

Scaling **WOMEN-LED** Businesses:

Generating Opportunities to Grow

BACKGROUND

“*Scaling Women-Led Businesses: Generating Opportunities to Grow*” is an international mobility project developed by a group of changemakers from across India and Europe administered by the Indian-European Social Change Ecosystem, [Make Room](#).

The project is developed as part of the Action Agenda for Change 2020 at the Changemakers' Room 2017 Training Forum and is expected to run until 2020. [Click here to read more about the Changemakers' Room!](#) Currently, the project is on the lookout for partner organizations/institutions across Europe and India.

Entrepreneurs are critical to economic growth and prosperity of any community across the world. The recent boost of entrepreneurship in Europe and Asia has led to launch of new enterprises and currently more and more young adults view entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood option. Yet most startups are run by men and often women are held back from launching or growing up their companies due to wide range of obstacles e.g lack of entrepreneurial education, societal discrimination and stereotypes, lack of confidence and personal ability as well as access to finance and a nurturing support system.

Despite the mentioned obstacles preventing women to launch businesses, the past decade shows an increasing interest among women to take up entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood option. More than 126 million women entrepreneurs have started a new business in 67 economies in 2012, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Women's Report.

The EU has had various actions to boost female startups since 2004, e.g. *European Network of Female Entrepreneurship* and other initiatives foreseen in the Commission's 2008 Small Business Act, that has helped to encourage women launch businesses **but it is critical to not only provide support and encourage women to become entrepreneurs, but more importantly the focus should be put on ensuring sustainability of the businesses run by women.**

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ADDRESSED ISSUES

The project consortium has prioritised the following issues with focus on youth women micro-entrepreneurs and is expected to contribute in solving the following issues:

Lack of nurturing environment/system:

1. Limitations to entrepreneurial development opportunities for women micro-entrepreneurs;
2. Limited or no access to financial resources for women micro-entrepreneurs to scale their enterprises

Lack of skills, innovation capacity:

1. Lack of organizational/innovation capacity prevents growth of women micro-entrepreneurs

Lack of societal support structure:

1. Existing societal barriers limit women to take up entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood option

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PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

The project consortium has agreed to develop the following interventions in order to contribute in solving the identified problems:

1. Mobilized Communities (area specific) - a replicable model of a structured, supportive and women-oriented environment - civil organizations, public authorities and private sector are involved in scaling women-led businesses.

Organizational model to enhance the management, governance and innovation capacity of the organizations working in the field of sustainability and scaling of women-led businesses:

1. Generate easy-access to entrepreneurial development opportunities for women on a single platform micro-entrepreneurs;
2. Create new entrepreneurial development opportunities for women micro-entrepreneurs;
3. Establish and strengthen a strategic civil-society-public authority partnership in nurturing entrepreneurial development opportunities for women micro-entrepreneurs;
4. Identify and gather currently existing financial resources available for women micro-entrepreneurs;
5. Encourage and strengthen new financial mechanism development to support women micro-entrepreneurs

2. Capacity Building - an innovative ICT tool creating an online, global community of women micro-entrepreneurs building individual capacities. The Capacity Building is based on non-formal learning methodologies improving level of competences and building capacities of women micro-entrepreneurs.

New form of practical training scheme - Building skills and innovation capacity:

1. Create an easily accessible ICT platform aimed at building individually-targeted entrepreneurial skills/capacities;
2. Establish and nurture network of women micro-entrepreneurs to encourage collaboration, mutual support and exchange of practices

3. Storytelling - as a tool to raise awareness and encourage women to take up entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood option. Gathering inspiring stories of hard-working women leading lives as entrepreneurs. **Transforming societal understanding of women micro-entrepreneurs through stories of success:**

1. Contributing in breaking the existing stereotypical view of woman's position in society;
2. Encouraging women to take up entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood option

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OPEN FORUM - OPEN CALL OF PARTICIPATION

Each one of the developed interventions are expected to be replicable, socially relevant and innovative. In order to develop the interventions benefiting not only the official consortium of the project, but the sector at large, Make Room organizes an open forum for individuals and organizations active in the field of women entrepreneurship.

Date: September 10th, 2017, MUMBAI

Venue: to be confirmed to registered participants

Time: From 10.00 AM - 05.30 PM

The Forum will create 3 working/focus groups each contributing to one of the identified interventions:

1. Community Mobilization Model - Creating a nurturing support system;
2. Capacity Building of women micro-entrepreneurs - developing a curricula
3. Storytelling to raise awareness - innovative social campaigns to transform societal understanding

The Open Forum is organized for individuals and organizations working in the sector of entrepreneurship notably with scaling women-led micro-entreprises as follows:

1. Creating a supportive, nurturing women-oriented environment to scale women-led micro-entreprises (in response to Intervention 1);
2. Developing curriculums, programs to build capacities of women micro-entrepreneurs;
3. Creating innovative tools, means to raise awareness, break stigma associated with women entrepreneurs.

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AGENDA

10.00 AM - 10.15 AM	Registration over Coffee
10.15 AM - 10.30 AM	Welcome Address by the Ecosystem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the Ecosystem - Introduction of the project “Scaling Women-Led Businesses: Generating Opportunities to Grow”
10.30 AM - 11.00 AM	Setting the Agenda of the day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objectives of the Forum - Introduction of participating individuals/organizations
11.00 AM - 12.00 PM	Focus Discussion (working groups) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Context of the issues proposed
12.00 PM - 12.45 PM	Cross Group Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enrich Focus Group work on problem identification/local context
12.45 PM - 01.00 PM	Finalization/Prioritization of the Problems
01.00 PM - 01.50 PM	Presentations of the local context based on the problems & Feedback
01.50 PM - 02.30 PM	Lunch
02.30 PM - 04.00 PM	Problems Vs Interventions Based on the local context and the thematic area, the groups will develop a prototype that can address the problems identified.
03.45 PM - 04.00 PM	Coffee Break
04.00 PM - 05.00 PM	Presentations Q & A / Feedback
05.00 PM	Closing Marks - The Way Forward

The Open Forum Agenda is subject to change. Agenda as on Aug 4th.

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REGISTRATION

In order to participate at the Open Forum, the online registration form has to be filled. Upon successful registration an entry fee of INR 700/- has to be paid.

To register, click here <https://goo.gl/Tx1MQd>

BENEFITS

The participating individuals/organizations are invited to benefit from various initiatives of the ecosystem and are cordially invited to take part at all Make Room conducted events and are entitled to the following:

- Outreach Partners of the the project “*Scaling Women-Led Businesses: Generating Opportunities to Grow*”;
- Make use of the interventions developed throughout the project free of charge;
- Invited to take part at the official events of the project free of charge;
- Explore possible areas of cooperation within the ecosystem to develop an independent international mobility project;
- Become a strategic/execution partner of the project, receive funding to conduct project based activities at your local community

Organized by



Make Room India is Indian-European Social Change Ecosystem, an independently organized ecosystem creating and strengthening civil society's cooperation to drive positive social change across Europe and India. Make Room India is a unique platform for impact-oriented intellectual, cultural and personal interactions between Europe and India. Make Room India fosters civil dialogue and creates impact-oriented partnerships between individuals and organizations of Europe and India and facilitates dialogue to create effective initiatives developing innovative, sustainable and easily-replicable solutions to problems found in both - Europe and India.

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