May 2024
Deliverable 4.1

Femme Forward

Report on the Future Start-up Founders Trainings

About Femme Forward

Femme Forward - *Fast-tracking women into new tech careers and supporting successful female-led start-ups* - is a two-year transnational project funded under the Erasmus+ Programme.

Through an innovative and comprehensive training programme, women with various backgrounds will be empowered to either start a career in tech or employ their experience and knowledge to set up a tech start-up.

Femme Forward will identify, develop and pilot high-quality digital education content to tackle the current gender gap in the digital economy, enabling at least 500 women to start on the track to tech employment or entrepreneurship.

Femme Forward will offer an easy-to-use and extensive repository of tested, high-quality educational materials, available in multiple languages and on a multi-device compatible learning platform: femmeforward.eu.

Project partners

The Femme Forward consortium comprises 15 partners led by SIMPLON.co, bringing together key industry, technology and education stakeholders in Europe.

Full partners
1. SIMPLON.CO (France)
2. TOP-IX (Italy)
3. ENGIM PIEMONTE (Italy)
4. Tech and Teach gGmbH (Germany)
5. BeCode (Belgium)
6. Big Blue Data Academy (Greece)
7. CYPRUS COMPUTER SOCIETY (Cyprus)
8. Asociatia ETIC (Romania)
9. Le Techspace (Belgium)
10. HOCHSCHULE HANNOVER (Germany)
11. Factoria F5 (Spain)

Associated partners
1. AMAZON WEB SERVICES EMEA SARL
2. RANDSTAD NEDERLAND BV
3. FUJITSU SERVICES LTD
4. DIGITALEUROPE AISBL

Subcontractors
Schuman SA

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Revision History			
Version	Date	Modified by	Comments
1.0	May 17, 2024	Tech and Teach gGmbH (Codingschule)	First stable version
1.1	May 24, 2024	TOP-X	Review
1.2	May 30, 2024	Tech and Teach gGmbH (Codingschule)	Final Version
2	May 2025	Le Techspace / Simplon.co	Added information regarding the courses at le Techspace

Disclaimer

Table of Contents

Authors & contributors

Authors:

Silke Roggermann (Programme Manager Tech and Teach gGmbH)

Each partner has provided contents about its own training programme.

Reviewers:

Christian Racca (Senior Engineer and Programme Manager at TOP-IX)
Sara Iannone (Project Assistant at TOP-IX)
Lucia Grilli (Shuman SA)

Introduction

The Femme Forward Future Start-up Founders Training Programme described in detail in Deliverable 4.1 , empowers women to launch their own tech start-ups by teaching and applying key principles of innovation. Participants exchange ideas and attend various workshops, aiming to develop marketable and investable products.

Women often hesitate to participate in male-dominated accelerator programmes. However, with sufficient know-how, their confidence and motivation increase. The Femme Forward Future Start-up Founders Training Programme aims to prepare participants for accelerator programmes by developing the necessary knowledge and confidence to apply.

The content of the Future Start-up Founders Training Programme includes workshops on hard and soft skills, a coaching program, and networking events with female role models. The training will be conducted online and on-site, featuring live sessions with trainers as well as recorded tutorials. This format allows us to reach women across the countries.

The training is exclusively for women. Age and education level are not relevant, but a high interest in innovation and technology is essential.

The following main course topics are covered in every country:

Business Concepts
- Business model canvas
- Lean Startup
- Sustainable economy
- Marketing and sales
- Legal and funding

Tech Concepts
- Cloud-based services
- Minimum Viable Product
- Artificial Intelligence and data-driven business
- Python Programming
- Accessible Web design

Soft Skills and Empowerment
- Pitch training

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- Leadership skills
- Ask-me-anything sessions with role models
- Community engagement
- *Project Management (Le Techspace only module)*

The programme focuses on both theoretical knowledge of essential business development, technologies, soft skills, and more importantly, on the practical application of these skills. The pilot trainings were delivered in Belgium, Italy, Cyprus, and Germany.

Originally, 5 x Future Start-up Founders trainings were listed in WP4.1, as Switzerland was initially listed as a project partner. After consultation and clarification with the project management, 4 x training countries were ultimately held in the above mentioned countries. However, Le Techspace agreed to organise two training sessions during the project cycle. This decision had positive results for le Techspace, allowing them to use the first - smaller - training session as a pilot scheme for the second session organised some months later. This is detailed below. This meant that the initial objective of 5 training sessions was maintained, but only within 4 countries.
Furthermore, the objectives of number of people trained did not change for the project, with each partner being given the same initial objective at the beginning of the project.

By participating in the Future Start-up Founders Training Programme, women gain increased confidence and motivation to launch their own start-ups. They enhance their knowledge and skills in key areas of business and technology and build stronger networking connections with other women in the tech industry.

Participants improve their ability to develop and pitch a marketable and investable product, and become more prepared to apply for and succeed in accelerator programmes. The programme empowers women through mentorship and role models, and provides practical experience through hands-on projects and real-world applications.
Ultimately, this programme equips women with the tools and support they need to succeed in the tech industry and bring their innovative ideas to fruition.

Future Start-up Founders

Codingschule (Tech and Teach gGmbH) - Country of delivery: Germany

DATES

Start date: October 9, 2023

End date: November 30, 2023

PARTICIPANTS

Number of applications / registrations: **53**

Number of participants / regular participants: **49** (the number of participants for each live session was between 12 and 20 people).

Origin of the participants:

Most of the participants live in Germany, but some of them live in other European countries. The programme was delivered completely online and in English language, therefore it was easily accessible for participants abroad.

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GERMANY:    40
EGYPT:       1
PORTUGAL:    2
ROMANIA:     2
FINLAND:     1
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ITALY: 1
CYPRUS: 1
SLOVENIA: 1
POLAND: 1
SWEDEN: 1
SPAIN: 1
UK: 1

TEACHERS / INSTRUCTORS

Here is the list of teachers and instructors involved in the pilot training:

● Barbara Lampl (AI & Data)
● Berkant Bostan (Startup Mentor & Trainer - MVP, Lean Startup, Pitch Training)
● Oliver Vaupel (Web Designer - Accessibility)
● Hannah Jensen (Programme Manager Women Entrepreneur in Science - Soft Skills)
● Melisa Manrique (Founder & Author - Storytelling & Community)
● Olaf Maywald (AWS Trainer - Cloud Computing)
● Ann-Cathrin Sieren (BRYCK Senior Creative Concepter - Marketing & Brand)
● Laura Kohler (BRYCK Startup Director - Sustainability)
● Sabrina Steffan (Tax Consultant - Legal & Tax)
● Celeste Kleinjans (Startup Founder MINDZEIT - Stress Management & Resilience)
● Imelda Blicker (Agile Consultant - Design Thinking & Scrum)
● Julian Wessing (BRYCK Senior Startup Programme Manager - Funding)
● Rümeysa Gündüz Can (Leadership & Authentic Personality)
● Carolin Desiree Töpfer (Founder & CEO - Cyber Security)
● Larissa Kranisch (Founder Climb & Rise - Self-Leadership)
● Laila Zohaib (Founder & Role Model & The Migrant Accelerator)
● Sadaf Khan (Enterprise Transformation Leader Randstad, Role Model)

APPROACH AND PROCESS

We have established a bilingual (German & English) Femme Forward landing page (https://www.techandteach.de/startup-founders) where the project is detailed and all relevant information is provided. On this landing page, there was a link to a Typeform questionnaire, which was completed by interested women applying for the programme.

We reached potential participants through our extensive network, social media channels, newsletters, and other communication channels. We employed a similar approach to

recruit trainers for the programme. Leveraging Codingschule's many years of experience in digital education and our comprehensive network, including connections within the startup sector, we have access to numerous experts and specialists. We primarily identified these individuals through LinkedIn and personal recommendations.

Initially, we used email for regular communication and established our Slack channel. Additionally, a WhatsApp group was created to facilitate further interaction.

As a special initiative to promote Femme Forward, we organized a physical kickoff event in Düsseldorf on September 18, 2023. We selected the "Techhub K67" in Düsseldorf's city centre as the venue due to its central role in the startup scene and its strong connections and partnerships with the city of Düsseldorf and other relevant organizations.

The event garnered significant media attention and expanded the project's reach. We hired a professional photographer to capture high-quality, thematic images for Femme Forward, which significantly enhanced our visual content.

FORMAT

- 1 kickoff event with over 70 guests in Düsseldorf, Germany (September 18, 2023)
- 8 weeks online curriculum (October 9 - November 30, 2023)
- 42 live online sessions with a total of over 65 hours of content (workshops, presentations, role model talks, Q&A's, etc)
- 49 registered women
- 19 coaches / trainers

The content of the sessions was based on the topics and modules already listed in the Introduction chapter.

During the 8-week curriculum, the online sessions took place via Zoom at different times. For a better overview for all participants and trainers, we created a publicly accessible Outlook calendar in which all information about the respective session was stored (including all Zoom access data).

All our sessions have been recorded. During the course we made all videos available via Shared Drive to allow participants to rewatch or in case they couldn't participate in the live sessions.
After the course, we uploaded all the sessions in the Moodle of the project https://femmeforward-moodle.simplon.co/course/index.php?categoryid=1

Every session was attended and supervised by our Programme Manager (Silke Roggermann, Codingschule). This meant that the cohort had a familiar face and a central

point of contact for all questions and any technical problems. This was also reflected in the interaction with the respective trainers, as they could concentrate on their content and questions in the chat, for example, were not overlooked.

In parallel to the public Outlook calendar we reminded the participants of each appointment through our Slack channel and several emails.

Shortly after the end of the course, we created a closed LinkedIn group for all alumni, which now also includes course participants from other Femme Forward cohorts: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12935005/
In addition, there is now a community call every last Tuesday of the month. Without an agenda, just to keep in touch and exchange news, tips and tricks.

CHALLENGES

Since we conducted the pilot training of the Femme Forward Startup Founders Track, we were able to pass on a lot of experience to our project partners and also learn a lot for ourselves and future projects.

Our different session times (due to the trainers' individual availability) did not turn out to be ideal. In the future, we would schedule the same times for the sessions on a regular basis.

Furthermore, we realized that due to the different life situations of the participants, some of the women were unfortunately only able to participate in a few live sessions. However, because all the sessions were recorded and we made them easily accessible, the content was easy to follow up on. The question here is whether a final certificate can increase the motivation to participate.

Another experience for us is that it is definitely necessary for one person from the organizing team to be on the call at all times, otherwise the trainers cannot concentrate on the content.

On the whole, however, the majority of participants are very satisfied and would recommend the programme to others at any time (see feedback).

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

Immediately after the 8-week curriculum, we sent a "Final Survey" via Typeform to all participants, asking them to give us feedback.
14 participants completed this and here is a link to the results: https://ak7k2b3kjnx.typeform.com/report/fQALgpfj/a5t0sPS8NGRsBYup

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You can find an excerpt here in the attached graphics and a selection of anonymous quotes:

Quotes & Comments (all anonymous):

"Thank you so much for this supportive programme and guidance throughout. This felt like a true safe space thanks to your kindness, Silke, as well as the attentive ways of all speakers, e.g. Berkant who offered words of support to all people affected by current conflicts, or Barbara for her offer of continued support. Thank you so much also for the facilitation at different times, online and recorded, which enables a lot of people to take part who would normally be excluded (e.g. mothers). This was such a rich and diverse group which will hopefully become a great community in the future."

"It was great that we had a Slack channel and now LinkedIn group to stay connected. Having recordings is also very helpful."

"Thank you for this amazing opportunity to learn about Startup projects. It was very inspirational and interesting. I got a lot of ideas about starting a business. It was very interesting and engaging."

Femme Forward - Overall Rating

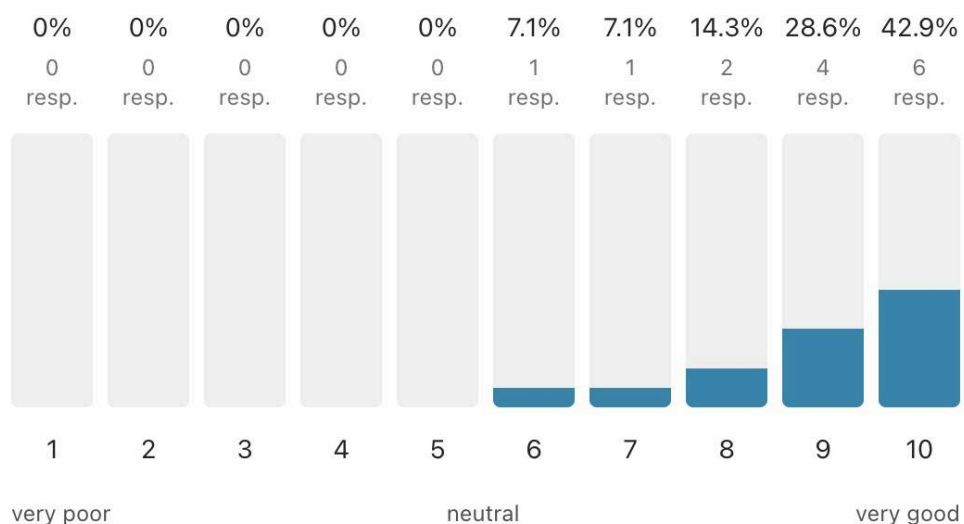Avg. 8.8

14 out of 14 people answered this question

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7.1%	7.1%	21.4%	28.6%	35.7%
0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	1 resp.	1 resp.	3 resp.	4 resp.	5 resp.

very poor   neutral   very good

FEMME FORW>>RD
Empowering Women In Tech
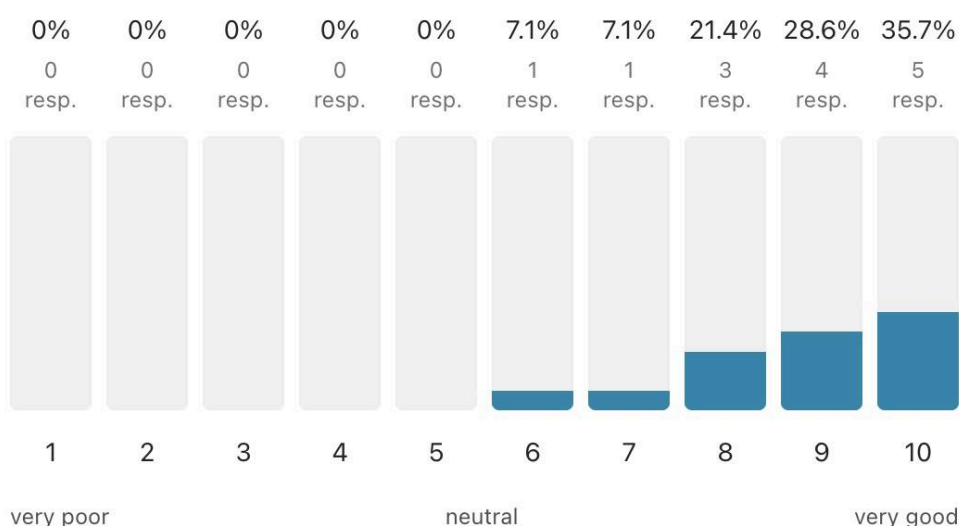
📊 4   Femme Forward - Trainer Evaluation   Avg. 8.9

14 out of 14 people answered this question

0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7.1%	7.1%	14.3%	28.6%	42.9%
0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	1 resp.	1 resp.	2 resp.	4 resp.	6 resp.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

very poor   neutral   very good

📊 9   Femme Forward - Programme Management Evaluation   Avg. 9.3

14 out of 14 people answered this question

0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14.3%	7.1%	14.3%	64.3%
0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	2 resp.	1 resp.	2 resp.	9 resp.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

very poor   neutral   very good
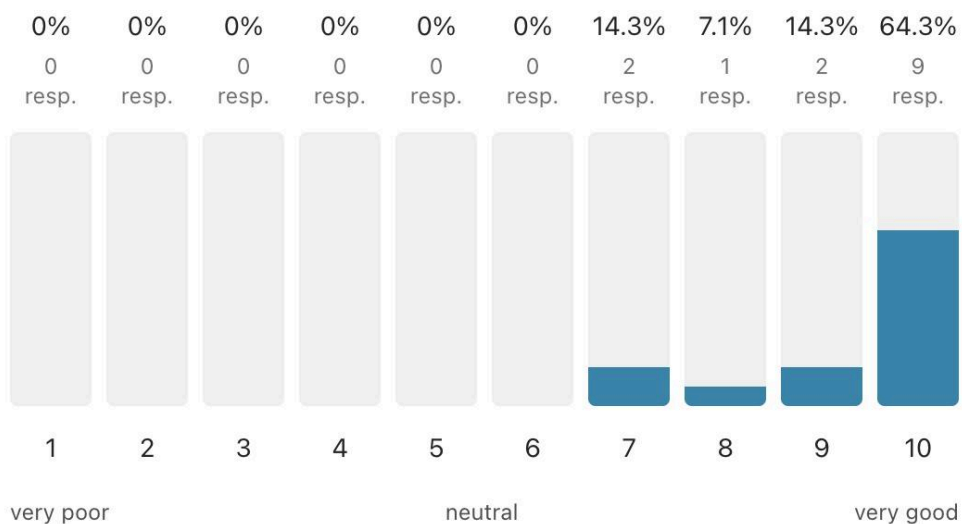
✓ 10   Femme Forward - Your next steps?

14 out of 14 people answered this question (with multiple choice)

Apply to an accelerator programme   9 resp.   **64.3%**

Develop a business idea   9 resp.   **64.3%**

Search for potential investors   5 resp.   **35.7%**

Find co-founder(s)   3 resp.   **21.4%**

other   2 resp.   **14.3%**

FEMME FORW❯❯RD
Empowering Women In Tech
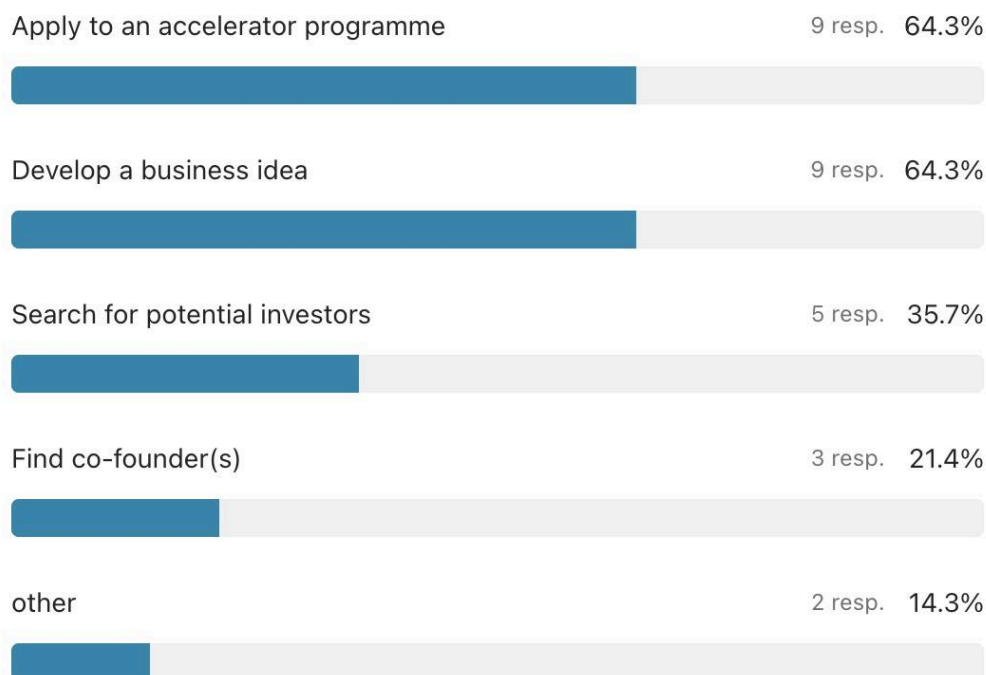
📊 13   Femme Forward - Recommendation   Avg. 9.4

14 out of 14 people answered this question

0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7.1%	0%	14.3%	7.1%	71.4%
0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	0 resp.	1 resp.	0 resp.	2 resp.	1 resp.	10 resp.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

very unlikel...   neutral   very likely
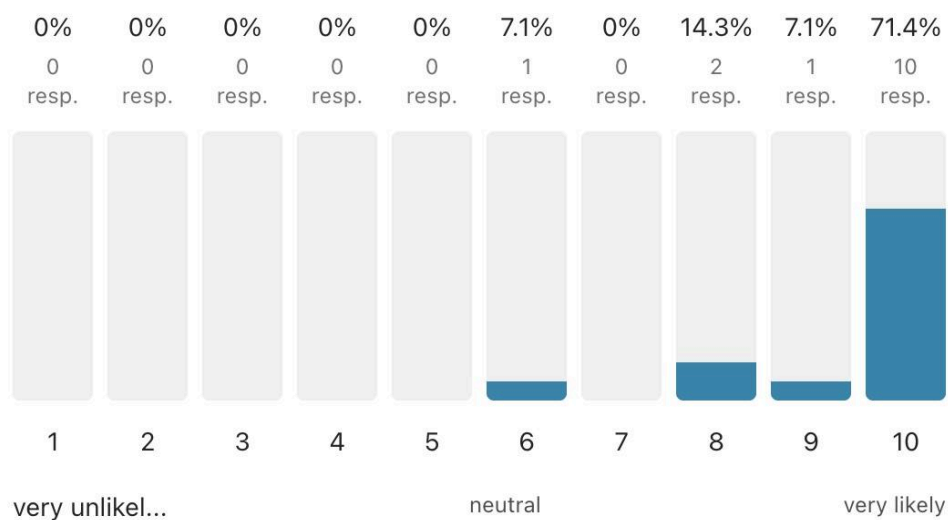
PHOTOS

TOP-IX - Country of delivery: Italy

DATES

Start date: November 8, 2023

End date: January 19, 2024

PARTICIPANTS

Number of applications / registrations: **51**

Number of participants / regular participants: **35** (the number of participants for each live session was between 14 and 20 people).

Origin of the participants: most of the participants live in Italy, some of them live in other European countries (Germany, UK and Ireland) but have Italian origin (the course, in fact, was provided in Italian language).

TEACHERS / INSTRUCTORS

Here is the list of teachers involved in the training path.

- Lean startup: Christian Racca (Senior Engineer and Programme Manager at TOP-IX)
- Business Models Canvas: Frieda Brioschi (Strategic Consultant and Project Leader)
- Circular Economy and Sustainability: Silvia Barbero (Associate Professor at Politecnico di Torino)
- Minimum Viable Product: Christian Racca (Senior Engineer and Programme Manager at TOP-IX)
- Design Thinking: Monica Paolizzi (Systemic Designer | COO and Head of Programmes and Partnerships Impacton.org | Strategic Advisor)
- Agile Development: Massimo Zaglio (Product and Programme Manager at TOP-IX)
- Marketing: Agnese Vellar (Head of Comms at Kudos)
- U/UX and Web Prototyping: Laura Pippinato (Communication and Visual Design at TOP-IX)
- Legal for startups: Giulia Patrassi Leopardi (Lawyer at CRCLEX)
- Introduction to Cloud Computing: Andrea Rivetti (Senior Software Engineer at TOP-IX)
- Crowdfunding: Sergio Schiavi (Founder of Dissimula Edizioni)
- Data-driven Business Model: Francesca De Chiara (Research data manager - Fair

data - Data Stewardship @ CNR - IMM)
- AI introduction: Francesca Naretto (Postdoctoral researcher at Scuola Normale Superiore
- Soft Skills: Sara La Pietra (Coordinator of training activities at Engim Piemonte)
- Funding and term sheets: Maurizio Liverani (Angel Investor and Startup Mentor)
- Entrepreneurial ecosystem: Alessia Pisoni (Associate Professor at Università degli Studi dell'Insubria)

APPROACH AND PROCESS

To effectively organise and manage the Femme Forward course, we leveraged our extensive expertise in training activities focused on startups and entrepreneurship.

Participants were primarily reached through a strategic approach that included:

- Social Media: Utilizing our web channels to promote the programme.
- Third-Party Associations and Organisations: Collaborating with associations, organizations, and individuals committed to gender equality, startups, and women's empowerment to extend our reach.

Trainers were carefully selected from our existing network and through previous successful collaborations, ensuring that the trainers were highly experienced and could provide valuable insights and guidance to the participants.

A variety of tools were used for participant acquisition and communication:

- Google Forms: Used for the initial assessment of participants, followed by individual interviews to complete the onboarding process.
- Telegram and Email: These were the primary channels for communication before, during, and after the course, providing direct and immediate interaction with participants.
- Feedback Collection: Google Forms were also used to collect feedback after the course, enabling a structured analysis of participants' opinions and experiences.

To enhance the programme's visibility, we involved a communications expert to manage the second part of our social media campaign, ensuring broader reach and engagement.

FORMAT

- 21 live sessions on Zoom (from 6 pm to 8 pm).
- 1 recorded session of 5 hours overall (Python fundamentals).
- 1 week (15-19 January) to work on the final projects in small groups.
- 3 online sessions of feedback and mentorship on the final projects.
- 1 online session of 2 hours to present the 4 final projects' pitch.

The following modules were included:

- Lean startup (3 hours)
- Business Models Canvas (4 hours)
- Circular Economy and Sustainability (2 hours)
- Minimum Viable Product (2 hours)
- Design Thinking (4 hours)
- Agile Development (2 hours)
- Marketing (4 hours)
- U/UX and Web Prototyping (2 hours)
- Legal for startups (4 hours)
- Introduction to Cloud Computing (2 hours)
- Python Fundamentals (5 hours)
- Crowdfunding (2 hours)
- Data-driven Business Model (2 hours)
- AI introduction (2 hours)
- Soft Skills (2 hours)
- Funding and term sheets: (2 hours)
- Entrepreneurial ecosystem (2 hours)

We provided a "certificate of completion" to the participants who participated in at least 13 lessons.

All sessions were recorded. We didn't record the final week (in which participants worked on their final projects) and the pitch presentation. We made the links to the recorded lessons available in a shared Google Sheet document to allow participants to rewatch or in case they couldn't participate in the live session. After the course, we upload all the registration in the Moodle of the project (https://femmeforward-moodle.simplon.co/course/view.php?id=9#section-3)

We organised a final week in which participants could work on a group project. In the final session, we invited all the course teachers and some startup field experts to provide participants feedback.

REMARKS FROM THE COURSE

- The final week and the possibility of working on a final project received particular appreciation from the participants, with a medium evaluation of 4.5/5
- The course seemed particularly effective for those who already had a business idea: 6 out of 11 reported that it improved their idea. Additionally, the course positively impacted those who did not have an initial idea: 2 participants indicated that they did not have an initial idea, but found one during the course. Only one participant stated that she did not have an idea before the programme and continues not to have one, but she is satisfied with the knowledge acquired.

How did you motivate the participants to stick with it?

- We reminded the participants of each appointment through the dedicated Telegram channel,
- We are continuing to send opportunities and pieces of news to keep them engaged.

CHALLENGES

Were there any particular challenges and if so, how did you overcome them?

- The course received an overall positive response, with particular recognition for the quality of the teaching material and instructors. However, key recommendations for improvement focus on more careful time management, both for final work and lesson delivery, to optimise student learning and participation.
- Some participants were not able to participate constantly in the live sessions. The recordings allowed them to recover quickly and stay on schedule.

Is there anything you would do differently in the future?
- We would organize the final project week differently, perhaps giving it more time.

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

A form to collect feedback and participants' evaluations was shared at the end of the training. For each module, organisers collected a rate.

The questionnaire was a mix of closed and open questions.

Here are some graphs reporting the general evaluation of the course (theory modules) and final week project work.

Nel complesso, come valuti il corso?

11 risposte
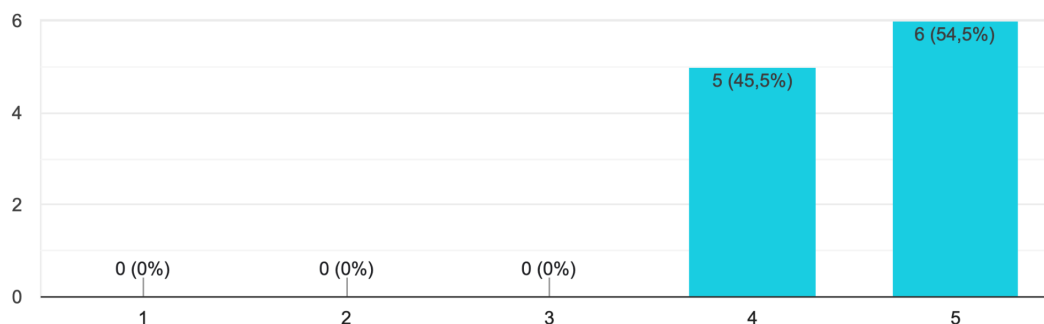
Come valuti la settimana dedicata al Project Work Finale?

11 risposte
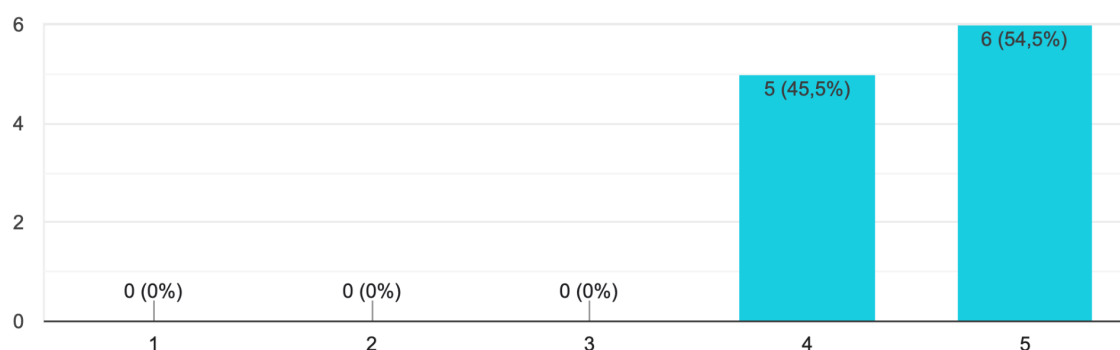
Quotes from the participants here:

Roberta

"From my point of view, the Femme Forward project has been an interesting training ground to practice and open up to the world of entrepreneurship in a concrete way and to test that, with the right methodological approach, this world is much more accessible than one might think.
The direct relationship with professionals and experts who work daily in the start-up ecosystem was a great opportunity for growth, not only professionally.

I really appreciated the presentation of tools and/or practical exercises for the design, development and concrete realisation of business ideas to be developed, in the making and/or already concrete, with the learning-by-doing approach.

The group work aimed at preparing the pitch for the presentation of a possible start-up was a lot of fun and stimulating.

I met women of different ages and with very different life and work experiences, some more motivated than others, but all driven by the curiosity to look beyond their own horizons, from whom I drew a lot of inspiration"

Eneida

"Femme Forward has been an empowering journey, where the clarity and depth of insights from experienced speakers provided a strong foundation for refining my startup vision. The program's synthetic and concise content served as a guiding light, supporting me in the process of focusing and developing my business idea into a reality. Engaging in the project work not only allowed me to articulate my vision more clearly but also provided invaluable feedback. The programme went beyond education; it was a gateway to a diverse network of experts and new friends with varied backgrounds. This newfound community is an invaluable resource. I appreciate this opportunity and the program's commitment to supporting women in realizing future businesses."

PHOTOS

DATES

Cohort 1

Start date: 19 October 2023
End date: 25 January 2024

Cohort 2

Start date: 11 March 2024
End date: 31 May 2024 (still running at the date of initial Deliverable submission. Updated as of 2025)

→ Le Techspace decided to organise two separate training sessions. For more information, see below "Remarks from the courses"

PARTICIPANTS

Number applications / registrations : **83**

Number of participants / regular participants: **33**
Learners had to go through a registration process:

- completion of a registration and motivation form
- technical assessment test
- information session, selection and signing of agreements

Origin of the participants: all from Belgium, 75% live in Brussels, 17% come from Wallonia and 8% live in Flandres (courses are provided mostly in French but certain workshops were in English)

TEACHERS / INSTRUCTORS

Here is the list of teachers involved in the training path.

Digital business concepts:

- Pamela Gerbino (Business Developer/IT Project Manager and Programme Manager at Le Techspace)
- Jean-Yves Kitantou (Digital Strategist/Project Leader and Partnership Manager at Le Techspace

- Ornella Simba (Cybersecurity expert and ISP Manager)
- Mehdi En-Naizi (Head of Capgemini Design Studio at Capgemini)

Technical concepts:

- Benjamin Olivier (Full Stack developer)
- Nadege Noel (UX Designer)
- Giovanna Gerbino (Webdesigner)

Soft skills & automation:

- David Van Vaerenbergh (Lean-Agile Transformation Coach)
- Djamila Pasi (Consultant engineer)
- Shreevidhya Pilluttla (Senior cybersecurity consultant at Capgemini)
- Maurice Johnson-Kanyonga (mental coach)
- Mohammed Tahri (Jobcoach in IT)
- Cécile Geeroms (Business advisor at Smart.be)
- Alice Gilliard (Advisor at Microstart)
- Sabine Clayes (Business coach at KBC)
- Sophie Dussart (pitch master and coach)

APPROACH AND PROCESS

To effectively organise and manage the Femme Forward course, we leveraged our extensive expertise in training activities focused on startups and entrepreneurship. This involved setting up strategic partnerships with experts in various relevant fields to enhance the quality and depth of the training.

Participants were primarily reached through a comprehensive strategy that included social networks and Internet advertising. Additionally, we organised various friendly events such as brunches, outdoor activities with bus tours, information sessions, and live sessions to attract and engage potential participants.

Trainers were carefully selected from our existing network and through previous successful collaborations. This ensured that the trainers were highly experienced and could provide valuable insights and guidance to the participants.

For registration and initial assessment, we utilised Google Forms. Group sessions were organised to complete the onboarding process. Throughout the course, we maintained regular communication with candidates via email and telephone calls. To facilitate communication with learners during the course, we used a combination of email, WhatsApp groups, and the Teams workspace. At the end of the course, individual online interviews were conducted to gather feedback from the students.

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To promote the programme effectively, we hired a communications expert who developed a robust digital strategy and handled Internet promotion. Additionally, we organised several outdoor events to raise awareness about the training, which significantly contributed to increasing the number of registrations.

FORMAT

The Format depended on the cohorts:

- Live sessions on Teams (from 8h30 to 15h30 or 18h00 to 21h00)
- One-to-one workshop sessions all day with specific topics
- online "permanence" sessions to make progress and finalize their individual projects
- 3 online sessions of feedback and mentorship on the final projects and on the post-training plan

The following sessions and modules were included:

- Digital business concepts
- Business Models Canvas
- Growth Hacking
- How to sell on a marketplace
- Minimum Viable Product
- Design Thinking
- Introduction to code
- No-code platform for website creation
- UI/UX and Web Prototyping
- AI introduction
- Digital Marketing
- Agile Foundation
- Soft Skills
- Funding
- Entrepreneurial ecosystem

We provided a "certificate of completion" to participants who completed at least 85% of the courses. Our learners also take the exam to obtain Agile Foundation certification.

We recorded all the main lessons online. We did not record the workshops and sessions with our partners.

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We have made the links to the recorded lessons available in our Teams workspace as well as the slides for all the lessons. Learners weretherefore able to follow the lessons if they wereabsent (one of the rules in place is that after 3 unjustified absences, the learner is excluded from the course, but this has not happened).

We organised workshops during the course with experts about specific topics and a final workshop on pitching their project in front of a jury.

REMARKS FROM THE COURSES

Organising 2 training sessions

As part of the Femme Forward project, we chose to organize two successive cohorts for strategic and pedagogical reasons. The first cohort was designed as a pilot, allowing us to test the training format, assess participants' specific needs, and observe their long-term engagement. This initial phase provided valuable lessons on areas for improvement, both in terms of content and practical aspects (scheduling, materials, facilitation).

Based on this initial feedback, we were able to adapt and optimize the second cohort. It attracted more participants, confirming the growing interest in the program. We reinforced certain modules, adjusted the time allocation, and integrated more interactive sessions and mentoring. This led to a more structured skills development process and increased participant commitment.

Running the two cohorts back-to-back enabled us to ensure continuous improvement of the program while expanding our impact among the target audience.

Other remarks

One participant, coming from a fully non-technical background (social worker), succeeded in developing a prototype for a digital solution in mental health. Her commitment was praised by the whole group.

More generally, the diversity of profiles (age, background, culture) created a particularly rich and supportive group dynamic.

Motivate the participants to stick with it

- Inspiring female mentors were present throughout the program.
- Project topics were linked to their real-life experiences, making the learning process more tangible.
- Peer group work to break isolation and promote collaboration.
- Regular checkpoints to assess progress and celebrate achievements.

Other comments

The combination of theory, practice, and real-world testimonials acted as a strong engagement driver. Some participants even decided to pursue a full professional transition or launch their own tech-related project.

CHALLENGES

Challenges encountered:

- Participants' availability varied, especially for those with children or job commitments.
- Wide differences in technical levels at the beginning of the program.

Solutions implemented:

- More flexible schedules and access to session replays.
- A preliminary "leveling module" to ensure foundational knowledge.
- Increased one-on-one tutoring during the first few weeks.

What we would do differently next time:

- Introduce a pre-onboarding phase with further skills assessment.
- Include post-training coaching to support project continuation.
- Offer more structured networking opportunities with peers and industry experts.

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

General feedback from participants was very positive overall, with participants reporting increased confidence, new skills, and a sense of legitimacy in the digital field. In particular, participants rated positively the following:

- The kindness and support of the trainers.
- The hands-on, project-based approach.
- The networking opportunities with industry professionals.

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Participants rated negatively:

- Some participants wished for more time on specific tools.
- Access to learning materials post-training could have been better centralized.

Some quotes from the participants:

"I never thought I'd be capable of building a digital solution—now I'm leaving with a concrete project."

"This is the first time a program has truly made me believe in my own abilities—especially in a field like tech!"

"I realized tech could be a tool for social change, not just about coding."

PHOTOS

Cyprus Computer Society CCS - Country of delivery: Cyprus

DATES

Start date: 03 April 2025

End date: 05 June 2025 (still running at the date of Deliverable submission

PARTICIPANTS

Initially Registered 151 ladies by March 27, 2024

We ended up with **98 participants.**

Number of participants / regular participants: 55 (up to 30/04)

Origin of the participants

Our 98 participants were located as follows:

CYPRUS   83

AFRICA   3

- UGANDA   2
- EGYPT   1

EUROPE   9

- GERMANY   3
- GREECE   1
- MALTA   1
- POLAND   1
- SPAIN   1
- UKRAINE   2

UK   3

TEACHERS / INSTRUCTORS

- Dr. Elias Hadjielias (Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship and Family Business - Cyprus University of Technology)
- Monica Ioannidou Polemitis (Technology & Growth Strategist)
- Konstantinos Kareklas (Strategy and Operations Advisor)
- Elena Georgiou Strouthos (CTO at Cocoon Creations and Host @ Breaking the 20% Podcast)
- Aimilia Tzanavari Smyrilli (UX Professional currently working at LearnWorlds)
- Sona Kerim (Founder at Writelingowritelingo and UX Messaging Expert)
- Christiana Aristidou (Founder, Partner & Director at "The Hybrid LawTech Firm" empowered by Christiana Aristidou LLC)
- Emilia Nicolaidou (International Certified Lifecoach & Personal Development Mentor)
- Dr Marianna Prokopi Demetriades (Biotech Innovator, Entrepreneur, and Clin.Assoc. Professor in Research Oncology)
- Dr Xenia Loizidou (Civil/ Coastal Engineer- Director of ISOTECH Ltd Research and Consultancy)
- Anna Prodromou (Communications & DEI Consultant)
- Dimis Michaelides (Consultant, Author, Keynote Speaker and Magician)
- Raluca Ioanna Man (Brand strategist, International business consultant, and Keynote speaker, Founder of RSEVEN Ltd)
- Martin Zarian (Full Stack Brand Builder and Co-Founder of Factory 39)
- Eirini Fotiou (Dedicated Mental Health Counselor)
- Stelios Spiliotis (FCA is the Partner and cofounder of Sagehill Partners.)
  Antigoni Hadjiargyrou (FCCA, is the Assistant Manager in Audit and Assurance at Sagehill Partners)
- Moyses Moyseos (Manager of Gravity Ventures Incubator, of CyRIC EUBIC)
- Theo Hadjiyianni (Information Security Professional)
- Elena Mazhuha (Partner at Flyer One Ventures)
- Chris Droussiotis (Senior Managing Director & Senior Partner at Kinisis Ventures LLC - Senior Lecturer at Columbia University)
- Gala Grigoreva (Chief Marketing Officer at Adsterra)
- Pavlos Kleanthous (Founder and Managing Director at Parsectix (AWS Specialist))
- Christina Orphanidou (Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Ethical AI Expert)
- Panis Pieri (Growth Hacker and Blogger)

All details of Workshops, Trainers with dates and times, recordings and presentation pdfs are included in the following file:
FFSF2024 Program

APPROACH AND PROCESS

To effectively organise and manage the Femme Forward course, we leveraged our extensive expertise in training activities focused on startups and entrepreneurship. This involved setting up strategic partnerships with experts in various relevant fields to enhance the quality and depth of the training.

Participants were reached through a multi-faceted approach:

- Press release
- CCS members Newsletter
- Social media announcements (Facebook, LinkedIn)
- Through our community partners who shared in their networks our announcements

This comprehensive outreach strategy ensured that we could attract a diverse group of participants from various backgrounds and regions.

We have clarified the following points with the participants in advance and asked them through e-mail to respond affirmatively:

- *Kindly confirm your availability for the instructional period and specified times as outlined in the schedule Schedule (startupschoolcyprus.com) by responding via email no later than March 29th, 2024. Your commitment to attending at least 75% of the sessions is essential for participation.*
- *Active participation in as many training sessions as feasible is expected. Upon request, CCS will furnish a certificate of attendance to those who are present for at least 75% of the online sessions.*
- *All sessions will be recorded to facilitate catch-up for missed sessions. These recordings will be accessible online via the EU project platform. By providing your verification as outlined in step 1, you implicitly consent to the publication of these recordings.*
- *For easy communication, a WhatsApp group named "FF Future Startup Founders 2024" will be created. Please specify your WhatsApp contact number in your response. Upon receipt of your acceptance, you will receive an invitation to join this group.*

How did you acquire the trainers (if external trainers were involved)?

● Personal contacts
● Through our Community Partners

Tools (e.g. Typeform? Landing page? Newsletter? Slack? etc) used for acquisition and communication:

Dedicated website - Registration through Google form

WhatsApp Group named "FF Future Startup Founders 2024" to easily communicate with participants

Here are the links to CCS social media channels

● CCS LinkedIn (English)

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/cyprus-computer-society_ffsf2024-startups-cyprus-activity-7171431407729143808-D5Z-?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android

● CCS Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/share/p/gQgXByvdSASU6KLp/

Also, below you can see some press clippings.

● Cyprus Mail (the biggest English newspaper – online and written)

https://cyprus-mail.com/2024/03/06/cyprus-computer-society-launches-startup-programme-for-women/

● InBusiness (the biggest Business community news)

https://inbusinessnews.reporter.com.cy/article/2024/3/6/762798/kupriakos-sundesmos-plerophorikes-future-startup-founders-gia-epidoxes-gunaikes-epikheirematies/

- Prepared specialised social media banners for our trainers so that they could promote their participation in the programme (some examples below)

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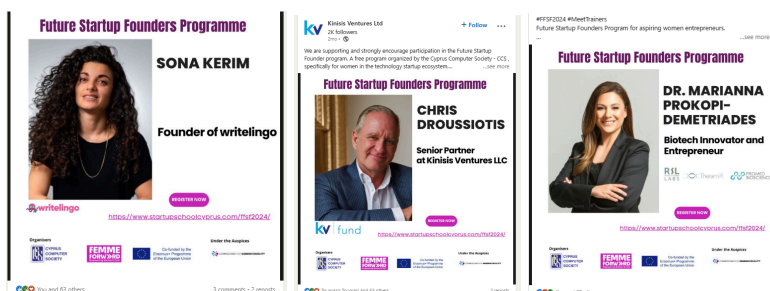
FORMAT

The following sessions and modules were included:

- 1 kick-off online session which was addressed by the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality
- 10 weeks online curriculum (April 3 - June 3, 2023)
- 25 live online sessions with a total of over 55 hours of content (workshops, presentations, role model talks, Q&A, etc)
- 3 online networking sessions (1hr each)
- 1 in-person networking event at Limassol
- 1 closing event will be held on June 5^h, 2024 (Head Quarters of Bank of Cyprus)
- 98 registered women
- 25 coaches / trainers (16 women and 9 men)

The following topics and modules were carried out:

Sessions	TOPIC	Workshops and Q&As	Trainers & Speakers	Title
Session 0 Wed 3/4/24 18:30-19:00		FFSF 2024 OPENING		Commissioner Of Gender Equality, Cyprus Computer Society, Femme Forward, Bank of Cyprus
Session 1 Wed 3/4/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Mapping Creative Ideas: Business Model Canvas Fundamentals	Dr. Elias Hadjielias	Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship and Family Business - Cyprus University of Technology
Session 2 Thu 4/4/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Navigating the Entrepreneurial Journey: When to Fly Solo and When to Partner Up	Monica Ioannidou Polemitis	Technology & Growth Strategist
Session 3 Mon 8/4/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Concept Development and Testing	Dr. Elias Hadjielias	Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship and Family Business - Cyprus University of Technology
EVENT Wed 10/4/24 18:00-19:00		ONLINE NETWORKING (OPTIONAL)	Panis Pieri / Neofytos Xenofontos	
Session 4 Wed 10/4/24 18:00-19:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Operational foundations of a tech startup	Konstantinos Kareklas	Strategy and Operations Advisor

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Session 5 Thu 11/4/24 19:00-21:00	SOFT SKILLS & EMPOWERMENT	Ask Me Anything - Role Model	Elena Georgiou Strouthos	CTO at Cocoon Creations and Host @ Breaking the 20% Podcast
Session 6 Mon 15/4/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Designing User-Centric Products: A Crash Course in UX Design for Entrepreneurs	Aimilia Tzanavari Smyrilli	UX Professional currently working at LearnWorlds
EVENT Wed 17/4/24 18:00-19:00		ONLINE NETWORKING (OPTIONAL)	Panis Pieri / Neofytos Xenofontos	
Session 7 Wed 17/4/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Building Trust in Your Brand with UX Content Marketing	Sona Kerim	Founder at Writelingo and UX Messaging Expert
Session 8 Thu 18/4/24 18:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Navigating the Legal Landscape for Startups	Christiana Aristidou	Founder, Partner & Director at "The Hybrid LawTech Firm" empowered by Christiana Aristidou LLC
Session 9 Mon 22/4/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Unleash Today's Way of Making Sales. Breaking the Status Quo is challenging but worth it!	Emilia Nicolaidou	International Certified Lifecoach & Personal Development Mentor
EVENT Wed 24/4/24 18:00-19:00		ONLINE NETWORKING (OPTIONAL)	Panis Pieri / Neofytos Xenofontos	

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Session 10 Wed 24/4/24 19:00-21:00	SOFT SKILLS & EMPOWERMENT	Ask Me Anything - Role Model	Dr Marianna Prokopi Demetriades	Biotech Innovator, Entrepreneur, and Clin.Assoc. Professor in Research Oncology
Session 11 Thu 25/4/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Sustainability: the way forward for Business	Dr Xenia Loizidou	Civil/ Coastal Engineer Director of ISOTECH Ltd Research and Consultancy
Session 12 Mon 29/4/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Crafting Connections: Unveiling the Art of Strategic PR & Comms	Anna Prodromou	Communications & DEI Consultant
Session 13 Tue 30/4/24 19:00-21:00	SOFT SKILLS & EMPOWERMENT	POWER UP YOUR CREATIVITY	Dimis Michaelides	Consultant, Author, Keynote Speaker and Magician
Session 14 Wed 8/5/24 19:00-21:00	SOFT SKILLS & EMPOWERMENT	From Beliefs to Breakthroughs: Empowering Women in Tech with Self-Leadership	Raluca Ioanna Man	Brand strategist, International business consultant, and Keynote speaker Founder of RSEVEN Ltd
Session 15 Thu 9/5/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	What is a brand and what is your Startup's superpower?	Martin Zarian	Full Stack Brand Builder and Co-Founder of Factory 39
Session 16 Mon 13/5/24 19:00-21:00	SOFT SKILLS & EMPOWERMENT	How to Manage and deal with Stress	Eirini Fotiou	Dedicated Mental Health Counselor

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EVENT Tue 14/5/24 19:00-22:00		In-Person Networking Event LIMASSOL	Panis Pieri / Neofytos Xenofontos	
Session 17 Wed 15/5/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Introduction to accounting and tax for startups	Stelios Spiliotis, Antigoni Hadjiargyrou	- Stelios Spiliotis, FCA is the Partner and cofounder of Sagehill Partners. - Antigoni Hadjiargyrou, FCCA, is the Assistant Manager in Audit and Assurance at Sagehill Partners.
Session 18 Thu 16/5/24 18:00-21:00	SOFT SKILLS & EMPOWERMENT	Structuring and delivery of startup presentations.	Moyses Moyseos	Manager of Gravity Ventures Incubator, of CyRIC EUBIC
Session 19 Mon 20/5/24 19:00-21:00	TECH CONCEPTS	Social Engineering: AI and Current Trends	Theo Hadjiyianni	Information Security Professional
Session 20 Wed 22/5/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Funding and Investor Tips for Startups	Elena Mazhuha	Partner at Flyer One Ventures
Session 21 Thu 23/5/24 18:00-20:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	How to Value Priceless - Valuations of Intellectual Property, Business Start-ups and who is Investing	Chris Droussiotis	Senior Managing Director & Senior Partner at Kinisis Ventures LLC

Session 22 Mon 27/5/24 19:00-21:00	BUSINESS CONCEPTS	Organic Growth Mastery: A Marketing Workshop for Women Startup Founders	Gala Grigoreva	Chief Marketing Officer at Adsterra
Session 23 Wed 29/5/24 19:00-21:00	TECH CONCEPTS	Start and scale your business on the cloud	Pavlos Kleanthous	Founder and Managing Director at Parsectix
Session 24 Thu 30/5/24 19:00-21:00	TECH CONCEPTS	Innovating with Trust: Building Ethical Technologies for a Sustainable Future	Christina Orphanidou	Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Ethical AI Expert
Session 25 Mon 3/6/24 18:00-21:00	SOFT SKILLS & EMPOWERMENT	Pitching Training Session	Panis Pieri	Growth Hacker and Blogger
Session 26 Wed 5/6/24 19:00-21:00		PHYSICAL Closing Event (NETWORKING)	Investors & Stakeholders of the Ecosystem	

During the 10-week curriculum, the online sessions took place via Zoom on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays evening hours to accommodate participants with full-time jobs.

All our sessions have been recorded. During the course we made all videos available via Shared Drive to allow participants to rewatch or in case they couldn't participate in the live sessions.

After the course, we will upload all the sessions in the Moodle of the project.

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Every session was attended and coordinated by our Programme Manager (Neofytos Xenofontos – CCS) and Panis Pieri – Growth Hacker & Blogger / CCS member. They acted as the focal point of contact for all questions and any technical problems.

All details of Workshops, Trainers with dates and times, recordings and presentation PDFs are included in the following file:
FFSF2024 Program

CCS promised to furnish a certificate of attendance to those who are present for at least 75% of the online sessions.

Were there any special events or sessions worth mentioning?

- We planned 2 physical events. (networking event at Limassol on May 14th and closing event at Nicosia)
- We also introduced the 1-hour online get-to-know-each-other (networking) every Wednesday!

REMARKS FROM THE COURSE

The coordinators reminded the participants regularly through our WhatsApp Group as follows:
- Every Monday morning reminding of the sessions at hand during the week
- On the morning of the session for the upcoming evening session

CHALLENGES

Some participants were not able to participate in some of the live sessions. The recordings proved valuable for them to catch up missed sessions and stay on schedule.

There were over 80 participants, so we could not afford the time to properly introduce each of the attendees at the 1st meeting. Therefore, we introduced unscheduled online networking events every Wednesday, where participants had the chance to introduce themselves to others and share their ideas.

In the future we would include in-person networking sessions **very early** in the programme. It helps to create team spirit and get to know each other.

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FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

An evaluation form will be distributed upon completion of the programme on **June 5th** to receive structured feedback from participants.

Meanwhile, we collected some initial feedback:

Lucile Cox "Great programme & initiative. Thank you for the opportunity to develop & network with inspiring ladies"

Eleonora "Thank you for organizing the meetup! It was indeed inspiring, insightful, and friendly! Proud to be a part of this community!"

Melinta "Grateful for the opportunity to be part of the team. It was an amazing and inspirational energy. The programme is fantastic, and I eagerly look forward to more networking events like this, which bring together like-minded, goal-oriented people!"

Ioana Cuitac Excited to be part of the Femme Forward Future Startup programme in Cyprus!

Our first networking event was awesome! Thanks to everyone involved for bringing together instructors, experts, investors and future female entrepreneurs . We shared stories and ideas, feeling inspired and grateful for the new connections.

Big thanks to Cyprus Computer Society - CCS and special thanks to Panis Pieri and NEOFYTOS XENOFONTOS!

PHOTOS

Here are the links to Cyprus Computer Society social media regarding the launching of the program.

LinkedIn

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7183127328837779456

Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/CyprusComputerSociety/posts/pfbid0jzbxR9c12e6s6iNqwDGpL7

www.femmeforward.eu

H84WzTDexaTGswnpMX1jLi32sQN5jWS9yugt32PEUfl

Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/cypruscomputersociety/p/C5gZHakCDII/

Twitter

https://x.com/CCS_social/status/1777364588679385408

Photo from Session 14, Wednesday 8/5/2024, 19:00-21:00

From Beliefs to Breakthroughs: Empowering Women in Tech with Self-Leadership with Raluca Ioanna Man "Brand strategist, International business consultant, and Keynote speaker and Founder of RSEVEN Ltd"
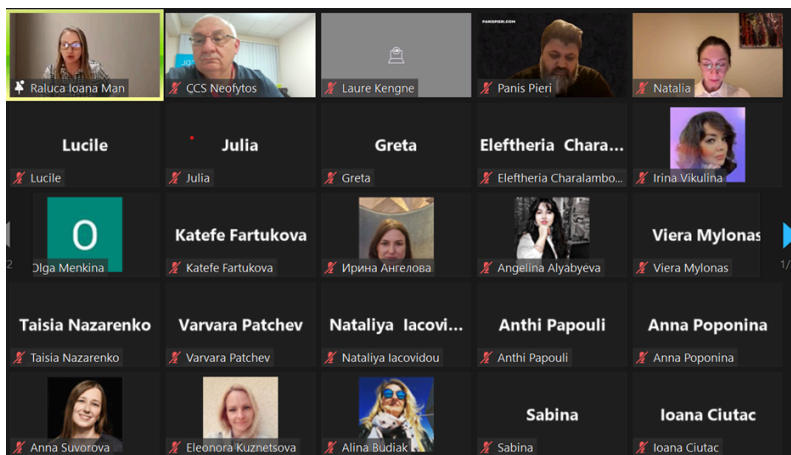
Photo from Session 15, Thursday 9/5/2024   19:00-21:00

What is a brand and what is your Startup's superpower? with Martin Zarian Full Stack Brand Builder and Co-Founder of Factory 39
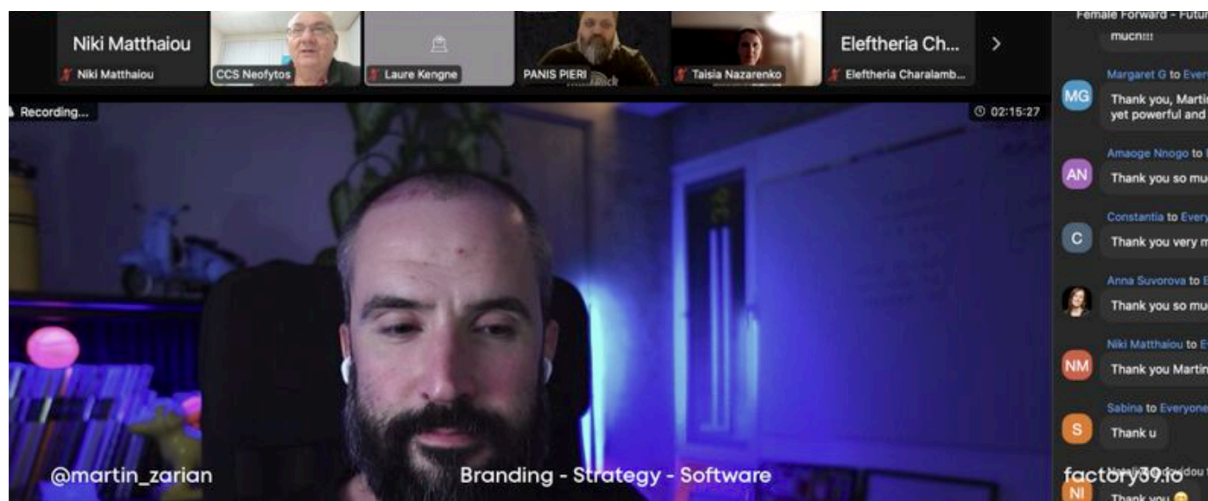
Photo from Session 17, Wednesday 15/5/2024   19:00-21:00

WORKSHOP: "Introduction to accounting and tax for startups." Stelios Spiliotis, FCA - Partner and Cofounder of Sagehill Partners and Antigoni Hadjiargyrou, FCCA - Assistant Manager in Audit and Assurance at Sagehill Partners.

Posts about Networking Event at Malindi-Limassol

Invitation

LinkedIn post from Panis Pieri
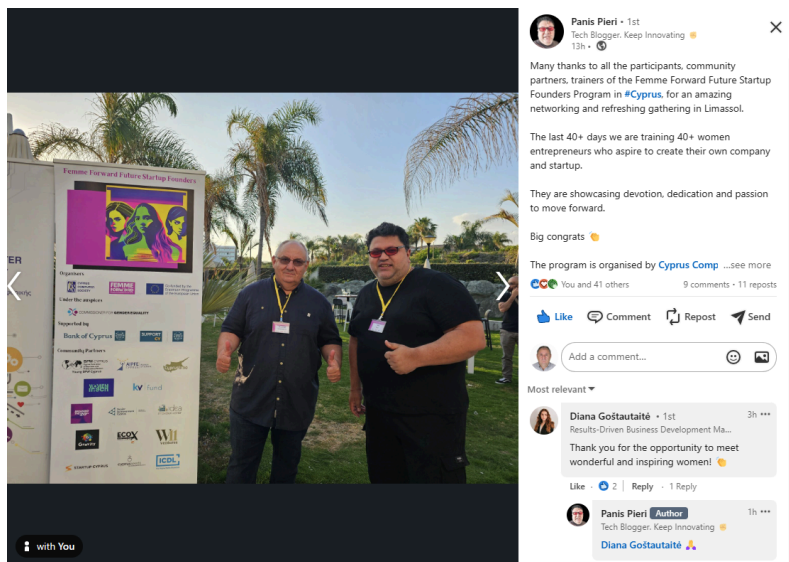
https://www.linkedin.com/posts/panispieri_cyprus-panisontour-ffsf2024-activity-7196253253179699201-wbL-?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

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LinkedIn post from Martin Zarian (Trainer)

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/martinzarian_a-massive-shoutout-to-everyone-involved-in-activity-7196441831604154369-s58o?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

LinkedIn post from Natalia Iacovidou (Participant)

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/natalia-iacovidou-65050532_cyprus-panisontour-ffsf2024-activity-7196367651747598338-Yh6S?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

Conclusions

The Femme Forward programme, funded under the Erasmus+ Programme, was designed to empower women to start tech careers or create tech start-ups. This comprehensive training programme aimed to bridge the gender gap in the digital economy by providing high-quality digital education content. Over the last months, the Future Startup Founders programme successfully registered participants across four countries: Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Cyprus.

Overall, the programme saw a total number of 215 participants (338 registrations), who engaged in a mix of online and offline activities tailored to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for tech entrepreneurship. Each country provided a unique structure and set of experiences, contributing to the overall success and learnings of the programme.

Participants across all regions appreciated the supportive environment, the quality of the training materials, and the expertise of the trainers. They gained practical skills in business development, technology, and soft skills, which were crucial in boosting their confidence to launch their own start-ups. Despite some logistical challenges, such as varying session times and the need for consistent attendance, the programme effectively used recordings and flexible scheduling to accommodate participants' diverse life situations.

In Germany, the programme included a mix of online sessions and a significant kickoff event, which helped create a strong initial engagement. Italy's approach focused on group projects and practical exercises, which were highly valued by the participants for their hands-on experience. Belgium emphasized digital business concepts and technical training, supplemented by individual workshops, which helped in personalising the learning experience. Cyprus maintained a robust online structure with additional physical networking events, which were crucial in building a community among the participants.

The participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the inclusive and empowering nature of the programme. The initiative's impact was evident in the increased confidence, networking, and entrepreneurial skills among the women who participated.

Recommendations for future programmes:

- Standardise session times: to enhance consistency and participation, standardise session times across all countries. This helps participants plan better and ensures regular attendance.
- Increase physical networking events: while online sessions are convenient, physical events foster stronger networking and engagement. Plan periodic in-person events to supplement online learning.
- Enhance participant motivation: introduce completion certificates and other incentives to motivate participants to attend and engage in all sessions. Regular reminders and follow-ups via multiple communication channels can also help.
- Leverage alumni networks: create and maintain alumni networks through platforms like LinkedIn to keep past participants engaged and connected. Monthly community calls or webinars can help sustain this network.
- Continuous feedback loop: implement a structured feedback mechanism after each session or module. This allows for real-time improvements and better adaptation to participant needs.
- Expand access and inclusivity: ensure that materials are accessible to women from diverse backgrounds and locations. Multi-language support and recordings are essential for inclusivity.

By addressing these recommendations, future iterations of the Femme Forward programme can ensure even greater impact and empowerment for women in tech.