

Bolivia 15 female entrepreneurs become skilled in leadership and innovation

On 30 April, the Permanent Observatory for Leadership and Innovation was inaugurated in the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz. The Observatory is an initiative of the chamber for Small Industry and Handicrafts CADEPIA. The inauguration coincided with the final meeting of a project of the employers' organisation FEPSC, UPSA University and CADEPIA, aimed at the empowerment of fifteen female entrepreneurs. This project was co-financed by DECP.

Most of the participants in the project already had a business as a hairdresser, beautician or caterer, but used the project to further professionalise themselves. They attended workshops on innovation, financing and budgeting, digital marketing and customer service, all focused on small businesses. The project also provided empowerment and helped to strengthen the women's leadership qualities. This will contribute to a more solid foundation for their companies.

The fifteen women who received their certificate are willing to act as ambassadors for follow-up projects. As graduates, they will be active as Ambassadors for the Observatory by passing on their acquired knowledge to at least 20 other entrepreneurs active in the same sector. In this way, a total of 300 SMEs will be reached.

The empowerment project was set-up and coordinated by Ms Milka Costas Sitic, after having successfully followed the training-of-trainers "Women empowerment through Business Member Organizations", given by the training centre of the ILO in Turin (ITC-ILO) and supported by DECP. After the training, Ms Costas -participating on behalf of the FEPSC- flew home to Santa Cruz full of enthusiasm and plans. Together with the Chamber for Small Industry and Handicrafts (CADEPIA) and the UPSA University she elaborated the programme elaborated above.

It is also conceivable to copy the project elsewhere in Bolivia or to open it to other micro-entrepreneurs. Male or female.