

DEW

Digital Entrepreneurship for Women
2021-1-IE01-KA220-VET-000033081

DEW Policy Recommendations

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1- Introduction

1.1 Project Overview (DEW)

The DEW project operates within a broader European context that firmly acknowledges the significance of female digital entrepreneurship. In this context, it emerges as a crucial driver of economic growth, innovation, and gender equality within the digital sector. DEW is resolute in its commitment to addressing the multifaceted challenges encountered by women who aspire to create and nurture their own digital businesses. These challenges are particularly pronounced among those who have had to contend with various social and economic barriers along their career paths.

In this spirit, the DEW project takes center stage with its mission to champion female digital entrepreneurship throughout Europe. As part of this initiative, our focus revolves around the practical and pedagogical aspects of promoting women in digital entrepreneurship. We aim to equip stakeholders with concrete tools and insights essential for the development and implementation of training programs tailored to the specific needs of female entrepreneurs or those seeking to embark on their entrepreneurial journey within the digital landscape. Through this project, we empower women to overcome obstacles and drive positive change, not only in their lives but also in the broader European digital entrepreneurship landscape.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of this Document

The purpose of this document is to encapsulate the wealth of knowledge, insights, and practical wisdom accrued during the DEW project's journey. It serves as a consolidation of the results and impacts derived from the project's three previous phases, namely Project Results 1, 2 and 3. The significance of this document is twofold.

Firstly, it positions itself as a comprehensive source of evidence intended to underpin policy formulation. The insights and findings contained herein are intended to resonate at the level of public policy, influencing the direction of regional, national, and even European policies in the domain of entrepreneurship with a particular focus on gender equality.

Secondly, this document assumes the role of an operational blueprint, guiding actions and program development at a practical level. It acts as a bridge between theoretical

knowledge and hands-on implementation. By drawing from real-life experiences within the project, it provides concrete best practices, approaches, and methodologies for stakeholders who seek to promote digital entrepreneurship among women.

Within the scope of this document, we present a holistic understanding of the challenges, solutions, and opportunities within the field. It is our intention that these insights will not only reflect the journey of the DEW project but also invigorate the discourse and initiatives surrounding entrepreneurship, gender equality, and the application of the [Entrecomp framework](#) throughout Europe. The European Commission has developed EntreComp: the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework as a reference framework to explain what is meant by an entrepreneurial mindset. EntreComp offers a comprehensive description of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that people need to be entrepreneurial and create financial, cultural or social value for others. EntreComp is a common reference framework that identifies 15 competences in three key areas that describe what it means to be entrepreneurial.

1.3 Background and Context

To understand the rationale and significance of this document, we must delve into the background and context that has shaped the DEW project. In a broader European context, there is a growing recognition of the pivotal role that female digital entrepreneurship plays in driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and advancing gender equality within the digital sector.

The DEW project emerges as a proactive response to the multifaceted challenges encountered by women who aspire to establish and develop their businesses in the digital domain. This initiative is particularly dedicated to those who have traversed daunting social and economic barriers in their career paths. These barriers have been persistent hurdles, impeding the progress of countless talented and aspiring female entrepreneurs.

The DEW project's mission, therefore, is to champion female digital entrepreneurship in Europe. It does so by focusing on the practical and pedagogical dimensions, providing stakeholders with tangible tools to design and implement training programs that align with the specific needs of female entrepreneurs or potential entrepreneurs in the digital realm.

The intersection of gender, entrepreneurship, and digital proficiency underscores the critical importance of the DEW project. By addressing these intersections, we aim to pave the way for women to harness the opportunities offered by the digital economy, ultimately fostering economic empowerment, innovation, and gender equality. This document serves as a testament to the project's journey and a beacon guiding the way forward in the dynamic landscape of digital entrepreneurship.

2- Main findings and results on women entrepreneurship

2.1 Insights from Previous Project Results (PR1, PR2, PR3)

Project Result 1 Gender Effect Assessment: The first part of the DEW project highlighted the crucial importance of digital training for women entrepreneurs, particularly in a post-pandemic world. It was identified that, despite women's entrepreneurial potential, there is a gap between this potential and the actual capabilities and opportunities they possess. Project Result 1 also highlighted the need for a coordinated and integrated approach to supporting women's entrepreneurship, illustrating how women's entrepreneurship is planned and coordinated across government and society and in particular by the lack of consideration they receive from financing agencies and banks.

Project Result 2 DEW OER Platform: With the launch of the official DEW project website, a platform has been created to serve as a repository of project results, news and contacts. The site has become an essential resource for women entrepreneurs, offering easy access to DEW training resources and materials. The DEW project, co-funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ program, aims to create operational solutions to the challenges faced by current and potential women entrepreneurship. It is aligned with key priorities such as inclusion, diversity, digital transformation and the adaptation of vocational training. The website, available in four languages, is testament to the project's commitment to international visibility and accessibility.

Project Result 3 DEW Training Toolbox: The DEW Training Toolbox was developed in response to the needs identified in the project's previous PRs. It aims to bridge the gap between women entrepreneurship potential and their actual capabilities and opportunities. The toolbox merges training content with complementary resources, offering operational case studies, guidelines and best practices. It has been designed to be user-friendly and

accessible, with micro-training sheets, case studies and guidelines. Formats vary from PowerPoint presentations to PDFs, animations and self-assessment tools.

The training covers a range of essential skills for women entrepreneurship, including digital skills, pricing and marketing, access to finance from a woman perspective, and leadership and communication. It also covers topics such as :

- digital team management,
- entrepreneurship,
- change management,
- business acumen,
- financial literacy...

Project Result 3 is distinguished by its pioneering nature, and aims to fill an operational gap with innovative training tools and resources. The expected impact is both internal, with partners equipped with new training courses, and external, with target groups benefiting directly from adapted training content. Thanks to its multilingual versions and free, open access, Project Result 3 has considerable potential for transferability, enabling wider adoption beyond the initial partnership and beyond the life of the project.

The testing and validation phase of the DEW project was a crucial time for assessing the effectiveness and relevance of the training program. With participation exceeding initial expectations, it is clear that the program meets a real need. Feedback from participants highlighted the relevance of the program, the added value of case studies and best practices, and the importance of targeted training for women entrepreneurship. In addition, the role of the EntreComp competency framework in the creation of the DEW training program was highlighted, adding further credibility and validation to the program.

2.2 Evidence-Based Data and Analysis

The DEW project, through Project Result 1, has provided valuable statistical data on women entrepreneurship in the EU. Here is a summary of the most important feature of this research:

General context of women entrepreneurship:

Women represent 52% of the total EU population. However, only 34% of them are self-entrepreneurs, and 30% of first-time entrepreneurs are women (WEgate, European Commission, 2020).

Gender stereotypes and male-dominated role models continue to prevail, holding back the growth of women entrepreneurship.

Impact of Covid-19 on women entrepreneurship:

The majority of businesses run by women are SMEs. These SMEs have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, with many having depleted their savings simply to survive (Eurochambers, 2022).

Women still shoulder the majority of unpaid care work, which has widened the gender pay gap (Hillard, 2019, IBEC, 2021).

Digital skills and training needs:

Almost four out of ten women in the EU (38%) felt they had the skills and knowledge to start a business, compared to 50% of men (WEbarometer, 2020).

The Gender Equality Index 2020 identified a need for digital entrepreneurship skills for women facing social disadvantages.

Challenges in accessing finance and networks:

EU investors tend to favor male entrepreneurs, limiting women's access to business networks and informal learning (European Parliament, 2021).

Transnational survey results:

206 respondents took part in the survey. 62% felt that technology had always been essential to their business.

Skills identified as essential for women digital entrepreneurs include self-awareness, motivation, planning and management, and financial literacy.

Statistics on women entrepreneurship in DEW partner countries:

In 2021, the percentage of women self-entrepreneurs was 9.5% in France, 8.1% in Ireland, 16.2% in Italy, 11.8% in Spain, with an EU average of 11.4% (OECD, 2021).

In conclusion, this statistical data provides a clear picture of the challenges and opportunities facing women entrepreneurs in the EU. This information is essential for developing effective policies and initiatives in favor of women entrepreneurship.

2.3 Challenges, Solutions, and Opportunities

In the dynamic landscape of women entrepreneurship, many challenges arise, but with them also come innovative solutions and unexplored opportunities. By understanding these elements, we can better shape policies and initiatives to support women entrepreneurs across Europe.

Challenges:

Cultural barriers and gender stereotypes: Despite advances, gender stereotypes persist, often discouraging women from entering the entrepreneurial world. These stereotypes can limit their access to resources and opportunities. Of particular note gender biased workplace culture, that operates in favour of the male, is a particular barrier to women in the ICT sector. This is most noted in gamification, coding and in programming sectors. It results in many women leaving the sector, due to this gender biased workplace culture.

Impact of Covid-19: The pandemic has disproportionately affected women entrepreneurs. Women-owned businesses, often SMEs, were particularly vulnerable to economic disruption. In addition, the increased responsibilities of unpaid caregiving have put further pressure on women entrepreneurs.

Access to finance: Historically, women entrepreneurs have had difficulty obtaining finance. The prejudices of investors and financial institutions can often hinder their access to the necessary capital.

Digital skills: Although many women possess basic digital skills, there is a significant gap in more advanced areas, such as programming or cybersecurity.

Solutions:

Targeted training: Specific training programs for women, focusing on entrepreneurial and digital skills, can fill existing gaps.

Support networks and mentoring: Encouraging the creation of networks and communities for women entrepreneurs can offer mutual support, mentoring opportunities and resource sharing.

Dedicated financing initiatives: Financing programs specifically designed to support women entrepreneurs can help overcome barriers to accessing capital.

Opportunities:

Digitalization: The transition to digital technologies offers huge opportunities for women entrepreneurs, particularly in e-commerce, digital marketing and technology.

Emerging markets: Sectors such as green technology, health and wellness offer new opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

Transnational collaboration: The DEW project, for example, shows how collaboration between different countries can lead to innovative solutions and the sharing of best practice.

In conclusion, while the challenges are real, the solutions and opportunities available to women entrepreneurs are vast. With the right support, training and resources, the future of women's entrepreneurship in Europe is bright.

2.4 Lessons Learned from Women Entrepreneurship Initiatives

This section delves into valuable insights gleaned from existing initiatives and projects aimed at fostering women entrepreneurship. These lessons are instrumental in shaping the DEW Project's approach to empowering women entrepreneurs in the digital landscape.

Leveraging Previous Initiatives

The DEW Project recognizes the wealth of knowledge generated by prior women entrepreneurship initiatives across Europe. To maximize the impact of our project, it is crucial to harness the lessons learned from these endeavours.

1. Tailored Support Programs

One key lesson from previous initiatives is the significance of tailored support programs. Women entrepreneurs often face unique challenges, such as work-life balance and access to finance. Successful initiatives have tailored their support to address these specific needs, offering mentorship, networking opportunities, and financial literacy training.

2. Encouraging Women Role Models

Initiatives that highlight successful women entrepreneurs as role models can have a profound impact. These role models inspire and motivate other women to pursue entrepreneurship. They also provide practical insights into overcoming challenges and achieving success.

3. Digital Skills Empowerment

In today's digital age, digital skills are essential for entrepreneurial success. Prior initiatives have demonstrated the importance of equipping women entrepreneurs with digital literacy, online marketing skills, and e-commerce knowledge. This digital empowerment enables women to leverage technology effectively in their businesses.

4. Addressing Confidence and Self-Efficacy

Women entrepreneurship initiatives have highlighted the significance of addressing confidence and self-efficacy issues. Many women underestimate their abilities, and initiatives that focus on building confidence and self-belief can yield remarkable results.

5. Networking and Community Building

Building a supportive network and fostering a sense of community among women entrepreneurs can be a game-changer. Previous projects have shown that women benefit greatly from networking opportunities, peer support, and access to a community of like-minded individuals.

6. Overcoming Stereotypes and Bias

Gender stereotypes and bias still persist in the entrepreneurial world. Successful initiatives have taken proactive steps to challenge these stereotypes and create an inclusive environment where women entrepreneurs are judged based on their skills and ideas, rather than their gender.

7. Measuring Impact

Measuring the impact of initiatives is essential for continuous improvement. Effective evaluation methods, such as tracking business growth, revenue generation, and the number of women starting and scaling businesses, help to assess the success of these programs.

8. Collaboration and Partnerships

Collaboration and partnerships with various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, and business associations, have been instrumental in the success of women entrepreneurship initiatives. These partnerships provide access to resources, funding, and expertise.

By learning from these valuable lessons, the DEW Project aims to create a comprehensive and effective training program that addresses the specific needs and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs entering the digital sphere. Our project is committed to empowering women to seize opportunities, develop essential skills, and thrive in the world of digital entrepreneurship.

3- Recommendations

3.1 Stakeholder-Centric Recommendations

3.1.1 Economic Policies

- Prioritise investments in digital education and training programmes tailored to women's needs;
- Invest in data collection specifically focused on women in digital entrepreneurship. Focusing on the EU level, for instance, gender-disaggregated data may be collected by the EIDES, the tool that measures the digitalisation of the entrepreneurial system in Europe;
- Integrate the gender perspective in all the facets of innovation policies. For instance, one of the four cardinal points of the EU Digital Compass 2030, “digital transformation of business”, may pursue a gender-tailored objective similar to the one assigned to the cardinal point “Skill”; the latter pursues the gender convergence in the number of ICT specialists in EU;
- Establish accessible funding mechanisms and ensure that funds are readily available without gender bias.

3.1.2 Educational Initiatives

- Integrate the EntreComp Framework to carry out the needs' assessment, identify learning outcome and evaluate the learner's progress. To know more on how to use this tool, readers are invited to consult the dedicated DEW's webinars available at this link (in particular, Webinar #1 Part 2 and Webinar #2 Part 3): <https://www.dewproject.eu/webinar.php?lang=EN>
- Integrate in the educational initiatives addressed to women the EntreComp Framework competences “Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk” and “Working with others”, considering that the majority of women businesses are reluctant to face great investments that require coping with a higher level of risk or hiring a significant number of employees;
- Integrate digital skills in training programmes not simply as a didactic unit but as a transversal element that can help women overcome all the gender-related barriers;
- Facilitate mentorship programmes where successful women entrepreneurs in the digital space can inspire and mentor aspiring entrepreneurs. Having relatable role models can significantly impact young women's confidence and motivation to pursue digital entrepreneurship;

- Provide hands-on, practical learning experiences such as workshops, hackathons, and real-world projects. Practical exposure to digital tools, online marketing, e-commerce platforms, and app development can equip women with the skills needed to succeed in the digital business landscape;
- Fill the lack of tools, at EU level, to assess the impact of educational initiatives in favour of women digital entrepreneurship. Future projects could work on the development and introduction of such tools as recommended by the European Parliament (2021).

3.1.3 Access to Funding

The major barrier preventing women from starting a business remains the access to finance and financial issues in general. Often women do not start a business because of lack of finance and when they already own one, they face problems in securing it (WEbarometer, 2021). The case of Italy is emblematic, since official sources report that credit-crunch is systematically greater for women and the banking system asks women businesses for more real guarantees from third parties or guarantees of financial solidity and economic growth (Unioncamere, 2020). Governments have to intervene with more concrete and efficient initiatives to reverse this trend that otherwise is likely to remain unchanged in the next few years.

3.1.4 Support Networks

- Create new women entrepreneurs' networks and widen the existing ones, since according to the WEbarometer (2021) women face limited business contacts and lack of models. For this reason, the DEW Training Toolbox has promoted the existing programmes at EU level (e.g., WEGate) and will function as a valuable network on its own, where women can share their experiences, ask for support and establish new valuable contacts;
- Facilitate the setting-up of or the access to networks, being the participation to networks a necessary condition for reaching a higher level of technical efficiency within a company;
- Encourage mentorship programmes that connect experienced women entrepreneurs with inspiring ones in the digital sphere and facilitate networking events or dedicated platforms.

3.1.5 Skill Development

- Emphasise digital literacy as a foundational skill. Ensure that women have a basic understanding of using digital devices, internet tools, and online platforms. Digital literacy forms the backbone for more advanced skills in the digital entrepreneurial landscape;
- Digital skills should be improved and treated as tools that can address transversally all the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, such as lack of self-awareness and motivation and financial issues. For instance, it is crucial to boost the digital skills and learn how to use the digital tools that enable women to search for funding opportunities easily and autonomously;
- Place importance on soft skills development such as communication, negotiation, leadership, and problem-solving. These skills are essential for building effective teams, fostering collaborations, and managing digital businesses successfully;
- As proved by the DEW's survey results, there is also a need, according to women entrepreneurs, to boost their Planning & Management skills and their Financial Literacy;
- In addition to EntreComp and considering the critical position that financial issues occupy in the field of women entrepreneurship, stakeholders are invited to conduct a DEW-like Gender Assessment on the Financial Competence Framework, the new framework to assess the financial competences of adults in Europe, jointly published by the European Union and the OECD in 2022.

3.2 Rationale for Recommendations

The rationale for the recommendations within this report is based upon both primary and secondary data sources.

Primary data source.

The primary data was garnered across the partner countries through the dissemination of a standardised survey. 206 respondents provided up to date data outlining their experiences of entrepreneurship, outlining the challenges they face and the opportunities that exist, and that have supported them in their entrepreneurship journey. The respondents provided recommendations for support agencies to facilitate and focus their support initiatives on providing targeted innovation training opportunities for women entrepreneurs that responds to their needs, in a nuanced way. The survey data indicates that aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs are well educated, over 80% of the survey respondents had attended third level education. Despite that they are challenged by gender biased perceptions, especially when encountering financial institutions. The survey responses indicated that a lack of self awareness and self confidence was for some, a major barrier, that hindered their entrepreneurial journey. Similarly qualitative data was gathered with aspiring and existing entrepreneurs, support agencies, managers, coaches, educators, quality assurance professionals amongst others across the partner countries during testing and validation and in the multiplier events.

Secondary data.

The secondary data that was consulted as relevant to the compilation of the recommendations included the Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring (GEM) reports, 2020, 2021 and 2022, with a particular emphasis on each of the partner countries reports. The European Commission promotes women's economic empowerment and women entrepreneurship. The European Entrecomp Framework and skills strategy was applied to the training toolkit. The EU education, employment and entrepreneurship strategy documents for each of the partner countries were consulted including [Entrepreneurship in Education](#). The OECD reports provided valuable insights and recommendations, specifically in relation to education and digital entrepreneurship strategies. The [OECD](#) entrepreneurship and self employment data reports for each of the partner countries were consulted. Within each partner country national, regional data was consulted and contributed to the DEW project recommendations.

3.3 Best Practices and Case Studies

Based on the needs expressed by women entrepreneurs, the EU Commission has encouraged networking and exchanges of good practices, as well as initiatives that help

women build confidence in their abilities. Such initiatives included [Wegate](#), designed with the women entrepreneur in mind. The [Enterprise Europe Network](#) supports the networking needs of women entrepreneurs. The DEW project has contributed greatly to raising awareness about such initiatives, bridging the gap between global and local business supports and alliances. The DEW project encourages associates across the partner countries to network within the DEW community. A particular gap identified by women entrepreneurs is in terms of international trading, and online payments.

3.4 Implementation Strategies

The findings of the primary and secondary research data indicates that in order to provide nuanced support to women entrepreneurs, implementation strategies need to respond to the complex mix of business, digital and financial support needs, as identified by women entrepreneurs. It is not a case of one size fits all. Implementation strategies need to be targeted to the unique and gendered needs of women, take cognisance of the reality of women's lives, including their caring roles and work life balance needs. It has been noted that women's entrepreneurship can be developed through mentoring, and through working with women role models, through networking, and through implementation of international alliances. The EU Business Angels model suggests strong potential [Business Angels Europe](#) for investment in women entrepreneurs. The DEW project research findings suggest that alongside European and international research and alliances, the local agency support context is very important. National, regional and local support agencies are critical to the implementation strategy of targeted policy, they can create better policy by listening to existing and potential women entrepreneurs, reflecting upon gendered financial bias, and organising the support they offer in a way that takes cognisance of women entrepreneurs work-life commitments.

4- Gender equality and the Entrecomp framework

4.1 Gender Equality in Entrepreneurship

Growth, innovation, and the creation of jobs are all facilitated by entrepreneurship. Encouraging entrepreneurship is a primary policy objective for governments that anticipate elevated levels of entrepreneurial activity to generate long-term employment

opportunities (EIGE, 2016). In light of this, academics and decision-makers have developed a greater interest in women's entrepreneurship. While advancing women's equality, empowerment, and social inclusion has historically been the justification for women's entrepreneurship, its growth is now recognized to make sound financial sense.

The percentage of women-owned firms in OECD countries is currently approximately 30% of all businesses. When women do launch firms, they often do it in fewer industries and on a smaller scale than men. Furthermore, women who work for themselves face significant wage disparities and often make between 30% and 40% less than men. At the EU level, the gender pay gap for self-employment is 45%, a stark example of the magnitude of the differences between men and women in this kind of work.

The literature demonstrates that women still face numerous challenges and hurdles when starting and operating enterprises, despite the fact that entrepreneurship is difficult to measure and analyse because the lines separating it from self-employment are often crossed.

4.2 The State of the Art in Gender-Related Entrepreneurship Research

The lack of female participation in the EU labour market continues to represent a significant source of untapped potential for EU economies. As outlined by the EU Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, gender stereotypes and male-dominated models and networks continue to prevail to the detriment of women. Women make up 52% of the total EU population, yet only 34% are self-employed and just 30% of start-up entrepreneurs are female (WEgate, European Commission, 2020). Covid-19 has undoubtedly exacerbated the challenges of female entrepreneurship promotion as well as the social challenges of violence against women and discrimination (in the EU there has been a rise of 60% in instances of violence against women during the pandemic).

At the same time, the post-pandemic landscape provides for new opportunities for female entrepreneurship, specifically the unexploited potential of digital entrepreneurship. As well as addressing the existing gaps in relation to female entrepreneurship promotion, there have also been calls for action to address gaps identified in relation to training under the EU 'Updated Skills Agenda for Europe'. A specific focus on digital skills is also required which would result in a significant boost to GDP of approximately €9bn (Danti, European Commission, 2016).

4.3 Significance of Gender Equality in the Entrecomp Framework

As presented above, DEW addresses the issue of social and economic exclusion of women, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds who do not have the opportunity to access supports to acquire or enhance digital enterprise skills. The DEW OER now enhances opportunities for new and existing female entrepreneurs as well as the suite of supports available to the project partners and external VET providers. DEW makes a significant contribution to policy as part of the Gender Effect Assessment (PR1) in its application of a gender lens to the ENTRECOMP framework, and has endeavoured to create a European-wide Community of Practice on the issue combining the learning and results into a format that can enhance and strengthen new policy. As part of PR1, the DEW project mapped the ecosystem of female entrepreneurship to extrapolate gender-specific needs and competencies onto the existing ENTRECOMP framework, through primary and secondary research.

4.4 Aligning the DEW Project with Entrecomp Principles

Developed in 2015, the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework offers a complete set of principles, attitudes, and abilities for the entrepreneurial mindset needed to meet today's societal challenges. Three competency areas—"Ideas and Opportunities," "Resources," and "Into Action"—are analysed by the EntreComp tool. Each of these areas highlights five competencies that are critical to cultivating an entrepreneurial mentality. From the DEW perspective, the needs assessment conducted in PR1, mapped these gender-specific needs and competencies onto the existing ENTRECOMP Framework, yielding new pedagogical approaches to teaching in the field of female entrepreneurship but in a digital capacity. This then has the potential to scale up the ENTRECOMP Framework for use in the partner countries and the wider-EU.

5- Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Key Recommendations

The recommendations provided in this document stem from extensive research and the invaluable insights of women entrepreneurs, support agencies, and partners across the DEW project. They focus on key aspects of women entrepreneurship, including economic

policies, educational initiatives, access to funding, support networks, and skill development:

Economic Policies:

Prioritize investments in digital education and training programs tailored to women's needs.

Invest in gender-disaggregated data collection to track the status and progress of women in digital entrepreneurship.

Integrate a gender perspective into innovation policies, ensuring that the digital transformation of business aligns with gender-tailored objectives.

Establish accessible funding mechanisms without gender bias.

Educational Initiatives:

Integrate the EntreComp Framework for needs assessment, learning outcomes, and learner progress evaluation.

Focus on the EntreComp competences "Coping with uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk" and "Working with others" for women entrepreneurship education.

Make digital skills an integral part of training programs to address gender-related barriers.

Facilitate mentorship programs with successful women entrepreneurs as role models.

Provide practical learning experiences through workshops, hackathons, and real-world projects.

Develop tools at the EU level to assess the impact of educational initiatives on women's digital entrepreneurship.

Access to Funding:

Create initiatives to address the gender bias in access to finance and funding mechanisms.

Support Networks:

Establish and expand women entrepreneurs' networks, offering support and networking opportunities.

Facilitate participation in networks as a prerequisite for technical efficiency in women-owned businesses.

Promote mentorship programs and facilitate networking events or dedicated platforms.

Skill Development:

Emphasize digital literacy as a foundational skill for women entrepreneurs.

Harness digital skills as tools to overcome gender-related challenges, such as financial issues.

Develop planning and management skills, financial literacy, and soft skills.

Encourage the evaluation of educational initiatives using tools like EntreComp and a DEW-like Gender Assessment on the Financial Competence Framework.

5.2 Ongoing Commitment to Advancing Women in Entrepreneurship

The DEW project remains committed to advancing women in entrepreneurship beyond its conclusion. As a community of practice, DEW encourages continued collaboration, networking, and knowledge sharing among women entrepreneurs, support agencies, educators, and policymakers. It is vital that efforts persist in creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in entrepreneurship. To achieve this, stakeholders must remain dedicated to implementing the recommended measures, refining policies, and fostering an ecosystem that empowers women in the digital entrepreneurship landscape.

5.3 Future Directions for the DEW Project

The DEW project has made significant strides in promoting women in digital entrepreneurship and addressing the gender-specific challenges they face. However, the journey is far from over, and the project envisions several future directions:

Policy Advocacy: Continue to advocate for the integration of gender equality and women's entrepreneurship in national, regional, and European policies. Collaborate with policymakers to ensure the adoption of DEW's recommendations.

Expanding Networks: Strengthen and expand the DEW community to create a thriving network of women entrepreneurs who can support and inspire one another. Foster international collaborations and partnerships for greater impact.

Capacity Building: Develop more tailored training programs and resources that empower women with essential digital and entrepreneurial skills. Address new challenges and opportunities in the evolving digital landscape.

Research and Evaluation: Stay committed to gathering data and conducting research on women's entrepreneurship, taking into account the digital and gender-specific aspects. Evaluate the impact of DEW's initiatives and refine strategies accordingly.

Promote Best Practices: Continue to disseminate best practices and case studies that highlight successful approaches to women's entrepreneurship. Encourage the adoption of these practices in various contexts.

Innovation and Adaptation: Stay at the forefront of innovation in digital entrepreneurship and adapt to emerging trends and technologies. Explore new avenues for women entrepreneurs, such as green technology and emerging markets.

The DEW project sees a future where women entrepreneurs are recognized, supported, and empowered as equal participants in the digital entrepreneurship landscape. The commitment to this vision will guide DEW's efforts in the years to come. Together, we can create a more inclusive and prosperous future for women in entrepreneurship, leveraging the transformative power of the digital age.

6- References and annexes

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