

MAPPING THE HISTORY AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Project Tsunami Mapped Against Past, Current and Future Women Entrepreneurial Milestone Events, November 19, 2003

This Timeline was designed to document some of the key milestones that led to the demand for the creation of Project Tsunami. It also serves as a template that can be adapted by countries and organizations to outline the growing understanding of the economic contributions of women's entrepreneurship by policymakers, researchers, the mainstream business community, and women entrepreneurs themselves. This Timeline can be downloaded from <http://www.projecttsunami.org>.

Summer 1995

Virginia Littlejohn (now Tsunami's Co-Chair and CEO) persuaded the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Working Party on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to hold a major international conference on women's entrepreneurship at the OECD's headquarters in Paris in April 1997. The OECD consists of the 30 major industrialized democracies in the world, each represented by an ambassador.

Summer 1995

The UN Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, China, and the 185 countries in attendance adopted a Platform for Action that provided the first stage for women's entrepreneurship as a key economic strategy (one that benefited women, men, children, communities and countries). This catalyzed the microenterprise movement. Littlejohn organized a contingent of women entrepreneurial leaders from many countries for this event. Linda Tarr-Whelan (formerly head of the women's office in the Carter White House, later U.S. Ambassador to the UN's Commission on the Status of Women during the Clinton Administration, and now Co-Chair of Tsunami) was an official U.S. delegate and led the economic negotiations. This event followed world and U.S. regional meetings (and was followed by another round, known as Beijing + 5 [pronounced Beijing Plus 5], held at the United Nations in New York 5 years later).

1996-1997

Regional Preparatory Meetings to prepare for the OECD Women Entrepreneurial Conference in Paris in April 1997 were held on all continents, organized by Littlejohn and Elizabeth Vazquez (now Tsunami's Executive Director). They were funded by IBM, with the support of leading associations of women entrepreneurs around the world.

April 1997

First OECD Conference on "Women in Small and Medium Enterprises (WSMEs): A Major Force in Innovation and Job Creation," for which Littlejohn served as Senior Advisor. Funded primarily by IBM, as well as by Royal Bank of Canada, Westpac Bank of Australia and New Zealand, Credito Italiano Bank, Queensland Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry in Australia, and Havas Voyages/American Express and Sogeres, both in France. It was attended by policymakers, academic experts and women entrepreneurial leaders from 35 countries. Littlejohn and Tarr-Whelan were plenary speakers.

April 1997

"White House / Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA) Summit on Women and the Economy" with President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, organized and led by Tarr-Whelan, then President of CPA as well as Ambassador. First-ever U.S. program focused on the strength that women add to the national economy, with women's entrepreneurship as a key strategy.

November 1997

75-country conference organized by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE, the international arm of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce) on strengthening associations of women entrepreneurs in developing and transition countries, for which Littlejohn served as Senior Advisor.

July 1998

Women's Entrepreneurship Summit at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Business – with Tarr-Whelan and CPA as key organizers and presenters, and Littlejohn chairing the Technology session. First policy report on women's entrepreneurship as a state economic policy tool was released by CPA.

1999

Launch of the first Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report, a multi-country survey conducted by Babson College and the London Business School, with strong support from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. The first report covered 10 countries, including the U.S. This was expanded to 21 countries in 2000, 29 in 2001, and 37 countries in 2002. The 2003 Report will include almost 50 countries. *The initial GEM Report concluded that the promotion of entrepreneurship is critical for a nation's economic growth, and that increasing the participation of women in entrepreneurship is necessary for long-term economic prosperity.* See <http://www.gemconsortium.org/> for copies of all Reports. (Note: Many of the women researchers who presented papers at the 1997 OECD Conference became GEM and Diana Project researchers—The Diana Project, also funded by the Kauffman Foundation, did research on women entrepreneurs and venture capital in the U.S., ultimately resulting in Kauffman's funding of Springboard Enterprises, the U.S. women's venture capital forum.)

1999

Planning was begun on the Second OECD Women Entrepreneurial Conference, for which Littlejohn again served as Senior Advisor. Decision was made to embed language on the importance of women's entrepreneurship as an economic strategy into the Declaration being developed for the 50-country OECD Ministerial on SMEs, to be held in Bologna, Italy, in June 2000.

May, 1999

Canada / U.S.A. Businesswomen's Trade Summit held in Toronto, where business matching as well as trade policies were addressed. Canadian Co-Chairs for the event were Andrina Lever and Astrid Pregel, then Minister-Counsellor (Commercial) at the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC (both serve on Tsunami's Global BrainTrust).

November 1999

The Trans-Atlantic Women and the Enterprise Economy Summit was held at 11 Downing Street in London. It was created and led by Tarr-Whelan and the Center for Policy Alternatives, with the UK-based Smith Institute and the sponsorship of Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Baroness Margaret Jay, Women's Minister and Leader of the House of Lords. The UK initiative to create a new economic agenda that invests in women's economic leadership potential began with this event.

2000

The economic significance of women's enterprise development began gaining acceptance around the world at several major international events, and policy began to move at the state level in the U.S.

April and May 2000

CPA, under Tarr-Whelan's leadership, released its second report on the economic benefits to states of women's entrepreneurship in Atlanta with the Governor, Lt. Governor and a dozen legislators of both parties. CPA then sponsored a 25-person White House Roundtable on Women's Entrepreneurship to develop next steps on policy, both domestically and internationally. The 25-person Roundtable was attended by Baroness Jay of the UK, Littlejohn and Linda Muir, Tsunami's President.

June 2000

At the first OECD SME Ministerial, held in Bologna and convened by the OECD and Italy, SME Ministers and Ministers of Industry from 50 countries signed the Bologna Charter on SME Policies. In establishing its broad framework for action, the Bologna Charter acknowledged the significant role of entrepreneurship for restructuring economies and combating poverty. Significantly, it *recognized the importance of women entrepreneurs in economic growth, job creation, regional and local development, and social cohesion. The Declaration included language on the importance of promoting women's entrepreneurship as an economic strategy.*

June 2000

The United Nations General Assembly, in a Special Session, "Women 2000," identified the growth of women's entrepreneurship as a key strategy for women's equality. It specifically recommended attention to the full spectrum of women's business opportunity and the removal of obstacles to its growth. Reports to the meeting from the International Labor Organization (ILO), World Bank, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNIFEM all raised this as an important component for women's full equality—and *noted that women-owned business is essential to national and global economies.* Ambassador Tarr-Whelan was Deputy Chair of the U.S. Delegation, under Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Fall 2000

Two months before the OECD Women Entrepreneurial Conference in Paris in November 2000, Littlejohn and Amy Millman, then the Executive Director of the National Women's Business Council in the U.S., decided to develop a U.S. Best Practices Handbook for distribution in Paris in November. They developed a template, identified a university student to assist with research and writing, and worked with government agencies, NGOs, banks and others to identify 15 U.S. best practices. They shared the U.S. template with Andrina Lever of Canada (a speaker at both the 1997 and 2000 OECD WSME conferences), who pulled together 10 Canadian best practices for distribution in November using the identical template.

November 2000

The momentum grew around the potential role of women entrepreneurs in economic growth when the OECD held its second major conference, "Women Entrepreneurs in SMEs: Realizing the Benefits of Globalization and the Knowledge-Based Economy," in Paris. Policymakers, academics and women entrepreneurial leaders from 50 countries examined the best practices being applied to support and promote women's entrepreneurship, and identified specific initiatives needed to strengthen this vital economic sector. They recommended adoption of an ambitious global agenda to synthesize resources and best practices from the private and public sectors and from NGOs. Littlejohn served as Senior Advisor, and Linda Muir, now Tsunami's President, helped coordinate the Atlanta fundraising. The conference was funded by BellSouth, The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Airlines, IBM, King & Spalding, UPS, TradeBuilders, Royal Bank of Canada, Westpac Bank of Australia and New Zealand, Fleet Boston Financial, Bank of Ireland, the Nordic Council of Ministers, and the National Women's Business Council in the U.S.

November 2000

Tsunami takes its name from a speech Littlejohn gave in the closing plenary of the OECD 2000 Conference, in which she challenged the audience: "If the hundreds of us in this room each hold a pebble in our hand and throw it into the water at different times and in different places, we will create thousands of small ripples that cancel each other out, and have no lasting impact. But, if we all throw our pebbles into the water at exactly the same time, and into exactly the same place, we can create a tsunami – a global tidal wave of economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs around the world."

January 2001

Littlejohn, Tarr-Whelan and Muir decided to found Project Tsunami, Incorporated as a non-profit organization to serve as a global accelerator for women's entrepreneurship and to facilitate the spread of women entrepreneurial best practices at all stages along the business continuum. Intensive thinking and planning began.

Fall 2002

Tsunami was formally launched in October 2002, with seed funding from the Kauffman Foundation. Elizabeth Vazquez, who had worked closely with Littlejohn since 1995, became Executive Director in February 2003.

November 2002

The Canadian Prime Minister's Parliamentary Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs was formed, chaired by Member of Parliament Sarmite (Sam) Bulte, who also serves on Tsunami's Global BrainTrust. Andrina Lever is the consultant to the Task Force.

Spring 2003

Tsunami planning for *The Road to Istanbul* began. The term refers to three related events being organized by the OECD from June 2-6, 2004, in Istanbul, with Ministers of Industry, SME Ministers and business leaders from 85 countries in attendance. Ministers will address the four key strategies deemed to show the greatest promise to grow economies—entrepreneurship, with a special focus on women's entrepreneurship, is one of these themes, along with finance, globalization, and eCommerce / information and communication technologies. Tsunami's researchers from around the world have provided national research for an OECD study in preparation for the Ministerial, in order to bring women's entrepreneurship into the mainstream of national and international economic policymaking, and to impact top policymakers from 85 countries. In addition, an 85-country OECD Business Symposium and Global Marketplace are planned, including a Women Entrepreneurial Best Practices Forum for which Tsunami is providing project management, program development, speaker selection, etc. (see June 2004 below).

May 8, 2003

Patricia Hewitt, the British Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and also Minister for Women, launched the UK's Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise in London. Jackie Brierton, a member of Tsunami's Global BrainTrust from Scotland, served as primary advisor for development of this Framework.

Spring and Summer, 2003

Tsunami, U.S. government officials, NGO leaders and academic researchers in the U.S. began a series of face-to-face and online planning meetings concerning U.S. participation in Istanbul. In addition, the U.S. agreed to develop and publish a "U.S. Handbook of Case Studies, Best Practices and Recommendations" (which includes a focus on women entrepreneurs at all stages along the business continuum, from start-up to high-growth). We are sharing this template with other countries so that a common template can be adopted for developing case studies and best practices. The U.S. is also developing a handbook of American public policies impacting women's entrepreneurship—legislative, regulatory and Presidential executive orders. Both will be presented in Istanbul.

August, 2003

Tsunami "Road to Istanbul" presentation at the APEC Women Leaders Network (WLN) meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, which took place in parallel with the APEC SME Ministerial (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation). Ten APEC countries and organizations agreed to present women entrepreneurial case studies and best practices in Istanbul. Ministers from all 21 APEC countries will attend the Istanbul Ministerial.

September 8-10, 2003

At OECD planning meeting in Budapest, attended by policymakers from the 85 countries that will be participating in Istanbul, Littlejohn chaired the panel discussions on women's entrepreneurship as an economic growth strategy.

2003 and Early 2004

Tsunami's work plan, *The Road to Istanbul*, builds toward the June 2004 OECD meeting with a series of online forums and face-to-face symposiums planned in the U.S., including:

- ~ Online forums on various aspects of women's entrepreneurship, fall and winter of 2003 and early 2004
- ~ Entrepreneurial Education and Training Symposium at Georgia Tech's DuPree College of Management in Atlanta on January 20-21
- ~ Access to Networks and to Corporate, International and Government Markets, Washington, DC in February
- ~ High-Growth Women Entrepreneurial Roundtable in Silicon Valley, March 23-24

March/April 2004

Proposed Trilateral Virtual Summit between 3 OECD countries (2 of which are also in APEC) in preparation for Istanbul. A Handbook of Best Practices and Case Studies would be produced by each country prior to Istanbul.

June 2004

85-country SME Ministerial will be attended by Ministers of Industry and SME Ministers. Project Tsunami's researchers have provided research for the Ministerial, where results of a multicountry economic study of women entrepreneurs (with extensive input from Tsunami researchers) will be released, and recommendations from the proposed Trilateral Virtual Summit will be presented to the Ministers. Littlejohn and Global BrainTrust members Jackie Brierton of Scotland and Danièle Rousseau of France serve on the Steering Committee for the OECD Business Forum and Global Marketplace that will take place concurrently with the SME Ministerial, and Littlejohn is co-chairing the Women Entrepreneurial Best Practices Forum.

