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Empowering Women in Agrifood (EWA) A Three-Year Journey of Impact and Innovation

RAFA Conference 2024

Presented by: Petra Kubálková, cats2cats

A Three-Year Journey of Impact and Innovation

Objective: To empower female entrepreneurs in the agrifood sector, fostering innovation, resilience, and economic growth. The program is running simultaneously in 12 countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, Türkiye, Ukraine)

Scope: Part of EIT Food initiatives across Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

Focus Areas:

- Agrifood business development.
- Entrepreneurial skills training.
- Networking and mentorship.
- Masterclass, Bootcamps, and Pitch Day

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Program Evolution (2020 - 2024)

2020: Launch Year - Established foundational modules and recruited inaugural cohorts. Pilot program.

2022: Expansion—Increased participation and introduced advanced support mechanisms, such as cooperation with UCT and CZU. Established partnerships with innovation centers and accelerators, such as JIC, SIC, Impact Hub, PointOne, etc.

2023: Innovation and Growth - Focused on scaling impacts and fostering sustainability. EWA program and its success was part of BIOFACH (World's Leading Trade Fair for Organic Food).

2024: 3rd run of the EWA program, the application significantly raised by 33 %.

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Program Structure and Curriculum Highlights

- **Entrepreneurship Fundamentals:** Basics of business strategy and legal aspects.
- **Value Proposition and Sales:** Training in market positioning and customer engagement.
- **Masterclass:** Pitch Training day with feedback from investors.
- **Mentorship:** 15+ sessions providing tailored support across each entrepreneurial phase. The most important is pairing mentor-mentees.
- **Pitch Day:** Culminating event where participants present business pitches, showcasing growth and innovation. The form is 4 minutes per presentations using 10 slides.

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Program Key Success Metrics

Graduates: Over 30 women trained since 2020.

Employment Generation: Participants have collectively generated new jobs and increased attraction to the agri-food industry. Thanks to the training, new movements started, such as “by local flowers— Výkvět,” founding a new city farm at Prague 7, or implementing Restaurant Week in the Czech Republic.

Business Launches: 60% of participants have successfully launched their agrifood ventures.

BUT - What we still need is raising new funding from external investors.

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Program Key Success Metrics

Product Innovation: Over 30% of alumnae developed new products, including sustainable food packaging, microgreens systems, and organic snack lines or superfood products. The background is a healthier food system and bringing alternative solutions for their family members to the market.

Process Efficiency: About 25% of businesses introduced more efficient processes, such as climate-smart farming. The background is to change the Czech farming narrative connected with the soil.

Sustainable, local, and community-oriented: All projects have a first point to keep those basic rules.

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Case Study Our winners now

Lamya Kourdi (40) - selling her solutions - manual seeding machine - at USA market, founder of the movement Výkvět (network of Czech flower farms)

Vendula Donátová (23) - runs the city farm “Metro Farm” at Prague 7 and sells seedlings every spring.

Denisa Tichá (27) — Živý uhlík was launched in 2022 (Live Charcoal is a natural preparation made from vegetable charcoal that supports the health of horses and other animals' digestive tracts).

Hana Součková (25) – farm influencer and partner of the Ambiente network.

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Case Study

Our winners now

cats2cats.org/ewa-almnae/



Adriana Slováčková –
Pojízdná prodejna farmy Mezi
Poli (2024)



Aneta Blažková – Květinec
(2024)



Eliška Nováková – Zde
domov můj (2024)



Lucie Rien – Soma Vision
(2024)



Martina Zelenáková –
Shupka (2024)



Šárka Márová – Fungi Pack
(2024)



Hana Hrstková – Green Plate
(2024)



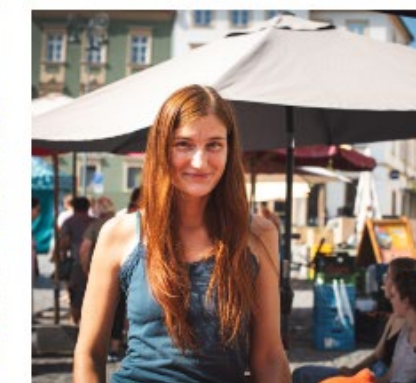
Lenka Simerská – Kopřiva
Boost (2024)



Lucie Mokrá – Reseedo
(2024)



Tereza Dostálová – Křepelky
Třemešná (2024)



Martina Sumbalová –
Swap.cz (2022)



Ema Jallet a Martina Pěkná –
eM.Ma.Oats (2022)

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Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges:

- Balancing regional diversity within program structure.
- Addressing financial constraints for early-stage businesses.
- Public visibility of the program and its impact.
- Investors interest.

Key Learnings:

- Customized mentorship.
- For sustainable growth, we have to respect the not-grow business strategy.

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Invitation

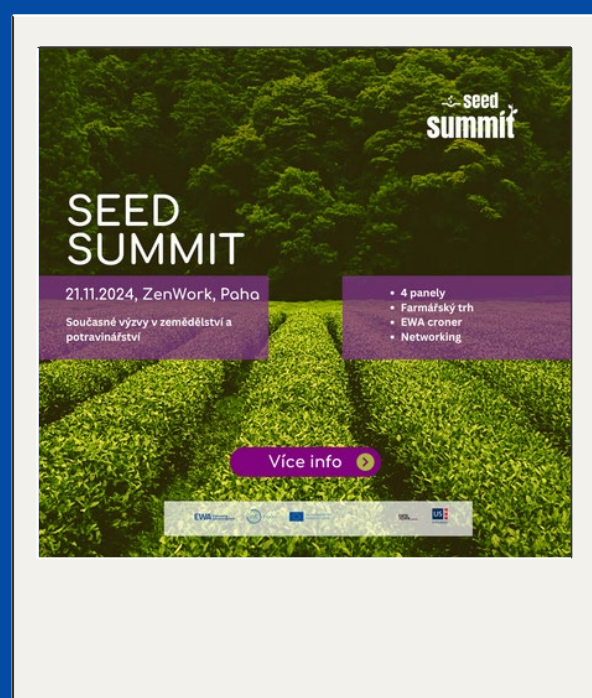
20th November

Final Pitch Day of the EWA Program

Registration open: <https://cats2cats.org/ewa/finale-ewa-2024/>



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21st November

International conference SEED Summit 2024

Registration open: <https://seedsummit.cz/>



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Thank you!

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