



WINNOVATORS - FROM IDEA TO BUSINESS IN DIGITAL ECONOMY

Sonja D. Radenkovic¹

Belgrade Banking Academy – Faculty of Banking, Insurance and Finance, Union University, Belgrade, Serbia

Nadja Cirovic²

Belgrade Banking Academy – Faculty of Banking, Insurance and Finance, Union University, Belgrade, Serbia

Mila Knezevic³

Belgrade Banking Academy – Faculty of Banking, Insurance and Finance, Union University, Belgrade, Serbia

MOTIVATION

The WINnovators project (*Boosting young women's entrepreneurial spirit and skills to become the women innovators of the future*) funded by the EU Erasmus+ program focuses on the marginalized women and creates free online courses for them to aid in their informal education and launch their own businesses. Young women from undeveloped areas can have brilliant ideas for starting and running businesses in many nations, but they often lack the skills and entrepreneurial mindset to really carry out these ideas, according to preliminary research of project participants.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Online education and online entrepreneurship can be first run as a side activity in the digital economy, with minimal costs and moderate effort, so encouraging entrepreneurship among some of the targeted young women does not always imply changing their lifestyles totally. However, some of them may view this as a great door opener for improving their living in the future. For young women, it often also means more independence and gender equity. However, due to family,

¹ Email address: sonja.radenkovic@bba.edu.rs

² Email address: n.cirovic@bba.edu.rs

³ Email address: m.knezevic@bba.edu.rs



economical, and other considerations, migrating from a rural location to a metropolis can be challenging for young women.

METHODOLOGY

The WINnovators platform (www.winnovators-space.eu), which was created to provide online teaching and training materials that encourage innovation and entrepreneurship using STEM/STEAM knowledge, i.e. knowledge from science (S), technology (T), engineering (E), art (A), and mathematics (M), is where the WINnovators project activities are realized. Relevant project participants (students and teachers) identify young women who are interested in learning about various STEM/STEAM topics and encourage them to enroll in courses and work with the project team in three of the project's partner nations: Slovenia, Estonia, and Serbia.

RESULTS

Once the marginalized young women are familiar in using the WINnovators platform, they begin enrolling in the courses and challenges they choose from among those posted on the platform; each woman is given a student mentor who serves as her first point of contact for any questions or concerns. All ladies are urged to develop their own concepts for new business during the learning period. In one or more creative, inspiring online sessions, those who struggle to come up with original ideas for starting a business or engaging in new activities receive assistance from their mentoring students and teachers. Student mentors monitor all of their students' online and in-person activities, gathering information on all pertinent activities.

CONTRIBUTION

The WINnovators project aims to give underrepresented young women more opportunities to learn new skills and obtain new knowledge, as well as to evaluate their own entrepreneurial potential. These women view it as a significant step in their lives to seize new opportunities for self-accomplishment outside of constrictive local mindsets and conservative lifestyles, evaluate social change critically, and build sustainable alternative futures by enhancing their own lives.

KEY WORDS

digital economy, women entrepreneurship, STEM education



JEL CLASSIFICATION

O330

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