



## EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF EU MOM ENTREPRENEURS

According to the current situation of female entrepreneurs in the EU, although women constitute 52% of the total European population, only 34.4% of them are self-employed and 30% are start-up entrepreneurs. Additionally, although the Women's Financial Network states that women start businesses at two times the rate of men, they find it harder at the outset to grow their businesses and access venture capital. Different reasons lead many new mothers, especially the disadvantaged ones, to withdraw from the labor market either for a period of time or completely, after the birth of their child. Employment rate of women with children under the age of 6 is more than 20% lower than the employment rate of childless women



(European semester thematic factsheet labor force participation of women, 2016). Moreover although many prominent women and mothers have contributed to all fields of business and entrepreneurship, very few if any, are known and popular to the general public, especially women, or even to their trainers, coaches, or educators. As a result, the belief that women/mothers are not competent enough in business leads to disappointment of women's with children.

## An Erasmus+ project

In the framework of the new 2021-2027 programming, the MOMentum project was approved by ERASMUS+ program and started its activities in December 2021 with an online kick-off-meeting.

The partnership is led by Institute for Regional Development (IRR) from Czech Republic and completed by Challedu from Greece, Inpla from Estonia, CIP-Citizens in Power from Cyprus, and ASSO-Agenzia per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile from Italy.

## THE RESILIENCE CAPACITY OF WORKING MOTHERS DEVELOPED DURING LOCKDOWN PERIOD

While it is clear that COVID impacted everyone, it is more evident that working mothers were affected even harder. Those who had the possibility of working-from-home during the lockdown had to develop extra capacity to handle at the same time labor tasks, homeschooling, children assistance, and daily housework. Although the involvement of men in domestic tasks today is significantly higher, the lockdown clearly revealed that gender inequalities still persist within each home.

The pandemic context also exposed the impossible balancing act that society demands of working mothers and how incompatible the ideals of the “good mother” and the “career woman” are. While the data is clear that the pandemic has driven mothers out of the workforce, what is less clear is how they will re-enter the work market in the Covid recovery phase. Yet, a positive aspect is that as a result of the mothers’ ability to balance their domestic role with smartworking during the lockdown, many of these women are considering starting their own business.

This is reflected in a survey developed by an Ecommerce platform (Shopify), with 1,532 parents in the U.S., where 62% of mothers said they were interested in supplementing their income, with more than half reporting at least some interest in starting their own business. Of the mothers surveyed who are not already business owners, 44% said they are either slightly or moderately interested in starting a business, and one in six mothers indicated that they are very interested in starting a business. So, mothers who developed great resilience in lockdown, now also intend to put it in their own entrepreneurial service. They ultimately seek professional growth in balance with motherhood.



## MOMENTUM PROJECT' CONTRIBUTION

The main priority of the project “MOMentum” is *social inclusion of mothers, especially disadvantaged mothers who are single mothers, migrants, mothers with social needs in the world of entrepreneurship.*

“MOMentum” is designed to bring out the significant role of women, and especially of mothers, in entrepreneurship. It thus fights stereotypes and provides role models to help them become start-uppers. By using the innovative approach of role-model gamified education to strengthen the entrepreneurship skills of mothers, the equality will emerge. This way we promote a basic objective of strategic framework for *European cooperation in education and training (“ET 2020”)* that is *“equity, and social cohesion so that all citizens can continue to develop job-specific skills throughout their lifetime”* and meet the important priority for *“inclusive education, gender equality, non-discrimination”*.

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