



PROWESS **Profile**

The journal for women's enterprise · Issue 4 · Spring/Summer 2005

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women's enterprise*

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women becoming
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Jacqui Smith*

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PROWESS VIEWPOINT

PROWESS Viewpoint

from Executive Director, Erika Watson



The picture is beginning to look much brighter for women's enterprise. As Rebecca Harding's article in this issue points out, the level of female entrepreneurship in the UK continues to increase. This is reinforced by major research from the Small Business Research Trust (SBRT)

which finds that women's businesses are growing faster than their male counterparts. Several commentators credit the activities of the Prowess network for some degree of this upsurge. So well done everyone - let's all take a bow together!

But, as Harding reminds us women are still less than half as likely to set up a business as men. And, the gap between male and female entrepreneurship in the UK remains one of the widest in the world. Back to work then.

Keeping up the momentum has never been more important. The RDAs now hold most of the purse-strings and their pivotal role has been highlighted by the excellent Action Plan just launched by the Government appointed Women's Enterprise Panel. The Panel want the RDAs to ensure that every woman in each region has access to high quality female-friendly business support at every level.

We like the Panel's recommendations so much we've incorporated them into our Manifesto for

Women's Enterprise which is included as a special supplement in this issue. The manifesto sets out Prowess's policy objectives for an inclusive and progressive enterprise culture. As Martin Wyn Griffith, CEO of the Small Business Service has said, investing in women's enterprise provides a comparatively better return on investment than investment in their male counterparts. He's right, it is ultimately a question of investment. And political will. As we say here in Norwich: "let's be having you".



"A glittering prize is within grasp for the UK if we can harness the entrepreneurial potential of women"

**Nick Goulding,
Chief Executive
of the Forum of
Private Business**

Women-led businesses smashing growth stereotypes

Companies run by women are leading the way in terms of sales and employment growth, according to new research. A survey of 12,000 small and medium-sized businesses found that a higher percentage of firms with female bosses were increasing their sales and taking on staff than those run by men. The report, by the Small Business Research Trust (SBRT) in partnership with the Forum of Private Business (FPB), showed that 44% of companies led by women recorded sales growth in the third quarter of 2004, 7% more than the average figure. Almost 3 out of 10 women-led firms recruited new staff in

the same quarter – a substantially higher proportion than the average. This is contrary to the widely held assumption that female-owned firms show less growth potential. Commenting on the findings, Nick Goulding, Chief Executive of the FPB said "The report is strong evidence that the Government is right to adopt measures to encourage female entrepreneurs to set up in business. A glittering prize is within grasp for the UK if we can harness the entrepreneurial potential of women". Copies of the SBRT Quarterly Survey of Small Business in the UK can be requested by emailing info@sbrt.co.uk



Women and Equality Minister Jacquie Smith celebrated women's enterprise on International Women's Day with a reception at Lancaster House. She is pictured (left) with Isabella Moore, Chair of the Women's Enterprise Panel, Jackie Brierton, Prowess Board Member and Louise Third, Integra Communications, Prowess PR and on the DTI Media Advisory Panel to Jacquie Smith.

At the same time the DTI published 'Promoting female entrepreneurship' which outlines the economic arguments for promoting women's enterprise. Copies of the new booklet are available from DTI Publications Orderline (quoting URN 05/853) on: Phone 0845 015 0010; Fax 0845 015 0020; Minicom 0845 015 0030; web <http://www.dti.gov.uk/publications>.

Nurturing Workspaces

A new collaborative report by Prowess and UK Business Incubation highlights the wide discrepancies between incubation and managed workspaces designed specifically for women at one end of the scale, and those that might be described as 'unfriendly' to women. 'Women-friendly incubation environments and managed workspaces' helps the reader to understand the purpose of such projects, and provides guidance for anyone seeking to make sure that both men and women feel that their working environment meets their needs. Well illustrated with examples of workspaces that 'work', this report will enable developers and managers of incubation facilities to provide the best possible services for all clients.

To obtain a copy of the report email admin@prowess.org.uk

www.prowess.org.uk



The Prowess website is being re-launched with a fresh new look and loads of new resources for visitors. **Log on for:**



Our new 'Members Portal' which allows members to engage in online debates, upload their own events on our clickable map of the UK and download the latest member's newsletters.



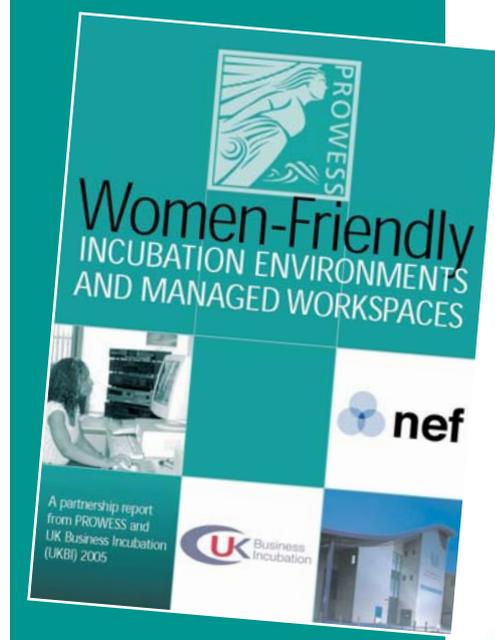
The Press and Research section will include all the latest women's enterprise news, Prowess publications and all the latest facts and figures on women and entrepreneurship.



Our online research library - open to all visitors contains hundreds of national and international papers on women's business ownership - categorised by theme and region.



The clickable map of the UK - where women looking for business advice or networks in their area can use find details of organisations in their locality.



GEM FINDINGS

Encouraging signs but keep up the pressure!



*Rebecca Harding,
Associate Director,
Deloitte Research,
Director, GEM UK*

Women are less than half as likely to set up a business as men. Fact. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) UK reports for the last four years have reported a persistent gap between male and female entrepreneurship, which, despite policy efforts to close it, has remained at one of the widest in the world.

GEM, however, is beginning to show us that the trend may be in reverse – that some of the efforts being made by people across the country to promote female entrepreneurship are starting to pay off.

Chart 1 (Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) in the G7 countries, 2001-2004) tells us that the UK has the third-highest level of female entrepreneurship in the G7 countries at 3.9%. And although this is not as high as the US, where female TEA is nearly two and a half times higher, it is the highest level in Europe.

Chart 2 (Male and Female Entrepreneurship in the UK Regions 2004) shows the gap between male and female entrepreneurship in the regions of the UK for 2004.

This picture hides the fact that the gap between male and female entrepreneurship has narrowed in the UK in 2004 as a result of a small increase in female entrepreneurial activity (from

3.8% to 3.9%) and a small decrease in male entrepreneurial activity (from 8.9% to 8.5%). For the UK as a whole, female entrepreneurship is some 47% of male entrepreneurship. There are six regions where the proportion of female entrepreneurs is higher than the UK average: the East Midlands (48%), the North East (57%), Northern Ireland (52%), Scotland (54%) and the South West (where female entrepreneurship is 70% of male entrepreneurship). The largest gap is in the West Midlands where female entrepreneurship is just 34% of male entrepreneurship.

Even so, female entrepreneurial activity is still lower than male entrepreneurial activity and this is generally true across the regions and nations of the UK. There have been steady increases in female entrepreneurial activity in some regions of the UK, such as the East Midlands, and female entrepreneurial activity in the UK has risen slightly (3.8% - 3.9%) while male entrepreneurial activity has fallen (from 8.9% in 2003 to 8.5% in 2004). Further, even amongst the younger age groups, 18-24 and 25-34, female entrepreneurship is still half of male entrepreneurship and this has to be a concern since, in the words of one expert we interviewed, "this represents a chronic waste of talent and resources in the economy as a whole."

Not only this, but, again as reported in successive GEM UK reports, women have

a poor perception of their personal capacity to set up a business (Chart 3). Compared to men they are more likely to let fear of failure stop them from starting a business. Women are less likely to know an entrepreneur, less likely to think that they have the skills to start a business and less likely to see that there are good business opportunities out there than men. This creates a vicious circle: fewer female entrepreneurs means inevitably that women are less likely to know an entrepreneur, creating weaker networks, which in turn means that women have few examples of how to use their skills to take the business opportunities that do exist. So there are fewer female-owned start-ups, and so it goes on. In short, women feel "unusual" when they start up a business and this stops them from doing it.

Chart 3 (Entrepreneurial perceptions amongst men and women). This is not to suggest that female businesses do not have growth potential, however. GEM reports that women are more likely than men to be owning or managing a business that is using technology that was not available a year ago. Necessity TEA is 0.5% amongst women and 0.8% amongst men, and more than this, women are proportionately more likely to be involved in innovation-based businesses and more likely to have networks to conduct research and development work with other organisations. There remain barriers to

finance, but although women are less likely to apply for any type of external finance, once they do apply, they are more likely to be successful.

Concluding remarks

There are frequently cited reasons why female entrepreneurship is low¹. Lack of support, lack of adequate or appropriate childcare, difficulties in accessing finance and the paucity of role models often head the list. Of no less importance is the need for women to build their confidence about their own skills and about the opportunities around them.

Yet GEM research suggests that the picture is not as bleak as it may at first appear. Women are less likely than men to set up a business, but are more likely to set up businesses in areas where the product or process is new to some or all customers, and, once they become established, more likely to be creating jobs. More interestingly than this even, is that although women's perceptions of their own capacity to set up a business is weak, they are nevertheless as likely as men to see it as a good career choice and a high status activity.

Women have a hard time when they are starting a business. Although there is no explicit gender bias against female businesses, several experts argued that women are disadvantaged by the cultural background that results in them lacking confidence, feeling like they have not got the skills and simply not knowing where to start to get a business idea off the ground. Another expert argued that she herself had been surprised when her business grew more quickly than she was expecting and had felt quite frightened as it started to grow.

The GEM survey suggests that women have lower expectations of what they can achieve and this translates into lower expectations of job creation and lower expectations of turnover growth. The solution to this rests in addressing the low levels of confidence that women have in their own capacity to set up a business and, when it is set up, to set aspirational targets. Although attitudes are improving, there is still a substantial and significant gap between men and women in terms of their perception of their skills and the opportunities for business start-ups out there. Addressing this must be a focus for all of us over the next few years.

Chart 1: Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) in the G7 countries, 2001-2004

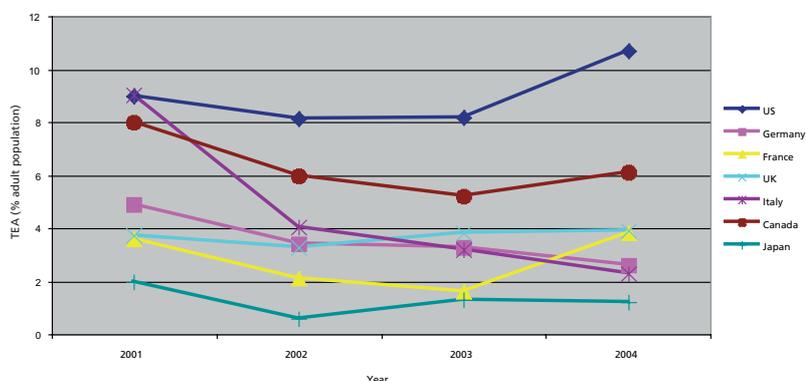


Chart 2: Male and Female Entrepreneurship in the UK Regions 2004

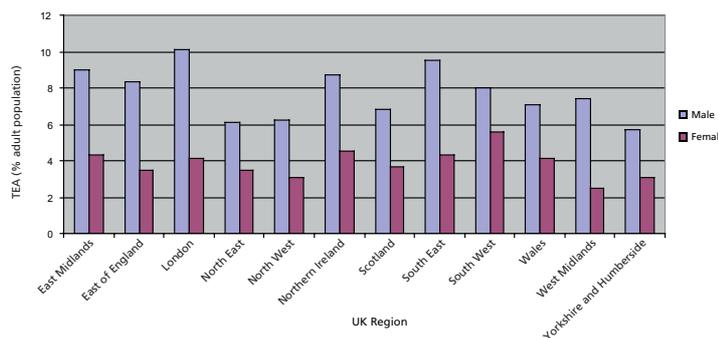


Chart 3: Entrepreneurial perceptions amongst men and women

	Men		Women	
	2003	2004	2003	2004
I expect to start up a business in the next three years	10.3	11.8	5.1	7.2
I personally know an entrepreneur	33.6	35.5	23.9	26.0
There are good start-up opportunities where I live	44.0	44.1	33.1	35.9
I have skills to start up a business	63.2	65.0	42.9	46.6
Fear of failure would prevent my starting a business	29.8	28.7	33.9	34.5
Entrepreneurship is a good career choice	51.3	54.3	51.1	55.8
Entrepreneurs have a high status in society	71.2	71.0	70.7	72.0
There is good media coverage of entrepreneurship	57.7	57.4	54.4	55.8

¹See for example SBS/DTI (2003): 'A Strategic Framework for Women's Entrepreneurship: Sharing the Vision – a Collaborative Approach to Increasing Female Entrepreneurship.' www.sbs.gov.uk

PROWESS AWARDS

Outstanding!

The response to the 'Prowess Awards for Outstanding Contribution to Women's Enterprise Development' was overwhelming. Nominations were of an extremely high calibre, making it a tough decision making process for the judges: Steve Michell, Head of the Small Business Services Women's Enterprise Unit, Isabella Moore, first woman President of the British Chambers of Commerce, Tracy Betts, Community Development Banking at the Royal Bank of Scotland and Natwest and Mumtaz Bashir, Director of Manchester Employer Coalition.

The awards, the first of their kind, were initiated by Prowess to recognise and celebrate the efforts of particular individuals and organisations and to promote good practice. The response indicates the huge amount taking place throughout the UK to encourage more women into enterprise. There were four award categories including: Business Support Professional of the Year, Innovator Award, Business Link Award

and an overall award for Outstanding Contribution to Women's Enterprise Development.

The Awards were presented during a special ceremony at the Prowess conference in Nottingham. The 'Innovator Award' went to the Asian-e Foundation, a community based organisation which has worked tirelessly to increase the representation of Asian women in enterprise. Through an innovative and personalised modular training programme they support Asian women to develop the skills to start their own business. Yasmin Akhtar, Chief Executive of the Asian-e Foundation said "I am honoured to accept this award: it symbolises the commitment that individuals have demonstrated in turning The Asian-e Foundation's vision into a reality".

Prowess felt it important to recognise a Business Link organisation showing leadership in the field of women's

enterprise, particularly as the business support environment is going through significant changes during 2005. The Business Link Award went to Business Link Wessex which has really mainstreamed the women's enterprise agenda in all of their practice. Jan Field, Enterprise Development Manager for the organisation said "We have launched a dedicated Women into Business Programme for women interested in starting or growing a business. Designed specifically to overcome the barriers faced by female entrepreneurs, we offer a variety of advice and information in a supportive group environment".

The individual award for 'Business Support Professional of the Year' was won by Sandy Richardson of Business Link Tees Valley. Sandy's longstanding personal commitment to women's enterprise is widely recognised. She combines hands on practical support for clients with a detailed awareness and understanding of the strategic issues.

Dinah Bennett, Project Manager and Founder of Women into the Network, won the individual award for Outstanding Contribution to Women's Enterprise Development. Dinah has been an inspiration to women entrepreneurs in the North East. Her establishment of the North East Women Entrepreneur of the Year Award has played a significant role in increasing the number of business women in the region. Commenting on her award Dinah said "I was shocked to hear that I had been nominated – let alone to hear that I had won! I am also really pleased that my colleague from Tees Valley Business Link won an award at the same ceremony. Sandy Richardson has been working tirelessly to support women from all sectors and communities in Tees Valley into business and she is a real credit to the UK Business Link network".

For details of the 2005 Prowess Awards scheme contact: Saskia Kent, Prowess on 01603 762355 or email at: s.kent@prowess.org.uk



The four winners:
Dinah Bennett, Sandy Richardson, Yasmin Akhtar and Jan Field



A Manifesto for Women's Enterprise

INTRODUCTION

Enterprise is critical for employment and productive growth in the UK. In this area our economic development is severely hampered by the particularly low engagement of women. The UK has one of the lowest proportions of entrepreneurial women in the developed world, with women half as likely as men to be involved in starting a business. The gender gap is wider here than in Canada, the US, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy.

An entrepreneurial culture which includes women is vital for the economic health of the UK. And it's not just about new businesses: entrepreneurial attitudes are increasingly important for the workplace and individual development. Qualities such as taking initiative, innovation, responsibility, flexibility and speed of response can benefit everyone.

Work is being feminised. In the future there will be more part-time working women and fewer full-time working men. The service sector, where women's businesses dominate, is set to expand, while male dominated manufacturing industry is set to decline further in the UK.

Government signalled its support and understanding of those developments with the publication of the first Government strategy for the development of women's enterprise in 2003¹. Regional initiatives for women's enterprise are beginning to take root. Demand from women for targeted business support services is growing exponentially. We are moving in the right direction. But many of those initiatives are

fragile, under-resourced and ineffectively monitored and evaluated.

This Manifesto represents the policy objectives of Prowess - the UK association of organisations and individuals who support women to start and grow businesses. Prowess has over 180 members who support over 100,000 women business owners.

Women's votes will decide the next election. Real commitment to creating an economic environment which enables women to achieve their potential, balance their lives and contribute to a dynamic economy is needed.

The messages in this Manifesto are not new – they have become an established mantra in numerous reports and they are reflected in the Government's Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise and the recommendations of the Women's Enterprise Panel. The Panel, which is made up of independent female entrepreneurs, was set up by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in October 2004, to give expert advice on how the numbers of women in enterprise can be boosted significantly. The Panel's recommendations were welcomed by the Chancellor in his election year budget. Prowess also warmly welcomes and supports those timely and considered recommendations and we have wholly incorporated them into this Manifesto.

The evidence supporting our Manifesto continues to accumulate. It is now time for effective resources and dedicated action.

ABOUT PROWESS

Prowess is a network of organisations that supports the growth of women's business ownership. Our work encompasses raising awareness, sharing of best practice, advocacy and information. Prowess has over 180 members who support 100,000 women each year to start 10,000 new businesses which contribute an additional £1.5 billion to the economy.

Enquires: Tel 01603 762 355 or visit www.prowess.org.uk

Manifesto



PROWESS

1. WOMEN-FRIENDLY BUSINESS SUPPORT

The issue

Government has set a tough target that by 2006, the number of women-owned businesses will account for 20% of the UK total (from the current level of 15%). Enabling targets include a goal that by 2006, women will account for 40% of customers using Government-sponsored business support services, with the number of women from ethnic minority communities receiving assistance being proportionate to their representation in the area. Business Links, who form the primary source of Government sponsored business support services, continue to reach an average of just 20% female clients.

Growth orientated programmes tend to attract even lower numbers of women-owned businesses and evidence from other countries suggests that a very low proportion of the businesses accessing the lucrative public sector and corporate procurement markets are owned by women.

Demand from women continues to swell among organisations which specifically target them. Prowess flagship organisations, which deliver high quality women-friendly business support have experienced a 110% increase in enquiries in the last year, but those organisations are currently facing a funding crisis, with several making redundancies or in danger of closing down.

- Female entrepreneurship has increased in the regions and nations where a strong emphasis has been placed on increasing levels of female participation⁶.
- Women's enterprise initiatives complement and add value to mainstream business support services located nearby – they serve different markets⁷.
- Over half of women choose to start their business on a part-time basis.
- Public Sector Procurement: Women-owned businesses account for 8% of suppliers and 5.6% of spending⁸.
- Women from minority ethnic communities tend not to use mainstream business services.

facts!

"A pound invested in developing women's enterprise provides a greater return on investment than a pound investing in developing male owned enterprise."

Martin Wyn Griffith, Chief Executive, Small Business Service⁹

What's needed

- Secure commitment of, and appropriate funding from, all RDAs for practical measures to promote women's enterprise
- The need for RDAs to ensure that every woman in each region has access to high quality, female-friendly business support from the pre pre-start-up stage onwards

Women's Enterprise Panel – Recommendations

- All mainstream business support services should be appropriate and accessible to both women and men. Mainstream providers should, wherever possible, work in partnership with targeted women's enterprise initiatives.
- Networking opportunities for women at all stages of business development, linked to advisory, training and/or mentoring programmes.
- Women-friendly business incubator facilities.
- Access to pre-start-up counselling available in every area and for all, including part-time businesses.

A Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise – Recommendations

- Flagship level women-friendly business support should be available to every woman in the UK regardless of where she lives¹⁰. This should build on existing provision and form part of the Business Link brokerage network to create a coherent and accessible network of support.
- Supplier diversity programmes supporting women business owners seeking to sell their products and services to government bodies and major corporations.

2. EVIDENCE BASED AND LONG-TERM POLICY MAKING

The issue

Having accurate, reliable and timely research-based information is essential for the development of effective policies and programmes which reflect the realities of the changing labour market and address the challenges faced by all those seeking to start and grow businesses. The data sources currently available for assessing investment in and the progress of women's enterprise development are very limited.

While much progress has been made in ensuring that gender is taken into account in enterprise policy and practice, there are still significant gaps where gender is ignored and programmes do not reflect the needs of women as well as men.

- In the USA the Women's Business Ownership Act 1988 put in place a long-term infrastructure to support women's enterprise development. Since then women's business ownership has increased significantly.
- Gender was added to the US Business Census in 1977.
- Gender analysis and budgeting are used to develop policies and programmes by Governments in Australia, New Zealand, France, Ireland and Norway¹¹.

facts!

- Legislation, along the lines of the US Women's Business Ownership Act (1988) which established the Women's Business Council and the Office for Women's Business Ownership which is responsible for the US women's business centres.
- Consider legislation to:
 - Establish a Women's Business Council and provide it with ongoing funding (subject to a 5 year renewable sunset clause);
 - require banks to provide gender-disaggregated data on business lending;
 - Require business support organisations (including Business Links) to keep and make available gender disaggregated data on clients and advisers.

Women's Enterprise Panel – Recommendations

- SBS and Inland Revenue should jointly review providing anonymised, gender-disaggregated data from self-employment registration forms¹².
- All Government supported enterprise development programmes should review the impact on women and men at the budgeting, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. Such a gender mainstreaming¹³ approach would be systematic and ensure that the high level Government commitment to women's enterprise is effectively implemented across all small business policy and programmes.

What's needed

- Improvements in long term data collection in order to identify areas of difficulty for women business owners and monitor performance of actions designed to increase the number of women owned businesses.



3. ACCESS TO FINANCE

The issue

Women, regardless of business sector – capitalise their businesses on average at just one third of the level of their male counterparts. And that includes high growth sectors such as technology. Women-owned businesses also account for less than 5% of equity finance. The research suggests that gender in itself has no impact on the success of businesses, but that consistent undercapitalisation does¹⁴. Coherent responses to both demand and supply side issues are now needed.

facts!

- **Fear of debt is the single largest barrier to entrepreneurship for both men and women, although women are significantly more fearful of this than men¹⁵.**
- **Women are much more likely to use their own funds or funds from family to finance business.**
- **Women who apply for loans are both more likely to be offered the loan and to turn it down¹⁶.**

Women use only one third of the starting capital that men do, irrespective of sector.
Unequal Entrepreneurs, Shaw et al, 2002

What's needed

- The need for better information for women on routes to financing their business – with the banks playing a key role
- Ensure commitment to continue the success of the Phoenix Fund CDFI (Community Development Finance Institutions) projects
- All public funded business finance sources to provide gender disaggregated data
Women's Enterprise Panel – Recommendations

- More microcredit programmes which combine small loans within a mutual support framework. As a core part of business support programmes it both helps women see their businesses in investment terms and build a credit track record
- Investment ready initiatives which assist women to develop investment orientated business plans and presentations and/or provide loan guarantees.
- Increased promotion and awareness of Small Firms Loan Guarantee (SFLG), in particular newly included sectors, among professional advisers.
- Banks to research current credit scoring mechanisms in terms of gender impact.
- A 'female angel' network of women who can widen financing options for women-owned businesses.

A Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise – Recommendations

- Diversity training for financial services professionals.
- Improved understanding of the growth capital needs of women-owned or led businesses, including research on the potential of mezzanine finance, which addresses issues of ownership and control, combining debt and equity and on the gender impact of Regional Venture Capital Funds. Community Development Venture Funds such as Bridges Community Ventures could be further explored as relevant instruments for addressing issues of access to growth capital for women¹⁷.

4. OVERCOME WELFARE BENEFITS DISINCENTIVES

The issue

For a significant number of women claiming welfare benefits, the flexibility of self-employment is highly attractive – offering the opportunity to combine caring responsibilities with work. In some disadvantaged areas, particularly rural locations, it may be one of the few options available. A report produced for the Department of Work and Pensions concluded: "The flexibility of self-employment is particularly important for lone parents with childcare responsibilities. For some lone parents with young children this was seen as their only viable employment opportunity"¹⁸.

Despite recent reforms, the benefits system remains geared towards a traditional, male model of full-time employment and does not adequately support the more cautious and tentative manner in which many low-income women start businesses¹⁹.

facts!

- **Around one in five women come into self-employment from unemployment compared with around one in fifteen men²⁰.**
- **Women in the UK are twice as likely to live in poverty as men and they have more to risk by coming off benefits. On average, benefits and tax credits comprise one fifth of women's incomes and less than one tenth of men's²¹.**

What's needed

- DfES and DWP to develop more effective programmes to help women on benefits start businesses
- Consider the impact of the level of earnings disregards on the ability of women on benefits to move into self-employment²².
Women's Enterprise Panel – Recommendations
- Improved liaison between business support providers and Jobcentre Plus.
A Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise – Recommendation



PROWESS

5. ACKNOWLEDGING CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

The issue

Women in the UK are still responsible for 80% of caring and domestic responsibilities. The implications of this for women starting and growing businesses need to be recognised. Care and childcare in themselves are female dominated and typically low paid industries, which are nevertheless still prohibitively expensive for many women and in short supply.

What's needed

- Caring allowances built into business training/advisory provision and where appropriate, in-house care facilities or development of partnerships with local care facilities for use by customers.
- Provision of specialist business advice and training for individuals and social enterprises setting up childcare businesses.

A Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise – Recommendation

- A full time nursery place for a child under two typically costs over £7,000 per year²⁴.
- The costs of care can be higher for business owners who have no option but to work flexibly and travel to develop their business. But unlike other essential business costs, caring is not tax deductible.

facts!

There is a severe shortage of registered childcare places – there are only enough childcare places for 25% of children aged under 8.
Daycare Trust, Jan 2005²³

- Childminding is both a good business for many women and a good source of community based childcare. Numbers of childminders have fallen dramatically in recent years. Action needs to be taken to overcome bureaucratic and financial barriers stopping women becoming childminders.
- Increased assistance with childcare costs and availability needs to be provided during the start-up phase to full and part-time businesses. Consideration needs to be given to extending financial support to unregistered childcare provision to ensure access in areas where the level of registered provision is very low.
- A review should be undertaken to consider making the cost of care fully tax deductible. This may lead to a virtuous circle enabling more women to participate fully in the labour market, business ownership and leadership, providing more equitable salaries to carers and childcare workers and stimulating growth in the supply of care and childcare provision.

THE WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE PANEL

The Women's Enterprise Panel was set up by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in October 2004, to give expert advice on how the numbers of women starting their own business might be increased. The Panel will be making recommendations to Government on the options for establishing a Women's Business Council.

Panel Members:

Isabella Moore (CILT) – Panel Chair	Geetie Singh (Singh Boulton Ltd)
Linda Bennett (LK Bennett)	Michele Giddens (Bridges Community Ventures Ltd)
Penny Newman (Café Direct)	Penny Streeter (Ambition 24 hours)
Elsa Caleb (ECJ Associates)	Tricia Dinan (Train 2000)

Notes

¹ A Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise (DTI/ SBS 2003).
² R. Harding, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, (London Business School, 2004).
³ Analyzing the Economic impact of the Women's Business Center Programme, National Women's Business Council 2004 (USA).
⁴ C. Michaelis, M. McGuire and L. Ferguson, SBS Diversity in Public Sector Procurement Survey, 2003.
⁵ Martin Wyn Griffith, Chief Executive Small Business Service, Speech at National Dialogue for Entrepreneurship, Washington DC 2005.
⁶ Those programmes provide established, locally based business support to a significant number of women. Their services are free or affordable, are easy to get to and they can help with childcare and disability or language barriers. Either directly or in partnership the organisation provides business training, training to help build personal skills and confidence, help accessing finance and ICT training. They also provide networking opportunities and the option of women-only training or access to a female business advisor if preferred.
⁷ Gender Analysis of Expenditure Project - final report. HMT and DTI, 2004.
⁸ Also a recommendation of the Cross Cutting Review of Government Services for Small Business (HMT/DTI 2002).
⁹ "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the

concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality." United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), 1997.
¹⁰ Shaw et al, Unequal Entrepreneurs, (The Work Foundation 2002).
¹¹ R. Harding, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (London Business School, 2004).
¹² ibid.
¹³ Recommendations from A. Westall, Women and Private Equity Finance (Prowess Briefing Paper 2004).
¹⁴ Kellard et al, Self Employment as a route off benefit (DWP 2002).
¹⁵ Marlow et al, Who Benefits? The difficulties for women in making the transition from unemployment to self-employment (Prowess 2003).
¹⁶ Annual Small Business Survey (DTI 2003).
¹⁷ Fawcett Society 2005.
¹⁸ The earnings disregard is the amount of money that can be earned before welfare benefits are reduced. It has not increased for more than 25 years for individuals and only marginally for lone parents.
¹⁹ Daycare Trust's Response to the Consultation on 'Choice for Parents, the best start for children: a ten-year strategy for childcare' Daycare Trust, Feb 2005.
²⁰ Childcare Costs Survey, Daycare Trust, Jan 2005.

WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE CASE STUDY

Sophie dances her way to a new career

Sophira Shannon thought her world had come to an end when she was forced to give up a promising dance career in her early twenties because of ill health.

Now, nine years on, Sophira, who lives in Pontypridd, near Cardiff, has set up her own business using her unique combination of dance and movement to help other people overcome health problems, regain their confidence, or simply enjoy a dance session.

She said: "I had danced from the age of four in a very focused and disciplined manner and went on to study at college. I then began suffering from an undiagnosed and agonising endometriosis and as a consequence a hormone imbalance and depression. To watch my career slide away due to ill health was horrendous."

Sophira turned to Chwarae Teg's, Women's Enterprise Wales project to help focus her business idea to set up an 'alternative' dance school.

"Following my operation my body completely changed shape. I suddenly became very self-conscious in a way that I had never been before and coupled with my depression I was very low."

Revisiting her long-standing interest in belly dancing, Sophira began to attend workshops around the UK, slowly recovering her movement and soon realised that there were plenty of other women who would enjoy dance but who felt too self-conscious to go out and join a class.

She went on to gain qualifications in Reiki Therapy, which is all about balancing the body's energy systems, dance therapy, relaxation techniques, and teacher's training.

With her business ideas in place, Sophira approached Chwarae Teg South Wales Valleys Enterprise Manager, Lynne Refae, for advice on putting her plans into action.

"Battling with depression, I had absolutely no confidence in my own

abilities and no knowledge of how to run a business. Lynne was a fantastic support because she believed in my ideas and encouraged me to use the strength I had developed to overcome my illness to actually drive the business forward," explained Sophira.

As well as attending business courses run by Chwarae Teg, Lynne also assisted Sophira in gaining a business start up grant from Broker Cymru.

Sophira now runs dance classes throughout Pontypridd and the Valleys for children and adults of all ages from 4 to 74.

Her classes include children's creative moves classes, modern dance and belly dance. She also runs community special needs groups and holds one day workshops for women to explore dance and gain confidence.

"The classes are open to absolutely everyone and different people attend them for very different reasons. The main emphasis of the sessions is to encourage women to become happy and confident with themselves and their bodies. This is particularly important for teenage girls who are under such pressure to have a 'perfect' figure."

Lynne Refae of Chwarae Teg said: "Sophira really is an inspiration to other women having overcome severe health problems and forged a new career for herself. She has taken all of her own experiences and is now using them to help other people in her business venture."

Sophira will be running her own belly dancing for beginners' summer school at Glamorgan University next year.

Sophira said: "Starting to dance again was key to my recovery because it is a way of expressing your emotions. Through teaching I want to share this idea with other people, whether it be for them to grow in confidence, recover from an illness or just to have fun."



Sophira takes a dancing class

Key Learning Points

- Turn adversity into new opportunities
- Retrain to learn new skills
- Advice can rebuild confidence as well as provide a direction for a business
- Business is not just about making money; it can transform other's lives too.

For further details on her classes contact Sophira on 01443 403515

For details of the Chwarae Teg Women's Enterprise Wales project call 0800 052 2255 www.chwaraeteg.com

PROWESS FLAGSHIPS

Women's enterprise in full sail with nine new Flagships

The Prowess Flagship fleet grew again this year, with nine new business support providers achieving the Flagship Award for best practice in women's enterprise development. These organisations have been recognised as providing accessible, appropriate and high quality advice for women looking to start and grow businesses. Amongst the latest award winners is the first Business Link to achieve the accolade and the first organisation based in Wales.

The Flagship Award was developed by Prowess to recognise and promote organisations who offer excellence in women's enterprise support. To achieve it, business support providers must show that they meet 13 rigorous standards of excellence (for networks there are 14) designed to measure Quality, Equality, Client Focus and Inclusion. The Flagship criteria have recently been adopted by the Department of Trade and Industry through the Small Business Service as part of a new toolkit for business support professionals.

Seven of the new winners received their Awards at a ceremony during the November Prowess conference. Two further organisations were presented with the Award by Isabella Moore, Chair of the new Women's Enterprise Panel, on board the Cutty Sark in Greenwich, as part of Prowess' International Women's Day celebrations.

According to Isabella "The Flagship Award is helping to drive up standards in business support across the UK. Every woman who wants to start a business should have access to appropriate and effective local business support. This will be of benefit to the woman herself, the



Isabella Moore, Chair of the new Women's Enterprise Panel with the latest Award winners aboard the Cutty Sark in Greenwich

local economy and overall national economic growth".

The massive rise in the number of female business owners in the USA is due to a large extent to the excellent support available there. Flagship Award organisations are helping to demonstrate that such an approach is possible here and we need more of them if we are to see a similar impact over here.

Winning in Wales

Chwarae Teg (fair play) is the first business support organisation based in

Wales to receive the Flagship Award. In the last three years Chwarae Teg has provided advice and support to more than 3,300 women across Wales, in total 446 women have started their own business, leading to the creation of 605 jobs. Commenting on their achievement, Chief Executive Ruth Marks said "We are delighted to be recognised for the work we do in supporting the economic development of women in Wales. The Prowess Flagship Award comes at a time when we are as busy as ever, especially with our Women's Enterprise Wales (WEW) and Lone Parents' Venture (LPV) projects". Ruth was presented with the

NEW FLAGSHIPS

New Flagship Organisations

Account 3

T: 020 7739 7720
E: admin@account3.org.uk

Beta Technology's South Yorkshire Female Entrepreneurs Network Programme

T: 01302 322633
E: women@betatechnology.co.uk

Business Link for Hertfordshire's New Horizons (Inspiring Success for Women) programme

T: 01727 813538
E: questions@exemplas.com

Chwarae Teg

T: 02920 478903
E: beverley.bailey@chwaraeteg.com

Her Business

T: 0208 257 4110
E: gill.fennings@newham.ac.uk

Incredit

T: 01483 794438
E: sue.lawton@incredit.org.uk

Rural Women's Network (Voluntary Action Cumbria)

T: 01768 210997
E: info@ruralwomen.org.uk

Sheffield Community Enterprise Development's Unit's (SCEDU) Making a Difference Programme

T: 0114 201 5260
E: milena.sec@scedu.org.uk

Existing Flagship Organisations

Bolton Business Ventures

T: 01204 391400
E: sp@bbvonline.net

Bolton Metro's Ethnic Minorities Business Service

T: 01204 336150
E: aysha.qasim@bolton.gov.uk

QSA – Street Cred

T: 0207 729 9267
E: qsa@dial.pipex.com

Train 2000

T: 0151 236 6601
E: debbie@train2000.org.uk

WEETU:

T: 01603 767367
E: info@weetu.org

Women's Business Development Agency

T: 02476 236 111
E: admin@wbda.co.uk

Women's Business Network (NW)

T: 0151 644 4577
E: ruth@wbn.org.uk

Women into Rural Enterprise (WIRE)

T: 01952 815338
E: admin@wireuk.org

Women into the Network (WIN)

T: 0191 334 5502
E: Dinah.bennett@durham.ac.uk

award on board the Cutty Sark, where she was joined by four members of the Chwarae Teg team and three clients who have started their own businesses as a result of the advice they have received.

Katherin Bean joined Chwarae Teg's VEW programme when looking to start her own web design and IT support business - Dvana consulting. She had worked in America for six years for major software development companies. When she returned to the UK, she decided she wanted to establish her own business. "The biggest issue I faced when moving back here was the need to forge a new network of business contacts, Chwarae Teg gave me all the support and advice I needed".

Success on the Horizon

With their New Horizons (Inspiring Success for Women) programme, Business Link for Hertfordshire has become the first Business Link operator to achieve Flagship status. They offer a comprehensive range of business support services to women including; a women's leadership programme, life coaching and mentoring, one-to-one business support and advice at all stages of business development from pre-start to high growth, a women's professional network and a full programme of training workshops on business related themes and ICT. According to one woman who used their services "Business Link Herts, have been very supportive, the staff are really understanding and share a lot of expertise. They promise you a quality service and they deliver it. Some of the best elements were the course timings, the flexibility and the friendliness of the booking service. Also the fact that courses are free and accessible is really important".

The Government has set the target for women to represent 40% of all customers accessing Government sponsored business support services by 2006. If this target is to be achieved it is vital that more Business Link operators look at the Prowess Flagship guidelines and understand the practical steps which can be taken to make services more accessible to women. It is hoped that Business Link Hertfordshire will be the first of many Business Links to achieve the Flagship Award.



Isabella Moore with Sarah McPherson, Quality Manager Prowess

'The Prowess Flagship Award for Best Practice in Women's Enterprise Development' Report

The new Prowess Flagship report should be the first point of call for anyone wanting to find out more about the best practice standards.

The report explains how the standards were adopted and what is involved in the process of working towards Flagship status.

Each of the quality standards is explained in detail with an explanation for why they must be achieved for business support organisations to be recognised as 'women-friendly'. The standards are designed to be measurable and transparent as well as being as objective as possible.

For a copy of the report, which includes case-study cards on Flagship organisations contact: admin@prowess.org.uk or call: 01603 762355

DIARY



A Working Week

– with Yvonne Field, New Prowess Board member and Managing Director of YFA Consultancy & Training

Monday

At 8.45am I drop my eleven year-old daughter Lara at school and dash across to the Women's Resource Centre (WRC) in East London for 10am. I am to join an interview panel to recruit two female Personal Advisors for a new Pan London European Social Fund management and leadership training programme for women called 'Elevate'. I call my office at lunch time to check for urgent messages and also manage to access my emails remotely. By 5pm we have recruited two outstanding candidates and I return to our YFA office to have a team de-brief. In the evening I meet with the 75 year old founder of the Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust for homeless young women. As a volunteer I am co-chair, currently helping to guide them through funding applications and arrange the celebrations for the Trust's 25th anniversary.

Tuesday

After taking Lara to the local hospital to get her foot examined and re-dressed, (she sustained a burn as a result of making me fried eggs for a Mothers' Day breakfast!) I drop her off at school. Then it's straight to the office to meet my Project Officer and collect materials for two training information sessions we are running for the Social Services Department of a London Borough this afternoon. The training programmes are part of a management development course titled 'Aiming higher', designed for black and minority ethnic (BME) staff. Both sessions go very well and we leave at 5pm having generated a strong interest in the program. I am home by 6.00pm, cook dinner and enjoy the rest of the evening with my daughter.

Wednesday

Lara makes her own way to school this morning as part of her move towards independence – she starts secondary school in September. I make my way to Brixton for a 9.00am Partnership Board meeting at Lambeth Children's Fund.

Children's Funds aim to help improve the life chances of children between five and thirteen years in a number of London boroughs. After the meeting I call in at a mobile phone store to negotiate a new contract. I wouldn't be able to run my business without a reliable and cost effective phone when I'm on the move! I return to the office for an internal staff meeting, and the day is completed with an open evening at my daughter's school.

Thursday

No school run this morning as we have extended the independence trial to two mornings – aiming to build this up by the summer term. I arrive at the office for 8.30am and check my daily barrage of emails, before setting off to attend a conference about the children's workforce development requirements to support Every Child Matters. This is the main legislation to be introduced as a result of the Victoria Climbié enquiry, and will radically alter the way in which local children's services are delivered. I round the day off with an informal dinner meeting with a consultant who is helping me to develop a marketing strategy for YFA.

Friday

Lara complains how busy I am as I rush her off to school once more, and I promise to make time for a mother and daughter day at the weekend. Today I have to complete two proposals for potential new contracts and meet with my business mentor/advisor to discuss the company's finance and budget issues. The outcome is a more robust profit and loss monitoring system that will allow us to spot potential problems before they happen. As a growing small business you can never be too complacent about potential cash flow problems further down the line! Finally it's Friday evening, and I meet up with a friend to go to a wonderful live jazz concert which is the perfect finale to an incredibly busy week.

PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Why 'different' needn't mean disadvantaged

Women are born communicators – and this is just one of the strengths they can use in business according to Nikki Royston, co-author of a must-read new book.

"In Business: Why Business Women are From Venus & Making That Work for Profit" by Alpesh Patel and Nikki Royston will become a welcome addition to businesswomen's bookcases throughout the UK when launched in 2005.

The book takes a closer look at the ways men and women differ in business and how these differences can be used to women's advantage. Thankfully it's no longer universally believed that to be successful in business a woman must operate more like a man. To the contrary, emerging statistics confirm that more women are choosing to start and grow a business in the way they know best. Currently 3.2 million self-employed workers in the UK are women: that equates to 6.8% of the working population – double the 1979 figure.

The data also suggests that women tend to be more innovative than their male counterparts. The UK Learning and Skills (LSC) Council research shows that businesswomen are more than 3 times as likely to collaborate with research institutions, and in Scotland the Government is investing millions in promoting this valuable link between business and research.

Despite these encouraging numbers, research indicates that some key challenges do pertain more generally to women in business - such as lack of confidence, childcare and access to finance – but the authors recognise that tackling these issues is essential if women are to achieve a level playing field.

One way in which women can achieve this is through recognition of what gender specific skills they have and how they can leverage these to get ahead.

Take, for example, networking. Women are excellent communicators, using on average between 22–24,000 communications per day in comparison

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to a man's 7 - 10,000¹. Women can utilise this skill to pitch for business and use the media to their advantage. Women, being accomplished relationship builders, have the additional skill of using words to communicate feelings, making them well equipped to stimulate loyalty, understand needs and hang onto business once established. This can elicit a valuable focus on long-term relationship building as opposed to short term gain.

The growth of the information age is also helping women to get ahead, giving women the flexibility to run their businesses on their terms, whenever and wherever they like: **"We can run our businesses at any time of the day which allows us the time to manage our personal lives"** says Nikki.

A key message from the book is the necessity for the UK to encourage and support more women into business: essential if it is to hold onto its spot as the world's 4th largest economy. Moving away from the "it's difficult being a woman" focus, this book encourages women to strike out and relish taking a different approach – one which may prove profitable in the long run for men, women and the economy.

Bank of Scotland is delighted to be sole sponsor of **"In Business: Why Business Women Are From Venus and Making That Work For Profit"**, due for publication in 2005. Contact the team for further details: womeninbusiness@bankofscotland.co.uk

The authors: Nikki Royston and Alpesh Patel are profiled in the latest issue of **"Big Fish"** – the magazine for Women in Business from Bank of Scotland. Visit www.bankofscotland.co.uk/women for further details or email the team on womeninbusiness@bankofscotland.co.uk to receive a copy.

You can subscribe to receive future issues of the magazine by emailing the team your name and full postal address. Look out for issue 5 due out May 2005.



Bank of Scotland Women in Business team (Left-Right) Julie Harris-Burland, Clare Logie and Marie Knock

¹ Allan Pease, Barbara Pease "Why Men Don't Listen And Women Can't Read Maps", Paperback June 2001

PROWESS Resources

Helping you to help your clients

PROWESS Training

Prowess offers a range of tailored training opportunities for people involved in all levels of women's business support. Contact admin@prowess.org.uk for more information on our comprehensive training programme, with workshops aimed at business support providers, front of house staff, bank personnel, researchers, social economy agencies and project managers.

The Flagship Quality Standard

The Flagship Awards are a best practice standard for excellence in women's enterprise development. They aim to help organisations identify, measure and improve their services for women business owners. Prowess works with business support providers and networks to help them achieve Flagship status by developing their services for women entrepreneurs. The robust qualifying criteria is helping to drive up standards across the business support sector.

Mapping and Directories

This year Prowess has launched a new regional directory of business support for women in partnership with the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA). The directory lists local, regional and national sources of advice and support and is packed with case studies and tips. It's an excellent resource for women looking to start or grow their own business. The East Midlands Development Agency (emda) has recently published the second edition of its very popular directory.

To obtain copies of either directory contact:
MonicaHingorani@emd.org.uk
(East Midlands) or
Irene.goh@businesslinksurrey.co.uk
(South East England)

Website



www.prowess.org.uk

The Prowess website is being re-launched with a fresh new look and plenty of resources for visitors. A new 'Members Portal', Press and Research section and online research library makes this one of the most valuable sources of information and inspiration on women's enterprise. The website will continue to be a gateway to local women-friendly business support through the popular clickable map of the UK.

Monthly E-zine – Women's Enterprise (UK) News

Regular digest from Prowess:
for organisations committed to excellence
in women's enterprise development

The Prowess electronic newsletter is free to subscribers, with an enhanced version for members. The E-zine includes the latest news, events, awards, research and funding for the women's enterprise and mainstream business support sector.

To receive the electronic newsletter,
send your contact details to
admin@prowess.org.uk.

Diary Date: Annual Conference



The Prowess 3rd Annual International Conference will take place at Cardiff City Hall on 8 - 9 February 2006, with an optional pre-conference training day on 7 February. The lead sponsor is the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) and key supporters are the Royal Bank of Scotland and NatWest. To register your interest in receiving information about this event contact conference@prowess.org.uk or for details of sponsorship opportunities contact Ann Nicholls on 01603 227092 email: a.nicholls@prowess.org.uk

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Prowess is a member of the Accelerating
Women's Enterprise (AWE) Partnership. Visit
www.awe-uk.org.uk for more information



Prowess has over 180 members, most of whom are business support providers committed to improving their services for women. If you would like to join us go to www.prowess.org.uk/about/join.html for a membership pack. A full list of Prowess members can be found at www.prowess.org.uk/about/memberslist.asp

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