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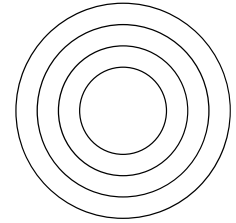
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Science-to-Business Research Centre Germany

INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS

A series of Authentic Stories from Münster



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The booklet is an initiative within the project Women Entrepreneurs in Regional Inclusive Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (WeRIn) with the reference number 621750-EPP-1-2020-1-DE-EPPKA2-KA. The WeRIn project is funded and overseen by EACEA. A pioneering European initiative, WeRIn, lead by the Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre at the FH Münster University of Applied Sciences, aims to enhance the inclusivity of entrepreneurship education and support programs to increase the share of female graduate entrepreneurs and enhance their level of embeddedness in regional entrepreneurial ecosystems across Europe.



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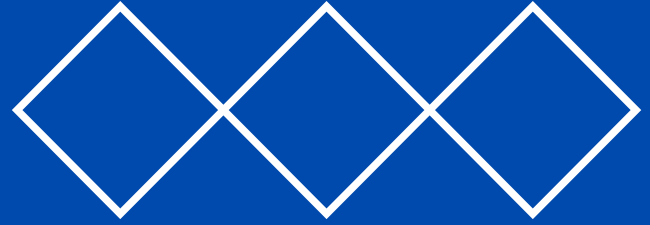
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PREFACE

AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR INITIATIVE.

Where have we gotten.

BEHIND THE STORY.

The Europe 2020 strategy and recent policy measures aim to expand entrepreneurship in each EU Member States (e.g., The Missing Entrepreneurs, 2019). Europe has taken the path to strengthen entrepreneurial culture and networks by assembling strategies and actions to enable everyone to start a successful and sustainable business, despite their gender, age, place of birth, or other personal characteristics.

Even though women have struggled in the past decade to break the "glass ceiling," to start their ventures, or to increase their participation in leadership positions, data suggest that women's entrepreneurial potential is still untapped (Ughetto et al., 2019).

The assumption that underlies most entrepreneurial ecosystems is that all entrepreneurs can equally access the ecosystem's support. In theory, this assumption is valid. However, in practice, this is not always the case (Brush et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship remains heavily male-dominated (Wu et al., 2019). Women are less well represented in incubators and scale-up programs and face substantial challenges such as fewer opportunities in start-up capital acquisition (National Women's Business Council, 2017) and lower perception of the possibility of business creation.

The lower entrepreneurial activity amongst women has been attributed to the traditional general attitudes in entrepreneurship education, which are discouraging for women (Dilli & Westerhuis, 2018). Traditional masculine assumptions underlie ideas about entrepreneurship, which in turn are presented to students in a classroom.

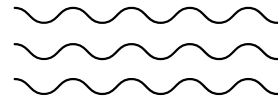
Research suggests that entrepreneurial activity can be either facilitated or hindered by ecosystems (Stroila, 2020). The existing entrepreneurship ecosystem's frameworks and perspectives appear to be essential factors that promote or hinder entrepreneurship. These frameworks and perspectives ignore the possibility that variance can be attributed to gender (Brush et al., 2019).

Though scholars may imply gender in cultural definitions (Isenberg, 2010), or participant heterogeneity in an ecosystem (Roundy et al., 2017), or the public status of freelancers or start-up communities (Mason & Brown, 2014), research suggests that adopting gender-aware practices may lead to improvement of theory and expand our understanding of entrepreneurial ecosystems in general (Brush et al., 2019).

The most prominent ecosystems are at the local scale rather than at the national scale (Berger & Kuckertz, 2016). Further, studies highlight the importance of a gender-based perspective by emphasizing entrepreneurs' agency in their concepts (Stead, 2015).

Women's lower entrepreneurial experience and reduced proclivity to take a risk (Fairlie & Rob, 2009), a lack of educational resources and support of various institutions, as well as inaccessibility to financial and social capital required for the identification and exploitation of opportunities (Alesina et al., 2013) are a few of the difficulties women face in starting a new business.

Evidence that soft dimensions of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (i.e., training and education; role models and mentors; human resources and workforce; markets' accessibility) are relatively less accessible for women has also been reported (Foss et al., 2019).



What is to be done.

A SILVER LINING.

There is a need for more inclusive approaches in entrepreneurship. Inclusion is a process of identifying and adapting to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing inclusion in literacy, cultures, and diverse communities and decreasing "exclusion within and from education" (Acedo et al., 2009). According to UNESCO (2005), inclusion is concerned with responding appropriately to a wide range of learning requirements in formal and informal educational environments.

Rather than being a secondary concern about how educators can incorporate certain learning concepts into formal education, inclusive (entrepreneurship) education will necessitate a strategy investigating how to change education programs and other learning experiences to achieve success. Furthermore, there is strong evidence that institutions in the entrepreneurial ecosystems beyond academia are not fully inclusive of women entrepreneurs (Hechavarría & Ingram, 2019).

If women entrepreneurs' rate is to be improved, measures must go beyond "fixing women" through educational and training activities, hence moving the focus from individuals to resource providers, networks, and the "connectors" within the ecosystem (Foss et al., 2019). HEI's and their partners in the local ecosystem need to collaborate to increase the number of female graduates to engage in entrepreneurship, facilitate and remove obstacles to entrepreneurship overall (Brush et al., 2019), and support their progression and advancement entrepreneurial journeys.

According to the latest report from the European Commission and OECD (2019), the following key points need to be addressed to advance initiatives on female entrepreneurship:

- More women should be self-employed and become entrepreneurs
- Female entrepreneurs face numerous challenges
- Women's careers and representation in innovation should be promoted
- Governmental strategies, cooperation, and funding for Women Entrepreneurship initiatives are insufficient in EU countries

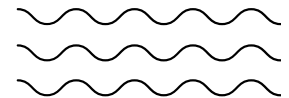
Through projects like Women Entrepreneurs in Regional Inclusive Entrepreneurial Ecosystems, Women Entrepreneurs in STEM, and many others, we significantly contribute to the EU Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan and beyond.

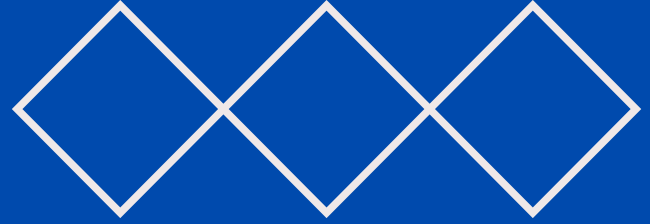
With the proposed collaborations and activities, we aim to strengthen initiatives on women entrepreneurship and leadership. We want to inspire, empower and support women in their path to self-employment and leadership.

Through the creation of this booklet, the three missions of the University of Teaching, research, and knowledge transfer are used to create synergy effects, resulting in enhanced teaching formats that bring students (male and female) closer to entrepreneurship and leadership role models to learn from and to raise awareness on the topics at hand.

Read more about our initiatives:

www.science-marketing.com





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About this project.

WHY WE CREATED THIS BOOKLET.

This project aimed to collect stories of students, alumni, entrepreneurship educators, and women entrepreneurs from the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Münster in Germany to reveal interesting insights on inclusivity within entrepreneurial ecosystems and education.

52 individuals with different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences were interviewed, resulting in a compilation of quotes that might inspire you and show the importance of the challenges to overcome.

The time has come - it is no longer only about educating for entrepreneurship; it is about making sure that all feel invited to be entrepreneurs and that students (male and female) are aware of entrepreneurship as a career perspective. We want to inspire those who might have great ideas but are still hesitant towards making the big step into entrepreneurship.

About the authors.

WHO CREATED THIS BOOKLET.

This project is the outcome of a four-month semester project at the FH Münster University of Applied Sciences in 2021.

The project was supervised by Iulia Stroila, PhD student, and Jun. Prof. Dr Sue Rossano-Rivero, managed by the Master's students Elina Isakova, Arlene Schwippert, and Clara Steding.

It was further carried out by the Bachelor's students Marie Anghelone, Pia Becker, Nicole Bedoya, Elena Dehne, Lucas Enee, Marceau Fugier, Pia Krasmann, Paul Maluck, and Célin Moulin.



Our motivation.

WHY THIS PROJECT IS IMPORTANT FOR US.

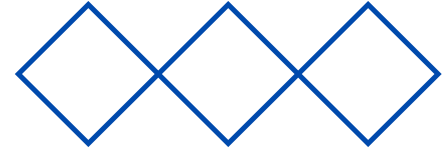


Entrepreneurship is a kind of art. It does not matter what gender, nationality, culture, religion, or age. It is all about being yourself, making the world a better place, being brave, and pushing boundaries. I believe that entrepreneurship is for everybody, and it is significant to empower various people in entrepreneurial ecosystems to make the environment more inclusive. This booklet is a great opportunity to tell authentic and brave stories and inspire people to believe in the power of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is not just about being innovative and introducing new products to markets. Rather, it offers an opportunity to improve living standards and thus increase wealth. This project may be limited to the Münsterland area, but it provides many insights that can be applied to other ecosystems. By linking numerous stakeholders around the topic, we provide unique insights into the world of entrepreneurship that can benefit many entrepreneurs.



I've always had much respect for entrepreneurs. Having an idea that benefits other people and doing everything to make it happen is remarkable and inspiring for everyone, who may only observe an entrepreneur on their journey. Far too few creative and ambitious people take their chance, as they might not dare to take the plunge due to fear of failure or lacking support. Therefore, this booklet should inform but also encourage future entrepreneurs.

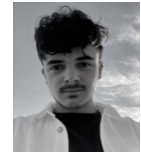


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It is straightforward: We need more entrepreneurs! Entrepreneurship is essential because it makes the world a better place by solving problems - for themselves and everyone else. They create jobs, creativity, change, innovation, and do something for the greater good. Entrepreneurs pursue their heart's issues. Not because they necessarily want to make a profit or need appreciation, but because they really stand 100% for their ideas and thus want to make this world a better place.

One thing is clear: entrepreneurship is important. There are many benefits, from rewarding problem-solving, organizational, and leadership skills to fostering creativity and empowerment. It's not easy to change the thought process among thousands of different demographics, but it's clear that most of the world needs higher female entrepreneurship participation.

“



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Entrepreneurship is not just another subject at university. It is a mindset that helps us identify problems and find solutions that create unique value. But there are also clear differences in entrepreneurship that we need to understand and find a solution for. This project allows me to learn more about the challenges that female entrepreneurs face and how we can get them out of the way.

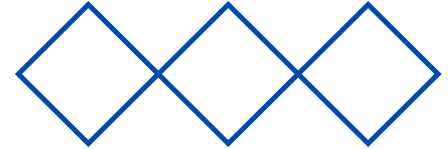


This project is essential because many people want to become an entrepreneur or start a business nowadays. Therefore, this booklet will help many of them by giving them experiences and stories from stakeholders of the ecosystem in Münster.

Entrepreneurship is the driver of our world. Without courageous and motivated entrepreneurs, the most important inventions would not exist. The world needs entrepreneurs to move things forward and improve our world, economy and thus people's living standards. Without entrepreneurship, our lives would be very different.



Entrepreneurship is the backbone of a thriving economy and an innovative society. Entrepreneurs are the ones that transform ideas into valuable products. The potential for such creativity can be found throughout society. However, in Germany, this potential might not be exhausted to its limit, and it is important to find out why that may be.

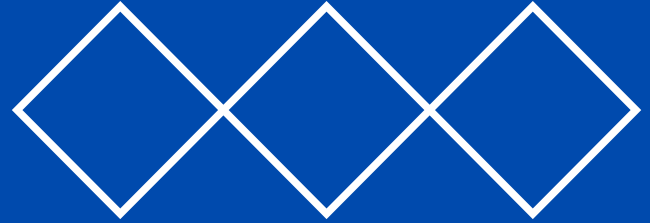


This project has allowed me to understand interdependent actors and relations systems better, and the experience has been enriching. Although female entrepreneurship is in the early stages, the stories and experiences gathered could motivate women to join the entrepreneurial path. Even though it is challenging, the legacy left behind marks a point in history.

Entrepreneurship is a mine of knowledge, ideas, and creativity, but it's mostly a world that can be scary because of its complexity. In this project, I was able to get closer to how entrepreneurship works and hope that I can now be a part of it. With everyone's different visions and experiences, the stakes and challenges seem clearer and easier to understand.



In my opinion, entrepreneurship needs to be taught to students because it can open their minds and make them realize that anyone can start something, and you don't have to have certain characteristics. Also, female entrepreneurship is an issue that needs to be addressed more at the university, and we saw through this project that there was often no mention of gender differences or access to networks. This project highlights the "problems" that need to be solved, and it is important to identify them.



MÜNSTER

A NASCENT ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM.

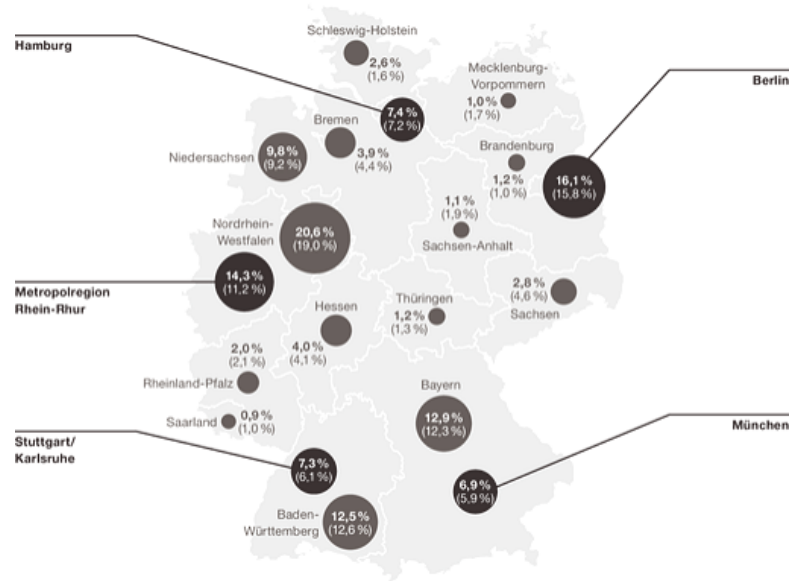
A well-functioning regional ecosystem and a founder-friendly climate are crucial for the success of start-ups. According to the Deutscher start-up Monitor 2020, almost 60 per cent of founders rate the start-up ecosystem in their location as (very) good.

Five start-up hotspots emerge in Germany, where start-ups are spread across the federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia (20.6 per cent) and Berlin (16.1 per cent) in 2019.

A study conducted by the S2BMRC study in cooperation with PwC investigated the start-up scene in Münster. Small and medium-sized enterprises characterise the economy of the entrepreneurial ecosystem around Münster. Of the approximately 69,400 businesses in Münsterland, 85.9 % are small businesses (under ten employees), 13.7 % are medium-sized businesses (of which 11 % have 10 to 49 employees and 2.7 % have 50 to 249 employees), and only 0.4 % are large businesses (250 employees and more).

The very positive elements in Münster from the startup point of view are proximity to universities and research institutions, access to start-up networks and available jobs in the creative industry.

Read more at: www.science-business.com.



Source: Deutscher Start-up Monitor (2020)

DISCOVER 13 THRILLING STORIES

AND BE INSPIRED BY THEIR EXPERIENCES.

In total, 52 interviews with students, alumni, entrepreneurship educators and women entrepreneurs from the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Münster, Germany, have been conducted. We asked about entrepreneurship education, role models, social norms, networks and access to institutional parties, inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems. In the end, we compiled 13 stories which are published in this booklet.

Students

- Juan Diego Mendoza
- Camila Molina
- Omar Zirite
- Taeim Ham

Alumni

- José Miguel Gutiérrez
- Alejandra Perafán

Educators

- Prof. Dr. Michael Wasserman

Female entrepreneurs

- Julia Kümper
- Eva Ritz
- Lena Otte
- Anna Hülemeier
- Julia Kirsch
- Leonie Dalferth



STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

GET TO KNOW THEIR STORIES.

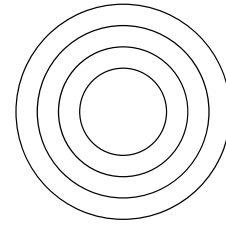
In total, 25 students from universities in Münster participated in this project and were asked for their opinion on entrepreneurship.

Thinking about entrepreneurs, most students have specific characteristics like intelligence, communication skills, flexibility, or confidence in mind. In their opinion, entrepreneurs are not afraid of failure but stay focused on their goals and never give up on their vision. As they strongly believe in what they are doing, entrepreneurs are willing to take risks and very passionate.

Students strongly recommend participating in entrepreneurship courses that encourage people to take new perspectives to learn more about entrepreneurship.

Especially those people who have had an idea and goal in mind for a long time are more likely to be perceived as successful entrepreneurs. However, it must be mentioned that only a few women are associated with entrepreneurship, and none of the students mentioned this as a shortcoming. Apparently, most students never dealt with gender differences in entrepreneurship in class and did not perceive this as an issue.

The relevance of networks is a present topic among the interviewed students, as they appreciate the given opportunities and advice.



Moreover, students believe that universities play an important role but could be more encouraging to get involved with entrepreneurship. To the majority, it is mentioned that networks and organizations are accessible regardless the gender.

Thinking about entrepreneurs, most students have specific characteristics such as intelligence, communication skills, flexibility, or confidence in mind. In their opinion, entrepreneurs are not afraid of failure but stay focused on their goals and never give up on their vision. As they strongly believe in what they are doing, entrepreneurs are willing to take risks and passionate.

**“ ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS
WHEN YOU HAVE A VERY
GOOD IDEA, AND YOU
WANT TO SPREAD IT
AROUND THE WORLD.**

FELIX FINDT



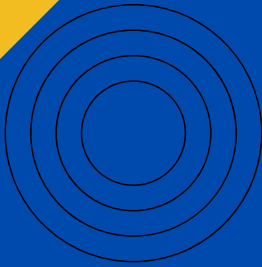
I ALWAYS RELATED ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH CREATIVE SKILLS. BUT AS I HAVE CONDUCTED A COUPLE OF INTERVIEWS FOR THIS PROJECT, I REALIZED THAT CREATIVITY SKILLS ARE NOT THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS. FOR EXAMPLE, SUPPOSE YOU WANT TO HAVE EXPERIENCE WORKING IN A COMPANY OR A START-UP IN A SPECIFIC AREA. BEING CREATIVE IS NOT THE MOST CRUCIAL CHARACTERISTIC.

IF YOU ARE OPEN-MINDED, BRAVE ENOUGH TO START A BUSINESS, HAVE GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS, YOU HAVE OTHER VITAL CHARACTERISTICS BENEFICIAL FOR ANY BUSINESS. IN YOUR CASE, YOU MANAGE THREE LANGUAGES. THEREFORE, YOUR NETWORKING SKILLS COULD WORK IN YOUR FAVOUR TO GET MORE INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS. I SUGGEST YOU TRY TO CONCENTRATE ON YOUR STRENGTHS RATHER THAN YOUR WEAKNESSES SINCE IT WILL HELP YOU DECIDE TO START A BUSINESS.

NICOLE BEDOYA

**“ NETWORKING IS A
PILLAR OF
ENTREPRENEURSHIP.**

JUAN DIEGO MENDOZA FRANCO



Juan Diego Mendoza

MASTER STUDENT AT THE
FH MÜNSTER UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Juan Diego Mendoza Franco is a 23-year-old Colombian. He did his bachelor's degree in International Business Management in Colombia and Germany with a double degree program. Currently, he studies at FH Münster and works as a graduate research assistant at the Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre (Münster).

How would you describe the typical entrepreneur?

They are leaders, they work not only because of money, but they're also working for a purpose. And when you have a purpose, you make amazing things.

They are risk-takers, highly motivated, disciplined because, without discipline, you will not achieve certain things. You can be brilliant, but without this quality, it will not work. Furthermore, they have flexibility when it comes to facing problems. Their resilience is important.

Which qualities are important for the future entrepreneur?

The attitude, how they act, and the energy. I think an entrepreneur must have particular leadership manners or attitudes: to be empathetic, and open-minded, flexible, but at the same time serious, vulnerable. This vulnerability term is essential, but people think it is a weakness if one person is vulnerable. I think that shows that we are human beings, and it is a kind of a source of trust within the teams.

Generally, in your peer group, how are entrepreneurs being talked about in informal settings?

How entrepreneurship is being seen differentiates between cultures. In Latin America, people often start some business or establish some venture because of necessity.

My parents are entrepreneurs. They have their own company. It is not easy to have a company and make all people think as you do and align them with the same goal. But I believe that in a social circle the entrepreneurship is seen as something good.

Here in Germany, I also have some friends that say: "Well, I don't have to become an entrepreneur because I also have some fun working for a company." They feel secure. They are in their comfort zone. There is no wrong or right approach, but if you have passion for something, go for it!



**“ WE SHOULD HAVE EQUALITY
OF OPPORTUNITY. WHAT WE
SHOULDN'T PURSUE IS
EQUALITY OF OUTCOME AS
THIS IS NOT SUSTAINABLE IN
THE LONG RUN.**

JUAN DIEGO MENDOZA FRANCO

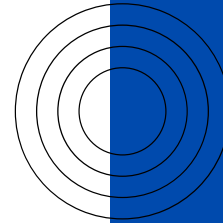
Camila Molina



BACHELOR STUDENT AT THE
FH MÜNSTER UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES AND
FOUNDER OF SANTO SAZÓN

Camila Molina is a 24-year-old Colombian. She has started her bachelor's degree in economics in Medellín, Colombia, and sometime later, taking the opportunity to get a double degree, she continued her studies in Germany. Currently, she studies Business Administration at FH Münster.

Furthermore, one year ago, Camila has started her entrepreneurial way. She has grounded a startup, "Santo Sazón," expressing herself through Colombian cuisine. Her goal is to share the story and the culture of Colombia by engaging and surprising people in Münster with the delicious part of her home country.



**“ THE SOCIAL IMPACT IN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS
SIGNIFICANT TO START
MAKING CHANGES.**

CAMILA MOLINA

How would you describe the typical entrepreneur?

I think you can be an entrepreneur because of an opportunity or because of a need. It also depends on the country, the background that you have. In my case, I can combine the job opportunity and the need.

Entrepreneurs' typical characteristics are initiative, disciplined, outside-the-box thinking, proactive, and they can find solutions for every problem. And if you can get out of your comfort zone, you start to see the opportunities.

In my opinion, the social criteria are critical. I can relate it to me because I tried to get a social focus when I started my business. The last year was a tragedy in Latin America, in Honduras, Guatemala, because of the hurricane. So, I was trying to give one Euro per dessert that I sell for this cause because I think it's important for the entrepreneur to think about how we can help society. We can impact the community in one way or many ways. I think the social impact is significant to start making changes.

Which entrepreneur(s) do you currently see as your role model(s) and why?

My mother is my main role model, and she is also an entrepreneur. Sometimes when I feel insecure, I wish that she could be here, in Germany. However, I can call her every time, and she is always there more me with advice and support.

I also consider one professor at FH Münster as one of my role models. She is engaged with the topic of female entrepreneurship, and I see her as a very inspiring woman.

Another person I see as my role model is Juan Manuel Barrientos. He's a Colombian, and he has already got a first Michelin star in a Colombian restaurant. He started from zero. It's a motivation for me.



Were there any specific course elements where there is attention for gender differences within entrepreneurship?

In the International Marketing course, we talked with the professor about female entrepreneurs, the drivers, the opportunities, the barriers. So, in this case, I can say we could implement some new strategies for addressing.

In my opinion, nowadays, female entrepreneurs and male entrepreneurs should be equal, but, unfortunately, it does not happen. Women have more challenges to address. For example, the trust as people says: "She is a woman, maybe she cannot do it."

How confident were you to become an entrepreneur?

In the beginning, it was difficult. I was thinking a lot about what people will say. But then, step by step, I feel more confident. In Germany, there are many bureaucratic things, especially in the food sphere. You have to do more documents.

So I also felt scared, and at this moment, I wanted to have a person or a pioneer, and German pioneer that tells me: "You can do it, and you have to do this." But I made it alone at that moment.

I am also trying to help the environment - the glass fund. So the people can take the glasses for one euro. And if you come again, you can give this glass back in exchange for one euro, and we help the environment a little bit. I don't want to be like another restaurant or other entrepreneurs that sell food. No, I want to make a little bit of impact.



COURTESY OF © SANTO SAZÓN

**“ NETWORKING SKILLS
ARE THE FIRST SKILLS
YOU SHOULD HAVE AS
AN ENTREPRENEUR.**

OMAR ZIRITE



Omar Zirite

BACHELOR STUDENT AT THE
FH MÜNSTER UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES AND
FOUNDER OF ANALYTICR

Omar is a 26-year-old Moroccan. He is a bachelor's student at FH Münster, and at the same time, a founder of Analyticr, a B2B tool that helps websites increase their conversation rate. And also the co-founder of the platform Marolet, where students can share their experiences and learning materials. He is passionate about entrepreneurship and marketing.

He grew up in an entrepreneurial family, and the person who drives him to be an entrepreneur is his father. Omar sees entrepreneurs as individuals who create something new and provide value for other people.

To what extent is networking or networking skills part of the program?

Before the Corona time, we have organized some events where we met and discussed what other people do, challenges that we were facing regarding startups, and people share their opinions. So if someone has already has been there, they had explained what they did when they faced these exact challenges, and It was helpful. Networking skills are the first skills you should have as an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship is all about networking. It's all about knowing people, their experiences. So if the person is a little bit scared of new people, it won't be easy.

How confident were you to become an entrepreneur?

It is not a decision that a person makes "okay, now I am an entrepreneur," it is a process. And you will be observed by the idea, by the concept, by the people, by the community, and you will find it in yourself: confidence. I thought: "I don't have anything to lose." If I lose, then I will go back to Morocco or go to another country, and with the experience I have learned before, I am going to try the same again.

And from the learning, the experience, I am going to build something bigger or something better. So, confidence. It comes with knowing what you do and knowing the processes, skills, soft skills, and hard skills, and it took me much time to learn how to sell to people, present something, speak with someone, do Facebook advertising, using copywriting. So many things built my confidence.

Have you ever felt that if you become an entrepreneur, you will need to live up to certain standards or images set by others?

The only standards that I am following are my own standards. I will be lying if I say that I don't care what other people say, but it's supposed to be my father. He is a businessman. And he talks with me about business, and he is successful in what he does. And it is a bit not a comfortable discussion with him each time because there are some standards. I think entrepreneurs should set their own standards. So, if I am comfortable wearing this suit, I will do it if I do not like it, I am not going to do it.

Are there any other entrepreneurs that you see as role models?

The entrepreneur that I see as a role model is my mentor. He is the one that mentors me in the project of Marolet, and he is the founder of Xibit, one of the best start-ups here in Germany. He is also Moroccan. So because I am from Morocco, I was looking for someone who already did it too, to believe in myself more. When you want to build a startup, you will not build a great start-up based on the knowledge from the internet.

Could you name some support organizations for entrepreneurs?

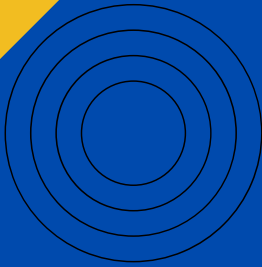
There is an organization Venture Club Münster. I am in the management team and as a founder there—furthermore, the Reach community is new in Münster. So there is a pre-incubator and incubator there. They help people with one-to-one coaching, and they also provide workshops.

I don't know many programs that finance start-ups. Because my goal is to get financing from venture capitalists directly, it is the point where the story begins. Because if they believe in you, then it's something great.

What do you think are the benefits of these support organizations?

There are many benefits. First, they help you with the decision-making processes. And if someone is at the beginning of this journey, someone who wants to learn about start-ups, how they function, their core values and how they grew up, it is a great opportunity to learn. One of the workshop speakers in those kinds of organizations was the CEO of FlaschenPost, and now Flaschenpost, I think, they were sold for 1 billion dollars or 1 billion euros. And the CEO has given us a workshop about financial planning.





Taeim Ham

BACHELOR STUDENT AT THE
FH MÜNSTER UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Taeim is a 22-year-old South Korean. Currently, she is doing her semester abroad and studies Business Administration at FH Münster.

She would describe a typical entrepreneur as "fearless" because there are 1000s of business students, only a few decide to choose entrepreneurship. She believes that most of the students decide to apply to the bigger companies, or even if it's a startup, they decide to apply as an employee.

What would increase your confidence, and what will motivate you to become an entrepreneur?

When I'm only learning the theoretical part, I don't have any interest in it. But since I started doing some project classes, it really makes me more dedicated, and I think about my future career more.

Who in your group of students do you think will become a successful entrepreneur? What are their characteristics?

I think some of them because I can see they're passionate and dedicated about it. Because most of the students, including me, do it because we want a great grade or have to pass this course to finish the program, but some actually have some pure interest. So, I think if they have that kind of passion, they can be successful.

Would people close to you (family members, friends, peers) support you if you decide to embark on a career as an entrepreneur? Why (not)? And How?

I think my friends would support me 100% because they know my traits, such as creativity.

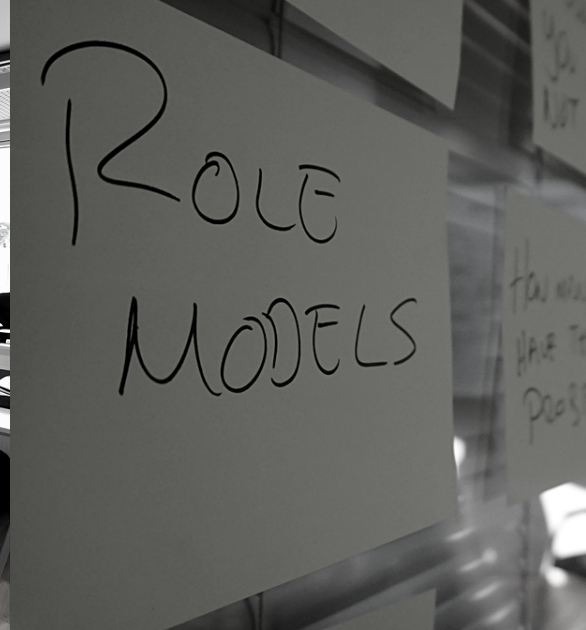
My family is a different story because I'm from Korea, and we still believe that a woman has to get married and have children. So, if I start a company, then that kind of lifestyle I have to give up. And also, for women, it's hard to get a job when they're older than 30. So, if I failed in my own entrepreneurship, that means I have to apply to other companies. I have more risk of not getting a new job or starting a new career. So that's why my family wouldn't support me that much.

What kind of entrepreneurship would suit you best?

Lifestyle apps would be the best fit for me because I would need to have a passion related to my life. Something that I have experienced before or that I want to experience. So that's why it has to be a lifestyle. And the reason why I want to choose the app company because I think that kind of industry has more tendency to being diverse or being more open and less hierarchy. So those two, if they are combined, I think that's the best thing that suits me.

**“ GOOD ENTREPRENEURS
THINK NOT ONLY ABOUT
MONEY BUT ALSO
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

TAEIM HAM



EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVE

GET TO KNOW THEIR STORIES.

In total, 10 educators from universities in Münster participated in this project and were asked to share their perspective on entrepreneurship education and its inclusivity.

Educators need to look up to role models like Elon Musk or Jeff Bezos; however, they know that each possible entrepreneur needs to figure out their own strengths and personality.

What should be encouraged is more curiosity, excitement and confidence, as everyone can be raised to be a successful entrepreneur if only the opportunity is pointed out to them. Particularly, this applies to minority groups from different socioeconomic or ethnics backgrounds. Especially for women, it is often harder to hold their ground next to a superior number of males. Educators are aware that men more often take the chance to get involved with entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, women mostly work in solid employment that is connected to lower risk, which is why they should receive more support and confirmation from society.

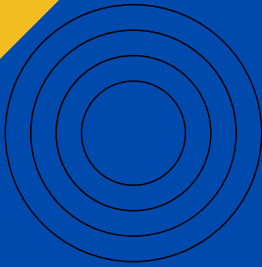
Regarding this very support, getting access to financial support is one of the biggest obstacles. According to most interviewed educators, students from the FH Münster University of Applied Sciences meet all requirements for successful entrepreneurship.

However, building a network is a challenge for young entrepreneurs, as they have little experience and contacts. It should be mentioned that this is especially the case in smaller cities, as the start-up scene is less represented.



**“ THE BEST ENTREPRENEURS
ARE THE ONES THAT SEE
WHAT OTHER PEOPLE
NEED AND WHAT OTHER
PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO
PAY FOR.**

PROF. DR. MICHAEL WASSERMAN



Prof. Dr. Michael Wasserman

EDUCATOR AT FH MÜNSTER
IN INTERNATIONAL
MANAGEMENT

Michael Wasserman is a professor of International Management at the FH Münster. He also teaches in the CALA, EBP programs, which are dual degree Bachelor programs. In the program, they offer entrepreneurship modules. Besides that, he teaches in the master modules in innovation, with two blog courses in sustainability, innovation, and prototyping. For him, it is important to talk with the students about gender and organizational culture.

Before this, he taught entrepreneurship and innovation classes in the USA for 25 years. Even before the rise of entrepreneurship, he started getting involved in innovation and technology management. Michael has co-founded three startups.

Which entrepreneurs do you like to use as an example in your course and why?

This is an interesting question. So I flip this the other way around. We asked the students to go out and explore the entrepreneurial competencies we give them. We provide them with the framework where they find out which competencies they are interested in. And then, at the beginning of the semester, they identify the competencies that they want, rather than me saying, here's what I think you should strive for. And then, over the course of the semester, while they are working on their project, they each week track the development of their chosen competencies. And then, in the end, they do a self-assessment of what they did.

So, I like to put it back on the students to develop their competencies, whether problem-solving, opportunity, identification, communication, or whatever they are. Each student has different goals and how to be an entrepreneur. And I'm a big believer in "there is no one right way." If you all try to be like Elon Musk, we are all in trouble.

Generally, how would you describe the typical entrepreneur?

To me, a successful entrepreneur is somebody that is very curious. The best entrepreneurs are the ones that see what other people need and what other people are willing to pay for.

They see that this is a group of important people, and their needs at the grocery store are not being met, or their needs in the automobile or transportation market are not being met. It is causing them pain. How can I solve that and make money? An entrepreneur has the vision to do something differently. And then the second thing is this idea of curiosity, how can I do this better? Whom can I talk to? What research can I do? How can I test these ideas? And this curiosity is important. And then the ability to walk up to somebody and talk to them. The last one I talk about is that they can communicate their passion clearly and get people excited. Because the solo entrepreneur never really works. You have to get other people excited about your idea.

Do you think that some groups are, for some reason, more or less suitable for entrepreneurship?

No, I actually firmly believe the opposite that anybody can be a successful entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship is not something that you are born with. Some people are a little more naturally communicated or have better language skills from when they were smaller in their brains. Maybe some people can see some problems a little more easily, and they have a little more open view of things. But I have seen all these levels, and everybody can get raised to the level they need to be a successful entrepreneur. And therefore, I do not think that some people are better suited than others. I do believe that, that some people have more opportunities than others to be successful entrepreneurs.

And this is why I think projects help women entrepreneurs and help minority entrepreneurs because many women and many minorities at lower economic levels do not have access to the same resources.

To what extent is networking part of your program?

Networking is something that everybody can learn. Also, it is an interesting skill to have. There are a couple of different ways you can network. And I think that networking is important to be a successful entrepreneur. Some of these social kinds of biases can come into play to make it harder for some people to network if you are not in a group.

But I think that face-to-face networking is obviously important to go to events. And this is where like venture club of Münster and some of the other organizations in Münster can be useful. But I think the other thing that is nice about things like LinkedIn is that it is a global network. And I think your journey, you know, your gender, or your ethnicity, does not matter. The best is using a combination of face-to-face and digital networking. I think you can do a certain amount on your own in networking. But sometimes, you need a little bit of help to break into other circles.



ALUMNI' PERSPECTIVE

GET TO KNOW THEIR STORIES.

Nine alumni from universities in Münsterland were interviewed as part of this project, with different degrees and working in various professions.

In general, there is a perception among respondents that entrepreneurs are hard-working people, who are dedicated to their work, focused and valuable. In addition, entrepreneurs are characterized by an open mind, creativity, out-of-the-box thinking, pragmatism and a positive attitude towards challenges. For respondents, entrepreneurship means mastering various tools and analyses such as Pestel and Porter's Five Forces and being prepared to face many different obstacles.

When describing entrepreneurial students, most interviewees characterized them as being open to trying new things, socializing, networking and having a high level of involvement in projects.

For alumni, the entrepreneurship courses within the university are essential to becoming an entrepreneur, as they already help prepare for it and develop a network from the course.

In their experience, the university courses were very balanced in terms of male and female participants. However, the lecturers and guest lecturers were predominantly male. In addition, the participants in the courses were very international.

Unfortunately, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, only a few of the respondents could participate in informal events within the entrepreneurship course. It is much easier to create a network within these events, meet new people, and get to know international students.

However, within their entrepreneurship courses at universities, some interviewees also experienced prejudices. First, there are prejudices related to different cultures and second, within gender differences. One of these was that entrepreneurship is more suited to men than women. In addition, most respondents find being an entrepreneur very challenging these days. When one decides to start a business, there are various risks involved, such as financial risks.

Depending on the social background one comes from, resources may be limited. Therefore, entrepreneurs often rely on the support of organizations.

The majority of respondents named support organizations such as Venture Club Münster and Digital Hub münsterLAND during the interview. According to them, networks are mostly formed through events, personal contacts, and via LinkedIn. Also, studying at a university is good for forming networks.



**“ EVERY DAY IS A NEW
CHALLENGE. YOU NEED TO
BE PREPARED TO FAIL AND
STAND UP AND CONTINUE
YOUR PATH.**

MARIA ALEJANDRA PERAFÁN

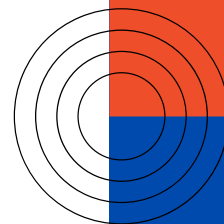
Maria Alejandra Perafán

CUSTOMER SUCCESS
MANAGER AT
MANGOPAY S.A.,
FOUNDER GRÜN



Alejandra is a 23-year-old Colombian. She has studied International Business Management, with a double degree program between her university in Colombia and the FH Münster.

She is passionate about others cultures and entrepreneurship. Besides the work as a customer success manager, Alejandra is also a founder of GRÜN. It is a textile producer and distributor that generates social value. Ten per cent of the profit is destined to promote and create social projects in Colombia. GRÜN has national and international orders and also first customers in Münster.



Which entrepreneur(s) do you currently see as your role model(s) and why?

My father is one of my role models. He does not own a big or multinational company. However, I have learned how to deal with different suppliers, logistics and saw my family's company growing. Moreover, I noticed that he does not have these technical entrepreneurs' skills, but he just learned by working.

How are entrepreneurs being talked about in informal settings?

For us, entrepreneurs are valuable. Moreover, entrepreneurs are courageous since they are trying to start a company. It is not easy, and sometimes it does not work due to the lack of experience. However, I think that every person who is trying to start a business has an excellent opportunity. My family tries, for example, to help lawyers who do not have a background in business management because many people have perfect ideas. Furthermore, they know about their ability to create something new even without any background concerning management.

What kind of characteristics do you think that a typical entrepreneur should have?

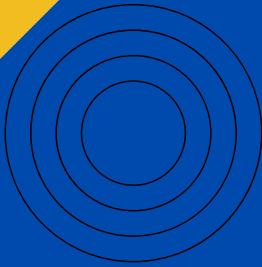
I think one very important is that it is inspiring to know what the tendencies on the market are. And how I can differentiate between a tendency and a mode. Because sometimes something is just a trend for a specific period of time, and tendencies are more for the future. And I think, have a powerful motivation because it is more complicated than working just in a company. But in the end, it is your own creation, and also you will be happier because you are helping other people. Moreover, have excellent communication skills are essential to talk with possible partners.



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**“ FAILURE IS NOT A BAD
THING. FAILURE IS ONE OF
THE MOST IMPORTANT
GROWTH FACTORS IN
YOUR LIFE.**

JOSÉ MIGUEL GUTIÉRREZ



José Miguel Gutiérrez

INTERN AT THE TRANSFER
AGENCY OF THE FH
MÜNSTER UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES

José is 27 years old and originally from Chile. Currently, he is finishing his bachelor's degree at FH Münster, and starting his entrepreneurial way in the pre-incubator program of the Reach Center in Münster, with his project called "Reganic" with two other teammates. This project is focused on building sustainable products made out of waste.

He believes that the benefits that entrepreneurs bring to society are significant, and this can change the world, making it a better place to live.

Why did you decide to take the entrepreneurial path?

I've always considered myself someone who is into discovering and asking why. So, whenever there's a problem, I always try to find different solutions and different approaches to solving it. And when I had the opportunity to put my expertise into action with real problems, with real startups, with real companies that are developing and are facing problems, I just thought it was a great chance for me to start this path.

Do you think that entrepreneurship classes or education have affected your career?

Yes, absolutely. It's not only because of the classes but also what you get from the classes you put into your personal life. Right. So, there's something called social entrepreneurship, which is trendy right now. But it's not trendy. It is empathy. And it is it's rising a lot. So many startups are developing their projects towards sustainability, and they can impact society and bring not only economic profits but also societal benefits to the community.

How confident were you to become an entrepreneur?

I was confident because if I don't have confidence in myself, no one would. And also talking to people about your project, talking about what you're passionate about. So it would help if you had confidence in yourself. And try to be better every day.

Would you say that the particular class increased your motivation and your confidence?

Yeah, absolutely. Having a safe space to pitch a small project in class. I think it's precious because first of all, you break that moment where you're thinking: "Okay, what do I do? How do I do it?" And by having a safe space in university, you break that barrier, and you feel confident, way more confident to talk to people. So I think entrepreneurial classes are fundamental to take some fears out of students in terms of failure because I think we're all afraid of failure. And failure is not a bad thing. I think failure is one of the most important growth factors in your life. And if you take it positively, failure can become a good ally to you.

How would you describe the typical entrepreneur(s)?

They are passionate and willing to do things differently with a more sustainable approach. They are trying to pay attention to what is the actual purpose of entrepreneurs and startups. So, is it only to make economic benefits? Or is it that you want to give something to the community in return and get a positive societal change in it? What else comes to my mind is the rising opportunities for entrepreneurs and people who are not considering themselves as entrepreneurs. Still, they have the possibility to be within this ecosystem, which is, I think, great. And networking is key when you talk about entrepreneurs. They are very open. And they have an excellent network. Whenever you ask them for something, they know somebody. So, it's always a good thing to develop a network with them.

When you think about your fellow students from your education, do you think some will become entrepreneurs? And why?

Yes, absolutely. I think creating companies, being an entrepreneur is either born out of necessity or opportunities.

And in less developed countries, you see that entrepreneurs rise because they need to create something. But in developed countries, it is more about opportunities. So okay, they are building electric cars. So I can create electric batteries. Right? So it's not built of the necessity to have the batteries, but it's because you see the opportunity, and it's good for you. I think most of us can become entrepreneurs. For example, our project is important because we felt the necessity to collect waste. Because we need a waste. No, we need to have a better world. We need to have a better future. So that's why we created our project. And there are endless companies that you can see. And if you focus on why they started the company, it's either because of necessity or opportunity. And I think every one of us can become an entrepreneur at a certain point in time. It doesn't have to be whenever you start your university or you finish it. It doesn't matter. Entrepreneurship doesn't come within age. It comes with an opportunity or necessity.





FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS' PERSPECTIVE

GET TO KNOW THEIR STORIES.

Eight interviews were conducted with female entrepreneurs from diverse cultural backgrounds working in various business sectors.

About half of the interviewees stated that a typical founder is a white male. The other half said that there are different types of entrepreneurs, and there are no specific characteristics. All agreed that a successful entrepreneur must have a vision and ambitions in mind. As typical role models, persons like Lea-Sophie Cramer, Sebastian Pollok, Jakob Berndt were named. Overall, there was a combination of male and female entrepreneurs when naming role models.

There is an agreement that entrepreneurs have to be confident as they have to believe in their idea and the story they are selling. Following the motto: When you fail, you learn. Some female entrepreneurs agreed that confidence is determined by good role models and supported by inspiring women around them.

Especially female entrepreneurs have to be confident as they are often facing people with doubts. Most of the interviewees agreed that they often experience hidden discrimination, which can be seen in not receiving invitations or being asked what will happen when they get pregnant. These aspects create barriers for female entrepreneurs. Still, all interviewees see the positive side of those barriers: They enjoy them, do not focus on them, and if they do, they see them as their own motivation to get better and prove doubters wrong.

Moreover, there is an agreement that there are social norms within entrepreneurship. As white women, most of them feel privileged. They agree that while there are gender differences, they are mainly due to socialization and the education system.

Still, the system should give everyone a chance to become the founder of a business.

Most respondents agree that the education system needs to be changed. While people are taught about the technical aspects of starting a business at university and other institutions, other aspects that belong to the foundation of a company are often disregarded.

Now is an exciting time for female entrepreneurs regarding social safety, as many people are interested in their stories and motivations. However, when it gets serious, female entrepreneurs are still at a disadvantage compared to men. Following this, inequalities still exist, and many of the interviewees have already experienced them.

The majority agree that networking is crucial when it comes to starting a venture. Some interviewees even stated that it could be the most important thing for being a successful entrepreneur.

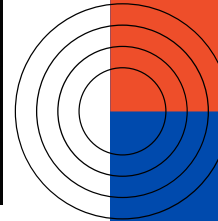
Networking allows entrepreneurs to meet potential clients and future colleagues. Many also use networking events for the advertisement since talking about your idea is often considered the most effective advertisement. In the Münsterland area, networks from the universities, the Venture Club Münster or the Digital Hub münsterLAND were mentioned.

Nevertheless, female entrepreneurs are often too proud to ask for help or advice was criticized. Based on this, they should work on these qualities: Be brave and ask.



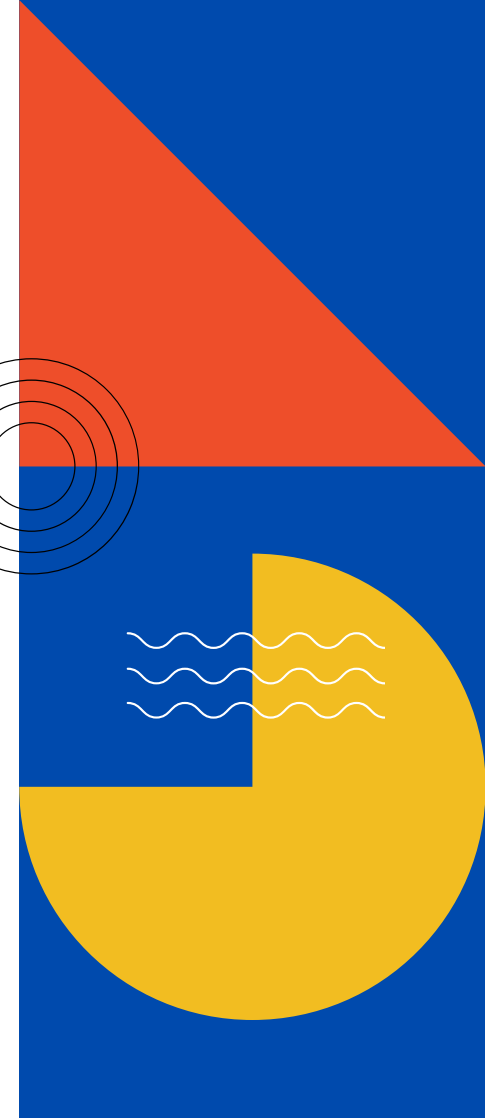
Anna Hülemeier

CO-FOUNDER OF
TECHLABS IN
MÜNSTER



Anna Hülemeier is a 25 years old doctorate candidate and research associate at the University of Münster for general psychology. Moreover, she is one of the founders of TechLabs, a non-profit organization that aims to offer free tech education to each individual.

She co-founded TechLabs back in 2018, and now she is a member of the global journey team. They assist other locations in building their journey, coordinating and collecting ideas and tools from different places, launch this to other areas, and develop new learning formats to be implemented.



**“ IT IS POSSIBLE TO CREATE A
SAFE NON-DISCRIMINATORY
PLACE FROM THE BEGINNING
AND TO EXPAND THIS
VISION GLOBALLY.**

ANNA HÜLEMEIER

Imagine a typical entrepreneur. What do they look like for you?

I would say that, in reality, the typical founder is, unfortunately, male and white. However, I want more women to discover the entrepreneurial path. In addition, I would assume that the typical entrepreneur has a vision in their mind about solving a social or organizational issue. I have the impression that the typical start-up relates somehow to technology. However, this impression may also come from my interest in tech.

Generally, how do you think younger women look at entrepreneurship as a potential career path?

I am a member of Generation f, a network that encourages women from different perspectives. Talking to the women, I was struck by how afraid many feel about tackling certain challenges like entrepreneurship because they do not feel represented or encouraged. The good news is, as soon as one woman is in a leading position, many women will follow because they see it as possible, and as a result, they will come up with this idea.

How confident were you when you started as an entrepreneur?

I was indeed confident when starting TechLabs. After finishing my Bachelor's in psychology, I set myself the goal of taking on a new challenge for the Master's degree. That is why I joined the student consultancy move e.V., where I met David Middelbeck and Marius Vennemann in December 2017. They are the initiators and pitched their idea of TechLabs at a meeting. I was immediately convinced and inspired because I saw the opportunity to build the structures myself, which I find decisive for a learning environment. For me, this meant free access to digital education in a strong, diverse community. What was unique about the founding team was that each person brought their vision. There was space, respect, and support for each motivation and vision in the founding team. Seeing that I received such support and opportunities for my profound conviction, in turn, boosted my confidence and self-efficacy in founding. The positive feedback from outside has strengthened us all further. Starting TechLabs was a unique and educational experience.

Are there any other barriers you have dealt with during your entrepreneurial path?

One current barrier is that I do not know every computer language. Therefore, this makes it quite challenging to work out a project and accomplish it. In addition, even though I enjoy learning different programming languages, at some point, I want to open my laptop and not see any error messages.

So far, we have 16 local communities across Europe and South America, and it is a continuous barrier to reach out to other locations. So, how can we talk about the vision? Our co-founders and members all have different reasons for joining TechLabs, and each of these reasons is legitimate. However, as a global tech organization, we also want to represent our core values globally. And these core values include diversity (e.g., representing women, reaching out to people with different educational backgrounds). Because this is not always self-explaining, we attach great importance to communicating these core values to all locations.

What do you think female entrepreneurs need to do differently compared to male entrepreneurs?

I think to succeed; they have to adapt. Accordingly, when it comes to financing fundraising, the gender gap is enormous, especially between all male and female teams. Therefore, if women want to succeed, they have to work exceptionally better in this area.

How important is networking for you as an entrepreneur?

It is essential. I know people recommend going to networking events. Even though these occasions are exhausting, they are to some degree exciting and inspiring. Analogously said networking is like self-advertisement. You do not know whether your advertisement campaign was good, bad, or address to your target group. Therefore, you must be very flexible. Still, you do meet the right people at some point, which can be beneficial.





Julia Kümper

FOUNDER OF MATCH
AND WATCH AND
VENTRENEURS

Julia Kümper is the CEO of VentureVilla, an accelerator which is based in Hanover. Furthermore, she is also the founder of two companies. The first one is Match and Watch, found in 2015, focusing on team and personal development. The other one is a company she found a few weeks ago named Ventreneurs Entrepreneurs. It's a blended value incubator focusing on systemic barriers for founding.

Which entrepreneur(s) do you currently see as your role model(s) and why?

I don't have any. It's more like I'm picking some kinds of behaviour or thinking, for example, a lot of intersectional feminists. So it's more about the thinking and, let's say, the school or theoretical schools I'm following and which are role models and not persons. So, as an example, reimagining capitalism is one of the theories I really can relate to. But I wouldn't say that the author of this book is a role model for me. It's not that theories are my goal, kind of.

Do you think female entrepreneurs need to do some things differently than male entrepreneurs? And what would it be?

Yeah, they definitely have to be more focused, be better in their terms, be better in their figures, because they got a lot more proofreading and more are forced to prove that they are right. So they always have to perform better than their male counterparts. And, I mean, studies are showing that if you have a man or woman present the same pitch deck, the man gets more funding than the women just because he's a man. So yeah, definitely many differences.

Did you experience some gender inequality in your entrepreneurial ecosystem?

Yes. Every day, starting from sexism. And it was not getting funded because I'm a woman, and it could be that I'm a chart. I experienced that every day. Not all of it, but something every day. And I know that a lot of female founders who connect with me to talk about these issues do face the same. It's nothing uncommon. It's more like it's prevalent, but no one wants to talk about it. And even if you talk about it with politicians, they are like, Oh, that's a difficult issue. Not easy to raise. Let's keep silent.

Were you confident when you started your company?

Well, both sides, I was afraid because of this whole legal part. So it was like every time I received a letter, it was like, what is happening? But the other way around, I was never frightened that I'm not succeeding or making money out of it because it was a learning journey. So it was a totally different mindset from the normal founding process, I think because it was not like I have to earn money to get my life back. What was more, it was this learning journey.



Julia Kirsch

CO-FOUNDER OF
GENERATION F

Julia Kirsch is a young entrepreneur from Münster who founded a social start-up called Generation f last January. Initially studying psychology and then specializing in personal business psychology, she decided to base her foundation on digital education, an emerging learning tool. With the help of her collaborator, she is determined to work on the empowerment of women.

Sure you can tell me about your venture. And, most importantly, why did you start it?

Because we were experiencing that there are so many amazing and inspiring women around us who always said, Oh, I'm not good enough. I'm not there yet. I'm not sure if I should apply. I only take seven out of the nine boxes that asking for? I don't know, I don't know, there are just so many insecurities, and so many other knows, maybe not yet. Um, and yeah, with all this background, and all this context, and we thought, okay, hey, let's bring all these women together.

Do you think female entrepreneurs need to do some things differently than male entrepreneurs?

I think it's a lot about how men present their ideas versus how women present their ideas. When you talk to me, a founder is always like, yeah, we have the best idea ever, and we're going to trend the whole industry upside down, and we're going to get 5 million in our Pre-seed round. And when you talk to women, it's more like "Hey, we have this idea, we will see work, like, just like me. We'll see where it goes". And, oftentimes, the questions you get are just different.

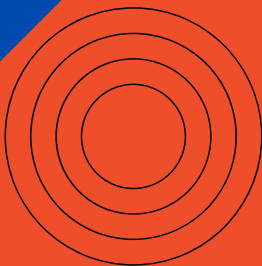
What do you think female entrepreneurs need to do differently compared to male entrepreneurs?

They need to be extra confident. Because you will hear so many doubts and you will hear so many "Are you really sure you want to do this?" "This is a better perspective. If you ever want to have a family", "this is so insecure." Like you really have to be very resilient again, against all these haters who criticize. What else do they have to do differently? Yeah, they always have to be aware that they are so special in this area. So female founders are extraordinary. So whatever you do, you will be held and judged by different standards. And that might be to your advantage, but it might also be true to his advantage. Okay, you really need to be conscious about it.



**“ NOWADAYS, I KNOW WHAT I
CAN DO. AND I KNOW WHAT I
CANNOT DO. I LEARNT THAT IT
WAS OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP
WHEN YOU ARE UNSURE
ABOUT SOMETHING.**

LEONI DALFERTH



Leoni Dalferth

CO-FOUNDER OF
CORBIOTA

Leoni Dalferth did her Bachelor's in International Business Administration at the University of Tübingen, followed by a Master's degree at the University of Münster with a strong focus on marketing. In 2020, she became the co-founder of Corbiota, a start-up active in the feed industry. Currently, part of Chemovator, the internal business incubator of BASF, the venture is planning its spin-off.

To what extent was entrepreneurship part of your education?

Studying business administration nowadays is strongly linked to entrepreneurship in a certain way. I got in touch with it a lot in Münster, actually, through my master studies, because we had a strong entrepreneurship programme. We had different start-ups, which came to our lectures and presented themselves, for example.

How gender-inclusive was it?

In my time at the WWU, I never recognised any difference which has been made between male and female students. We really were a mixed study group, and we were almost 50:50 regarding the male-female ratio. I was lucky enough never to feel that I was treated any different from my male colleagues, neither in any internships, maybe due to the companies I worked in. They were rather young and innovative. I think this makes a difference sometimes.

How did your entrepreneurial confidence develop over time? Are there specific situations where you feel more or less confident?

The confidence came over time with each job I had. And with my study background, I learned a lot. Nowadays, I know what I can do. And I know what I cannot do. I always learned that it was okay to ask for help and ask for support when unsure about something. When I talk to external people and know that I have a question, I can always rely on my network. I'm rather confident in my area. I am used to marketing, and I am used to marketing strategy and everything related to it. I am less confident in situations where I am new to a topic and am still learning, e.g. developing contracts needed to set up a start-up or talk to investors for the first time. In these situations, I can always rely on my network and ask for external support.

How does the image that is set by media about entrepreneurship influence your confidence?

It did impact my confidence positively, as many start-ups also share their failures. It is well known that from ten start-ups, only one survives. Many start-ups fail. And they fail at totally different stages.

Talking about mistakes and talking about the learning outcomes you are generating with them improves my confidence because I know that if I make a mistake, I can learn from it, and I can improve myself and the business.

How do you think younger women nowadays look at entrepreneurship as a potential career path?

I think it has changed, also through increased media attention for start-ups and entrepreneurship, where all these topics receive more and more relevance. Nevertheless, many start-ups are in areas that are known to be rather male-dominated. This begins much earlier. There are many more male students, for example, in STEM study programmes, so it is rather natural to have more male entrepreneurs in the end in these areas as well.

Combining starting your own business and creating a family at a certain point is still a topic, which is really important, especially for female entrepreneurs, because you cannot start your own business when you're not 100% there. And you have to solve the challenge between creating a family and creating your own business, which is also your baby in a certain way.

Would you say that certain things need to change in the entrepreneurial ecosystem? And what would that be to enable more females to thrive in entrepreneurship?

Male investors often invest in male teams. So maybe we can start there. Because the second challenge is the male-dominated areas, many start-ups originate from. This is something we must change beforehand and cannot change in the entrepreneurial environment directly.

We have many VC funds in the entrepreneurial environment where you have many male employees and male investors. However, we have some start-up ideas serving female customers only. Those are often not taken seriously, even if they could be successful.

This can be a challenge for rather male-dominated investment funds that often do not understand the need or the problem these start-ups solve.

Eva Ritz



CO-FOUNDER OF
SIMSALABIM, START-
UP IN MÜNSTER

Eva Ritz is a 25-years old German entrepreneur. She has studied entrepreneurship at the FH Münster, and she started her own company two years ago. She is the co-founder of Simsalabim, a company that provides a learning experience platform for the construction industry because the industry needs to be digitalized in Germany.

She wanted to create a venture on her own. This is what interested her in entrepreneurship. She has the chance to be part of a modern and open-minded team that doesn't give any importance to gender differences.

What do you think about gender differences?

Of course, they are fewer female founders, but I think it is developing. And for me, gender differences were never an issue. We are a diverse startup. I'm the only girl in the team, but it is not a problem. I got a lot of positive feedback and much support. And as this is the case for us, a diverse team is a game-changer. Because in some things we think differently, and I think it is nice if you have both kinds of views. I think there are skills that all entrepreneurs need to have, self-confidence, for example, but it is not harder for women. I don't think that women should act differently than men. We all work the same way, it is just different opinions because we are all different, but it is not gender-related. But in my opinion, yes, maybe sometimes for women, it is harder to be taken seriously or step out there and talk.

Do you think your confidence is determined by images you see in the media or by other entrepreneurs?

Yes, I think there are some excellent female role models, which we didn't have 20 or 10 years ago. For example, the founder of Bumble, I didn't really know her, and her

story, and thanks to the media and people who talked about her, now I do, and she is a role model. I think it's important to represent female founders in the media because it shows that you can do it as a female founder and that there might be issues, but there are also ways to solve the problems.

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Yes, I think there are some perfect female role models, which we didn't have 10 years ago. For example, the founder of Bumble, I didn't know her story, and thanks to the media, now I do, and she is a role model. It is important to represent female founders and show that females can also found a company.

Would you say that you are already a role model for some people?

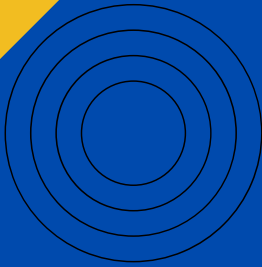
I always take the chance to talk about my experience because it is important to show your perspectives. I try to influence my environment and explain what is starting a new business all about.

**“ THE MEDIA SHOWS YOU
MANY FEMALE FOUNDERS
NOWADAYS, AND IT
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EVA RITZ

**“ IF YOU FAIL, YOU
LEARN. YOU JUST HAVE
TO STAND UP AGAIN.**

LENA OTTE



Lena Otte

MANAGING
PARTNER AT TIME-
2-EXPLORE GMBH

Lena Otte is the managing partner in a SME of Münster. After studying aviation management and a master's in management and leadership at the Kuehne Logistics University in Hamburg, she worked in the aviation industry as a software consultant.

With her sister flight attendant, they started in April 2021 a new company, making digital and lifelong learning a bit more interesting as they realized that Germany lacks knowledge in digital issues.

Which entrepreneur(s) do you currently see as your role model(s) and why?

That will sound cheesy, but I think it's my dad. Because he basically showed us not only the upside but the downside. His first company went bankrupt. He had to step up for it. So that is basically where I'm looking at, so we know what can happen if the money is not coming. So yeah, that would be probably my dad. So I don't care much about Elon Musk or other tech guys that made it. This is one in a million, right. So this is not where you want to. You want to head.

Were you confident when you started your company?

Yeah. I think you have to be; I think you need to believe in your idea and story. To quote Elon Musk, "if you don't want to start a company, please don't. And if you then stop, you didn't want it. And if you say What the fuck, I love it, you go for it." So that's the overall idea, I would say.

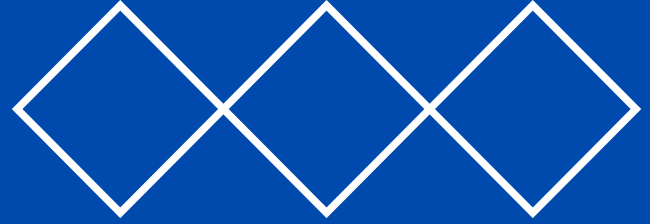
We know that gender is sometimes seen as a variable of entrepreneurial potential. So what do you think about that?

Working in a very male-oriented industry, I think I had to work a little bit more. "Okay, this one girl is coming in. And she's telling me something about statistics. I don't think so". So I had that. But for me, it's always nice, because I love to be underestimated. Because then the surprise is much bigger. Right? So that's how I do light like, okay, no, that's the wrong variation you're taking here.

And do you have some examples? When you experienced some sexism?

I'm coming into the room; everyone's looking at me, like, "what are you doing here?" And I'm like, I'm the real person, "it's your bad luck, you have to deal with me. So either you explain it so that I can understand and go back to my company, or we leave it like that". And everyone realized, "oh, okay, she actually knows her stuff".





REFLECTION AND OUTLOOK.

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THIS PROJECT.

Role models and networking .

EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS TOWARDS EQUALITY.

Women's entrepreneurial journeys have attributed a significant influence on role models and access to networks. Awareness of women's entrepreneurship potential should be increased by media role models, which would have different degrees of effects on women's cognitive processes. Role model selection should ensure that students relate to the model and that the chosen role model depicts a desirable result and a feasible and achievable career goal. A diverse selection of women entrepreneurs from various backgrounds should be highlighted. Networks are essential for developing confidence, but they are insufficient for developing habitus.

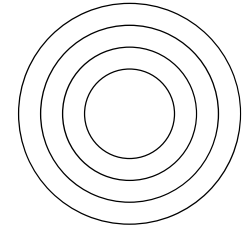
To include women in entrepreneurial activity, a gender-egalitarian culture is advised. Some effective mechanisms for work-life balance, including the supported provision of parental leave and childcare, could clearly encourage more women to participate in employment and engage in entrepreneurial activity. To do that, a program aiming at supporting and promoting women's entrepreneurship should first support policies directed at transforming women's status within society. One way of doing that is to start with entrepreneurship education, policymakers, and media, promoting a non-stereotyped image of entrepreneurship and fostering this career option, particularly among women.

Inclusion and diversity .

CREATING A CULTURE OF EQUALITY.

Firstly, women entrepreneurship and gender have been mostly contextualised as a “women’s issue” since women have been the driving force behind equality and inclusivity. This view has contributed to the perception that only women are the main beneficiaries of a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Men also benefit from inclusivity since they also constantly experience rigid gender norms. It is essential to engage more men in standing for inclusivity and understand how gender inclusivity in entrepreneurship in higher education and entrepreneurial ecosystems. In this way, inclusivity can be achieved only through the equal participation of men and women.

Secondly, we need to challenge entrepreneurial ecosystems' inclusivity across different contexts as the share of women graduating from university with good ideas and intentions is growing. The lack of inclusiveness of the ecosystem prevents them from exploiting business opportunities. As entrepreneurial ventures are increasingly operating internationally and subject to geopolitical developments, it is not enough to deal with this on a regional or national level. However, it needs to be handled as a connected network of regional (ecosystem) hubs internationally.

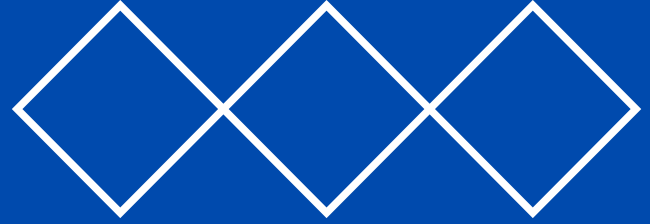


Thirdly, inclusivity is a prime source of innovation and one of the critical drivers of sustainable economic development. We need to assess how the entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and specifically the inclusivity of women entrepreneurs vary from country to country and inside European countries.

Across Europe, one can find countries with highly functioning entrepreneurial ecosystems where women entrepreneurs more often have difficulty accessing networks and finance and work part-time regularly. Countries where the ecosystem generally is less effective but where women seem to be more embedded.

Next, diversity is vital for educators' peer learning. The possibility of making use of digital free platforms to get in contact with peers and share doubts and experiences boost the professional development of educators. A broader perspective on teaching experiences certainly helps educators learn more and risk more when implementing new and innovative learning approaches.

Lastly, diversity is vital for educators' peer learning. The possibility of making use of digital free platforms to get in contact with peers and share doubts and experiences boost the professional development of educators.



OUR PEOPLE.

THE TEAM BEHIND THE INITIATIVE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Thank you!

WE HOPE YOU FOUND SOME INSPIRATION.

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In 2020, she published a book entitled "Drivers and Barriers of Women Entrepreneurs: An Analysis of the National and Regional Context Using GEM Data" in Springer Spektrum. The study investigates the entrepreneurial intention of women across four different European countries.



Dr. Sue Rossano-Rivero is currently a Junior Professor for Entrepreneurship and International Business Development at the FH Münster University of Applied Sciences. Sue is an expert on entrepreneurship: social and rural entrepreneurship, female entrepreneurship and leadership, the role of higher education in entrepreneurship, university-business cooperation for entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial ecosystems and networks.

Her research has approached entrepreneurship from a networking perspective, focusing on social value creation and economic value creation. Sue is passionate about entrepreneurship and creating value by fostering interaction between science, business and society.



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