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German Chancellor Fellow, entrepreneur, researcher

Anastasia Sukhomlinova from Moscow co-founded a business at 23. As a German Chancellor Fellow hosted by the Harriet Taylor Mill Institute she analyzes the ecosystem for female founders in Germany.

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In the following interview, she gives an insight on her research project, her motivation and her plans for the future.

Would you tell us a little about your academic and working background?

Right now I represent my own small business in the event industry that I co-founded 7 years ago. Our company brings authentic photography technologies to all kinds of events and makes people rethink the idea of analog photography and family albums traditions.

After receiving a classical liberal arts education at university, I also worked as a journalist in tech and business and then as editor in one of the best private business schools for creative industries — RMA business school in Moscow. I launched my business while still working there. Even after I fulltime focused on my business, I still engaged in various educational and editorial projects. For example, in 2016 I worked closely with Google team Russia and participated in launching the local information portal about data, insights, innovations, and business — Think with Google.

What is the core idea of your research project?

My research project focused on defining and studying successful practices and solutions that have a positive impact on the development of female entrepreneurship in Germany. I am interested in an ecosystem for female founders and initiatives run by different stakeholders like private and government organizations, investors, communities, media, etc.

What was your motivation to do research in the specific field of women and entrepreneurship?

I see business as a force for positive change on gender issues and women empowerment in general. I've been speculating about barriers and opportunities for female entrepreneurship in Russia for a while. Being part of different projects, speaking to entrepreneurs and building my own business made me realize how important it is to get professional support at different stages of business development. So, I started investigating the role of communities and initiatives that encourage women to start businesses as well as thinking about what new I can bring to the table.

Do you have a vision of how far your research results might encourage/support women to become entrepreneurs?

On one hand, I want to map diverse solutions (accelerators, financial instruments, mentoring, educational and networking activities) that navigate new opportunities

for female entrepreneurs and help them to overcome the most common challenges. So the results could be used as a handbook by those who start a business or need specific support to develop it to the next stage.

On the other hand, I have many fundamental questions to answer connected with particular barriers for women in business. In this case, my research can be a tool for further promoting social and economic equity, and also female empowerment more broadly.

What does it mean to you personally being a German Chancellor Fellow at the HWR Berlin?

I am happy to join the Harriet Taylor Mill Institute at the HWR Berlin because of the vital part that gender studies play in economic research here. It means a lot to work alongside best scholars like Prof. Claudia Gather and other colleagues, who have been studying women entrepreneurs in Germany for years. I also enjoy the HWR's practical approach to entrepreneurial education.

Do you already have plans for what will come next?

I will be staying at the HWR Berlin till the end of September. My professional ambition for this fellowship is to expand my expertise in gender entrepreneurship questions and approach them with an international outlook. And I hope that the results of my research to become the base for starting a public dialogue about support for female entrepreneurs in Russia.

German Chancellor Fellowship Programme

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's German Chancellor Fellowship Programme is targeted at university graduates from the United States, the Russian Federation, the Republic of China, Brazil and India who have an international outlook and initial leadership experience. This fellowship programme is under the patronage of the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and is financed by the Federal Foreign Office.

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