



BEST PRACTICE IN ADULT EDUCATION FOR A JUST TRANSITION

WECF France

Supporting Entrepreneurship among
Women in Rural Areas

JULY 2024



Co-funded by
the European Union

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– Supporting Entrepreneurship among Women in Rural Areas

Context and Initiative Details

Name of the initiative	<u>Women Engage for a Common Future France (WECF France) – Réseau Femmes rurales</u> (“rural women’s network”)
Geographical scope	Local: Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
Sources of funding	RAJA-Danièle Marcovici foundation. Regional public funding: Haute-Savoie Corporate sponsorship: Léa Nature
Duration of the initiative	2011 – Ongoing
Target audience	Women entrepreneurs in rural areas committed to environmental transition.
Social justice focus area	Gender equality, Women empowerment, sustainable rural economy.
Goals of the initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing women’s participation in starting local businesses, community governance organizations, and agricultural initiatives (like new farming methods). Improving the liveliness of rural areas while preserving agricultural environments. Encouraging agricultural and food practices that preserve biodiversity and are climate-adaptive in order to promote local food security.

Good Practices Description

Stakeholder engagement in the process

The “Femmes rurales” network primarily unites women entrepreneurs in rural areas dedicated to transition.

Yet, the crucial involvement of support structures, local authorities, institutions, and funding bodies is essential in welcoming and aiding these women. Hence, there’s an urgent need for these entities to adapt their approaches, providing the necessary space and resources for these women to thrive.

Therefore, operating from the grassroots to the national level, this network connects public entities, organizations, and women engaged in rural initiatives.

Accordingly, advocacy actions have grown in scope, and many regional and national organizations (Initiatives Center to promote Agriculture in Rural Areas, National Federation of Organic Agriculture, etc.) have taken up this issue. These include studies on the place of women in inter-professional organizations, and access to maternity leave.

Methodology used (if available)

Prior to putting these women on the network, WECF France selected people whose achievements deserved to be acknowledged and shared with a larger audience. The goal is to demonstrate how women can make a positive difference in their communities and build strong rural societies by implementing projects like itinerary profiles and portraits, short film production, award ceremonies, and participatory financing.

Teaching approaches (if available)

The initiative does not provide training directly, but connects the women participating in the project with each other and with institutions that can support and train them (public structures, rural training associations, etc.).

Challenges and outcomes

Key factors contributing to success

An increasing number of associations and public institutions have committed to the initiative's concept, which can help advance the women who are involved.

Encountered difficulties and challenges

Given that the project is based on initiatives started by women entrepreneurs, the primary obstacle was related to their status as female entrepreneurs in rural areas:

- Limited participation in interprofessional groups and consular bodies.
- Inappropriate or unreachable babysitting options.
- A lack of confidence, particularly in women business owners.

Recommendations

Macro level:

- combine mobility and proximity solutions to lessen rural women's isolation and distance.
- Establish comprehensive and targeted policies to support women working in rural areas.
- increase women's access to and quality of medical care in rural areas.
- Encourage and support female entrepreneurs
- Boost the representation of women in local politics

Meso level:

- expanding the educational opportunities available to young girls both locally and globally.

Impact

'Spotlight' campaign in 2021:

- Webinar "Women's resilience worldwide in the Covid-19 context"
- Open letter: "Europe needs more women farmers," International Day of Peasant's Struggles
- Conference "Women at the forefront of climate change" at the "Empow'Her" Festival
- Webinar "My next job will be green" with over 60 participants
- Stand at the "The Women's Cause" Festival in Gaillard (Haute-Savoie), with nearly 250 visitors
- Exhibition "Rural Women" at the "Eco nights" in Annemasse (Haute-Savoie)

The Femmes et Biodiversité award in 2022:

- Out of 23 candidates, 3 winners were selected. On Earth Day, April 22, 2022, the awards ceremony was held in Annecy (Haute-Savoie) in the presence of departmental elected representatives and members of the jury.
- The event also provided an opportunity for exchanges between the candidates, and to publicize and promote the commitment of rural women to the social and solidarity economy, in addition to their contribution to agriculture.