

## Newsletter #4 - May 2011

### Welcome to Winnet8

#### The Finish Line is coming closer

We have now passed the centerline and are working hard to reach the finish line in time and with good results! At the mid-conference in Seinäjoki the first drafts of the Regional Action Plans were presented and I'm happy to say that we have done a good job. During the coming months the anchoring process, of the Action Plans and the Policy Documents, will be in focus at Regional and European Round Table meetings. We have already had the opportunity to present our results, so far, at a hearing at the Committee on Regional Development in Brussels, the 12th of April. The members of the Committee showed great interest for our work and will consider our recommendations in the next programme period.

You will be able to read more about these meetings in our next Newsletter. This Newsletter has a focus on the researchers who follow and evaluate Winnet8.



Carin Nises is the International Coordinator of Winnet8 and chairwoman of the Steering Group. She represents the Lead Partner, The Municipality of Älvdalen.



### The project Winnet8 - what are the goals with the project?

The overall objective with the project Winnet8 is to contribute to regional growth by improving women's participation in the labour market focusing on:

- Horizontally segregated labour markets
- The lack of women in innovation and technology
- The lack of women in entrepreneurship

The project aims to shape regional, national and EU-level policies and development programmes that relate to women's status in the labour market and ensure these policies are integrated into mainstream provision.

### What happened in the Winnet8 project during the winter of 2010/2011?

In this Newsletter we will publish a summary of the research work shop in Seinäjoki, Finland in March 2011. To make a summary and clarify the researcher's experience of the work in Winnet8 we have asked three questions:

1. Can you explore one important learning from Winnet8?
2. What external or internal obstacles can be identified in a Capitalisation project like Winnet8?
3. What is the contribution of Winnet8 to the research area of gender relations and the labour market?

Find their answers in this newsletter! If you want further information about the project Winnet8 – visit our website [www.winnet8.eu](http://www.winnet8.eu)

## Research Workshop in Seinäjoki, Finland

On the 14-16th of March 2011 about 40 members of the Winnet8 project met in Seinäjoki, Finland. On the 14th the conference started up with the "Research Workshop on the potential of WRCs to influence gender equality in regional growth policies".

### Participating researchers:

- Researcher Malin Lindberg, University of Luleå, Sweden.
- Adjunct Professor Liisa Horelli, Aalto University, Finland.
- Dr. Christiane Bannuscher, Member of Winnet Europe Board, Rostock Mecklenbourg Vor Pommern, Germany.



## Adjunct Professor Liisa Horelli, Aalto University, Finland.

### Can you explore one important learning from Winnet8?

One important learning is the positive approach adopted in W8 that the mainstreaming of gender equality is not a burden or a repulsive obligation but a must if you want to improve the segregated labour markets (considered as a market failure), increase business potential or create innovative milieus (see Gender and Innovation) in a knowledge society.

### What external or internal obstacles can be identified in a Capitalisation project like Winnet8?

One internal obstacle is perhaps the heterogeneity of the participants in terms of the prevailing national culture of gender-friendliness/blindness. This means that there are big differences both in the practices and understanding of the opportunities concerning gender mainstreaming. For example, there is confusion about what WRCs are and their potential role for the implementation of W8 objectives. On the other hand, this diversity can also be a strength if it is well catered for.

A major external obstacle is the massiveness of the main objective, namely the effort to influence the labour markets through working simultaneously on the local/regional, national and transnational levels. This is a very ambitious goal and the W8 project design and strategy are brilliant. However, the implementation of the strategies needs to take into account the cultural differences on the local/regional and national levels in which the project has not had enough time to invest.

### What is the contribution of Winnet8 to the research area of gender relations and the labour market?

Gender studies in general have not focused on local and regional development, besides Sweden, and the segregation of labour markets has been a separate area of research. Now the two have been integrated through the concept of WRCs as an instrument for both alleviating the segregation of markets and the enhancement of regional development, as the WRCs form innovative milieus for a range of new participants (Malin Lindberg and quadruple helix).



## Researcher Malin Lindberg, University of Luleå, Sweden

### Can you explore one important learning from Winnet8?

I discern three equally important learning's from Winnet8. 1) That gender mainstreaming in regional growth policies can include both altered policy priorities and positive actions for women, such as Women Resource Centres (WRCs). 2) That the power structures in regional growth policy making often excludes women's contribution to innovation and growth, which has been manifested in some countries resistance to financing WRCs. 3) That there are several milieus in Europe promoting women's entrepreneurship and innovation in a manner that contribute to societal & economical development.



**What external or internal obstacles can be identified in a Capitalisation project like Winnet8?**

One internal obstacle is the struggle about the balance between focusing “women” as a group in need of promotion in entrepreneurship & innovation and focusing equality issues among all citizens regardless of gender.

One external obstacle is the struggle to spread the experiences made in Winnet8, to get external actors to understand what the project is about since it grasps over three huge areas (labour market, entrepreneurship & innovation).

**What is the contribution of Winnet8 to the research area of gender relations and the labour market?**

The research done in Winnet8 contributes with a new set of data considering actors and areas that hereto have not been acknowledged much in innovation research, namely women and industries employing many women.



## Susanne Stenbacka, on-going evaluator Winnet8

Susanne Stenbacka works with the on-going evaluation of Winnet8. Her main task is to participate in the meetings of the Steering Group, and to combine supporting and evaluating input.

- I do this by listening and gathering information from the participants in the project. I try to have discussions with participants engaged in different ways, MAG-members, project partners and members of the Steering Group of course. I work as a researcher and senior lecturer at the Department of Social and Economic Geography at the University of Uppsala, and to gain insight in a project like Winnet8 is inspiring for both research and teaching. I also believe that my research background may be helpful in understanding the implementation of Winnet8 in different geographical contexts, and that I also can contribute by offering critical and self-reflective questions during the process.

**Can you explore one important learning from Winnet8?**

- That the points of departure for the participants are quite different and that this offers an interesting position for learning for all partners. When you learn about others you also learn about yourself.

**What external or internal obstacles can be identified in a capitalisation project like Winnet8?**

- External obstacles may materialize in liquidity problems, in local power relations and hierarchies that may delay the work. Internal obstacles may be that participants are too eager to get the job done and to perform in a “good way”. The danger is that problems or disagreements are restrained and important learning aspects are becoming subordinated.

**What is the contribution of Winnet8 to the research area of gender relations and the labour market?**

- Winnet8 will contribute to an increased understanding of the diversity of female participation in the labour market in Europe as well as of diversity in perspectives and tackling of problems. The meaning of the local context in the transformation of gender relations and learning among regions are other important aspects. Parallel to this diversity there is a common goal and a strong engagement in women's rights and the need to question gender inequalities.



## Panel Discussion

During the afternoon on the 14th of March there was a very successful panel discussion on the topic “Women resource centres influence on the gender aspect in the different countries”. Members of the panel: Adjunct Professor Liisa Horelli, Aalto University, Finland, Britt-Marie Torstensson Winnet Sweden, Hazel Smith Winnet8, Scotland, Dr. Christiane Bannuscher, Winnet Europe, Johanna Sjöholm, WRC Finland, Malin Lindberg, University of Luleå.







## Bulgaria - on track

In April, Carin Nises and Karin Eriksson, Älvdalen, visited The Municipality of Plovdiv, our partner in Bulgaria. Their work has proceeded slightly slower, than the other regions, due to bureaucracy and financial problems, but they are now working hard to catch up. We had a meeting with the MAG for the region and presented Good Practices from Sweden. We also had the opportunity to help the project leader, Diana Vaneva, with some reporting issues.

## Next newsletter

Next Newsletter from Winnet8 will be published in June 2011.

## Agenda spring of 2011

- National and regional Round Table meetings April/May
- Steering Group meeting in Poland 15th of June
- Partnership meeting in Poland 15th of June