



A Toolkit for Gender Equality in Practice - Initiative

UNIZO (Union of Independent Entrepreneurs)

Women Entrepreneurship Award (WOMED), Women Entrepreneurs MentorCoach (WE mentor coach)

Summary of the initiative

UNIZO is the Union of Independent Entrepreneurs, an organisation active in Flanders and Brussels whose members are entrepreneurs, self-employed or members of a liberal profession. Markant is an independent network of entrepreneurial women. Markant and Unizo want to put role models of female entrepreneurship in the spotlight.

Annually they invite female entrepreneurs, who have built their own business successfully, to come forward and participate in the WOMED Award competition, which has existed since 1998. WOMED stands for "Women in Enterprise and Development".

Every year they hand out one award in the category Entrepreneur > 5 years (WOMED Award North) and one award in the category Upcoming Talent having their business between 2 and 5 years (Award Promising Entrepreneur) to female entrepreneurs in Flanders.

Every other year, a similar selection is done in a developing country. This development award (WOMED Award South) has the protection of Her Majesty the Queen of Belgium and therefore gets a lot of media attention.

Furthermore, Markant has launched the 'WE mentor coach' initiative aimed at stimulating female entrepreneurship through mentoring and coaching.

'WE mentor coach' is an e-tool that gathers and unites established women entrepreneurs with women entrepreneurs at a crossroads, by means of an e-platform. It gives the opportunity to established entrepreneurs to strengthen their mentoring and coaching skills in a unique virtual environment and to put their experience and abilities into practice by supporting other entrepreneurs at a certain crossroads – specifically those who are considering expanding, downsizing or terminating their business.

Entrepreneurial women at such a professional crossroads will have access to a virtual environment of businesswomen with a similar profile. 'WE mentor coach' will organise training sessions for mentors, who in turn will give advice to mentees.

The purpose of 'WE mentor coach' is twofold:

- For the mentors: deepening their mentoring and coaching skills;
- For the mentees: successfully bridging their "transition period" through training, networking and the support and inspiration from their mentor. 'WE mentor coach' has grown out of a collaboration between the University of Hasselt, Markant, Zenitor, Syntra Flanders and Unlocking Enterprise CIC (Worcester, UK).

The 'WE mentor coach' project is supported by the European Social Fund.





Priorities

Addressing gender roles

Type

Social Partners

Country

Belgium

Model of social partnership

Unilateral / employer

References

<http://www.womedaward.be>

<http://www.we-mentorcoach.eu>

This initiative was submitted by:

Unizo/Markant (UEAPME)

Website

<http://www.unizo.be/> - <http://www.markantvzw.be/>