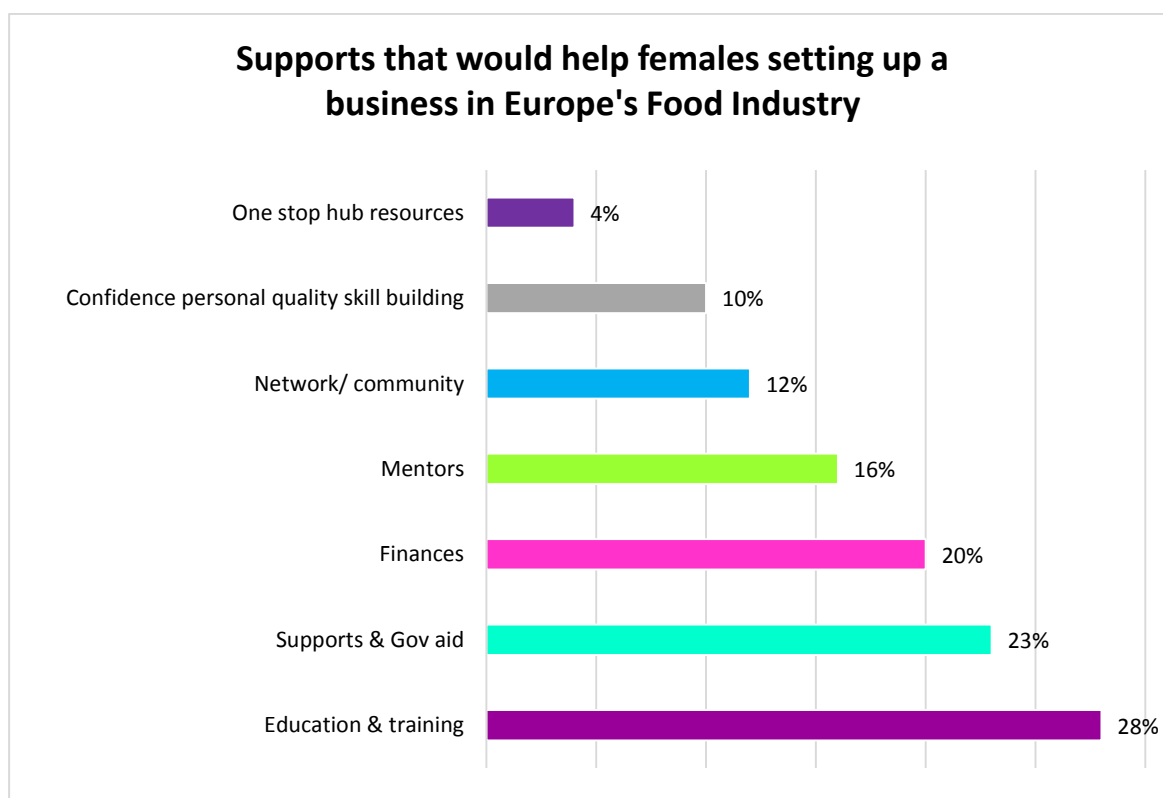
Lithuanian, Romanian, Polish and Italian participants also commented that training that was targeted to FFEs, business establishment and development. Training that used both theory and practice teaching methods would help overcome challenges.

## Finance

Finance and its current availability challenge mentioned by 8 (23%) females. The need for less barriers around accessing and sourcing finances, beneficial grants and funding for their businesses would help females. While the provision of more funding and investment opportunities were also highlighted for females in business or starting out. Tax incentives for the FFE, with less bureaucracy and red tape and more support specifically in Italy.

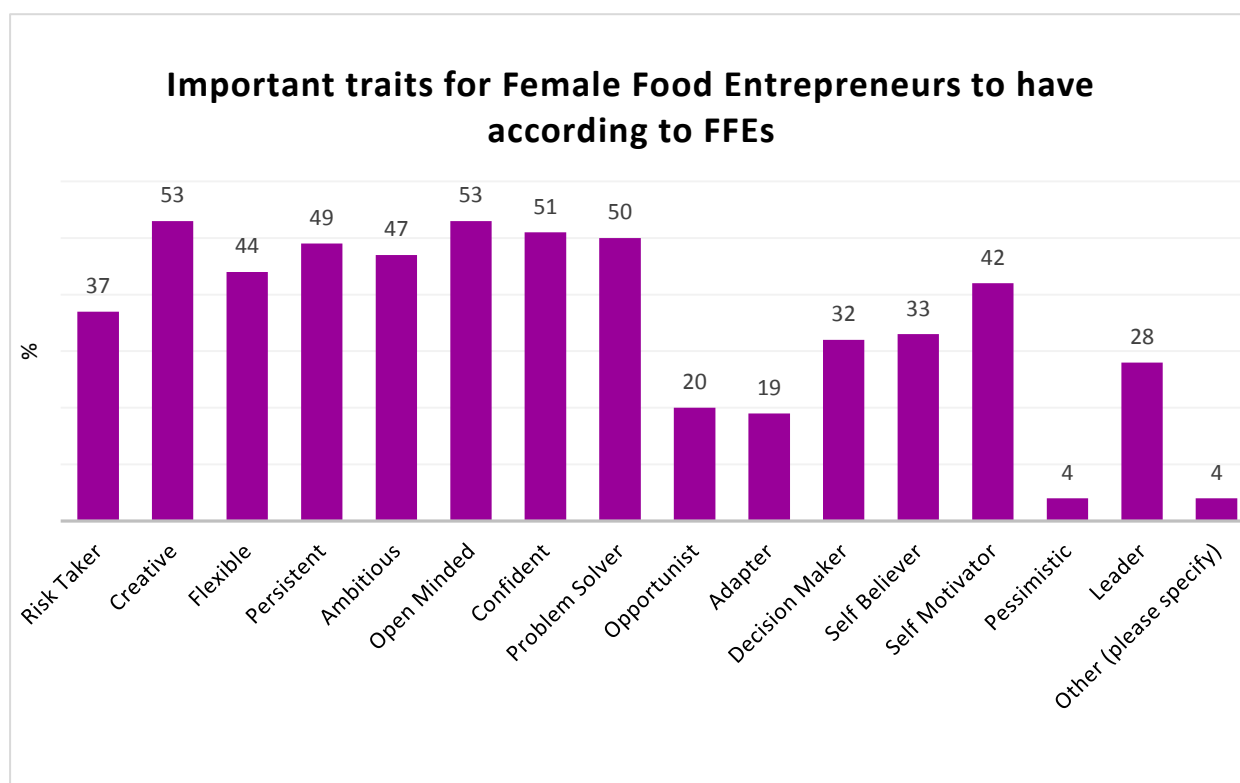
## Resources easy to accesses

A hub or 'one stop common space' online area for entrepreneurs that was easy to access and find all information, resources and supports that is relevant to FFEs and their needs - from short courses, education, training, idea/ business development, an online communication and knowledge sharing platform.

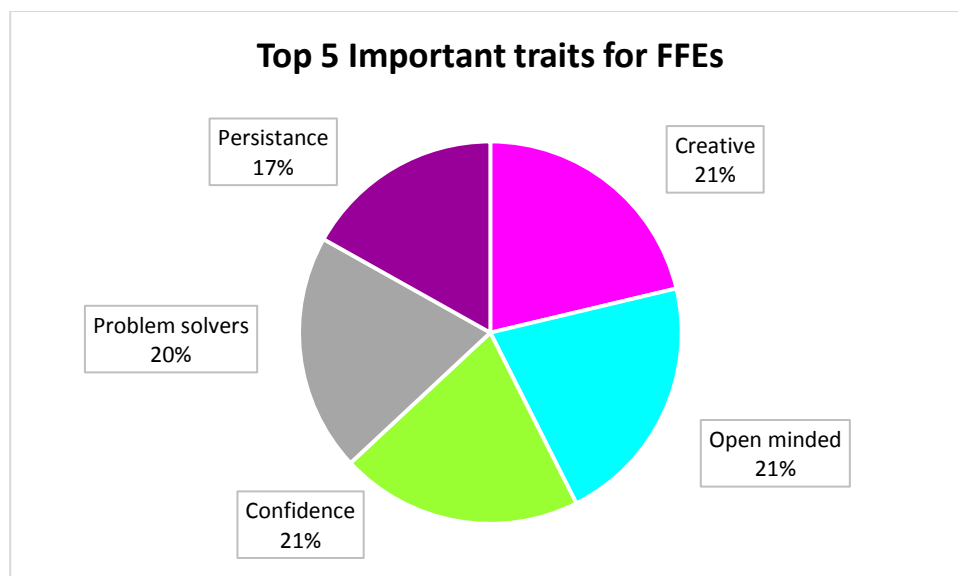


## Important traits for Female Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs have certain traits that help them to become entrepreneurs. They are risk takers, have high energy, are visionaries, they can exploit opportunities, are confident and hard workers. The results from this question aided the project team in identifying the strong and weak traits present in the FFEs surveyed and used the analysis as a guide in developing the content for the Training Guide.



The top 5 traits selected included creativity, open mindless, confidence, problem solving abilities and self-motivation.



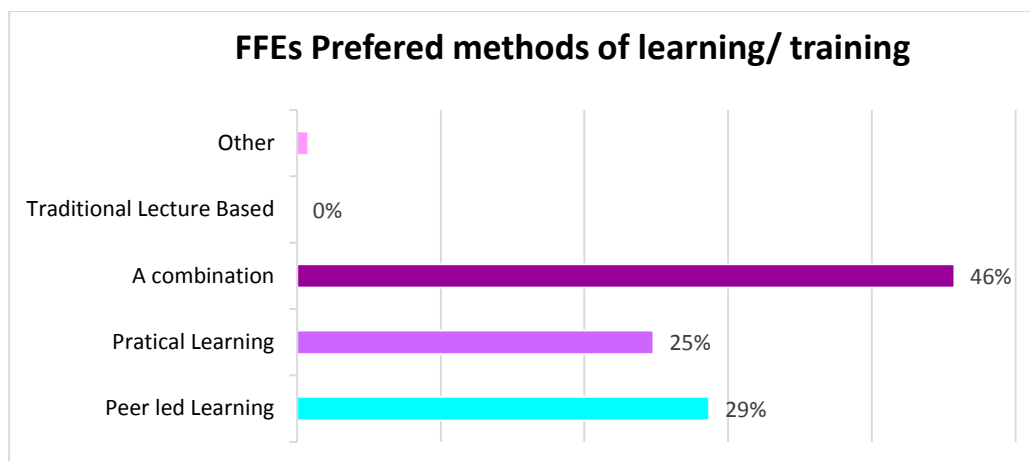
The survey results provide a snapshot of the top five traits selected by the FFEs surveyed enabling VET providers to tailor the training to the general perceived strengths and weaknesses.

Females were then asked if they felt they would benefit from specific FFE training.



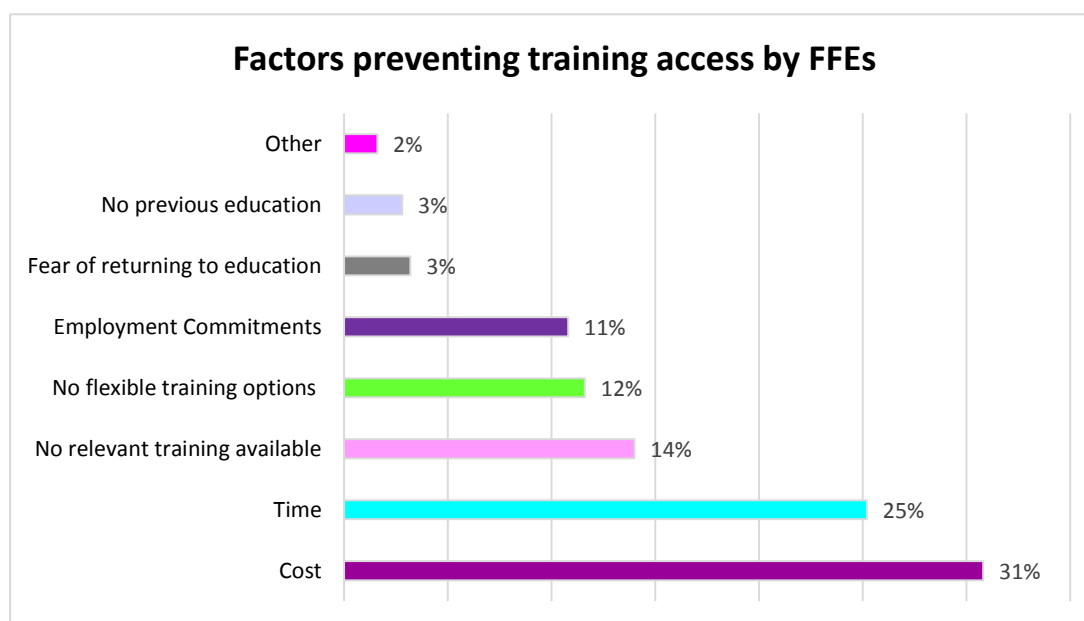
A remarkable 93% of those surveyed indicated that training specific to FFEs will encourage the growth of food entrepreneurs across Europe.

Keeping in line with training needs females were asked to identify their preferred methods of learning.



- 29% FFEs felt they would predominantly engage with **Peer led training**
- 25% of FFEs would prefer **practical learning**
- 46% of FFEs would learn and engage best with a **combination of both methods**.
- **Traditional lecture led** was not rated by the sample of FFEs surveyed

To help FFEs in their businesses and provide them with adequate training the survey sought to identify what has prevented FFEs in successfully assessing training.



The top barriers identified included cost, time and not having relevant training experience. It is vital for the VET providers to ensure that the training they develop is flexible and cost effective.

Some recommendations on how to overcome such barriers include:

- Ensure that the course is affordable and where possible and that there is some funding available to FFEs i.e. allowances for self-employed/unemployed, funding streams,

government agency access, grants, etc.

- Develop time management strategies for course work and learning that complement females that may have limited time due to home commitments, work commitments and other issues. Incorporate a flexible approach to learning i.e. blended nature of the delivery of the programme (i.e. some face-to-face sessions and some online learning including recorded webinars, podcasts and other interactive mediums)
- Ensure that the **course content is relevant to FFEs**:
  - Address the challenges and barriers facing FFEs and provide solutions, methods and resources that will help in overcoming these barriers. Peer and experiential learning will be vital in achieving this.
  - Highlight the importance of building a network, the ability to access mentors and the idea of collaborative working relationships.
  - Incorporate learning outcomes for each stage of business – Early idea, Start up and in the first 5+ years of business.
  - Foster and encourage entrepreneurship and innovative thinking through experiential learning.

## APPENDIX 2 - RESOURCES

*Below are a list of relevant resources and supports available to FFEs throughout Europe. Accessing the below resources will aid in fostering and developing business ideas and contribute to creative and innovative thinking.*

### SMARTCHAIN (Smart Solutions in Short Food Supply Chains)



The main objective of this project is to support the shift towards collaborative short food supply chains. The project introduces new robust business models and innovative practical solutions that enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the European agri-food system.

<https://www.smartchain-h2020.eu/>

**Food 4 Growth** introduces a range of innovative training models relevant to the food sector that can be easily implemented by Vocational Education and Training (VET) organisation across Europe.



<http://www.food4growth.eu/>

### ESCAPE (Enhancing Sales Capacity for Agri-food Products in Europe)



The ESCAPE project developed a training programme for food technology aimed at those interested in working in the business development area of the Food and Drink sector. The training course was developed based on the industry needs i.e. international salespeople with skills in food technology.



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

<http://www.escape-project.eu/>

**Erasmus Food Lab** is organization aiming to promote and raise awareness about sustainable and healthy food. It is an experimental playground for research, teaching and marketing related to plant-based foods.



<https://www.erasmusfoodlab.nl/>

**ASKFOOD** (*Alliance for Skills and Knowledge to Widen Food Sector-related Open Innovation, Optimization and Development*)



This project aims to develop cross-industry knowledge platforms to support innovative multi-actor food clusters across Europe.

<https://www.askfood.eu/project>

### EIP-AGRI Brochure – Innovation in short food supply chains

Short food supply chains have the potential to connect producers and consumers and increase added value for farmers in the food chain. Improving collaboration between farmers, farm cooperatives, food processors, consumers and others involved in short food supply chains can boost this potential and enhance mutual benefits. It can enable the people involved to develop new products and processes to add value and to improve the range of products available to consumers. It can also help to make logistics and distribution more efficient, and it can strengthen food chains and open up new markets.



[This brochure](#) highlights a number of Operational Groups and other innovative projects that illustrate successful ways of bringing innovation and collaboration to short food chains, for more impact.

### “Future farmers in the spotlight”: case studies on inspiring farming initiatives

future farmers  
in the spotlight



Dutch filmmaker and farmer-to-be Joris van der Kamp travelled across the EU with his camera to capture the farming projects of inspiring personalities.

[Thirteen videos](#), from Denmark to Greece, to understand the ups and downs of starting a farm.

### Resources available in Poland



KONGRES KOBIET



-funded by the  
i+ Programme  
of the European Union



## Congresses and Conferences – Relevant to FFEs in Poland

### The Congress of Women Association

The Congress of Women Association, established in 2009, is the largest social movement in Poland. As a non-governmental organization, it operates at the national as well as local levels with 35 regional representatives. Its mission is to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the political, social and economic spheres. <https://www.kongreskobiet.pl/>

### Conferences "Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020"



<http://www.krir.pl/2014-01-03-03-23-24/dzialalnosc-zarzadu/szkolenia>

### Successful Sales workshops

Workshops supporting customers' sales targets, which gives them success and references: "The sales development program - Sales Up - 4VALUE".



[https://4value.com.pl/szkolenia/programy-szkolen/skuteczna-sprzedaz/?gclid=CjwKCAiA1fnxBRBBEiwAVUouUve1\\_7JJ7D4f\\_teI5XGLoZWuYADQhmCpFHIdEICLHKQwzs5Ma2K2hoCYrEQAvD\\_BwE](https://4value.com.pl/szkolenia/programy-szkolen/skuteczna-sprzedaz/?gclid=CjwKCAiA1fnxBRBBEiwAVUouUve1_7JJ7D4f_teI5XGLoZWuYADQhmCpFHIdEICLHKQwzs5Ma2K2hoCYrEQAvD_BwE)

### Training Independent Woman - edition 35 – Warsaw

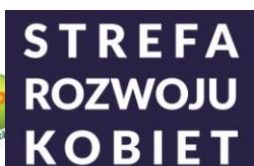


More than 15,000 people in Poland, England and Ireland have already participated in the "Independent Woman" training. The idea for the "Independent Woman" training was born out of professional and coaching cooperation with thousands of women.

<https://rowinskabusinescoach.com/sklep/szkolenie-kobieta-niezalezna-warszawa/>

**"Women's Development Zone"** - free workshops and lectures on personal development.

All workshops are unique and one of a kind. They have been designed to stimulate long-term thinking in women - both in the area of employment, financial management, career path planning, achieving the goal you want to achieve, as well as caring for your values and inner strength. The aim of the whole cycle is to promote knowledge of personal development, which



-funded by the  
s+ Programme  
European Union

will contribute to the activation of women at various levels, i.e. from self-acceptance and self-confidence to the introduction of effective methods of financial management, stimulating entrepreneurship and supporting in the achievement of goals and introducing balance in personal and professional life. - [link](#)

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## WOMAN POWER - WOMAN IN BUSINESS



The situation of women in modern business, especially in Poland, is only seemingly similar to that of men. Apart from extreme cases of mobbing or chauvinistic behaviour, in a large part of companies, a woman with much higher competences than a man has less chance for a high position or similar remuneration. "TiM Training is a Woman" program meets the challenges that women face in modern business. It supports them and strengthens their skills, which will allow them to compete with men of equal standing.

<https://www.timtraining.pl/woman-power-kobieta-w-biznesie/>




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## Safety of women and children on the farm

Training and competition events for the Rural Women's Club in Gorzno

Staff will indicate the rules, the observance of which ensures safety during work and play on the farm. A test competition will be held at the end of meetings and winners will receive material prizes.

<https://wydarzenia-prewencyjne.krus.gov.pl/wydarzenie/bezpieczenstwo-kobiet-i-dzieci-w-gospodarstwie-rolnym-szkolenie-i-konkurs-dla-kola-gospodyn-wiejskich-w-gorznej/16345>

Training and competition on health and safety rules in agriculture for women working on a farm in Miedzichowo

<https://wydarzenia-prewencyjne.krus.gov.pl/wydarzenie/szkolenie-i-konkurs-z-zasad-bhp-w-rolnictwie-dla-kobiet-pracujacych-w-gospodarstwie-rolnym-z-gminy-miedzichowo/34774>

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## Agricultural Technology Centre - agricultural training

Trainings at the Agricultural Technology Centre are meetings with farmers who are looking for new and innovative solutions useful on their farms. Trainings include theoretical and practical part. Lecturers from various universities and institutes in the country are invited to the trainings.

<https://www.kalendarzrolnikow.pl/3154/centrum-techniki-rolniczej-szkolenia-rolnicze>

## Small grants scheme for enterprising women

The aim of the Small Grant Scheme for Entrepreneurial Women is to increase the competitiveness of entrepreneurs by developing or designing and implementing innovations in one of the three areas: environmental technologies, innovation in inland or maritime waters or technologies improving the quality of life. Projects under this scheme can simultaneously contribute to increasing the knowledge, skills or entrepreneurial competence necessary to maintain and develop a business.

<https://www.parp.gov.pl/component/grants/grants/technologie-dla-kobiet>

## Female Entrepreneurial Projects in Poland

### XXIV Business Lunch for Women Entrepreneurs



In the meeting program:

Consists of lecture with Sophie Cholody, the patroness of the city. Networking with businesswomen, business card lottery and gifts from KKP partners, lunch (included) along with great atmosphere and environment to develop invaluable new relationships.

<https://www.klubkp.pl/>

## Entrepreneurial women 2.0

The project entitled the project "Entrepreneurial women 2.0" is implemented under Priority Axis 8 Labour Market, Measure 8.3 Self-employment, entrepreneurship and creation of new jobs ROP WD 2014-2020 by the Centre for Consultancy and Training "Europrojekt" in partnership with the Psychotherapy and Mediation Studio.



<http://przedsiebiorczekobiety2.eu/>

## FOOD SECTOR IN POLAND - development, processing

Over the last 20 years, the Polish food sector in Poland has undergone significant transformations. It successfully survived the economic crisis. Thanks to constant technical, technological and organizational development, Poland is the eighth largest exporter of food from among the EU countries and offers great potential for organic food production.



What challenges are facing the food market in Poland? What are the latest trends and technologies? Should further market consolidation and further acquisitions be expected? The above and many other questions will be answered by experts during the conference "Food sector in Poland - development, processing, trade", which will take place already on 29 November 2019 in Warsaw.

<http://pirbinstytut.pl/index.php/sektor-spozywczy-w-polsce>

## Network of entrepreneurial women

The aim of the project is to make women in Poland self-determining, causative and financially independent. Therefore, they comprehensively support women's entrepreneurship, through: developing women's professional community, initiating acceleration and business programs, popularizing women's networks of business angels and financing instruments for start-ups - [link](#)



**SIEĆ PRZEDSIĘBIORCZYCH KOBIET**

**"Become a leader of your own life and create your dream business."**



This is a unique 6-month course for 16 women. The project is chargeable

<https://www.szkolaliderek.pl/>



**ŁÓDZKIE CENTRUM ENTERPRISE - support for the future and present entrepreneur.**

Free consultancy, trainings and consultations for entrepreneurs in Łódź and people planning to start a company.

<https://przedsiębiorczosc.lodz.pl/>

## Final ceremony of the fifteenth edition of the national competition Way to Success



**Centrum Doradztwa Rolniczego  
w Brwinowie**

The Way to Success Competition organized by the Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów.

<https://cdr.gov.pl/85-nasze-dzialania/konkursy/sposob-na-sukces/1684-wreczenie-nagrod-laureatom-i-wyrozniomym-w-xv-edycji-konkursu-sposob-na-sukces?highlight=WYJrb2JpZXRhIl0=>

**AgriLink** - Cooperation in the dissemination of agricultural knowledge - farmers, agricultural advisors, researchers for innovation.



<https://cdr.gov.pl/44-nasze-dzialania/projekty>

## FROM IDEA TO BUSINESS - PROJECTS FOR ENTERPRISING WOMEN



Running your own business is often a great solution to reconcile the duties of a young parent with the needs of professional development. Often, however, starting a business, gaining money for a start is too big a barrier. That is why projects such as "From idea to project - comprehensive support for women in setting up a business" come to your aid.

<https://www.plineu.org/projects/od-pomyslu-do-biznesu-projekty-dla-przedsiębiorczych-kobiet/>

### Resources available for FFEs in Lithuania

#### IStartup.Eu

LT - PL cooperation platform supporting newly established business and promoting entrepreneurship. Project activities are focused to strengthen the quality of business support organisations services in Cooperation Programme area.

<http://istartup.eu/courses/how-to-incorporate-and-accelerate-the-development-of-the-business-entity/>

Suntzu technique trainings - <http://suntzu.lt/mokymai>

### Resources available for FFEs in Romania

#### Ghidul antreprenorului [Entrepreneur's Guide] (2010)

<https://www.traininguri.ro/ro/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/ghidul-antreprenorului-cuprins.pdf>

The Project **Business Start-up** (2009-2010) aims to increase entrepreneurial potential at the level of the Bucharest - Ilfov region through the development of the entrepreneurial culture and by improving the competitiveness and adaptability of potential entrepreneurs.

The **objectives** of the Business Start-up project are as follows:

1. Improving entrepreneurial potential in the region;
2. Presentation and awareness of existing opportunities at the level of the region;
3. Developing practical skills and theoretical knowledge needed for entrepreneurship;
4. Providing consultancy for business start-ups;
5. Stimulate the design of feasible business plans.

The **target group** of the project consists of people who want it to start an independent entrepreneurial activity (**regardless of** age, **gender**, minority, social category) belonging to the Bucharest - Ilfov area.

The target group includes the following categories:

- authorized individuals;
- employed persons (employees);

- inactive people;
- people looking for a job;
- people with disabilities;
- PhD students;
- registered unemployed;
- Roma people;
- students;
- unregistered unemployed.

The guide addresses all future entrepreneurs, regardless of gender.

#### Chapters:

1. The Business Start-up Project
2. Entrepreneurship as an alternative
3. How to build a business
4. Management and leadership
5. The courage to start
6. Project management
7. Negotiation – Practical advice
8. Entrepreneurial concepts – Basic notions

#### **Competente comune mai multor ocupatii – Competente antreprenoriale [Competencies Common to Several Occupations – Entrepreneurial Competencies] (2011)**

<http://www.seap.usv.ro/~carmenn/cursuri/Competente%20antreprenoriale%20standard.pdf>

**Start-up:** a chance for the unemployed but also for the NE region (START-UP NE).

**Project co-funded from the EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND by:** Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013

**Priority Axis 5:** Promoting active employment measures

**Key area of intervention:** 5.1 Development and implementation of active employment measures

**The course-support addresses all future entrepreneurs, regardless of gender.**

#### Chapters:

1. Entrepreneurship in the economy and society of the north-East Region
2. Defining the terms business, profit and entrepreneur
3. The path to great brands
4. Research prior to choosing a business/Types of business start-up
5. External environment as a supplier of basic information (legal and economic)
6. Research – investigation
7. Management and administration
8. Human resources
9. Publicity and branding
10. Action plan
11. Choosing the firm's structure

## 12. Business plan

### Antreprenoriat pentru tinerii din mediul rural [Entrepreneurship for Rural Youth] (2014) –

<http://madr.ro/docs/dezvoltare-rurala/rndr/buletine-tematice/PT6.pdf>

Delivered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Main target groups for consolidation entrepreneurship in the environment rural areas are young people, women and small farmers holders of subsistence farms and semi-subsistence.

The document addresses all future entrepreneurs, regardless of gender.

#### Chapters:

1. Rural entrepreneurship in the European Union
2. What should the youth know to start up their own rural business
3. Financing opportunities for young rural entrepreneurs through the new National Programme of Rural Development
4. Stimulating youth's entrepreneurial initiatives through incentives and national programmes
5. Successful projects of young entrepreneurs funded through the National Programme of Rural Development 2007-2013

### Curs Competente antreprenoriale [Entrepreneurial Competencies – A Course Support] (2015)

<http://startpentrutine.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Suport-curs-competente-antreprenoriale.pdf>

Sectoral Operational Programme “Development of Human Resources”

**Project title:** START for you!

**Editor:** Association Patronage of Young Entrepreneurs in Romania

The document addresses all future entrepreneurs, regardless of gender.

#### Chapters:

1. Introduction to entrepreneurship
2. Starting up a business
3. Qualities required for an entrepreneur
4. Elements of business start-up
5. Financing a business
6. Developing products /services
7. Development strategy and business risks
8. Business planning

### Suport de curs – Antreprenoriat [Entrepreneurship – A Support Course] (2016)

<https://www.sos-satelecopiilor.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/antreprenoriat.pdf>



It is an intellectual output of the project “A model of integrate services for rural and child protection youth” (2015-2016).

It aims at improving services for rural and child protection youth for better social and professional integration through the promotion of a model of integrated services.

Specifically, it aims at improving living abilities and labour market integration chances for 225 young beneficiaries, at increasing the capacity of the actors involved in providing services for the youth at local and county levels, as well as at developing local and county networks that meet the needs of youth from disadvantaged categories through the use of methodologies for professionals in the field.

The course support addresses all future entrepreneurs, regardless of gender.

## Chapters

1. Introduction to entrepreneurship. General notions
2. Developing a business plan. Business plan – general structure
3. Capital investments
4. Legal issues. Starting up and administering a SME.

## Ghid pentru femeile antreprenor în fază de start-up și pentru comunitățile lor [A Guide for Start-up Female /Women Entrepreneurs and Their Communities] (2018)

[https://empowerwoment.eu/Files/Contents/189e4954-7042-4e13-ab7b-856fb5c5b742io3\\_consolidarea-noii-mele-afaceri-%E2%80%93-ghid-pentru-femeile-antreprenor-%C3%AEn-faz%C4%83-de-start-up-si-pentru-comunit%C4%83%C5%A3ile-lor\\_20.09.2018.pdf](https://empowerwoment.eu/Files/Contents/189e4954-7042-4e13-ab7b-856fb5c5b742io3_consolidarea-noii-mele-afaceri-%E2%80%93-ghid-pentru-femeile-antreprenor-%C3%AEn-faz%C4%83-de-start-up-si-pentru-comunit%C4%83%C5%A3ile-lor_20.09.2018.pdf)

The **EmpowerWOMENT project** focuses on women in the early stages of their own businesses (2-3 years) and on the satisfaction of their needs.

The project aims to conceive and pilot entrepreneurial ecosystems in different countries partners and to develop case-based guidance for other European communities. The results of the

**EmpowerWOMENT project** are a significant increase in sustainability for the start-up businesses of the women involved, the creation or consolidation of local or virtual support ecosystems and the development of guides or high-quality support materials for groups of women who run newly established businesses from all over Europe.

The goal is to develop entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of women and to strengthen their identity, to encourage women to start on new roads, to work with different models and to achieve an ideal balance between family life and career priorities.

The guide was written with support from women active in **goods production** (clothing, company games, crafts, cutlery, embroidery, event materials, food products, foot ware, fruit and vegetable



preserves, gadgets, jewellery, textiles, video games, wedding dresses) or **services** (accommodation, accounting, arts, business and change management coaching, business consultancy, catering, children care, consultancy in entrepreneurial legal and financial issues, consultancy in professional transitions, consultancy in sales, cooking workshops, counselling, cultural management, e-commerce, education, energy consultancy, events organisation, graphic design, hair care, health, local and national auctions, massage, nutrition consultancy, office services, open-air events, organisation and production, project management, restauration, skin care, social integration of women, social services, software, support for female /women entrepreneurs, tourism, translations, virtual assistance, web development, wedding planning, welfare, women care, yoga) fields.

The guide addresses particularly female /women entrepreneurs.

## Chapters

1. Introduction
2. Starting up a business: maturing an idea and designing the entrepreneurial project
3. Building up a strategy for firm launching
4. Development of a product
5. Communication
6. Administering the firm
7. Being one's own boss – benefits and challenges

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## Manual Competente antreprenoriale [ A Handbook of Entrepreneurial Competencies] (2018)

<https://ccicj.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Manual-competente-antreprenoriale-CCI-3.7.pdf>

**Program Title:** Human Capital Operational Program 2014-2020

**Priority Axis 3** - Jobs for All

**Specific objective 3.7** - Increasing employment by supporting companies with a non-agricultural profile in the urban area

**Project Title:** Sustainable Entrepreneurship in the North West Region

The handbook contains numerous specific references about female entrepreneurs.

## Chapters

1. To be or not an entrepreneur
2. Starting one's own business
3. Financing one's own business
4. Planning one's business
5. Marketing
6. Managing the firm's finances
7. Strategic planning for a successful business

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## Resources available for FFEs in Italy

## **Extraordinary measures for economy recovery after pandemic emergency**

### **INVITALIA**

<https://www.invitalia.it/cosa-facciamo/creiamo-nuove-aziende/nuove-imprese-a-tasso-zero>

“New companies – loans with zero rates”

A governmental initiative dedicated to businesses that have started up within the last 12 months, managed by young entrepreneurs or females.

The loan finances investment projects for a maximum amount of 1.5 Million Euro, covering 75% of the investment. This financial line includes investment for the transformation of agricultural products.

### **Ministry for economic development**

<https://www.fondidigaranzia.it/le-sezioni-del-fondo/imprese-femminili/>

Pandemic aid for businesses, the ministry providing loans with 80% of guarantee. With a special session is dedicated to the female entrepreneurs and companies. They also offer special conditions and priority access.

This form of loans concerns both capital and personal companies.

### **ISMEA**

<http://www.ismea.it/istituto-di-servizi-per-il-mercato-agricolo-alimentare>

“Bonus for woman in agriculture”, a special initiative offering loans with zero rates to woman managing farming activity.

The amount of loans can reach a maximum of 300.000 Euro, financing the 95% of investments, with a maximum duration of 15 years.

## **Rural Development program 2014-2020 (RDP) - TOSCANA**

<https://www.regione.toscana.it/psr-2014-2020/bandi/bandi-in%20attuazione?sortBy=desc&orderBy=modifiedDate>

The main call of Rural Development Program (RDP) relevant to the financial support for investment in agriculture, recognize a priority for woman in the frame of selection criteria

Woman entrepreneurship committees by Chambers for industry, commerce and agriculture

### **Chambers for industry, commerce and agriculture**

<http://www.imprenditoriafemminile.camcom.it/>

Thanks to an agreement between the Ministry of economic development and the Union of Chambers of industry, commerce and agriculture, signed in the year 1999, in each territorial chamber are installed special committees for woman entrepreneurship, promoting projects and actions to foster their competitiveness.

### Useful links – Food Regulations and General Information

**Food information to consumers** – Since December 2016, EU food entrepreneurs/ producers are obliged to provide an updated list of nutrition information to the consumers. Find out all the mandatory information on food packaging in this [infographics](#).

**Dates of consumption** – A comprehensive guide including information around product expire dates to reinforce the reliability of products. This information can also contribute to a decrease in food waste in some instances. This [memo](#) provides clear explanation of the different terms used.

**Sustainable packaging** - Packaging always requires a bit of thinking when launching a food business. The demand of consumers for eco-friendly packaging along with the will of EU policymakers to eradicate single-use plastics has caused a new paradigm in which biodegradable and edible materials are a must-have. More information [here](#).

**Tips and tricks on content marketing** - Ever wondered how to launch a product successfully and optimise its visibility on a small budget? Social media can surely help, just like step-by-step planning and the involvement of networks around you do. From writing blog posts to posting tasty recipes on your website, [this article](#) describes why and how content marketing could help your start-up grow.

**Labelling animal welfare: a new initiative in France** - Several sectorial associations, together with a major seller, have created a new label on animal welfare. Currently, the only compulsory labelling existing at EU level is for table eggs. This label aims at extending the coverage of such a labelling to all types of animal products. It follows the creation of similar private labels which have developed their charter over the last years. [More information – in French](#)

**Information on Nutrition and Health Claims** - Nutrition and health claims and regulations by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. [Read More](#)

**The Food and Drink Association (FDA) UK** - The FDA represents the UK food and drink industry. Its website provides an array of useful information relevant to the producer and consumer. [Read More](#)

**The balance small business** - This website is a good source for all-things-small-business, relevant to supporting start-ups. The following article on marketing using online content is very comprehensive: [Food and Beverage Content Marketing Case Studies](#) - [Read More](#)

**Short Supply Chain Knowledge and Innovation Network** - - **This** is an EU project found by the H2020. SKIN creates a European network of good practices in the short food supply chain domain, connected to overcome knowledge fragmentation and to support bottom-up innovation initiatives. [Read More](#)

**Unfair Trading Practices in the Food Supply Chain** - Information on legislation regarding unfair trading practices in the food supply chain. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-deeper-and-fairer-internal-market-with-a-strengthened-industrial-base-products/file-unfair-trading-practices-in-the-food-supply-chain>

**Brexit Monitor: The Impact of Brexit on the Agri-food Industry** - A concise discussion of the impact of Brexit on the agri-food industry by PricewaterhouseCoopers: <https://www.pwc.nl/nl/brexit/documents/pwc-brexit-monitor-the-impact-on-agrifood.pdf>

**Short food supply chains and local food systems in the EU** - The current EU rural development policy 2014-2020 puts more emphasis than before on short food supply chains and defines them precisely for the first time. Producers wishing to involve themselves in local food systems can benefit from several measures co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for rural development. [Read More](#)

**Agri-Food Chain Coalition (AFCC)** - Joint initiative representing 12 industry associations across the agri-food chain. [Link to AFCC](#)

**EIP-AGRI Workshop: Innovation in the supply chain: creating value together** - The EIP-AGRI workshop 'Innovation in the supply chain: creating value together' took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2018 in Lyon, France. It was organised in cooperation with the French National Rural Network, led by the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food, General Commission for Territorial Equality. [Read More](#) [Final Reports from the workshop](#)

**Agricultural Markets Task Force** - Improving Market outcomes: Enhancing the Position of Farmers in the Supply Chain (Report of the Agricultural Markets Task Force, Brussels, November 2016).

[Read More](#)

Read this article about short supply chain in food industry in EU markets:

[Is the Short Food Supply Chain an Efficient Solution for Sustainability in the Food Market?](#)

**How can food entrepreneurs fight food waste** - The farmers organisation Copa-Cogeca has launched an online platform, “Grown No Thrown”, on which farmers, associations and Agri-cooperatives can share good practices to avoid food waste. Together with a publication containing six ways to avoid the issue in the future, an interactive map allows users to share their own success story with others. A good opportunity to get some inspiration and exchange tips and tricks with other entrepreneurs!

<https://grownnotthrown.eu/>

#### Useful resources for women in business in Ireland:

- [Find your Local Enterprise Office](#)
- [Competitive Start Fund \(Enterprise Ireland\)](#)
- [Going for Growth](#)
- [National Women’s Enterprise Day \(Local Enterprise Office\)](#)
- [Start Your Own Business Programme \(Local Enterprise Office\)](#)
- [Cork Institute of Technology Entrepreneur Development Programmes](#)
- [ACORNS \(Accelerating the Creation of Rural Nascent Start-ups\)](#)
- [Female Highfliers accelerator programme \(DCU Ryan Academy\)](#)
- [Innovate Programme \(Dublin BIC\)](#)

#### Useful links – Food Regulations and General Information – **Poland**

- Polish Trade Investment Agency - <https://www.paih.gov.pl/sektory/spozywczy>
- Website on the food industry in Poland - <http://www.portalspozywczy.pl/tagi/przemysl-spozywczy,137.html>
- Website on the food industry in Poland  
<https://www.kierunekspozywczy.pl/arttykul,20062,polski-przemysl-spozywczy-rosnie-wkrotce-druga-fala-inwestycji.html>
- Farm advisory centre (CDR) – [read more](#)
- Legal provisions - food and catering industry - <http://archiwum.ciop.pl/9634.html>

- Legislation – food industry – [read more](#)
- Regulation of the Minister of Food Industry and Purchase of 16 June 1969 on safety and hygiene at work in the spirit industry plants - <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19690200150>
- New rules on food labelling – Libra Poland - [read more](#)

## APPENDIX 3 – CASE STUDIES

### IRELAND

#### European Research Project Supporting Entrepreneurship

#### Creating Entrepreneurs in Food (CEF) Project - European Erasmus KA2+



funded project. The main objective of the project was to boost innovation and entrepreneurship in rural communities across Europe. The project was led by Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Ireland in partnership with the University of Bedfordshire in the UK, CEJA in Belgium and the Polish Beef Association in Poland. The main objective of the project was to examine short food supply chains in Europe and identify innovative methods to overcome the challenges faced by small food producers when starting and growing their business. The project was completed in February 2019 and produced an innovative and flexible training course for food producers designed by both Agri-Food entrepreneurs and academic leaders. The course provides food producers with transferable skillsets required empowering to gain control of their business, promote innovation, create employment and move up the value chain in the Agri food sector. An online web portal

([www.cefportal.eu](http://www.cefportal.eu)) was also produced as a project output. The web portal was specifically designed to enable Europe's Agri Food Entrepreneurs to connect and collaborate with one another, industry and education bodies providing a channel to stimulate the flow and exchange of knowledge and best practice.

**CEF website** - <http://www.creatingentrepreneursinfood.eu/the-project/>

**Online Portal for Food Entrepreneurs:** [www.cefportal.eu](http://www.cefportal.eu)

### EMPOWER Programme



The EMPOWER Programme is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund.

EMPOWER is a women's entrepreneurship programme delivered in GMIT's Innovation Hubs for women located in counties on the western coast of Ireland.

The EMPOWER Programme has two components:

- EMPOWER Start is designed to test innovative ideas for market acceptance. It is for females with an early stage idea or females in business less than one year. This is free programme and is delivered part-time over 12 weeks by start-up experts.
- EMPOWER Growth is focused on women who are already in business (2 years +) and are now looking to scale and grow their enterprises. It provides them specific supports from relevant peers, mentors and role models. The programme incorporates peer-to-peer learning and is delivered by industry experts.

**EMPOWERHER website** - [www.empowerher](http://www.empowerher)

### CASE STUDIES: Female Entrepreneur's in Europe's Food Sector

#### **TOTALLYNUTZ BUTTER**

##### **Social media handles/ website links**

- Instagram - @totallynutzbutter
- Facebook - @totallynutzbutter
- Twitter - @totallynutzbutter2017
- Online store - [www.totallynutzbutter.com](http://www.totallynutzbutter.com)



#### **What was the seed for what is now your food business?**

I started TotallyNutz in December 2017. The idea came from living a healthy lifestyle whilst I was travelling with my boyfriend in New Zealand. We fell in love with a runny, tasty peanut butter that had no added oils or sugars. We used it as part of almost every snack and meal during our travels. When I came back, I realised I couldn't live without peanut butter and especially one that was



actually healthy and super smooth. I started experimenting and trying to blend my own at home with no oils or anything added to it just roasted peanuts and Himalayan salt. During my experimenting I trialled the nut butter on my family and friends taste buds to see what they thought and if it would sell.

The name “TotallyNutz” occurred randomly one day when my boyfriend came into the kitchen. Mum and I were blending peanuts and he said, “you two are TotallyNutz” and from there the name developed.

Next step was to register my business name, then speak to the environmental health agency to see what I needed to bring my idea to market. I then worked on finding a commercial kitchen to produce the nut butter in, locate suitable packaging suppliers, find a designer for labels and source quality nuts that could be bought in bulk.

### **What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?**

There are always challenges in business and I face many every day.

But initially I found there were many hidden costs when I was at the business set up stage, so I continued to work my 9-5 job in a local restaurant. I still work to this day here as it enables me to promote my product and live my life whilst running a business, as I not only have business costs but also must run a car, pay rent, eat and gym etc.

Secondly, my time is precious and a this is a challenge. Making sure I manage my time between my day job and my business is very important for me. I find myself frequently going to bed at midnight as I have so many things to balance between working 9-5 and running TotallyNutz tasks after work along with the other normal day to day activities life requires.

### **What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?**

Don’t be afraid to step into the unknown, if you have an idea, stick with it, work at it, improve it every day and jump straight in because you never know what may come of it. Nothing worse than the regret of not trying something.

Take risks but make sure you enjoy every day. You will have good and bad days but as long as you’re happy in what you do then you will succeed.

Also don’t be afraid to take advice and criticism, both are important, and they will help you and your business to grow. I would recommend continually seeking guidance and opinions from your peers and mentors.

### **If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you before you set up your business would you have engaged with it? Did you do any training?**

I did not do any training. I just set up the business by registering the name, spoke to environmental health agency about exactly what I needed for my set up and went from there. I learnt as I went along. However, if there was free training I would definitely do it, the expense of courses meant that I followed my instinct instead of spending money on a suitable course.

### **If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most**



### interest to you?

I would love to have training in marketing as I feel it would really benefit my business.

## EXPLODING TREE (bean-to-bar, Fairtrade chocolate makers)

### Social media handles/ website links

- Instagram - @clonakiltychocolate
- Facebook - @clonakiltychocolate
- Twitter - @clonchocolate
- Online store - [www.explodingtree.com](http://www.explodingtree.com)



### What was the seed that grew into what is now your food business?

I started getting into moulding chocolate when I was very young, thanks to a woman at a local farmer's market. This led me to take a course when I was 12, start my 'business' and I spend that Christmas making spreadsheets and price lists for my new product. Later I studied Globalization and Social Entrepreneurship and applied all that to my business to grow and develop.

### What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?

I think the biggest lesson has been the ability to listen to and trust my own inner voice, not to be intimidated by those who want to tell you what the direction of my business should be. I have had to pull away a bit from some of the business networking and mentoring offered as I know some of those events and interactions can leave me questioning my path and choices for my business.

Another massive learning was to trademark my name, I thought that registering with the Companies Registration Office (CRO) was as good as trademarking, unfortunately not, and I learned the hard way! It's expensive at first but a trademarked name lasts 10 years.

### What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?

Don't be afraid to look hard at your costs, getting a solid sense of what your complete product will cost. This will of course be higher if it's ethical/ eco-wrapped/ environmentally responsible, but it will give you the right idea about what you need to charge. Also don't forget you need to include ingredients, packaging, electricity, labour (as if you are paying staff!), rent, insurance etc.

Set up a spreadsheet and update it when things change. Don't be afraid to charge for your time and product! Packaging really does matter I'm afraid, I have a very strong dislike to marketing in general, but you do need to spend some money to make sure your packaging reflects the contents.

Also – in the same tone, don't be afraid of the Health Service Executive (HSE), they are there to help. I have found them very helpful, friendly and they are usually only doing their job - get

advice before you set out rather than have to redo things after you are all set up. They will usually look over your packaging and advise on anything you need to add or change.

**If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you before you set up your business would you have engaged with it? Did you do any training?**

In the same tone as before I would be deliberate about doing any training, there are a lot of 'free training' available around small food businesses, and some of it might be just what you need but much of it might be time not well spent for you. I did do training, but a lot of it was a waste of my time. I think the best training I did was in life experience and creating relationships & talking to other food producers. The training I really needed and wanted I couldn't find.

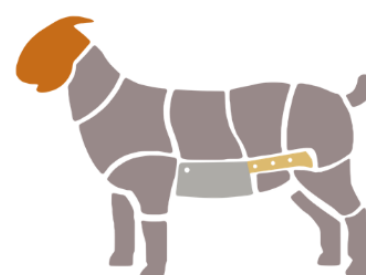
**If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?**

I would have liked training on accounting and bookkeeping for small business. I would have also liked specific shelf-life training and training on filing taxes as a sole trader and registering/filing VAT.

## GOAT IRELAND

### Social media handles/ website links

- Instagram - @farmingwoman
- Facebook - Goat Ireland
- Twitter - @PaulGoat Ireland/ @farmingwoman
- Website - Goatireland.ie



Goat Ireland

**What was the seed that grew into what is now your food business?**

We started initially when we rented a farm in rural Galway where we had a flock of sheep. I'm not from a farming background but I love working with animals. The original idea of working with goats, developed from a dream! After the midnight inspiration, we researched and discovered there was a niche for goat meat in Ireland.

I have a very varied work/education background. I studied Applied Biology at GMIT, ended up working in retail and as a secretary. I trained pet dogs as a side career, had my first child returned to retail, this time it was a supermarket and I got to try many departments, but most of all enjoyed the HACCP and cooking in the deli. Looking back, I now know that all of this prepared me for running my own business. Knowing a little about a lot of things in different areas and sectors helps me with our business.

### What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?

Certain aspects of working in the agricultural sector are presumed to be a male dominated environment. I am and have been oblivious to this club and carry on in my own best interests. I think as a mother it gives me a softer approach to closing deals, I much prefer to form relationships and build networks with my market.

However, my biggest challenge lies in balancing my work life and family life, it all seems to overlap – especially because we work from home. There is no office door to close at 5pm – having a partner, three kids a farm enterprise and a food business feels like it is 24/7 business.

### What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?

- You can do anything, never forget this – even on the bad days.
- Look at your bigger picture and keep painting it!!

### If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you before you set up your business would you have engaged with it? Did you do any training?

Of course, any resources and help in the complicated world of creating a business would be and is helpful in my opinion. I have attended a quite a few Local Enterprise Office (LEO) short courses and I have done the GMIT springboard Food and entrepreneurship course. I feel these have really impacted me and my business in a very beneficial way.

### If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?

It's hard to say but skill building is very important. My training so far has given me more focus for the direction I want my business to go in and the ability to put the necessary systems in place to do so. It has also opened a lot of networking doors for me as a woman in business. Training has also allowed me develop networks with other likeminded people and experts to communicate and learn from.

While setting up and running a business is an ever-developing process and it can be lonely especially if you are located in a rural location therefore training provided opportunity for me to develop important connections.

## LINNANE'S LOBSTER BAR, NEW QUAY, CO CLARE

### Social media handles/ website links

- Instagram - @linnanesbar
- Facebook - Linnane's Lobster Bar
- Website - <https://www.linnanesbar.com/>



### What was the seed that grew into what is now your food business?

I have always had an interest in hospitality and food so, when an opportunity presented for my husband and I to take over a food business I was only delighted to accept and take on the challenge.

Initially started my professional work life as a nurse, while always having a gra/love for cooking and developing recipes. Like many people in Ireland, I grew up on a farm, where we grew and ate our produce; 'farm to fork'. My mother was a great believer in fresh, home grown products well before it became fashionable. She grew her own fruit and vegetables, had her own hens and cows and always had us as children helping in on the farm and kitchen; cooking and baking.

### What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?

Personally, I have never felt or thought that being a female presented hurdles in business. I do think if you present yourself as a successful businessperson, people will take you seriously and won't look or judge your gender.

The biggest challenges I faced starting out were in the setting up of the company, employing staff contracts/ holidays etc, defining and setting wages, processing VAT returns and other logistics required in the running of a business.

### What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?

Take yourself seriously and present yourself as a food entrepreneur. Men don't present themselves as 'men', so I have never presented myself as a 'woman'. Maybe because I am of a different generation to younger people, I possibly didn't and don't dwell so much on gender balance at the time. Ensure you do research your business, all the way from the start to your end goal. I've had two very successful businesses and one that was not a success. That one was more an idea that I liked rather than a practical business but luckily, I had enough experience to have an opt out clause. However, that unsuccessful business to this day provided me with a lot of learning of what not to do and what does not work for me helping me be better in business today.

Every day is a learning experience, you will have some dreadful days and you will wonder what it is all about but that is the nature of being self-employed. Don't ever make a rash decision, sleep on it, the next day get up early and get fresh air - run/walk/swim/cycle whatever you are happy with and then deal with problems with a clear head.

Another massive important thing to remember is to keep your staff and customers on-side, life is so much easier, business is easier as it provides a happier environment for all.

### If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you before you set up your business would you have engaged with it? Did you do any training?

I didn't have any specific training as I came from a nursing background into this business and learnings from previous enterprises. But, from my nursing background the one thing that stood to

me is my ability to deal with people – empathy and understanding is important even in a restaurant. I found that whether it is a customer or a patient you still have to put on that smile and keep them on-side because their needs are number 1.

**If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?**

I'm not sure what is available now, but when I started (2004) setting up a limited company, doing VAT returns, daily spreadsheets, wages and having some understanding of employment law was challenging at times. Courses in these mundane business tasks would be valuable to every start up entrepreneur.

## NOO Chocolate's

### Social media handles/ website links

- Twitter - @noo\_chocolate
- Facebook - @noochocolates
- Website – [www.noo.ie](http://www.noo.ie)



Noo Chocolates is an artisan chocolate company located in Ballina in County Mayo. We use locally produced ingredients to create our unique and exciting chocolates. In our chocolates we combine the best of everything: finest Belgian chocolate, freshest Irish cream, liquor to name a few which create a completely unique taste of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Coast. The name Noo, comes from my nickname as a child. It an endearment term used for small children in South Africa (my parents lived there for a few years before I was born).

### What was your inspiration for starting your company?

I've always had a huge interest in food and food production, especially high-quality produce. I have always from a young age wanted to own a food company, but never felt like it was ever the right time (there was always something else to be done first). Back in 2010 my 3 sisters bought me a voucher for a half day chocolate making workshop as a birthday present (they'd already bought me every other food related item imaginable, and this was the only thing they could think of). Myself and my husband went along to the workshop, where we learned the basics of hand chocolate making. We learnt how to temper chocolate, how to make simple truffles, ganache sauce, and how to pair flavours combinations to complement the palate. We then started practicing at home, making gifts for family and friends, and accumulating more and more chocolate making equipment. Finally, in 2017, the company I was working for offered some redundancies, this was when I decided this was the perfect chance to follow my dream and start what is now 'Noo Chocolates'.

### What is your background in (education and qualification)?

My background is in science with a degree in Microbiology. Business has never been something I loved in school and have no background in it whatsoever. My previous career was based around quality assurance with a focus on food safety and most recently in the beverage industry.

### Where is your company based out of?

I have a small production unit based at the Quay, in Ballina Co. Mayo. Where I prepare, make and package the chocolates in a regulated area.

### How do you make your product?

My product is fully handmade. I buy high quality couverture chocolate from Belgium, that I prepare by hand tempering. I make all the fillings myself, using as many locally sourced ingredients as possible (creams, liquors, sea salt). I also pack each chocolate by hand, I will be taking on some help for this very shortly as it's the most time-consuming part of the process.

However, it's one of the most important steps as appearance and presentation are one of the first

things judged by a consumer before tasting or buying chocolates.

### What is your target audience/who do you primarily cater to?

My target audience is initially a local audience, mainly women who have an interest in locally made high quality produce. I also cater for the tourism market, by supplying a product that gives multiple tastes of Mayo in the same box.

As I'm expanding into retail outlets outside Mayo, I find that the audience, while still mainly women, are more interested in the high-quality Irish made aspect (i.e. the Mayo local ingredients are less important outside of Mayo).

### What are your future plans for your company?

Future plans include taking on some help (probably part time) to help with packing initially, and then manufacture of the chocolates. This will then allow me to keep expanding the product into more retail outlets further afield, and also to concentrate on accessing the corporate market.

### How did having mentors influence your company?

Mentoring had a massive part to play in where I am now. They gave me the business knowledge and develop a structure for my fledgling company to put in place. I had no business knowledge previously, but my mentors had experience in all the aspects of setting up from their own business's. This meant that I was able to proceed with a level of confidence I wouldn't have otherwise had. In addition, the networking and support from having a likeminded mentor to learn from has been huge for me. They were on hand to offer a bit of advice or help and sometimes just to have a cheerleader. These aspects are really important for those anyone like me who mainly works alone. In business I find my own thoughts and isolation are my two biggest challenges in being a food entrepreneur.





## POLAND

**SERY KORYCIŃSKIE - Agnieszka Bielec**

### Social media handles/ website links

- Instagram - @serkorycinski.bielec
- Facebook – @serbieleckorycinski
- Website - <https://www.serykorycinskie.com.pl/>



### What was the seed for what is now your food business?

SERY KORYCIŃSKIE developed when we took over the farm business from my parents. It was a dairy farm; we diversified and started to produce various types of cheese from the produce.

### What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?

The hardest thing for me was to take over the farm from my parents. It was connected with the conviction of the older generations way of thinking about business management. Old traditions do not always work with a new approach to business which can be a hindering barrier.

### What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?

- respect tradition, but also follow new trends in business
- constantly acquire new skills
- not to be afraid of failures, they always happen, and we gain experience on them



### If there was training available for you before you set up your business would you use it, or did you do any training.

I felt that I didn't need any additional training.

### If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?

As I mentioned in my advice to women, we gain experience throughout our lives, so it is important to keep gaining new skills. Even though we are quite well-known brand already, and we sell what we produce, I would love to take part in an online marketing training. It is a newly evolving area of trading and communication that is essential for FFEs in this

technology era.





## POLINAT GRZYBY

### Social media handles/ website links

- Website - <http://www.grzyby.biz/>



#### What was the seed for what is now your food business?

We are a small family company from Siemiatycze from the voivodeship Podlasie. We produce and sell mushrooms and other food products to our customers. These include dried, marinated, salted mushrooms, cranberries, blueberries and quince (pear like fruits). In addition to this, we offer pickled cucumber varieties along with Jewish pickles.



Myself and my husband started our business on a small scale, with all processes being done by hand even packaging. As of today, all our products are available and sold throughout our region.

We sell locally and are well known in the region.

We are also popular as employers, because we buy mushrooms from the whole region and hire ladies to work with us.

#### What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?

Due to the fact that the method of production of our products is based on traditional and regional recipes, in 2009 they were included in the list of traditional products. We obtained a certificate for this; 'Bug River' Traditional Mushrooms. It was very difficult to get certified, we worked very hard for it, partly at the expense of our private life but it has been worth it for our business. It was one of the biggest learnings for me so far.



#### What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?

Important advice for other women in business, you need to believe in yourself, do not listen to people who advise against setting up a female business. You do not need to dedicate your life only to your family despite what is seen through generations. In business, be honest and kind to people. Listen to the advice of experienced businesspeople and be open to learning from others.

#### If there was training available for you before you set up your business would you use it, or did you do any training.

I didn't need a training as I learnt a lot growing up and took it all from my home, I learnt the technique and the recipes from my mother and from my grandmother.

**If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?**

If I wanted to grow my business perhaps e-Commerce and English, but I'm happy the way it is now, we sell everything locally.

**BWB Podlasie** - Fruit & Vegetable producer

**Social media handles/ website links**

- Website - <https://www.bwbpodlasie.pl/>



**What was the seed that grew into what is now your food business?**

Warzywa Podlaskie was established in 2008. When a group of people decided to act together to achieve a higher quality of products, to meet current standards and growing demands of customers.

**What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?**

The biggest challenge was to adapt the fields to the cultivation of our vegetables.

The fields belonging to our group and are located in Podlaskie Voivodeship an area of over 730 ha. All the growers keep crop cards, keep the penalties and principles of good agricultural practice on their plantations.

**What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?**

Continuously acquire knowledge and new skills. Don't ever give up. Don't worry about criticism from other people they always have opinions but your opinions matter and what's in your head not others.

**If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you before you set up your business would you have engaged with it? Did you do any training?\_**

I graduated from Agricultural courses.

**If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?**

I graduated from Agricultural courses which helped me grow my business, especially when it comes to preparing the ground for cultivation. However, there are certain business acumen areas I would have loved training in.



## LERYMOND

### Social media handles/ website links

- Instagram - @lerymond
- Facebook @ Lerymondeu
- Website - <https://lerymond.eu/>



### What was the seed that grew into what is now your rural natural business?

I decided to set up my own company producing fashionable products that are made of natural material. This allowed me to create employment for myself and also respond to a growing demand for environmentally friendly products.

### What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?

The most difficult was to find money to purchase machinery and equipment, as well as to finance the services needed for creating the company's website and online store.

### What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?

High quality, environmentally friendly products are a growing market globally. This is driven by increasing social awareness about environment issues and the increasing tendency of consumers to turn away from products made from artificial materials – so increasing social awareness was the most important for me. Acquiring new markets should be a central goal of the company. This can be achieved by placing the company's products on foreign websites and by participating in trade fairs.

### If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you before you set up your business would you have engaged with it? Did you do any training?

Yes, of course I would have loved to use it.

**If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?**

I would take part in training on rural fashion and how to process Agri raw materials like wood for clothes. That's what is very interesting for me.



**OLEJOWY RAJ - Kamila Zubrzycka**

**Social media handles/ website links**

Website - <http://www.olejowyraj.pl/>



**What was the seed for what is now your food business?**

This business was my idea. For as long as I can remember, I've been taking care of a healthy lifestyle. I have read a lot about the effects of oils and omega-3 on our health. Finally, I decided to go forth and start my business.

**What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?**

I had to pledge my private property to start a business which was very stressful for me. Betting everything "on one card" taught me that in my life I had to be willing and take the risk to achieve success. There was no funding available for me to start a business and one of the biggest problems was to secure the money to start up and buy equipment etc. My competition in this sector is high, which I find challenging because other businesses do not like to communicate or help one another in share ideas.

**What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?**

My best piece of advice for FFEs in business or starting up is to:

- be brave and act fast
- do not give up after the first failures, learn from them and keep going
- it's easy to be chaotic but it is important to be systematic



**If there was training available for you before you set up your business would you use it, or did you do any training.**

If there was a training available for me before I set up my business, I would have loved to attend. Especially training that included mentors to provide some support and to talk FFEs through ideas that. This would and could have saved me some time and money.

**If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?**

At the moment I feel quite confident, I took many different trainings available now, the most difficult was to start up. But training that provides mentoring I feel would be very valuable to FFEs starting up and growing in businesses.



**JAGODA JPS AGROMACHINES - Farming Machinery**

**Social media handles/ website links**

- Website - <http://www.jagoda.com.pl/en/>
- Facebook - @jagodajpscompany

**What was the seed that grew into what is now your rural natural business?**

JAGODA JPS is a farm machinery manufacturer founded in 1997. Previously I was working in the Experimental Horticulture Mechanization in Skierniewice, The Capital of Fruit Science of Poland and this was the seed for my business. Initially, the company dealt with the sale of spare parts and service of farm machinery. They then developed into the production of their own machines. Now over the years the company assortment has been constantly developing and gaining an ever-wider range and in 2006, the headquarters was moved to Pamiętna close to Skierniewice.

**What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?**

Company designers constantly develop and perfect the products. Many design solutions that have been developed in the company are patented and manufactured, the machines are protected by law as utility models. The biggest hurdle we have was and is the making of patents.

**What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?**

Work hard and constantly learn and develop your dream, this has been the key to my success.

**If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you**





**before you set up your business would you have engaged with it? Did you do any training?**  
If there was training available for me, I would use it.

**If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?**

Scaling and growing the businesses is our next goal and courses on international sales would help us as they are very limited.



## ITALY

**AZIENDA AGRICOLA “I TRE CAPI” DI MONICA BETTOLLINI**

### Social media handles/ website links

- Instagram - @itrecapi
- Facebook – I tre Capi
- Website - <https://www.itrecapi.it>



### What was the seed for what is now your food business?

My business is a family business; developed from my grandparents who were farmers. First sharecroppers and then they developed into direct farmers of their own lands. My parents then became farm owners too. Their farm consisted of the same land as my grandparents and mainly suited to the cultivation of vegetables.

The company, was formed initially by my grandparents, was passed down to me from my parents' when they retired. I decided to expand and added land and resources to the company which was previously developed directly beside me which was suited to olive groves.

My enterprise developed from the result of merging two rural nuclei. One located in the area of Val di Chiana, in a province of Siena, from my grandparents and the other located in the hills of Montepulciano directly created by me for my development in olive farming. I decided to specialize and cultivate the “Aglione” which is special kind of garlic found in the Val di Chiana countryside that has big cloves and a sweet flavour to taste. From the comparison with other local producers my idea to specialize was born.

I worked with the association for the protection and enhancement of biodiverse products, to help

revalue and develop an almost forgotten product, that yields a vast amount of nutritional and health properties. This developed and it was decided to transform the product and market the processed products directly to the consumer, with a shorter supply chain as this gave the product a competitive edge in the market. To date we are expanding in local markets and further due to our online market.

**What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?**

The biggest rock I found has been in being "woman" and still is today, merging work with family life management along with culture norms provide many pressures and challenges. From this experience I have learned a lot and I am continuously learning that with commitment and sacrifice, it's possible to manage work and still be present for my family needs.

**What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?**

I grew up in the fields of the family business so this would have been the basis of my training. In college I studied to be a technical surveyor and I never did any specific business training, but I would have if it was available to me at the time.

**If there was training available for you before you set up your business would you use it, or did you do any training.**

Before I started my social farm, I took part in an apprenticeship program in a cheese factory in Italy.

**If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?**

If I could I would have a specific training to help in the economic planning of my business. Currently, I proceed by challenging myself and my ideas with the trade association to which I adhere to and communicate with, while receiving advice from the banks and ultimately trusting my own decisions. My business is growing in comparison to other similar business peers that I network with during seminars promoted by the trade association.



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**AZIENDA AGRICOLA QUATTRO LUNE**

**Social media handles/ website links**



<sup>33</sup> All Case Studies available to view via website: <https://www.nurtureher.eu/latest-news/>

- Facebook - @ ilaria marcucci azienda agricola quattro lune
- Address: Via di Popogna, 457 - 57124 LIVORNO

**What was the seed for what is now your food business?** I decided to undertake this new business as my mother, whom was owner of the business, had been close to retirement and I didn't want the company to be permanently closed. Our company mainly deals with the cultivation of seasonal vegetables and the growing of olives. Over the years it has evolved more and more both in production techniques, the quantities produced, and produce quality.

To meet this growth, I have trained and specialized in the methods of producing and cultivating the crops most suited to my land. Since I took over, I have also purchased new tools and machinery to benefit the crop produce.

The company is located close to the centre of Livorno which is on the West Coast of Tuscany, Italy and intercepts city buyers who want fresh agricultural produce directly from the producer. Farm to fork is very important to our customers.

**What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?**

The first obstacle I faced was concerning finance for investment, I acquired my mother's company but to have the title of 'agricultural entrepreneur' I wanted to grow in the direction of my bigger vision and had to buy more land.

In this process I have met many issues seeking and obtaining credit from banks. While the banks were unable to help me, I was also not entitled to European financing as I am not located in a disadvantaged area. So, for me and my company finance aid has been the biggest challenge.



**What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?**

- To be very informed about the commercial potential of the products that you want to offer.
- Do not be enchanted by commercial innovations but focus on traditional products: vegetables, oil, wine, cereals... Focus on what you have, the potential it can provide and become the expert in what you can offer. Rather than seeking for more external products.

**If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you before you set up your business would you have engaged with it? Did you do any training?**

Certainly, it would have shortened my experience with challenges and helped me massively.



**If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?**

I would love to have access to training courses on the company's administrative management – it is one aspect that is difficult to learn and is essential for the success of my enterprise;

I self-thought myself in working with my produce however I would love to have access to training courses on soil management and methods for crop defense.



## ALBANESE LABARDI FARM

### Social media handles/ website links

- Website: [www.agrilorenzo.it](http://www.agrilorenzo.it)
- Facebook: @FattoriaAgriturismoAlbaneseLabardi



### What was the seed for what is now your food business?

In 1982 the ALBANESE LABARDI FARM was founded, located 15 kilometres from Florence. Alba and Domenico decided to leave their jobs in the chaotic city to go and live in the beautiful Italian countryside and from there the farm developed.



In 2005 they passed the management of the farm and agritourism to their daughter Lorenza. She had graduated in agriculture specializing in Agri-engineering.



Lorenza has a passion love and respect for nature and Italian farming traditions which have developed from growing up on the farm with her parents. The farm specializes in the organic agriculture and cultivates 7 hectares of land that contain olive groves, seasoned vegetables and fruit vineyards.

The farm also breeds Tibetan goats and other farmyard animals. While the farmhouse is the ideal place for ecotourism and ecological holidays; where you can visit and taste the typical flavours of Florentine and Tuscan cuisine. Produce developed from the crops are available to taste and buy from the on-farm shop; selling their specialty Tuscan IGT Red Wine, PGI extra virgin olive oil and seasoned fruits and vegetables (IGT/PGI – Protected Geographical Indication).

### What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?

For me when I started working on the farm, I was an undergraduate student and after graduating I took it over. However, I found the governmental rules and regulations provided a lot of hurdles for me to get started in the business despite what we are led to believe. While governmental support was an issue, I also could not obtain any financing help from the banks.



### What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?

I would recommend keeping up to date with your skills, research trends and your market often and thoroughly. Develop patience and gratitude for agricultural activities (not everything can happen quickly, agriculture is a natural activity that requires time, hope and patience).

### If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you before you set up your business would you have engaged with it? Did you do any training?

I did not do any training besides my Agricultural degree. But yes, I would have used appropriate training courses that would have helped me to start my business.

### If you were interested in engaging with training/ further training what areas would be of most interest to you?

I would be interested in training on IT skills, digital marketing and social media use. Along with this I would love access to training on finances, business acumen, credit and European/ national/ regional funding training courses.

## AGRITURISMO VILLA CAPRARECCIA

### Social media handles/ website links

- Website links: [www.villacaprareccia.it](http://www.villacaprareccia.it)
- Facebook: @villacaprareccia
- Twitter: @caprareccia



### What was the seed for what is now your food business?

The history of Caprareccia began in February 1933 when the Galli family of Emilio and Maria settled. The whole family worked as sharecroppers and in 1961 Carlino and Beppina Galli with their sons bought the farm, continuing the activities of winemaking and olive growing.

I opened the farm, with ambition to extend and in 1992 we increased the agricultural activity by introducing new necessary innovations. The farm has been extended to 35 Hectares producing grapes for wines, olives and other fruits. While we also manage Agri-tourism activities as our location is very attractive and close to the sea. In the last years we have expanded starting a new restaurant, where we offer an Agri-catering service based on the fresh produce grown on the farm.

### What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female

### food entrepreneur?

The biggest barrier I have faced is regarding the relationship associated with small businesses and governmental agencies. While facing a lot of bias, prejudice as female entrepreneurs are not the norm in my location.

### What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?

The advice I would give to those who want to undertake this activity are:

- have love and passion for agriculture, the land and what you do
- keep the traditions of the territory alive despite what is seems to be trending due to fashion

### If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you before you set up your business would you have engaged with it?

Yes of course, it would have helped greatly.

### If you were interested in engaging with training/ further training what areas would be of most interest to you?

I would love a training courses on languages, which would help in the marketing and tourism aspects of my business. Access to specific training on how to work and market with the public and how to relate to different people and situations in business.



## ROMANIA

### **ASOCIAȚIA “CURTEA CULORILOR” (The “Court of Colours” Association)**

#### **Social media handles/ website links**

- Facebook: @AsociatiaCurteaCulorilor
- Website: <https://www.curtea-culorilor.org/>



#### **What was the seed for what is now your food business?**

In 2011 I came to Romania to establish a social farm for disadvantaged women. Fast-forward to 2019 we are now growing vegetables and fruits and raising poultry and rabbits for our own needs and manufacture 12 different varieties of Italian cheeses. Which we sell to a local market to support our farm and use also for our own needs.

#### **What has been the biggest challenge you have overcome or lesson you have learnt as a female food entrepreneur?**

The biggest challenges I have overcome as a female food entrepreneur in Romania has been in bureaucracy and cultural differences. Over time, I have learned to deal with both these challenges, and I still to this day.

#### **What advice would you give to aspiring female food entrepreneurs?**

I would tell other aspiring female food entrepreneurs that they need to have a true passion for what they intend to do.

#### **If there had been (female entrepreneurial) training available to you before you set up your business would you have engaged with it? Did you do any training?**

Before I started my social farm, I did an apprenticeship programme at the workplace in a cheese factory in Italy.

#### **If you were interested in engaging with training/further training what areas would be of most interest to you?**

I currently don't have time to attend any training but, if I had I believe I would need and benefit from it in several areas – manufacturing, management, marketing.



The FFE in the cheese laboratory



The FFE in the cheese maturation room



## LITHUANIA

### NAMU RESTORANAS “Home Restaurant”

#### Social media handles/ website links

- Website - <https://namu-restoranas.business.site/>
- Facebook - @namurestoranas
- Instagram – namu\_restoranas



#### What was the seed for what is now your food business?

Food and the desire to cook have always provided me with enjoyment in life. They would never leave my mind. Which lead me in my choice to upskill and study later of work. I have been working in the professional kitchen for almost ten years in different roles; as a waitress, administrator, pizza baker and a chef. I also worked as a food section editor on a TV show and in a food magazine. It seemed like I had reached the peak of my career. But I seek to not take the easy path and instead of enjoying the fruits of my hard work I pushed myself out of the comfort zone and returned from the capital to my hometown Marijampole. With all my acquired experience and knowledge, I opened my very own long-matured and dreamy “Home Restaurant” – a quality small and cosy place.

#### What has been the biggest hurdle you have overcome as a female food entrepreneur?

Starting a new business in a small town is a huge challenge. I knew a lot and had a lot of experience in restaurants business but in the beginning, it was very hard dealing with all the financial questions, paying taxes, salaries for employees and other important outgoings. I did not have any other business incomes to help or enough savings to cover all the required expenses. This led me to decide to close the restaurant after one year leaving me with a broken heart. I am active on social media, so I posted my decision on social media. That same evening, I received a proposal from my regular customer who was offering to become an investor to allow us continue our work. I went with my heart and gut and took the second chance and now we are successfully working for two years.



Rūta Augustinavičiūtė

#### What is your best piece of advice for other aspiring female food entrepreneurs?

- If you want to establish direct marketing, try to get as close as possible to your customers. **Get to know your customers**, talk to them, and find out what they expect, what they like and prefer. This information is very valuable for you.
- **Don't get discouraged** and keep going. Especially the beginning is hard, but if you don't start working you will not succeed. You must work towards your goal, whether your

parents, brothers or sisters believe in you.

- **Get out from your comfort zone!** Even if you fail at the first time, always remember that there is a second, third and fourth chances just learn from each one.

**If there was training available for you before you set up your business would you use it, or did you do any training.**

I took everything from my past experience studies and working with and in other restaurants and projects. I did not have time to attend in trainings or other learning activities, but I think it is absolutely useful and I strongly recommend it to all people who are thinking about creating their own business or if they have such a possibility.

**If you'd like training what areas would you like to it on specifically. Or if you did training did it help grow your business?**

It would be interesting and useful to attend trainings about marketing, social management and law. I am pretty sure, even if I have a lot of experience I will participate in some trainings in the future because it is important to keep learning new skills to develop and grow the business in line with the changing laws, environments and trends.



## BARANAUSKAI FARM Organic hemp and Galloway cattle Farm

### What was the seed for what is now your food business?

Egle's parents established the original farm in 2006 where rape and wheat were produced for export. In 2015 we decided to establish an additional source of income. With the support of Egle's parents and EU funding, we founded our own farm and started cultivating organic hems and Galloway cattle. Most of the time, we produce and sell only the raw material (dried hemp, its seeds and cattle), so our business model is easier to follow for newly established companies, because we can refer to already existing structures.

However, in order to draw more attention to hemp and its production and to establish a relationship with customers, we started to look for different methods of production and product distribution. We have now started to produce hemp products such as hemp tea and selling





them at the farmers' markets, in healthy food shops and at city's fairs and festivals.

They have been a great hit with our customers.

### What has been the biggest hurdle you have overcome as a female food entrepreneur?

I have never had any huge challenges in this business because of my gender. Maybe, because I receive great support from my husband and my family. While, I have always been self-confident and trustful for that I am doing and what I am capable of doing. However, the hardest part was to learn the different working techniques and knowledge required to diversify the farm as I had no experience in growing hemp and using organic methods before creating my business.

### What is your best piece of advice for other aspiring female food entrepreneurs?

- First, **evaluate your options**. Look through your network with value and start thinking what support you can receive and what you can offer to them in return. In this case, we were lucky, because we had relatives already successful in the agriculture sector. However, this does not mean that this is the only way possible. Find the support you need for example by joining an association that provides support for farmers.
- Try to **figure out all your options**. For example. The EU supports young farmers, which can be very helpful for beginners.
- It is always advisable to start with small steps. If you do not have enough resources at the beginning, try to gather as much information as possible about the quality of your seeds and the appreciation of the market for the product you can offer. Get to know the natural conditions and the quality of the soil on which you carry out your farming activities and adapt yourself to these conditions. If your soil is not productive, you may consider diversification never pigeonhole yourself to only one outlook or option (e.g. livestock farming).

### If there was training available for you before you set up your business would you use it, or did you do any training.

I didn't do any special trainings before starting my business. However, I took a lot of management, marketing, counting and other business-related knowledge from my university studies. I did spend a lot of

time researching information about cultivating organic hems and Galloway cattle before we diversified. I participated in many conferences, exhibitions and other events related to this topic that I could access. While I also communicate with other farmers from Lithuania and other countries which allowed me to develop an important network.

**If you'd like training what areas would you like to it on specifically. Or if you did training did it help grow your business?**

It is never enough to gain experience and learn new things, so in my opinion all trainings, conferences and other activities are very useful for all entrepreneurs at every stage. For me, most useful would be trainings specifically about my business topic.

I would really appreciate trainings about new marketing methods, how to present your products to larger diverse audiences, access to and applications for funding opportunities and human resource training.

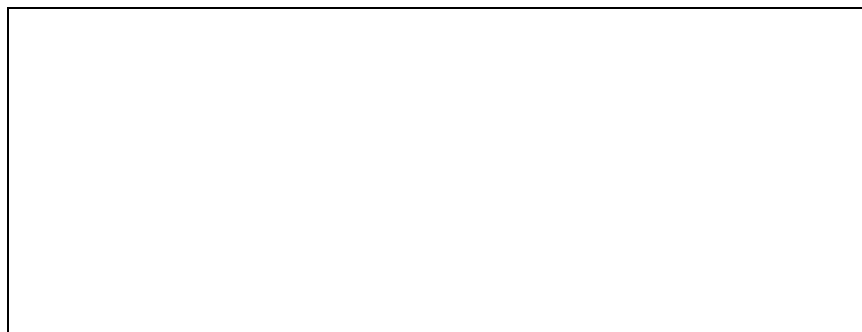
**Hemp field** **Hemp seeds**



**Galloway cattle**



**Eglė and Vaidas  
Baranauskai**



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