Literature Review: Bulgaria

Bulgaria has never outlined for its gender or entrepreneur policies. When it comes to gender equality, there are some aspects related to Bulgarian cultural and historical heritage that have restrained the progress of this matter. Religion values, a traditional mindset towards family structure and being a country that once took part of the URRS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) - with all the consequences that implies to its social structure – are some of the elements that has affected the way gender policies has been applied to this Balkan country.

In comparison to European country’s statistics, Bulgaria generally has still some issues to address as for entrepreneurial policies as well.

Over the past decade, the self-employed rate in Bulgaria – A method used to measure the entrepreneurship activities – has remained below the average compared to the EU rate (11% in Bulgaria to a 14,3% for EU). As for youth and women, the gap is even wider when we compare it to EU numbers (3,7% to 7,8%) accordingly.

Moreover, the opposition of the Bulgarian government to ratify the Istanbul convention - An agreement in which almost all European agree on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence within its borders – based on a supposed violation of the Bulgarian constitution hasn´t helped to the creation of new policies focused on the support of women victims of gender based violence to make them engage in entrepreneur activities.

Admittedly, during the last decade and since the entry in the EU - And therefore, the entry of European money for the implementation of social policies – Bulgaria has implemented several policies to boost the entrepreneur initiative. Nonetheless, most of this initiatives are focused on a general basis and lack of the capability to target underrepresented or disadvantaged groups.

Target Group:

Among this underrepresented groups we can find the women’s who has suffered from gender based violence collective. Since every woman can be victim of this type of violence, no matter the age neither the social status, there is not a specific description for this target. However, we can identify some common characteristic within its collective:

* Economic dependence: As most of these women were or are involved in a toxic environment, it facilitates the creation of dependent dynamics. The economic dependence don’t allow these women to engage in new projects, whether they be personal or professional. Even when they left behind that context and are ready for a new start, they see themselves still carrying the burden of economic dependence.
* Lack of sources: Not only the lack of economic sources is a burden for these women, but the lack of information, family support, shelter and security can put these people in a risk situation. Social initiatives can help to solve these problems, however, they require from investment, task force, and government institutions involvement.
* Lack of self confidence: Not believing in themselves makes it more difficult for them to engage not only in entrepreneur activities but also limit their range of action within their personal life context making the easiest decisions difficult to take.

Conclusion.

Whether the women has suffered from based gender violence or not, both groups wear a burden that restrain them from getting engage with entrepreneurship. An aversion towards entrepreneur women, a culture based on traditional family values, the still fresh sequels of the old communist regime and the lack of interest of the government in gender based social policies deepen the breach for future Bulgarian women entrepreneurs. This aspects deepen even more for these women who has suffered from gender based violence and, therefore, suffer from other stigmas and are more vulnerable.

However, policies and programs aimed to foment entrepreneurship can help this target not only to overcome their problematic situation, but become an independent and successful. For this to success, it is needed the government implication, whether it be financially or institutionally. Also, this policies not only need to be implemented, but also targeted and designed for those most vulnerable groups.