

The logo for WeRin features the text "WeRin" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "i" is lowercase and has a small yellow dot above it. The text is centered within a white circle. Surrounding this central circle are several colorful, fan-shaped segments in shades of purple, pink, orange, and yellow, arranged in a circular pattern.

WeRin

Meet 10 successful female role model entrepreneurs/change makers embedded in the regional ecosystem.

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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INTRODUCING THE CHANGE MAKERS

As part of the **WeRin** research & discovery phase, we are delighted to showcase our first 10 successful female role model entrepreneurs already embedded in the regional ecosystem.

By highlighting tenacious, ambitious and resourceful female entrepreneur role models and sharing their realistic advice on how they are succeeding, despite existing barriers, we take a step to strengthening female graduate entrepreneur inclusiveness.

The interviews, conducted by female students and aspiring female entrepreneurs offer great learning for entrepreneurial education. Our interview teams gain firsthand knowledge about the entrepreneurial journey and have access to hands-on support and advice from a wide variety of experienced, inspiring and motivating role models.



Dr. Sue Rossano-Rivero



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My entrepreneurial journey....



Tricia Balfe



Business Name

XMLdation www.xmldation.com



Place

Ireland & Finland



Year started as entrepreneur

2007



Number of employees

20



What is your highest level of education?

Masters

I co-founded a software company in 2007 with a 'pure technology' idea. I had no background in product management or sales. Now we sell our product in three continents.

My targets are

I want the business to grow and I want the business to be good for its employees, customers and investors/owners.

My Challenges are

Figuring out how to navigate a world that is dominated by very large companies

This is what characterises me

1. Independent 2. Tenacious

The brands that inspire me

WIKIPEDIA

The Free Encyclopedia

My motto is:
Keep on going!

The role models that inspire me:

Angela Merkel and people I know personally who have run businesses through good and bad times

Which networks are you involved in?

Bank payments related networks internationally

My advice to girls and women who want to realise their dreams:

1. If you want to do something, go for it.
2. Listen to others but do what you think is right yourself and be patient.
3. Many, many successful people worry that they are not good enough. You won't know whether you are good enough until you try.

When I'm not working:

Family and food. I enjoy outdoor stuff: walking, cycling, swimming, gardening. Reading of all sorts, and music.



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My entrepreneurial journey....



Before Autheos, I was in a COO leadership role of a venture backed company, Peerby. It made me really yearn for more of an ownership component. I was approached to co-found Autheos and that gave me a different type of freedom to create a product that I thought was missing in the market and could also align with some of my personal ambitions for the marketing and advertising industry.

My targets

To expand my network and connect with other people who share similar values to mine from a societal impact perspective, and looking to create more equity in the world from a gender, ethnicity and socio-economic point of view.

My Challenges are

Learning to cope with the highs and lows of maintaining a company and making it work. Making the right decisions and figuring out what the right pricing, clients and markets are.

This is what characterises me

- 1. Ambitious
- 2. Resourceful

The brands that inspire me



The role models that inspire me:

Jessica Alba Kim Kardashian Jennifer Lopez

Which networks are you integrated in?

Meetup –an easy way to find groups of people with whom you can establish a mutually beneficial relationship to discuss issues and learn.

My advice to girls and women who want to realise their dreams:

1. We are our own worst enemies sometimes. Don't let the fear of what someone else thinks deter you from the path of what you want to become.
2. Have a positive mindset, this will bring you so much energy and confidence and allow you to take the first step.
3. Share your thoughts and ambitions with other people, this will help you find people that can support you either through collaboration or with advice.

When I'm not working:

I love reading. I work on making myself better from a professional perspective. I love watching cooking videos, reading cookbooks, experimenting in my kitchen or chatting with friends. I recently started to meditate more often and have more time to self-reflect.

Christina Calje



Business Name
Autheos <https://www.autheos.com/en/>



Place
Amsterdam, The Netherlands



Year started as entrepreneur
2009



Number of employees
2



What is your highest level of education?
Masters' degree

My motto is:
If you don't ask, you don't get.



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Jalila Essaidi



Business Name

Inspidere

[Inspidere](https://www.inspidere.com)



Place

Eindhoven, The Netherlands



Year started as entrepreneur

2010



Number of employees

5



What is your highest level of education?

Master's degree in Art Education

My entrepreneurial journey....



My strong network and entrepreneurial up bringing helped me develop valuable and successful projects and outputs, such as 'Bulletproof Skin' and Mestic®. I founded two companies Inspidere® BV and BioArt Laboratories during my entrepreneurial journey. I draw inspiration from nature and I believe that everything society needs can be found in natural products and processes.

My targets are

1. Make the world a healthier and more beautiful place
2. Have long-term impact

My Challenges are

Short-term solutions to problems are not viable and policy needs to think longer term.

This is what characterises me

1. Independent
2. Tenacious
3. Proud

The brands that inspire me

None at the moment.

The role models that inspire me:

I get my inspiration from nature and natural processes and materials.

Which networks are you integrated in?

I have a network of strong women that helped me and showed me the way.

My advice to girls and women who want to realise their dreams:

1. It is important to find a strong network and use the network to ask for help from mentors and others with experience.
2. Take a chance and "jump" into the project that you want to develop.
3. A good idea is the most important part of the entrepreneurial journey.

When I'm not working:

I am always working.

My motto is:
Exploring boundaries
by piercing barriers!



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My entrepreneurial journey....



Clare McSweeney



Business Name

Kuul Play [Home - Kuul Play](#)



Place
Ireland



Year started as entrepreneur
2020



Number of employees
1



What is your highest level of education?
MSc. Exercise Science & Health Promotion

Full of challenges, excitement, visualising, actualising, many iterations, persevering, celebrating and much more!

My targets are

1. Transform children's experience of movement & activity
2. Leverage technology for access - a positive play experience should be a universal right for all children.
3. Realise positive global social impact & value in addressing one of the world's most pressing health problems.

My Challenges are

Investment – growth dilemma

This is what characterises me

1. Curious
2. Mindful
3. Adaptability

The brands that inspire me



The role models that inspire me:

Serena Williams
Sara Blakely

Which networks are you involved in?

Network Ireland

My advice to girls and women who want to realise their dreams:

1. Solve something meaningful that you're passionate about
2. Don't be afraid to dream big or to pursue the unexpected path
3. You don't need to know it all - just start!

When I'm not working:

Spend time with family & friends
Run or anything that involves fun movement & activity
Travel Adventures
Laugh!

My motto is:
Life is short, don't wait to dance!



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My entrepreneurial journey....

Working as a consultant engineer in food additives since 2007. In 2011, I received support from the Ministry of Industry and Technology for my thesis "Natural Antibacterial from Egg Shell". I received grants to develop a product from my research and began small-scale production. In 2014, I won the Monitise prize in the ITU Core Big Bang Competition. I have started sales to Singapore by IPI Singapore. I have also taken support of Hamdi Ulukaya Girişimi in 2019.

My targets are

Once you have enough education, experience, and passion, the world is yours! The only limit is you. My goal is to be a clean label food products' pioneer.

My Challenges are

I had no work experience, but I had a Master's Degree and Ph.D. so I started working in several food additive industries. Once people heard about my project, they thought it would not make it to market. I worked for 5 years and supported the company's finance until we started to sell the product.

This is what characterises me

1. Hopeful
2. Enthusiastic

The brands that inspire me

Chobani

The role models that inspire me:

Marie Curie

Which networks are you involved in?

İTÜ
Istanbul University
Chamber of Food Engineers Turkey

My advice to girls and women who want to realise their dreams:

1. Love yourself; you are valuable. Wherever you live, get a good education, read as many books as you can.
2. Do your best, and do not compare yourself with others
3. Believe your dreams

When I'm not working:

Play Badminton
Spend time with my family
Yoga
Reading

Elif Güngör Reis



Business Name
Arkim <https://arkim.org>



Place
Istanbul, Turkey



Year started as entrepreneur
2007



Number of employees
6



What is your highest level of education?
PhD candidate

My motto is:
Do your best!



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My entrepreneurial journey....



Melanie Rieback



Business Name

Radically Open Security <https://radicallyopensecurity.com>



Place

Amsterdam, The Netherlands



Year started as entrepreneur

2014



Number of employees

Approx. 40 freelancers



What is your highest level of education?

PhD

I started Radically Open Security because I had some philosophical differences with the market players in the computer security industry. I don't believe in selling vulnerabilities for offensive usage or in building surveillance solutions or in non-transparent black-box consultancy. I wanted to create a place where there was room for the idealism of ethical hackers and members of the open-source community.

My targets are

1. To make staff, customers and society happy.
2. To deliver the value at the quality that I am promising.
3. To help others start their own non-profit companies.

My Challenges are

The logistics of running an organisation.

This is what characterises me

1. Computer security professional
2. Social entrepreneur

The brands that inspire me



The role models that inspire me:

Andy Tanenbaum, Professor Emeritus of Computer Science at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Which networks are you involved in?

1. The Hacker Community
2. Post Growth Movement

My advice to girls and women who want to realise their dreams:

1. Believe in yourself. You can do pretty much everything you want to do. Don't worry about something being weird or unusual.
2. Try to find people that you admire and respect, and reach out to them. You might find that they are willing to talk to you, mentor you or maybe just have a cup of coffee and give you some advice.

When I'm not working:

Enjoying Amsterdam. I used to travel a lot and I plan to do it again when the circumstances get better.

My motto is:
I try to be useful
and leave the world
better than I found it



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My entrepreneurial journey....

Aslı Elif Tanuğur Samancı



Business Name
BEE & YOU

<http://www.beeo.com.tr>



Place
Istanbul, Turkey



Year started as entrepreneur
2013



Number of employees
Approx. 200



What is your highest level of education?
PhD

I discovered propolis (a natural resin collected by bees) and royal jelly when I was looking for a solution to my son's immunity condition. After learning that propolis and royal jelly are not produced in Turkey, I decided to produce them myself for my son. I started working on my initiative with the dream of delivering these valuable healing products to everyone.

My targets are

1. To make BEE & YOU a leading world brand.
2. To show everyone the healing properties of natural bee products.
3. To support skin care products containing natural bee products.

My Challenges are

Counterfeit bee products which are now very common

This is what characterises me

1. Diligent
2. Assertive
3. Energetic

The brands that inspire me



My motto is:
Never back down!

The role models that inspire me:

Oprah Winfrey

Which networks are you involved in?

1. Natural & Organic Food Community
2. International Honey Commission

My advice to girls and women who want to realise their dreams:

1. Their philosophy should be "if nobody can do it, I must do it".
2. Believe in your desire, work hard and don't be afraid to take risks.
3. If you have an innovative business idea, knowledge and courage, there are many people who can help you.

When I'm not working:

I like to travel and see new countries.



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My entrepreneurial journey...

- Is a perfect teacher showing me how to fail, learn and move on.
- Full of new challenges offering me life-long learning to develop every day.
- Opportunity to see how I overcome challenges and turn them into success stories.

My targets are

1. Total loss due to scrap & rework is 8 Trillion USD. My target is to reduce this loss by 10% and positively impact the global economy and the environment.
2. Revolutionize production industry with engineered AI and applications.
3. Make Simularge the #1 platform for Industry 4.0 applications.

My Challenges are

- Digital Maturity Level is not high enough; the industry needs education.
- Investment-growth dilemma
- Hard to find talent

This is what characterises me

1. Ambitious
2. Outgoing
3. Hardworking

The brands that inspire me



The role models that inspire me:

Jeff Bezos Suna Kirac

Which networks are you involved in?

Alchemist Accelerator (San Francisco - USA)
Digital Twin Consortium US
ITÜ ARI Technopark
SAHA Istanbul (Defense and Aerospace Network in Turkey)
Istanbul Chamber of Industry

My advice to girls and women who want to realise their dreams:

1. Believe in yourself and do not doubt your capabilities.
2. If you have a strong gut feeling about something, listen to it.
3. Remember, women's emotional intelligence is a special power! Use it for influencing and inspiring.
4. Don't force yourself to take 100% logical actions. Sometimes it's not about logic, it's about emotions. Passion is an emotion that helps you to find new ways.

When I'm not working:

Dining out with friends
Traveling
Salsa & Bachata Dancing

Buryan Turan



Business Name
Simularge
[Simularge - Digital Transformation Starts Here](#)



Place
Turkey & US



Year started as entrepreneur
2017



Number of employees
11



What is your highest level of education?
PhD candidate

My motto is:

Focus on your journey, not your destination.
Your journey can take you to a better place.



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My entrepreneurial journey....



Marian Spier



Business Name
[IAMarian](#) & [FEM-START](#)



Place
The Hague, The Netherlands



Year started as entrepreneur
2012



Number of employees
Many freelancers around the world



What is your highest level of education?
Bachelor in Communication and Media Studies

After studying communications, I worked in education, and then went on to study pedagogy and didactics. After that I followed some executive programs, which were 'Strategic partnerships' via INSEAD and venture finance to get more insights into how ecosystems work. Now, I have two companies; a consultancy and an online learning platform for female entrepreneurs. I recently wrote a book: '*IMPACT. Lessons in personal and business leadership*' about my own road to leadership.

My targets are

1. Increase the revenue of IAMarian
2. Find a dedicated team for FEM-START
3. Raise funding for FEM-START

My Challenges are

Finding the right people for the right team

This is what characterises me

1. Autonomous
2. Proactive
3. Efficient

The brands that inspire me

Businesses themselves are not something that I admire, because they are focused on revenue. I rather admire the people behind the businesses.

The role models that inspire me:

I have many role models, such as Oprah. In general, I always focus on a person's good traits, especially entrepreneurs that started with nothing.

Which networks are you integrated in?

I am involved in many networks, not only women networks. Every network I am involved in should be added value for my business.

My advice to girls and women who want to realise their dreams:

1. Start working somewhere!
2. Young female students should finish their education and start a business right away or start a business when they are still studying.
3. Women that start later should work with an entrepreneur to learn from them. Once they become an entrepreneur themselves: go for it and do not be afraid!

When I'm not working:

I like to travel and walk a lot.
I love to listen to podcasts about writing and arts.

My motto is:
"Everything is possible"



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My entrepreneurial journey....

Marcella Wijngaarden



Business Name
Project Cece <https://www.projectcece.nl/>



Place
Amsterdam, the Netherlands



Year started as entrepreneur
2016



Number of employees
4 + interns



What is your highest level of education?
Currently working on PhD in Astrophysics at University of Southampton

1. Realising that there were several issues in the fashion industry and that everyone contributes to those problems because everyone needs to wear clothes.
2. Setting up an online tool and website that brings together sustainable and ethical clothing shops, to make the process of buying ethical clothes easier and faster for consumers.

My targets are

I want to be happy and do something that has a big impact.

Our goal is to show that buying sustainably and ethically doesn't have to be harder or more expensive than fast fashion.

This is what characterises me

1. Curious
2. Hard-Worker
3. Ambitious

The brands that inspire me



The role models that inspire me:

Several professors and researchers in the Dept. of Astrophysics in the University of Amsterdam. My Family.

Which networks are you integrated in?

LinkedIn
Twitter

My advice to girls and women who want to realise their dreams:

1. Being a perfectionist can be a good thing, but it can also stop you from doing things like launching a product, because you never think it's finished or good enough to launch.
2. Find a team of people who know about what you're doing, people that you can run ideas by, or a group of people that are working on their own projects. It can be beneficial and give you information you don't have when you're starting out.

When I'm not working:

I love food and baking.
I read a lot of books and like watching TV shows.
I like to explore the countryside by bike.

My motto is:
"Do things that make you happy and that make the world happier too"



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