

Minutes of the Women in Enterprise Cross Party Group

Tuesday 10 November 2020

Held via Zoom

In attendance: B. Thomas, WES; Julie Hall; Tayo Lasisi; Paula Ritchie, RBS; Evelyn McDonald, Scottish Edge; Wendy Crawford, Format UK; Sandra Patterson, Kids Bee Happy; Sarah Stephen, Barra Castle; Laura Galloway, Heriot Watt Business School; Lisa Wardlaw, YES; Mandy Bailey, RBS; Isabella Moore, Comtec Translations (Speaker); Suzanne Doyle Morris, InclusiQ (speaker); Helen Mullen, Glasgow University; Allison Harrison, Hot Yoga Edinburgh; Souhila Chetouane SMS oilfield; Emily McGowan, McGowan Marketing; Morag Malloy, WES/Scottish Enterprise; Lynne Cadenhead, WES; Beatrice Wishart MSP; Julie Ashworth, Broad Reach; Criona Courtney, RBS; Asma Abdalla, EWFC; Christina Scott, Be yonder; Shona Blakely, women's fund Scotland; Anne Meikle, WES; Melanie McIntyre, Melmcintyre; Jennifer McKenzie, TEFL; Polly Reay; Wendy Edie, ECom Scotland; Gill Lawrie; Olivia Carson, CIPD; Carolyn Currie, WES; Gillian Martin MSP.

Apologies: Nathalie Agnew, MuckleMedia; Pheona Matuvo, Radiant and Brighter; Poonam Gupta, PG Paper.

1. Welcome by Gillian Martin MSP and topics and speakers introduced to the meeting - presentations on confidence for women by Suzanne Doyle-Morris, and entrepreneurship and older women by Isabella Moore.
2. Suzanne Doyle Morris presented some slides taken from her new book, 'The Con Job'. Some key points from her presentation included –
 - We need to rethink how we value 'confidence'
 - Intersectional identities all affect confidence
 - While we may think that millennials are the more confident generation, research has shown that they are the most likely to be lonely and suffer from depression.
 - Women entrepreneurs in later life have been shown to be more successful – even as risk takers. It is vital for entrepreneurs not to let failure define them – but to be able to reflect, learn and move on.
3. Isabella Moore began her presentation taken from her research by saying that so much of what Suzanne had said resonated with the research which Isabella has conducted over the years. 'Confidence' as a concept come up time and again when discussing women and entrepreneurship – you may believe in your abilities but not that you can be successful in how you use them. Some key points included –
 - Motivation is a key aspect. What motivates women of all ages to start their own business? Confidence has a huge impact on motivation.
 - Confidence does tend to go mostly as a result of the social norms and attitudes that are applied to women in later life. Women do become worried about not being taken seriously. Current literature on later-life entrepreneurship seldom highlights gendered differences in motivation, attitudes, and accrual of resources.
 - Policy initiatives need to be aimed at stimulating later-life entrepreneurship.
 - We need to find ways to celebrate success of female role models in later life.

4. General discussion –

- Online networking has proven to be very useful for many women and many beginning to enjoy it more
- Women do worry a lot about poverty in later life and also pension contributions.
- Sometimes we have to see failure as being part of our success! Accepting some failures and moving on from them can also be liberating. It is just about learning how to deal with lots of these different aspects of employment / entrepreneurship.

5. Launch of CPG Annual Report

Anne Meikle presented the report to the meeting. It had been quite a different year with one meeting being cancelled and other going online in light of Covid restrictions, etc., but it had still been quite a busy year for the group. The November 2019 meeting had started the group off in a very positive note with International speakers and visitors from across the globe as a result of the successful WES/WEI conference in Edinburgh. March 2020 meeting focussed on the issues for BME women in enterprise and had a good attendance – just before lockdown happened. September meeting highlighted some difficult stories of the impact of Covid on women in business. The report was welcomed by the group and highlighted the many key issues which still need to be tackled for women in enterprise in Scotland.

6. Ideas for future themes of CPGs –

- Young people
- Economic recovery post Covid
- Green recovery as part of economic recovery
- Diversity in business
- Rural businesses

7. AOCB

- A suggestion was made about keeping momentum going on some of these topics outwith the meetings. How can we best do this?
- There will be a Members Debate in the Scottish Parliament (introduced by Gillian Martin) sometime mid to late January 2021 which will mention women's enterprise and its role in economic recovery and renewal.

Gillian Martin thanked the speakers and all the attendees and looked forward to the group's continued success in 2021.