

The Inclusive Way Initiative Final Report

Final Report by FE+MALE Think Tank

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Promoting Female Entrepreneurship in Switzerland

The Inclusive Way Initiative (TIWI): Strengthening female entrepreneurship in Switzerland towards the UN 2030 Agenda.



Fig. 1. Rothenbühler, F. (2023). The Public Forum Fotografie.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3-4
Background	5-6
Impact & Recommendations of 3 initiatives	7-14
1. Outcomes Impactful Workshop	7-9
2. Outcomes Roundtable	10-12
3. Outcomes Public Forum	13-14
Recommendations and next steps	15-19
Strategic Area 1	15
Strategic Area 2	16
Strategic Area 3	17
Next steps	18-19
Acknowledgments	20
FE+MALE THINK TANK Team	21-22
Photos	23-24
Credits	25



Executive Summary

FE+MALE Think Tank designed The Inclusive Way Initiative (TIWI) to better advance the recommendations and findings by the **Bern University of Applied Sciences** – Department of Economics *Institute for Innovation & Strategic Entrepreneurship and Institute for Sustainable Business*, titled “**Promoting Female Entrepreneurship in Switzerland: Starting Points for Improving entrepreneurship Framework Conditions**”.

The goal of the TIWI project has a 3-pillar approach:

- **Raise Awareness** – by disseminating the study and facilitating dialogue amongst stakeholders via workshops and a corresponding forum on its key findings and recommendations.
- **Increase Knowledge on the Market** – Utilize inputs gained through the above process to advance the development of a corresponding market analysis for high-growth opportunities.
- **Develop Market-Driven Relevant Tools** – to help increase the % of women entrepreneurs in Bern.

The start of the TIWI Project was **the Impactful Workshop**, the goal of which was to collect input from key experts. The focus was all around understanding the problem and brainstorming solutions. To capture the collective knowledge, the first question answered by the participant was what is already in the market. Then identifying existing gaps and what are concrete steps to remove barriers. We developed solutions in five areas: **Policy Agenda, Advocacy Agenda, Raising Awareness Agenda, Education & Training Agenda and Tools Development & Programming Agenda**.

The Roundtable goal was to give an overview of solutions found in the impactful workshop. Prioritize solutions & validate & decide on solutions to be implemented. Roundtable participants were requested to populate a matrix using the following criteria to prioritize recommendations:

- Does the priority action have a high, moderate, or low impact on improving conditions for female entrepreneurs in Switzerland?
- Does the priority action have a high, moderate, or low probability of being effectively and efficiently implemented in 2024 given existing knowledge, resources, or available technical expertise?

The Public Forum’s main goal was to present three key findings and provide a summary of the most promising action steps gathered through the previous workshops with key stakeholders from all fields and sectors. In a keynote, a panel discussion, and a networking Apéro, participants had the opportunity to delve deeper into the topics. Throughout the forum, attendees had the space to review, deliberate, and validate actions suggested during the event to improve outcomes for entrepreneurs.

The aim of the Inclusive Way Initiative (2022-2023) was to recruit representatives from 20 organizations to actively participate in workshops and the forum for tool development, and the initiative has successfully achieved this. This success has resulted in increased knowledge among participants, thereby enhancing awareness of the barriers faced by female founders in entering the market.

More than just an initiative, the Inclusive Way Initiative has built momentum.

1. Collaborative Expertise

The Inclusive Way Initiative (TIWI) has provided solutions firmly grounded in both research and real-world insights. This method has enhanced the credibility of proposed actions, addressing nuanced challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in Switzerland.

2. Holistic and Actionable Strategy

TIWI's three-pillar approach, focused on raising awareness, increasing market knowledge, and developing tools, has demonstrated a commitment to practical solutions. By approaching issues through policy advocacy, awareness campaigns, and tool development suggestions, the project has positioned the Think Tank as a dynamic force for tangible improvements in the entrepreneurial landscape.

3. Innovative Stakeholder Engagement

TIWI stands out for fostering innovation through extensive engagement with diverse stakeholders, including all genders. This inclusive way has tapped into diverse ideas and experiences, leading to innovative solutions that address the unique challenges faced by female entrepreneurs. It reflects a commitment to diversity and equality, making TIWI a compelling initiative for impactful and forward-thinking solutions in Switzerland.

Overall, the Inclusive Way Initiative has successfully provided information about the initiative and personally engaged with over fifty individuals and organizations in Switzerland.



Background

- 1. FE+MALE Think Tank:** Founded in 2022, the FE+MALE Think Tank was established to build a broader sustainable method in closing the gender gap through changing the status-quo of female entrepreneurs by increasing female participation in entrepreneurship, identifying the challenges unique to their situation, and coordinating efforts to remove barriers for female participation in the economy in Switzerland. The Think Tank works specifically to increase the participation of female entrepreneurs through coordinated efforts to both raise awareness and knowledge on the specific challenges that females face by using research to detect patterns and conceptualize innovative projects that are solution orientated. The FE+MALE Think Tank brings a unique research-based approach that investigates these issues, bundles the topics and creates projects to solve the problems; including on topics such as innovation, funding, education, gender, mentoring, sustainability, intrapreneurship, and leadership that can have a long-lasting impact on breaking down the gender gap by increasing gender diversity in entrepreneurship, making significant contributions to economic and social growth in the region.
- 2. KEY TIWI PARTNER: Bern University of Applied Sciences – Business School:** As a major stakeholder in the economic region of Bern, **Bern University of Applied Sciences – Department of Economics *Institute for Innovation & Strategic Entrepreneurship and Institute for Sustainable Business*** is committed to designing sustainable innovation processes and engaging in entrepreneurial thinking and action to strengthen systems and broaden methods towards increasing entrepreneurial participation in the regional economy. In order to achieve a shared vision of closing the gender gap through advancing female entrepreneurship in Switzerland, the FE+MALE Think Tank partnered with the **Bern University of Applied Sciences – Department of Economics *Institute for Innovation & Strategic Entrepreneurship and Institute for Sustainable Business*** to help raise awareness and disseminate the findings and recommendations put forward in their May 2022 study (referenced below).
- 3. Innovation Office of the University of Bern:** The Think Tank and the Innovation Office have cooperated in the development of the Inclusive Way Public Forum. The innovation office has a specific program to promote women in entrepreneurship called "*Women Who Start Up, Bring Your Ideas Alive*", with the goal to foster female academic entrepreneurship. The series of events aims to provide the audience with inspiration, practical tools and testimonials from people who have gone through the journey from an idea to their own business. The Innovation Office was founded in September 2021 to further promote a dynamic culture of innovation and entrepreneurial thinking at the University of Bern and the Inselspital, Bern University Hospital. The mandate of the Innovation Office is to support students, researchers, and faculty members in translating ideas, research, and inventions into innovations. Thereby, strengthening the University's role in creating value through knowledge for society and the economy.
- 4. “Promoting Female Entrepreneurship in Switzerland: Starting Points for Improving entrepreneurship Framework Conditions”.** The 2022 study utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods and determine that women in Switzerland are in fact far less likely to become entrepreneurs and/or have more unique barriers than men that need to be overcome in order to successfully enter into the ever-evolving regional markets in Switzerland. Through this assessment, the study identified the following factors as to why women are less likely than men to start-up a business in Switzerland:

- Entrepreneurial skills are not sufficiently taught at various levels of education in Switzerland,
- Cultural and social norms are more likely to motivate men than women to start a business,
- The family phase often prevents women from engaging in entrepreneurial activities,
- Funding instruments often neglect forms of start-ups that women often prefer.

However, the study also identified key opportunities that exist within the Swiss system which can be leveraged to help increase women entrepreneurial activities, including:

- There are no structural differences in Switzerland in terms of access to funding, programming or networks between women and men entrepreneurs.
- Recent trends can increase women's participation in the evolving regional economy.

5. Inclusive Way Initiative: As the communication partner in this endeavor, the FE+MALE Think Tank designed the following 3-point strategy to better advance the recommendations and findings from the May 2022 study:

- i. Raise Awareness** – by disseminating the study and facilitating dialogue amongst stakeholders via workshops and a corresponding forum on its key findings and recommendations.
- ii. Increase Knowledge on the Market** – Utilize inputs gained through the above process to advance the development of a corresponding market analysis for high-growth opportunities.
- iii. Develop Market-Driven Relevant Tools** – to help increase the % of women entrepreneurs in Switzerland.

Inclusive Way Initiative Approach: With funding support from the Bern Economic Development Agency, the FE+MALE Think Tank is raising awareness throughout 2023 on the barriers outlined for women entering the market in the May 2022 study, and is convening and engaging key stakeholders and technical experts to utilize public discourse and gain critical inputs through 1) the Technical Impactful Workshop (March 2023); the corresponding Stakeholder Roundtable (June 2023); and subsequent Public Forum (November 2023) workshops to tailor solutions, increase market knowledge, and develop market-relevant tools needed to increase the percentage of women entrepreneurs in Switzerland.

Impact & Recommendations of 3 initiatives

In this next chapter the focus is to outline the impact and recommendations of the three initiatives performed this year.

Impactful Workshop Outcomes

→ [Find the document here.](#)

The purpose of the Impactful Workshop was to raise awareness, increase market knowledge, exchange views, and deliberate prospective solutions on the findings and recommendations put forward in the May 2022 BFH Business School study.

The workshop was designed to increase knowledge and understanding amongst the workshop participants of the existing problems and/or barriers that female entrepreneurs face in the region, by providing a platform that would allow participants to deliberate and brainstorm solutions which can better prepare, inform, and improve outcomes for prospective entrepreneurs in the region.

The workshop started with a detailed presentation of the TIWI Project and followed by a presentation of the BFH Business study. This set the stage for the participants to start the brainstorming sessions. The brainstorming sessions were grouped according to the recommendations of the study:

- Norms and care work
- Entrepreneurship in midlife
- Heterogeneity in entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurship education
- Social entrepreneurship

The deep dive sessions answered following questions:

- What has been done in each area?
- Existing gaps?
- What needs to be done to remove barriers in each area?

The FE+MALE Think Tank grouped the results into 5 strategic alignments. Below is a synopsis of the key recommendations made by workshop participants in each of the related solution-oriented categories:

Policy Agenda	
Develop a policy agenda under The Inclusive Way Initiative with support from key private, public, academic stakeholders targeted to both regional and national policy makers	<p>Affordable Childcare: increasing policy support at local and national levels for subsidized, increased tax exemptions and/or more affordable childcare options came up as a high priority for workshop participants.</p> <p>Economic Development Incentives for Female Entrepreneurs: increasing tax exemptions for female and/or promoting tax incentives for female-owned business.</p>

	<p>Public Incentives for Social Enterprises/businesses & start-ups: increased public tax exemptions or other funding incentives to for-profit organizations</p> <p>National Strategy on Entrepreneurship: to advocate for a broader national strategy on entrepreneurship that is benchmarked against other countries or against existing best-practices that are evidenced-based in increasing female start-ups</p>
<h2>Advocacy Agenda</h2>	
<p>Develop an advocacy agenda under The Inclusive Way Initiative with support from key private, public, academic stakeholders targeted to both public (policy makers) and private (business, investors, etc.) to be deliberated and validated by Roundtable Stakeholders in June 2023, and advanced to the Public Forum for design and implementation</p>	<p>Closing the Pay Gap: using an evidenced-based advocacy approach, targeted to both public and private stakeholders to recognize inequities in funding availability (for female start-ups) and within the workplace.</p> <p>Increased Paternity Leave: equity in parental leave can incentivize both men and women to be more proactive in the start-up economy when weighing family obligations against professional aspirations.</p> <p>Changing the narrative or public perception on entrepreneurship opportunities: to change public perception on the role that entrepreneurship can play in increasing economic development in the region.</p>
<h2>Raising Awareness Agenda</h2>	
<p>Develop an awareness raising agenda under The Inclusive Way Initiative with support from key private, public, academic stakeholders targeted to prospective female entrepreneurs, to be deliberated and validated by Roundtable Stakeholders in June 2023, and advanced to the Public Forum for design and implementation</p>	<p>Increased Awareness & Visibility of Female Role Models: concentrated effort to raise awareness on successful female owned start-ups, or successful women owned enterprises, can help to serve as an inspiration and/or provide a roadmap for females of all ages who are looking to initiate or incorporate a business.</p>

	<p>Increase Awareness on Family Support Initiatives, Programming, Incentives and Networks: concentrated effort to raise awareness on successful female owned start-ups, or successful women owned enterprises, can help to serve as an inspiration and/or provide a roadmap for females of all ages who are looking to initiate or incorporate a business</p>
<p>Education & Training Agenda</p>	
<p>Develop an education & training agenda under The Inclusive Way Initiative with support from key private, public, academic stakeholders targeted to regional primary, secondary, and post-secondary educational institutions, as well as to prospective female entrepreneurs, to be deliberated and validated by Roundtable Stakeholders in June 2023, and advanced to the Public Forum for design and implementation.</p>	<p>Embedding Entrepreneurial Curriculum in Education Systems: concentrated efforts across all levels of preliminary, secondary, and post-secondary educational systems to include entrepreneurship as part of their offered curriculums. Participants agreed that attracting girls at a young age, through strength-based approaches of modeling or engaging in entrepreneurial activities and training, can be a first major step in overcoming existing perceptions of entrepreneurship being more of a male oriented endeavor.</p>
<p>Tools Development & Programming Agenda</p>	
<p>Develop an agenda under The Inclusive Way Initiative to support the development of innovative tools targeted to prospective investors, and other targeted programming interventions, to be deliberated and validated by Roundtable Stakeholders in June 2023, and advanced to the Public Forum for design and implementation.</p>	<p>Tool Development for Investors and Businesses: that tools can be developed (and trained on) to help address these biases and ensure that there is a process in place to potentially remove unfair advantages that male entrepreneurs may have during the interviewing stages or in securing competitive funds. By adding a “value-based” and/or more diverse evaluation criteria (and training) for investors.</p> <p>Programming for Seniors: increased outreach and/or attention paid to providing training that can help “retool” seniors in the workforce can also open up opportunities on the entrepreneurial front.</p>

Table 1. The impactful workshop.

Roundtable Outcomes

→ [Find the document here.](#)

The purpose of the TIWI Stakeholder Roundtable was to raise awareness, exchange views, and to prioritize and elaborate a plan of action based on the recommendations which resulted from the *March 2023 TIWI Stakeholder Workshop* where technical experts had gathered at the Bern Impact Hub on March 15, 2023, to deliberate prospective solutions on the findings and recommendations put forward.

In order to provide focus and/or to help guide the discussions of the Roundtable, FE+MALE staff further presented a template of a Priority Matrix, developed by the Think Tank to help provide a framework and specific decision-making criteria that could help participants deliberate and prioritize actions under each respective cluster areas going forward.

Roundtable task: Roundtable participants were requested to populate the accompanying matrix using the following criteria to prioritize recommendations:

- Does the priority action have a high, moderate, or low impact on improving conditions for female entrepreneurs in the Switzerland?
- Does the priority action have a high, moderate, or low probability of being effectively and efficiently implemented in 2024 given existing knowledge, resources, or available technical expertise?

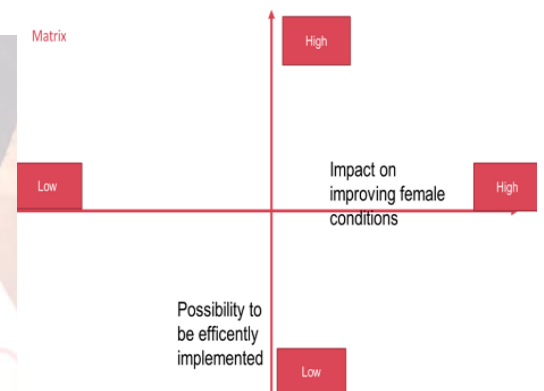


Fig.2. Priority Matrix.

Developing and Implementing a Policy Agenda

<p>Promoting Affordable Childcare:</p> <p>Roundtable participants concluded this was a High Priority (demonstrating both high impact and ability to implemented starting Q3 2023) – but with the caveat that efforts be focused on the Cantonal level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Priority Action: Establishing a network lobbying effort (with varying representation or “buy-in” from key stakeholder groups targeted to a pilot Canton (Bern) to align with national efforts currently being undertaken. ➤ Priority Action: Identifying entry points (concurrent with the above) to partner and/or align with the National Cantonal (Kanton) <i>Wirtschaftsförderung</i> efforts to promote national funding and/or investments/ subsidies provided to Cantons to increase affordable childcare.
<p>Developing & advancing a national strategy on entrepreneurship:</p> <p>Roundtable participants concluded this was a Medium (moderate) Priority (demonstrating both mid impact and a viable ability to be implemented starting Q3 2023). Priority actions under a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Priority Action: Align with the SNSF and Innosuisse to facilitate a family approach to entrepreneurship (also to be guided by lobbying network noted above) as a proven method to support increased entrepreneurship and changing social perceptions (vis a vis benchmarking other regions/states/countries/ etc.) ➤ Priority Action: Gather and disseminate the evidence-base to persuade Government authorities of the relevance that increased childcare subsidies have in

Policy Agenda for Q3 2023-2024 included	promoting and/or strengthening economic outcomes (again benchmarking other regions, countries, etc.).
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Next Step: Utilizing the above recommendations from the Roundtable, develop a proposed implementation strategy and/or outline a proposed roadmap that includes timelines, benchmarks, concurrent activities stakeholder engagement efforts, and proposed outputs/outcomes for each of the corresponding priority actions identified to help increase female entrepreneurship in Switzerland for Q3 2023-2024. This policy agenda and its implementation strategy (roadmap) can be taken up as a separate project in 2024 once resources are allocated and confirmed. A specific concept will be presented to prospective donors and key partners.

Developing and Implementing an Education & Training Agenda

<p>Increasing Awareness on Entrepreneurship for Future Entrepreneurs:</p> <p>Roundtable participants concluded this was a High Priority (demonstrating both high impact and ability to implemented starting Q3 2023). Priority actions under an Education & Training Agenda for Q3 2023-2024 included</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Priority Action: Identify and/or align within an established (collective) network of providers (stakeholders) working in this field to assess where current programs can be strengthened & leveraged for broader impact. ➤ Priority Action: Promote a ‘Day/Week on Entrepreneurship’ within existing School Education curriculum (at a Cantonal level). Could include bringing role models to present and/or highlight their experiences
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<p>Increasing Primary & Secondary Ed on Entrepreneurship:</p> <p>Roundtable participants concluded this was a Medium Priority (moderate) (demonstrating both mid impact and a viable ability to implemented starting Q3 2023). Priority actions under an Education & Training Agenda for Q3 2023-2024 included</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Priority Action: Support efforts to embed a “critical thinking” method into existing entrepreneurship education efforts. in addition to embedding “know your own strengths” assessments & confidence building activities. ➤ Priority Action: Work in partnership with schools to develop and promote a pilot project-based lesson around an entrepreneurial activity. ➤ Priority Action: Work in partnership with school system(s) to develop an offering targeted to teachers on entrepreneurship.
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Next Step: Utilizing the above recommendations from the Roundtable, develop a proposed implementation strategy and/or outline a proposed roadmap could include timelines, benchmarks, concurrent activities stakeholder engagement efforts, and proposed outputs/outcomes for each of the corresponding priority actions identified to help increase female entrepreneurship in Switzerland for Q3 2023-2024. This Education & Training agenda and its implementation strategy (roadmap) can be taken up as a separate project in 2024 once resources are allocated and confirmed. A specific concept will be presented to prospective donors and key partners.

Developing & Implementing an Advocacy Agenda

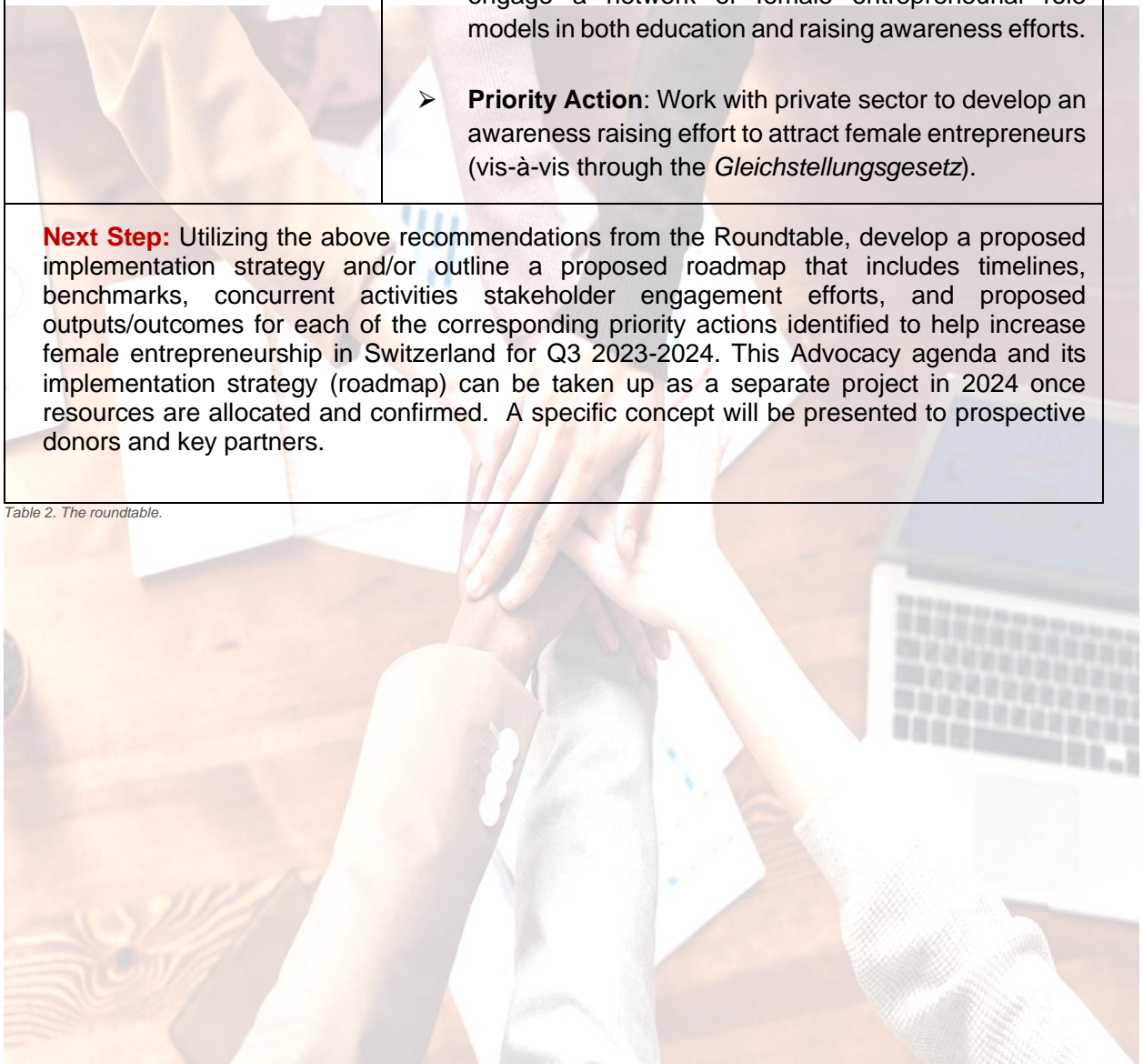
Changing the Narrative (or public perceptions) on Entrepreneurship:

Roundtable participants concluded this was a **High Priority** (demonstrating both high impact and ability to implemented starting Q3 2023).

- **Priority Action:** Raise awareness on unconscious biases (through the use and development of tools) that investors may exhibit in establishing funding criteria awarded to prospective entrepreneurs.
- **Priority Action:** Target advocacy efforts through leveraging joint (collective) efforts of various stakeholders (i.e. aligning efforts of existing networks) to increase awareness on entrepreneurship.
- **Priority Action:** Promote efforts to identify, promote, engage a network of female entrepreneurial role models in both education and raising awareness efforts.
- **Priority Action:** Work with private sector to develop an awareness raising effort to attract female entrepreneurs (vis-à-vis through the *Gleichstellungsgesetz*).

Next Step: Utilizing the above recommendations from the Roundtable, develop a proposed implementation strategy and/or outline a proposed roadmap that includes timelines, benchmarks, concurrent activities stakeholder engagement efforts, and proposed outputs/outcomes for each of the corresponding priority actions identified to help increase female entrepreneurship in Switzerland for Q3 2023-2024. This Advocacy agenda and its implementation strategy (roadmap) can be taken up as a separate project in 2024 once resources are allocated and confirmed. A specific concept will be presented to prospective donors and key partners.

Table 2. The roundtable.



Public Forum Outcomes

→ [Find the document here.](#)

The Public Forum component of the *Inclusive Way Initiative* (TIWI) was held at the University of Bern on November 28, 2023, to review, deliberate and affirm necessary solutions that have been derived through a series of stakeholder consultations, public meetings, and roundtable discussion from March to November 2023 with key experts, to help facilitate a high-level discussion on prioritizing actions and solutions needed to increase the percentage of women entrepreneurs in Switzerland.

Speaker & Topic	Conclusions
<p>Dr Müller provided a brief evidence-based presentation titled: <i>Biases and Female Entrepreneurship, what do we know from the research</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Confidence Gap: Fewer women than men feel prepared to start a business in terms of skills and knowledge, ➤ The perception that “Women owned firms under-perform.” ➤ Bias towards “asking men to win and women not to lose”.
<p>Mrs. Diana Engetschwiler, Keynote Speaker, provided context for the forum discussion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The implicit barrier that female entrepreneurs face when approaching investors, and/or gaining access to investment, where humility and understating ones' value is not rewarded, but “faking it, until you make it”, is a skill set that can help strengthen outcomes for prospective female entrepreneurs. ➤ FIFA's way towards building the female football brand, and how FIFA embodied a hybrid approach of utilizing female role-models, engendering activism amongst the players, and creating a powerful, but unique method in establishing a female-centric value-proposition of empowerment, diversity, family-friendliness, and fairness as underpinning the success and growth of popularity of women's football over the decade.
<p>Mrs. Patricia Montesinos highlighted the three key strategic areas which were derived from the stakeholder consultations and participant inputs on identifying and prioritizing actions needed to promote and increase female entrepreneurship in Switzerland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Area 1: Closing funding gaps through Increased Awareness efforts by addressing unconscious bias in funding settings and biases that female entrepreneurs face in their start-ups, and in accessing funding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic Area 2: Advancing Policy & Advocacy interventions by identifying existing trends and gaps and targeting both public and private stakeholders to increase their awareness and improve decision-making. ➤ Strategic Area 3: Promoting Education & Training at Primary and Secondary levels by fostering critical thinking and entrepreneurial education to reignite girls' confidence and interest in entrepreneurship and related fields through hands-on learning experiences, targeted campaigns, and a nurturing environment.
<p>Panelists shared their perspective, guidance, and advice in helping to promote and strengthen female entrepreneurship in Switzerland towards the UN's 2030 Agenda</p> <p>Panelists Mrs. Maria Anselmi, Head of Division Start-Ups & Next Generation Innovators at Innosuisse; Julia Maria Trzicky, CEO Taskforce for Women; and Elsa Callini, Innovation and Start-Up Advisor for Bern University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Specific areas of training to help increase and foster skill sets for female entrepreneurs to help in their start-ups. ➤ How to bridge the funding gap. ➤ No “one solution” that would solve all stated issues but a combination of all angles. ➤ Raising awareness, both in public and private venues (i.e., through concentrated policy and advocacy efforts). ➤ Implementing tools to help address gender biases that have been found to be prevalent in the financing/venture capitalist community. ➤ Skills training can help close gaps and move towards attaining the 2030 Agenda.

Table 3. The Public Forum

Recommendations

In this next chapter FE+MALE Think Tank will outline key recommendations from the 3 initiatives performed this year. The strategic projects and recommendations for the National Agenda 2024-2026 on Entrepreneurship and tentative roadmaps might include:

Strategic Area 1.

Closing the Funding Gender Gap by effectively addressing unconscious bias in funding settings

Impact: If we solve this, what is going to change?

- Successfully addressing gender unconscious bias will create a more diverse entrepreneurial environment = increasing funding opportunities for female founders.

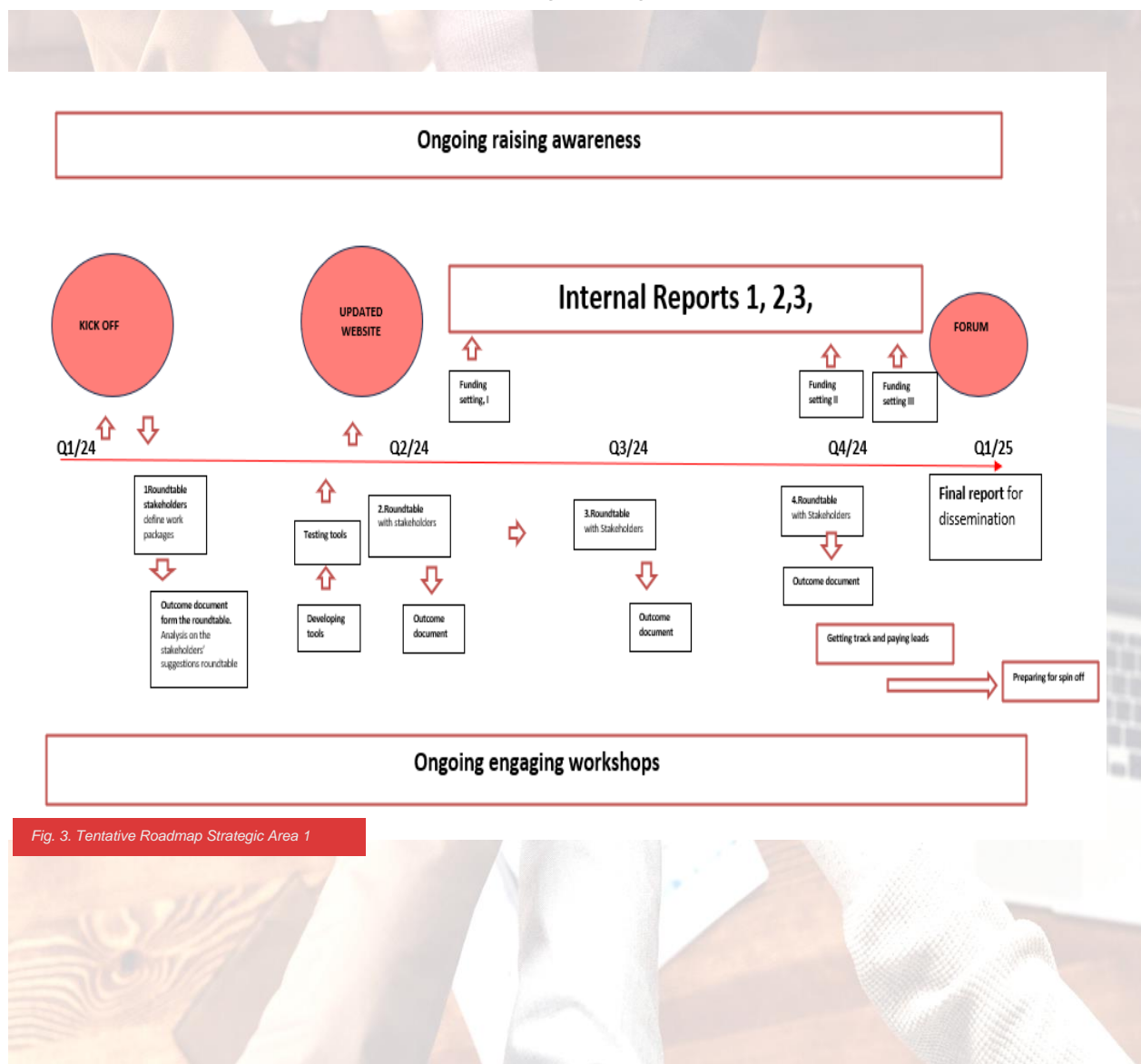


Fig. 3. Tentative Roadmap Strategic Area 1

Strategic Area 2.

Advancing Political and Economic Landscape by improving decision-making with timely insights on gaps and trends.

Impact: If we solve this, what is going to change?

- Lead to a 10-30% increase in streamlining and efficiency in decision-making processes enabling targeted interventions, support adaptive policy development, and create a more responsive and inclusive entrepreneurial landscape.

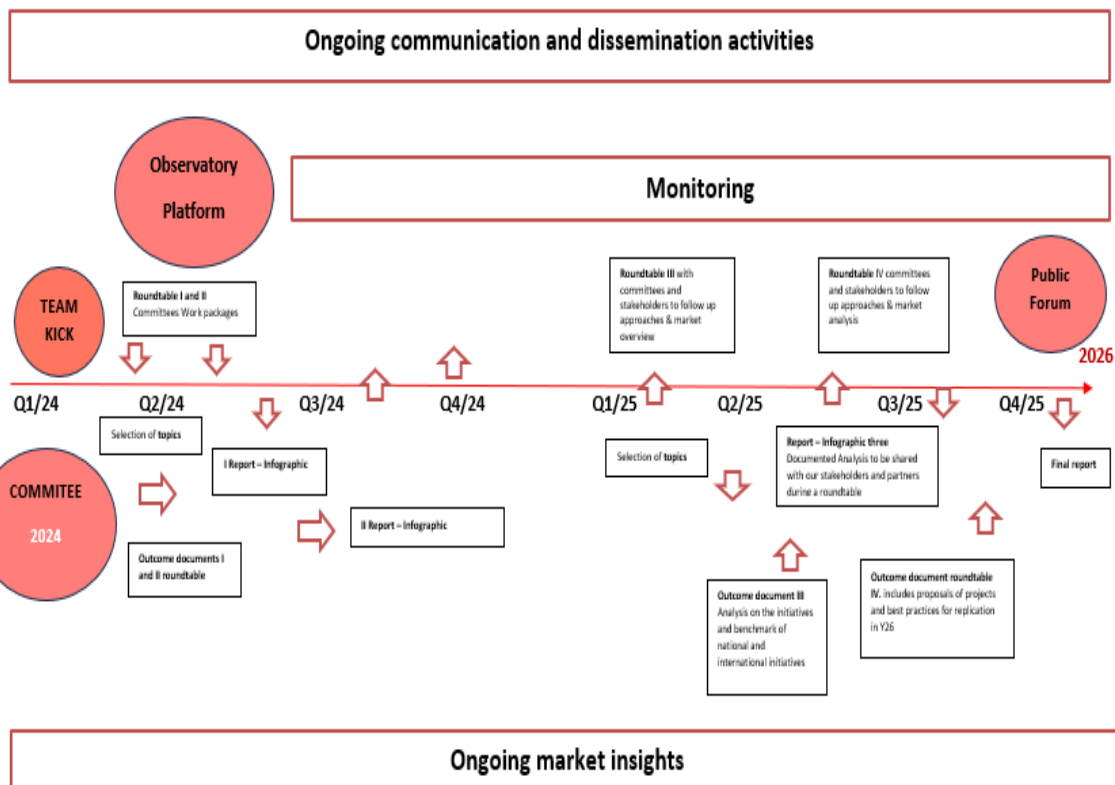


Fig. 4. Tentative Roadmap Strategic Area 2



Strategic Area 3.

Changing the Perception of "RISK" in Entrepreneurship and Addressing STEM Dropout by instilling confidence in girls for entrepreneurship and STEM careers.

Impact: If we solve this, what is going to change?

- Addressing girls' STEM confidence loss and entrepreneurship concerns will reshape career choices and significantly impact the labor market by bringing in diverse talent, enhancing workforce dynamism, and fostering inclusivity and innovation in entrepreneurship.

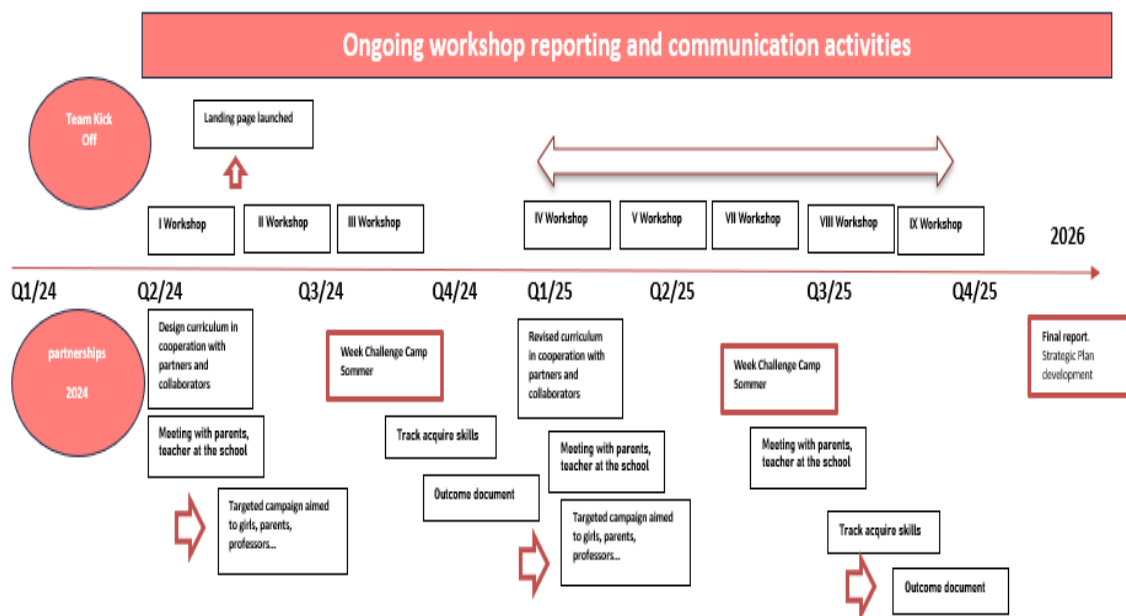
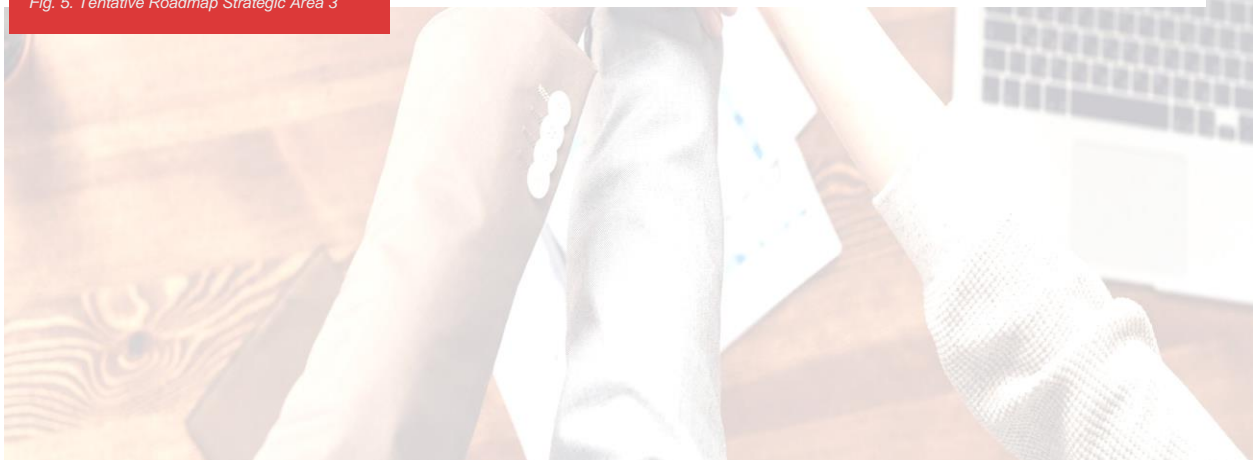


Fig. 5. Tentative Roadmap Strategic Area 3



Next Steps

Established as an international non-profit organization in Switzerland in 2022, FE+MALE Think Tank has rapidly emerged as a trailblazer in the field of female entrepreneurship. With a passionate Board of Directors, project-oriented team members, and invaluable volunteers, the organization actively drives projects with support from various institutions.

Open to all, the Think Tank targets and collaborates with institutions, government bodies, academia, corporations, and individuals to alter the discussion and push for greater gender diversity in entrepreneurship by transferring research knowledge into tangible solutions to address the challenges faced by female entrepreneurs. This effort is complemented by awareness campaigns and collaborative exchanges, advocating for innovative approaches across different topics concerning female entrepreneurship. Stakeholders in diverse fields position the FE+MALE Think Tank as becoming “leader” in their space with high growth potential.

Looking ahead to the medium term (2024-2026), the think tank strategic pillars encompass engaging stakeholders, creating an Advisory Board, building brand awareness, securing recurrent funding sources through sponsorships agreements and membership, and launching new projects.

This is how FE+MALE Think Tank will get there.

Step 1: Diverse Stakeholder Engagement

The FE+MALE Think Tank distinguishes itself by actively engaging with a broad spectrum of stakeholders—public institutions, government bodies, academia, corporations, organizations, and individuals—embracing gender differences in entrepreneurship as innovators and change drivers. This diverse collaboration enhances the organization's innovative way through open collaboration and diversity, positioning the think tank as a holder of a unique method and innovative business model to become a leader in the female entrepreneurship landscape. To strengthen this, the organization will continue fostering partnerships, promoting inclusivity, adopting a data-driven method, setting up powerful marketing and communication activities, raising awareness, publishing articles and reports and expanding the network to drive innovation and impactful solutions.

Step 2: Strategic Recommendations for National Agenda 2024-2026

The Think Tank's strategic recommendations and key projects for the national agenda exhibit a forward-thinking way. By addressing crucial issues such as closing the funding gender gap, advancing the political and economic landscape, and changing the perception of "RISK" in entrepreneurship, the FE+MALE Think Tank positions itself as an influential advocate for positive change. To ensure success, the organization will focus on the effective conceptualization and implementation of projects, continuous monitoring, benchmarking, and rapid adaptation of strategies based on evolving needs.

Step 3: Comprehensive Future Planning

The FE+MALE Think Tank's comprehensive plan for 2024-2026, including stakeholder engagement, fundraising, and nationwide consolidation, demonstrates a commitment to sustainable growth and innovation. To capitalize on this, the organization will maintain transparency, communicate its vision effectively, set up a core team to consolidate the organization, leverage strategic partnerships and sponsoring initiatives, and expand and spread its impact. This

forward-looking way sets the stage for continued leadership in promoting gender diversity in entrepreneurship.

Along the journey, in the pursuit of excellence in executing the Inclusive Way Initiative 2022-2023, FE+MALE has actively engaged high-level stakeholders across various fields at a national level. This report includes a summary of documented insights gathered from various events e.g. such as the Impactful Workshop in March 2023. The present report will be shared with leaders, politicians, universities, founders, investors, and stakeholders in early 2024.



Acknowledgments

We extend our sincere gratitude to Mrs. Virve Resta, Expert for Innovation and Promotion, and Dr. Sebastien Friess, President of the Bern Economic Development Agency, for their crucial support in the successful launch of The Inclusive Way Initiative.

Special acknowledgment is given to the Innovation Office of the University of Bern, including Dr. Elsa Callini, Innovation & Startup Advisor; Dr. Sébastien Hug, Head of Innovation Office; Sarah Waelti, Innovation Office; and Jennifer Berger, Communication & Community Manager, for their collaboration on the development of the Public Forum.

We also extend special recognition to Dr. Susan Müller, Professor of Entrepreneurship at Berner Fachhochschule BFH, for contributing research and providing continued support to the FE+MALE Think Tank.

Special thanks go to the panelists: Maria Anselmi, Head of Start-ups and Next Generation Innovators Division at Innosuisse; Julia Trzicky, CEO of Müller-Möhl Foundation and Taskeforce4women; and Diana Engetschwiler, CO-CEO of WolfPak. Your enriching contributions to the Public Forum with your knowledge and personal experiences are highly appreciated. We are grateful for your patience and assistance in aligning the vision.

Extended gratitude to Impact Hub Bern, especially Frederike Asael, Co-Managing Director, for supporting the development of two roundtables; Martin Godel Head of Division, Small and Medium size Enterprise Policy (SECO); Barbara Ruf Leiterin Kantonale Fachstelle für die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern; and Jazmine Lorenzini Head of Equality in research funding (SNF) for providing invaluable advice along the way.

Heartfelt gratitude goes to our technical and roundtable workshops and Public Forum attendees; their insights and commitment fuel the positive impact of The Inclusive Way Initiative. Thanks to all organizations that participated by offering continued support.

Last but not least, sincere appreciation is directed towards the entire FE+MALE Think Tank team. Starting an organization from scratch and growing it is no easy feat; it requires passion, determination, and drive. Special thanks to Edona Gutaj, Maria Luisa Fuchs, and Francesca Ronzio, Founding Members of the FE+MALE Think Tank, as well as Tim Born, Head of Communications and Marketing; Nicholas McCoy, Head of Fundraising; Isabelle Vionet, Fundraising Lead; and a long list of individuals cooperating closely with us. Together, we have achieved a dream, and my sincere thanks to all of them for propelling the Think Tank and the Inclusive Way Initiative forward.

Patricia M. Montesinos,
Main Initiator and President
FE+MALE Think Tank

FE+MALE Think Tank



Patricia M. Montesinos

Board Member, Co-Founder and President

I am passionate about empowering women and girls, and men committed to supporting women. I bring a strong understanding of the challenges that women founders face to access finance, and also a deep knowledge about the investor decision making process when it comes to gender. My knowledge is not just about the pure due diligence process but also about how unconscious bias may affect the decision to invest or not to invest in a business.

Local based but acting globally, I love cultural exchange and also try to make sure that there is a clear delineation between my roles and mandates. I like to build long term relationships that create value, and establish collaborations and alliances with different institutions.

Edona Gutaj

Board Member, Co-Founder, and Head of Project Management

My mission with FE+MALE ThinkTank is personal and begins with my four nieces. For them and ultimately for every young girl, I want to untackle unconscious biases, remove obstacles towards women, and ultimately create a world where everyone lives within their truest version of themselves. My passion goes to see beyond the obvious, so I always start with the question Why? Why did processes, people or systems develop to a certain stage? After that I can move into action towards the solution.



Maria Luisa Fuchs

Board Member and Head of Research

It is proven that diversity promotes innovation and boost economic and team performance in companies in different verticals. My ideal is to support FE+MALE ThinkTank with know-how and network, to create projects that challenge and improve business performance by fostering diversity.

Francesca Ronzio

Board Member and Finance & Executive Secretary

My wide experience throughout my studies in mechanical engineering and MBA has always opened my eyes to the importance of diversity. I am passionate about innovation and sustainability and challenging existing design practices to create new circular products. I love breaking the ceiling, especially when women's empowerment is at stake.





Nicholas C. McCoy

Head of Fundraising

I am an advocate, visionary, and action-oriented professional who has spent the better part of a 15+ year career working to help increase opportunities for marginalized populations across the globe and advance local, national, and international efforts to help close gender gaps and make significant contributions towards economic and social growth in some of the world's most vulnerable communities. I come to this position with both a background in public (government) and international non-government organizational work and have a proven track record in building multi-stakeholder partnerships across sectors to help increase investments into improving outcomes for both children and families in urban and rural communities throughout the United States; Africa; Southeast Asia; Europe and Latin America. I feel a tremendous amount of privilege to be joining the FE+MALE Think Tank and I look forward to creating a new chapter with FE+MALE as we look towards building a broader and more inclusive way together!

Isabelle Vionnet

Fundraising and Communications Lead

My interest in the topic of women entrepreneurs:

The compatibility of family and career is very important to me. I am happy to work/I advocate to ensure that women have the same opportunities and possibilities as men and that both are on an equal footing. As a mother of a daughter, as a bonus mom for my husband's children and as the godmother of a wonderful girl, I am happy when all the strong young women can develop their full potential and do what is important to them and close to their hearts. For a world where there are no barriers and all children are allowed access to education.



Tim Born

The Inclusive Way Initiative Head of Communication for TIWI

In my opinion, the world is largely shaped by entrepreneurial individuals. To me, these people often seem very inspiring and full of drive, because they are fully committed to their project. Though, entrepreneurship has one shortcoming: the ratio between the different genders is not balanced at all. That's why the world is largely shaped by men. As a result, important issues are not addressed or are addressed too little. With my role at FE + MALE THINK TANK I want to help change this to empower female entrepreneurship and create a more inclusive and sustainable society.





MAIN CONTRIBUTORS AND PARTICIPANTS

More than fifty individuals and organizations have participated and or cooperated in the Inclusive Way Initiative's workshops and the Public Forum. Due to data protection regulations, we are not allowed to disclose the names of organizations and participants.





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