BRIDGING THE GAP:

Digital competences for women in rural areas to increase their entrepreneurial opportunities and employability. Towards inclusion through entrepreneurship

ITALIAN NATIONAL REPORT

By

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Contents

General Introduction

In Italy, about one in three companies is run by women, with higher percentages in farms where the structures run by women are almost nine thousand. However, there is still a long way to go, starting with an organic and strategic project that encourages the break with tradition based on the patriarchal management of the company that usually sees a passing of the baton between father and son, focusing on structural interventions that allow women to devote themselves to the enterprise and at the same time to the family.

EU rural development policy helps rural areas to cope with the wide range of challenges and opportunities they face in terms of economic, environmental and social development. Known as the "second pillar" of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), it has been improved for the 2014-2020 period through the process of broader CAP reform.

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development 2014-2020 in Italy, amounts to €50.142.641.889 divided as follows:

Competitiveness of SMEs (comp. Delle PMI) : 15bln

Environment Protection & Resource Efficiency : 13bln

Climate Change Adaptation & Risk Prevention : 10bln

Social Inclusion 4bln

Low-CarbonEconomy : 2bln

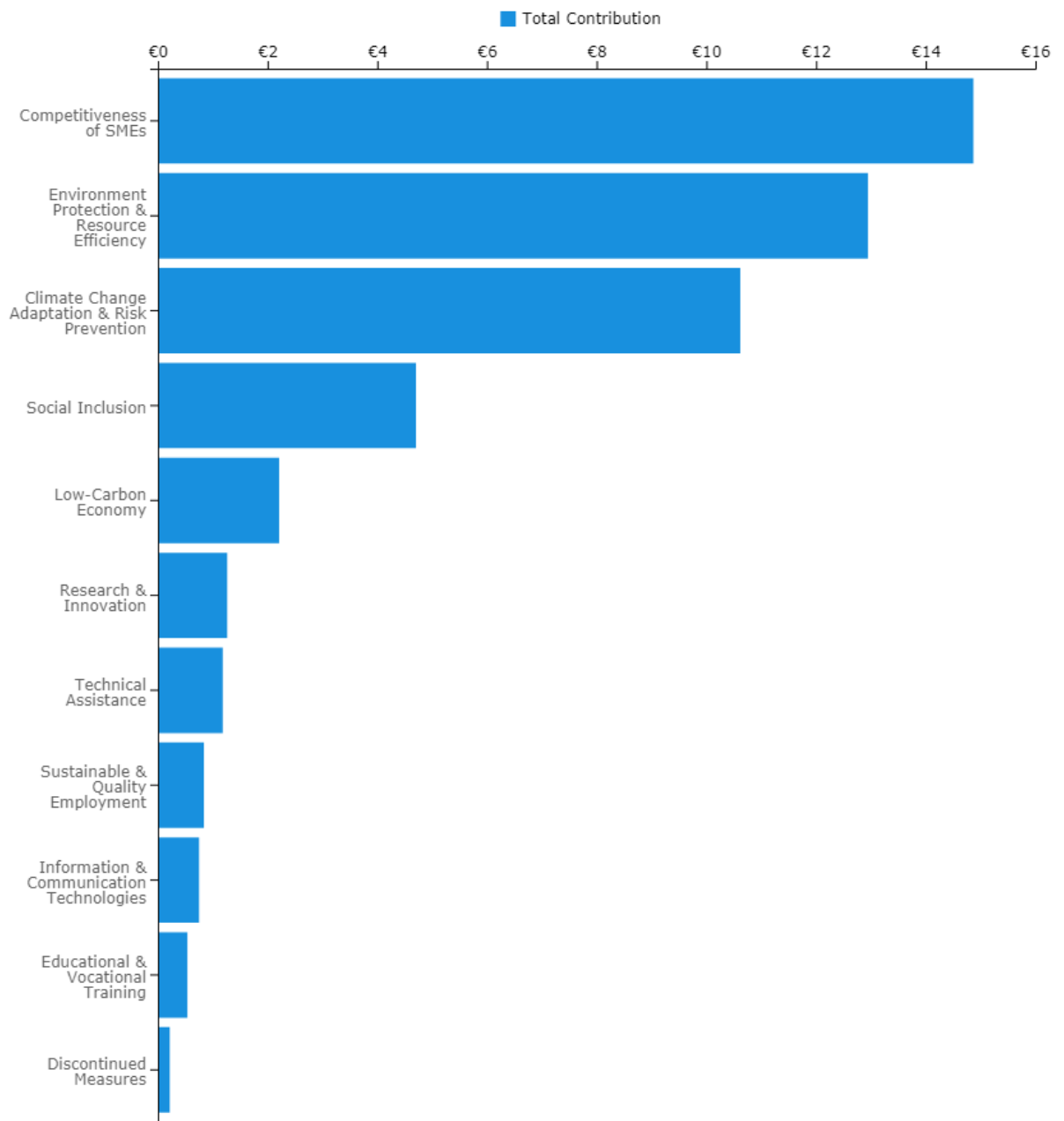Research &Innovation : 1bln

TechnicalAssistance : 1bln

Sustainable &QualityEmployment : 838mln

Information &CommunicationTechnologies : 751mln

Educational &VocationalTraining : 538mln

DiscontinuedMeasures : 216mln

ESIF 2014-2020: Total Budget by Theme (daily update): European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, EUR billion

Italy has one of the lowest employment rates for women (42,0%) as compared with the European average (55,6%). In addition, an unemployment rate of 12,2% as compared with an EU average of 8.8%, confirms Italy's position as a late developer in the EU.

According to the ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics) data of 2003, women manage 17.3% of Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA) and 27.3% of farms all over Italy

Rural population ageing is one of the main constraints affecting rural development. Indeed, in agriculture there is a high percentage of women in the age class 35-54 (59.4%), a small percentage of 15-34-year-old women (22.9%), while women over 50 total 33.9%. On the contrary, in the industrial and service sectors, there is a higher percentage of young women in the age class 15 to 34 (39.2%) and a lower percentage of women over 50 (17.8%).

Age group	Agriculture	Other sectors
15-19	0.8	1.2
20-24	3.7	7.5
25-29	7.5	14.1
30-34	10.9	16.4
35-39	14.2	16.4
40-44	14.6	14.3
45-49	14.4	12.3
50-54	16.2	9.9
55-59	11.0	5.0
60-64	4.0	1.9
65 and over	2.7	1.0
Total	**100**	**100**

Percentage of women in agriculture and other sectors broken down by age group for the year 2001 (ISTAT

Most of the times the level of education of women occupied in the agricultural sector is lower than the national average. According to the ISTAT data of 2001, 5.6% of rural women didn't get any certificate, 36.5% have a primary education certificate, 16.6% have a secondary school certificate, and only 1.7% possess a university degree. These data show that women in the agricultural sector are much less educated than those occupied in other sectors, but at the same time reveal that their level of education is almost the same as men's

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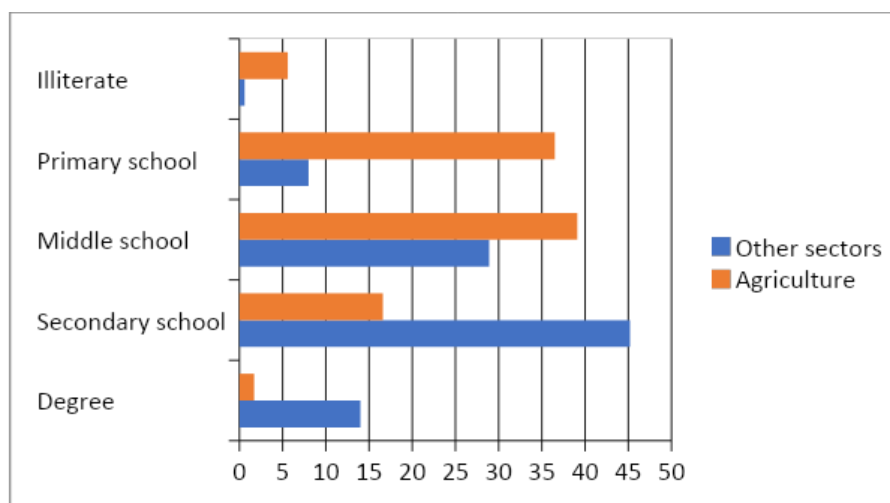
Percentage of women in agriculture and other sectors broken down by level of education (ISTAT 2001)
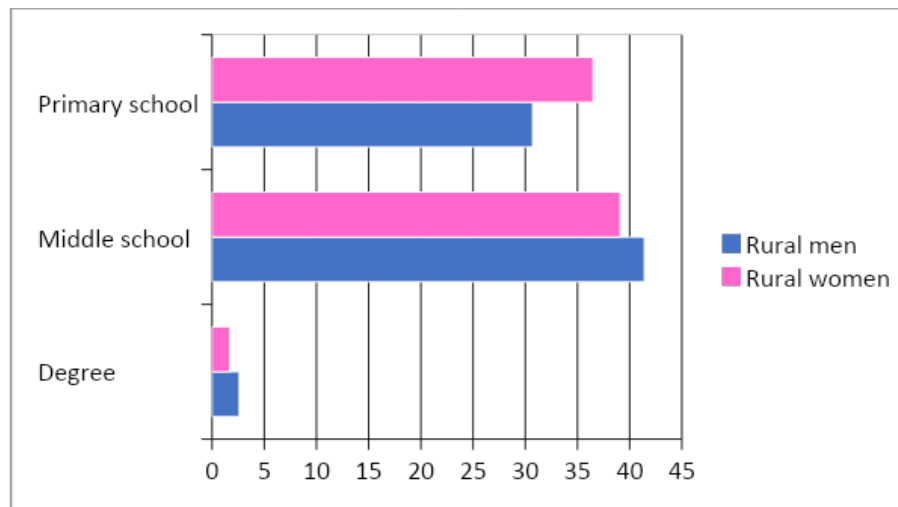
Percentage of women and men occupied in agriculture broken down by level of education (ISTAT 2001)

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are seen as necessary ingredients for economic and social development in the so-called 'knowledge society' and have attracted attention by governments, businesses, citizens and civil society organizations. They are tools with multiple functionalities providing ample opportunities for information and communication and having applicability in the entire sphere of economic, social, political and cultural life. Nonetheless, the availability of ICTs should not be taken for granted and their deployment presents variations according to individual, social and cultural characteristics. Disparities in access, capacity to use and ways of engagement with ICTs (the so-called digital divide) have also been on the EU and international policy agendas for quite some time. Such disparities have pronounced gendered dimensions and are generated by political, economic and socio-cultural factors but often by the nature of technology itself.

The main cause of the digital divide between men and women in the world is related to the fact that women rarely attend secondary schools of II grade and very few choose computer courses, both in high school and university. In Italy, 24.9% of women graduate in technology-related fields, one third of men.

Italian entrepreneurship ecosystem in the rural areas.

The rural development policies financed by the European Union represent for entrepreneurship, especially in the agricultural sector, the opportunity to have access to public interventions aimed at promoting the structural modernization of farms, the economic diversification of rural areas, the improvement of the quality of life and the protection and enhancement of environmental resources.

While promoting in principle the abolition of inequality and the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women, the planning and implementation of interventions have so far shown little attention to women.

From the official data of the General Census of Agriculture of ISTAT it emerges that in Italy, in 2010, the women conductors of an agricultural enterprise are 487,071 and represent about 32% of the total of the agricultural conductors. The same information is more important if we consider the data provided by MovImprese for which 38% of the farms registered in the Register of Enterprises is conducted by women, thus placing the agricultural sector, 17.8%, the second most concentrated female sector after trade. The total number of women's farms surveyed in the 2010 Agricultural Census, compared with the previous one in 2000, highlights a moderate positive trend in the weight of these companies: over the ten years is recorded, in fact, an increase of both women conductors and heads of companies, respectively 1% and 2%, compared to the decrease of 2% of heads of companies and 1% of male conductors. For the most part, women's farms are characterized by family-run farms, small or medium-sized farms and are mostly located in areas with less specialized agriculture. Compared to the national average, they are distinguished by a smaller size in terms of physical size (5.1 hectares against 7.9) and productive, with a value equal to half of the national and an average standard production per hectare less than 23%.

The female conductor works on average, in one year, 41 days less than for men and with an intensity of work, given by the ratio of working days per hectare of Sau (utilized agricultural area), a little higher than the national average (11 days against 10.5). This highlights two key features of the female farm: on the one hand, the widespread use of part-time employment which finds its main justification in the possibility that it offers of reconciling business with family and care commitments, which are often left to women, and on the other hand, the

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existence of a traditional management of the company focused mainly on the supply of human capital.

Rural female entrepreneurs. Digital competences to support entrepreneurship.

For a long time women have played a marginal role in the entrepreneurial fabric of our country because of a society where the division of tasks within the family between man and woman was clear and access to employment for women was markedly hindered by cultural factors. In spite of what may seem, however, in those years women had the ability to lay the foundations of what would have been their future skills by demonstrating their ability to a prudent management of the family economies.

Despite the disadvantageous conditions in which they have been relegated in past years, they have found the energy and motivation to bring out their initiatives and bring them to success. With the passage of time, an increasing number of women have chosen to move towards the world of entrepreneurship thanks to the benefits it offers in the balance between work and private life. For many women, a company of its own is an alternative way of taking control of their careers and at the same time of continuing to take care of the family and the education of their children through greater flexibility and autonomy in relation to paid employment. Another factor that has supported the drive for female entrepreneurship has been the need to try to break free from the pay gap and opportunities compared to men.

Disadvantaged in economic activities and undervalued by the world of work, women have developed a greater determination to risk with a career as entrepreneurs to achieve their goals and succeed in business. Especially today, with the great potential that new technologies offer to "digital entrepreneurs" to take advantage of new opportunities, to eliminate geographical limits and boundaries, to actually change the way they work, to live and to be together.

Within the macroscopic framework of female entrepreneurship we look in detail at whether and how digital transformation can make a breakthrough in this scenario.

If we look exclusively at the report published by the Ministry of Economic Development (MISE) in January 2019 on innovative startups, there is a slight delay in the rise of female leadership in new businesses. Out of 9,758 new startups, those where the majority of the

shares are held by women are 13.3% of the total compared to 22.2% observed in the sample of all new companies. Considering instead the innovative startups that have at least one woman in the social structure rises to 43.1% of the total, a very promising figure compared to 47.7% of the other new companies. In short, to date, innovative startups are starting to speak to women and more and more studies show the positive correlation between business results and female leadership.

One factor to take into account is that the digital world is free from prejudices and makes no gender differences, guaranteeing women the same opportunities as men in doing business and competing, even in sectors traditionally considered male.

Even the data of an eBay Ipsos search shows how women can find more opportunities and ease of entry into some digital-based businesses such as e-commerce. Although the majority of women surveyed (53%), believe that the greatest benefit of those who have an online business is to reconcile family and working life more easily, there is a 25% who sees online as an opportunity to operate easily in any sector and see recognized their professionalism.

Training and Learning on entrepreneurship in rural areas.

Rural women's access to education and training can have a major impact on their potential to access and benefit from income-generating opportunities and improve their overall well-being. A variety of approaches, including non-formal education, technical and vocational training, agricultural extension services, workplace training, training in new technologies and literacy and numeracy training are needed to address the various challenges rural women face. In addition, information and communication technologies (including mobile and electronic communication, etc.), supported by the right policies and institutional frameworks, can provide rural women with alternative avenues to access information related to their rights, services and resources, and social protection.

- **Re-Startup**

The project, carried out by a partnership involving six Italian provinces in five different regions of the national territory: Lombardy, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Emilia-Romagna, Lazio,

Puglia and funded by the Ministry of the Interior and the European Commission under the European Refugee Fund 2008-2013 - AP 2011-2012 Action 6, wants to promote the entrepreneurial initiative of holders of international protection belonging to vulnerable groups, with particular attention to women, through the carrying out of training courses and accompanying the start-up of cooperative enterprises. The partners involved make use of multidisciplinary territorial teams formed by experienced professionals with regard to: taking charge and psycho-social-health support of vulnerable international protection holders, business training with reference to the cooperative and start-up business model. The intervention methodology shall be participatory, focusing on the involvement of vulnerable international protection holders in decision-making processes relating to entrepreneurial pathways. The duration of the interventions is 3 years (2012-2014). The project was carried out by several partners: three social cooperatives and three non-profit associations operating in the field of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, a representative association and assistance to associated cooperatives, a cooperative society engaged in vocational training.

- **FESR – European Regional Development Fund**

The ERDF shall pay particular attention to specific territorial features. Its action aims to reduce the economic, environmental and social problems affecting urban areas, investing mainly in sustainable urban development. At least 5 % of ERDF resources shall be allocated to specific territorial features through «integrated actions» managed by cities. Geographically (isolated, mountainous or sparsely populated) less favored areas receive special treatment.

Finally, the most remote areas receive specific economic support from the ERDF to cope with any disadvantages resulting from the remoteness of the region. Taking as an example the Apulia Region, the ROP 2014-2020 has been elaborated taking into account the provisions of Regulation (EU) n. 1303/2013, which identifies 11 Thematic Objectives underlying the implementation of the Cohesion Policy, aligned in turn with the priorities and objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

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Training and learning on entrepreneurship in rural areas – specific for women:

There are different realities, more or less large, that give a hand to women, proposing training courses and learning paths to develop their skills to the best, acquire self-awareness and learn to manage the different roles (like the more classic one: the working mother).

Young Women Network - Inspiring Mentor

Young Women Network is a non-profit association founded in 2012 with the aim of promoting the empowerment of young women. Among the many activities proposed, for the fifth edition of Inspiring Mentor, which was held in March 2020, a program that aims to support the career and the work-life balance of young talents, thanks to the collaboration of managers and professionals who provide their time and skills in a one-to-one path. Professionals interface using their know-how to help women approach the world of work to build their career path in a solid and structured way.

Valore D

Valore D is the first association of Italian companies that has been working on gender balance for 10 years. It was born from the collaboration between 12 managers of major companies, AstraZeneca, Enel, General Electric, Johnson&Johnson, Ikea, Intesa Sanpaolo, Luxottica, Mckinsey & Company, Microsoft, Standard&poor's, Unicredit and Vodafone. The programs proposed by Valore D are various and aim at the enhancement of employees of companies with very important results. For example, 50% of managers who participated in Valore D mentorship programs had a career advancement within 18 months. Interesting is the project **InspirinGirls**, which brings in middle schools professionals, as scientists, sports and managers, who encourage young women not to limit their path and to follow their ambitions.

Training and learning to develop digital competences and skills in rural areas:

As mentioned above, women at work are still at a disadvantage. This is what emerges from several reports: for example, Italy still has an important gender gap according to Eurostat data, a difference that is 4.1% in the public sector and reaches 20% in the private sector.

Women can find more opportunities and ease of entry into some digital-based businesses, 25% see online as an opportunity to operate easily in any industry and see their professionalism recognized. In this regard, there are several initiatives to support the development of digital skills for women:

SheTech

SheTech is an organization that offers women working in the digital and technological field important events, workshops and meetings and exchanges. The target groups are the most diverse: female entrepreneurs, freelancers, engineers or even any other interested woman, regardless of professional background. In addition to one-off appointments, it also offers a School divided into didactic modules, with individual and group exercises. The main activities are focused on: personal branding, public speaking, leadership and self-confidence and other digital training workshops to learn and improve their skills: from social media management to digital marketing, from graphics to SEO, boot camp and training courses on coding, to bring women to the world of programming and fill skills mismatch.

Wise Growth

It is a reality that supports both companies and individuals in a path of growth, to improve reputation, well-being, economic demand, hopes for the future and try to work on the inclusion of diversity. Women are offered empowerment paths, also to be managed autonomously online, in which they can reflect on their role, on the goals they set themselves and on possible limits, as well as to develop awareness and motivation. The goal is to support women in the search for a strong motivation to move towards career and places of power, with the awareness of the pros and cons of this journey. This path of self-empowerment is proposed to women who do not have this possibility, either because they work in areas not sensitive to the subject, or because they are freelance professionals or self-employed women.

Case of study

Case of study 1

Case of study 1	
Identification of the initiative/programme	FA.Ci.L.E. - Formazione civico linguistica e servizi sperimentali
Promoter(s)	Rinascita Società Coop. Sociale
Website	http://www.cooperativarinascita.org/servizi/al-via-il-progetto-fa-ci-l-e-formazione-civico-linguistica-e-servizi-sperimentali
Country	Provinces of Lecce, Brindisi and Taranto
Active	No
Language(s)	Italian
Type of training	Self-learning
Is it the initiative addressed to rural female (exclusively)?	No
If no, please indicate other groups addressed:	Users with vulnerabilities (weak, illiterate, uneducated, exposed to the risk of territorial isolation or far from CTP/CPIA sites, refugees and holders of international protection)
Starting point	The project was created to meet a need widely felt on the territory of the provinces of Lecce, Brindisi and Taranto among all the entities operating within the network SIPROIMI and CAS and consisting in the absence of adequate language training courses for holders of international protection belonging to vulnerable groups (women, pregnant women, minors at risk of exclusion, unaccompanied foreign minors, persons with physical or cognitive disabilities, victims of trafficking)

Objectives	•Development of teaching tools for teaching Italian to people belonging to vulnerable groups;
	•Strengthening the skills of teachers in partner schools;
	• Promotion of inter-institutional dialogue between the world of training and welfare in order to create support services for the socio-economic integration of vulnerable migrants;
	•Development and application of a FAD platform for the provision of distance learning services for self-learning;
	•Strengthening the territorial social and institutional network for the provision of services to migrants;
	•Provision of services and interventions to facilitate and support access to and participation of specific and/or vulnerable targets in training actions;
	•Provision of personalized support services for specific and/or vulnerable targets;
	•Provision of ancillary services to courses aimed at ensuring adequate flexibility of training courses in terms of educational program, time and location;
	•Provision of services of linguistic and cultural mediation and orientation to the territory and its services provided in collaboration with the social fields of the area;
	•Provision of information services relating to regulatory requirements for non-Community nationals;
	•Provision of services and in-depth actions on knowledge of the labour market and the network of labour services, the essential contents of labour law with particular reference to contractual forms, safety and regularity of work, prevention of domestic and professional accidents
Description	The project has as its general objective the activation of 5 integrated training courses for the learning of the Italian language (L1/L2) and civic education aimed at the achievement of knowledge and language skills useful for social-economic inclusion on the territory of 100 applicants and holders of international protection belonging to vulnerable categories, selected within the CAS (Extraordinary Reception Centers) and SIPROIMI centers (Protection system for international protection holders and unaccompanied foreign minors) active in the provinces of Lecce, Brindisi and Taranto (Apulia Region)

Training/learning methodology applied	Training and materials.
Competences developed	
Structured-learning/training topics covered	• Translation and interpreting service in the classroom; • Presence of educational facilitators and support teachers for the class of people with psycho-physical discomfort; • Teaching accompanied by experiential methodologies; • Outdoor modules with practical experiences or guided tours in key places of daily life • Modules for the teaching of technical languages aimed at facilitating integration into the world of work; • Composition of classes for homogeneous groups and choice of teaching tools adapted to the target audience; • To strengthen the link between education and integration by including in education elements of civic and legal education and information on the world of work; • Use of the Media Education methodology to facilitate learning; • Use of non-formal language to facilitate learning; • Distance learning services, simple and easily accessible, usable by self-learning;
Results	The project has been structured to have a significant impact on the entire territory involved and coincides with the three southernmost provinces of the Apulia Region. Expected impacts can be distinguished into short- and medium-term impacts. The short-term impacts consist in supporting the integration process of 100 people who due to a social or psychophysical vulnerability and in the absence of this training, integrated and personalized, they would certainly be destined to remain for a long time within the care circuit of taking charge, linked to the SPRAR network, CAS or territorial social services. The medium-term impacts result, both from the training of the teachers of the partner schools, and from the activation on the territory of support services for vulnerable international protection holders. The project in fact provides for the construction of numerous moments of encounter/ exchange and dialogue between the world of training (secondary schools) and the world of welfare (social areas of the area).

Challenges	
Potential for Bridging the gap	Get inspiration for national languages classes and for an inclusive approach. Developing training activity aimed to women social integration (from rural areas, migrants, women with fewer opportunities)

Case of study 2

Case of study 2	
Identification of the initiative/programme	Skills to work
Promoter(s)	Apulia Region, Cooperativa Sociale Rinascita, ARCI, Ce.f.a.s., A.F.G.
Website	http://www.cooperativarinascita.org/sociale/skills-to-work
Country	Apulia Region
Active	Yes
Language(s)	Italian, English, French
Type of training	Face to face
Is it the initiative addressed to rural female (exclusively)?	No
If no, please indicate other groups addressed:	Third country nationals citizen (no EU)

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Starting point	The clear employment segmentation between Italian and foreign workers means that migrant workers (EU and non-EU) are characterized by greater mobility, lower wages and greater opportunities for employment, are more exposed to the processes of expulsion from the labour market. In some foreign communities there are high rates of NEET and very high levels of female inactivity. In general, they perform low-skill tasks which, in many cases, underutilize the training skills acquired in their home countries, At the same time, they have a low participation in active labour market programmes for the unemployed.
Objectives	• activation of individualized integrated pathways to support the autonomy and integration of migrants; • support for the recognition and enhancement of the knowledge, skills and skills acquired by migrants in formal, informal and non-formal contexts, with particular attention to those gained through migration experience; • increase in the degree of attachment of migrants to the Employment Services system with a consequent decrease in dependence on ethnic networks for job search; • decrease in the phenomenon of over-education, the causes of which include the non-recognition of qualifications; • increasing opportunities for professional growth through access to vocational training and retraining programmes; • reduction of female inactivity among the migrant population; • percentage reduction of the number of Neets on the legally resident migrant population; • increase the opportunities for job integration for Community and non-Community foreign nationals; • support for social participation and civic engagement of migrants in building an inclusive society.
Description	The overall aim of the project is to establish a system for linking labour policies, integration and reception services with the aim of activating individualized integrated pathways to support the autonomy and integration of as many migrants.
Training/learning methodology applied	Outreach

Competences developed	• improving and facilitating access for migrants to local employment services; • activation of innovative interventions for the profiling of formal and informal skills held and for the certification of qualifications acquired in the countries of origin; • activation of actions aimed at consolidating multi-level governance actions to strengthen cooperation with the reception system; • strengthening of awareness-raising pathways to issues of economic integration; • innovative measures to encourage the involvement of migrants in productive sectors.
Structured-learning/training topics covered	
Results	• activation of individualized integrated pathways achieved through the certification of formal and informal skills, the drafting of Cvs and skills balance sheet, the validation/certification of titles held acquired in the countries of origin or transit; • elaboration and dissemination of a pathfinder (English, French, Arabic, pastu, wolof) aimed at orienting and improving the knowledge and access of migrants to work services in the territory; • experimental activation at each Centre for the provincial employment of an immigration desk managed with multilingual human resources; • activation of a regional capacity-building programme aimed at integration operators active in first and second reception centers (CAS, SIPROIMI and CARA) to promote the use of the Skills profile tool for third country nationals; • promoting the active participation of migrants in economic and social life through the strengthening of awareness-raising pathways; • involvement of the private sector and the reception system for the formation of two networks aimed at facilitating the meeting and the job match between employers and migrant workers, especially in emerging productive sectors or linked to the local productive fabric.
Challenges	Consolidate and qualify employment services for foreign citizens, focusing on dialogue and inter-institutional cooperation and implementing the promotion of interventions aimed at facilitating access to social-economic integration policies measures aimed at migrants in order to increase their participation in active working

	programmes and policies.
Potential for Bridging the gap	Get inspiration for future awareness activity, the potential of the Skills to work methodology, is the project itself. Integrating a specific target group, the used tools are efficient and create an immediate contact with the service users.

Interviews

Interview 1

INTERVIEWEE PROFILE n.1	
Profile	🖎 Rural female entrepreneur 🖎 Teachers or trainers in ICTs-related rural content
Organisation:	Demo Group Soc.Coop.
E-mail (further contact):	
Job position:	project manager
Experience in years	8
TO BE FILLED BY INTERVIEWER	
Control data	

Hour:	10:00 a.m	Date:	19/03/2021
Place:		online	

A. Identification of interviewer n.1	
Name	Paola Iaconisi
Summary of her professional and persona background	Project manager and non-formal education expert. She is graduated in Social Sciences and she specialized in project management, she collaborates and supports several enterprises for their strategic development and sustainability
B. Experience as entrepreneur	

Experience as entrepreneur	Becoming an entrepreneur was not an immediate choice, her willingness to become a co-operative came at the end of her high school years. For this reason she undertook an academic path in social sciences and international development cooperation and then specialized in human rights and international cooperation. During the years of University she had the opportunity to lean on the design and then chose to specialize by following courses in parallel, even privately, learning to use the various technical tools that are the basis of design. In the course of her studies she discovered a new specific field, European design, then she embarked on a path in this field and during her studies she implemented all the notions already acquired previously, both theoretical and practical (such as time management, space management, teamwork) managing to create her professional career. When he learned management techniques and to work for goals, in collaboration with other institutions has promoted and organized courses of application of project management to personal life providing guidance and advice to those who want to enter the business sector learning to manage their private life (time and space management) and acquiring skills such as public speaking, managing to express concepts addressing an audience of people. During her professional career there were various issues to be addressed, such as shyness or language. In the start-up experience together with her sister has entered the world of commerce and one of the problems that she faced in this new sector is to find and communicate with the right target and therefore issues related to social and web marketing.
Training to be entrepreneur	The entrepreneurial training, in terms of content she learned it at the university, while for the design the first course was undertaken at an NGO based in Lecce and then continued at other institutions, It is therefore a specific training not offered by public bodies but to be sought in the private sphere.
Digital skills and competencies	Today, digital skills are essential, and we have seen this especially in this year of pandemic and lockdown. This moment has made us realize how important it is to be familiar with technology. In her career she had to learn to use mainly basic computer programs such as writing, but also more specific programs such as data processing, programs for creating and editing images, use of the web, social media and programs to help develop a critical spirit for searching for online information.
C.Training/learning on entrepreneurship/digital skills	
Existing training on digital skills to entrepreneurship	What she knows in the digital field, she learned by himself, at work. In some aspects, however, she had to turn to experts in the field, such as to learn how to manage her website or use social pages in the most

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	effective way. For the digital training, she doesn't currently believe that there are difficulties of access to courses, but rather limits in the application of skills, especially here in southern Italy the limits are in society and in the economic system that leads women to have to choose between becoming a family or becoming entrepreneurs, denying support to all those who must also take care of the family.
Future training/learning tool:	If Italian and European politics are pushing towards entrepreneurship, specific training courses should be created already in the school field (high schools and universities). To start any kind of activity on your own you must now have some skills (basic digital, time management, administrative, etc.), which are part of the project management, It is therefore possible to integrate the existing courses of study alongside project management to any type of training because it is such a transversal field that is adaptable to any sector.
Final question	
5 digital competences and skills	Basic programs of writing photo and video editing Use of social media know how to do online research communication skills aimed at web marketing

Interview 2

INTERVIEWEE PROFILE n.2	
Profile	🖉 Rural female entrepreneur 🖉 Teachers or trainers in ICTs-related rural content
Organisation:	GroundGround
E-mail (further contact):	
Job position:	Marketing Expert
Experience in years	8
TO BE FILLED BY INTERVIEWER	

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Control data				
Hour:	09:30	Date:	22/03/2021	
Place:		online		

A. Identification of interviewer n.2	
Name	Silvia Dongiovanni
Summary of her professional and personal background	Graduated in linguistic mediation (English and Arabic), she also studied the French language in Paris, has a master's degree in fashion communication and journalism, is a stylist and deals with social and visual communication, collaborates with various brands and fashion publishing houses. Trainer, organizes courses of communication and responsible use of social. She founded in 2014 her fashion brand "Ground Ground"

B. Experience as entrepreneur	
Experience as entrepreneur	Becoming an entrepreneur was for her an attempt to be reborn after a dark period. She decided to return to the south of Italy, in Salento, after a long period of study and work between Rome, Milan and Paris. In 2014 she launched her clothing line, completely tied to the territory, drawing agricultural tools on her t-shirts as a sign of challenge, to say that "we have to get our hands dirty if we want to get something in life". In 2016 she began to give a more professional structure to her entrepreneurial idea and to travel around the territory and Italy to make her product known. She has published her brand in magazines such as Vogue, GQ uk and Glamour uk, making himself known abroad. This process, was relevant to her because she understood that to do business you have to understand what will actually be your job, not just have a good idea and tell it well, but you have to structure it well, have an economic base and have someone to advise you on how to steer your expenses in the right direction. Before you start, you need to study the business idea, have a business plan and discuss with industry experts. In the territory in which it is located (South Italy) it has not found suitable professionalism to understand its entrepreneurial idea and that they were able to follow it step by step because all the "professionals" to which it has turned, have not been able to have a complete vision of the final idea. In spite of the study and the years of experience acquired, the difficulties to face therefore have been and are many, from the fiscal ones, bureaucratic, to the request for a financing to the production of

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	the heads and in order to try to face all this she has confronted with other female entrepreneurs of the same field exchanging ideas, advices and good practices.
Training to be entrepreneur	At the educational level, she didn't follow any specific training to become an entrepreneur, but she gained her experience directly in the world of work, thanks to collaborations for large brands and studies undertaken.
Digital skills and competencies	In the digital field his skills are varied, after his studies, as well as for his brand , he has collaborated with various fashion brands and publishing companies taking care of the image, video clips, music. Currently she is also a trainer and organises courses for young people on digital communication and the responsible use of social media.
C.Training/learning on entrepreneurship/digital skills	
Existing training on digital skills to entrepreneurship	With regard to training, he currently does not believe that there are specific professional figures for his sector able to support and train aspiring female entrepreneurs.
Future training/learning tool:	It would be very interesting to have access to courses, also online, with specialized trainers that help to understand what is missing in the entrepreneurial idea and to improve. In his case he would like to improve marketing skills at a specific level.
Final question	
5 digital competences and skills	Use of company management software e-commerce sales techniques through social networks Photo and video editing programs Graphics software in general

Interview 3

INTERVIEWEE PROFILE n.2	
Profile	🖊 Rural female entrepreneur 🖊 Teachers or trainers in ICTs-related rural content
Organisation:	Silente
E-mail (further contact):	

Job position:	fashion designer
Experience in years	11

TO BE FILLED BY INTERVIEWER

Control data

Hour:	09:30	Date:	22/03/2021
Place:		online	

A. Identification of interviewer n.3

Name	Francesca Iaconisi
Summary of her professional and persona background	Fashion designer, she studied fashion at the University of Bologna, 15 years ago she started her brand of sustainable fashion handmade clothing "Silente", for a few years now, she has decided to start her first family-run store on the road to entrepreneurship.

B. Experience as entrepreneur

Experience as entrepreneur	She started this business because it was her dream since she was a child. She undertook a course of university studies in the fashion sector, in Bologna, training purely from a cultural and communicative point of view. On a personal level, the entrepreneurial path was very important because it allowed her to increase her skills and also grow personally. Being an entrepreneur is not a job like any other because there are many responsibilities to face and you need to possess many skills. In order to address the problems that entrepreneurship entails both in the long term and in day-to-day management, it is constantly confronted with other realities both at the same level and at higher levels.
Training to be entrepreneur	In order to become an entrepreneur she did not follow specific courses. She has followed general training courses, but she lacks training on marketing, administrative training and company training, for the practical part is self-taught. For an activity like her, you would have to have skills to 360°, being then it's a young reality you need to always add new skills.
Digital skills and competencies	Digitally it has few basic skills. At the beginning of her professional career she opened a blog, then facebook and then an instagram profile trying to make the best use of these tools but without specific skills.

	She thinks that digital skills are very important but that an entrepreneur cannot take care of everything, in a company there is a need for a specific figure to deal with the digital part.
C.Training/learning on entrepreneurship/digital skills	
Existing training on digital skills to entrepreneurship	In the territorial reality in which it is located, the situation is completely different from the north, one gets the impression that one does not take too seriously, starting from the training bodies that often seem to have more interest in existing and giving work to their employees rather than forming new resources and also contributing to entrepreneurial development. Specifically, with regard to her sector, the level of training in many environments is low and lacks vision and foresight in training new professionals.
Future training/learning tool:	In the business sector, a useful tool could be to have a series of ad hoc courses available in various fields, from basic skills such as e-mail management to more specific tools such as management of an e-commerce, passing through the areas that everyone can need for their work. It would also be very useful to have constant updates on the news of the digital world that is constantly updated.
Final question	
5 digital competences and skills	cataloguing software e-mail management social network know how to properly search for information online e-commerce and indexing

Interview 4

INTERVIEWEE PROFILE n.4	
Profile	🖊 Rural female entrepreneur 🖊 Teachers or trainers in ICTs-related rural content
Organisation:	Makara srls
E-mail (further contact):	
Job position:	craftswoman

Experience in years	4

TO BE FILLED BY INTERVIEWER			
Control data			
Hour:	09:00	Date:	23/03/2021
Place:		online	

A. Identification of interviewer n.4	
Name	Giorgia Negro
Summary of her professional and persona background	Creative, her training starts from the Art School, loves visual communication and drawing. After high school she attended an academy of graphics where she specialized in photography, graphic design, web design art direction. She has worked in the field of graphics as a freelancer for years with various projects. In 2016 flew to New Zealand where she discovered the use of laser cut thanks to a friend who was doing a job training at Wellington. So the spark starts and passes from the graphics of the 2d to 3d, then arriving at the design of the jewel until developing its line: "Radika".
B. Experience as entrepreneur	
Experience as entrepreneur	On a personal level, her entrepreneurial path has been very important, her approach to work has changed, she has started to manage independently and has formed in a positive way in all areas, from administrative and bureaucratic management to respect for time, but also in the creative and production process, regarding suppliers up to product advertising.
Training to be entrepreneur	She didn't attend training to become an entrepreneur, but as a winner of a European funding she was supported by professionals in various fields, and has had access to many useful tools to have a general view of his project and to understand how to achieve the goals set. The best way is to always deal with people who have followed a path similar to your or even the case histories online and turn to professionals such as accountants and job consultants.
Digital skills and competencies	There are very useful tools for work organization, such as analysis programs, which help you to have a precise picture of what the company

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	has done and what are the objectives to achieve. Some of these software has learned to use them thanks to online courses such as the platform for managing electronic invoicing or communication on facebook and instagram.
C.Training/learning on entrepreneurship/digital skills	
Existing training on digital skills to entrepreneurship	She never attended a training derived from public institute. According to her experience there is a gap between those who seek specific training in the business and those who offer it.
Future training/learning tool:	One training which he would like to undertake and which he considers very important for his case is data processing.
Final question	
5 digital competences and skills	Use of social media processing of statistical data correct use of an e-commerce cataloguing software email management

Interview 5

INTERVIEWEE PROFILE n.5	
Profile	🖉 Rural female entrepreneur 🖉 Teachers or trainers in ICTs-related rural content
Organisation:	Krill Academy
E-mail (further contact):	
Job position:	Web Manager
Experience in years	15
TO BE FILLED BY INTERVIEWER	
Control data	

Hour:	10:00		Date:	26/03/2021
Place:			online	

A. Identification of interviewer n.5	
Name	Fernando Tadicini
Summary of her/his professional and persona background	Head of the Team of RSM Puglia, a consulting company within which an innovation laboratory has been created on the themes of "business design" and "digital transformation". It advises companies in a process of change both in terms of business and in terms of digital.
Current position	Responsabile del Team di RSM Puglia

B. Existing training	
Training on entrepreneurship in rural areas	Female entrepreneurs are figures that in Southern Italy are imposing only in recent years. According to her point of view and her professional experience, there are no major difficulties in access to training for aspiring female entrepreneurs. The main difference for an entrepreneur lies in the size of his company rather than in the geographical location, the membership of networks or multinationals, the connection with a parent company that has various locations around the world or the fact of starting a family business. Much is surely linked to a cultural discourse and in Italy there is a very important gap regarding these issues.
Digital skills and competencies	Management of hardware and software within your company, acquisition of data for the study of customer requests/ expectations, use of social networks, knowledge of 4.0 technologies, tools for evaluating the company.

C. Skills and competencies developed/promoted by existing training:	
Training needs and gaps	When companies rely on them, the first thing that is put in place is a process of training in digitization and the use of digital tools, as these processes of change are impacting on all business dynamics and organization. It is therefore essential to involve all employees in the approach to new technologies, alternating training phases in presence and at a distance.
Challenges to access to this training	The typology of their interventions is focused on the customer and on the needs/criticality to be solved through the use of a series of

	specific resolution tools such as the organization of new e-learning formats.
Involvement of rural females in the training activities	Especially in the south, they often work with aspiring women entrepreneurs and the training needs encountered are for the most part related to the simplification of work through the use of digital tools and the creation of a business plan that is within the reach of past training.
D. New learning/training	
Skills and competences to be included	Their work in southern Italy is concentrated in the regions of Apulia, Campania and Sicily where the client companies are often in fact inserted with a narrow entrepreneurial fabric, that have been found especially in the last year to have to rethink its organization because belonging to industrial sectors in crisis (e.g. refineries or car logistics), where the decline in demand (due to the pandemic) has had major repercussions in the sector, thus benefiting greatly from digitisation.
Characteristics	During the Covid emergency they created new formats, such as survey focus groups and "talk show" (short training moments for the introduction to digital tools).
Topics covered	Hardware and software, robotics, cyber security, social use, customer experience, use of digital tools.
Involvement of target group in training	A technique of involvement they implement is the approach to technology through the use of the video game. With this tool, employees are encouraged and facilitated in learning new digital techniques and tools useful for their work. Of course, the more you move towards advanced tools (such as cyber security, robotics, augmented reality) the more complex the training becomes.
Final question	
5 digital competences and skills	Understand how to manage hardware and software within your company; Customer experience of its customers through the acquisition of data (questionnaires anonymously, information collection); How social media can be a vehicle for information: linkedin, facebook, etc. Know the 4.0 technologies, understand what these technologies are and have info about the various facilities (Industry 4.0, recovery found, 4.0, training 4.0). Understand if the company is in a time of crisis or growing.

Interview 6

INTERVIEWEE PROFILE n.6	
Profile	✎ Rural female entrepreneur 🖍 Teachers or trainers in ICTs-related rural content
Organisation:	RSM
E-mail (further contact):	
Job position:	business consultant / trainer
Experience in years	3

TO BE FILLED BY INTERVIEWER			
Control data			
Hour:	11:30	Date:	29/03/2021
Place:		online	

A. Identification of interviewer n.6	
Name	Mino Degli Atti
Summary of her/his professional and persona background	He deals with digital communication, has a past as a university researcher in Contemporary Philosophy and Philosophy with new media. He's a freelancer, digital strategy and communication consultant. He founded Krill Academy, a training school where he provides courses in the digital field (copywriting, blogging, web writing, video design). It has an editorial project linked to the training school called "Krill Books" with some active series that deal with topics such as cross-media knowledge, philosophy, social sciences and contemporary imagery.
Current position	Trainer, free-lance professional.
B. Existing training	
Training on entrepreneurship in rural areas	Regarding his experience as a trainer, the target group of women who turn to his Academy is between 30 and 45 years of age, often with training courses far from digital and communication, who, however,

	find themselves having to fill the roles of communicators and social media managers for companies or individual projects. Universities and traditional training bodies often do not provide digital and communicative training, which is why these issues are being addressed at a relatively adult age.
Digital skills and competencies	In a constantly moving world, upgrades and training are extremely important. The impression in his work experience is that users looking for training, are often people who are already passionate about the subject or who want to increase their skills to put at the service of third parties or their projects effective communication methods, but also people who have professional experiences far away from the digital world, that get back in the game through the use of these tools.

C. Skills and competencies developed/promoted by existing training:	
Training needs and gaps	Basically the macro needs are two: the one related to writing for the web (blogging, copywriting) and social media (who wants to communicate with social media must put passion but there are also many things to know such as the type of content, platforms, channels, visual or written content)
Challenges to access to this training	In the experience of Krill Academy the courses are promoted throughout Italy, intercepted people are reached via the web and mainly through social. Then there are various steps in which you evaluate the educational offer, is made available to the informative material to make known the courses and teachers, meetings and free live. The activities are carried out individually, live or on demand, so that the subject matter remains accessible.
Involvement of rural females in the training activities	Within their courses, women are majority. It comes from all over Italy as the online presence of the training offered allows access to all. It has been noted that in metropolitan areas the interest in the web and communication is more specific, but in terms of enrolment and frequency Krill Academy manages to reach both peripheral areas and large cities. Digital is therefore a strength for the training of many people.
D. New learning/training	
Skills and competences to be included	The key to training is certainly concreteness. It can be said that there are 3 levels of training: theoretical (for example university), theoretical/practical (training such as that provided by their centre) and the concreteness of working on their projects. Its goal goes towards these last two points, making people work on specific projects and personal projects, bringing out the

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	maximum potential from a training path by applying the acquired notions concretely.
Characteristics	Most of the students are people who come from university courses, who are already familiar with the web and social networks and try to understand how best to use these tools for their projects.
Topics covered	Goals to achieve, writing a project, communication.
Involvement of target group in training	Its goal is to implement the knowledge acquired in personal paths and projects, making the maximum potential emerge from the training path.
Final question	
5 digital competences and skills	Know how to build a project Being able to forecast, set goals Organize the work, the activity, the sustainability of a project Communication: interfacing with professionals, knowing how to talk with a graph, with who builds the site etc. to be able to communicate effectively. Have relationships and empathy skills

Focus Groups

Focus Group 1

BRIDGING THE GAP PROJECT **2020-1-ES01-KA204-082832**	
🖊 **Rural female entrepreneur** 🖊 **Trainer/Teacher/Facilitator**	
Date: **22/03/2021**	**Place:** **online**
Name and Surname	**Professional profile/ working area**
Francesca Iaconisi	Fashion designer
Silvia Dongiovanni	Marketing Expert
Giorgia Negro	Craftswoman
Paola Iaconisi	Project Manager
Alessandra Strano	Craftswoman
Selena Del Vecchio	Seamstress

A. Focus group nº 1

BLOCK 1. Training addressed to rural female aimed to promote entrepreneurial mindset

When you start a business you are director, creative, marketer, communicator, but even having basic training it is difficult to manage all the parts.

Some of the main issues that emerged certainly concern digital, specifically marketing and communication, knowing how to use social media can be a good starting point. The proposed training is also too basic for sales and data processing, which would be useful for the presentation and marketing of the product.

Especially here in southern Italy the gap in the digital field appears to be very widespread, if even in the business you are "trained" it is very likely to find around you a total lack of digitalization, it is also often difficult to communicate via the internet due to the lack of email addresses or the online presence of suppliers and customers that leads to a stalemate.

Another situation in which we may find ourselves is that of being trained and updated in the digital field, but having serious difficulties in starting entrepreneurship due to the lack of training courses in business management, workflow, communication or even just managing a newsletter.

Some of these difficulties can be overcome if you are a winner of one of the European calls that promote start-ups and self-entrepreneurship and that allow you to use the advice and the help of experts in the sector to start your business. After the first start-up period, however, the gap remains due to the lack of funds for consulting with experts in the sector to support the company that won the call.

BLOCK 2. Digital skills and competences for rural female entrepreneurs

Currently there are no major difficulties in accessing training, just provide yourself with the right tools and have some time to invest in this. In the business world, however, we should learn to value the professionalism of each and understand that there are skills that must be entrusted to the right professional. These skills must be easily usable for an entrepreneur/ creative without that means spending a lot of money.

It's impossible to know everything, but starting a business requires a 360 degree training, having a deep knowledge of the sector and then knowing its shortcomings to go and fill them if necessary. In Italy we have too much bureaucracy, too many digital gaps even in the public sector, difficulties of approach and communication with public offices via the internet (emerged for example during the lockdown) Gap training in the digital field that start from school. Within schools in fact, at this time there are training courses on the proper use of social networks and the internet but there are gaps in the use of the PC because many kids have and use only the Smartphone or the tablet (used mostly to play) not knowing then use even basic pc programs such as Microsoft word or emails. As for the business sector, however, if there are opportunities for training in the digital field (aimed at specific sectors) are very difficult to intercept. There are certainly online courses organized by private paying agencies (often very expensive) and there are courses organized by public bodies that are very difficult to learn about. There is no fundamental channel between training bodies and entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs.

Other skills necessary for those who start entrepreneurship are the management of time, resources, objectives and the management of unforeseen, all factors that will constitute the entrepreneurial path. Depending on the sector of reference, it would be useful to train and

improve especially in the management of social networks, a website, the use of graphics and video editing programs, but also in the management of business and online invoicing.

BLOCK 3. Expectations of a new learning tool

One of the main problems emerged is that work is too rough in the south of Italy, there is a need for constantly updated training and to create easier access to professionals and effective communication between young people already trained in digital (born in a world already totally digitized and that have received a training in step with the times) and companies.

Final questions	
5 digital skills and competences	Cad programs for fashion Online communication Email management Graphic editing programs Use of statistical software for the performance of the company.
Define how the new tool should be	Training to support entrepreneurship, company management, social, image and communication management
4 (only 4) characteristics that could define the added value of the new training/learning tool	Complete start-up training Free access to content Consulting with professionals Continuous updating

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Focus Group 2

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2020-1-ES01-KA204-082832</td>
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<tr>
<td colspan="4">🖊️ Rural female entrepreneur
🖊️ Trainer/Teacher/Facilitator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>29/03/2020</td>
<td>Place:</td>
<td>online</td>
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<tr>
<td colspan="2" align="center">Name and Surname</td>
<td colspan="2" align="center">Professional profile/ working area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Christine Vernaglione</td>
<td colspan="2">Financial consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Laura Contaldo</td>
<td colspan="2">Estate agent</td>
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<tr>
<td colspan="2">Laura Pezzuto</td>
<td colspan="2">Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td colspan="2">Selenia Greco</td>
<td colspan="2">Psychologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Federica Masella</td>
<td colspan="2">Engineer and public consultant</td>
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A. Focus group nº 2

BLOCK 1. Training addressed to rural female aimed to promote entrepreneurial mindset

Training provision in the most disadvantaged areas is almost non-existent, unless you go to private or paying institutions, especially here in Southern Italy often lack the culture of training in general or do not invest properly in it and are obliged to seek private and self-financed training.

Looking at the world of school, the proposed training is extremely basic and does not allow, for those who want, to enter in a concrete way into the business world.

In the world of work then we can see the substantial differences between those who approach to be entrepreneurs selling services such as psychological or technical advice and those who enter the business world being part of commercial networks already developed. In the first case there are obvious difficulties of access to training, both in the digital and management of the company, in the second case we find a base (main company) that invests in continuing training to keep their partners up to date in both digital and development.

To approach then to be entrepreneurs it's essential to follow a training and update on the use of the Internet, the main social networks, or the use of OTP codes for digital signatures, the advertising or the communication.

BLOCK 2. Digital skills and competences for rural female entrepreneurs

There are many obstacles to be faced in the field of business, certainly subjective experience counts, but one of the first obstacles is to give greater importance to digital skills. It's very useful, for example, to have a social profile, to know how to use it correctly by sponsoring and managing to sell your product reaching a large number of people. It is essential to know how to use the internet to communicate, through emails or video calls with their customers or partners.

The main obstacle is to integrate women's personal and social skills and the development of

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digital skills, combined with the lack of credit from public authority that allows investment in proper training or access to professionals.	
BLOCK 3. Expectations of a new learning tool	
From a training tool it would be useful to have structured courses with modules and practical laboratories that allow to have a specific training of computer tools useful in a company, such as using a spreadsheet or accounting and project management tools.	
Final questions	
5 digital skills and competences	Correct use of social networks Online communication Graphic design Use of a digital agenda Use of video conferencing and online communication apps
Define how the new tool should be	Structured training courses with modules and practical workshops.
4 (only 4) characteristics that could define the added value of the new training/learning tool	Easy to use, Intuitive, Practical, Accessible.

Conclusion

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Digital is today the leading sector of the world economy and the indeclinable tasks of every country are to guarantee citizens access to technologies, providing tools for the dissemination and learning of digital skills and raising public awareness of the need to develop a digital culture. Before that, it is essential that this same awareness is acquired by public administration, by leaders, by companies. Investing in ICT means investing in work, social inclusion, the strength of small Italian entrepreneurship, the simplification and optimization of the country's resources and integration into the global economy. The transversality of the ICT theme leads us to become all of the stakeholders with individual responsibilities that will be accompanied by national political responsibilities able to promote and support digital literacy, to lead to the creation of a digital market and to the creation of new and high professionalism.

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