



PANDORA

European Opportunities for Female Entrepreneurship

BOOKLET
SUCCESS STORIES



INTRODUCTION

Becoming a female entrepreneur allows women to chart their own course and overcome the constraints of patriarchal structures and glass ceilings which marginalise and exclude them from business and economic development. The Erasmus+ project, Pandora – Discovering European Opportunities for Female Entrepreneurship, was initiated with the aim of developing tools to enhance the employability and entrepreneurial spirit of women. The outcome is to create a pathway for those who require guidance or motivation for their future business projects.

This booklet contains case studies of inspirational women who were selected as representatives of good entrepreneurial practice from London, Warsaw, Ankara, and Palermo. We interviewed women from various walks of life and backgrounds, thus providing a good range of examples of the different ways in which you can become an entrepreneur. We found a common theme in that their business activities tended to showcase each of their individual talents, hobbies, and dreams, responding to their own particular social issues and circumstances. The Pandora programme was developed to respond to the issues raised in this research.

The purpose of this booklet is to disseminate the stories of these women and to inspire and encourage women who are looking to enter the field of entrepreneurship. We hope that this booklet can be used as a useful resource or tool for institutions or organisations working to increase economic initiatives run by women. We also hope that this booklet will function as an inspirational guide, an educational tool and contribute to gender inclusion and female empowerment.

This exchange of practice was carried out by experienced organisations in the field of social work and Female em-

powerment: The Ubele Initiative in London aims to increase the capabilities of their local African community, and their strong community bond makes them an excellent resource for women with fewer opportunities in a multicultural environment. Fundacja Autokreacja in Warsaw work with issues related to female entrepreneurship and lifelong learning, and their experience in integration, education and media approach is a valuable asset to the project Pandora. In Ankara, the Municipality of Yenimahalle provides the project with expertise in institutional dialogue and women empowerment projects. They provide the project Pandora with institutional stability to secure a consistent project development. H.R.Y.O Human Rights Youth Organization have conducted local and international projects related to social inclusion and are experienced in the transnational coordination of mobility projects and youth work. The project Pandora is therefore carried out through a mutual fulfilling cooperation between competent and dynamic organisations.





SUCCESS STORIES ITALY

Palermo, the capital of Sicily, has for millennia been one of the most cultural diverse European cities in the Mediterranean, something that has left palpable traces on the city's lifestyle. Situated on the hem between Europe and Africa, this multifaceted city has throughout history provided an inspirational and dynamic environment for artists, artisans, merchants and entrepreneurs. However, during the second half of the 19th century, the city underwent a period of social decline characterised by prevailing corruption and economic speculation which led to a claustrophobic reality for those with entrepreneurial aspirations. Fortunately, for the many men and women who wish to revitalise the city, recent impactful grassroots movements against criminality and economical misconduct have gradually relieved the city of the oppressive structures opposing independent thinking and business development.

We have chosen five good practices of female entrepreneurship which have in common the will to improve the living conditions and create a more welcoming atmosphere in the city. The women we have interviewed built their businesses from scratch and found innovative solutions to sustain a healthy growth in line with the social and cultural environments in which they are based. They are artists, artisans and social workers realising their projects on an admirable level of industriousness, simultaneously developing their own creative and professional skills whilst collaborating with and helping other up-and-coming entrepreneurs to follow in their footsteps. The Palermitan good practices presented in this booklet stand as examples for everyone who wishes to cut their own entrepreneurial path.



CARMELA DACHILO

Edizioni Precarie

<http://edizioniprecarie.it>

CASE STUDY

Carmela originally started working as an architect in the north of Italy until she decided this was not her dream, and moved to Palermo. After working in a hotel for about two years, she started her adventure with Edizioni Precarie in 2013, which she describes as a long project that is still ongoing.

Edizioni Precarie is a project focusing on graphic research, design and artisanal techniques. A lot of the products made in Edizioni Precarie originate for example from a deep research on paper and the different ways in which paper can be used to re-create something. What matters to Carmela though is not simply to create something which is visually beautiful, but most importantly to create objects that derive from a well-thought process of research on the meaning and content.

"Edizioni Precarie is centred around three main concepts: Firstly, the technique and visual aspect of what we produce; secondly, the creative research; and finally, the actual production of this research, therefore the translation of this creates something material", she explains to us in her laboratory at Edizioni Precarie.

One of her first priorities was to avoid being caught by the tourism market in her activity. Edizioni Precarie's laboratory sits right in the historical city centre of Palermo, which especially in recent years, has become a tourist attrac-

tion. She always tries to prioritize quality over commercialization, even when this meant selling less. "Of course these are considerations you need to make when you run an independent business like Edizioni Precarie. What will sell more? Will people prefer this over that? However, I always tried to put quality before quantity, and it wasn't always easy as it meant I had to take many risks in financial terms" she tells me.

Carmela thinks that Edizioni Precarie is contributing to local development in different ways. In her opinion, the existence of an autonomous business, born out of "self-entrepreneurship" can be inspiring especially in a city like Palermo, where rates of unemployment are increasing sharply. "You can show people that you could make a living with your creativity. At least I hope I can do that for the local community. For example, there are many abandoned spaces in Palermo which can be re-used and re-thought to promote art", she says. In addition, she feels the presence of other local businesses and initiatives were very important for the development and subsistence of Edizioni Precarie.

One of the biggest challenges she faces as an entrepreneur in the art sector is time-management. "Since my business is independent, I have to take care of all the components, from bureaucracy, communication, and marketing, to the actual production and creation phase. My collaborators are precious in this sense, but I would benefit from having more time to create and focus on the artistic aspect of my business.", she explains.

Her advice to future women business owners is to try not to panic when a moment of crisis arises. On the contrary and based on her experience, it is especially during a crisis that the most creativity can derive. "The best moment to start something brave and new could actually be a crisis. Don't panic, don't stay alone. Harder the period, stronger the solution.", she says.



LAURA DI FATTA

Sartoria Sociale

<http://sartoriasociale.com>

CASE STUDY

Laura Di Fatta and her co-workers truly are an example of how social work can go hand in hand with entrepreneurial business projects and personal development. They founded the social enterprise Sartoria Sociale in 2012 with the mission of transforming discarded textiles into resources by creating new clothes and items to be revitalized on the market. Sartoria Sociale is however also a project for giving opportunities to people with fewer opportunities who are excluded from the labour market, especially minorities such as migrants, incarcerated and victims of human trafficking.

"The first step to restoring a person's dignity, is to provide work," Laura points out and talks about the importance of breaking down stereotypes by working with people in difficult life situations. For her and the other social workers at Sartoria Sociale this is closely connected to community development. When new customers enter our premises, they often presuppose that Sartoria Sociale is only a laboratory, but after learning about the tailors' backgrounds, they understand that buying a product here supports community building and development.

The fact they support a social enterprise which is standing up against corruption and blackmailing of local businesses, also makes their customers willing to spend more money on artisanal products because of the added ethical

value. Sartoria Sociale takes part in the anti-Mafia movement "Addio Pizzo" which can be translated into "farewell protection money". Laura explains that "this is a choice of legality, it's a message. Those who come in here know that we are against these, let's say, 'mafia proceedings', and our clients show a sign of respect for 'the greater law'". Although Sartoria Sociale has become well-known in Palermo for their entrepreneurial, social and artisanal projects, balancing these three aspects can be challenging. An important part of their social work is the time-consuming training of new tailors which affects the productivity level and raises product prices. After spending some time in their shop and studio I however understand what Laura means when she describes the enterprise as a combination of social work, fashion and tailoring with a firm base in entrepreneurial self-development. Sartoria Sociale's philosophy is that everyone who comes to work in the cooperation has an entrepreneur in them.

"Working as an entrepreneur is difficult; working as an entrepreneur and being a woman is even more difficult," Laura tells us when we ask her to share her experiences on female entrepreneurship, and while elaborating on the obstacles related to gender, she concludes with a positive note: "The fact that almost all of us are women, our president is a Nigerian woman—gives an idea of redemption, social and professional redemption." One of the successes that women who work in Sartoria Sociale are achieving, is the opportunity to feel and act like entrepreneurs by transcending the stereotypical categories related to their gender.

When we ask Laura about the advice she would give to women who want to become future entrepreneurs, she stresses the importance of self-confidence and to gather a team of people who share your values and principles. "Make your own work a commitment – this is a fundamental resource."



AISSETOU JAITEH GAMBIA

African Queens

<https://www.africanqueens.it/>

CASE STUDY

Gambia and her co-worker started the African Queens Association in 2013, mainly creating accessories. After four years of designing and tailoring they opened their studio and shop in downtown Palermo. Her entrepreneurial spirit is nourished by the will to break down barriers and in line with this she explains to us how fashion can function as a bridge between people: "If someone wears a dress made of African fabric and sees someone else wearing something similar, they can interact through this common meeting point.", she tells us in her shop.

African Queens was in fact born from Gambia's will to find a link between the Western culture where she was born and the African culture in which she has her origins. She also felt the need to show how fashion is not restricted to western styles and cuts, but can also include a wider range of cultural expressions. She makes us aware of how African Queens' clothes can positively influence the dignity of her customers and the diversity in the fashion industry. Gambia designs clothes whilst keeping in mind the different notions of aesthetics and beauty. This provides for a broad set of designs that she can tailor to fit individual customer needs without discriminating between body types, as is common in the commercialized fashion industry. "We would propose

something that makes her [the customer] feel more beautiful in the mirror. This is what fashion should do", she mentions.

Gambia and her partners worked from home in the beginning and were able to expand with financial help from a governmental fund for young second-generation migrants. She however points out that this was not enough to cover all costs related to the start up, and that they received a bank loan to acquire sufficient tools and fabrics for the business. Her part time job at Moltivolti, a local restaurant in the historical Ballarò district of Palermo, helped them cover extra expenses. She underlines that keeping the business going has not always been easy and that African Queens' financial and creative backbone was gradually developed during the four years before they settled into their studio.

When asked whether she would proceed differently today if she were to plan a new business project she replies: "I would change the structure", meaning she would seek more support for daily administrative and logistical tasks. She would also try to find a more visible location for her business, as the present one lacks in visibility. The fundamental idea of African Queens though she would never revise, because its strong social and cultural aspect has made them well known among their customers and local textile vendors where they buy materials.

The strongest advice she would give to someone who wants to start their own entrepreneurial project, is to spend time developing a clear idea. "It's like a fruit", she says, "plant the seed and wait for it to mature".



NADIA LODATO

Cotti in Fragranza

<http://cottiinfragranza.com>

CASE STUDY

Before Nadia took on the responsibility of developing the entrepreneurial business project Cotti in Fragranza, she studied international political science and humanitarian aid in Florence and in Rome and participated in several youth work projects abroad. When she returned to Sicily and began working within the penal system, she helped former convicts with social reintegration and entry into the labour market. Even though her jurisprudential competences and youth experience are valuable additions to her current entrepreneurial work, she mentions that she, like most other people, had to learn from scratch how to create a business.

Cotti in Fragranza is a baking laboratory for incarcerated youth and former convicts where they produce biscuits, cakes and other oven-baked products. Each employee and participant collaborates on the overall entrepreneurial idea, and the fundamental approach to the daily business is teamwork where everyone's voice is heard in the production and commercialization process. Nadia tells us that "everyone has the right to speak. Obviously we also have external consultants who do their work and help us conduct market strategies, but our guys do not only produce biscuits manually. They are also absolutely aware of all the aspects of the business".

Helping the incarcerated youth to become independent and develop professional skills can be considered as Na-

dia's own entrepreneurial project. This however presents challenges related to balancing business and social work. "It is very difficult because if you want to create a business, you will have to sell a product or a service and have many market competitors", Nadia tells us and explains that "if you want to pay the guy's salaries—and pay the chef, me and my co-worker Lucia etc.—you will have to earn, that is have a revenue. So the most important thing is to create a product of excellence and know how to sell it".

Even though it is crucial to succeed economically, Nadia also emphasizes the necessity of communicating the overall social impact of Cotti in Fragranza: "Because the educational aspect and mental health treatment of the guys are just as important as sales, you need to explain the purpose of a social enterprise: providing jobs".

We asked Nadia if she would do something differently if she could start everything again. "I think that mistakes are used to steer things for the better", she answers. "When you start the team is orientated in one way. But then it gets, say, to a point where you do not achieve the desired results, which is something you could not know beforehand. So I believe mistakes serve to orientate yourself differently", she elaborates and adds that "if you create the group you create participation, and if it fails: patience! The important thing is that the group decides".

Their non-hierarchical business structure has contributed to Cotti in Fragranza's success, and Nadia's advice to someone who would like to become entrepreneurs in the sector of social work, is therefore creating a group where everyone's ideas and interests are taken into account. "Together we can achieve goals with respect to your own needs, and yours and yours and yours ... so creating this group is maybe the only advice I can give to someone who wants to create a business".



MASSIMO MILANI

Quir

www.facebook.com/quir.mg/

CASE STUDY

Massimo and Gino represent much more than founders of a boutique. Massimo originally from Rome, and Gino from Milan, they have been an LGBTI couple for 40 years now, and together they decided to found Quir in Palermo 25 years ago, in the historical district of Ballarò.

Quir specializes in the manufacturing of leather products, such as bags, belts, and wallets, handmade by its founders, who are now a symbol not only of a successful entrepreneurial story, but also of sexual freedom and human rights. "Palermo did not use to be as open-minded as today. 25 years ago, when we first moved here from Rome to open up the boutique, you could hardly see any LGBT around. We were the only ones and we had to overcome many cultural and social barriers, in addition to the economic issues of running a new business", says Massimo inside Quir.

She is President of the campaign Palermo Pride, an Advocacy Programme aimed at raising awareness about the rights of LGBTI people, and together with y she founded ARCI gay back in 1981, the very first association in Italy formed to represent the LGBTI community. "Prior to us, there was no formal association in Italy for the LGBTI community. We quickly became a reference point for many people who felt like they were living at the margins of society. Here they could be listened to, and we could all be ourselves", she explains.

"You have to bear in mind that we started this peaceful battle when no one else in Palermo even knew what not being heterosexual meant. Civil unions between LGBTIs only became legal in 2016 in this country. People come to Quir to buy leather products of course, but there is much more to it than shopping. There is a sense of belonging and community based on these long-term battles", Massimo proudly tells me.

She remembers facing many difficulties with their business at the beginning. "For a long time we had practically no clients at all. Only recently we can say that local people here have accepted us into their community. Although I should say that I don't like the term "accept" because being LGBTI is something natural and in that sense I don't feel it should need to be accepted.", she continues.

When we ask her what advice she would give to women interested in opening up their own businesses she stresses how things have become much harder today because of high rates of unemployment. In addition, she thinks that women face a double barrier: One due to the general levels of unemployment faced by all young people today and the other due to gender discrimination at work and in society.

"You need to be strong and determined, because as a woman you will always need to fight more than men in order to get what you want and what you are entitled to. The one advise I feel like sharing, is to always try to be creative. Creativity is what saved Gino and me, and of course Quir. Only if you are creative, you can truly be free to choose in life.", she concludes.



SUCCESS STORIES POLAND

This section summarizes the interviews we carried out with five women entrepreneurs in Poland. They are from different cities and represent different sectors and unusual ideas that were born from passion. They chose a difficult path of their personal career. They took up the challenge to set up their own business and to be the boss for themselves. We believe that these good examples of activities, which from the very beginning started with little investment, can show and inspire other women that are gifted but afraid of being entrepreneurs. They also mentioned that in the future they want to work internationally and expand their activities in new cultural environments.



ANNA KOŁODZIEJ

ZUMBA INSTRUCTOR

www.zumba.com/en-US/profile/anna-kolodziej/257035

CASE STUDY

Conducting sporting activities involving the combination of dance and fitness for children (Zumba Kids and Zumba Kids Junior) and for adults (Zumba Fitness) – including elderly people and pregnant women (Zumba Gold).

It all started by chance. Anna did not have any experience, she only went to Zumba Fitness classes. The hotel, where she was working as a manager, was sold and the entire crew was released. Anna decided to make use of her Zumba Fitness instructor's license. For about a month, she organized classes for trial and received positive feedback. Later on she received EU funding to set up a company. She rented a gym and started teaching classes on her own.

She feels that the community supports her business. It promotes her as a person and her company. Thanks to that, she established cooperation with new educational and cultural institutions (schools, kindergartens, cultural centers) and fitness clubs. For her, social activities are a form of advertising – it pays off. As the biggest challenges that affected her business in terms of learning and adapting, she points out Zumba marathons, which she runs with other instructors or during which she participates.

Her message to others: "It is worth continuing to use professional accounting services and, occasionally, legal

services, e.g. setting up a business and signing cooperation agreements. Do not be afraid of starting a business, you can suspend or close your business in case the idea of a company turns out to be unsuccessful. You can also change the business profile. Working at home gives me the opportunity to freely use my time (the biggest plus in my opinion), but remember that if you have a business, there is no paid vacation (the biggest minus in my opinion). She doesn't have plans of expanding her business, currently, the company absorbs all her time for work. Her future plans include reducing the number of classes with adults, while increasing those with children.



ALEKSANDRA KORZENIAK

AK-ART ART&GARDEN

akart-garden.blogspot.com/

CASE STUDY

Aleksandra's business is a combination of profession and passion – she is a landscape architect. She both designs gardens and works on artistic activities such as painting clothes, porcelain, and interior decoration items. Seemingly these unconnected areas intermingle and bind together. Her company combines natural and artistic areas. She started the activity shortly after graduation, but before that, she worked as a subcontractor in a company owned by a friend who recommended her to the clients and their friends in the field of garden design.

She would place herself in the environmental protection, landscape architecture and artistic handicrafts sectors. She runs the business as a sole proprietorship and does not have other employees. For her it is extremely important to make sure that she meets the expectations of her customers and that her work brings joy to the others.

From the feedback she got from her clients, Polish or foreign, she found out that her products are mostly chosen for various special occasions like weddings and celebrations. Among the most popular and innovative works there are painted sneakers and wedding dress. She is very thankful to her friends who promoted her work sharing posts, photos on social media channels and recommended her on various occasions in addition to ordering

gifts for their beloveds. As a result, this had a multiplier effect: Aleksandra's network has been extended worldwide.

As for the biggest challenge she points out the face-to-face relation with the foreign market. So far she has been working mostly with English and German customers. Still, she has to observe well the products which are most demanded. At this moment, she has no plans to expand the business, instead, quite unusually, she would like to narrow it down. She would like to focus on artistic activity as she hopes to cooperate with someone else in this regard.



MAGDALENA KOŹMALA

BUSINESS & PRESTIGE

www.businessandprestige.pl

CASE STUDY

Magdalena Koźmala is the owner of the company named "Inspire Your Life Magdalena Koźmala" which is a website for business women.

She is a master & team coach, business trainer, journalist and columnist, public relation & image building expert and Business & Prestige editor-in-chief. For many years she has been helping people to reach their goals. Since 2016 she has been successfully running the website Business & Prestige where business women, who are looking for some professional and lifestyle inspirations, can find interesting articles on different topics such as communication, sales, marketing, negotiations, body language etc. and interviews with top business people. Besides, Magdalena shows women how to "break the glass ceiling" in their careers. She takes part in several important conferences in Poland.

Since 2017 Business & Prestige has been organizing an annual charity project called #ProjektPomagam. Every year Magdalena chooses one foundation for which she organizes the huge event and social campaign to raise funds for children in need.

If we think about the community of women in Poland, we can see that the situation at workplaces is developing, but very slowly. By showing many examples of stories and experiences of business women from Poland and from other countries, Magdalena supports those women that want more from their life, those that aspire to be better and better in their jobs, those who want to reach their goals in business and in private life. She teaches through workshops and she uses networking to connect women in order to create a space to work together and share their stories.

She believes that she not only runs a successful website which is getting more and more popular but also helps women on many levels. For instance, Magdalena as a coach writes a series of columns called "Mindcoffee by Koźmala". She reflects on many questions of the meaning of life and shows by her own life experiences that women should believe in themselves, reach their goals, leave the past behind and be grateful for everything in their life because everything happens for a reason.

The team had experience neither in media industry nor in charity. Magdalena and her group learn from each other and learn from other organizations and companies. They have this great opportunity that they can meet, talk and learn from the experts in their fields. As a team, they try to see what talents they have and figure out how to use it in the best way. The most important resources for the company are people – pointed Magdalena.

Since the beginning of the year, she has had one word in her head: internationally. To connect and inspire people on the international level.

"The most precious for me are: faith and love for what I'm doing, belief in purpose and rightness, passion in action, the uncompromising attitude in organization, ability to find solutions, class and being a person with a big heart and respect for others."



OLIWIA MISZTUR
YOGA INSTRUCTOR

CASE STUDY

Her business is dedicated to raising body- and self-awareness through the practice of yoga, meditation and mindfulness. She teaches Ashtanga Yoga method and her original method Fly/Flow (air yoga & creative movement) to groups and individuals, she does business yoga for companies and organises workshops and retreats in Poland and abroad.

In our fast-moving world, people can easily get detached from themselves. They lose contact with their own bodies and suffer a lot of pain, because of incorrect sitting or moving habits, lack of physical activities and tremendous amounts of stress. They don't know how to breathe anymore, suffer stiffness of body and mind. Unhealthy habits and mindsets affect every aspect of life – family, relationships, job. Regular yoga practice teaches discipline and consequence and – what's more important – brings your ego down. While practising, you learn to breathe correctly and make your body strong and flexible. Physical aspect has an impact on our mental state. Yoga helps to release stress and has a very positive effect on the nervous system.

Also, as a practitioner and teacher, she builds a strong community of people concerned about the healthy balanced living, sustainable growth and self-development. Apart from regular classes and workshops, she gets in-

involved in many probono activities, teaches yoga for free outdoors and gets involved in charity events.

The community of people practising and supporting yoga and healthy lifestyle is growing fast. More and more people are curious and want to learn more. That's why she tries to organise many open events – like free yoga in the park. It happens very often that someone comes randomly and then stays for good. She is always very open and welcoming for the new joiners. Besides, she organises events and workshops for people with fewer opportunities, facing health conditions, financial situations and other obstacles.

She gets lots of support from students, but also from strangers, who just like the idea. People and companies invite her for events, offer new possibilities of growth and cooperation.

She has been active, since early childhood, in physical activities such as dance and performance. She has got a degree for a dance instructor, practised yoga for 12 years and deepened her knowledge during the workshops and classes with well-known masters worldwide. She definitely considers hiring employees in the future – young teachers and people for administration promotion.

She can see the future full of opportunities. She will definitely focus more on organising workshops and yoga trips abroad. She expands her business by preparing new website and appropriate visual communication. But the most important thing is a recommendation – people come to the class, like it and they tell others to join. That's how they built the yoga community.

Her advice: "Make sure you have long-term experience in any field you want to teach. You need to truly be there for the people and serve them."



ANNA POŁOŃSKA

TIE ART

www.annapolonska.com/sklep/

CASE STUDY

She founded a start-up promoting various forms of art. She deals with painting, computer graphics (including creating illustrations, posters and covers) and designing a unique 'Tie ART' fashion accessories that are an original idea for a new form of women's ties.

The idea of launching a startup was born out of passion and determination. Most of the activities focus on promoting accessories 'Tie ART', which is a result of her passion for art and creative approach to fashion. The ties are sewn by hand in single copies on the basis of traditional neckties. They attract attention with carefully selected elements, such as decorative stones, crystals or pearls, and the shape resembles bows, shells or flowers.

Presenting them on the website or during fashion and business events (conferences, galas), she complements them with paintings and graphic designs. Her aim is to combine art with fashion and business. There are so many areas she wants to penetrate. She creates high-quality, unique products for those who value individuality, craftsmanship and ecology. "Art should accompany us every day, inspire us and influence our well-being and experience the world. It can also be treated as a kind of social manifesto against mass production of poor quality clothing from chain stores.", she adds.

There are no two identical copies of Tie. Among her clients are also people who ask her to re-design their tie on 'Tie ART', and thanks to this, old accessories gain a "new look". It is an ecological approach to fashion. In harmony with the spirit of "slow fashion". Instead of buying a lot of clothes, it's enough to have some interesting additions to the outfit that will diversify the style.

Her business goal is to create a strong brand, to promote creativity and - in the future - to open a gallery-boutique that would bring together designers from various fields and be a place of meetings and cultural events.

Her clients are often entrepreneurs who also run companies or operate in a business environment. Thanks to this, she has a contact with specialists from various industries, she can exchange experiences and mutually promote her activities and establish co-operation.

"Developing your own business is constant learning and expanding competencies," she states. Setting up a start-up was a "jump into deep water". She had to acquire a lot of new skills in a short time, starting co-operation with other companies and learning to recognize the needs and expectations of clients.

She is trying to support foundations which organize charity auctions by communicating them her work. For her, this is the best method of supporting their activities, because the income obtained from it is much higher than the amount that she would be able to transfer in cash.

She would like to create an artistic and business place where not only her work but also other artists' would be available. The events organized there would be an opportunity to meet experts from various fields and promote culture. Art should not have "borders"; - that's why she came up with her actions and the innovative "Tie ART" accessories. She would like to promote her ties in other parts of the world.



SUCCESS STORIES TURKEY

This section summarizes the interviews we carried out with five women entrepreneurs in Ankara. All of them voluntarily took part in the conversation, and were selected because they are business owners, self-employed, and therefore representative of that small percentage of women, compared to men, who work hard to enter the job market as independent and autonomous decision-makers in the exercise of their business.

All of them felt the desire to play their role in contributing to the socio-economic development of their society, as well as their personal realization.

Here, they speak about some of the challenges they had to face in the process which led them to success, and also about some positive elements of their experience. Their hope, as ours, is to help other women in Turkey who wish to become entrepreneurs by sharing their personal stories. Each one of them has something unique and important to tell.



YEŞİM BELLİ

Pharmacy owner,
and President of the ANGIKAD NGO

www.angikad.org.tr/uyeler.aspx#

CASE STUDY

Yesim has been the owner of a pharmacy in Ankara since 2009. She is the mother of two children, whom she takes care of in balance with a busy and satisfying working life. After completing a BA in pharmacy she decided to open up her own business because she felt the need to be autonomous in the daily exercise of her job.

"I always wanted to be independent. This is why I worked hard to open up my own pharmacy in Ankara. I like the idea of being able to take decisions for myself, and to use my professional knowledge as I think best", Yesim tells us in her office on the upper floor of her pharmacy. She looks proud of what she built with her efforts.

She describes her career path as a hard-won one, mainly due to the lack of governmental support in Turkey for women entrepreneurs. This affects business women particularly at the initial stage of their economic activity, when start-up resources are fundamental. "There are financial support schemes in place in Turkey for women entrepreneurs like me. However, banks are reluctant to grant loans unless you are able to guarantee some property as a form of insurance, and in this country men are usually the owners of property rather than women. This means that in practice it is very difficult for a woman to get funding", Yesim explains.

Another barrier she had to overcome as a business owner since the beginning is the fact that women entrepreneurs in Turkey tend to have lower access to social networks within their own business sectors. This is true because the majority of business owners and CEOs are men, with the result that women colleagues tend to be excluded from gatherings and meetings which could be of relevance to their businesses.

"Social norms about genders are still very strong in Turkey, with women expected to take care of children and the household and men to bring money home. As a woman who opened up her own business I had to overcome some of these socio-cultural barriers and challenge pre assumptions about what I could or could not do in terms of my professional life", she says.

Yesim, however, could count on the continuous support of her family which encouraged her both financially and psychologically. Her efforts and will power helped her pursue her career aspirations despite some initial limitations, to the point that she gradually gained the support of other male entrepreneurs in the pharmaceutical industry. In addition, Yesim is President of an Ankara-based NGO called ANGIKAD, which provides direct support to women entrepreneurs through the creation of a network made by "women for women". "It is very important to offer the support of such a group to other women, especially those who are just beginning their journey into self-employment. ANGIKAD has helped me, and is still doing so for many others.", she explains. Maybe leadership qualities perceptions here?



MELİKE EMİROĞLU YILMER

Board member and product coordinator
at MIR İzolasyon
<http://www.mirizolasyon.com>

CASE STUDY

Melike's story is one of a kind, certainly an inspiration to all women out there wishing to become entrepreneurs. After a BA in Economics, and 2 years working for an insulation company, her professional ambition brought her to found a MIR İzolasyon, a company specializing in the production and export of insulating materials for industries in Turkey and abroad.

She has been the product coordinator at her company for 14 years now, and she keeps thinking big, always looking for ways to increase her business and especially the impact of her daily efforts for the development of her country. She considers herself to be lucky because she could always count on the support of her family, particularly of her husband, co-founder of MIR İzolasyon with her.

The presence of her family helped her overcome some important barriers during the initial stages of her entrepreneurial career. "The Turkish traditional system of values does not fully recognize women as subjects of leadership and self-development. Society tries to keep us [women] passive, and to not realize our potential. But if you work hard, there will be no barrier strong enough to prevent you from succeeding.", she proudly tells us in her office in Ankara.

Melike recalls having been especially puzzled by finding a balance between family life and work, as she often had to

sacrifice time with her children in order to grow her business. "My job takes 60% of my time away, which means I often had to face the emotional stress of not being always there for my children, and for the rest of my family. Ultimately though I am working for their wellbeing, and to secure a solid future for them. I want them to understand they can be who they want regardless of their gender.", she explains.

Melike and her husband did not receive the State support they hoped, having created their company entirely from their personal efforts. When asked what she would modify of her working environment had she the possibility, she replies that bureaucracy to access financial assistance for women is too slow, and therefore making the process easier and less complex would help a great deal of women achieving their professional aspirations more readily. "I am definitely a lucky person, and I will never cease to thank my husband and family for believing in me. I know I will keep doing my best to develop MIR İzolasyon. It is a symbol of my fight for personal realization.", she concludes.



ZÜLEYHA ÖZCAN

Manager of Engineering Company
"DERIN"

<http://www.derinmuhendislik.com.tr/>

CASE STUDY

Zuleyha is an engineer who founded an HVAC company in Ankara 14 years ago. She is part of a small percentage of women at the head of engineering companies in Turkey. She had desired to be an engineer since she was a child, but the road that took her to Derin was not an easy one. After graduation she started working in the private sector until she had her first child. "I was the only woman in that environment, which did not make things easy for me. As soon as I had my first child, mobbing began from other colleagues and superiors because they thought I could not possibly combine work and family life. So I decided to quit and establish my own company.", she says with a proud look in her office in the district of Cankaya in central Ankara.

Zuleyha created her own company without any financial assistance from the State, and thinks that the scarcity of economic support put in place for especially women entrepreneurs is one of the major difficulties to overcome. "You all too often must create your own business without the relief of forms of public or private support schemes. This is especially true in the case of schemes for maternity.", she explains.

In her opinion, gender discrimination means today that women have lower opportunities than men, even when they are at the same professional level.

She wishes that both maternity and paternity leave could be longer in Turkey, in order to allow women entrepreneurs and their husband to combine work and family life more easily. "We made progress in the last fifty years of course, but women still need to be given more opportunities if we have to reach a state of true equality. Beginning with salaries.", she says.

The efforts she had to make over this past fourteen years though made her proud of what she built on her own: A strong team of both men and women, which she supervises and guides, helping each others and working together towards a common goal.



ÖZGÜL PEKER

Clothes designer, producer, and founder of SOIE Design

<https://soiedesign.com.tr>

CASE STUDY

Ozgul is an example of how passion can work as a strong driver in life. After working 15 years in the food industry for a private company, she decided that her love for fashion and design should become her profession. Despite she knew how challenging it would be, she founded her own clothes design company, Soie Design, 2 years ago and has not stopped creating ever since.

We were lucky to interview Ozgul directly at her boutique in Ankara, where she produces and sells a range of artistically conceived products, from clothes, to furniture and paintings. Recently, she started cooperating with a local painter, turning his works into patterns for her clothes, so that each piece is truly unique.

She remembers going through considerable difficulties at the initial stages of her business creation, especially in terms of financial instruments to turn her dreams into reality. "The range of financial schemes available for women in Turkey is limited, and even when they do actually grant economic support, the amount is pretty low. The biggest problem is that State support schemes require some form of warranty as a prerequisite for funding, which means property, and property is mostly in the hands of men in Turkey.", she explains.

This lack of support relates especially to the period of maternity, during which women entrepreneurs in the private sector are left alone in balancing between family and professional requirements.

Ozgul found much more help in her family and husband, who believed in her potential since the beginning, allowing her to develop what is now a renowned fashion boutique in Ankara.

"Being an entrepreneur in Turkey is a challenge, as much as becoming one. However, it is extremely rewarding and satisfying when you realize it is possible. Women are natural leaders, and excellent organizers given their experience as mothers. My only wish for the future is that our government can recognize our potential and create more support schemes for women like me.", she tells us.



ERİNÇ YURTER

MANAGING PARTNER AT TAZE&KURU
FOOD INC

https://www.tazekuru.com/images/assets/catalog_2015.pdf

CASE STUDY

Erinc has been the managing partner, together with her husband, of Taze&Kuru Food Inc since 2009. Taze&Kuru, which means Fresh&Dried in Turkish, is a company specializing in the production of healthy snacks, mainly made from dried fruit grown in Turkey. Erinc's story is inspiring. A mother of three, she studied towards a BA and a Masters in Sociology, and always wanted to turn her passion for environmentally-friendly food production and manufacturing into a private business.

Prior to opening up her company with her husband, she was the producer of a TV program about the everyday lives of ambassadors, and then vice-director of a private school in Ankara, where she also taught English and philosophy.

"My company started as a hobby, which I luckily share with my husband. We both recognized the importance of food production for the development of our country, which we want to contribute to. But we want to play our part in sustainable production as well.", she explains in her office in Ankara while we taste a delicious portion of dried fruit she offers us.

As a woman and manager of a big incorporation, Erinc had to overcome some obstacles, some of which are still present today. In particular, she has to confront herself with a professional environment- that of agricultural pro-

duction and food retail- mostly made of men and largely structured around a male-driven culture. "I often use my initials to sign emails I exchange with clients, and nobody ever thinks I am woman. They all assume I am a man.", Erinc says. She also feels that many clients and partners do not value her professional worth enough, and that she is often considered only as "the wife of the manager", in the margin.

Her hope is that the Turkish government will implement more maternity support schemes to encourage women who want to work in the private sector or open up their own businesses, like she did. She considers herself lucky however because she received considerable financial support from the Agricultural Ministry.

In addition, Erinc has found in ANGIKAD (see page for infos and contact details) a precious source of support. "When we are all together and support each other, we find a space where we are represented for our value. Men sometimes think they own the world, but at ANGIKAD each and every woman is given voice and is listened.", she explains.



SUCCESS STORIES UNITED KINGDOM

In the UK we have a developing social enterprise infrastructure which includes leading agencies such as Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) which provides resources and advice to help with establishing a new organisation.

SEUK are a leading global authority on social enterprise and the biggest network of social enterprises in the UK. They are a strategic partner to 6 government departments and have led public policy on social enterprise for 15 years. They are the membership body for social enterprise.

In the UK 41% of social enterprises are led by women compared to 7% of FTSE 100 companies. In comparison with larger organisations, women run 43% of social enterprises with more than 100 employees, and 44% of those with more than 250 employees. 51% of social enterprises have a majority female workforce.

The WISE100 (Women in Social Enterprise 100) is a new initiative from the NatWest SE100 Index which aims to recognise the invaluable contribution of 100 of the most inspiring and influential women in social enterprise, impact investment and social innovation. This is great because the focus here is on women and highlighting what women are doing. The listed women are nominated by others and so the programme is inspirational as well as informative. It encourages diversity across industry and demonstrates that women can run successful enterprises.

CONTEXT

The context for the UK contributions is in keeping with The Ubele Initiative's role as partner on the Pandora Project, and the project outcome of the sharing of good practice that promote the engagement of women and their creativity in entrepreneurship.

Women from across the UK who have created and run a social enterprise were contacted to share their business journey. They explained the nature of the business, what inspired the idea, how the business is of benefit to the wider community, the beneficiaries and the people who work within the business. We explored challenges and future plans.

The women were excited to share their experiences with a European Audience. Set questions were used to ensure that the information gathered although qualitative, was relevant to the Pandora project women's enterprise objectives and could contribute to the outcomes, which is essentially to share good practice.





YVONNE FIELD

CEO / FOUNDER AT THE UBELE
INITIATIVE

www.ubele.org

CASE STUDY

The Ubele Initiative ('The Future') was established in 2014, as a social enterprise which supports the sustainability of the African Diaspora communities through intergenerational leadership initiatives, community enterprise and the development of community spaces or assets.

Ubele's national research, 'A Place to Call Home' 2015, identified the need for a new generation of leaders who help can create sustainable community spaces. As a result, Ubele offers direct support to individuals, as well as groups and organisations to help them develop the next generation of community based leaders, organisational governance and community and social business models.

The Founder and Managing Director has over 40 years of experience in working with communities– her original profession in Community Development and Youth Work and she now also teaches this discipline on a part time basis at Goldsmiths, London University. Prior to establishing Ubele, she ran a successful 'for profit' business within the social sector.

The Ubele team consists of 1 full time member of staff, 12 part time associates and volunteers. The majority of the team are highly skilled and have more than 25 years' experience in community and youth work, social work, social action and social change business development strategy,

communications and evaluation in the not for profit and for-profit sectors.

.Ubele have a range of projects which operate at local, regional, national and international levels. For example, the national Mali Enterprising Leaders programme supported 6 different Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) led organisations in London and Manchester. Ubele provided an organisational assessment, tailor made consultancy support, new leadership development opportunities and access to national and international learning and networking opportunities. They also produced the first national toolkit on BME Community Business, which helps organisations explore Governance, their Community Business Model and their Social Impact.

.The majority of programmes include international elements which allowed participants to engage in mobilities thereby widening their horizons, increase their social networks and overall understanding of issues and concerns panEurope.

Ubele does not experience a conflict between profitability and the vision as it is a business with a social purpose. There is quite a lot of support for this particular growing business sector in the UK. Others should try and access it giving themselves 3-5 years to grow their business as it takes this amount of time, dedication and sheer hard work for business to really take off!



JENNY GARRATT

CEO at Rocking Ur Teens Community Interest Company

www.rockingurteens.com

CASE STUDY

Rocking Ur Teens was established in February 2015 as a social enterprise which operates in education, youth and social mobility sectors.

It offers inspiring conferences that expose teens to corporate environments, apprentices, graduates and interns, giving them a practical insight into the world of work. They create relationships between young people and corporate organisations to develop pipelines of diverse talent that are accessible, providing socially mobile speakers who share stories and act as role models.

Rocking Ur Teens is important for communities because it helps support young people make that important and often challenging transition between childhood and young adulthood by providing advice, guidance and inspiration and offering insights into the world of employment. It increases aspirations and helps teenagers to get on track for success through inviting them to workshops and conferences. They explore challenging issues such as the development of self-esteem and mental health awareness through speakers that have experienced it.

Rocking Ur Teens also help dispel career and employment myths, including 'science is not for girls' and engage audiences with inspirational speakers such who are leaders in Science, technology, Engineering and Maths industries. The teens benefit because they increase their self-con-

fidence, have gone on to mentor others and been introduced to careers that they haven't heard of before. They break down barriers between those from culturally diverse backgrounds and continue to bring together a national and international audience.

They also introduce teens to social action at an early age to illustrate how they can make a difference in their local and global community. At a recent conference, a young man made a commitment to meet his head teacher and arrange to hold an school assembly on mental health and young people, as he had suffered from depression himself.

Rocking Ur Teens is well supported through volunteers, students and teachers. They encourage others to attend the events and be a part of the Rocking Ur Teens movement.

The Rocking Ur Teen co-founder Sandy, along with Jenny Garrett and the board members, bring a range of expertise including leadership skills, business planning and strategy which all contribute to the development of the business.

The biggest challenge has been time and resources and meeting the demands for their services. They are clear that as a social enterprise they should not only break-even, but need to begin to make some profit to be sustainable. They also ask for small contributions to the services they provide.

Jenny's advice is that social businesses need to learn about the big priorities that are impacting young people and create innovative solutions.

The most important resources for their business have been the people, particularly the volunteers, board members and speakers who are crucial for the business to function effectively. They have been sponsored by corporates and are looking forward to accessing funding in the future.

Rocking Ur Teens would like to expand their partnerships with schools, corporates and organisations based in Europe to increase the exposure and diversity that students who attend their conferences experience. Although they use social media and their work has been featured in the media, their prestigious and high-quality speakers and ambassadors also spread the word about what they do.





LOLA OWOLABI

CEO at PROUD TO BE ME

proudtobeme.org

CASE STUDY

Proudtobeme was established on in 2012 as a social enterprise providing invaluable life skills via bespoke and practical classes for teenage girls between the ages of 13 and 18 years.

It is a programme that responds to a growing number of distressed and disadvantaged young women that face an uninspiring future, often amidst a turbulent transition to adulthood exacerbated by drug and alcohol abuse issues, peer pressure, bullying and nutrition.

Recent research suggests that 1 in 4 girls are clinically depressed before the age of 14 (Guardian 2017). There is a growing number of girls who are unhappy with themselves and feel less positive about life generally. Research has also shown that depression affects nearly 80,000 children and young people in the UK. With the sharp rise of social media, with its positive and negative effects, they aim to prepare these young women to rise against online bullying, and unrealistic media images, and perceptions. Proudtobeme aims to equip the young women with entrepreneurial and social skills with which they need to make the transition into adulthood. It offers positive support and empowering options that motivates the young women to confidently find their place in society, so that they can add value, and be equipped to be positive influencers in society.

After the workshop sessions:

Young women report feeling more empowered to use their voices and make positive contributions to their communities. Young women have increased health and mental well-being for them to be able to be more confident and a stronger sense of self. Young women have greater confidence/ well-being and self-esteem to achieve both their immediate and longer-term goals. Many of the previous participants go on to achieve much better grades at school; attend university and achieve good class degrees and / or secure employment and are contributing positively to society.

The major difference is that the girls are better informed to make positive life choices which will impact them and their immediate community. They are more likely to fulfil their potential and become valued influential members of society.

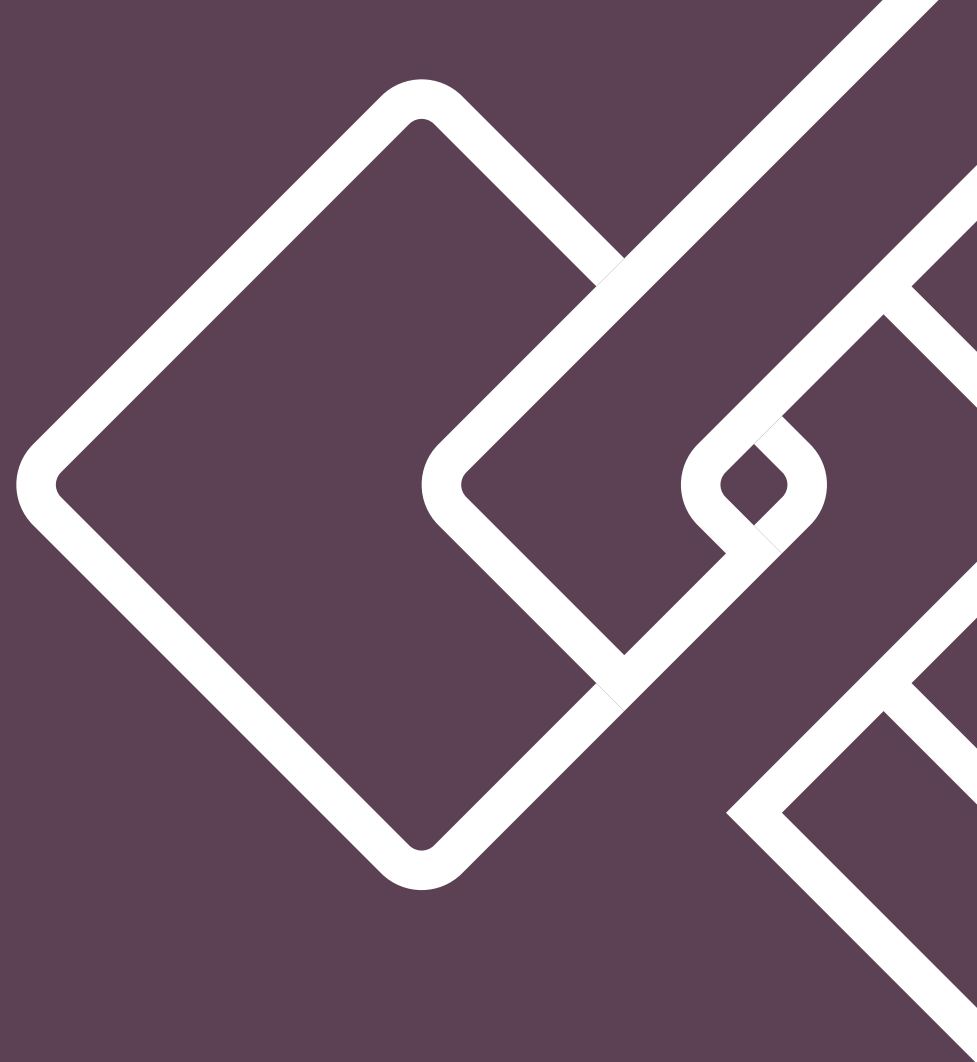
The community supports the social business by donating in kind and through advertising the service. Proudtobeme emphasises the ethos of empowering others. They aim to empower their volunteers, (who are often previous graduates), through coaching and mentoring by the Founder and Director of Proudtobeme. Their in-house training aims to build volunteers' self-esteem and confidence by empowering them to empower others and through encouraging an atmosphere of 'paying it forward'.

Members of the social business have relevant experience and they also employ interns in: events, management, nutrition and health and fitness. As a not for profit sector business they would have liked more training in fundraising. Their advice to others who would like to create a business in this sector is to make sure that you network well and have accessed available training and have a disposable pot of funds if at all possible.

In future, Proudtobeme aims to create a wide range of digital and other course content that will be an invaluable

resource to young people, educational establishments and local authorities that wish to run the training courses. ProudtoBeme's future looks very promising as they have partnered with 2 schools who are interested commissioning workshops for their pupils. Their ultimate aim is to influence the UK schools' curriculum via a programme of 'wellbeing' which empowers young women.

They also plan to expand internationally, to develop an app and also design and introduce franchising materials.





YULIANA TOPAZLY

CEO at OutSpace

www.myoutspace.co.uk

CASE STUDY

My OutSpace was established in February 2012, specialising in supporting parents and women into employment and business via training, mentoring, one to one support and introduction to networking opportunities.

It also helps companies to support their own employees better via mentoring schemes, peer to peer support networks and well being services. They launched a tool for companies to support their back to work employees: www.buddywith.org.uk

It also offers free services to parents and ensures every family has an opportunity to become financially sustainable. Their team works with over 300 families each year and in the last 12 months it has created 127 jobs and helped to set up 48 businesses.

Yuliana came from a family business background, and completed a Business Studies degree, and an MSc. She then became an academic lecturing in Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship across several universities in the UK; worked supporting entrepreneurship activities and spin out companies in the universities. However she says '...all the time on the journey I knew I wanted to start my own business, which will make a real difference in the society'.

Yuliana also says that '...it is very rewarding to see families become more financially sustainable and happier. Those

we support very often are coming back to support others. There is a great sense of community among parents especially those experiencing similar issues.'

My OutSpace is accredited under the Good Employer Charter, as they are committed to recruiting locally and paying The London Living Wage. They also ensure they employ parents, provide access to those with disabilities and offer flexible working arrangements. Employees can go on to become advisers, facilitators and trainers in the employability and business training and support sectors.

Yuliane has experienced many challenges from the time she started the business, from funders not believing in my idea, landlords not granted the leases because they did not want children around, through to building a customer base and securing tenders with local authority.

If she started the business again, she would probably do more research and networking prior to starting a business as well as trying to make quicker decisions and being more specific in her networking. There have not been any real serious challenges but she has set up a social enterprise from scratch – it is not a charity. She suggests that measuring social impact is only possible if you have a sustainable model in place. She says, 'I did not want to rely on funding and constantly 'begging' for money. We managed to secure contracts with universities and local authorities and reinvest money back into social value to develop a large portfolio of free services we can offer'.

Her best advice would be to choose your team wisely as it is her greatest resource. She recruits new people via local council recruitment services, social media and recommendations.

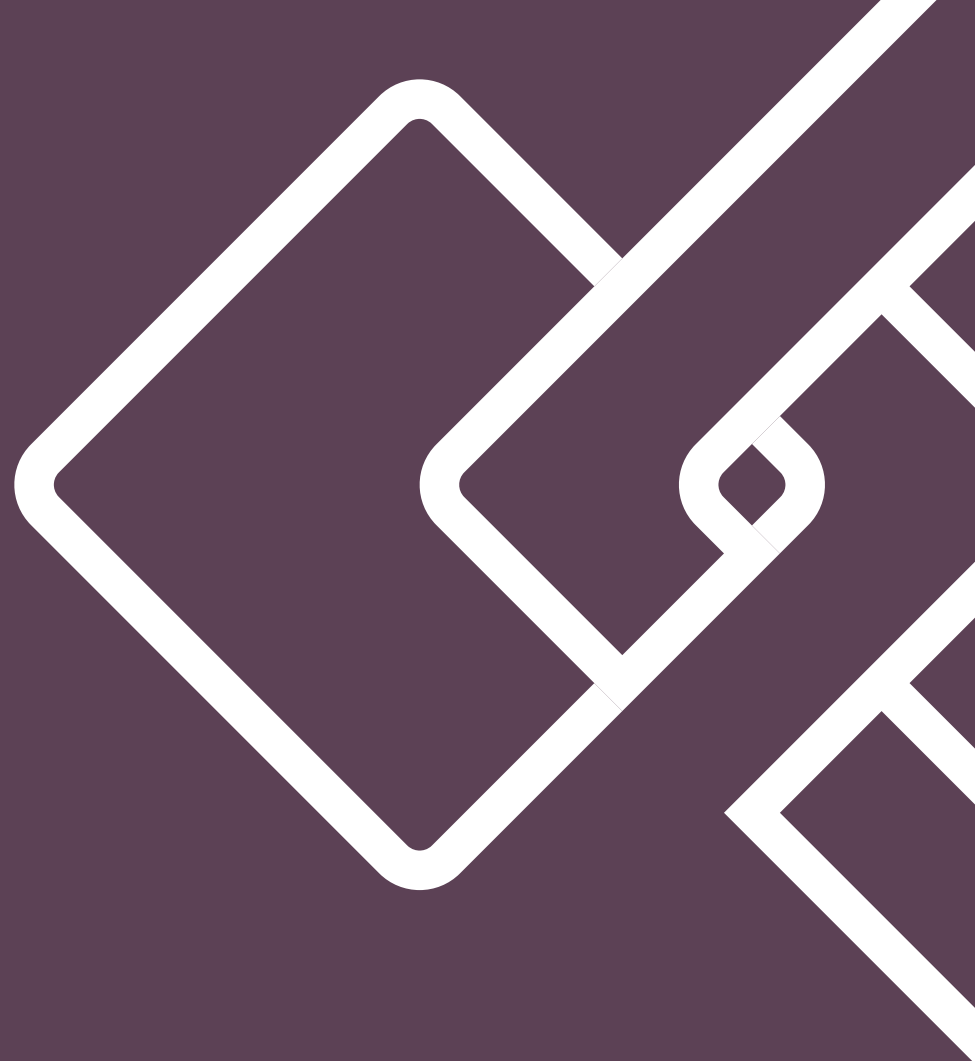
She likes her employees to show commitment, adaptability and an eagerness to learn, knowledge of the social problem they are trying to resolve, e.g. unemployment among parents with younger children, lack of flexible working opportunities etc.

She also suggests the need to do robust research, to plan well, but also to learn to make quick decisions, as if you take too long, someone else will get there before you! She also suggests the need to be aware of your Intellectual Property rights.

In order to remain relevant, My OutSpace do a lot of work via social media engagement, PR, speaking opportunities and produce case studies.

They are launching 2 new services:

- online mentoring platform to manage mentors and mentees and reporting on all activities;
- buddywith.org.uk – an online platform to help organisations to support their employees and increase staff retention.





PAULETTE WILLIAMS

Leading Routes

<http://leadingroutes.org>

CASE STUDY

Working in the higher education system Paulette Williams, was exposed to detrimental effect institutional racism was having on the Black Community. With a drive to do something about this she established Leading Routes in October 2016.

She describes Leading Routes as 'a black led initiative within the education sector, which aims to prepare the next generation of black academics by strengthening the academic pipeline for black students'. It is run by a group of people who have all had various levels of experience in higher education. Leading Routes, holds conferences and programmes for the black community to explore new ways to address the marginalisation of black people in higher education.

Paulette lists the main purposes of Leading Routes to be; 'to support prospective students to make informed decisions and navigate higher education at all stages. To provide a platform that celebrates black students and academics in higher education and a network that encourages progress in higher education. To strengthen, over time, the pipeline into academic careers for black students and are lastly, to inform and influence policies that affect the black student experience at a strategic level'.

Leading Routes recognises that most pertinent issue in higher education is institutional racism. To support the

black community through this issue, Leading Routes aims to fill in some of the gaps that exist between academia and the black community. Some of these gaps include; Informing the black community about higher education, direct contact with university representatives, dispelling myths about higher education and connecting black colleagues in academia. Leading Routes is very well supported by the community, this is reflected in the high attendance rate of events and the dissemination of information gained at the event via social networks.

When asked what could have been done differently from the beginning, Paulette states that she should of 'brought a team together from the start instead of attempting to everything independently'. Paulette explains that it is not always easy and that she did experience a conflict of interest between profitability and charity work, which she is now working through by creating a model that allows us to charge for some services and receive funding for others.

When asked what advice would you give to those who would like to create a business in the education sector, Paulette says she would tell people to 'stay up to date with changes in the sector, not to over promise and to find your organization's strengths and play to them'. Paulette explains that she believes that people are the most important resource for her business. She states that 'funding is important but we can adjust the cost of an event based on available resources but having the right people is invaluable'.

Paulette hopes for the future of Leading Routes is to consolidate their network in academia, to act as consultants to institutions within sector and to offer programs that provide solid opportunities for black students. Leading Routes plans to do their first regional event outside of London, next year.

INSTITUTIONS



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Yenimahalle Municipality International Relations and European Union Office

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PANDORA

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