



# WOMEN MENTOR'S GUIDE

Practical tools and tips  
for teachers and trainers

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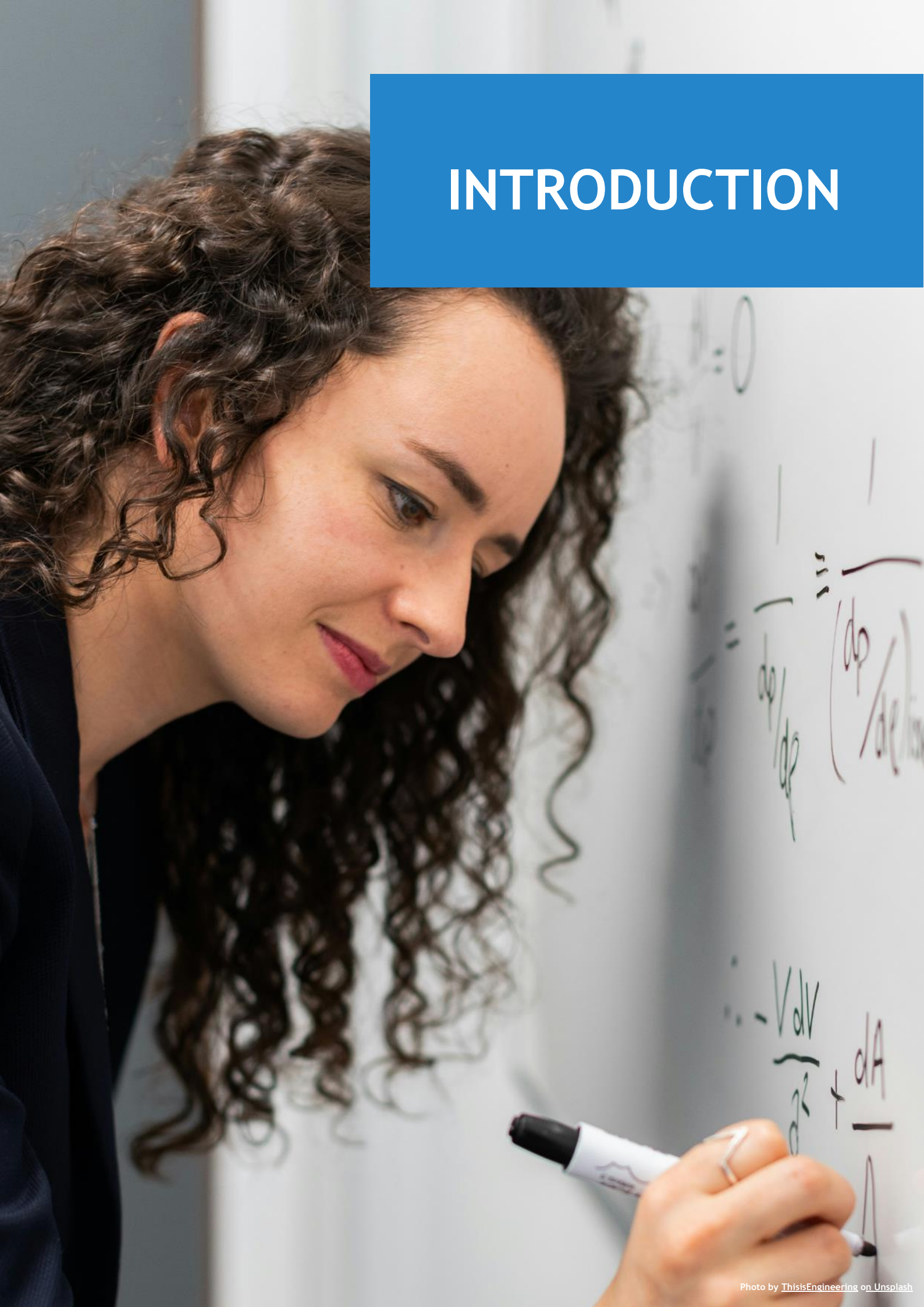
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# Table of content

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Purpose of the guide .....	5
Importance of the guide .....	5
What you will find in this guide .....	5
How to use this guide.....	6
<b>Understanding the landscape</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Current state of women in STEAM.....	8
Challenges faced by female entrepreneurs.....	9
Opportunities provided by green entrepreneurship .....	10
<b>Mastering the Flipped Training Course</b> .....	<b>12</b>
GreenSteam’s Flipped Training Course explained.....	12
Module 1: Entrepreneurship in STEAM.....	12
Module 2: Green Skills and Sustainable Entrepreneurship .....	13
Module 3: Innovation and Design Thinking in Entrepreneurship.....	15
Module 4: Digital Skills in Entrepreneurship .....	16
Module 5: Project Management and Social Skills in Entrepreneurship .....	17
<b>Essential skills for teachers and trainers</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Building self-belief and confidence in students .....	20
Leadership and decision-making facilitation.....	21
Effective networking and relationship building .....	23
Financial literacy and management coaching .....	25
Integrating digital and green skills into training .....	26
Effectively pitching a business idea .....	28
<b>Coaching and mentoring approaches</b> .....	<b>31</b>
What is mentoring? .....	31
Mentoring techniques to help female entrepreneurs.....	31
Tips for an effective mentorship .....	36
<b>Integrating role model stories</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Why use role model stories in entrepreneurship support? .....	38
Tips for effectively using role model stories.....	38
Inspiring stories of women in STEAM and women entrepreneurs .....	39

# INTRODUCTION



# Introduction

## Purpose of the guide

Welcome to the Women Mentor's Guide, a comprehensive guide to empower higher education educators and career guidance experts, such as tutors, mentors, internship/business liaison coordinators, in their mission to support and inspire future female entrepreneurs from the world of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).

This guide is a key component of the Erasmus+ GreenSteam project - GREENovation & STEAMpreneurship -, which aims to address gender disparities and mainstream green skills and an entrepreneurial spirit across female higher education students in STEAM fields, at the same time promoting a sustainable and inclusive future.

By equipping educators and career guidance experts with practical tools, real-life examples, and effective mentorship approaches, this guide strives to foster a new generation of female entrepreneurs in green entrepreneurship and STEAM disciplines.

## Importance of the guide

Despite significant progress, women remain underrepresented in STEAM fields and entrepreneurial ventures. This underrepresentation perpetuates gender disparities and limits the diversity of perspectives necessary for addressing global challenges such as climate change and sustainability. Therefore, female entrepreneurs in STEAM fields can bring unique insights and ideas, driving innovation and fostering a more sustainable future.

Supporting female entrepreneurship in STEAM is thus crucial for fostering sustainable development and empowering women. Female entrepreneurs can contribute to the green transition by developing new technologies, starting sustainable businesses, and creating green jobs. Moreover, entrepreneurship provides women with financial independence, professional growth, and a sense of agency, while also benefiting the labour market through job creation and economic opportunities. All in all, by promoting female entrepreneurship in STEAM fields, we can accelerate the green transition and ensure it is inclusive and equitable.

In this context, the Women Mentor's Guide aims to bridge the gender gap by providing educators and career guidance experts with the needed resources to nurture the skills, confidence, and entrepreneurial spirit of female students, including those facing social, geographical or cultural obstacles, thus inspiring the next generation of female entrepreneurs in STEAM, paving the way for a more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable future.

## What you will find in this guide

- **Overview of the importance of female entrepreneurship in STEAM:** understanding the current state of women in STEAM, highlighting both the progress made and persistent challenges they face, delving into the specific obstacles female entrepreneurs encounter, such as gender bias, limited access to

funding, and lack of mentorship, as well as exploring the unique opportunities that green entrepreneurship offers. By understanding the landscape, teachers and trainers can better support and guide female entrepreneurs in navigating their entrepreneurial journeys.

- **GreenSteam's Flipped Training Course explained:** an overview of the project's Course for female students, so teachers and trainers can better understand each module's topic, its importance for female entrepreneurs, and be provided with practical tools and tips, and useful resources to adapt the materials to their students' needs.
- **Essential skills for teachers and trainers:** practical advice, tools and resources on a set of skills necessary for female success in the business world, so teachers and trainers can better support and guide female entrepreneurs, preparing them for the challenges of entrepreneurship while boosting their confidence and ability to navigate the unique challenges they may face as women in business.
- **Coaching and mentoring approaches:** proven methods, techniques and tips for mentoring women, including how to provide constructive feedback, foster a growth mindset, and create a supportive learning environment.
- **How to make use of role models in female entrepreneurship support:** this section highlights inspiring stories of successful female entrepreneurs, particularly in green entrepreneurship and STEAM fields, showcasing roles models from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Italy, Poland, and Portugal that can motivate and encourage aspiring female entrepreneurs, as well as how can teachers and trainers integrate them in entrepreneurial support.

## How to use this guide

This guide is designed to be a flexible and practical resource that can be adapted to various educational settings and needs. Whether you are an educator or career guidance expert, you can use the tools and strategies provided to support female entrepreneurs at different stages of their journey. By integrating these resources into your teaching and mentorship practices, you will help create a more inclusive and equitable environment where women can thrive and lead in the green economy.

Therefore, this guide is expected to serve as a valuable resource in your efforts to empower female entrepreneurs, contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive future, and inspire the next generation of women leaders in STEAM and green entrepreneurship.

# UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE



# Understanding the landscape

## Current state of women in STEAM

Despite significant progress in recent years, women remain underrepresented in STEAM fields. This underrepresentation is evident across various levels of education and professional careers. In higher education, women often constitute a smaller percentage of students in STEAM disciplines, particularly in areas such as engineering, computer science and physics. This trend continues in the workforce, where women are less likely to hold positions in STEAM-related industries and are often underrepresented in leadership roles.

Several factors contribute to this disparity, including societal stereotypes, gender biases, and a lack of female role models in these fields. Women in STEAM frequently face challenges such as discrimination, unequal pay, and limited opportunities for career advancement. These obstacles can discourage young women from pursuing STEAM careers and contribute to higher attrition rates among those who do enter these fields.

However, there are also positive developments. Initiatives aimed at promoting gender diversity in STEAM are gaining traction, and there is a growing recognition of the importance of including diverse perspectives in scientific and technological innovation. Programmes that encourage girls to enhance with STEAM subjects from an early age, mentorship opportunities, and policies that support work-life balance are helping to create a more inclusive environment.

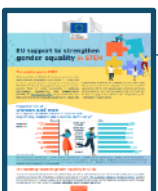
Despite the challenges, the increasing visibility of successful women in STEAM and the ongoing efforts to address gender disparities offer hope for a more equitable future in these crucial fields of the 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market.



Current status of women in STEAM education and careers from UNESCO's 2017 report: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000253479>



Facts and figures on women's representation in STEAM in the European Union from the European Commission's SHE FIGURES 2021 report: <https://shorturl.at/Ry72M>



Europe's 2022 roadmap and commitment towards gender equality in STEAM: <https://shorturl.at/U1veK>

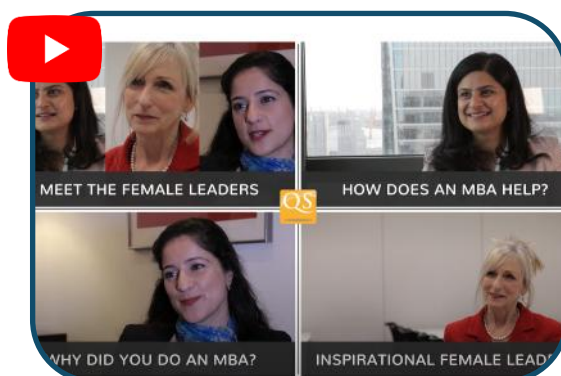
## Challenges faced by female entrepreneurs

- **Gender bias and stereotypes:** women often face preconceived notions about their capabilities in STEAM fields, which can undermine their confidence and credibility. These biases can manifest in various ways, from subtle microaggressions to explicit discrimination.
- **Limited access to funding:** female entrepreneurs frequently encounter difficulties in securing investment and funding for their ventures. Venture capital and other funding sources are often dominated by male decision-makers, who may have unconscious biases against women-led businesses.
- **Lack of mentorship and networking opportunities:** access to mentors and professional networks is crucial for entrepreneurial success. Women in STEAM fields often have fewer opportunities to connect with experienced mentors and peers who can provide guidance, support, and valuable industry connections.
- **Work-life balance:** balancing the demands of entrepreneurship with personal and family responsibilities can be particularly challenging for women. Societal expectations and traditional gender roles often place additional pressure on women to manage both their professional and domestic duties.
- **Underrepresentation and isolation:** the underrepresentation of women in STEAM fields can lead to feeling of isolation and lack of community. This can make it more difficult for female entrepreneurs to find support and encouragement from peers who share similar experiences and challenges.
- **Limited visibility and recognition:** women in STEAM fields often receive less recognition for their achievements compared to their male counterparts. This lack of visibility and hinder their ability to attract investors, customers, and collaborators, and can also impact their confidence and motivation.
- **Navigating male-dominated industries:** many STEAM fields are traditionally male-dominated, which can create unwelcoming or even hostile environment for female entrepreneurs. Women may have to work harder to prove their competence and gain acceptance in these industries.



What are the main challenges women in STEAM are facing right now?

<https://youtu.be/F7PBUWBXSXQ>



What challenges do women face in the business world?

<https://youtu.be/2cPQZUBXXRU>

## Opportunities provided by green entrepreneurship

Green entrepreneurship offers a range of opportunities for women in STEAM fields, particularly in the context of addressing global challenges such as climate change and sustainability. As the world shifts towards more sustainable practices, there is a growing demand for innovative solutions in areas like renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, green construction, and waste management. This transition opens new markets and business opportunities for female entrepreneurs who are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge.

Moreover, green entrepreneurship allows women to leverage their unique perspectives and experiences to create businesses that not only generate profit but also have a positive environmental and social impact. By focusing on sustainability, female entrepreneurs can develop products and services that contribute to a healthier planet and more resilient communities. This dual focus on economic and environmental goals can be particularly appealing to women who are motivated by a desire to make a difference.

Additionally, the rise of green entrepreneurship is accompanied by increased support from governments, non-profit organisations, and private sector initiatives that are eager to invest in sustainable ventures. This support can come in the form of grants, subsidies, mentorship programmes, and networking opportunities, all of which can help female entrepreneurs overcome some of the traditional barriers they face, such as access to funding and mentorship.

All in all, green entrepreneurship provided a promising pathway for women in STEAM to innovate, lead, and drive positive change, while also addressing some of the most pressing issues of our time. By embracing these opportunities, female entrepreneurs can play a crucial role in shaping a more sustainable and equitable future.



- The concept of green entrepreneurship:  
<https://somra.eu/en/the-gem-mag/articles/green-entrepreneurship>
- Opportunities and challenges of women's green entrepreneurship:  
<https://fastercapital.com/content/Women-in-Green-Entrepreneurship--Opportunities-and-Challenges-in-the-Sustainable-Business-Sector.html>
- UNIDO's facts and figures on women in green industries:  
[www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2022-03/Cambodia\\_Infographic\\_English.pdf](http://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2022-03/Cambodia_Infographic_English.pdf)
- Why investing in female climate entrepreneurs?  
<https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/why-the-world-needs-to-invest-in-female-climate-entrepreneurs>

# MASTERING THE FLIPPED TRAINING COURSE



# Mastering the Flipped Training Course

## GreenSteam's Flipped Training Course explained

The GreenSteam's Flipped Training Course is an innovative educational course specifically designed for female students in STEAM fields, aiming to equip them with modern entrepreneurial skills while emphasizing environmental sustainability. This course goes beyond traditional training by reshaping how women's participation in the labour market is perceived, particularly in the STEAM sector. Female learners are expected to learn how to meet the demands of new job markets, become facilitators of change, leverage advanced digital tools, enhance self-recognition processes, and engage proactively with their communities.

What sets this course apart is its commitment to integrating ecological stewardship into everyday aspect of the curriculum, positioning female learners as key contributors to the global green transition.

The course is structured into standalone modules, allowing female learners to select areas most relevant to their needs. This modular approach is learner-centric, offering flexible units that cater to individual schedules and career aspirations. Each module, while focusing on specific learning outcomes, consistently integrates the theme of sustainability. This ensures that female learners are not only enhancing their job-seeking tools but also learning to view their careers through the lens of environmental responsibility.

The practical, real-world application of concepts means that the skills acquired are immediately applicable to professional life, aligning career growth with the broader push for global sustainability. Each module is divided into five sections and includes short video lectures and practical activities with facilitation tips for educators and career guidance experts to conduct with female students during the training process. A lesson plan for each module is also provided. The total qualification time is 10 hours (2h/module).

## Module 1: Entrepreneurship in STEAM

### An educators' guide to entrepreneurship in STEAM

Entrepreneurship in STEAM is a dynamic and interdisciplinary approach that empowers students and graduates to leverage their technical expertise and creativity to develop innovative solutions and marketable products. By integrating various STEAM disciplines, female student entrepreneurs can identify and evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities, conduct market research, and develop prototypes that address real-world challenges. This process involves a blend of critical thinking, opportunity recognition, risk-taking, and innovation, fostering a sense of initiative and responsibility. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, market analysis, and interactive feedback, STEAM female entrepreneurs can create sustainable business practices that are both economically viable and ecologically responsible. Case studies of successful STEAM startups highlight the potential for students' projects to evolve into impactful enterprises, demonstrating the importance of combining technical

skills with an understanding of market demands and creativity.

### The importance of this topic for female student entrepreneurs

- Understanding entrepreneurship in STEAM can empower female students by providing them with the tools and confidence to break into traditionally male-dominated fields, fostering greater gender diversity and representation in these industries.
- Knowledge in STEAM entrepreneurship equips female students with access to specialised resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities, which are crucial for overcoming barriers such as gender bias and funding gaps.
- By leveraging their unique perspectives and interdisciplinary skills, female student entrepreneurs can drive innovation and create solutions that address specific market needs, contributing to economic growth and societal advancement.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students to know more about entrepreneurship in STEAM.

### Tips for teachers and trainers

- Use case studies of successful STEAM entrepreneurs to illustrate the practical application of interdisciplinary skills. Highlight stories of diverse entrepreneurs, including women, to inspire students and provide relatable role models.
- Encourage students to engage in hands-on projects that require them to identify problems, brainstorm solutions, and develop prototypes. This experiential learning approach helps students apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios.
- Create opportunities for students from different STEAM disciplines to work together on projects. This fosters a collaborative environment where diverse skills and perspectives can lead to innovative solutions.
- Connect students with industry professionals, mentors, and alumni who can offer guidance, share experiences, and provide valuable insights into the entrepreneurial journey. Organise guest lectures, workshops, and networking events.
- Incorporate lessons on market research, business planning, and financial literacy into the curriculum. Equip students with the tools to evaluate the visibility of their ideas, understand market demands, and develop sustainable business models.

## Module 2: Green Skills and Sustainable Entrepreneurship

### An educators' guide to Green Skills and Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Green skills and sustainable entrepreneurship are crucial in shaping a future where economic growth harmonises with environmental stewardship. Green skills encompass the knowledge, abilities, values, and attitudes necessary to implement business practices that are both environmentally sustainable and socially responsible. These skills enable entrepreneurs to innovate in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and waste management, thereby minimising ecological footprints and addressing pressing environmental challenges like climate change and resource scarcity. Sustainable entrepreneurship, or green entrepreneurship, involves creating and managing businesses that prioritise ecological balance alongside

economic goals. By integrating green skills into their ventures, entrepreneurs can develop new technologies and processes that enhance operational efficiency, reduce costs, and open new market opportunities. This not only helps to protect the planet but also ensures compliance with environmental regulations, attracts eco-conscious consumers, and builds a strong brand reputation. Ultimately, green skills and sustainable entrepreneurship drive innovation, promote social equity, and ensure long-term business viability in a rapidly evolving global market.

### The importance of this topic for female student entrepreneurs

- Green skills and sustainable entrepreneurship empower female student entrepreneurs to become leaders in the growing field of eco-friendly business practices, allowing them to drive change and innovation in industries traditionally dominated by men.
- By focusing on sustainability, female entrepreneurs can tap into emerging markets and consumer demands for environmentally responsible products and services, providing them with unique business opportunities and a competitive edge.
- Emphasizing green skills and sustainable practices enable female entrepreneurs to create businesses that not only generate profit but also contribute positively to society and the environment, fostering a sense of purpose and community engagement.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students to know more about green skills and sustainable entrepreneurship.

### Tips for teachers and trainers

- Embed sustainability concepts across various subjects and courses. This can include case studies on successful green businesses, discussions on the impact of environmental policies, and projects focused on sustainable solutions. By making sustainability a core part of the curriculum, students can see its relevance in multiple contexts.
- Incorporate interactive tools such as simulations, virtual labs, and sustainability-focused software to provide hands-on learning experiences. These tools can help students understand complex concepts related to green skills and sustainable entrepreneurship in an engaging and practical manner.
- Host competitions or challenges that encourage students to develop innovative solutions to environmental problems. These events can foster creativity, teamwork, and practical application of green skills, while also providing a platform for students to showcase their ideas.
- Establish partnerships with local green businesses and organisations, that can offer students opportunities for internships, site visits, and collaborative projects, providing them with real-world exposure to sustainable business practices.
- Support and mentor student-led sustainability initiatives and clubs. These groups can organise events, campaigns, and projects that promote green practices within a school environment and the wider community, empowering students to take active roles in driving sustainable change.

# Module 3: Innovation and Design Thinking in Entrepreneurship

## An educators' guide to Innovation and Design Thinking in Entrepreneurship

Modern entrepreneurship relies heavily on innovation and design thinking, which provide an organised approach to idea generation, exploration, and development, while also boosting creative talents and confidence. Embracing design thinking allows entrepreneurs to better comprehend and use practical strategies throughout the innovation cycle, resulting in more sustainable company practices and improved cooperative exchanges. This methodology promotes a thorough grasp of customer needs while also encouraging innovative problem-solving and iterative prototyping. As entrepreneurs progress through the many stages of the innovation cycle, they obtain vital insights into the complex dynamic links between diversity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. This comprehensive approach not only improves their ability to generate new ideas, but also provides them with the skills they need to turn these thoughts into viable, long-term business solutions. Individuals that incorporate design thinking into their entrepreneurial path can create a mindset that embraces experimentation, learns from failure, and constantly adjusts to meet changing market demands, ultimately driving business innovation and success.

## The importance of this topic for female student entrepreneurs

- Design thinking empowers young female learners by developing empathy, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities. Introducing design thinking early helps women develop creative and problem-solving self-efficacy, enhancing their confidence to face real-world difficulties and excel in STEAM sectors where women have traditionally been underrepresented.
- Design thinking provides an entrance point for young women to succeed in engineering, science, and mathematics-based areas, thereby overcoming long-standing gender preconceptions and biases. By participating in design thinking programmes, female students might gain valuable skills and attitudes that challenge these prejudices, potentially increasing their representation in historically male-dominated professions.
- Design thinking provides female student entrepreneurs with a systemic method to concept production, exploration, and development. It helps students to truly grasp user demands, encourage creative problem-solving, and engage in iterative prototyping, all of which are necessary skills for successful entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it helps people to seek critical criticism, change work based on input, and develop improved attitudes about group work, all of which are useful abilities in both academic and professional settings.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students to know more about innovation and design thinking in entrepreneurship.

## Tips for teachers and trainers

- Stay updated with the latest trends and methodologies in design thinking and innovation. Attend workshops, webinars, and conferences focused on these topics. This will not only enhance your knowledge but also provide fresh perspectives to share with your students.

- Use examples of successful female entrepreneurs who have leveraged design thinking in their businesses. This can inspire your students and provide practical insights into how these concepts are applied in the real world.
- Create opportunities for group projects and peer-to-peer learning. This approach mirrors the collaborative nature of design thinking and can help build confidence in female students by encouraging them to share ideas and learn from each other.
- Design practical exercises that allow students to apply design thinking principles to solve real problems. This could involve partnering with local businesses or non-profit organisations to work on actual challenges, giving students tangible experience in applying innovation techniques.
- Highlight the importance of diversity in innovation and entrepreneurship. Create an inclusive classroom environment where all ideas are valued and emphasize how different viewpoints can lead to more innovative solutions. This can help female students recognise the unique value they bring to entrepreneurial endeavours.

## Module 4: Digital Skills in Entrepreneurship

### An educators' guide to Digital Skills in Entrepreneurship

Digital skills are becoming increasingly important in entrepreneurship, acting as the foundation for modern business success. Entrepreneurs who master digital communication technologies like email platforms, instant messaging apps, and video conferencing software may expedite operations and improve customer engagement. Digital collaboration technologies, such as project management software and virtual whiteboards, promote effective teamwork and knowledge sharing. Furthermore, competency in multimedia content creation tools such as graphic design software and video editing platforms enables entrepreneurs to create appealing content that increases brand awareness and business success. Understanding cybersecurity is equally important since it protects business assets and maintains customer trust. By combining these digital talents, entrepreneurs can navigate the changing digital landscape, streamline their business operations, and achieve long-term success.

### The importance of this topic for female student entrepreneurs

- Gaining the confidence to use technology and manage it safely is one way that learning digital skills helps female student entrepreneurs. By overcoming gender prejudices and stereotypes, their ability can enable them to succeed in traditionally male-dominated fields.
- Female entrepreneurs that are proficient with digital technologies for communication, collaboration, and content creation can increase customer engagement, streamline operations, and produce effective marketing content. Increased productivity, brand awareness, and business expansion may result from this.
- Keeping customers' trust and safeguarding company assets depend on having a solid understanding of cybersecurity. Strong cybersecurity protocols can be put in place for female entrepreneurs to protect confidential data, guarantee business continuity, and build reliable relationships with stakeholders and clients.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students to know more about digital skills in entrepreneurship.

### Tips for teachers and trainers

- Keep up with the most recent advancements in digital tools and technology that are pertinent to entrepreneurship on a regular basis. To remain up to date on current trends and best practices, sign up for webinars, take part in professional development courses, and subscribe to industry newsletters.
- Provide case studies and illustrations of prosperous female business owners who have successfully integrated digital skills into their enterprises. For female students, emphasizing practical applications might help make the learning process more accessible and motivating.
- Construct practical projects and hands-on exercises that let students use their digital abilities in real-world situations. Encourage group projects, role-playing games, and simulations to make use of digital resources for communication, collaboration, and content creation.
- Encourage an inclusive learning environment in the classroom so that female students feel free to experiment and explore with digital technologies. To boost their self-confidence and motivation, give them helpful criticism and acknowledge their accomplishments.
- Establish links between female students and accomplished female professionals or entrepreneurs in the digital sphere. Plan networking opportunities, mentorship programmes, and guest lectures to give students access to professionals with experience and serve as role models.

## Module 5: Project Management and Social Skills in Entrepreneurship

### An educators' guide to Project Management and Social Skills in Entrepreneurship

Successful entrepreneurship requires social skills and project management, especially in the STEAM fields. To guarantee that projects are finished on schedule and under budget, effective project management entails developing comprehensive, implementable plans that contain budget estimates, timetables, and quality control procedures. Furthermore, the integration of risk management techniques and plans for continuous development aids entrepreneurs in anticipating obstacles and adjusting to evolving situations. Social qualities including empathy, creativity, resilience, leadership, and emotional intelligence are equally vital. These abilities help business owners manage the complexity of the corporate world, develop strong teams, and cultivate favourable connections with stakeholders. Entrepreneurs may foster innovation, accomplish sustainable growth, and leave a lasting beneficial impact in their professions by becoming proficient in both project management and social skills.

### The importance of this topic for female student entrepreneurs

- Gaining proficiency in social skills and project management gives female student entrepreneurs the self-confidence and know-how to successfully manage teams and projects. They can overcome gender stereotypes and establish themselves as capable leaders in professions that have historically been dominated by men because of this empowerment.

- Developing strong, cohesive teams requires the application of social skills including empathy, emotional intelligence, and effective communication. Successful female business owners may create a supportive and cooperative work atmosphere that boosts morale and productivity.
- Well-planned, well-executed, and change-adaptable business initiatives are the products of effective project management. Strong social skills enable female entrepreneurs to manage obstacles, reduce risks, and promote sustainable growth, all of which contribute to long-term success and positive social impact.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students to know more about project management and social skills in entrepreneurship.

### Tips for teachers and trainers

- Take online courses, attend workshops, or get certified in project management methodologies such as Agile or Waterfall. Explore resources like the Project Management Institute (PMI): [www.pmi.org](http://www.pmi.org). Also research effective communication, negotiation, and networking skills for entrepreneurs and consider attending workshops or coaching programmes focused on these areas.
- Showcase successful female entrepreneurs who excel in project management and social skills. Share their stories, interviews, or case studies to inspire your students. You can also invite female guest speakers from various industries to talk about their experiences.
- Design project-based learning activities that simulate real-world entrepreneurial scenarios to encourage teamwork and communication while managing projects. You can use case studies that feature diverse entrepreneurs, including women, to address potential gender bias.
- Encourage students to practice pitching their ideas to a panel of peers and provide them with role-play negotiation scenarios commonly faced by entrepreneurs. Address unconscious bias by fostering a supportive environment where women feel comfortable voicing their ideas and advocating for themselves.
- Connect students with female entrepreneur mentors or organisations like Girls Who Code or Women In Tech. These resources can provide ongoing support and networking opportunities. Also, you can encourage them to participate in online forums or communities specifically for female entrepreneurs.

# ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR TEACHERS AND TRAINERS



# Essential skills for teachers and trainers

By focusing on the following skills, you will be able to provide female student entrepreneurs with a strong foundation of skills necessary for success in the business world. These skills not only prepare them for the challenges of entrepreneurship but also boost their confidence and ability to navigate the unique obstacles they may face as women in business. Together, these skills form a comprehensive toolkit that not only equips female student entrepreneurs with the practical knowledge they need but also build their resilience, adaptability, and confidence to succeed in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

## Building self-belief and confidence in students

### What is self-belief and confidence?

Psychological attributes such as confidence and self-belief are crucial for success, particularly in the field of entrepreneurship. Confidence is the outward manifestation of self-belief, which is an internal trust in one's own skills and potential. These attributes are especially important for female entrepreneurs because they support resilience, help them overcome gender preconceptions, and help them assert their strengths. Women who possess strong self-belief and confidence are better able to express their thoughts, take risks, and overcome obstacles. Teachers and trainers can assist in removing internal barriers and preparing female student entrepreneurs for the demands of the business world by supporting these qualities in them.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students put into practice self-belief and confidence to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

### Tips for stimulating self-belief and confidence

- Motivate female student entrepreneurs to see barriers as chances for personal development rather than as impossible hurdles. Teach them that intelligence and abilities can be developed with work, perseverance, and learning. This strategy fosters resilience and self-assurance in taking on new tasks.
- Provide students with opportunity for little victories by creating assignments and projects that let them reach achievement gradually. Celebrate these tiny triumphs to give them confidence and to help them gain momentum. This could entail establishing realistic short-term goals or segmenting more complex tasks into digestible stages.
- Give precise, constructive criticism that is actionable and concentrates on strategy and effort rather than just results. Draw attention to certain areas of strength and growth and offer advice on how to develop their abilities. This method assists women in understanding their potential and learning how to enhance it.
- Through case studies, guest lectures, or mentoring programmes, introduce students to successful female entrepreneurs. Seeing realistic role models can greatly increase self-confidence and offer helpful advice on conquering obstacles. Students should be encouraged to establish connections with mentors who are able to provide support and direction.
- Establish a classroom or training setting that promotes cooperation and peer

support to foster a helpful peer environment. Organise group projects that let students show off their skills and share knowledge. Encourage students to participate in peer feedback sessions so they can get experience providing and accepting constructive criticism in a friendly environment.



## USEFUL RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO BOOST SELF-BELIEF AND CONFIDENCE

- Create a suite of learning modules tailored to build confidence and entrepreneurial skills in female students:  
[www.babson.edu/professional/entrepreneurship-education/what-is-babson-academy/resources-and-tips](http://www.babson.edu/professional/entrepreneurship-education/what-is-babson-academy/resources-and-tips)
- Implement project-based learning approaches to connect female students to the real world, preparing them to meet and overcome challenges:  
<https://genz-project.eu>
- Use online open tools that help female students focus on and explore their positive traits and accomplishments, building a foundation for confidence:  
<https://positivepsychology.com/self-esteem-tools-activities>
- Incorporate mindfulness exercises to help female students live in the present moment and reduce negative self-talk:  
<https://ipractice.com/therapy/mindfulness/mindfulness-exercises>



### TEACHERS AND TRAINERS SHOULD FOCUS ON:

- 1 Provide positive reinforcement and constructive feedback
- 2 Encourage students to take on challenges and learn from failures
- 3 Highlight successful female role models in entrepreneurship
- 4 Support an environment where students express ideas and take
- 5 Implement confidence-building exercises and activities

## Leadership and decision-making facilitation

### What is leadership and decision-making facilitation?

A crucial set of abilities for entrepreneurship is facilitation of leadership and decision-making, which entails leading teams, motivating others to act, and making wise decisions. For teachers and trainers who deal with female student entrepreneurs, this entails providing opportunities for skill development in a nurturing setting. Teaching good communication, problem-solving techniques, critical

thinking, and diverse leadership styles is part of this. Encouraging students to lead teams, resolve problems, and make strategic decisions in a variety of situations is the aim. These abilities are critical for overcoming obstacles in the commercial world and helping future endeavours succeed.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students put into practice leadership and decision-making facilitation to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

### Tips for stimulating leadership and decision-making facilitation

- Construct case studies or realistic business simulations that force students to make difficult choices in a hurry or with incomplete knowledge. Consider setting up a situation where students must choose whether to change the direction of their startup's product in response to customer input. With this method, students can practice making decisions in a low-pressure setting while honing their rapid situation analysis and decision-making skills.
- Assign students leadership roles to each other for a variety of class assignments or events. Every "Leader for a Day" oversees organising meetings, assigning assignments, and reaching decisions on behalf of their group. Every student now has the chance to gain first-hand leadership experience and learn from both achievements and setbacks.
- Good decision-making and leadership frequently depend on one's capacity to fully comprehend the viewpoints of others. Lead activities that emphasize the use of active listening techniques, like summarising, clarifying questions, and paraphrasing. For example, assign students to work in pairs and apply these strategies while talking about their business ideas and obstacles.
- Give students ethical problems pertaining to business and entrepreneurship and encourage them to discuss and compare various points of view. Through this practice, they can practice their critical thinking abilities, learn to weigh many viewpoints, and get ready for the intricate decision-making scenarios that entrepreneurs may encounter. They are also better able to explain and defend their opinions, which is an essential leadership ability.
- Promote reflective practice by setting aside time for thought following each leadership or decision-making exercise. Encourage female student entrepreneurs to keep a notebook in which they can reflect what went well, what they found difficult, and what they might do differently in the future. This kind of introspective exercise promotes learning retention and ongoing development. For students to share their comments and gain knowledge from one another's experiences and perspectives, you can also lead group discussions.



### USEFUL RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO BOOST LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING FACILITATION

- Look at this training programme specifically designed for stimulating leadership in women, which can provide valuable tools and techniques:  
<https://voices.erasmus.site>

- Provide problem-based exercises using case studies to stimulate creative problem-solving:  
<https://teaching.cornell.edu/problem-based-learning>
- Provide students with free mind map software, allowing them to visually organise ideas, promoting brainstorming and group discussions:  
<https://elearningindustry.com/the-5-best-free-mind-mapping-tools-for-teachers>
- Expose female student entrepreneurs to inspirational and informative talks on women leadership, decision-making, and building successful teams:  
[www.ted.com/playlists/771/how\\_fearless\\_women\\_lead](http://www.ted.com/playlists/771/how_fearless_women_lead)



#### TEACHERS AND TRAINERS SHOULD FOCUS ON:

- 1 Teach effective communication skills
- 2 Introduce problem-solving techniques and critical thinking
- 3 Provide opportunities for students to lead projects or teams
- 4 Teach conflict resolution strategies
- 5 Encourage autonomous decision-making through case studies

## Effective networking and relationship building

### What is effective networking and relationship building?

Building relationships and effectively networking are essential abilities for businesses, particularly female student entrepreneurs. These entail establishing and fostering professional relationships that are mutually beneficial through genuine communication, attentive listening, and value exchange. It necessitates taking a calculated risk, striking a balance between online and offline interactions, and considering relationships as long-term investments. Networking is essential for female entrepreneurs to break through gender-based barriers and gain access to opportunities and mentors. Effective networking creates a wide, encouraging network that may offer opportunities and resources for a person's entire business path. It does this by combining emotional intelligence, sincerity, and clear communication.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students put into practice effective networking and relationship building to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

### Tips for stimulating effective networking and relationship building

- Construct role-playing games that reflect actual networking situations. Give the

students practice making introductions, trading details, and following up. Comment on their attitude, mannerisms, and communication abilities.

- Invite prominent women in the business and entrepreneurship sectors to speak as guests on a regular basis. Urge students to engage with these experts, pose inquiries, and even establish mentorship relationships. This introduces students to networking opportunities in the real world.
- Set up in-class or programme peer-to-peer networking events. Assign students to present their business ideas to one another, work together on projects, or conduct one-on-one interviews. Their trust in business dealings is increased as a result.
- Include instruction on how to use LinkedIn and other professional networking sites effectively. Assist students in developing interesting profiles, interacting with content, and starting deep online discussions. Give guidelines for proper online networking etiquette.
- Arrange gatherings that provide a safe space for students to hone their abilities. Ask graduates, professionals in the field, and owners of local businesses. Give the female entrepreneurs specific goals for these activities, such as reaching a certain number of new relationships.



#### USEFUL RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO BOOST EFFECTIVE NETWORKING AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Encourage students to create profiles highlighting their entrepreneurial ventures and connect with industry professionals and potential mentors: [www.linkedin.com/pulse/linkedin-entrepreneurs-leveraging-platform-startup-success](http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/linkedin-entrepreneurs-leveraging-platform-startup-success)
- Facilitate workshops where students practice their elevator pitches, a concise and compelling introduction to their business idea: [www.bplans.com/business-funding/pitching/elevator-pitch/female-entrepreneur](http://www.bplans.com/business-funding/pitching/elevator-pitch/female-entrepreneur)
- Conduct mock interviews with students to help them develop strong communication skills and confidence when meeting potential investors: <https://interviewdesk.ai/blogs/mock-interview-magic-boost-your-confidence-and-interview-skills>
- Teach students how to craft and present their entrepreneurial stories effectively through storytelling techniques to potential partners: [www.linkedin.com/pulse/7-beginner-storytelling-tips-entrepreneurs-get-new-clients-ewanfoh--87hkf](http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/7-beginner-storytelling-tips-entrepreneurs-get-new-clients-ewanfoh--87hkf)



#### TEACHERS AND TRAINERS SHOULD FOCUS ON:

- 1 Organise networking events and workshops
- 2 Teach the importance of building/maintaining professional relations
- 3 Provide guidance on effective communication in a business setting
- 4 Introduce students to mentoring programmes
- 5 Teach the art of creating and delivering elevator pitches

## Financial literacy and management coaching

### What is financial literacy and management coaching?

A process of instruction known as financial literacy and management coaching gives people—especially business owners—the knowledge and abilities they need to make wise financial decisions. Topics including cash flow, debt management, investing, budgeting, and financial planning are covered for both individuals and businesses. The objectives of this coaching are to promote strategic financial decision-making, strengthen money management skills, and increase comprehension of financial topics. It is especially helpful for female student entrepreneurs in addressing certain financial opportunities and problems, which eventually boosts confidence and increases the likelihood of business success.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students put into practice financial literacy and management coaching to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

### Tips for stimulating financial literacy and management coaching

- Include realistic, hands-on examples and simulations in your instruction. Make case studies of successful female small business owners or entrepreneurs or use ones that already exist. Ask students to evaluate financial choices, make budgets, and devise financial plans for various situations. To make learning more relevant and individualised in one-on-one mentoring, use the mentee's own business idea or an example from a related field.
- Provide practical budgeting activities where students establish and oversee fictitious (or real) company budgets during timed simulations. To make this interactive, use spreadsheet tools. Incorporate diverse situations such as unforeseen expenditures, seasonal variations, or abrupt expansion prospects to reveal flexibility in handling finances. You can also work closely with the mentee's existing or anticipated business budget during the mentoring sessions.
- Invite experts to offer their knowledge, such as financial consultants, accountants, or accomplished women business owners. These invited lecturers can offer practical insights on the difficulties and solutions associated with money management. Urge students to participate in Q&A sessions and to prepare questions ahead of time. Consider setting up informational interviews with these for one-on-one mentoring.
- Introduce students to a range of technology and tools used in real firms for financial management. These might include investing platforms, financial planning applications, or accounting software. Give students the opportunity to experience these tools through practical training sessions, if freely available online. When providing mentoring, assist the mentee in choosing and mastering the tools that are most appropriate for their company requirements.
- Provide students with opportunities for project-based learning where they can create financial strategies for hypothetical or actual business ideas. Start-up

expenses, revenue forecasts, cash flow management, and investment strategies should all be part of these projects. Establish a peer review system to encourage critical thinking and cooperative learning. Students assess and comment on each other's financial plans. During one-on-one mentoring, assist the mentee in creating a financial strategy for their company idea. Give frequent feedback and support any necessary adjustments.



### USEFUL RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO BOOST FINANCIAL LITERACY AND MANAGEMENT COACHING

- Incorporate the business model canvas in your teaching, a visual tool that helps students refine their business model and make financial planning more concrete:  
[https://utas.shorthandstories.com/PP\\_Business\\_Model\\_Canvas/index.html](https://utas.shorthandstories.com/PP_Business_Model_Canvas/index.html)
- Facilitate workshops where students assess their businesses' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats through a financial lens:  
[www.imd.org/blog/strategy/swot-analysis](http://www.imd.org/blog/strategy/swot-analysis)
- Introduce students to user-friendly financial management software that is freely available online, to help them create budgets and track income and expenses:  
<https://tipalti.com/financial-operations-hub/top-financial-management-tools>
- Create powerful Frequently Asked Questions as an easier way for female student entrepreneurs better understand complex financial issues:  
[www.tudelft.nl/teaching-support/educational-tools/brightspace/collaboration-communication/faq-module](http://www.tudelft.nl/teaching-support/educational-tools/brightspace/collaboration-communication/faq-module)



### TEACHERS AND TRAINERS SHOULD FOCUS ON:

- 1 Basic accounting principles and financial statement analysis
- 2 Budgeting and financial planning techniques
- 3 Understand funding sources and investment strategies
- 4 Teach how to create and interpret financial projections
- 5 Explain concepts of risk management and financial decision-making

## Integrating digital and green skills into training

### What is integrating digital and green skills into training?

Integrating digital and green skills into training brings together technology

proficiency and environmental sustainability practices in educational programmes. This strategy educates students, particularly female entrepreneurs, for a digitally connected and environmentally sensitive corporate world. It teaches how to use digital tools for sustainable operations and uses technology to address environmental issues. Teachers and trainers have an important role in keeping up with digital developments and sustainable practices, creating hands-on learning experiences, and giving mentorship. Their support is critical in instilling confidence and empowering female students to start tech-savvy, environmentally friendly enterprises.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students put into practice digital and green skills to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

### Tips for stimulating digital and green skills into training

- Give your students the digital marketing and e-commerce skills they need to succeed. To establish a strong online presence and attract clients, teach them about social media marketing, writing appealing content, and Search Engine Optimisation. Introduce e-commerce systems such as Shopify or Etsy, which allow them to sell straight from their own websites.
- Challenge your female student entrepreneurs to incorporate sustainability into their ventures. Encourage them to think about the environmental impact of everything, from raw materials to packaging and operations. Introduce frameworks such as the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) that consider social, environmental, and financial considerations to ensure their firms are both successful and responsible.
- Showcase project management solutions that help with eco-friendly activities, as well as supply chain software that monitors ethical sourcing. Introduce carbon footprint measurement tools, which will enable them to assess their environmental impact and make data-driven decisions for a greener business.
- Encourage collaboration with female sustainability leaders and organisations. Facilitate virtual conferences and online communities dedicated to green entrepreneurship, encouraging collaboration and resource sharing. Female entrepreneurs can increase their overall good influence by establishing strong digital networks.
- Include case studies of successful female entrepreneurs leading the way in green technology. Collaborate with women-led green enterprises to provide mentorship possibilities. Encourage study on female pioneers in renewable energy and sustainable agriculture, highlighting the value of digital and green talents in a variety of fields.



### USEFUL RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO BOOST DIGITAL AND GREEN SKILLS

- Explore the European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp), a structured approach to understanding and developing digital competences: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128415>
- Explore the European Sustainability Competence Framework (GreenComp), a

valuable tool for integrating sustainability skills into educational programmes:  
[https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework_en)

- Create a suite of learning modules tailored to promote the digital skills of women in an entrepreneurial context:  
<https://digitalzwomen.erasmus.site/hub/learning>
- Facilitate workshops where students have access to valuable information related to green entrepreneurship and enhance their own skills:  
<https://www.acorn-europe.com/>



#### TEACHERS AND TRAINERS SHOULD FOCUS ON:

- 1 Teach digital marketing and social media management
- 2 Introduce e-commerce platforms and online business models
- 3 Emphasize the importance of sustainability in business practices
- 4 Teach about eco-friendly product development
- 5 Introduce concepts of circular economy/responsible consumption

## Effectively pitching a business idea

### What is effectively pitching a business idea?

Effective pitching is the ability to convey a business concept to possible investors, partners, or customers in a persuasive and brief manner. It entails effectively presenting the problem, solution, target market, competitive advantage, company strategy, and financial predictions. For female student entrepreneurs, acquiring this ability is critical for gaining access to finance, mentorship, and collaborations, as well as developing confidence and communication skills. Teachers and trainers play an important role in pitch structuring, providing practice chances, boosting confidence, and sharing insights on investor viewpoints. Their assistance in acquiring these abilities considerably increases female student entrepreneurs' chances of success in a competitive business environment.

You can follow these tips to help your own understanding and to help your students put into practice effectively pitching a business idea to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

### Tips for stimulating effectively pitching a business idea

- Develop and teach effective storytelling techniques. Create intriguing tales and brief elevator pitches to make company ideas memorable and impactful.

- Schedule frequent pitch sessions in a variety of formats. Give positive feedback and encourage peer reviews. Participate in pitches to exhibit techniques and develop empathy.
- Capture and evaluate student pitches. Encourage self-reflection to discover strengths and areas for growth in delivery, body language, and content. Teachers should also conduct self-analysis to improve their coaching skills.
- Invite industry professionals to offer feedback on student proposals. Establish mentorship programmes. Teachers should pursue professional development to keep up with business changes.
- Teach the proper use of visual aids and presentation tools. Create clear, impactful slides and use visuals to comprehend financial and market data. Stay up to date on the best presentation practices.



### USEFUL RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO BOOST EFFECTIVELY PITCHING A BUSINESS IDEA

- Provide students with access to online platforms like Canva where they can create visually compelling and informative pitch decks:  
[www.canva.com/presentations/templates/pitch-deck](http://www.canva.com/presentations/templates/pitch-deck)
- Organise workshops or individual sessions where students can practice their pitches in a supportive environment:  
<https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/how-to-pitch-a-business-idea>
- Train female student entrepreneurs on storytelling techniques to capture the audience's attention and make their business ideas relatable:  
<https://hbr.org/2003/06/storytelling-that-moves-people>
- Incorporate the analysis of successful pitches from previous competitions into training to identify best practices and winning strategies:  
<https://youtu.be/99mXmwvJE4c>



#### TEACHERS AND TRAINERS SHOULD FOCUS ON:

- 1 Structure a compelling business pitch
- 2 Develop clear and concise presentation skills
- 3 Teach how to create impactful visual aids (e.g., slides)
- 4 Practice storytelling techniques to engage the audience
- 5 Prepare students for Q&A sessions and objection handling

# COACHING AND MENTORING APPROACHES



# Coaching and mentoring approaches

## What is mentoring?

Mentoring is an effective development strategy that aims to improve an individual's knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours, and overall personal and professional success. Mentoring is fundamentally a relationship between two people: the mentor, an experienced and trusted advisor who provides direction, support, and counselling, and the mentee, a less experienced individual looking for growth and development. The mentoring relationship is defined by the dynamic interaction between these two parties, and it can result in major benefits such as quicker learning, increased self-awareness, extended professional networks, and improved career advancement chances.

Mentoring relationships can take two main forms: informal and formal. Informal mentoring happens when the mentor and mentee spontaneously build a connection with no predetermined aims or structured goals, allowing for flexibility and organic evolution based on the mentee's needs and the mentor's observations. Formal mentoring, which often takes place within an organisation, is characterised by a more structured approach with clearly stated objectives, standard protocols, regular check-ins, and, in many cases, a set duration. Depending on the situation and the individual's need, both approaches can be extremely beneficial. Regardless of the type, good mentoring needs both parties' dedication, open communication, and a willingness to provide constructive feedback, which can lead to a transformative experience for both the mentor and the mentee.

## Mentoring techniques to help female entrepreneurs

There are different mentoring models but all of them require a formal setting up for the mentoring relationship, such as a mentorship agreement (clear aims and objectives, rules and boundaries, action plan), regular mentoring meetings (clear structure and purpose) and an ending of the mentoring relationship (revise initial goals and compare it with the final outcomes). To conduct successful mentoring meetings the mentor must have a comprehensive knowledge of the mentees needs, identify areas for improvement and provide tools and information the mentee could act on. This requires, from the mentor, a self-analysis exercise: am I a coach, a counsellor, a facilitator, a trainer?

Whatever the context, there are some examples of mentoring techniques to boost your female student mentee's skills for a successful entrepreneurial path. The presented approaches can easily be adapted in any context.



### Build rapport

Building rapport is the basis for a successful mentoring relationship. It entails establishing a bond built on trust, mutual understanding, and respect. The mentor's role is to provide a welcome and comfortable environment, share important background information, and demonstrate genuine interest in the mentee's experiences and objectives. Building a solid

rapport might make female entrepreneurs feel more at ease discussing obstacles they may experience, such as gender-specific issues in business.

### Step-by-step implementation

- **Initial contact and programme overview:** reach out to the female entrepreneur mentee via email or phone. Send a comprehensive overview of the mentoring cycle. Include a brief introduction to the mentoring programme and its goals. Provide a pre-meeting questionnaire to gather initial information about the mentee's background and expectations.
- **First meeting - introduction and programme explanation:** define mentoring and its benefits. Outline the mentoring process in detail, such as number and frequency of meetings, focus areas for each session, roles and responsibilities of both the mentor and the mentee. Emphasize the mentoring programme's specific focus on supporting the mentee's entrepreneurial journey. Discuss confidentiality and ethical guidelines.
- **Building rapport and background exchange:** share relevant personal and professional background. Invite the mentee to share her story, focusing on professional experience, cultural background and challenges faced as a woman. Establish common ground and mutual understanding. Maintain professional boundaries while creating a supportive atmosphere.
- **Clarifying the mentor's role and session structure:** explain the types of support and guidance you can offer, such as career advice, skills development, networking opportunities, and entrepreneurial and business insights. Outline the structure of each mentoring session, such as check-in and progress review, main discussion topics or skills focus, action planning for next steps and reflection and feedback.
- **Aligning expectations and goals:** discuss the mentee's understanding of the mentoring programme. Explore her specific expectations and aspirations. Share your expectations as a mentor, including active participation, commitment to agreed-upon goals, and open communication. Collaboratively set SMART goals for the mentoring relationship. Establish a mechanism for regular progress review and adjustment.
- **Action planning and next steps:** summarise key points from the first meeting. Set specific tasks or reflection exercises for the mentee before the next session. Schedule the next meeting and outline its focus. Provide resources relevant to the mentee's goals and the mentoring programme.
- **Follow-up and continuous engagement:** send a follow-up email summarising the first meeting and confirming next steps. Establish a communication channel for between-session questions or concerns. Encourage the mentee to start a mentoring journal for reflection and tracking progress.



### Setting SMART goals

SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goal setting is a systematic way to identifying and achieving goals. Mentors' roles include assisting mentees in developing clear, actionable goals that are consistent with their entrepreneurial vision and personal development. Well-defined goals can assist female entrepreneurs stay focused and motivated, particularly when confronted with potential gender-based barriers in the corporate world.

## Step-by-step implementation

- **Collaborative goal setting:** schedule a dedicated goal-setting session early in the mentoring relationship. Use the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) framework to establish clear, actionable goals. Align goals with the mentee's entrepreneurial career aspirations and the mentoring programme objectives. Prioritise goals and create a timeline for achievement. Document goals and share them with the mentee for reference.
- **Comprehensive knowledge and skills assessment:** conduct a thorough assessment of the mentee's current knowledge, skills, and experiences on entrepreneurship-related topics. Use a combination of methods: structured questionnaires, open-ended discussions, practical exercises or case studies. Identify strengths to leverage and areas for improvement. Consider the mentee's cultural, geographical and socioeconomic context and how it might influence her perspective and approach. Create a visual map or chart of the mentee's knowledge landscape.
- **Targeted gap analysis and development planning:** analyse the assessment results to identify specific knowledge and skills gaps. Prioritise gaps based on their relevance to the mentee's entrepreneurial and business goals and immediate digital and green needs. Develop a personalised learning and development plan to address these gaps. Set milestones for progress review and adjustment. Encourage self-reflection and self-assessment throughout the process.
- **Resource provision and knowledge sharing:** curate a tailored resource list for the mentee, including relevant books, articles, and research papers, online courses and webinars, professional associations and networking groups, entrepreneurship and business development resources specific to women. Share personal experiences and case studies of women role models that relate to the mentee's challenges. Introduce the mentee to other women entrepreneurs or mentors who can provide specialised insights. Encourage the mentee to create a personal knowledge repository.
- **Contextual advice and guidance:** provide timely, specific advice on issues raised by the mentee. Offer guidance on navigating entrepreneurial challenges. Share strategies for overcoming common challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. Use role-playing exercises to practice difficult situations. Encourage the mentee to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **Continuous progress monitoring and adjustment:** implement regular check-ins to assess progress towards goals and knowledge acquisition. Use a mix of quantitative metrics and qualitative feedback to measure advancement. Adjust the development plan as needed based on progress and changing circumstances. Celebrate milestones and achievements to maintain motivation.
- **Practical application and skills development:** assign homework or projects that allow the mentee to apply new knowledge in real-world scenarios. Encourage the mentee to seek opportunities within her current role to practice new skills. Provide constructive feedback on the mentee's performance and offer suggestions for improvement. Discuss strategies for transferring learned skills to different contexts.
- **Building a support network:** help the mentee identify and connect with key stakeholders in her field. Introduce the mentee to professional organisations that support female entrepreneurs. Encourage participation in relevant workshops, conferences, or networking events. Discuss the importance of building a diverse, supportive professional network.



## Effective and active listening

Active listening entails fully focusing on, understanding, and responding to the speaker while exhibiting engagement through verbal and nonverbal signs. Mentoring responsibilities include attentive listening, insightful comments, and creating an environment in which mentees feel heard and respected. Active listening can assist mentors in identifying specific issues experienced by female entrepreneurs and providing personalised assistance and encouragement.

### Step-by-step implementation

- **Cultivate active listening from the first session:** begin each mentoring session with a mindful moment to centre yourself. Demonstrate genuine interest through your body language and facial expressions. Practice reflective listening by paraphrasing key points to show understanding. Ask open-ended questions to encourage deeper exploration of topics. Create a distraction-free environment to fully focus on your mentee.
- **Identify patterns and themes:** develop a system for noting recurring topics or concerns (mentally or discreetly on paper). Look for underlying emotions or motivations in your mentee's communication. Recognise challenges that may influence your mentee's perspective. Connect seemingly unrelated points to uncover broader themes. Consider how identified patterns align with or diverge from the mentee's stated goals.
- **Maintain focus on the mentee's narrative:** resist the urge to interrupt or offer immediate solutions. Practice empathetic listening without over-sympathising or taking on the mentee's emotions. When sharing personal experiences, do so sparingly and only when directly relevant. Use silence effectively to allow the mentee time for reflection and continued sharing. Redirect the conversation gently if it veers off-topic.
- **Embody present-moment awareness:** maintain appropriate eye contact to convey attentiveness. Use subtle nodding and affirmative gestures to encourage continued sharing. Adopt an open and receptive posture to create a safe space for communication. Practice mindfulness techniques to stay focused and avoid mental distractions. Observe non-verbal cues from your mentee to gain deeper insights into their state of mind.
- **Employ clarification and summarization techniques:** regularly summarise key points to ensure accurate understanding. Use clarifying questions to delve deeper into important topics. Reflect the mentee's emotions and tone to demonstrate empathy and comprehension. Validate the mentee's experiences while maintaining objectivity. Conclude each session by recapping main discussion points and agreed-upon actions.



## Effective questioning

Effective questioning involves asking thoughtful, purposeful questions that stimulate reflection, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Therefore, the mentor should develop a repertoire of

open-ended questions that encourage deep thinking and self-discovery, while being mindful of timing and context. Skilful questioning can help female entrepreneurs uncover their strengths, address self-doubt, and develop strategies to overcome gender-specific barriers in entrepreneurship.

### Step-by-step implementation

- **Craft purposeful open-ended questions:** prepare a set of thoughtful, open-ended questions before each session. Align questions with the mentee's goals and current challenges. Use "what," "how," and "why" questions to encourage deeper reflection. Tailor questions to explore both professional and personal growth areas. Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of your questions and refine your approach.
- **Challenge thinking with sensitivity:** frame challenging questions in a supportive and non-judgmental manner. Use hypothetical scenarios to explore different entrepreneurial perspectives safely. Encourage the mentee to question their own assumptions and biases towards her entrepreneurial journey challenges and opportunities. Be mindful of potential sensitivities. Balance challenging questions with affirmation of the mentee's strengths and progress.
- **Foster solution-oriented thinking:** guide the mentee towards self-discovery with probing questions. Use the GROW model (Goal, Reality, Options, Will) to structure problem-solving discussions. Encourage the mentee to generate multiple solutions before evaluating them. Ask questions that help the mentee consider potential obstacles and how to overcome them related with her entrepreneurial journey. Prompt the mentee to reflect on past successes and how they can apply those strategies.
- **Create space for mentee-led inquiry:** allocate dedicated time in each session for the mentee to ask questions. Encourage the mentee to prepare questions in advance. Practice active listening when the mentee is asking questions. Provide clear, concise answers and, when appropriate, guide the mentee to find answers independently. Use the mentee's questions as opportunities to deepen the mentoring relationship and uncover new areas for growth.
- **Conduct post-session analysis and follow-up:** review session notes thoroughly, identifying key themes and areas for further exploration. Develop targeted follow-up questions based on the mentee's responses and progress. Consider how to build upon insights gained in previous sessions. Prepare questions that address any gaps in understanding or areas of resistance. Create a system to track the mentee's entrepreneurial progress and adjust your questioning strategy accordingly.



### Providing constructive feedback

Constructive feedback is detailed, actionable feedback that enables mentees to enhance their performance and attain their objectives. Thus, the mentor should provide fair, honest feedback that acknowledges strengths while addressing areas for growth in a supportive manner. Constructive comments can assist female entrepreneurs gain confidence, enhance business strategy, and overcome problems unique to their experiences in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### Step-by-step implementation

- **Master the art of reflective summarisation:** regularly pause to summarise key points using the mentee's own words. Frame summaries as questions to invite confirmation or correction. Use phrases like "If I understand correctly, you are saying..." to demonstrate active listening. Highlight connections between different points the mentee has made. Encourage the mentee to expand on or refine your summary for greater accuracy.
- **Employ strategic clarification techniques:** use a variety of clarification methods, such as paraphrasing and probing questions. Ask specific, targeted questions to address any ambiguities. Seek examples or analogies to enhance understanding of complex ideas. Use hypothetical scenarios to test your interpretation of the mentee's situation. Encourage the mentee to elaborate on key terms or concepts they have used.
- **Promote self-Reflection through mentee summarisation:** regularly ask the mentee to recap main discussion points in their own words. Encourage the mentee to identify key takeaways from each conversation. Use prompts like "How would you explain what we have discussed to a colleague?". Ask the mentee to connect current topics with previous sessions or future entrepreneurial and business goals. Guide the mentee to articulate action steps based on their summary.
- **Provide balanced and constructive feedback:** start with positive reinforcement, acknowledging specific achievements and strengths. Frame challenges as growth opportunities, using "and" instead of "but" statements. Offer specific, actionable suggestions for improvement. Use the "feedback sandwich" technique: positive-improvement-positive. Tailor your feedback style to the mentee's personality.
- **Ensure feedback is objective, non-judgmental, and constructive:** focus on observed behaviours and outcomes rather than personal characteristics. Use concrete examples to illustrate your points. Frame feedback in terms of its potential impact on the mentee's goals. Offer alternative perspectives or approaches without imposing your own preferences. Invite the mentee's response to your feedback, making it a collaborative process.

## Tips for an effective mentorship



### TEACHERS AND TRAINERS SHOULD FOCUS ON:

- 1 Gain a thorough awareness of the distinct problems that female entrepreneurs face in the green sector, integrating empathy for gender-specific concerns with knowledge of sustainability trends
- 2 Stay up to speed on sustainable business practices, green technologies, and eco-friendly breakthroughs to provide relevant recommendations to their mentees
- 3 Introduce mentees to other female entrepreneurs, sustainability specialists, and green investors to broaden their prospects and support system
- 4 Promote a growth attitude that welcomes both entrepreneurial and environmental difficulties, assisting your mentee in developing resilience in the face of setbacks
- 5 Share green success stories to encourage and motivate your mentee and set an example by sharing your own experiences of successful female green entrepreneurs
- 6 Work with your mentee to develop a structured mentoring strategy that is consistent with both sustainability and business objectives

# INTEGRATING ROLE MODEL STORIES



# Integrating role model stories

## Why use role model stories in entrepreneurship support?

Female entrepreneurs, as well as their teachers and trainers, benefit greatly from role model stories. These narratives are effective resources for inspiration, motivation, and practical advice. By highlighting the paths of successful female entrepreneurs, role model tales assist to break down perceived barriers and challenge preconceptions, demonstrating that women can succeed in business. For prospective female entrepreneurs, these stories offer relatable instances of overcoming hurdles, balancing personal and professional lives, and finding success in a variety of industries. They provide significant insights into tactics, decision-making processes, and lessons learnt that can be used directly to their own business ventures.

Role model stories are valuable instructional resources for teachers and trainers because they allow them to illustrate theoretical concepts with real-world examples while also creating a more engaging and motivating learning atmosphere. These stories also address the unique problems that women experience in entrepreneurship, such as access to capital, networking opportunities, and work-life balance, giving both students and educators a more complete picture of the entrepreneurial landscape for women.

## Tips for effectively using role model stories



### TEACHERS AND TRAINERS SHOULD FOCUS ON:

- 1 Ask students to watch or read the role model stories and identify the different businesses. Then ask them to add five more green businesses in the STEAM sector not represented in the stories
- 2 Set up a task for students to write their own questions for female entrepreneurs and then interview someone who as an entrepreneur is already going green
- 3 Ask students to watch or read the role model stories and make notes about the advice given - create a poster from these about good practices for green entrepreneurship
- 4 Ask students to watch or read the role model stories and make a list of the different ways women entrepreneurs started and then grew their businesses
- 5 Ask students to watch or read several role model stories of women entrepreneurs and identify who inspired them and why
- 6 Ask students to watch or read the role model stories and identify the key learning points for them. Discuss in small groups what these are and how they will use them to move forward

# Inspiring stories of women in STEAM and women entrepreneurs

BULGARIA



Elena Lagadinova

Elena Lagadinova (1930-2017) was an outstanding Bulgarian scientist and advocate who received international acclaim for her contributions to agriculture and women's rights. As an agronomic and genetic engineer, she created Triticale, a hardy hybrid wheat strain that dramatically increased farm output. Her scholarly efforts earned her the Bulgarian government's Order of Saints Cyril and Methodius in 1959, followed by the coveted "Presidential Medal of Outstanding Achievement" from California's Claremont Graduate School in 1991. Lagadinova's influence went beyond science; she entered politics, becoming a major advocate for women's rights and influencing legislation to help women in the workplace. Her connections with international luminaries and work with the United Nations increased her global significance. Notably, Lagadinova's amazing life began at the age of 11, when she joined the Bulgarian resistance to German occupation during World War II, laying the groundwork for a lifetime of groundbreaking achievements in science, politics, and social advocacy.



## USEFUL RESOURCES TO FIND MORE ABOUT ELENA'S JOURNEY

- Video interview with Elena Lagadinova in December 2014:  
<https://youtu.be/FX6DSAdqQFo>
- Elena's inspiring journey in politics:  
<https://jacobin.com/2017/12/elena-lagadinova-bulgaria-partisan-amazon-gender-equality>
- Elena as a case study of women's rights and the Cold War:  
[https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/kristenghodsee/files/vb96\\_lagadinova5.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/kristenghodsee/files/vb96_lagadinova5.pdf)
- Book "The left side of history" featuring Elena's role in World War II:  
[www.amazon.com/Left-Side-History-Unfulfilled-Communism/dp/0822358352](http://www.amazon.com/Left-Side-History-Unfulfilled-Communism/dp/0822358352)



Iva Gumnishka

Iva Gumnishka is a well-known Bulgarian social entrepreneur and the CEO of Humans in the Loop, which she founded in 2017. Her innovative firm hires refugees and conflict-affected persons to provide human insight for AI systems, with a focus on data annotation and validation

for machine learning. Inspired by her human rights studies in the United States and her enthusiasm for social entrepreneurship, Iva has led her company to deliver over \$1 million in payments to 952 conflict-affected persons, with a goal of reaching 1,500 by 2024. Her accomplishments have earned substantial acclaim, including being recognised to the Forbes 30 Under 30 list in Bulgaria in 2018, winning the Cartier Women's Initiative 1st Prize Europe Fellow in 2023 and obtaining the EU Woman Innovator Prize in 2022. Iva's strategy emphasizes local training and support for her workers, which she says results in higher quality and consistency in AI data annotation. Her work illustrates how social entrepreneurship may address global concerns while also providing significant employment opportunities for underprivileged groups.



#### USEFUL RESOURCES TO FIND MORE ABOUT IVA'S JOURNEY

- Iva Gumnishka's personal website:  
<https://ivagumnishka.com>
- Iva's company Human's in the Loop official website:  
<https://humansintheloop.org>
- Video interview with Iva Gumnishka from 2023:  
<https://youtu.be/AUd83TGpXso>
- Story article of Iva and Human's in the Loop from Cartier Women's Initiative:  
[www.cartierwomensinitiative.com/fellow/iva-gumnishka](http://www.cartierwomensinitiative.com/fellow/iva-gumnishka)

#### CYPRUS



#### Jonilda Kushta

Dr. Jonilda Kushta is a well-known Research Scientist at the Cyprus Institute, specialised in atmospheric modelling, air pollution processes, and associated health effects. She was born in Albania in 1977 to a Greek family and later went to Athens to finish her education, getting a PhD in Meteorology/Atmospheric Modelling from the University of Athens. Since joining the Cyprus Institute in 2015, Dr. Kushta has been involved in over 20 international and national projects, serving as Scientific Leader and Project Manager for several of them. She is the leader of the Emissions and Regional Air Quality Modelling research team and has over 60 peer-reviewed publications. Dr. Kushta, a mother with a rigorous scientific profession, is also an advocate for women in STEAM disciplines. Her work has made substantial contributions to our understanding of climate change and air pollution, establishing her as a key figure in environmental research in Cyprus and around the world.



#### USEFUL RESOURCES TO FIND MORE ABOUT JONILDA'S JOURNEY

- Video interview explaining Jonilda's day at the Cyprus Institute:  
<https://youtu.be/1zvgFb0yY5M>

- Jonilda’s official biography and CV:  
<https://cyi.ac.cy/index.php/care-c/about-the-center/care-c-our-people/author/854-jonilda-kushta.html>
- List of Jonilda’s research papers, articles and books:  
<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=vzdsas4AAAAJ&hl=en>
- Video interview with Jonilda on air pollution in Europe:  
[https://youtu.be/q4nZf\\_wTgHc](https://youtu.be/q4nZf_wTgHc)



## Elena Georgiou Strouthos

Elena Georgiou Strouthos is a well-known woman in Cyprus's technology business and has been named one of Forbes Cyprus' Top 20 Women in Tech. As Cocoon Creations' co-founder and Chief Technology Officer, she has led the company to serve over 100 clients in 14 countries, creating bespoke digital solutions. Elena has approximately two decades of expertise in technology and holds a good academic background in Computer Science from the University of Cyprus and the University of Manchester. She is a strong supporter of gender equality in the industry, hosting the "Breaking the 20%" podcast and maintaining a 50% female team of software engineers at Cocoon Creations. Elena has led innovative ventures such as "Crew," a workforce management tool, and serves as a Women Techmakers Ambassador. She prioritises ongoing learning, mentorship, and community support in technology while juggling her demanding profession and family life as a mother of two. Her personal slogan, "Embrace Uncertainty, Pursue Learning," exemplifies her dedication to growth and adaptation in the rapidly changing digital industry.



### USEFUL RESOURCES TO FIND MORE ABOUT ELENA'S JOURNEY

- An interesting 2024 interview article with Elena:  
<https://thefuturemedia.eu/leaders-insights-elena-georgiou-strouthos>
- Elena’s Cocoon Creations’ official website:  
<https://cocooncreations.net>
- Elena’s podcast series “Breaking the 20%” for women empowerment:  
<https://breaking20.eu>
- Elena’s LinkedIn profile:  
[www.linkedin.com/in/elenageorgioustrouthos](http://www.linkedin.com/in/elenageorgioustrouthos)

ITALY



## Rita Levi-Montalcini

Rita Levi-Montalcini (1909-2012) was a pioneering Italian neurologist who made important contributions to neuroscience, earning the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1986. Her discovery and isolation of the nerve growth factor (NGF) transformed our understanding of cell growth and differentiation. As a Jewish woman in Fascist Italy, she endured great obstacles, including establishing a makeshift laboratory in her bedroom during World War II when she was barred from academic jobs. Levi-Montalcini's commitment to science lasted far into her older years, when she was still active after turning 100. She was a major supporter of scientific education and women in STEAM, serving as an inspiration to aspiring female scientists around the world. Her significant accomplishments include being named a Senator for Life in the Italian Senate in 2001. Levi-Montalcini's outstanding endurance, scientific achievements, and advocacy make her a role model for Italian STEM history.



### USEFUL RESOURCES TO FIND MORE ABOUT RITA'S JOURNEY

- Official Nobel Prize article on Rita's story and main achievements: [www.nobelprize.org/womenwhochangedscience/stories/rita-levi-montalcini](http://www.nobelprize.org/womenwhochangedscience/stories/rita-levi-montalcini)
- Rita's biography book about her life and work: [www.amazon.com/Praise-Imperfection-My-Life-Work/dp/0465032176](http://www.amazon.com/Praise-Imperfection-My-Life-Work/dp/0465032176)
- Video on Rita's inspirational life and the secret of neuronal growth: <https://youtu.be/kZje3RapLxw>
- Video interview of Rita, Nobel Prize in Medicine 1986: <https://youtu.be/3dMQv0xcxQc>



## Ludovica Gaultieri

Ludovica Gaultieri, an imaginative entrepreneur and designer, launched Ludovica Gaultieri Milano, a green fashion start-up. Gaultieri, who was named to Forbes' Under 30 list for Europe, is dedicated to fashion sustainability, using only eco-friendly and bio-sustainable Italian materials in her creations. Her brand, well renowned for its remarkable swimwear range, blends creativity, innovation, and technological expertise with a strong environmental concern. Gaultieri participates with Healthy Seas, donating a percentage of proceeds to assist environmental programmes, reflecting her personal connection to the water. She graduated from Marangoni Fashion School and Cambridge University and is an advocate for sustainable fashion as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion. Gaultieri's work extends beyond Italy, as she participates in international fashion events that connect the Italian and Chinese markets. Her entrepreneurial venture epitomises the merging of high-end fashion design and environmental responsibility, establishing her as a key player in the sustainable fashion sector.



## USEFUL RESOURCES TO FIND MORE ABOUT LUDOVICA'S JOURNEY

- Ludovica Gualtieri Milano's official website:  
<https://ludovicagualtieri.com>
- An interesting article about Ludovica's entrepreneurial journey:  
[www.econyl.com/highlighted-brands/this-weeks-brand-spotlight-ludovica-gualtieri-milano](http://www.econyl.com/highlighted-brands/this-weeks-brand-spotlight-ludovica-gualtieri-milano)
- Ludovica's official company videos on eco-friendly couture techniques:  
[www.youtube.com/@ludovicagualtierimilano/featured](http://www.youtube.com/@ludovicagualtierimilano/featured)
- Ludovica's video partnership with Volkswagen, presenting her eco-company:  
<https://youtu.be/t92DmKXaKFA>

## POLAND



## Maria Skłodowska-Curie

Maria Skłodowska-Curie (1867-1934), a pioneering Polish-French physicist and chemist, made major discoveries to the study of radioactivity. Born in Warsaw, she moved to Paris at the age of 24 to pursue higher education and conduct scientific research. Maria achieved numerous historic firsts: she was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, the first person to win two Nobel Prizes, and the only person to win Nobel Prizes in two scientific fields (Physics in 1903 and Chemistry in 1911). She and her husband Pierre Curie discovered the elements polonium and radium. Curie invented the word "radioactivity" and devised procedures to isolate radioactive isotopes. Her work paved the way for numerous modern applications in nuclear physics and chemistry. Despite gender hurdles, she became the University of Paris' first female professor in 1906. Maria's legacy extends beyond her scientific accomplishments; she aggressively pushed the use of radium in medicine and founded the Radium Institute in Paris. Her life and efforts continue to inspire scientists, particularly women in STEAM professions around the world.



## USEFUL RESOURCES TO FIND MORE ABOUT MARIA'S JOURNEY

- Marie Curie: The Courage of Knowledge 2016 movie trailer:  
[www.imdb.com/title/tt5705058](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5705058)
- Radioactive 2019 movie trailer inspired by Maria's life and work:  
[www.imdb.com/title/tt6017756](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt6017756)
- An inspirational video about Maria work and life in male-dominated world:  
<https://youtu.be/ercAieKbaA4>
- A video about how Poland Shaped Maria Skłodowska-Curie:  
<https://youtu.be/trNJblPoh3U>



## Zofia Zochniak

Zofia Zochniak is a key person in Poland's sustainable fashion and circular economy industries. As co-founder and CEO of Ubrania Do Oddania, she is transforming Poland's second-hand clothing business by encouraging circular economy techniques in the textile sector. Zofia's experience extends beyond her company; she is a United Nations Global Compact specialist and a sustainable fashion mentor. Her efforts to teach businesses about environmental consciousness and foster a less-waste culture have gained her accolades, including inclusion in Forbes' "The Top 10 Sustainable Development Leaders in Poland" in 2022. Zofia's company, Ubrania Do Oddania, is included in the "Startupy Pozytywnego Wpływu 2023" report, indicating its beneficial impact. Zofia's active participation in sustainability conversations and efforts, together with her roles as an educator and advocate, position her as a vital actor in increasing environmental awareness and sustainable practices in Poland's fashion sector.



### USEFUL RESOURCES TO FIND MORE ABOUT ZOFIA'S JOURNEY

- Zofia's Ubrania Do Oddania journey to promote circular economy: <https://youtu.be/h322T8otKvE> (English subtitles)
- Zofia's Ubrania Do Oddania's fundraising portal: [www.2n.pl/case-studies/udo](http://www.2n.pl/case-studies/udo)
- Zofia's Ubrania Do Oddania's official website: <https://ubraniadooddania.pl>
- Zofia's LinkedIn profile: [www.linkedin.com/in/zosia-zochniak](http://www.linkedin.com/in/zosia-zochniak)

## PORTUGAL



## Elvira Fortunato

Elvira Fortunato is a renowned Portuguese scientist and pioneer in materials science and electronics. She was born in 1964, received her PhD in microelectronics and optoelectronics in 1995, and has since become a professor at Nova University in Lisbon and Director of the Institute of Nanostructures, Nanomodelling, and Nanofabrication. Elvira is known for pioneering paper electronics, having led the team that invented the paper transistor in 2008. Her research focuses on environmentally friendly electronic materials and green electronics, with the goal of addressing difficulties related to sustainable development. Her ground-breaking work has earned her multiple awards, including the Blaise Pascal Medal, a €3.5 million European Research Council grant, and the Pessoa Prize. The French government named her one of 27 inspirational women from Europe in 2022, and she was appointed Minister of Science, Technology, and Higher Education in Portugal. Elvira's contributions to scientific advancement and sustainable

electronics have made her a respected figure in both national and international scientific circles.



#### USEFUL RESOURCES TO FIND MORE ABOUT ELVIRA'S JOURNEY

- Elvira's official biography as former Portuguese Minister of Science: [www.portugal.gov.pt/en/gc23/ministries/science-technology-and-higher-education](http://www.portugal.gov.pt/en/gc23/ministries/science-technology-and-higher-education)
- Elvira's main scientific achievements: <https://docentes.fct.unl.pt/emf>
- An inspiring video of Elvira's professional life as a scientist: <https://youtu.be/KAphlyquO4> (English subtitles)
- Elvira's official scientific CV at Portugal's researcher database: [www.cienciavitae.pt/en/DE1F-9132-B3FF](http://www.cienciavitae.pt/en/DE1F-9132-B3FF)



#### Helena Antónia Silva

Helena Antónia Silva is the creator and CEO of Vintage For a Cause, a circular economy initiative in Portugal that combats textile waste while providing employment for women over 50 in the fashion business. Helena, who grew up in northern Portugal with parents in the textile and furniture sectors, switched from an insurance profession of 15 years to social innovation after completing a postgraduate study. Her company's goal is to interrupt the cycle of quick fashion by rethinking consumer choices, promoting the "Silver Economy" concept, supporting responsible fashion consumption, pushing for selective textile collection, and building collective action for sustainability. Vintage For a Cause not only decreases textile waste, but also provides meaningful employment to older people, instilling a feeling of purpose and belonging. Despite obstacles like limited space and poor textile waste solutions in Portugal, Helena's work has received notice. Helena's creative method promotes both environmental sustainability and social inclusion in the fashion business.



#### USEFUL RESOURCES TO FIND MORE ABOUT HELENA'S JOURNEY

- Helena's video interview about her professional journey: <https://youtu.be/axJvJqXjzdc> (English subtitles)
- Helena's Vintage for a Cause official website: <https://vintageforacause.pt>
- An inspiring video of Helena's journey towards sustainability: <https://youtu.be/fH4gqNyYnuk>
- Helena's LinkedIn profile:

[www.linkedin.com/in/helena-ant%C3%B3nia-silva-3a0b555b](https://www.linkedin.com/in/helena-ant%C3%B3nia-silva-3a0b555b)



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## Women Mentor's Guide - Practical tools and tips for teachers and trainers



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