

## Final results and recommendations on FEM wp 3, mentoring

Mentoring was carried out in two ways: as traditional pair mentoring and as group mentoring. The countries could choose either pair or group mentoring or even both of them. On the bases of the base models and their own experiences they have further created the models suitable to themselves.

### 1. Mentoring in Numbers

There were more than 200 women directly involved with mentoring.

	Groups / Pairs		Participants
Estonia	10	4	groups generally with 4-6 participants
Finland	4		
Latvia	3	21	
Lithuania	3	9	
Sweden	3		
Together	23 / 34		

The participants were both micro entrepreneurs and women planning to start their own; in Sweden and Finland more often entrepreneurs and in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania mainly women who want to start their own business.

### 2. Main Achievements

The group mentoring model from Finland has been developed in the FEM countries and each country has built a model suitable to the respective circumstances. The “ingredients” are presented as a base model in the feminfo.net. In developing the pair mentoring were used models from different countries.

The main achievements:

- **5** mentoring manuals (Estonia, Finland (2), Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden)
- **12** new enterprices
- a power point presentation on group mentoring (in Sweden)

All the main achievements are not all measurable in numbers. However, they are very important and the basic motive to continue with mentoring:

- increased self-confidence, wider views: the participants see their future and possibilities more positive and, also, realistic

- cooperation and networking, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally: mentor groups have met locally, they have participated so called idea trips and trainings in business issues
- to work independently = alone - traditions have changed; entrepreneurship has got wider meaning and thus also been accepted as an option

The qualitative results were more often pointed out by the starting entrepreneurs than by the entrepreneurs with more experience who also were able to create concrete business contacts

### **Achievements in business**

- increased understanding in economical issues
- improved or new business and marketing plans
- cooperation in purchasing and marketing
- improved language knowledge in practise
- improved performance

It was pointed out that the changes like improvements in turnover and results will be seen in some years after the mentoring process has taken place.

### **Special achievements in countries**

- **in Estonia** special mentor training and training camps for both mentors and mentees  
= tradition in E has been applied in other connection
- new women entrepreneur organisations started
- **in Finland** two mentors for one group and in Estonia mentor change. With two mentors you maximize the benefit for the mentees and also make sure that the group will even, if the other mentor gets ill, have a mentor
- **in Latvia** mentoring is included in the National plan for development for year 07-13; they also have a national mentor competition
- **in Sweden** the Power Point presentation

### **3. Expectations and fulfilment**

According to the surveys the expectations of the participants and the targets were reached very well. The most often mentioned were and fulfilled

- the entrepreneurial know-how increased, business development
- networking, both national and international started
- new business contacts, new views
- entrepreneurs activated in many ways e.g. joined the entrepreneur organisations and even created new ones
- the organisation learned mentoring principles and coordination

Mentoring is a respected and eligible working method in business promotion among the women micro entrepreneurs in the FEM countries. Especially the group mentoring has been a success.

The expectations put in planning the project were fulfilled: best practises and efficient methods were created. Even during the project there were long-term decisions taken thanks to the mentoring and support and networking with it.

Interest to cooperate has risen. There are new business contacts both inside the countries and internationally. New mentoring groups have been created and are in the planning phase.

#### **4. Problems**

The importance of commitment: The combination of whole time and part-time entrepreneurs is not to recommend: the part-time entrepreneurs are less serious and interrupt more easily. It makes the group motivation weaker. All participants should be either whole time or part-time entrepreneurs.

The language skills: some entrepreneurs were not able to tell about their own products. It created difficulties in the international connections and the international network formation was not as expected.

The long distances can be a barrier; in Finland mentors were paid for travel costs.

#### **5. Recommendations for the future mentoring processes**

**It is important to realise when planning and implementing group mentoring that**

- the mentoring project needs to have an organiser who has access to public financing, the understanding and contacts in entrepreneurship and business
- well structured plan for the project (meetings and trainings)
- groups are well put together; there are many ways and combinations
- motivated mentees: they understand that also they themselves are the gaining part
- experienced entrepreneurs as mentors; the own experiences are highly valued and respected
- themes for meetings
- documentation of the meetings
- peer support and information exchange is crucial – also the mentors gain from it; the well functioning networks are also permanent.

#### **6. Continuation**

Most of the FEM mentoring groups have expressed a wish to continue in order to meet, cooperate and develop the business contacts started both nationally and internationally. Other actions in countries

- Sweden has started a new group
- in Finland plans to start with Leader financing
- in Latvia also men are interested in mentoring
- even half of the mentees are interested to be mentors in the future.