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# Understanding the Woman Entrepreneur:

*The Dynamics of Starting a Business in Norway*

© Master's Thesis by Ida Jaarvik Hetland



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## Preface: A Personal Tale of Entrepreneurship

*What triggered your decision to write a thesis on women and entrepreneurship, people ask me. In fact a whole set of events led me to it, and please allow me to give a short introduction to how it all came about.*

### **The Norwegian Entrepreneurship Program**

*After three years of studying finance for my bachelor degree in the UK, I returned home to Norway the summer of 2009 and started my master's program in Economics and Business Administration at Stavanger Business School. Shortly after I joined an exchange program to South Africa, with the Norwegian Entrepreneurship Program (Gründerskolen).*

### **Idas Hjelpesfond**

*The majority of my time as a student was spent away from the lecture halls at the university; in addition to South Africa I flew back and forth between Norway and Guatemala, where I was working as a volunteer. At the age of 22, I founded my own NGO for the children in Guatemala named Idas Hjelpesfond. Being able to build something from scratch and see the immediate effects of my own organization felt very motivational and rewarding.*

### **Research Assistant**

*My one favorite class at Stavanger Business School was on innovative and dynamic organizations, led by Dr. Tatiana Iakovleva. Little did I then know that Iakovleva would three years later become my thesis supervisor.*

*Iakovleva was involved in several exciting research projects, among them a cross-cultural one on women and entrepreneurship. I was asked if I wanted to join as a research assistant, which I of course was interested in. Transcribing is a very dull job, but transcribing interviews listening to women entrepreneurs was very inspirational!*

### **New York**

*At the time I started as a research assistant I had decided to postpone my studies at University of Stavanger to start a second master's program at New York University (NYU). Prior to leaving, Iakovleva had put me in touch with professor Jill R. Kickul at NYU's Stern School of Business. Kickul was the Director of the Program in Social Entrepreneurship.*

*During my two years in New York I was highly involved in the Entrepreneurship field; both taking theoretical and practical classes at Stern, as well as assisting with conferences and serving as a judge in business plan competitions around New York City.*

***In conclusion;*** *personal experiences combined with professional opportunities the past years made it natural for me to pick 'women and entrepreneurship' as a theme for my thesis. I thought that if I were to invest that much time and effort into one piece of work it had to be something I felt passionate about myself. Here it is, my final project: Understanding Woman Entrepreneur: The Dynamics of Starting a Business in Norway.*

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*I would also like to give special thanks to Mary Genevieve Billington for her assistance and feedback, and for giving me access to an office and other helpful resources at the International Research Institute of Stavanger.*

*I wish to thank my granddad for always being such a knowledgeable and wise mentor for me throughout my seven years of studying around the world.*

*Thank you mom for your continuous encouragement; for raising me to believe in my potential, and for teaching me that only the sky is the limit.*

*J.R., thank you for making every day so joyful, especially during the time of thesis writing.*

## Executive Summary

### **Purpose**

*The purpose of this thesis is to examine women entrepreneurship in the regional context of Norway, and how factors in their micro and meso/macro environment affect their success. More specifically the thesis addresses the following research question: How does the interplay between the micro and meso/macro environment affect the success of women entrepreneurs in Norway?*

### **Research Method**

*The paper exploit a rich set of qualitative data to provide an overview of the dynamics and key determinants of starting a business in Norway, from the perspective of the female entrepreneur. The data was collected using an exploratory design; 21 semi-structured interviews with 16 women entrepreneurs, and with 5 institutions from meso environment (support system). Secondary data sources including journals and reports were used to describe women entrepreneurship as a growing field.*

### **Conceptual Framework**

*This paper builds on institutional theory, as well as Brush et al's (2009) 5M Model (Market, Money, Management, Motherhood and Meso/macro environment). These constructs are all necessary for women entrepreneurs to launch and grow their companies. This thesis focus specifically on the latter two constructs of the model; Motherhood and Meso/Macro environment respectively.*

### **Findings**

*The findings indicates that there is a mismatch between what the meso/macro environment can offer the female entrepreneur in Norwegian context, and the female entrepreneur's actual needs and wants. This gap can be explained by factors relating to the microenvironment of the entrepreneur, including characteristics, personal life experience and perception of success. We choose to encompass all these factors into one this thesis call 'Motivation'. This thesis argues that Motivation and Motherhood are both core elements on micro-level affecting the interplay with the Meso/macro environment, and consequently the success of the entrepreneur.*

### **Implications & Value**

*The theoretical implication of this thesis is the extension of Brush et al's (2009) model with a sixth construct, namely Motivation. Practical implications include a deeper understanding of the sources of challenges women entrepreneurs face, especially with regards to the interplay between the individual and the societal factors and institutions surrounding her. The findings are helpful for policymakers and others interest groups engaged with improving the conditions for women entrepreneurs in Norway. Furthermore this thesis aim to answer the call for contextualization of entrepreneurship research, and contribute to the growing body of knowledge relating to the influence of women's entrepreneurship.*

### **Limitations**

*While qualitative methods allow drawing certain generalization, it provides limited ability to search for new insides and explore unexplained so far phenomenon.*



## Introduction

Despite the fact that Norway is on top of the world's equality ladder, Norway still still ranked at the bottom with regards to women and entrepreneurship; only 1 in 4 entrepreneurs are women (Berglann et al 2013). There is not a single reason to this as the picture is complex; consequently the aim of this research paper is to shed light on some of the potential and explanatory factors.

There has been an increased call for scholars worldwide to take their research in new directions in order to get a better picture of contextualized entrepreneurship, especially with regards to women's entrepreneurship (Welter 2010). "Rules for entrepreneurship do change dramatically from one time and place to another" (Welter 2010: 165).

More than 50% of the existing literature is based on empirical results from previous studies, and of those researchers adding new data, only 19% use open-ended interviews (Bruin et al 2007). In other words there is not much new empirical evidence being added to the literature on women's entrepreneurship. Quantitative data collection methods dominate the women's (and men's) sphere on the subject.

However, while qualitative methods allow drawing certain generalization, it provides limited ability to search for new insides and explore unexplained so far phenomenon.

This thesis aim to respond to the need of drawing a more holistic picture of the woman entrepreneur using qualitative research methods. Scholars look at entrepreneurs and their respective companies from a range of perspectives using frameworks both from the macro, meso and micro contexts. Drawing on Institutional Theory, which emphasizes that norms, values, social rules and expectations are the most pressing factors for an organization, together with Brush et al's 5M framework (2009), this thesis aim to construct a more gender-aware framework useful for the study of women's entrepreneurship in its own right. A country's cultural context is crucial for understanding the challenges and barriers to entrepreneurship (Sarasvathy 2004), and constitutes the macro environment.

By meso environment Brush et al (2009) include institutions, regional support policies, services and initiatives, whereas national policies, strategies and cultural and economic influences are part of what is called the macro environment.

While the 5M Model suggest to look at the microenvironment by adding the *motherhood* concept to focus on female's role in combining family and business, there is still a lack of explanatory factors on why females tend to start business and grow them in the manner that differs from what males typically choose (Bruin et al 2007). In order to address this gap, this thesis seeks to extend Brush et al's model by addressing the following research question:

*How does the interplay between the micro and meso environment affect the success of women entrepreneurs in Norway?*

Brush et al's argument rest on the assumption that entrepreneurship is socially embedded, and understanding these factors are therefore crucial to obtain a holistic view of the entrepreneur. It is therefore important to research the suggested research question in a particular context, which in this case is country-specific to Norway. To answer this research question 16 open-ended interviews with women entrepreneurs were carried out in Rogaland, county of Norway, as well as five interviews with institutions from the women's meso environment; Innovation Norway, Stavanger Innovation Park (iPark), Skape (Center of Entrepreneurship in Rogaland), and lastly two interviews with national banks. Macro environment was assessed through the usage of secondary data on entrepreneurial culture and development of female entrepreneurship in Norway (e.g. Berglann et al 2013, Hughes et al 2012, Berglann et al 2009, Bruin et al 2007 and Ahl 2006).

The theoretical implication of this thesis is the extension of Brush et al's (2009) model with a sixth construct, namely *Motivation*. This thesis argue that *Motivation*, capturing factors such as personal characteristics, personal values and perception of success, is crucial for understanding the women entrepreneurs in Norway, and the interplay between microenvironment and meso/macroenvironment.

Practical implications include a deeper understanding of the sources of challenges women entrepreneurs face, especially with regards to the interplay between the individual and the societal factors and institutions surrounding her. The findings are helpful for policymakers and others interest groups engaged with improving the conditions for women entrepreneurs in Norway. Furthermore this thesis hope to answer the call for contextualization of entrepreneurship research, and contribute to the growing body of knowledge relating to the influence of women's entrepreneurship.

This thesis is organized in the following way; firstly providing an overview of the development of women's entrepreneurship in Norway today using secondary data from articles and reports; secondly drawing on the theoretical constructs primarily rooted in institutional theory and Brush et al's 5M model; thirdly describing the research method and the process of data collection; fourthly summarizing and analyzing the findings according to the theoretical constructs; and finally it ends by discussing the implications of the findings with concluding remarks.

## Chapter I: Conceptual Framework

### I. Definition(s) of Entrepreneurship

There is not an explicit agreement amongst scholars on the definition of an *entrepreneur* or what constitutes *entrepreneurship*. This section briefly introduce three different definitions which all captures the phenomena in accordance to our research objective.

Joseph Schumpeter, one of the earliest contributors to the literature, believed entrepreneurs to be the ones that are responsible for “*the doing of new things or the doing of things that are already being done in a new way*” (Schumpeter 1947: 151). Schumpeter describes entrepreneurs more as agents of change. The thesis discusses this in Chapter IV.

Ireland, Hitt, Camp & Sexton claim that “*entrepreneurship is viewed as a context-dependent social process through which individuals and teams create wealth by bringing together unique packages of resources to exploit marketplace opportunities*” (2001: 51). This definition specifically captures the importance of gaining access to institutions of the support system (meso/macro environment), for an entrepreneur to be successful. The thesis explores this issue in more detail in Chapter III and Chapter IV.

Berglann, Moen, Røed & Skogstrøm on the other hand takes a more pragmatic approach in defining what an entrepreneur is; “[*it is*] a person who is either employed in a firm in which she directly or indirectly is a major/active owner of (defined as either controlling at least 30% of the company or controlling at least 10% of the company, and being a board member or chief executive), or who runs her business as a sole proprietor” (2009: 8). This definition is used for the purpose of selecting appropriate interviewees in Chapter II, Section V.

## II. Current Status on Female Entrepreneurship in Norway

Female Entrepreneurship has been a priority with the Norwegian Government, and the goal was to have 40% women by 2013 (Handlingsplan 2013). Female involvement in entrepreneurial activities in Norway has decreased from 2008 to 2009, whereas male involvement has seen a steady increase; and the current involvement rate is approximately 27% women. (Bullvåg, Kolvereid, Mathisen & Åmo 2009)

The Global Gender Gap Index and other reports describe Norway as one of the most equal countries in the world, and with the highest participation (48%) of women in the workforce (Hausmann, Tyson, Bekhouche & Zahidi 2012). “Why have there not been similar effects when it comes to entrepreneurs?”, Rusten & Alsos (2007: 2) ask.

Despite this only 1 in 4 entrepreneurs are women according to a recent extensive report on entrepreneurship in Norway carried out by Berglann, Golombek & Røed (2013). This is the lowest share of women entrepreneurs in the Western world. In comparison, close to one third of the entrepreneurs in the other Nordic countries are women, and nearly half of the ones in the US (Berglann et al 2013).

Berglann et al (2013) found that this gender gap of entrepreneurs cannot be explained by accounting for factors such as education and work experience alone; on the contrary they suggest the gap is due to more fundamental differences in women and men’s values; their perception of risk taking, and other personal assets.

Furthermore Berglann et al (2013) found that municipalities with many women entrepreneurs were more likely to have a growing share and larger influx of women entrepreneurs in the future.

Ljunggren, Alsos, Amble, Ervik, Kvidal & Wiik (2010) argues that the current research on entrepreneurship has favored industries dominated by men, where level of innovation is measured by patents. This they argue, excludes many women entrepreneurs from the research literature.

Norwegian women work on average 30 hours/week, where 37,5 hours is the norm. Almost 50% of all women work part-time. This creates a picture of the Norwegian woman as having to choose between being a mother or being a full-time worker.

Ljunggren et al (2010) is calling for more research on women entrepreneurship in Norway to shed light on this particular issue.

### III. Institutional Theory

Following the definition by Ireland et al (2001) above, institutional theory has been widely utilized as a lens for entrepreneurship research (Iakovleva, Solesvik & Trifilova 2013). Research has shown that companies of different countries react different to similar challenges, and these challenges are often due to the institutional context in which they operate in; context is crucial for success.

Scholars of institutional theory have found a link between the cultural context and the level of entrepreneurship in that context, based on Hofstede's five cultural dimensions; *Individualism, Power Distance, Masculinity/Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance and Long-Term Orientation* (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010).

Bruton et al (2010) found the former two specifically correlating with a nation's level of entrepreneurship. Individualism, meaning "*the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members*", was amongst the dimensions that were positively associated with innovation, whereas Power Distance, meaning "*the degree to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally*", had a negative effect. Norway is regarded as highly individualistic yet with a low power distance (Hofstede 2013).

Institutional theory helps explain the driving forces behind entrepreneurial success, and more specifically in relation to the entrepreneur's meso and macro environment (Bruton, Ahlstrom & Li 2010). Rules, norms and routines of the society all guide the entrepreneur's behavior, and different components of the theory explain how each of these elements develops over time and how they affect the organization;

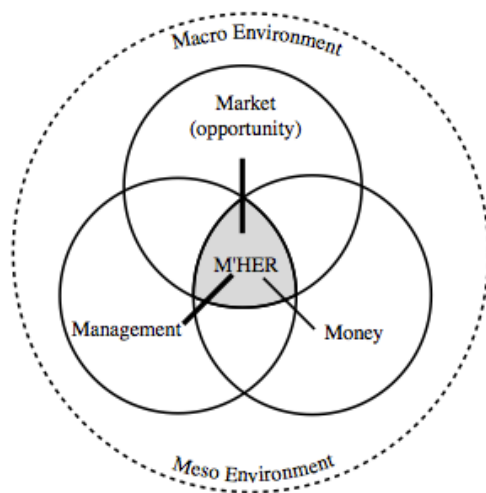
*"The factors that have been widely acknowledged are that for new organizations, the institutional environment defines and limits entrepreneurial opportunities, and thus affects the rate and size of new venture creation (...) inadequate institutional development can complicate new venture development, while a more developed*

*institutional environment with overly restrictive regulation can hamper firm's founding" (Bruton et al 2010: 426)*

Organizations should perform more efficiently when they receive institutional support; if no formal institutional structures exist, this has a discouraging effect on entrepreneurs. Similarly, entrepreneurs are discouraged where too many structures exist because of the time and efforts spent complying with rules, regulations and documentation requirements etc. (Bruton et al 2010)

#### IV. 5M Model

Based on institutional theory, Brush et al (2009) suggest two new constructs to the traditional '3M model' (*Market, Money, Management*) of entrepreneurship namely '*Motherhood*' and '*Meso/Macro environment*' (see Figure I). These are all elements necessary for entrepreneurs to launch and grow their companies successfully, yet each may also represent potential barriers to new companies (Bates et al 2007, Brush et al 2009). Brush et al draws on the notion that entrepreneurship is socially embedded, hence the objective is to explore the embeddedness of these two constructs; *Motherhood and Meso/Macro environment*. The remaining three is beyond the scope of this paper.



*Figure 1: 5M Model (Brush et al 2009)*

**Motherhood**

Motherhood is a metaphor representing the household- and family context of the entrepreneur, and is found to have a larger impact on women entrepreneurs than men (Brush et al 2009, Iakovleva et al 2013). “(...) Recognition of the intricacies of household dynamics, including unequal division of labor and access to household resources that differentially impacts access to the standard 3Ms of markets, money, management, is what we seek to highlight with the motherhood metaphor” (Brush et al 2009: 11). Jennings & McDougald (2007) found that the family domain factors have important consequences for the work domain, and vice versa.

In their paper, Iakovleva et al (2013) redefined the concept of ‘Motherhood’ to what they call ‘Motherland’. After carrying out an extensive study interviewing 60 entrepreneurs, they found that historical heritage played an important role. They embedded this into their new construct to account for the heritage.

**Meso/Macro environment**

By meso environment Brush et al (2009) include institutions, regional support policies, services and initiatives, whereas national policies, strategies and cultural and economic influences are part of the macro environment. The entrepreneur cannot influence these environments, but they in turn influence the development and success of the entrepreneur and her company.

Bruton et al (2010) found that entrepreneurs felt discouraged from starting companies if they were forced to comply with too many rules and regulations. They made similar observations in environments where no regulations were in place at all, such as in economies in transition (Bruton et al 2010, Iakovleva et al 2013, Welter 2011).

The meso environment intends to link the macro environment with the microenvironment of the entrepreneur, however the 5M Model have a very limited discussion of these micro-level forces affecting business development. In other words there is a gap that needs to be addressed here due to a range of unexplained factors of the entrepreneur’s environment.



## Chapter II: Research Method and Data Collection

### I. Research Question and Sub-Questions

This thesis address the following research question:

***How does the interplay between the micro and meso/macro environment affect the success of women entrepreneurs in Norway?***

Additionally, a range of sub-questions were developed to facilitate the research process:

Microenvironment:

- *What is the woman's motivation for starting a business?*
- *What factors triggered this decision?*
- *How is the motivation related to the woman's perception of success?*
- *What kind of challenges and barriers do women in Norway meet in starting a business?*

Meso/macro environment

- *How are these challenges linked to the Norwegian support system?*
- *What can be done to improve the meso/macro environment for women entrepreneurs in Norway?*

### II. Research Design

In order to best address the research question, this thesis takes a qualitative approach. By using a qualitative method one have the opportunity to give agency to the individual entrepreneur, and get a more personal, nuanced and diverse view of the topic studied, as opposed to using a quantitative approach with, for example, a more impersonal questionnaire. Due to its nature therefore, the research proposal was reported to the

Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). Please find the approval letter in **Appendix I**.

More specifically, this thesis uses an exploratory research design. A design of this kind is flexible and can address research questions of all types, including ‘*what*’, ‘*why*’ and ‘*how*’ (Maxwell 2005). Our focus is to gain insights and familiarity on the subject of women entrepreneurship in Norway, specifically with regards to the interplay between the micro environment (e.g. personal values and motivation) and meso environment (institutions of the support system). The exploratory research design is particularly useful for gaining background information on a topic that has not yet been fully explored such as the one in question (Maxwell 2005).

### III. Research Method

The data on women entrepreneurs was collected using semi-structured interviewing. These kinds of interviews allow one to ask more open-ended questions, and at the same time probe and follow up on issues throughout the interview process (Maxwell 2005). The interview subjects were approached by email with an attached information letter/interview request. Please see **Appendix II** for more information (in Norwegian).

A total of 21 interviews were conducted from Fall 2012 through Spring 2013, in the Rogaland-region of Norway. These included 16 interviews with women entrepreneurs, and 5 interviews with institutions of the meso environment; Innovation Norway, Stavanger Innovation Park (iPark), Skape (Center of Entrepreneurship in Rogaland), and lastly two interviews with national banks (confidential).

19 of the 21 interviews were conducted in-person, the remaining 2 over telephone. All interviews were recorded using an iPhone or a Dictaphone, and thereafter transcribed. Each interview lasted from 35 minutes to 90 minutes, and was each transcribed into between 7 and 20 written pages.

The aim of the interview was to firstly obtain insights into the experience of the entrepreneur, and secondly to explore the meso/macro environment. For this purpose two different interview guides were conducted; one specifically for the entrepreneur (in Norwegian, **Appendix III**) and one for the institutions (in English, **Appendix IV**).

The questions were organized around main themes (e.g. challenges, networking, financing, the support system and personal characteristics). The themes were each constructed as an open-ended question (e.g. “tell me about your network”), followed by sub-questions as a guide for the interviewer. Additional data from secondary sources including scholarly articles, national and regional reports, and statistical overviews were also utilized for the purpose of the study.

#### IV. Validity & Reliability

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the responses, especially with regards to the quantitative information provided by the entrepreneurs (e.g. founding year, profit, number of employees, owners etc.) all information were checked using publicly available sources such as Ravninfo.no, newspapers, archived documents and the Internet.

#### V. Selection of interviewees

The subjects were reached merely due to their regional accessibility, i.e. by using a convenience sample (Marshall 1996). Several institutions at iPark facilitated the process by providing information using their network of entrepreneurs. Prior to reaching out to the subjects however, certain criteria had to be fulfilled, such as I) she had to be the driving force behind the company, i.e. founded it from scratch and II) an active owner of the company controlling either 30% of it, or at least 10% *and* be a board member/CEO.

This is a definition of entrepreneurship taken from Berglann et al (2009). Additionally the entrepreneur had to have a business with a relatively innovative concept (Schumpeter 1947), i.e. hairdressers and similar companies were therefore excluded from this study.

Factors including, but limited to, the age of the firm, income level and industry were irrelevant; the main objective was to identify the individual entrepreneur’s challenges and experience of starting a business irrespective of that.

Nevertheless, our demographics shows that the entrepreneurs ranged from age 24 to 62 when they founded the company, giving an average age of 42. The entrepreneurs

had from 1 year of experience to 19 years, which on average gave a company age of approximately 6 years old. **Figure I** below provides an overview of the basic demographics of the women entrepreneurs studied.

A full demographic summary of the women entrepreneurs and their respective companies is available in **Appendix V**. Additionally **Appendix VI** provides a short overview of the five meso institutions studied.

<b><u>Average age of the entrepreneur:</u></b>	<b><u>Average age of the company:</u></b>
❖ <i>Average age today: 48 ½</i>	❖ <i>Mean: 6 ½ years</i>
❖ <i>Average age when started this company: 42</i>	❖ <i>Median: 6 years</i>
	❖ <i>Mode: N/A</i>
<b><u>Role within the company:</u></b>	<b><u>Numbers of employees:</u></b>
❖ <i>Entrepreneur and CEO = 14/16</i>	❖ <i>Zero (4)</i>
❖ <i>Entrepreneur, other CEO = 2/16</i>	❖ <i>&lt; 5 employees (8)</i>
	❖ <i>&gt; 10 employees (2)</i>
<b><u>Industries represented:</u></b>	❖ <i>&gt; 50 employees (1)</i>
❖ <i>Health (4)</i>	❖ <i>&gt; 100 employees (1)</i>
❖ <i>Food (2)</i>	
❖ <i>Oil and gas (2)</i>	<b><u>Annual profits (NOK):</u></b>
❖ <i>Consulting (5)</i>	❖ <i>&lt; 1 mill. (4)</i>
❖ <i>Education (1)</i>	❖ <i>1-5 mill. (4)</i>
❖ <i>Biotechnology (1)</i>	❖ <i>&gt; 5 mill. (1)</i>
❖ <i>IT (1)</i>	❖ <i>&gt; 50 mill. (2)</i>
	❖ <i>&gt; 100 mill. (1)</i>
	❖ <i>N/A (4)</i>

**Figure II: Demographic Summary of Interview Subjects**

## VI. Data Analysis Approach

The data was analyzed by systematically going through the transcribed interviews of the women entrepreneurs; themes were categorized and identified in accordance with the theoretical constructs chosen from the 5M model (Charmaz 2000, Strauss & Corbin 1998). The themes included the following:

- I. Education/Experience
- II. Motherhood
- III. StartUp phase/Other challenges
- IV. Mentor/Network
- V. Financing
- VI. Support System (meso environment)
- VII. Personal Characteristics
- VIII. Success

The themes were eventually summarized in a table to ease the comparison of findings across the 16 entrepreneurs (**Appendix VII**).

A similar approach was taken to identify the meso/macro factors from the 5 institutions interviewed. In addition, this method opened up for inclusion of any potential new constructs and extending the initial framework if needed.

## Chapter III: Data Analysis and Findings

In the subsequent sections this thesis present the findings in accordance with the two constructs of Brush et al (2009) described above; starting with the microenvironment, followed by the meso/macro environment. All the quotes are taken from **Appendix VII**.

### I. Micro Environment

#### a. Education & Experience

##### **Educational Profile**

Three of the entrepreneurs had a PhD degree; three had a master's degree; nine had a bachelor's degree in addition to other courses; and only one had no schooling beyond high school. More than half had taken Skape's course for entrepreneurs.

Only two of them had a formal education in business administration; but a few had taken courses/individual classes at schools such as the Norwegian School of Management (BI). All but one had previous job experience, mostly in the public sector, prior to starting their company. Approximately one fourth came from entrepreneurial families;

*My dad knew how hard it was to start a company, so he wanted me to chose something much more nice and secure than the entrepreneurial lifestyle... but in Norway you have plenty of security! In the US however, you can fail so badly. Whereas in Norway you have a huge safety net. I wonder why there aren't more entrepreneurs in Norway! – Lisa 48*

##### **Experience**

The majority had seen flaws or a certain need in their previous workplace that led to the startup of the company; they were in one way or another dissatisfied with how things were being done, especially those that were working in the public sector, "I noticed that

*this was a heavy burden for many, and decided to do something about it to make it an easier tool for them to use” (Jessica 47).*

In general, they wanted change; *“My boss is very interested in initiatives from the private sector, because these kinds of initiatives will not come from the public sector. It has to come elsewhere form. (...) and I saw that this worked just like medicine. It improved the life quality of the person so much!” (Helen 44). Ilanna (51) said:*

*I was thinking, why is this taking so much time? It is destroying another human’s life – when you could do it much faster and better than what is being offered by the public at the moment. So I decided to see if there was something I could do about it. My motivation for starting was about my care for the society we live in.*

Some found the public monopoly on specific services a challenge to the growth of their business. They tried to have public ownership in the company, hoping this would lead to a better relationship with the public who would be using the service; *“Once I started the company we had 12% government ownership, which we thought would be positive. The politicians could see that the support system was in fact working...but no....” (Ilanna 51).*

Many had personal reasons for starting the company either related to an experience with their **child/husband**, *“all these experiences with my son, in the kindergarten, at school, with other kids – that’s when I realized I just have to do this...” (Diane 51). Eliza (65) said:*

*The day after my husband got his surgery, that’s when I called up Skape and signed up for their course on starting a business. I thought that this was just outrageous! At this point I had no idea how many years it would take me or how much money it would actually cost me. That just seemed insignificant. The most important was that a lot of people were struggling with this, I needed to do something. Many people isolated themselves completely, like my husband. He was always at home, “forget about it”, he said when people invited us out.*

Major life changes also affected some, such as suddenly **loosing their job**, and finding out this was the right time to focus 100% on their company; others got **divorce** or were **moving to/from another country**, “so when we were going to move back home, I needed to make a decision. Should I go back to the bank and insurance business or should I kind of follow my new interest....” (Polly 63). Naomi (44) had an experience of ‘getting burned out’ that made her reassess her current work situation. Naomi had worked as a manager for a bank for many years; “so then I read a book called ‘You are more than you think you are’ – and I felt someone was describing my philosophy; success internally gives success externally – it was all about the individual human being. I called up the author of the book, and he asked me if I wanted to work with him! And that’s how it started!”.

## b. Personal Characteristics

### **Childhood/Personality**

Many of the entrepreneurs had examples from early childhood of their entrepreneurial characteristics, such as Diane (51):

*This is important for my story, I had 5 siblings...my mum died when I was only 15 years old, so I had all these little siblings I had to take care of. I was used to being ‘a boss’ at an early age. I never asked, I just did. I went to grocery shop and bough food, went home and made dinner. I never waited around and expected anyone else to do it, I knew I just had to do it myself to get things done.*

Others described the characteristics as something you just are; it’s part of your personality:

*I’ve thought a lot about what it means to be ‘an entrepreneur’. I always thought it was the type of person you were. And maybe it is too...for me it just kind of came naturally. – Helen (44)*



*I don't think you can "acquire the entrepreneur spirit" through education. I don't think you can take a course and make it work from there. It has to be from the inside; you either have this spirit or you don't. – Anna (39)*

Identity was an important part for many; where they came from, and who they were influenced their way of thinking and doing as entrepreneurs. *"I was raised in the belief that you just have to go out there and try, unless you do it you never know what you are missing out on! Because frankly you don't know if you can make it without trying."* (Fiona 49). Beatrice (55) described her identity the following way:

*I am a businesswoman. I am a farmer's daughter, I am a nurse, and I am a businesswoman. That is me. (...) As a farmer's daughter I know that the farmer has to be nice to its cows, then they will produce good milk. The farmer has to be kind to his earth, and have the right knowledge and science in the way he run his farm; only then will the crops grow. Then the payment will come after doing this; and that is how I think too.*

### **Go-Getters**

A go-getter is often described as an "ambitious enterprising person" or a "ball of fire" (The Free Dictionary 2013); a definition very applicable to the entrepreneurs of this study. They share characteristics such as being passionate risk-takers, who are highly determined and extremely hardworking. They never give up. A go-getter doesn't care what people say about her, she just have the guts to go for it;

*I was frustrated over something at work, then I had this conversation with a friend of mine and he was like: hey, how about we create something together?", and I was like, what do you mean? Let's start a company, he said. You have competence, I have the money!". He gave me unlimited time to think about it, I responded after two days: let's do it. I quit my job after two months, and have never regretted. It's been 6 years now! – Beatrice (55)*

*I don't look back; I focus on the future instead of the past. It's important to believe in the gut feeling, and just go for what you believe in. (...) One of my strengths is that I don't care about what people say about me...I think that is important! There are always people who have an opinion on something, but once you start noticing it, it will drive you crazy. So I don't! – Christine (28)*

*I never think of what could go wrong. I just do it. I see opportunities not barriers. One has to be able to stand through both good and bad times, and work hard to succeed! – Maybel (40)*

*I remember in the beginning I thought; no, I have to pull out of this. It is never going to work! But at this point we had already made some investments, and I decided it was too late to pull out... – Fiona (49)*

### **“Crazy”**

An entrepreneur is not the ‘average person’; and on the question of how others reacted to their decision of starting a business most entrepreneurs said others would describe them as ‘crazy’. Beatrice (55) describes this well:

*Everybody told me I was crazy; then they corrected themselves and told me I was brave... But I like that – I like being a little crazy [laughter]. I'm an adventurer. When I was graduating I had the following written in the yearbook, “Why would I want to be normal when I can lead a happy life by being crazy!”. So yes, I guess I am a little crazy.*

### **Learning by doing**

When the entrepreneurs were asked to describe themselves, and which characteristics contributed to their success, every single one said they were learning by doing; by jumping straight into it.

*I've always had this idea. Since I was very young. My goal was always to be able to start something like that. I had no experience whatsoever; neither on the food side of it, nor the organizational. I have just learned by doing! [and] instead of thinking about everything that could go wrong, I just jumped straight into it and decided to see how it went. What's the worst that could happen, I told myself! – Fiona (49)*

*I learned by doing. Everyone is good at something, and you have to play with what you've got. You have to be good at making others good; you have to be able to play with others and their resources. Take advantage of each other in a positive sense; you will get far if you are good at that. – Anna (39)*

### **Caring**

The entrepreneurs were all found to be very caring, generous, and considerate towards the people around them. More or less all of them had founded the company on such principles;

*(...) I am pretty much a workaholic. It is extremely important for me when I go to bed in evening to think what I have done in the day, to know that I have done something important for other people. I need to use my energy for something positive. – Polly 63*

*I never give up! Because I want everyone to have the same quality of life as me. Nobody should lead an unhappy life. We are in 2013 – we should be happy! My vision is: increased life quality for this group of people. They should have the same life quality, the one the rest of us just take for granted! – Eliza 65*

*It is sad to see how the last days of your life are lived in such misery. Completely lacking any content, any joy. Sometimes I ask myself; if I was being filmed right now, and someone showed me this movie of myself, would I be able to stand for what I have done? The work I carry out, and what I say? – If someone secretly records my actions I want to be able to say, "yes, that's how I work – that's how I*

*am". So I am working a lot with changing the perceptions of people working in the public sector with the elderly. Involve them more...give them the dignity they deserve. – Helen 44*

This last element also leads us to the next section; the entrepreneur's perception of success.

### c. Perception of Success

The entrepreneurs' perception of success was closely linked to their personality traits, particularly the latter one of the previous section. No matter how big or small their company was; or how much or little money they earned or how well or poorly they did – their perception of success was without exception linked to the well-being of others, and in making a difference. This was also in line with the findings of Berglann et al (2009).

Money, on the other hand, was more described as a mean to an end. One entrepreneur, Anna (39), gave a significant amount of her earnings to a project for orphans she was running in addition to the company and she described success as, *"success for me is helping others get a better life; that's when I can say that I made it"*. Other entrepreneurs described success in a similar way:

*My company was never established to create money, but to create results for people. – Beatrice (55)*

*Success is creating something for someone; success is not about money. – Diane (51)*

*Earning money has never been a goal in itself. Happiness has, and that the people around me are satisfied. – Fiona (49)*

*Success is when you see that people enjoy working in my company, and they look forward to coming to work. – Gina (72)*

*Creating a good place for people to work. – Lisa (48)*

*Success for me is simply to make a difference. – Ilanna (51)*

*Success is when what I am doing is having an effect on those I am working with. That's the driving force number one. That they are enjoying it, and that it's making their life better. That's when I know that what I am doing is making a difference. – Olga (47)*

#### d. Motherhood

The existing literature on women's entrepreneurship claim there is a division between work and family, where the woman has to choose (Ljunggren et al 2010). This is contrary to the findings of this thesis; where being a mother and running a company had positive effects outweighing the potential challenges. This was pointed out in the research carried out by Ahl (2006).

The findings clearly state that being an entrepreneur is not a job you choose, it is a lifestyle; *"my husband also works in the company now; it is no longer just a company, but it's a lifestyle"* (Anna 39). The whole family gets involved, either they want it or not. Generally however, the entrepreneurs claimed that the positive sides of it outweighed the less positive ones; out of the 16 entrepreneurs, 14 reported they had a family, and all of these said they would never go back to having a 9-5 job again, even though the lifestyle they had chosen was far from perfect. Many pointed specifically to the value of showing their children that hard work pays off, and that success does not come automatically; *"I want to teach my kids how to clean up, how to work – because things just don't work out by themselves!"* (Olga 47). These findings are in line with those of Jennings & McDougald (2007) who argues that the family domain has important consequences for the work domain, and vice versa.

**Challenges: Work/Life Balance**

One challenge many reported was finding time for themselves; finding work-life balance.

*I have one main challenge, and I am sure many have told you this; living a holistic life – because I need my spare time. I need to have a private life. My board members keep asking me; when do you every switch off? And at the moment that is the most important thing I am working on. I have been running this company, and at the same time been a Mother – with a Capital M. Me, the individual me, has been abolished. And I cannot do that anymore. But I know its part of being an entrepreneur. And I love it! I keep telling myself that; I am so happy, because I am having so much fun too! – Beatrice (55)*

All but two of the entrepreneurs reported they had children. Having children and at the same time running their own company was challenging for many; *“the biggest challenge is to be a mother in the midst of all this! Because it is no 9 to 5 job, that’s for sure.”* (Anna 39).

They found it challenging due to the extra planning and organizing required,

*I used to travel a lot before. Now the kids have started school, but before I used to bring them with me to Vietnam, to Singapore, the US...I had them with me or had someone to take care of them when I went for meetings etc. either it was me or my husband; we backed each other up. Okay, I was becoming a mother, but I was dependent on others to help me out in situations. Now they are in school and I cannot take them out of there randomly, so during school vacations we travel, and I bring them with me. That requires more organizing and planning. – Anna 39*

**Advantages: Flexibility**

Nevertheless, the advantages of combining family life with running their own company outweighed the hurdles for all the entrepreneurs interviewed. Flexibility was a key word in describing the main advantage of the lifestyle they had chosen; *“Even though it’s hard,*

*I could never go back to a 'regular job' again. If I am working somewhere, and I want to go and buy myself a soda – and I can't! oh my, that would never work for me.” – Jessica (47). Fiona (49) put it this way:*

*Having time for the family has always been priority number one for both of us. This is a lifestyle; you are always kind of bound to your company, but there are two of us, so if one travels abroad, the other one is always there. (...) We have the flexibility to govern our own days.*

A few of the entrepreneurs were divorced and had children from previous marriages; they appreciated the flexibility it gave because they were able to work less during “their weeks” and be “more mom”. Helen (44) said, *“When my daughter is with her dad, I work the maximum hours I can. But when I have her, I try working as little as possible. (...) I have a lot of flexibility – and freedom. That I just love about being an entrepreneur!”*. Olga (47) had the same experience as Helen; *“I can be anywhere when I don't have the kids, and then I work 24/7. But the other week, then I am 'very mom'”*.

Jessica (47) claimed that the lifestyle improved her relationship with her children: *“my oldest son love that I am able to sit at home and work. Because of this he knows more about my job – because frankly a lot of children have no idea what their parents do!”*

Another one emphasized better business relationships by involving the family in the company;

*You have freedom and flexibility; you have the opportunity to include your family more in what you do. That doesn't mean it's necessarily the best thing to do, but I believe that my little fellas have been through most things – they have met with my clients, and because of that I build a better relationship with them; stronger ties with both clients, customers and partners by involving my family. – Anna (39)*

### **Role Models**

The majority viewed themselves as good role models for their children, and that certain values were promoted by being an entrepreneur,

*My daughter knows that I have been away much, but she also knows that I have been present a lot as well. I think I am a good role model for her. She does say that I am a very good mother; when I am there, I'm there. I am present in the moment. She has travelled with me. She is the oldest, and I had to take her along to things all the time. So she was always curious. She's seen me in action. The last time I was lecturing, she went with me. And she said; 'oh I remember when I was little and used to go with you to the lectures'. – Olga (47)*

Jessica (47) made a similar observation in her home:

*Being an entrepreneur has definitely affected the family. All the time spent on the company instead of the family. At the same time, I have the opportunity to work from home, and stay at home if the kids are sick. At times I think that it has affected my kids negatively, but generally I feel that it is a value in itself to show them I work hard; I never give up. That's an important value in life. But my oldest son told me off a few years ago, so now we have this agreement that I never work between 5pm and 8pm on weekdays. And that agreement I keep.*

### **Family Support**

11 out of the 16 reported they had a husband or boyfriend, and the support from them was described as inevitable for succeeding as an entrepreneur;

*Having kids and running your own company is not easy, not financially nor practically. Especially hard is it to stay away from the marketplace for one year during maternity leave. You are dependent on having someone to help you out.*  
– Olga (47)



Our findings suggest that some had their husbands helping them financially, which is in line with the findings of Berglann et al (2009). But the majority claimed they were more of a moral support, describing them as ‘mentors’; *“my husband is a great mentor. It is financially very risky if both are involved in entrepreneurial activities. He helps me out a lot”* – Lisa (48). Diane (51) echoes this;

*If it hadn't been for my family, my husband, supporting me...without them I could never have done it. Both financially, but also considering how much time I spend on it. At times I work 24/7. There's a lot more work to it than people think. I can tell by the questions people ask me that they don't understand how much work it is.*

Others, such as Gina (72) found great help in having a boyfriend with specific skills to help her out in the start-up phase: *“I received a lot of support from my boyfriend. He was an auditor and helped me with all the admin work; all the required documents etc. He was a very good mentor for me. I hated the paperwork!”*.

A few entrepreneurs reported that their children were good mentors, and feedback from them was an important factor for them;

*My husband is a good mentor, and supports me a lot. Actually my daughter too; one day when I was insecure and told her I don't know what to do...she replied; “but mum, what do you enjoy the most?” And that's kind of how you have to think when evaluating the lifestyle of an entrepreneur. – Helen (44)*

*It's nice because my daughter sometimes tell me she is proud of me. I ask her what she's proud of, and she says that people listen to me, she hear people talking positively about what I am doing professionally. She says it's inspiring, that she has something to look up to. – Olga (47)*

Some had their husbands change their work schedule in order to make the household run smoother; *“My husband is used to me taking off on my own [laughter], but it has*

*required a lot from both of us though. He had to change his work situation in order for me to run my own company, and in order for an improved household and work/family balance” (Jessica 47).*

One employed her husband in the company when she was pregnant with their first child, because she could not leave her company for a whole year without support from someone else who knew the company. She compared running her own company to having children. She describes a situation as followed:

*My husband started working when I had my first child; so I think that being a woman, and being an entrepreneur, requires that you have a good partner. That’s inevitable (...) you are dependent on support from those at home. Because I believe a woman ‘has what it takes’; she just has this little.... what shall I say? Women are good at having an overview of what’s going on; what to do when, how and where – and when you are an entrepreneur you kind of have that “double up”; because at home you can’t just leave your kids, and nor can you just leave your company; your company is treated like a child. And I believe that is how us women works; we take care of our children, we never leave them no matter what we do, either it is our actual children or our company-child. However the combination between the two are sometimes challenging. – Anna (39)*

iPark has also seen that women entrepreneurs are different than their male counterparts in this sense;

*They will have control over the companies – they will build the organization, they are more – think more about their employees, and they will build this as a ‘family company’. And the males...are more thinking of to be able to make an exit on this project. So it’s a different way. – iPark*

### e. Other Challenges

A range of challenges was identified throughout this research. In this section we describe the following three; 1) Administrative Work 2) Competence & Knowledge, and 3) Lack of a Team.

#### **Administrative Work**

The majority of the entrepreneurs identified the amount of administrative work as an obstacle, especially during the start up-phase of the business; *“it was a jungle of rules, regulations, laws to comply with. It was a nightmare!”* (Fiona 49). It was challenging for many to suddenly have responsibility for employees, and all the bureaucracy this created. This was a factor leading to a lot of frustration for many of them, including Beatrice and Ilanna;

*One of the biggest challenges; all the administrative work. I should have had an admin assistant! But there are no funds for that. You have to do it all, you have to take every role of running a company. – Beatrice (55)*

*The biggest challenge starting my own company is all the admin work...it is a challenge to be able to understand and navigate through all the organizational work that has to be done, the bureaucracy of filling out the right documents for the government...have employee responsibility. It is so time-consuming! I spend most of my time on admin work... – Ilanna (51)*

As noted in the previous section, one entrepreneur had a boyfriend who has an auditor and could help her out. Another entrepreneur however received help from a local accounting company;

*An accounting company contacted me, and offered me a few hours with financial aid. It was fantastic news for me! I was there on no time, finally getting started!*

*And they have been with me since, through good and bad times. They have been invaluable to me! – Eliza (65)*

The work related to patents was also brought forward as challenging for some, such as Helen and Eliza, who were both working in the health sector;

*The patent application was very demanding. Everything had to be kept as a secret for a very long time, because of the patent. That was the most challenging part for me, because I felt I couldn't be honest when people asked me. That was tough. – Eliza (65)*

Both Innovation Norway and iPark highlighted the importance of getting a patent in order for them to support projects. Ljunggren et al (2010) found this particular part to be an obstacle for research on women's entrepreneurship to move forward;

*...of course the motivation of doing something good is perfect, and you need that also – because perhaps...and the point is, that if you don't focus on the commercial side you will never be able to help somebody. Because the company would perhaps not survive! So, it might sounds quite like "I'm not interesting in helping out" but Innovation Norway's role is not good enough – we have two words, it's commercial and company economy and its economy for the society. And all our projects shall meet some criteria related to commercial or company economy, in addition to the economy of the society. It's not good enough – even if it would save the whole world, if you are not allowed to protect your idea and make sure that nobody else can start with the same idea... and leading you out of business. It is not a thing for us! – Innovation Norway*

*(...) they have to work out the application for the incubator – then we work together with them on different topics, and... market, and do they have patent? Is it possible to have a patent for the technology? And, then we could ask them to go to the office and talk to maybe somebody else who are able to protect their idea,*

*because we have him sitting right there and we can involve him [laughter] – and of course we are not experts on all the fields, so we have to use our network.*

*– iPark*

### **Competence & Knowledge**

One of the key challenges entrepreneurs face is getting the right people; the right competence, and also the right knowledge necessary for developing the business;

*It is difficult to get the right competence; people with mechanical background, engineers... so instead of bringing the foreigners to Norway, I bring my company to them... – Anna (39)*

*My biggest challenge is the lack of knowledge and competence. I am thinking...I know the knowledge I need exists, but it is too costly” – Diane (51)*

*This is what I am missing; there is so little time to focus on being innovative, unfortunately. It is very limited the amount of conferences you can attend or the people you can contact dealing with such things as innovation...this is very negative. We should have been more innovative. There is too little time. There should have been a forum or a group, or a presentation of some kind of research on this. That could have been very very interesting! – Gina (72)*

Many wish they had a person in the beginning to guide them, especially those with a product-oriented company rather than those with a service-oriented company;

*I spent so much time figuring things out, I wish I had had a professional who could help me from the start; there was a lot of trial and error. The method of elimination was widely used. It would have been different if I at an early stage had the right people to help me guide my way forward. – Diane (51)*

*Finding the right people to help you in the beginning; finding industry designer, affordable ones... factories to produce products, producers...they are often abroad. It's difficult to navigate through all this! – Eliza (65)*

### **Lack of a Team**

Only three of the companies started out with a partner; *“I would never run a business by myself. Having someone else to ‘play ball with’ is important for me”* (Fiona 49). Several of those who did not, reported that being an entrepreneur sometimes feels a little lonely; *“So...I think a lot of good companies come from discussion. Get your thoughts out there, see how rubbish they are or those are actually quite good – how does that work. So, it can be quite lonely”* (Kayla 42). Many were missing this person Fiona described above, somebody to discuss with;

*Lately I've realized that it is difficult to do this by myself. I want a team, more people in the industry who has the competence and knowledge to say something about the work we are doing. I need somebody who can say ‘this should be like this...or this...’ one can have many good ideas and thoughts, but sometimes it is important to “play the ball” with others to develop these ideas, and yourself!*  
– Helen (44)

Of those that did not have a partner to discuss with, solved this by being part of an environment such as iPark, where they could rent an office with other entrepreneurs; *“I had an office, and was part of an environment. I had people with experiences to ask for advice. They were of great help to me when I first started”* (Anna 39).

These experiences lead the thesis on to the next section, which is specifically on the meso/macro environment of the entrepreneurs.

## II. Meso/Macro Environment

### a. Networks

#### **Networking**

Networking is crucial, and all of the entrepreneurs interviewed for this thesis emphasized the importance of their network in order to be successful with their company. Many said that networking was essential for getting that next client;

*We worked hard to get contacts – and get our first client; then they could tell the world who we were and that we had done a good job...that's what's essential in this industry. – Gina 72*

*Business partnership for me is almost as committing as a marriage, both good and bad. I experienced that when I had four partner and we all had the same share of the company. It's a challenge. I learned from that. Now I am very picky about who I choose, based on what I believe in and what I know works. Only then do I invite people to build the future with me. – Olga (47)*

Many spent significant amount of time on making connections, and getting to know people. Being a good communicator and an outgoing person were both traits they claimed were important in this job;

*I found out that if you just have what it takes...if you are nice and accommodating...then it is those people you meet that will stay with you. Those you meet randomly and establish a connection with. – Anna (39)*

*I constantly called people up, I was very determined, and never afraid of asking a CEO or CFO if they knew somebody else I could get in touch with. I always asked if it was OK to use them as a reference. That's how I created my network!*

*– Gina (72)*

*I have been everywhere, trying to be visible and 'out there'. I've probably held 60-70 presentations, and met a lot of people. After a while you start noticing that you are beginning to "harvest some of that". People know who you are; they know what you stand for, and how you run your business. I feel today that the biggest gain is the network I have built. And I have managed to play around with that, and make the most out of it. – Christine 28*

### **Informal Networks & Mentors**

Many seek out a mentor, especially those who do not have another partner in their company. The findings suggest that the informal networks are more popular than the formal ones. These networks were often used to test products and services before the entrepreneur were launching it on the market, *"I actively used my network to test the product out. My network of managers was big, so I felt sure that this product was something of value"* (Jessica 47). Similarly, mentors are often found in the informal network of the entrepreneur;

*I use more my informal networks, and those as mentors. And they use me. More adhoc, informal. Once it becomes too formal, I think it's too much work. I feel I have enough of that structured type of work in my work life, I don't need more of it. I get sick of organizing. – Olga 47*

*My dad is an important mentor. He is also running his own company. But that's more informal...talking about all the frustrations you are experiencing in your day-to-day activities. Because you see, you employ people, but I am still alone, I am both the owner 100%, and I take all decisions by myself. Therefore it is crucial for me to have someone to "play ball with" ... – Christine (28)*

*I have been through the mentor program of Innovation Norway and through iPark – but it never really worked out...they didn't really have much to offer. But I've asked around, asked other people, without having a dedicated 'mentor'.-Lisa (48)*



The value of having a dedicated person to ask was very important for many entrepreneurs as it made them work more efficiently, and spend their time more wisely. Some, such as Diane (51) were missing this, especially in the start up-phase; *“I should have had someone to guide me...I had to do it all by myself. I started from scratch, and I did my own research”*. Christine (28) on the other hand picked a mentor from iPark, whom she knew had experience in her field and could use these experiences to guide her and her company efficiently. This is a service she pays for having;

*I am constantly looking for new ways to develop myself, and I need a mentor around me to ask for advice. Then I can spend my time more wisely; spend less time fooling around. Because over time you find out what works and what doesn't work, but when you have a mentor like mine you do more of what works, and less of what doesn't work. (...) I get a business partner, a mentor, to ask questions and help me set targets for my company. My mentor has a great experience and a large network to know what's the next best move for my company. – Christine (28)*

Naomi (44) as well had the same need for somebody to challenge her, and like Christine emphasized the importance of a person with similar experience;

*I found a mentor myself because a partner is important. One to discuss things with, ask ‘was this good?’. He has a lot of experience with what I am working with. I needed one that could challenge me – tell me what was good, bad and what we could do be better. Additionally, he had a large network for me as well.*

Diane (51) on the other hand, had a mentor from a formal network in iPark, but the mentor's lack of experience in her field made it less valuable for her: *“(...) her experience was not related to mine...she knew a lot, but not really anything about what I was doing...”*.

iPark had also recognized the need to help with more mentors;

*I think the best thing we can do for them is to provide them with a mentor. And also help them with all the things they have to go through. It's a lot things to think about in this period of starting up. You have to be able to think of everything actually – project, customers, running a business – everything! – iPark*

### **Board of Directors**

The majority reported that their board was crucial as mentors, and it was where the necessary knowledge and support they needed came from. These were mostly picked from their informal networks;

*One of my jobs as a CEO for these startups is to find a network relevant to that company. So I build up board members and advisers. They have specific knowledge in that area to say something about it. – Kayla (42)*

*Of course the easiest is always to ask your husband, your friends and neighbors... But I thought that, “ummm – if I’m going to have success I need to ask people that can actually give me advice”. – Polly (63)*

*My business partner was the most important person; he was my mentor. And the people of my board. (...) If I was feeling down and started losing faith, I always told the other two on my board, and they filled me up again. – Beatrice (55)*

### **Formal Networks**

More than half of the entrepreneurs were taking an active part in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the region, but surprisingly few were part of any formal networks. Many felt it was merely a waste of time;

*I am not part of any of those networks. Oftentimes I think those networks are a little dull. Too much coffee and...a little dull. To make use of a network like that*

*requires, for me, people working with similar problems. But at the same time, they cannot be competitors. And it can't be too many at once. It should be just a hand full of men or women – interested in some of the same things. Such as a “growth network” – have a few companies with ambitions of growing. Meeting up say 5 times a year to discuss experiences. – Olga (47)*

*I miss a forum where women can discuss at the same level as men discuss. With women it is always about those soft values, lots of talking, little work. I like directness, I like someone telling me what I do well and what I do badly. I am used to working with men, they are more direct when they speak. The women entrepreneurs I've met...I prefer male ones because of that. – Naomi (44)*

Both Christine and Diane pointed to the importance of relevance for them to join a formal network;

*I have seen a few networks in the region, such as 'Driftige Damer' etc....I have attended Lady Circle; that's more Rotary just for women. A place where you meet ladies across disciplines, and to build relationships. (...) I am also part of the Chamber of Commerce...if there is events related to what I am doing, I usually join. But not otherwise. – Christine (28)*

*I just signed up for 'Driftige Damer'; a friend of mine sent me a link. I joined one of their meetings...but I don't know if I'll go back. It had been different if it was more informal, like you meet at a café to discuss and exchange experiences...but here we had to present ourselves every time. And if we take that same round every time, whenever a new person joins the network, then we never get to the next stage! I wish it was more of a 'café meet up' ...and more like; if I need something as simple as a new business card, then I know that this person is doing this, and she can help me out, and I can help her with something I'm good at...more exchanging services and information. Knowledge exchange. But only women, I think. (...) As women we are allowed to be a little stupid at times, we, unlike the*

*guys, don't think we have all the answers...but I am sure there are industry differences. – Diane (51)*

Anna (39) said she stayed away from formal networks due to the fact that a relationship is built on personal connection and trust, which she argues, is hard to find if you try to 'set people up' like you would in a more formal network;

*No, to be honest, I try to stay away from all of those public networks! It is a small world, and when I travel around for conferences, I usually meet the same people everywhere. We know each other...I don't think one can...to put it that way; we chose our own friends. One can not just turn up in a group and say 'these are my friends', in a way, if you understand what I mean? You have to build a relationships, and you have to build it on trust.*

Furthermore, Anna claimed that the formal networks were more an arena to 'show off' than anything else. Other entrepreneurs made similar observations.

*I get run down with calls from all these network-thingies.... I don't know how many there are in this region, but it isn't few! I just know that it is not an arena for me...we have our own networks, and the people you enjoy being with. I don't feel the need to go out and tell the world how good I am and how well I am doing, and brag about everything I have created. I feel that's what those arenas mostly are for. It is an area for bragging.*

Time-constraints and motherhood were also a factor in determining whether to join a formal network or not;

*I am occasionally at Stavanger Chamber of Commerce and Industry; but nothing else...I get invitations to all sorts of things, but I don't know if I want to be part of a network...I have my own leader network through my company – and I love it! It gives me so much. People have told me that I should be part of different groups*

*on LinkedIn etc., but no.... I have no time! I have enough to do. Things are moving so fast! – Beatrice (55)*

*I travel a lot, I meet new people all the time. But if...I have friends living in small villages, and they are actively searching for networks in order to meet new people. But because I travel so much, I don't feel the need. I don't feel the need to spend my daily life, or all my evenings, heading to new networking events. I have a family, and a combination of all this – when I travel I am on, then I am really on, but when I am at home, I am at home. – Anna (39)*

## b. Financing

Type of financing varied across the 16 entrepreneurs, but the majority started from scratch with their own money, once they had a 'proved' concept it was easier for them to apply for funding elsewhere. However, the challenges were to find a way to prove that their idea works and get other people to see the value in what you doing:

*The biggest challenges have been the financing. It would have been a lot easier if it weren't that tough to get the ends to meet financially. I have to be honest and say that. If they could only see the value of this. I have done everything, and I've been almost impolite and reached out to a lot of people. A lot! I even reached out to ministers of the government. I emailed them, called them...I actually get people back to work with this product, I tell them [the welfare state]. Isn't that good enough?" – Eliza (65)*

Many entrepreneurs had this mentality that they had no option but to start earning money as opposed to be dependent on somebody else for doing this, e.g. the support system; "I had no money – I had to toss and turn every single penny. (...) I never applied for any funding; I just had to start earning money. As simple as that!" (Gina 72). Some reported that financing was an obstacle, especially during the start-up phase:

*I think the hard part in the beginning is to get enough funding. Because it is always stressful when you start a business you don't know if you can pay your bills the next month or not, so to really focus on a solid budget when you are starting the business is quite important. – Polly (63)*

*I never applied for funding – I just lived poorly! [Laughter] I was doing my work, and making the most out of it. I have been extremely active and dedicated in trying to succeed; been everywhere, been visible anywhere. – Christine (28)*

Many of the entrepreneurs of this research did nonetheless receive some albeit limited funding from institutions such as Innovation Norway whom were very helpful;

*The financial is the most challenging – because you start from scratch, with nothing. You have to do a pretty good job, which you have to pay others to do before you can actually get money yourself. Innovation Norway has been invaluable to me! – Jessica (47)*

Financing and available funds is closely related to what the support system can offer entrepreneurs. Many of the entrepreneurs have service-related companies, and had difficulties in obtaining bank loans because of no investments but a salary;

*I asked if it was possible to get any kind of economical support. You know, to start a business. But they said no. As long as you start as a consultant... No. As long as you have an idea that you are going to sell yourself, you wont have any support. If you have invented a tool, you know, something that someone can be using. They will be helpful to assist you with some money to do technical research, and maybe help you so you can produce it, etc. But as long as you are selling yourself as a consultant... – Polly (63)*

The next and last section of this chapter on findings includes the entrepreneurs' experiences related to the support system.

c. Support System:**Discrimination**

Some found the support system only to be prioritizing **larger companies**;

*Well...in the beginning you are a small company, and you don't have the resources needed, you are not as strong financially and whatever...and you quickly realize that the larger companies are prioritized and they get the best service. Smaller companies [like mine], have never really been prioritized... – Anna (39)*

*We applied to Innovation Norway, but they told us that if we spent 1 million krone, they could support us with 100.000...but we started small, we were below 1 million krone. So we had nobody to help us out there. We were too small for them! But we started earning money right away, which is quite unusual for the industry... – Fiona (49)*

*Innovation Norway defends this by the lack of growth ambitions with the women entrepreneurs;*

*We have to see some potential of growth, because people working one and one in a company, it's fine and good – and the public also supports that – but innovation has a special role of investing in the most innovative, the most growth potential companies. And that's a problem related to, and this is my personal meaning, I see it as one of the biggest problems. Because they choose different areas, they don't choose the small technical pumps or, ventiler, plugger, you see – in the petroleum industry. Which is quite easy to just produce in thousands and sell out internationally, they choose more service, more small-scale, more focused on their own competence, and that's – it's not that easy to show growth potential and it might also be more difficult to show the innovation in those, because if you have a technology that has never been done, or used before, you can meet a need that*

*has been sold in a less effective ways before with the last technology. It's quite easy to show the potential and show the growth and potential of innovation.*  
– Innovation Norway

Others felt that because of the **nature** of their company, did not fall under any categories to apply for funding, which was in line with the findings by Ljunggren et al (2010);

*I was in touch with iPark, but...I think they are better at the oil and gas industry. They didn't really have this good of a deal for me. – Helen (44)*

*I've applied for funding for research, but I have not received any. They don't view this as something that needs research... – Diane (51)*

*We were in touch with the local support institution for development of new companies, but we quickly realized we had nothing to do there. – Fiona (49)*

*I applied for VRI funding – but were rejected because we didn't fall under the definition. – Ilanna (51)*

Many of the entrepreneurs felt they were beyond the scope of the support system's definition of entrepreneurship, which defines it based on 1) level of innovation, and 2) growth potential; *“they have to have high ambitions and high growth. And they have to have an innovative concept or product, or recipe or anything. Something unique.”* (iPark). Innovation Norway put it this way;

*(...) It must be good enough. We do not give money to bad projects. If it's a bad project – criteria for getting some support are several, but the main two criteria is innovation, and how unique it is – the level of innovation. It can be technical, it can be in a way you – a service, innovative service – but it must meet the needs in a different way than these needs are met today. So if somebody has a – a need in the market, this product must serve it in another way. If it's just a company doing*



*the same or almost the same as companies doing it before, then we should not go in because then we are disturbing a competition. That's a strong criteria; uniqueness and innovation.*

*The other strong criteria is there should be growth potential. And ambition of growth. And it should be possible to believe that this company will grow in the number of employees, in the spread in the market, international market – it's not a, not all projects has to have international markets – but usually Norway is very small as a market, so usually to meet the criteria of growth you have to look outside of the border quite soon depending on the product of course.*

*– Innovation Norway*

Others again felt that nobody viewed their company as **'something of value'**, especially those in the health sector, such as Eliza and Helen;

*I had to research and do everything on my own. Endless nights browsing on the Internet...phoning people. Emailing. Ask, ask, ask...I didn't find a single scholarship to apply for. There were some for improving the life quality, but my project wasn't found to be in that category...even though we thought this was a project where it would be easy to get 'free money'! But nope. Nothing.*

*– Eliza (65)*

*I am familiar with the support system, but what I am missing is some research on this. I cannot do that myself. I am struggling with finding someone to do it for me. Different institutes thinks it's cool and all that, but it's not very scholarly, they say...but I think, just because this is about improving the life quality of elderly, it is just "sexy enough", they are old people, that's not 'as important'...*

*– Helen (44)*

Innovation Norway claims that ‘the problem’ with women in the health sector specifically, is their lack of growth ambitions, one of their components of what constitutes entrepreneurship;

*(...) the problem with the women is that the criteria of growth is often...[not a priority] – it’s. because they start up, they have own good knowledge in the field – example; in the health sector. They see a need that is not met good enough. They have an idea how to meet this need. They use their own experience, competence – but they do not have any big plans of growing. Because it’s their own competence that is important in that case, and it’s not that easy to scale up services for instance, as a program. Women often, more often, in the health sector – thinks of providing a service. – Innovation Norway*

However, they do acknowledge the fact that the definition might be too narrow, especially for a lot of women entrepreneurs;

*We can’t say that you have to change sex, or go get another managing director. Its like – ok, we can try to make more ideas to come up – but, my experience is that it’s the target of IN is innovation and growth, and we are lagging in a way. I think we have some – I think what we can do is to develop our focus on service innovation. On other types of innovation that does not require technology.*

*(...) and there I think we have some way to go. But it’s much more difficult to evaluate innovation in soft-sector. So we just have to work on that. But I think we are on the way – it’s a lot of focus on it. And we are focusing more not only on the product, but how you will get into the market. And I think there is a lot of things happening now, so we might... [but] that was my personal view again, and its based on these experiences on service innovation in health care for instance.*

*– Innovation Norway*

Additionally some attributed the discrimination to **age**;

*I contacted Innovation Norway at an early point, to tell them what I was doing, that I was taking different courses...because I really wanted this to work out! And I asked them if they could put me in touch with medical personnel to help me out. No...they did not see the value in what I was doing. So that was then. It has not been easy! And also, I am an adult woman. There is a clear divide between those under 30 and those over 50 like me. Are you under 30 years old, that's when you get "the millions" ...a study shows that 6 / 10 under 30 never gets any further with their company, however they receive plenty of funding! However, are you over 50, or like me over 60, then you get a lot less because they look at you as one that is just retiring soon...instead of looking at you as someone who can contribute; instead of looking at what this can do to the patient, for the region in general...*  
 – Eliza (65)

Innovation Norway said they have a 'tag' specifically for women below the age 35, i.e. the company gets marked with a special 'priority' tag;

*We have another tag. And that is young entrepreneurs. So that's, that age in innovation is young – and that is set at 35 years [laughter], so everybody who is less than 35 get a tag of young. If you are a young female that is.*

*(...) The area where I have most experience is the health sector, because I had a lot of phone calls from women wanting to start up something and that is typically from women working in the health sector for a lot of years. And past, I think. Because most of them never get passed an application because they are not falling within the criteria. In that category I see a tendency towards not the youngest. – Innovation Norway*

Lastly, some felt discriminated by the Norwegian **state**, and the politicians. Some felt this was hindering their business in developing;

*We won an award and were highly recognized by one ministry of the government, then other ministries are not even letting us on the market... they are speaking with two tongues. On one side they want women's entrepreneurship, but on the other side they are not willing to use the services women entrepreneurs offer. Women who start companies are often in the health- and care type of industries. It is unnatural for women to start in other industries, such as production of metals, and the like. But then our businesses comes into conflict with what the public government is offering, and the type of services the government is supposed to provide the society with. The problem is that they do not have the capacity to provide all the necessary services. (...) they have to let the private sector take part! – Ilanna (51)*

*If Norway wants more entrepreneurs, they have to start using the services that their entrepreneurs provide the society with. – Ilanna (51)*

### **Entrepreneur, not a 'Female Entrepreneur'**

For many being a 'female entrepreneur' was not something special; they emphasized that fact that they were *entrepreneurs*, and just that.

*I think the Norwegian society focus too much on gender equality. Being an entrepreneur, and having success, that is related to the interplay between colleagues, between the families you have...I believe there is too much focus on gender equality, but we forget the teamwork. In order for a society to work and develop, and for new generations to be created, we need teamwork. – Anna (39)*

Innovation Norway also claimed they have this focus where they are shifting away from 'female entrepreneurs' to entrepreneurs, yet they do have a 'tag system' to prioritize women entrepreneurs if they apply for anything and fulfill the criteria of 1) innovation, and 2) growth;

*(...) because of course we've had a lot of focus on women and how to succeed – and we have started separate programs, especially targeting women. Competence program, entrepreneurial programs, networking events – several things. But what we have moved more and more towards, is that women is not like a special group. So instead of defining them as someone who needs extra help – we try to include this perspective in all of our programs, financing services – so what we do is that in every case I prepare a decision to give a grant or loan, I have a tag naming is this a woman-related project or company, and that's not only related to who's idea it is, who's the leader or the owner, it's a mix. We have – we are registering a female “tag” in a way, if there are a woman leader or entrepreneur of course, but also if there are more than 30% women on the board.*

*(...) there has been a kind of movement from defining women as a weak, special group to be supported with extra money, lower criterias, etc...to include it and say that if you have this tag, and you have 2 projects [e.g. one by a male and one by a female] – they are good and competing – then we choose the women project.*

### **Bureaucratic and Time-Consuming**

Many entrepreneurs criticized the support system for being too bureaucratic. This is in line with findings by Bruton et al (2010), where entrepreneurs were found to be discouraged from starting companies if they were forced to comply with too many rules and regulations. Filling out required documentation to various institutions can be both time-consuming and costly. Four entrepreneurs describe their experience related to these procedural requirements;

*I haven't been very active because they want extensive business plans and lots of documentations. I am a creative entrepreneur and I don't have time to do all that. Nobody wants to take part of it, because it's just too much structure, too many rules to comply with. It leaves no room for creativity, which I find worrying because at last it should be about innovation! I miss more openness and room for thinking differently. Maybe for the technical companies; the oil and gas industry –*

*maybe its perfect for them, but for us running a company on the social side of it, it is not... – Naomi (44)*

*(...) I did spend a lot of time on that in the beginning; writing a lot of applications. But you know they have a whole bunch of people; and you are supposed to do your financial accounting, your reports and everything...I got it sent in return all the time because something was missing or was wrong, and eventually I gave up. I decided to start spending the energy on what was actually going to make me earn a living instead of 'free money'. So I quickly concluded that no, this system will not grow my business. – Anna (39)*

*We sent an application to 'Forskningsrådet', but it takes so much time. Innovation Norway is a little bit less bureaucratic...but the Forskningrådet is incredible, I just try to stay away from all of it! I need to spend my time wisely and on the things that are actually making me earn money. – Lisa (48)*

*I am not very familiar with the support system, and I remember when I was writing applications in the start up phase, it was tough. Time-consuming. I didn't want to spend more energy doing it. Moreover, when you are unemployed you need to fill out all these applications to NAV...and I was so sick and tired of it! So I decided that this was not something I wanted to spend my time and energy on. And if you on top of it don't get any funding, you just feel so empty...  
– Christine (28)*

Others, such as Beatrice did not apply for anything because she did not want anybody to take an ownership in her company;

*I didn't want to spend time and efforts on bureaucracy, which wouldn't perhaps give me anything in end anyways. Also, I wanted to be able to be on my own, be free. I didn't want anyone telling me what to do or how to do it, or disrupt the mission of the company. – Beatrice (55)*

**Importance of Local Community Support:**

Even though the entrepreneurs generally did not feel that the support system had something to offer them, many felt that establishing contact with the local municipality was important for their company to feel included and accepted by the community itself. Both Fiona (49) and Diane (51) gave examples of how their local municipality wanted to promote their business through cheap rent and good contracts. Additionally, they both received cheap loans from a local bank; *“my local bank and other institutions locally have contributed positively to make it work and make our company successful”* (Fiona 49).

### III. Summary of Findings

In summary, the findings suggest that being an entrepreneur is a lifestyle, not just a job. Most entrepreneurs found it positive to have a flexible work schedule, and be able to structure days according to the needs of the family. The majority reported that the husband/boyfriend was invaluable for them as a moral and financial support. This support was necessary for the outcome and success of the company.

Personal characteristics did not vary much across the group of entrepreneurs; generally they were not afraid of going against the masses; they were risk-takers, go-getters but at the same time very caring about their environment. Some compared being a female entrepreneur to being a mother and caring for a company as you do with your child. Many had examples from their childhood of the entrepreneur within them, and described this as a spirit you cannot acquire through education or anything who can be forced upon you. You either are an entrepreneur, or you are not, they said. Their identity, often related to childhood, was important for them and had a significant effect on the nature of their company. Many wanted to be ‘just an entrepreneur’ and not looked upon as ‘a female entrepreneur’, or as something special compared to their male counterparts.

The entrepreneurs were all highly educated, and it was either a personal experience or an experience at work that made them start their company. Their motivation and perception of success was closely linked to the well-being of others, and

be able to increase life quality of people around them. The majority had worked in public sector, and had solutions to problems they argued the state could not solve alone. Nonetheless, many felt they met resistance from the state in accomplishing their mission towards achieving this.

Many had received funding from institutions such as Innovation Norway, however they found the process of applying and navigating through the system very bureaucratic and time-consuming. Many reported they wish they had a person to help them specifically with all the administrative and reporting work required by the state.

The entrepreneurs highlighted the importance of building relationships on trust; their mentors and other resourceful people were therefore mainly found through their informal networks. Many reported that starting a company by themselves was lonely at times, and having mentor to discuss questions related to growth and development was therefore crucial. Many had less good experiences with obtaining mentors from official programs by the government, because of these people's lack of experience within the field of the entrepreneur. The board of directors however was highlighted as an important part for securing their company professional competence and necessary knowledge.

Many entrepreneurs felt discriminated by the support system on many levels. They felt their services and products were not viewed as important and valuable as for instance those from industries such as oil and gas. The definition of entrepreneurship by the support system, focusing on the level of innovation and growth, was found to be the source of discrimination, due to the nature of many women entrepreneurs' companies.



## Chapter IV: Discussion & Conclusion

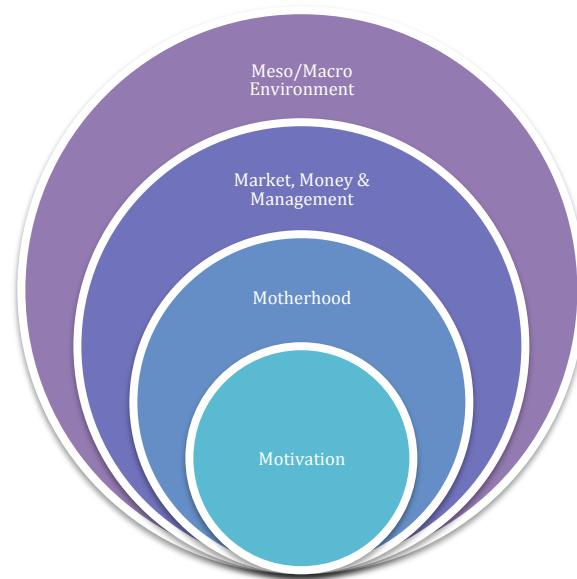
### Motivation

Brush et al's 5M Model (2009) suggest approaching the microenvironment by adding the *motherhood* concept, in order to focus on the woman's role in combining family and business. The model had limitations, including the lack of factors explaining why women tend to start businesses and grow them in the manner that differs from that of their male counterparts. There was a need for extending the model further by looking at other micro-level factors beyond motherhood. This thesis asked the following question in an attempt to mitigate this gap; *How does the interplay between the micro and meso/macro environment affect the success of women entrepreneurs in Norway?*

This thesis focuses on the Meso/Macro environment, as well as the *Motherhood* construct of the 5M Model. The findings suggest however that there is a mismatch between what the meso/macro environment can offer the female entrepreneur in a Norwegian context, and the female entrepreneur's actual needs and wants.

This gap, we argue, can be explained by factors relating to the microenvironment of the entrepreneur, such as her personal life experiences, her personal traits, her perception of success, as well as the importance of motherhood and family life to her. This thesis choose to encompass all these factors into one construct called *Motivation*, and argue that both *Motivation* and *Motherhood* are core elements on micro-level affecting the interplay with the *Meso/Macro environment*.

Therefore it is proposed to embed a sixth M (Figure III), due to the crucial importance and effect micro-level factors has on the entrepreneurs. These factors are in turn related to her success; due to the nature of her company combined with personal values and characteristics. The empirical evidence presented demonstrates how the company is a direct product of the female entrepreneur's motivation; and as both entrepreneurs and institutions pointed out, she almost also cared for it like it was her child.



*Figure III: Revised Brush et al's (2009) Model*

### **Need for Reassessing the Definition of Entrepreneurship**

One crucial obstacle related to this gap was found to be the meso environment's definition of entrepreneurship. The definition focuses on two elements, namely growth and the level of innovation. According to the findings, this definition poses a major challenge to many women entrepreneurs.

In all actuality, this definition favors *male* entrepreneurs in the sense that it speaks mainly to innovative products measured by patents, derived from sectors dominated by men. Most of the women entrepreneurs offer *services* rather than products; which makes it among other things difficult to apply for funding from the support system. This was also in line with the findings made by Ljunggren et al (2010); they identified poor measurements and a narrow definition of 'innovation' as an obstacle for moving forward with women's entrepreneurship research in general.

In other words there is a need for reassessing the definition of entrepreneurship made by the meso environment, to encompass a wider specter of industries; industries dominated by women such as health, food, and education.

### **The Changing Role of the State**

Based on the study of Hofstede, mentioned in Chapter I, certain cultural traits are linked to the level of entrepreneurship, such as individualism and power distance. A high score on the individualism dimension, combined with a low score on the power distance dimension, should lay a good foundation for entrepreneurship to flourish in a given country. This is the case of Norway, at least on paper (Hofstede 2013). It means that entrepreneurs have the power to influence the meso/macro environment, and have a say in the development of entrepreneurship in this country. Meso institutions evolve and they are in constant change. They will eventually be replaced with new institutions; and as Kury (2012) argues, entrepreneurs are one means to achieving this type of institutional change and improvement. The level of entrepreneurship that develops in a society is directly related to a society's regulations and policies governing the allocation of rewards, argues Bruton et al (2010). Furthermore they add that in a country like Norway only the government can ensure market function by removing conditions creating entry barriers for entrepreneurs.

Much of the literature on institutional theory and entrepreneurship is focused on emerging economies and government irregularities as a challenge, however there is a need for more in-depth analysis of developed economies such as Norway on this topic.

### **Agency**

Institutional theory put the emphasis on social rules, expectations, norms and values as the primary factors pressuring organizations to conform (Bruin et al 2007). In other words, the institutional profile of organizations such as Innovation Norway and iPark, are of high importance for the development of entrepreneurship amongst women.

However, the empirical findings suggest that these institutions have to know better the profile of whom they are dealing with; the microenvironment of women entrepreneurs that is. Unless they speak the same language, there will always be a lack of understanding and a poor interplay amongst actors. Battilana et al (2009) suggest reintroducing actors' agency to institutional analysis as a mean for improving this interplay amongst entrepreneurs and institutions.

Additionally, our findings suggest that better tools for measuring *innovation* is called for by these institutions, and as Ljunggren et al (2010) propose; put women's entrepreneurship on the research agenda to increase their agency.

### **Women Entrepreneurs as Change Agents**

Furthermore, Battilana et al use Schumpeter's definition of entrepreneurs as change agents because they view them as someone who "initiates changes that breaks with existing institutions, and face specific challenges arising from other actors' institutional embeddedness and possible political opposition" (2009: 86). This thesis shows that being something for others is an increasingly important contribution to this ego-modern world, and the 'so me'-jungle.

Women's contribution to innovation and value creation is crucial for ensuring societal development. Entrepreneurship is more than just an instrument for economic growth; it fits into our narrative of modernity and should therefore, as noted by Ahl (2006) and Hauge & Havnes (2005), be seen as a tool for change and progress.

### **A Question of Values**

Regardless of the sectors they operate in, women entrepreneurs tend to have a focus beyond themselves as a motivation for starting a business. An idea to broaden the definition of the support system is to acknowledge this, and the greater impact a woman entrepreneur may have on the society as a whole. Many entrepreneurs find themselves in the social sector, and the motivation is non-pecuniary – yet they still make a living, and the findings suggests that they are very specific about being a businesswoman, and not working for charity.

The majority of the entrepreneurs described in this paper, have the potential to reach and improve thousands of lives. Yet she is lacking a specific way of measuring this impact, as patents are difficult in the so-called 'soft sectors' as these women operate in. How do we measure the life quality of a person in his last stage of life?

It is a question of values being a woman entrepreneur and offering these kinds of services to the public. How can we compare a tangible, million dollar technical business in the oil and gas sector, with a more intangible business contributing to improving the

life quality of thousands of people, as some of these entrepreneurs do? We have to reassess what we mean by ‘innovation’, and what we want our society to focus on in the years to come.

As noted by one entrepreneur, having success is related to the interplay between different actors; we sometimes forget that for a man or woman to succeed, we need teamwork. Similarly, we need different types of entrepreneurs for societal progress and development. Kury (2012) suggest steering the discussion of entrepreneurship away from a narrowed focus solely based on the economics of entrepreneurship, to a discussion on entrepreneurship as a mean for social change.

### **No Elephant in Entrepreneurship**

The empirical evidence presented in this paper demonstrates the importance of context to enlighten our understanding of women’s entrepreneurship. Sarasvathy (2004) highlights the importance of understanding the barriers to entrepreneurship, such as those discussed in Chapter IV, because increased levels of knowledge will support the need for policy actions by the support system for women entrepreneurs, and consequently mitigate the gap. Nonetheless, “there is no elephant in entrepreneurship. The various topics in the entrepreneurship field do not constitute a congruous whole” (Bruin 2007: 323), and one should there be cautions with drawing generalizations based on these findings.

## Chapter V: Concluding Remarks

### I. Implications & Value

The theoretical implication of this thesis is the extension of Brush et al's (2009) model with a sixth construct, namely *Motivation*. This thesis argue that *Motivation*, capturing factors such as personal characteristics, personal values and perception of success, is crucial for understanding the women entrepreneurs in Norway, and the interplay between microenvironment and meso/macroenvironment.

Practical implications include a deeper understanding of the sources of challenges female entrepreneurs face, especially with regards to the interplay between the individual and the societal factors and institutions surrounding her. The findings are helpful for policymakers and others interest groups engaged with improving the conditions for women entrepreneurs in Norway. Furthermore this thesis aim to answer the call for contextualization of entrepreneurship research, and contribute to the growing body of knowledge relating to the influence of women's entrepreneurship.

### II. Limitations

This thesis has several limitations, an overview of these is provided as followed; One of the limitations of using an exploratory research design is that a small sample size is often utilized, thus one should be cautious with generalizing and drawing conclusions based on the findings from such a limited sample. This research is based on the experience of 16 entrepreneurs, and is therefore a limited number for having a significant value in decision-making.

No control- or comparison group was added to this research due to limited time and resources, but also intentionally because comparison of businesses have been a criticized issue in previous studies on women entrepreneurship (Ahl 2006). In this paper we only explore two constructs of Brush et al's (2009) 5M Model; motherhood and

meso/macro environment. We leave the discussion of the remaining three Ms; market, money and management beyond the scope of this paper.

Moreover, the paper is cultural specific to Norway; results should therefore not be directly translated to other cultures. One should appreciate the heterogeneity of women's entrepreneurship.

Finally, while qualitative methods allow drawing certain generalization, it provides limited ability to search for new insides and explore unexplained so far phenomenon.

### III. Avenues for Future Research

Insights for future research can be derived from the discussion presented. More specifically, theory can be enhanced by further clarifying the following avenues;

#### **a. Comparative Study**

This preliminary research indicates that a systematic study of the institutionalization of support systems for women entrepreneurs is needed; a comparative study on women in other cross-cultural settings addressing questions such as *“why is the level of entrepreneurs in Norway so low compared to other Nordic countries, the US, and the Western World in general? Could this be explained by the differences in the countries' meso/macro environment? What works well in countries where women's entrepreneurship is flourishing? How are these programs designed compared to Norway's, and how efficient and beneficial are these programs actually?”*

#### **b. Longitudinal Study**

As we have seen in this paper, the support services in the region are fairly new in terms of existence, and a more comprehensive study to capture the constant changes in the meso/macro environment should be considered for the future to avoid a static picture of women's entrepreneurship in any given country.

### c. Institutional Entrepreneurship

Because of limited time, capacity and scope, this thesis did not explore two terms that were however identified during the research process, namely *institutional entrepreneur* and *institutional entrepreneurship*. Considering the findings, these might be two applicable terms to explore in greater detail.

### d. Social Entrepreneurship

Furthermore, the findings related to the entrepreneur's microenvironment suggest that a study of women entrepreneurs as agents of change (from the context of a developed country), and using literature specifically on social entrepreneurship, could bring new insights to the world of women's entrepreneurship.

## IV. Other Useful Resources

- *Innovation Norway* - <http://www.innovasjon Norge.no>
- *iPark* - <http://www.ipark.no/hjem>
- *Norsk Forskningsråd* - <http://www.forskningsradet.no>
- *Skattefunn* - <http://skattefunn.no/>
- *Skape* - <http://www.skape.no>
- *SIVA* - <http://www.siva.no>
- *Kvinnovasjon* - <http://kvinnovasjon.no>
- *Stavanger Næringsforening* - <http://www.rosenkilden.no>
- *Jæren Produktutvikling* - <http://jprod.no>
- *FERD Sosiale Entreprenører* - [http://www.ferd.no/sosiale\\_entreprenorer](http://www.ferd.no/sosiale_entreprenorer)
- *Ashoka Norge* - <https://www.ashoka.org/country/norway>
- *Lady Circle* - <http://lcnorge.no/public/login>
- *Driftige Damer* - <http://www.driftigedamer.no>



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## Appendix I: NSD Approval Letter

### Page I:

**Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS**  
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

**NSD**

Hindt Hårfages gate 29  
N-5007 Bergen  
Norway  
Tel: +47 55 58 21 17  
Fax: +47 55 58 96 50  
mailto:nsd@nso.no  
www.nsd.uib.no  
Org nr: 985 321 884

Tatiana Iakovleva  
Handelshøgskolen ved UiS  
Ullandhaug  
4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 04.01.2013      Vår ref: 32548 / 3 / LT      Ders dato:      Ders ref:

**TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER**

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 01.01.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

32548	<i>Thesis on Women and Entrepreneurship</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	<i>Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
Daglig ansvarlig	<i>Tatiana Iakovleva</i>
Student	<i>Ida Jaarvik Hetland</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pro.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 15.06.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen


*Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim*  
Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

*Lis Tenold*  
Lis Tenold

Lis Tenold tlf: 55 58 33 77  
✓ Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering  
Kopi: Ida Jaarvik Hetland, Svingen 2, 4340 BRYNE

**Page II:**

**Personvernombudet for forskning**



**Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar**

---

Prosjektnr: 32548

Formålet med prosjektet er kartlegge hvilke barrierer og utfordringer kvinner møter som entreprenører og grundere.

Opplysningene samles inn gjennom intervju. Intervjuene tas opp på lydbånd og behandles elektronisk.

Det gis skriftlig informasjon og innhentes skriftlig samtykke. Personvernombudet finner skrevet tilfredsstillende.

Innsamlede opplysninger registreres på privat pc. Personvernombudet forutsetter at bruk av minnepenn og privat pc er i tråd med Universitetet i Stavanger sine interne retningslinjer for informasjonssikkerhet.

Innsamlede opplysninger anonymiseres og lydbåndopptak makuleres ved prosjektslutt, senest 15.06.2013. Med anonymisering innebærer at navnelister slettes/makuleres, og ev. kategorisere eller slette indirekte personidentifiserbare opplysninger. Ved publisering vil ingen enkeltpersoner kunne gjenkjennes.

## Appendix II:

### *Information Letter/Interview Request*

01.03.13

#### Informasjonsskriv:

*Forespørsel om å delta i intervju i forbindelse med en masteroppgave om  
Kvinner og Entreprenørskap*

Mitt navn er Ida Jaarvik Hetland, og jeg er masterstudent i økonomi og administrasjon ved Universitetet i Stavanger (UiS). Jeg skriver denne våren min avsluttende masteroppgave. Temaet for oppgaven er kvinner og entreprenørskap, og jeg er derfor svært interessert i å intervjuer deg som del av denne oppgaven.

Jeg skal spesifikt undersøke hvilke utfordringer og barrierer kvinnelige grundere møter under etableringen av ny bedrift. Spørsmålene vil hovedsakelig dreie seg om utfordringer relatert til oppstartsfasen, finansiering og nettverk. Jeg er i tillegg tilknyttet Innovasjonsparken gjennom IRIS, og vil gjerne stille et par spørsmål relatert til dette også.

Jeg ønsker å bruke båndopptaker under intervjuet, som vil ta ca. 45 minutter. Vi blir sammen enige om tid og sted for intervjuet. Det er frivillig å delta, og du har mulighet til å trekke deg når som helst underveis, uten å måtte begrunne dette nærmere. Dersom du trekker deg vil alle innsamlede data om deg bli anonymisert. Opplysningene vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og ingen enkeltpersoner vil kunne gjenkjennes i den ferdige oppgaven. Opplysningene anonymiseres og opptakene slettes når oppgaven er ferdig, innen 15.juni 2013.

Dersom du har lyst og anledning til å være med på intervjuet, er det fint om du gir meg tilbakemelding på dette. Ta gjerne kontakt med meg om det er noe du lurer på. Utfyllende kontaktinformasjon finnes under. Du kan også kontakte min veileder Dr. Tatiana A. Iakovleva ved Stavanger Business School/Stavanger Center for Innovation Research, på e-post [tatiana.a.iakovleva@uis.no](mailto:tatiana.a.iakovleva@uis.no). Om du har noen spørsmål.

Studien er meldt til/godkjent av Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste (NSD). Jeg håper du ønsker å dele dine verdifulle erfaringer som kvinnelig grunder med meg. Din deltakelse er svært verdsatt.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Ida Jaarvik Hetland  
Svingen 2  
4340 Bryne  
(m) 92642248  
(e) [ida\\_hetland@hotmail.com](mailto:ida_hetland@hotmail.com)



## **Appendix III:**

### *Interview Guide I (entrepreneurs)*

#### **1. Fortell meg om deg**

- *Navn, utdanning, bakgrunn*

#### **2. Fortell meg om bedriften din**

- *Hvilke type foretak er det/Når ble den stiftet/Type eierskap/Hvor mange/hvem er eierne, Bransje, Ansatte, Kunder/besøkende*
- *Bakgrunn*
  - *Hvorfor startet du din egen bedrift?*
  - *Motivasjonen bak: sosialt aspekt?*
  - *Under hvilke omstendigheter startet du bedriften? Var det pga. Eksterne omstendigheter eller eget ønske og ide som du brente for?*
- *Marked og profitt*
  - *Hvordan er industrien du jobber i/Hvem er konkurrentene*
  - *Markedsandel/Profit – øker den?*
- *Er du involvert i andre aktiviteter/bedrifter annet enn denne?*

#### **3. Fortell meg om oppstartsfasen; om utfordringer og barrierer**

- *Hvordan opplevdes støtten utenfra under oppstartsfasen? Har dette endret seg siden?*
- *Hva var familie og venners reaksjoner når du ville starte din egen bedrift?*
- *Under oppstartsfasen, følte du deg selvsikker på deg selv og dine kvalifikasjoner for å lykkes? Kjente du til entreprenørskap? Levde dine ideer og forventninger i forkant opp til slik virkeligheten ble/er? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? Hva var f eks annerledes?*
- *Ser du på deg selv som en "risk-taker"? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? Tenkte du på risikoen før du startet bedriften din?*

#### **4. Fortell meg om de generelle utfordringer**

- *Hvordan er utfordringene da sammenlignet med de du møter nå?*
- *Hvilke autoriteter og mennesker måtte du kommunisere med i startfasen? Dvs. Hvilke offentlige og/eller private kontorer, banker, leverandører etc*
- *Har du eksempler fra hvordan disse samtalene foregikk? Hvilke utfordringer møtte du på? Har du eksempler fra samtaler som gikk bra og dem som gikk mindre bra?*
- *Innovasjon: hva er det du gjør som er nytt?*

#### **5. Fortell meg om finansiering**

- *Hvordan finansierte du oppstarten av bedriften?*
- *Har du eksempler på hvordan finansieringsaspektet spilte en rolle for din bedrift?*

**6. Fortell meg om virkemiddelapparatet**

- *Hvor godt kjent er du med vma (virkemiddelapparatet)? Dvs forskning og utvikling, samhandling etc*
- *Har du søkt/fått offentlige eller andre vma (virkemiddelapparat) midler? (Innovasjon Norge, Prekubator, Ferd etc)*
- *Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? (eks ikke kunnskap om dette/søknadsprosess/lite utbytte ifht tidkrevende forarbeid etc)*
- *Har du hørt om VRI? (virkemiddel regionale innovasjoner) F eks vært på konferanser?*
- *Hvis ja - hvordan oppfattes søknadsprosessen til VRI? Søkt/ikke/hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?*
- *Er du tilknyttet forskningsmiljø på annen måte/samhandler du med andre aktører?*
- *Er det noe du føler det er behov for her som din bedrift kunne dratt nytte av ifht dette?*

**7. Fortell meg om nettverket ditt**

- *Hvordan er ditt profesjonelle nettverk – har du et stort nettverk?*
- *Hovedsakelig menn eller kvinner? Hvorfor? Føler du at kjønn spiller en rolle? Tror du det spiller en rolle for dem? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?*
- *Hvor ofte er du i kontakt med andre entreprenører? I hvor stor grad påvirker dem ditt arbeid?*
- *Bruker du en mentor? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? Hvor ofte treffes dere? Hva diskuterer dere?*

**8. Fortell meg om dine personlige egenskaper**

- *Hvordan vil du beskrive deg selv og dine egenskaper*
- *Hvor viktig er personlige egenskaper for å starte egen bedrift?*

**9. Fortell meg om fremtiden**

- *Hvordan ser du nye muligheter? Hvor får du inspirasjon fra? Gi eksempler*
- *Hvor ser du deg selv og bedriften om 5 og 10 år?*

**10. Fortell meg hva suksess er for deg**

## Appendix IV: *Interview Guide II (institutions)*

### Interview guide for banks

A. Tell us about your experience in the banking sector (office, work experience at the bank, other banks).

Two. Your bank is there any policy on working with entrepreneurs in general and women entrepreneurs in particular. And in other Russian banks?

Three. Women in general - are treated as a separate group of entrepreneurs in the banking sector (as at risk or vice versa can be as attractive clients) (India, microfinance for women entrepreneurs by foreign banks).

4. What is the general policy in respect of credit in your (other) bank: to lend only at the stage of growth and development of enterprises or emerging, too.

Five. It is considered a development stage company in the category of special risk?

6. Suppose that I - a woman entrepreneur - if I have hope for support in funding?

7. Imagine that you are a woman entrepreneur - where would you go for financial aid?

Eight. If your wife (mother, sister, daughter) said she wanted to become an entrepreneur, you would rather have it be supported or discouraged?

9. Ms (management): The Russian woman manager - what would you give her assessment, draw a portrait.

10. Ms (money): Do you think what a big problem, "take the money / get a loan" or "refund" in Russia today (in the beginning of the reform)?

11. Ms (marketing): How should we position ourselves (as entrepreneurs), what to look for when working with the bank? What advice would you give in this matter to women entrepreneurs at the "selling" themselves to the bank as a customer?

12. Ms (motherland): What is the peculiarity of Russia in the women entrepreneur, how would you say about a proposal, based on your experience in the business?

13. Ms (motherhood): concepts such as "Motherhood," "single mother", "mother of many children" - in any way with sound management of the bank?

14. Ms (macro / micro): Women in business - should we be this: the country's economy, your bank? How would you describe the role of women in business?

15. Ms (me): Is there a history of your bank (your experience) women in business, which are worth to tell, write, as an example of a "great woman entrepreneur"?

16. Have you learned any lessons (lessons learn) when working with women entrepreneurs?

17. What is your final word (final word)?

18. Can I see some general statistics of your bank on this issue (loans granted)?

19. Is there any book, article, which would you recommend to read the site - see?

20. Could you recommend me to someone in our town in the banking industry, your former colleagues to conduct an interview with me.

Thank you.

Middle level (the promotion of policies, implementation strategies, monitoring needs, requirements, service companies)

A. Tell us about your experience in the banking sector (office, work experience at the bank, other banks).

Two. Do you produce a gradation, classify you on a small / large, large state. f.l. / private entrepreneurs - in working with clients?

Three. Women in general - are treated as a separate group of entrepreneurs in the banking sector (as at risk or vice versa can be as attractive clients) (India, microfinance for women entrepreneurs by foreign banks).

4. How do you feel - is there any difference as a man / woman are managing their business - in fact they are, for example, provide you with information that serves the paper?

Five. Keep track of whether you want customers and whether you are building a new product? how often? If I as a business owner come up with the idea-bank product, as a client, as the end user - you'll listen to me. Have you noticed lately that somewhere needed innovation in dealing with customers.

6. You employee, the experience of working with entrepreneurs like there would be an entrepreneur, to have your own business?

7. Suppose that I - a woman entrepreneur - if I have hope for support in funding?

Eight. Imagine that you are a woman entrepreneur - where would you go for financial aid?

9. Ms (management): The Russian woman manager - what would you give her assessment, draw a portrait.

10. Ms (money): Do you think what a big problem, "take the money / get a loan" or "refund" in Russia today (in the beginning of the reform)?

11. Ms (marketing): How should we position ourselves (as entrepreneurs), what to look for when working with the bank? What advice would you give in this matter to women entrepreneurs at the "selling" themselves to the bank as a customer?

12. Ms (motherland): What is the peculiarity of Russia in the women entrepreneur, how would you say about a proposal, based on your experience in the business?

13. Ms (motherhood): concepts such as "Motherhood," "single mother", "mother of many children" - in any way with sound management of the bank?

14. Ms (macro / micro): Women in business - should we be this: the country's economy, your bank? How would you describe the role of women in business?

15. Ms (me): Is there a history of your bank (your experience) women in business, which are worth to tell, write, as an example of a "great woman entrepreneur"?

16. Have you learned any lessons (lessons learn) when working with women entrepreneurs?

17. What is your final word (final word)?

18. Can I see some general statistics of your bank on this issue (loans granted)?

19. Is there any book, article, which would you recommend to read the site - see?

20. Who are the workers in your submission I must speak on direct communication with customers?

Thank you.

Low-level (direct contact with clients, personal attitude, tracking the level of satisfaction, feedback)

A. Tell us about your experience in the banking sector (office, work experience at the bank, other banks).

Two. Do you have any installation to work with different categories of clients: Do you classify enterprises into small / large, large state. f.l. / private entrepreneurs - in working

with clients?

Three. Who are you no longer have to / like to work with male clients, female clients in a professional / personal level?

4. Imagine that you are a woman entrepreneur - where would you go for financial aid?

Five. Ms (management): The Russian woman manager - what would you give her assessment, draw a portrait.

6. Ms (motherhood): concepts such as "Motherhood," "single mother", "mother of many children" - in any way with sound management of the bank?

7. Ms (me): Is there a history of your bank (your experience) women in business, which are worth to tell, write, as an example of a "great woman entrepreneur"?

Eight. You want to leave the role of an employee and start your own business?

9. Have you learned any lessons (lessons learn) when working with women entrepreneurs?

10. What is your final word (final word)?

## Appendix V: Summary I (entrepreneurs)

### Summary Interview Subjects: 16 Women Entrepreneurs

In order to keep the information confidential all companies including the entrepreneurs have been given fictional names. Company A has an entrepreneur with a name starting with an A, Company B an entrepreneur starting with B and so on in order to make it easier for the reader to identify the matching company and entrepreneur.

The companies were all registered as a Norwegian corporation, Inc. [AS], except one\* that was registered as a sole proprietorship [enkeltpersonforetak]. The number of employees and annual profits has been generalized within a range instead of the actual number. N/A signifies that numbers were not available. One company\*\* was sold to another company shortly after. The entrepreneur is now the CEO of the other company.

Please find a short overview of the statistics below followed by a complete table of the 16 women entrepreneurs and their respective companies. Company info was accessed online through Ravninfo (2013).

<p><b>Average age of the entrepreneur:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Average age today: 48 ½</li> <li>❖ Average age when started this company: 42</li> </ul> <p><b>Role within the company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Entrepreneur and CEO = 14/16</li> <li>❖ Entrepreneur, other CEO = 2/16</li> </ul> <p><b>Industries represented:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Health (4)</li> <li>❖ Food (2)</li> <li>❖ Oil and gas (2)</li> <li>❖ Consulting (5)</li> <li>❖ Education (1)</li> <li>❖ Biotechnology (1)</li> <li>❖ IT (1)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Average age of the company:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Mean: 6 ½ years</li> <li>❖ Median: 6 years</li> <li>❖ Mode: N/A</li> </ul> <p><b>Numbers of employees:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Zero (4)</li> <li>❖ &lt; 5 employees (8)</li> <li>❖ &gt; 10 employees (2)</li> <li>❖ &gt; 50 employees (1)</li> <li>❖ &gt; 100 employees (1)</li> </ul> <p><b>Annual profits (NOK):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ &lt; 1 mill. (4)</li> <li>❖ 1-5 mill. (4)</li> <li>❖ &gt; 5 mill. (1)</li> <li>❖ &gt; 50 mill. (2)</li> <li>❖ &gt; 100 mill. (1)</li> <li>❖ N/A (4)</li> </ul>
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Company name:	Fictional name of the entrepreneur (age):	Role within the company:	Year Established (age):	Employees:	Annual Profit (NOK):	Industry:	Mission:
Company A	Anna (39)	Entrepreneur, CEO	1999 (24)	> 10	> 50 mill.	Oil and gas	Production of new machines and equipment
Company B	Beatrice (55)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2007 (49)	< 5	1-5 mill.	Consulting	Consulting services
Company C	Christine (28)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2012 (27)	< 5	N/A	Health	Delivering services related to fitness/nutrition
Company D	Diane (51)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2009 (47)	0	1-5 mill.	Food	Development and production of food for people with allergies
Company E	Eliza (65)	Entrepreneur, board member	2010 (62)	< 5	< 1 mill.	Health	Production of special products for the health sector
Company F	Fiona (49)	Entrepreneur, board member	2005 (41)	> 10	> 5 mill.	Food	Production and sale of exclusive food products
Company G	Gina (72)	Entrepreneur, CEO	1994 (52)	> 50	> 50 mill.	Consulting	Consulting services
Company H	Helen (44)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2013 (43)	0	N/A	Health	Production of special products for the health sector
Company I	Ilanna (51)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2004 (42)	> 100	> 100 mill.	Oil and gas	Services related to oil extraction
Company J	Jessica (47)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2005 (39)	< 5	< 1 mill.	Health	Services related to forensic analysis
Company K	Kayla (42)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2010 (39)	< 5	1-5 mill.	Education	Production of education material for pre-school
Company L	Lisa (48)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2007 (42)	< 5	< 1 mill.	Biotechnology	Development and production of plant proteins
Company M	Maybel (40)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2011 (38)	< 5	< 1 mill.	IT	Development of cyber security products
Company N*	Naomi (44)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2002 (33)	0	N/A	Consulting	Business Consulting Services
Company O	Olga (47)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2010 (44)	< 5	1-5 mill.	Consulting	Business Consulting Services
Company P**	Polly (63)	Entrepreneur, CEO	2005 (55)	0	N/A	Consulting	Business Consulting Services



## Appendix VI:

### Summary II (institutions)

<b>Institution:</b>	<b>Mission:</b>	<b>Founded:</b>	<b>Owned by:</b>	<b>Website:</b>
<b>Innovation Norway</b>	Innovation Norway gives local ideas global opportunities; they have more than 700 employees; offices in every county of Norway and in more than 30 countries around the world.	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 51% Ministry of Trade and Industry</li> <li>▪ 49% County Municipalities</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.innovasjon Norge.no">www.innovasjon Norge.no</a>
<b>Skape (Center of Entrepreneurship in Rogaland)</b>	Skape [signifies 'to create'] provides guidance and training to entrepreneurs in Rogaland. It is a joint partnership between different actors within the state government, the municipalities and the county governor.	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Innovation Norway</li> <li>▪ The Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration (NAV)</li> <li>▪ County Governor of Rogaland (Fylkesmannen)</li> <li>▪ Municipalities in Rogaland</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.skape.no">www.skape.no</a>
<b>iPark (Stavanger Innovation Park)</b>	iPark contributes to increased innovation and value creation in the region (Rogaland) through active participation and facilitation in the development of new businesses.	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statoil</li> <li>▪ SIVA</li> <li>▪ Rogaland County Municipality</li> <li>▪ Stiftelsen Rogaland Kunnskapspark</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ipark.no">www.ipark.no</a>
<b>Two National Banks (confidential)</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

## Appendix VII:

### Data Analysis: 16 Women Entrepreneurs

Company A	
<i>Education/experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Master, family-owned company, father was an entrepreneur</li> <li>▪ Wrote a thesis to test the product she founded her business upon</li> <li>▪ Travelled the world, and decided to start</li> <li>▪ <b>What about the business side of running your company?</b></li> <li>▪ “I learned by doing. Everyone is good at something, and you have to play with what you’ve got. You have to be good at making others good; you have to be able to play with others and their resources. Take advantage of each other in a positive sense; you will get far if you are good at that.”</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Married, two children</li> <li>▪ “My husband also works in the company; it is no longer just a company, but a life style”</li> <li>▪ “The biggest challenge is to be a mother in the midst of all this! Because it is no 9 to 5 job, that’s for sure”</li> <li>▪ “My husband started working when I had my first child; so I think that being a woman, and being an entrepreneur, requires that you have a good partner. That’s inevitable (...) you are dependent on support from those at home. Because I believe a woman ‘has what it takes’; she just has this little.... what shall I say? Women are good at having an overview of what’s going on; what to do when, how and where – and when you are an entrepreneur you kind of have that “double up”; because at home you can’t just leave your kids, and nor can you just leave your company; your company is treated like a child. And I believe that is how us women works; we take care of our children, we never leave them fully no matter what we do, either it is our actual children or our company-child. However the combination between the two are sometimes challenging.”</li> <li>▪ <b>How were they challenging?</b></li> <li>▪ “I used to travel a lot before. Now the kids have started school, but before I used to bring them with me to Vietnam, to Singapore, the US...I had them with me or had someone to take care of them when I went for meetings etc. either it was me or my husband; we backed each other up. Okay, I was becoming a mother, but I was dependent on others to help me out in situations. Now they are in school and I cannot take them out of there randomly, so during school vacations we travel, and I bring them with me. That requires more organizing and planning.”</li> <li>▪ <b>What’s positive with combing life as an entrepreneur with family picture?</b></li> <li>▪ “You have freedom and flexibility; you have the opportunity to include your family more in what you do. That doesn’t mean it’s necessarily the best thing to do, but I believe that my little fellas have been through most things – they have met with my clients, and because of that I build a better relationship with them; stronger ties with both clients, customers and partners by involving my family”</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I had an office, and was part of an environment – I had people with experiences to ask for advice. They were of great help to me”</li> <li>▪ “I quickly found out that I cannot be a prophet in my own country”</li> <li>▪ “I caught the travel bug, and decided to go presenting my products at exhibitions and conferences. I met a lot of people; one thing leads to another. And that’s the difference; most people just sit there and everything is</li> </ul>

	<p>supposed to be perfect. But in fact, things develop as you go...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is difficult to get the right competence; people with mechanical background, engineers... so instead of bringing the foreigners to Norway, I bring my company to them...”</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Created her own network by going overseas to exhibitions/conferences, meeting people where they were</li> <li>▪ “I called people up, and asked for a meeting; that is how I met people, and then I created a small agent network”</li> <li>▪ Only personal, informal networks – none formal:</li> <li>▪ “No, to be honest, I try to stay away from all of those public networks! It is a small world, and when I travel around for conferences, I usually meet the same people everywhere. We know each other...I don’t think one can...to put it that way; we chose our own friends. One can not just turn up in a group and say ‘these are my friends’, in a way, if you understand what I mean? You have to build a relationships, and you have to build it on trust”</li> <li>▪ People she met along the way – worked as mentors</li> <li>▪ “I get run down with calls from all these network-thingsies... I don’t know how many there are in this region, but it isn’t few! I just know that it is not an arena for me...we have our own networks, and the people you enjoy being with. I don’t feel the need to go out and tell the world how good I am and how well I am doing, and brag about everything I have created. I feel that’s what those arenas mostly are for. It is an area for bragging.”</li> <li>▪ “I travel a lot, I meet new people all the time. But if...I have friends living in small villages, and they are actively searching for networks in order to meet new people. But because I travel so much, I don’t feel the need. I don’t feel the need to spend my daily life, or all my evenings, heading to new networking events. I have a family, and a combination of all this – when I travel I am on, then I am really on, but when I am at home, I am at home.</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Had a job at the family-owned business where she earned money whilst opening her own business</li> <li>▪ Earned 3MILLNOK first year...</li> <li>▪ Challenge to find financing for going to visit conferences and exhibitions overseas; “there are so many start up companies that should be out there, and show their products to the world, but they cannot afford it. If you barely make money, you would not prioritize spending thousands going to conferences. I had caught the travel bug, and made time and money for it, and now 90% of my customers are overseas”.</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Are you part of a research environment?</b></li> <li>▪ - “No, I feel no need for that; in the beginning Innovation Norway was “on it” all the time. Everything they could do for me, everything they could help me with... They have people everywhere in the world. But I quickly realized that I knew more than they could offer me. In the beginning I was inexperienced, and I trusted them blindly – but I found out if you just have what it takes...if you are nice and accommodating...then it is those people you meet that will stay with you. Those you meet randomly and establish a connection with.</li> <li>▪ <b>Was there a special reason for you not getting engaged with Innovation Norway?</b></li> <li>▪ – “No...well, in the beginning you are a small company, and you don’t have the resources needed, you are not as strong financially and whatever...and you quickly realize that the larger companies are prioritized and they get the best service. Smaller companies [like mine], have never really been prioritized...”</li> <li>▪ “But you know, I was 21 years old, blue eyed and travelled around in the oil and gas world; they probably just looked at me someone.... [Laughter]”</li> <li>▪ <b>Did you ever consider applying for grants from any of them?</b></li> <li>▪ “Yes, and I did spend a lot of time on that in the beginning; writing a lot of</li> </ul>

	<p>applications. But you know they have a whole bunch of people; and you are supposed to do your financial accounting, your reports and everything...I got it sent in return all the time because something was missing or was wrong, and eventually I gave up. I decided to start spending the energy on what was actually going to make me earn a living instead of 'free money'. So I quickly concluded that no, this system will not grow my business.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes – heard about VRI; been to a presentation once. “There are many great, fine arenas and everything...but I have 24 hours only, and I don’t know...I just focus on what will make me earn a living. That is what I do.”</li> <li>▪ Other things you want to add?</li> <li>▪ “I think the Norwegian society focus too much on gender equality. Being an entrepreneur, and having success, that is related to the interplay between colleagues, between the families you have...I believe there is too much focus on gender equality, but we forget the teamwork. In order for a society to work and develop, and for new generations to be created, we need teamwork.</li> <li>▪ “I don’t think you can “acquire the entrepreneur spirit” through education. I don’t think you can take a course and make it work from there. It has to be from the inside; you either have this spirit or you don’t.”</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristic:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creativity, ‘a need to see the world’, create something with my own hands</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Success for me is helping others get a better life; that’s when I can say that I made it” → pointing to increasing revenues in order to support the projects they have for orphans</li> </ul>

<b>Company B</b>	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bachelor, classes at BI, management experience,</li> <li>▪ “I was frustrated over something at work, then I had this conversation with a friend of mine and he was like: hey, how about we create something together?”, and I was like, what do you mean? Let’s start a company, he said. You have competence, I have the money!”. He gave me unlimited time to think about it, I responded after two days: let’s do it. I quit my job after two months, and have never regretted. It’s been 6 years now”</li> <li>▪ Wanted to do something different: be a different consultancy company – working for people to make them better; “I still remember the first meeting with my auditor. I was telling them what we intended to do. He had written down ‘process guidance’. He didn’t understand what that meant. We wanted to be different. He senses that immediately. We wanted to create something for people. People in focus are our vision. In all and everything we do. We wanted to be a guide.”</li> <li>▪ “I am a business woman. I am a farmer’s daughter, I am a nurse, and I am a businesswoman. That is me.”</li> <li>▪ “As a farmer’s daughter I knew that the farmer has to be nice to its cows, then they will produce good milk. He has to be kind to his earth, and have the right knowledge and science in the way he run his farm; only then will the crops grow. Then the payment will come after doing this; and that is how I think too.”</li> <li>▪ Had previously been on other boards, had some experience of how to meet the requirements of the Companies Act – this was a useful experience</li> <li>▪ Public sector: some people reacted because she wanted to leave the public for the private sector</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Divorced, two children</li> <li>▪ Midst of life crisis</li> <li>▪ “I have one main challenge – and I am sure many have told you this;</li> </ul>

	<p>living a holistic life – because I need my spare time. I need to have a private life. My board members keep asking me; when do you every switch off? And at the moment that is the most important thing I am working on. I have been running this company, and at the same time been a mother – with a capital M. me, the individual me, has been abolished. And I cannot do that anymore. But I know its part of being an entrepreneur. And I love it! I keep telling myself that; I am so happy, because I am having so much fun!”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finding a balance is challenging</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Everyone told me I was crazy; then they corrected themselves and told me I was brave...”</li> <li>▪ Never cared about competitors, only acknowledged that they existed</li> <li>▪ The other business partner had experience from starting a company</li> <li>▪ “One of the biggest challenges; all the administrative work. I should have had an admin assistant! But there are no funds for that. You have to do it all, you have to take every role of running a company.”</li> <li>▪ “I have been so frustrated at times, there are times where I do not see the road ahead...last year at this time of the year I was so frustrated and felt nothing was working. But that’s a part of it...learning how to live with the different stages of a development process. Be patient, find peace. I’ve worked a lot on that, and now I am finally starting to get better at it! But we are going to make it far, and do good!”</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One of the assumptions/reasons for starting; network from previous work place crucial – had a large network prior to starting up</li> <li>▪ Board = crucial; “if I was feeling down and started loosing faith, I always told the other two on my board, and they filled me up again”</li> <li>▪ “My business partner was the most important person; he was my mentor. And the people of the board.”</li> <li>▪ “I am occasionally at Stavanger Chamber of Commerce and Industry; but nothing else...I get invitations to all sorts of things, but I don’t know if I want to be part of a network...I have my own leader network through my company – and I love it! It gives me so much. People have told me that I should be part of different groups on LinkedIn etc., but no.... I have no time! I have enough to do. Things are moving so fast!”</li> <li>▪ I travel to conferences abroad to get inspiration – I am very curious and want to meet people that are working with the same methods as I am doing</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Business partner gave money for salary – “loan”</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Took an evening course at SKAPE – this was very useful.</li> <li>▪ <b>Did you ever consider applying for funding from the SS?</b></li> <li>▪ “No, because my business partner had funding and gave a loan to the company. Additionally, I didn’t want to spend time and efforts on bureaucracy, which wouldn’t perhaps give me anything in end anyways. Also, I wanted to be able to be on my own, be free. I didn’t want anyone telling me what to do or how to do it, or disrupt the mission of the company.”</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adventurer, Crazy</li> </ul>
<i>Motivation/Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I wanted to do more of what I loved. Of those things that provides me with happiness. That was it. And working with people. Find out what works best for them. Those three things.”</li> <li>▪ “My company was never established to create money, but to create results for people”</li> </ul>
<b>Company C</b>	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bachelor, felt a need to “work with the whole human, not just parts. Our service is to adapt as much as possible to the individual. Helping</li> </ul>

	<p>individuals.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Hard to get a job with that education, was unemployed – started my own company”</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Single, no children</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Having employees; lots of challenges, and many new things all the time. (Admin work)</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I have been everywhere, trying to be visible and ‘out there’. I’ve probably held 60-70 presentations, and met a lot of people. After a while you start noticing that you are beginning to “harvest some of that”. People know who you are; they know what you stand for, and how you run your business. I feel today that the biggest gain is the network I have built. And I have managed to play around with that, and make the most out of it.”</li> <li>▪ “Now I am in the process of an application for funding from Innovation Norway; being in constant development is extremely important for me. I don’t like when my day consists of too many routines. I am constantly looking for new ways to develop myself, and I need a mentor around me to ask for advice. Then I can spend my time more wisely; spend less time fooling around. Because over time you find out what works and what doesn’t work, but when you have a mentor like mine you do more of what works, and less of what doesn’t work.”</li> <li>▪ “My dad is also an important mentor. He is also running his own company. But that’s more informal...talking about all the frustrations you are experiencing in your day-to-day activities. Because you employ people, but I am still alone, I am both the owner 100%, and I take all decisions by myself. Therefore it is crucial for me to have someone to “play ball with””</li> <li>▪ “I have seen a few networks in the region, such as ‘Driftige Damer’ etc....I have attended Lady Circle; that’s more Rotary just for women. A place where you meet ladies across disciplines, and to build relationships. (...) I am also part of the Chamber of Commerce...if there is events related to what I am doing, I usually join. But not otherwise”</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I never applied for funding – I just lived poorly! [Laughter] I was doing my work, and making out of it. I have been extremely active and dedicated in trying to succeed; be everywhere, be visible everywhere.”</li> <li>▪ “When I had status as unemployed I got something called ‘support for entrepreneurs’ from the welfare program. I had this source of income in 4 months. I spent those 4 months building up and laying the foundation for my company”</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Took Skape course</li> <li>▪ Prekubator: “that’s an important part of my story; because a company I worked for before went bankrupt. I was unemployed, but with my own company. That’s when I thought – okay, then I should just go all in because I have nothing to lose. And when you have status as ‘unemployed’ you are entitled 3-hour business counseling with ‘Jæren Produktutvikling’ (regional business development company). And I took advantage of that! I then started buying services from iPark, and had a business adviser there who has helped me a lot. I am paying for this service”</li> <li>▪ What do you get out of this relationship with iPark?</li> <li>▪ “I get a lot out of this; I get a business partner, a mentor, to ask questions and help me set targets for my company. My mentor has a great experience and a large network to know what’s the next best move for my company.” [He worked in the same industry]</li> <li>▪ She has not much experience with the support system;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I don’t know the support system very well, but my mentor from iPark does...and we did apply for funding for a bank who had this scholarship. But we were rejected...I think I am made a bit like this; “okay, I don’t get it – then I will just have to make it work by knocking on doors, go out and meet people and companies, and work hard to make a living! That is my way of spending my energy”</li> <li>▪ “But now I have come to a point where I do need external funding in order to be able to take that next step...and that is why we applied to Innovation Norway”</li> <li>▪ “I am not very familiar with the support system, and I remember when I was writing applications in the start up phase, it was tough. Time-consuming. I didn’t want to spend more energy doing it. Moreover, when you are unemployed you need to fill out all these applications to NAV...and I was so sick and tired of it! So I decided that this was not something I wanted to spend my time and energy on. And if you on top of it doesn’t get any funding, you just feel so empty...”</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “One of my strengths is that I don’t care about what people say about me...I think that is important! There are always people who have an opinion on something, but once you start noticing it, it will drive you crazy. So I don’t!” - Not scared; I don’t look back too much, I focus on the future instead of the past - Believe in gut feeling – go for what you believe in - I am a good communicator – I easily meet new people</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Success for me is when I can do what I love, and people around me love what we can offer them. It is not about money. Money is only necessary for development. Being able to reach out to more people, that is success for me”</li> </ul>

#### Company D

<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Different education, never finished any bachelor degree, but took different courses</li> <li>▪ “This is important for my story, I had 5 siblings...my mum died when I was only 15 years old, so I had all these little siblings I had to take care of. I was used to being ‘a boss’ at an early age. I never asked, I just did. I went to grocery shop and bough food, went home and made dinner. I never waited around and expected anyone else to do it, I knew I just had to do it myself to get things done”</li> <li>▪ Working part-time alongside the company in different jobs</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Married, one child; the child was the reason for the start up of the company; “my boy was born with all these allergies. We realized this already when he was 3 weeks old, and got sick every time I ate something he didn’t like. Much of my life already at that time was about food, or food for him. My sister had been through similar things, but never as bad as what we experienced. But she was a nurse and had experience, I had none. I asked her a lot of questions”</li> <li>▪ “I knew that if he was running around and ate a tiny piece of bread, that could actually kill him. It was difficult to handle for us. But when he was 7 years old, that’s when I started my company. I knew nothing. I had never even turned on a computer! But I thought, if nobody else wants to help these people with allergies, someone has to do it – and I guess that’s me!”</li> <li>▪ All the experiences with my son, in the kindergarten, at school, with other kids – that’s when I realized I just have to do this...</li> <li>▪ “I would have had to do it completely different if it wasn’t for my husband and his salary. He is basically the one financing the project; his salary pays for it”</li> <li>▪ “If it hadn’t been for my family supporting me...without them I could never have done it. Both financially, but also considering how much time I spend</li> </ul>

	<p>on it. At times I work 24/7. There's a lot more work to it than people think. I can tell by the questions they ask me that they don't understand how much work it is!"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "People are happy for me, but I get the feeling that they think 'how much time you are spending on it and how little you get back', but generally I would say people are positive..."</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Getting the right research and knowledge</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kvinnovasjon</li> <li>▪ "I just signed up for 'Driftige Damer'; a friend of mine sent me a link. I joined one of their meetings...but I don't know if I'll go back. It had been different if it was more informal, like you meet at a café to discuss and exchange experiences...but here we had to present ourselves every time. And if we take that same round every time, whenever a new person joins the network, then we never get to the next stage! I wish it was more of a 'café meet up'...and more like; if I need something as simple as a new business card, then I know that this person is doing this, and she can help me out, and I can help her with something I'm good at...more exchanging services and information. Knowledge exchange. But only women, I think. (...) As women we are allowed to be a little stupid at times, we, unlike the guys, don't think we have all the answers...but I am sure there are industry differences"</li> <li>▪ Mentor at iPark: "but her experience was not related to mine...she knew a lot, but not really anything about what I was doing..."</li> <li>▪ "I should have had someone to guide me...I had to do it all by myself. I started from scratch, and I did my own research."</li> <li>▪ Mentor Kvinnovasjon as well: he has also done a lot of things...</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Husband's salary...I have lost more money than I've gained.</li> <li>▪ Innovation Norway</li> <li>▪ Cheap loan</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Just a year after I made my website iPark called me up and asked if I wanted to become an incubator company. And most people go to them and ask, but they came to me because they were lacking entrepreneurs in the food industry. They had heard of me and wanted to contact me. They asked me 'if you could do whatever you wanted to do, if you just dream – what would you do? – And I had a whole list of things I wanted to do...'"</li> <li>▪ Good contracts with the municipality; cheap rent crucial!</li> <li>▪ Cheap loan from regional innovation support system for entrepreneurs</li> <li>▪ <b>Are you part of a research project?</b></li> <li>▪ "No, but I've applied for funding for research, but I have received any. They don't view this as something that needs research..."</li> <li>▪ "I spent so much time figuring things out, I wish I had had a professional who could help me from the start; there was a lot of trial and error. The method of elimination was widely used. (...) It would have been easier if I had received funding from the beginning. The process would have been smoother, and faster."</li> <li>▪ "My biggest challenge is the lack of knowledge and competence. I am thinking...I know the knowledge I need exists, but it is too costly"</li> <li>▪ "It would have been different if I at an early stage had the right people to help me guide my way forward"</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I have this driving force; I have to get things done. Passionate. Hardworking</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Success is creating something for someone; success is not about money...</li> </ul>



Company E	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High school</li> <li>▪ Husband the reason why started; also seeing others working at various nursing homes</li> <li>▪ Range of 'bad experiences' with patients leading up to starting the company</li> <li>▪ Works part-time in another job to finance this one</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Death in family. Husband gets sick with cancer and this particular problem; the products on the market were not useful</li> <li>▪ "The problem is the human factor; it is a very tough mentally. There are thousands walking around with the fear...many get bullied, and never complete school..."</li> <li>▪ "The day after my husband got his surgery, that's when I called up Skape and signed up for their course on starting a business. I thought that this was just outrageous! At this point I had no idea how many years it would take or how much money it would actually cost me. That seemed insignificant. The most important was that a lot of people were struggling with this, I needed to do something. Many people isolated themselves completely, like my husband. He was always at home, "forget about it", he said."</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Patents</li> <li>▪ Finding the right people to help you in the beginning; industry designers etc.; affordable ones... factories to produce products, producers...often abroad. (Much more of a challenge than service-related entrepreneurs)</li> <li>▪ "Everything had to be kept as a secret for a very long time, because of the patent. That was the most challenging part for me, because I felt I couldn't be honest when people asked me. That was tough."</li> <li>▪ "We have to travel around the whole country and also overseas to get business partners. Funding is necessary for ensuring the best and most affordable partners"</li> <li>▪ "I have to look overseas and sell my products in other countries to scale the business and start earning money"</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Through Skape; accounting company; then others... word of mouth.</li> <li>▪ Didn't necessarily have anybody prior to starting the company</li> <li>▪ Board of directors crucial for reaching out to new contacts and networks</li> <li>▪ <b>How do you find the board of directors?</b></li> <li>▪ "We had a good committee, made by the incubator at iPark. They have a lot of good mentors there, and are doing a great job"</li> <li>▪ Kvinnovasjon</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Own money</li> <li>▪ Two banks gave 'free money'</li> <li>▪ Innovation Norway</li> <li>▪ "The biggest challenges have been the financing. It would have been a lot easier if it weren't that tough to get the ends to meet financially. I have to be honest and say that. If they could only see the value of this. I have been everything, I've been almost impolite and reached out to a lot of people. A lot! I even reached out to directors of the government. I emailed them, called them...I actually get people back to work with this product, I tell them (the welfare state). Isn't that good enough?"</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skape course – took other courses there afterwards as well.</li> <li>▪ "An accounting company contacted me, and offered me a few hours with financial aid. It was fantastic news for me! I was there on no time, finally getting started! And they have been with me since, through good and bad times. They have been invaluable to me"</li> <li>▪ "I contacted Innovation Norway at an early point, to tell them what I was doing, that I was taking different courses...because I really wanted this to</li> </ul>

	<p>work out! And I asked them if they could put me in touch with medical personnel to help me out. No...they did not see the value in what I was doing. So that was then. It has not been easy! And also, I am an adult woman. There is a clear divide between those under 30 and those over 50 like me. Are you under 30 years old, that's when you get "the millions"...a study shows that 6 / 10 under 30 never gets any further with their company, however they receive plenty of funding! However, are you over 50, or like me over 60, then you get a lot less because they look at you as one that is just retiring soon...instead of looking at you as someone who can contribute; instead of looking at what this can do to the patient, for the region in generally. Because it is something completely new and innovative! But we have eventually applied for a patent now..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Innovation Norway gave eventually...but that was at year end, and they had no money left really. Nobody had told us to send the application at the beginning of the year, when the government issue money, instead of at year end when all the funding has been distributed..."</li> <li>▪ "I had to research and do everything on my own. Endless nights browsing on the Internet...phoning people. Emailing. Ask, ask, ask...I didn't find a single scholarship to apply for. There were some for improving the life quality, but my project wasn't found to be in that category...even though we thought this was a project where it would be easy to get 'free money'! But nope. Nothing."</li> <li>▪ "This one bank has been incredible! One of the directors of my board called them up and the director of the bank found this so important he promised me 200.000 just like that, after one phone conversation. He said that 'perhaps somebody in my bank has this problem as well – and I want people to be at work without problems! I want to help you get this out!'"</li> <li>▪ "I also applied to another bank, but they were more like 'what is this? This doesn't look like something important...'we didn't get the millions we applied for, but eventually they did give us some money. And by all means, everything helps!"</li> <li>▪ "I reached out to the welfare state [NAV] for funding, but it is a problem because when Innovation Norway has supported you, NAV cannot. Politicians have made that decision. That's just how it is."</li> <li>▪ No need for research – they have found out by 'trial and error'; "I feel we have now figured out what works and what doesn't work. We know there is a huge demand for this product. We have what it takes. But it's just the finances now."</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "I am so really passionate about this. I will make it work! I will reach my goal, without having to sell the company. I want to be part of everything myself. The goal is not to earn lots of money by selling it. I do not want that, I want to take part myself"</li> <li>▪ "I never give up! Because I want everyone to have the same quality of life as me. Nobody should lead an unhappy life. We are in 2013 – we should be happy!"</li> <li>▪ "My vision is: increased life quality for this group of people. They should have the same life quality, the one the rest of us just take for granted"</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Making this work – for all these people that are struggling with it!"</li> </ul>

Company F	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bachelor</li> <li>▪ Different kinds of jobs, last one in a restaurant – “I thought, well if she can start one, I can!”</li> <li>▪ “I’ve always had this idea. Since I was very young. My goal was always to be able to start something like that. I had no experience whatsoever; neither on the food side of it, nor the organizational. I have just learned by doing!” → all the entrepreneurs have said this</li> <li>▪ Business partner – found randomly through mutual friends</li> <li>▪ Lived overseas for a few years – collected menus, read receipts... “I was basically educated on Food Channel in the US!”</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Divorced, two grown-up children</li> <li>▪ “I was raised in the belief that you just have to go out there and try, unless you do this you never know what you are missing out on! Because frankly you don’t know if you can make it without trying!”</li> <li>▪ “Having time for the family has always been priority number one for both of us. This is a lifestyle; you are always kind of bound to your company, but there are two of us, so if one travels abroad, the other one is always there. And we have the flexibility to govern our own days.”</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We just put up a sign, we had no idea. We were drawing on the windows, telling people we would open ‘something’ soon. Based on this we received a lot of attention, newspapers wrote about us and people had a lot of expectations. We had a lot of expectations because we didn’t even know what this was going to be! [Laughter]”</li> <li>▪ “I remember in the beginning I thought; no, I have to pull out of this. It is never going to work! But at this point we had already made some investments, and I decided it was to late to pull out...”</li> <li>▪ “It was a jungle of rules, regulations, laws to comply with. It was a nightmare!”</li> <li>▪ “We received a lot of warnings when we started; you are crazy!”</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “No network to start with; but we have called around, we have reached out – we have asked everyone, “Tell us what to do!” We have played with ‘open cards’ and got a lot of support on the way.”</li> <li>▪ Part of local networks in the city, also the Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>▪ “We have been very proactive in seeking out people, attended conferences and events, and worked hard to establish a network”</li> <li>▪ “We are now in the process of establishing this mentor-program with a public institute. They have specific knowledge on food!”</li> <li>▪ B.partner: “I would never run a business by myself. Having someone else to “play ball with” is important for me”</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Own money; “It was difficult to get a loan; ‘two girls and a café, ha-ha, we’ve heard that one before!’ but we started small. Used our friends and family, got stuff from our own houses, and invested in just the necessary...”</li> <li>▪ Small bank loan</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skape course</li> <li>▪ “We were in touch with the local support institution for development of new companies, but we quickly realized we had nothing to do there.</li> <li>▪ Local bank and other institutions locally have contributed positively to make it work and make our company successful” → important to have local support to back you up, and give you “a place in the community”</li> <li>▪ “We applied to Innovation Norway, but they told us that if we spent 1 million krone, they could support us with 100.000...but we started small, we were below 1 million krone. So we had nobody to help us out there. We were too small for them! But we started earning money right away, which is quite unusual for the industry...”</li> </ul>

<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Being personal and informal in the way we approach our customers</li> <li>▪ Risk-taker</li> <li>▪ “Instead of thinking about everything that could go wrong, I just jumped straight into it and decided to see how it went. What’s the worst that could happen, I thought!”</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “The goal was never to earn money or make it something big. The goal was to create our own workplace, we wanted to make a living out of what we love doing! We wanted to create a place we felt were missing ourselves, a place where we would have like to go.”</li> <li>▪ “Earning money has never been a goal in itself. Happiness has, and that the people around me are satisfied.”</li> </ul>

<b>Company G</b>	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bachelor and other courses</li> <li>▪ Worked in men dominated businesses</li> <li>▪ Extensive management experience</li> <li>▪ Part of many start-up companies</li> <li>▪ Grew up in an entrepreneurial family</li> <li>▪ Unemployed – started the company based on previous work experience and what “she was good at”</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Divorced, new boyfriend, two grown-up children</li> <li>▪ Boyfriend provided a lot of support, both mentally and financially</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I did none of things the book says an entrepreneur should do! I just wrote yellow post-its and told myself I wanted to start a business”</li> <li>▪ “Our first client asked: “why should you be able to do this, you think?” – because I cannot afford to go wrong, I answered!”</li> <li>▪ “There is not a single recipe. You end up trying and failing, because you are lacking the funds to do exactly what you want to do. If I had the funding from the beginning, it would have been a lot easier”</li> <li>▪ “This is what I am missing; there is so little time to focus on being innovative, unfortunately. It is very limited the amount of conferences you can attend or the people you can contact dealing with such things as innovation...this is very negative. We should have been more innovative. There is too little time. There should have been a forum or a group, or a presentation of some kind of research on this. That could have been very very interesting!”</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reached out to university; utilized master students to help out with business plan</li> <li>▪ “We worked hard to get contacts – and get our first client; then they could tell the world who we were and that we had done a good job...that’s what’s essential in this industry.”</li> <li>▪ “I called people up, was very determined, I was never afraid of asking a CEO or CFO if they knew somebody else I could get in touch with. I always asked if it was OK to use them as a reference. That’s how I created my network”</li> <li>▪ No formal networks; but a mentor – mostly men – “If I’ve lost any battle or anything, I’ve never thought it was because I was a woman, but rather because I just wasn’t good enough at what I was doing”</li> <li>▪ “I received a lot of support from my boyfriend. He was an auditor and helped me with all the admin work; all the required documents etc. He was a very good mentor for me. I hated the paperwork!”</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I had no money – I had to toss and turn every single penny”</li> <li>▪ Boyfriend helped</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I never applied for funding; I just had to start earning money. As simple as that!”</li> <li>▪ Never been in touch with the support system – wasn’t in place when she</li> </ul>

	started
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disciplined</li> <li>▪ Determined</li> <li>▪ Hard-working</li> <li>▪ I never doubt in something; there are always opportunities</li> <li>▪ High working capacity</li> <li>▪ I stay on – never give up</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Success is when you see that people enjoy working in my company, and they look forward to coming to work”</li> </ul>

<b>Company H</b>	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bachelor, different courses</li> <li>▪ Experience at work (public sector), dissatisfaction here led to the start up of the company; “finding the key to what each individual like, is crucial” – “I saw that it worked just like medicine. It improved the life quality of the person so much!”</li> <li>▪ Working part-time as well as running business; has a good deal with municipality</li> <li>▪ “I’ve thought a lot about what it means to be ‘an entrepreneur’. I always thought it was the type of person you were. And maybe it is too... for me it just kind of came naturally”</li> <li>▪ “My boss is very interested in initiatives from the private sector, because these kinds of initiatives will not come from the public sector. It has to come elsewhere form.”</li> <li>▪ “Other colleagues think I am a little crazy doing this... maybe they are thinking I am using my job to take advantage of it just to realize my own project. But that’s not how it is...”</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Husband, one child from previous marriage</li> <li>▪ “I have a lot of flexibility – and freedom. That I love about being an entrepreneur!”</li> <li>▪ “When my daughter is with her dad, I work maximum hours I can. But when I have her, I try working as little as possible.”</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “After working a lot with it, the department of health and others picked up on it. I had to ask myself; how much can I stay away from work to do this? In the beginning, it gave my workplace a good reputation, but I realized it was better when I stayed away for a while to focus just on my company. I also had the challenge with travelling; how much traveling could I actually do to promote my company? Because I was the only employed in the company”</li> <li>▪ Patent application</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Joined forces with others with both different and similar experiences to develop a product</li> <li>▪ “My husband is a good mentor, and supports me a lot. Actually my daughter too; one day when I was insecure and told her I don’t know what to do... she replied; “but mum, what do you <i>enjoy</i> the most? – And that’s kind of how you have to think when evaluating the lifestyle of an entrepreneur”</li> <li>▪ “Lately I’ve realized that it is difficult to do this by myself. I want a team, more people in the industry who has the competence and knowledge to say something about the work we are doing. I need somebody who can say ‘this should be like this...or this...’ one can have many good ideas and thoughts, but sometimes it is important to “play the ball” with others to develop these ideas, and yourself!”</li> <li>▪ Advisory board of the company crucial</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Worked part-time</li> <li>▪ From national support initiative for entrepreneurs</li> </ul>

<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I was in touch with iPark, but...I think they are better at the oil and gas industry. They didn’t really have this good of a deal for me”</li> <li>▪ “I am familiar with the support system, but what I am missing is some research on this. I cannot do that myself. I am struggling with finding someone to do it for me. Different institutes thinks it’s cool and all that, but it’s not very scholarly, they say...but I think, just because this is about improving the life quality of elderly, it is just “sexy enough”, they are old people, that’s not ‘as important’...”</li> <li>▪ In touch with Ashoka</li> <li>▪ “I didn’t apply to Innovation Norway, because I really didn’t have any investments to do. It would have been easier if I got funding and had a small salary – then I could go in 100% doing this! It is difficult when you don’t have any specific to measure; do we measure the change in life quality? Medication? Sleep? It’s complex. They are old, but what we see is that what we are doing are making them happier.”</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communicative</li> <li>▪ Open</li> <li>▪ Honest, informal</li> <li>▪ “It is sad to see how the last days of your life are lived in such misery. Completely lacking any content, any joy. Sometimes I ask myself; if I was being filmed right now, and someone showed me this movie of myself, would I be able to stand for what I have done? The work I carry out, and what I say? – If someone secretly records my actions I want to be able to say, “yes, that’s how I work – that’s how I am”. So I am working a lot with changing the perceptions of people working in the public sector with the elderly. Involve them more...give them the dignity they deserve.”</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “When you get this unique moment with the individual, when you see how happy they are because they are given the opportunity to do what they love!”</li> </ul>

**Company I**

<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PhD</li> <li>▪ Work and study abroad</li> <li>▪ Few jobs available when graduated</li> <li>▪ Very groundbreaking education (exactly related to the product/service they offer)</li> <li>▪ Working in the public sector; identified weaknesses and limitations; decided to do something about it – few with her competence – challenge is the public monopoly on services such as hers;</li> <li>▪ “I was thinking, why is this taking so much time? It is destroying another human’s life – when you could do it much faster and better than what is being offered by the public at the moment. So I decided to see if there was something I could do about it. My motivation for starting was about my care for the society we live in.”</li> <li>▪ Worked in public sector; many had an opinion of her going to private sector – “taking advantage and earning money off others”</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Married, children</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public/governmental monopoly – no room for competition (only one competitor: the government)</li> <li>▪ Politics/current government</li> <li>▪ Admin work; “the biggest challenge starting my own company is all the admin work...it is a challenge to be able to understand and navigate through all the organizational work that has to done, the bureaucracy of filling out the right documents for the government...have employee</li> </ul>

	responsibility. It is so time-consuming! I spend most of my time on admin work, but whether that is the best allocation of time for me I don't know. It is a challenge for someone who has 9 years of education in the field I am working in!"
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Actively used her network; used people she knew at consultancy firms to help with business plans and admin work – with this she was able to apply for investor's money – crucial for success</li> <li>▪ iPark – incubator</li> <li>▪ Investors: reached out through network; "I contacted him, presented my business plan and he looked at me after an hour and said: I want to join you, how much do you need?'. They have stood by me for 8 years now. It is actually a very positive investor story, there are not too many of those!"</li> <li>▪ Part of many boards; to influence, Chamber of Commerce etc.</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Innovation Norway</li> <li>▪ Private investors</li> <li>▪ SIVA/Rogaland Kunnskapsinvest</li> <li>▪ Skattefunn</li> <li>▪ Norsk Forskningsråd</li> <li>▪ Living off the husband's salary; "maybe one of the advantages of being a female entrepreneur is that I can live off my husband's salary – it is much harder to be a male entrepreneur and having to support the family simultaneously."</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very familiar with the support system</li> <li>▪ Applied for VRI funding – but were rejected because they didn't fall under the definition</li> <li>▪ "Once I started the company we had 12% government ownership, which we thought would be positive. The politicians could see that the support system was in fact working... but no..."</li> <li>▪ "We won an award and was highly recognized by one ministry of the government, then other ministries are not even letting us on the market... they are speaking with two tongues. On one side they want women's entrepreneurship, but on the other side they are not willing to use the services women entrepreneurs offer. Women who start companies are often in the health- and care type of industries. It is unnatural for women to start in other industries, such as production of metals, and the like. But then our businesses comes into conflict with what the public government is offering, and the type of services the government is supposed to provide the society with. The problem is that they do not have the capacity to provide all the necessary services. (...) they have to let the private sector take part!"</li> <li>▪ "The day I do something wrong, I lose my salary. I cannot afford to do anything wrong, unlike the public; they can do wrong, but I can never do that."</li> <li>▪ "If Norway wants more entrepreneurs, they have to start using the services that their entrepreneurs provide the society with"</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Passionate, open, honest, hardworking, never giving up, my needs never come first...</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	"Success is simply to make a difference"

<b>Company J</b>	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bachelor</li> <li>▪ Management experience</li> <li>▪ “I wanted to have a say in something, and on how to do things”</li> <li>▪ 3 women started together, different yet similar experience and background</li> <li>▪ “I’ve always wanted to contribute to something more, something beyond the closed doors of an institution”</li> <li>▪ “I noticed that this was a heavy burden for many, and decided to do something about it to make it an easier tool for them to use”</li> <li>▪ Worked in public sector; negative reactions when leaving public for private</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Husband, two children</li> <li>▪ “my oldest love that I am able to sit at home and work. Because of this he knows more about my job – because frankly a lot of children have no idea what their parents do!”</li> <li>▪ “My husband is used to me taking off on my own [laughter], but it has required a lot from both of us though. He had to change his work situation in order for me to run my own company, and in order for an improved family life and work/family balance”</li> <li>▪ “Being an entrepreneur has definitely affected the family. All the time spent on the company instead of the family. At the same time, I have the opportunity to work from home, and stay at home if the kids are sick. At times I think that it has affected my kids negatively, but generally I feel that it is a value in itself to show them I work hard; I never give up. That’s an important value in life. but my oldest son told me off a few years ago, so now we have this agreement that I never work between 5pm and 8pm on weekdays. And that agreement I keep.”</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Even though it’s hard, I could never go back to a ‘regular job’ again. If I am working somewhere, and I want to go and buy myself a soda – and I can’t! oh my, that would never work for me.”</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I actively used my network to test the product out. My network of managers was big, so I felt sure that this product was something of value”</li> <li>▪ “I find people with the same values as me, but someone who can at the same time challenge me, and go against me”</li> <li>▪ Not part of any formal networks; “those girls’ networks are just foolish”</li> <li>▪ The competence she needs, she makes sure are on the board of directors</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Own money</li> <li>▪ iPark</li> <li>▪ Bank – ‘free money’</li> <li>▪ Innovation Norway</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “The financial is the most challenging – because you start from scratch, with nothing. You have to do a pretty good job, which you have to pay others to do before you can actually get money yourself. Innovation Norway has been invaluable to me!”</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I am a fighter! Take risks.</li> <li>▪ “I don’t believe I am good at everything, I am very open for other’s competence and knowledge. This I believe is an important characteristic of an entrepreneur. It is important to know that there are other people who can help out on things you are not as good at”</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Being able to do what I love</li> <li>▪ Make it easier for others</li> </ul>



Company K	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Master</li> <li>▪ Experience from start-ups</li> <li>▪ Management experience</li> <li>▪ Worked in iPark</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Husband</li> <li>▪ “In some ways it is good, because for many years I have run things myself so actually being employed is quite difficult. Having somebody say can I have a holiday! [laughter] so little things like that... flexibility is fantastic. Choosing when to do things. But I really miss being part of a team.”</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	N/A
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “So...I think a lot of good companies come from discussion. Get your thoughts out there, see how rubbish they are or those are actually quite good – how does that work. So, it can be quite lonely.”</li> <li>▪ “But what I have done, one of my jobs as a CEO for these startups is to find a network relevant to that company. So I build up board members and advisers. They have specific knowledge in that area to say something about this, what does the market look like, and how do I get into that company.”</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Government; “Well, early stage companies can get an awful lot of money from the government. An awful lot! But it’s always money that has to be supported with your own money.”</li> <li>▪ Innovation Norway, VRI, Forskningsrådet</li> <li>▪ “We got some external angel type investors, really nice local people that were very philanthropic. They made a bit of cash and they would like to see it developed in the region.”</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “They are different. VRI is lovely. They are very clear on how they want to use their money. And it is people you can talk to, they are nice”</li> <li>▪ “The big money comes from Forskningsrådet. And that is what you expect. Because they fund the major R&amp;D projects. They do the base research, Innovation Norway helps more with commercialization money. They pay for me effectively. Business side. VRI is nice because once you get beyond university stage and verification stage of Forskningsrådet you don’t get money for R&amp;D. VRI is good at funding technical projects that is very difficult to get money from. That’s the good role of it to play. It does seem to be a cut-off. University and early stage and after that it’s all commercial...but actually an awful lot of it is R&amp;D, proof of principle, proof of concept.</li> <li>▪ “The good is that it is very consultative, it is very easy to say: does my project fit? It is easy to work out whether it is appropriate or not before you apply. It’s just down to the areas they have.”</li> <li>▪ “A lot of the Forskningsrådet stuff – they have tried to make the application process standard, but if you are a very early company – they ask ‘could you send a short 10-year accounts book...’nooo, because they don’t exist...! You know. ‘what is your profit margin’ – eh, we don’t have one. They don’t fit the type of company we are, because they are across the board. But VRI is a lot simpler.”</li> <li>▪ “If you are start up company there is a lot of information you don’t have yet because you are in the early stages, so...”</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Asking the difficult questions</li> <li>▪ Not scared of anything</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	“When I see the light of understanding in somebody’s eyes, then that’s success for me”

<b>Company L</b>	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PhD in what the company is doing</li> <li>▪ Worked in a company where they cut down on the workforce; got a deal and they paid her salary for 11 months; that's when she founded her own company</li> <li>▪ Education and experience from abroad</li> <li>▪ There was a crisis in society, on internet security, lead to the start up of this</li> <li>▪ From an entrepreneurial family; "my dad knew how hard it was to start a company, so he wanted me to chose something much more nice and secure than the entrepreneurial lifestyle... but in Norway you have plenty of security! In the US however, you can fail so badly. Whereas in Norway you have a huge safety net. I wonder why there aren't more entrepreneurs in Norway!"</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Husband; good mentor; "It is financially very risky if both are involved in entrepreneurial activities. He helps me out a lot"</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finding the right personnel and knowledge</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I have built a large network from studying abroad</li> <li>▪ "I have been through the mentor program of Innovation Norway and through iPark – but it never really worked out...they didn't really have much to offer. But I've asked around, without having a dedicated mentor!"</li> <li>▪ "The positive thing about iPark is that there are so many entrepreneurs in one place. We go out for beers, and share frustrations, experiences and tips. it is what you make out if it yourself!"</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "The biggest challenge is financing and finding the right people. We need specialized people. We already have 3 on board, all with a PhD and a minimum of 30 years in the industry..."</li> <li>▪ Innovation Norway, EU project</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "We sent an application to 'Forskningrådet', but it takes so much time. Innovation Norway is a little bit less bureaucratic...but the Forskningrådet is incredible, I just try to stay away from all of it! I need to spend my time wisely and on the things that are actually making me earn money..."</li> <li>▪ "One of my advisors at incubator, at iPark, told me about VRI funding. It was not very bureaucratic, even though we had to go through Forskningrådet's website, which always complicates things a little bit more..."</li> <li>▪ "I had these tiny, 100.000-krone projects – below the 'bureaucracy par'!"</li> <li>▪ "For me it is essential to stay in touch with the support system and the research institutes, both to find other talents as well as keeping the network active and alive, as part of developing the products we have."</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Never give up! Fighter. "If the goal changes, I still enjoy the process getting there, by finding out and learning new things. But simply, never give up."</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "Creating a good place for people to work"</li> </ul>

Company M	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PhD</li> <li>▪ Worked as a researcher</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	N/A
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding the market</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I started out with a very small network, but gradually I built myself a network; I am not afraid to contact people.”</li> <li>▪ Not part of any formal networks</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Own funding</li> <li>▪ VRI</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Little experience with the SS</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I never think of what could go wrong. I just do it. I see opportunities not barriers”</li> <li>▪ Risk taker, I never give up, I am determined</li> <li>▪ “One has to be able to stand through both good and bad times, and work hard to succeed”</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Success is when I deliver something that is expected of me or better than expected! That means money.”</li> </ul>

Company N	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bachelor/Courses related to business education (marketing and management), started a master’s program but didn’t complete it</li> <li>▪ Worked in a bank, only private sector</li> <li>▪ Experience from a start up company</li> <li>▪ Management experience</li> <li>▪ On different boards</li> <li>▪ Got burned out; I was sick of being one in a million – I felt something was missing...I was sick of working in the industry I was working.</li> <li>▪ Read a book “you are more than you think you are” – and I felt someone was describing my philosophy; success internally gives success externally – “it was all about the individual human being”. I called up the author of the book, and he asked me if I wanted to work with him!</li> <li>▪ “I learned so much about values from working with him; from being that business lady with a suitcase and Kotler’s models; now the real me was coming out!”</li> <li>▪ “I was such a ‘good girl’, worked and worked and worked. I had to perform all the time, at all stages. The body couldn’t take it anymore. I felt sick, and had to build myself up again...”</li> <li>▪ Personal experience led to start of company</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Husband, to children; I discuss work with my husband a lot, mentor</li> <li>▪ Also an entrepreneur</li> <li>▪ Have a cabin, away a lot – being entrepreneur allows for this to work</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	N/A
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I found a mentor myself; a partner is important. One to discuss things with, ask ‘was this good?’. He has a lot of experience from what I am working with. I needed one that could challenge me – tell me what was good, bad and what we could do be better. Additionally, he had a large network for me as well”</li> <li>▪ No formal network but Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>▪ Made a network of women herself; with a theme each time they meet; 12 women entrepreneurs</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Own money</li> </ul>

<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I miss a forum where women can discuss at the same level as men discuss. With women it is always about those soft values, lots of talking, little work. I like directness, I like someone telling me what I do well and what I do badly. I am used to working with men, they are more direct when they speak. The women entrepreneurs I’ve met...I prefer male ones because of that.”</li> <li>▪ “I haven’t been very active because they want extensive business plans and lots of documentations. I am a creative entrepreneur, I don’t have time to do all that. nobody wants to take part of it, because it’s just too much structure, too many rules to comply with. It leaves no room for creativity, which I find worrying because at last it should be about innovation! I miss more openness and room for thinking differently. Maybe for the technical companies; the oil and gas industry – maybe its perfect for them, but for us running a company on the social side of it, it is not...”</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	▪ I don’t care what other people think about me
<i>Success:</i>	N/A

<b>Company O</b>	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bachelor BI</li> <li>▪ Experience from private sector</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 4 children</li> <li>▪ Divorced – every other week with the kids; “I can be anywhere when I don’t have the kids, and I work 24/7. But the other week, then I am ‘very mom’”.</li> <li>▪ “Having kids and running your own company is not easy, not financially nor practically. Especially hard is it to stay away from the marketplace for one year during maternity leave. You are dependent on having someone to help you out”</li> <li>▪ “It’s nice because my daughter sometimes tell me she is proud of me. I ask her what she’s proud of, and she says that people listen to me, she hear people talking positively about what I am doing professionally. She says it’s aspiring, she has something to look up to.”</li> <li>▪ “She [my daughter] knows that I have been away much, but she also knows that I have been present a lot as well. I think I am a role model as a mum for her. She does say that I am a very good mother/ when I am there, I’m there. I am present in the moment. She has travelled with me. She is the oldest, and I had to take her along to things all the time. So she was always curious. She’s seen me in action/ last time I was lecturing, she went with me. And she said; “oh I remember when I was little and used to go with you to the lectures”</li> <li>▪ “I want to teach my kids how to clean up, how to work – because things just don’t work out by themselves!”</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	N/A
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Business partnership for me is almost as committing as a marriage, both good and bad. I experienced that when I had four partner and we all had the same share of the company. It’s a challenge. I learned from that. now I am very picky about who I choose, based on what I believe in and what I know works. Only then do I invite people to build the future with me.”</li> <li>▪ “I am not part of any of those networks. Oftentimes I think those networks are a little dull. Too much coffee and...a little dull. To make use of a network like that requires, for me, people working with similar problems. But at the same time, they cannot be competitors. And it can’t be too many at once. It should be just a hand full of men or women – interested in some of the same things. Such as a “growth network” – have a few companies with ambitions of growing. Meeting up say 5 times a year to discuss experiences.</li> <li>▪ “I use more my informal networks, and those as mentors. And they use me.</li> </ul>

	<p>More adhoc, informal. Once it becomes too formal, I think it's too much work. I feel I have enough of that structured type of work in my work life, I don't need more of it. I get sick of organizing.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“What becomes clear to me throughout this interview, is that there are all these stairs. And I believe that all this about ambitions, about growth – that is where it stops for many women, because they let the motherhood prevent them, both good and bad. We need help someone helping us firstly from step 1 to 3, then maybe from 5 to 7, and to 15...”</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Own money; also started earning money early and were able to go to the bank for loan. But she didn't have any big investment but her computer</li> </ul>
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am part of a committee of iPark for new companies, but not more than that...</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good work capacity</li> <li>Ability to be in constant development; never resting</li> <li>Self-confident</li> <li>Social skills – to get to know people; good at networking</li> <li>“I think what is challenging, and very typical for entrepreneurs I believe, is that we are often very good at get the things going, we have lots of ideas. But finishing up, completing, quality etc. – I don't feel as good at doing that. but I have helpers now – I have a good accountant. I have a good auditor, good connection with the bank. Everything I am bad at myself, I need to find others that are better.”</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	<p>“Success is when what I am doing is having an effect on those I am working with. That's the driving force number one. That they are enjoying it, and that it's making their life better. That's when I know that what I am doing is making a difference”</p>

<b>Company P</b>	
<i>Education/Experience:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master, working public and private</li> <li>“So when we were going to move back home, I needed to make a decision. Should I go back to the bank and insurance business or should I kind of follow my new...”</li> </ul>
<i>Motherhood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“So, moving to the US and not being able to work that was a pretty hard start. I decided I need to fill my day with some important activities. I have two kids, 9 and 11 when we moved there, and of course they needed some kind of support.”</li> </ul>
<i>StartUp-phase/other challenges:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think the hard part in the beginning is to get enough funding. Because it is always stressful when you start a business you don't know if you can pay your bills the next month or not, so to really focus on a solid budget when you are starting the business is quite important.</li> </ul>
<i>Mentor/Network:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board is important: “of course the easiest way is always to ask your husbands, your friends and neighbors... But I thought that, “ummm” – if I'm going to have success I need to ask people that can give me advice.</li> </ul>
<i>Financing:</i>	
<i>Support System:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“And I...rented a location at the innovation park, because I asked if it was possible to get any kind of economical support. You know to start a business. But they said no. As long as you start as a consultant... No. As long as you have an idea that you are going to sell yourself, you wont have any support. If you have invented a tool, you know, something that someone can be using. They will be helpful to assist you with some money to do technical research, and maybe help you so you can produce it, etc. But as long as you are selling yourself as a consultant...”</li> <li>“I think... for this region, Rogaland, we are talking about Rogaland – when the economy is good, you know, it's easier for more people to be creative as well because you feel you have the safety net, and you know</li> </ul>

	<p>you have the possible customers, right? So then more people crave to start their own business. And... some of the businesses that really had a great success they have experience from big companies and they have a dream to take the knowledge and start as a consultant in the same business – because they know the business, they have a network – and they know about the market situation. And then of course if they need more people they know who to pick that has worked well together with before. So some of those businesses have done really really well. But you understand what I mean? If, because there will always be ups and downs in life, when the downturns in 2008 Rogaland had less trouble than some other districts, right. Because yeah. The big companies, everyone needs energy all the time – so that’s why we are at a very lucky spot. To be honest, if you ask the same question to a person in Nordland or Finnmark the answers would be completely different.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “In Rogaland way too much is focused on the energy. And of course we do have artistic people who start businesses (food), or of course food, but still in Oslo area the variety is completely different. And again it is about the market situation. Because I think, a lot of people they are attracted to be the areas because they could see the network and the business possibilities are higher. So again, if you do the same research in Nordland or Finnmark – because you should think it is obvious if you don’t have a job, if you have to be creative and invent something, and of course – with online you can do business all over the world. But I think if you are in an area, if you are in a negative circle, you don’t really have the energy to go up 6 o’clock in the morning and be creative.”</li> </ul>
<i>Personal Characteristics:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Then I quit my job and moved to the US together with husband. It was really hard to quit my job because I love working. I am pretty much a workaholic. It is extremely important for me when I go to bed in evening to think what I have done in the day, to know that I have done something important to other people. I need to use my energy for something positive.</li> </ul>
<i>Success:</i>	N/A