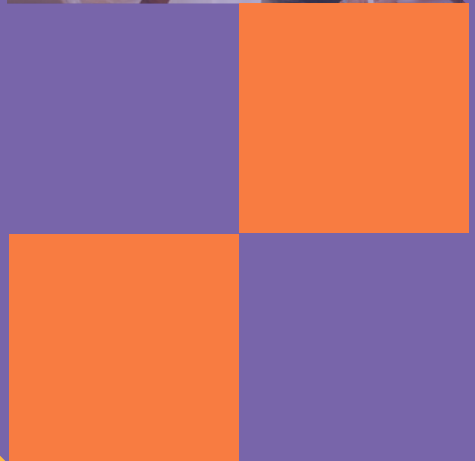


Better Incubation:

Collection of Best Practices in Inclusive Entrepreneurship Support Programmes



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List of Abbreviations

BSO	Business Support Organisation
COP	Community of Practice
DG EMPL	Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
EBN	European Business and Innovation Centre Network
EVPA	European Venture Philanthropy Association
URE	Under-Represented Entrepreneur
URG	Under-Represented and Vulnerable Group
WP	Work Package

Overview

Better Incubation is a 2-years programme (2021-2023) powered by the LIAISE - Linking Incubation Actors for Inclusive and Social Entrepreneurship project, funded under the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

The objective of LIAISE is **to provoke a paradigm shift in the European incubation ecosystem towards a more inclusive and impact driven approach to innovative entrepreneurship. The European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN), Impact Hub (IHUB) and the European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA), are three leading organisations – networks, who have joined the forces to achieve the systemic change through enhancing BSOs’ skills, methods and approach towards entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs from different social backgrounds, so they can guide them to define the most viable and feasible business models.** In order to do so, IHUB is leading and is assisted by EBN in building Communities of Practice (CoPs) where participants share their knowledge and experience on how to best approach and support entrepreneurs from under-represented groups (URGs).

From their very beginning, the CoPs are designed to evolve, first based on the existing networks designed to serve as catalysts. Under the leadership of IHUB, all partners play a fundamental role in all the phases of this work-package, not only by providing inputs but also by taking the lead on specific tasks.

In this sense the CoPs foreseen in LIAISE will serve as a powerful virtual space where 7 selected participants will debate, exchange, investigate, plan, prototype and evaluate the activities in the field of inclusive entrepreneurship. As part of the programme we developed 5 thematic CoPs targeting 5 vulnerable groups: **women, migrants/refugees, people with disabilities, youth and seniors.**

The CoPs are formed by at least **7 individuals**: 4 representing members of IHUB and EBN, 1 representing Caritas Europa, and 2 external participants, either entrepreneurs from the underrepresented group the

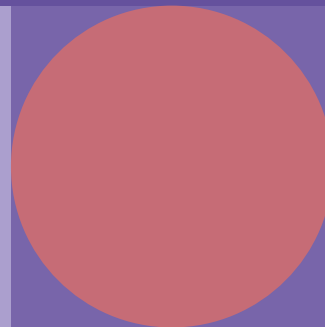
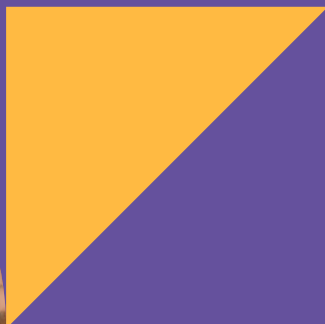
CoP is working on, or experts on the subject more broadly. Coordinators from IHUB or EBN will facilitate the work of the 7 representatives on each CoP, who will come together online every month met as part of the Bootcamp on 16th April as part of a full day online event (due to the current circumstances). Participants were selected either because of their direct expertise - built through their past or current work with the group - or because of their clear commitment to engage in the future with the thematic group.

The following document **takes inspiration from the work carried out by the Better Incubation Communities of practice through a thorough best practices, tools and resources collection for each of the target groups.** For the purpose of this publication, we have selected 10 case studies from Impact Hub, EBN and other partner organizations to showcase different programmatic approaches towards supporting vulnerable entrepreneurs.

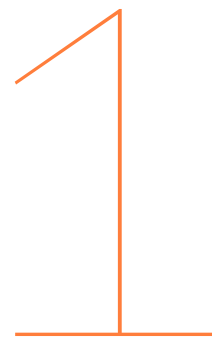
The document consists of **five sections**, each of them focusing on a specific vulnerable group, and dives deeper into 2 practical examples of dedicated business support programmes covering various geographical regions of Europe.

At the end of each section, we included **quotes** we have extracted from the empathy interviews with the representatives of five vulnerable groups conducted by members of the thematic Communities of Practice. We believe these might provide interesting ingredients for consideration in the creation of structured and customised incubation programmes. As the programmes featured in this publication are at various stages of the implementation, we were not able to draw conclusive statements on the efficiency of their methodology or assess their long-term impact. We however hope that this Collection of best practices can offer some **practical insights** for business support organisations, NGOs, local/national policymakers, funders and other stakeholders, to be applied in the design and implementation of inclusive incubation and support programmes, strategies and/or policies.

Women



Women



According to a June 2020 study commissioned by the European Union, entrepreneurship is a key driver of innovation and growth across society. **While Europe is making steady progress towards these principles, women remain underrepresented and underfunded, even as an increasing number of European citizens express the desire to launch their own businesses.** (EIT Food, 2021).

Other identified barriers for women entrepreneurs are:

- gender pay gap for self-employment (**EIGE, 2015; OECD, 2012**). In the EU, self-employed women may earn 30% to 40% less than their male counterparts.
- limited/lack of access to formal finance mechanisms (**ILO, 2008; ILO, 2014; WORLD BANK, 2018**)
- the perception of entrepreneurship as a risky activity (**OECD, 2012; WORLD BANK, 2018**) specifically in the European context
- similarly, the low opportunity perception regarding entrepreneurship among women (**GEM, 2019; OECD, 2012**)
- lack of role models (**GEM, 2019**)
- on the same note, limited mobility and access to information and networks (**ILO, 2014**).
- cultural barriers such as unequal household power relations, unequal division of labour and access to household resources (**BRUSH et al, 2009; ILO, 2014**)

- similarly, competing demands on time (**ILO, 2014; IMPACT HUB, 2021**) there's still a double burden of home and work responsibilities for women, which prevents them from starting or carrying on a self-employed business
- lack of proper maternity protection (**ILO, 2008**)
- unfavourable business regulations (**ILO, 2008; GEM, 2019; UNIDO, 2015**)
- gender segregation regarding educational background (**GEM, 2019; Impact Hub 2021; UNIDO, 2015**)
- gender segregation in industry and occupations (**GEM, 2019; Impact Hub 2021; UNIDO, 2015**)
- similarly, prejudices and stereotypes about women in business, which prevents them from considering entrepreneurship as a viable option in the first place (**GEM, 2019**)
- gender-based discrimination, violence and harassment (**ILO, 2008; Impact Hub 2021; UNIDO, 2015**)

There is still work to do to address some societal bias in order to offer flexible arrangements with respect to the timing and location of service delivery.

New Roots for Mompreneurs

COUNTRY
Germany



ORGANIZATIONS
Impact Hub Munich, IH King's Cross and Go Daddy

DATE OF RELEASE
October 2021



Introduction and Background

Looking at the German context, apart from unemployment, one of the biggest risks of falling into poverty in Germany is being a single mother; more than a third of all single parent households are at risk of poverty. And even if mothers find a job, they can hardly work as much as they want to (on average 20 hours per week). Job sharing, home office or telecommuting is still very rare in most companies. Altogether, over two thirds of all mothers feel discriminated against in their jobs.

They get less responsible positions, bad promotion prospects and promised salary increases do not materialise (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2020).

There are also mothers in their late 40s or older who are trying to re-enter the workforce. At the time they had children and decided to stay home, divorce rates were low and it was quite common that their partner/husband provided for the family. For women whose family situation changes and who want to or have to start working again, they rarely get a chance (Evertsson and Grunow, 2012).

New Roots for Mompreneurs targets underrepresented mothers who were still taking care of their children as well as mothers who wanted to re-enter the workforce after a long period of being a full-time mother. Impact Hub Munich recognises that entrepreneurship can become the perfect tool for a mother. The life changing moment to have a child brings along a change in mindset, including concerns regarding the future of the child.

The New Roots programme was initiated as a part of the partnership between GoDaddy and Impact Hub with the purpose of supporting underserved commu-

nities in overcoming barriers to entrepreneurship.

Expanding the partnership to Munich, from September 2020, we accompanied a selected cohort of 20 mothers on their way towards entrepreneurship. The "New Roots for Mompreneurs" cohort consisted of mothers who were still taking care of their children as well as mothers who wanted to re-enter the workforce after a long period of being a full-time mother. When selecting the participants, we gave preference to women facing multiple discrimination which increases their social vulnerability and marginalisation.

Due to the global Covid-19 pandemic and the measurements taken by Germany to combat it, the participants were faced with additional challenges and amplified repercussions of their pre-existing marginalisation. By way of example, childcare services and schools were in parts or permanently closed leading to various negative consequences especially for mothers, such as throwing daily

routines out of balance, the necessity to provide additional, uncompensated care work, and therefore potential financial shortage, an overall feeling of instability, stress and psychological pressure - just to mention a few.

As a reaction to the situation, the New Roots programme setup was adapted in order to increase flexibility and targeted support in consideration of the current crisis. This aimed to stabilise the setup and circumstance necessary for the mother, to be able to keep pursuing their courageous vision of self-employment and entrepreneurship. As of December 2020, all 20 mompreneurs were carrying on with their business ideas within the New Roots programme and were continuing working individual programme milestones.

Approach and Methodology

The program consists of the following phases and modules:

Phase 1: Program Setup

Building on several years of experience in designing entrepreneurial programs paired with a deep understanding of the local ecosystem, the Impact Hub Munich team designed the New Roots program tailored to the needs of the mothers. Out of the local Impact Hub community, a pool of valuable role models, mentors and facilitators was compiled.

Phase 2: Scouting and Selection

Due to the specific target group, we kicked off the scouting process with 2-3 concise virtual events open for the broader public. Through these formats, we aimed to lower barriers to the application by shining a light on the option of becoming self-employed as a mother. We included mothers from our community to share their personal journeys and first hand experience. The format will also introduce potential participants to the Impact Hub and the program before committing to it. Besides promoting the program at our events, the call for applications was combined with spreading the word through our local channels of communication and direct scouting within relevant local networks. Through the whole scouting process, we collaborated with local referral partners that work closely with our target group.

Selection was done by Impact Hub Munich together with representatives of the mentor pool with strong individual link and understanding of the target group. The cohort was composed of mothers with initial business ideas in need or early stage support. Focusing on this stage provides consistency across the cohort and leaves room for diversity in terms of topics and pursued ideas.

Phase 3: Program Facilitation

We kicked off the program with an ideation sprint, consistent of 3 half days idea-generating workshops. To gain flexibility, the workshops were held partially at the Impact Hub and partially online. This initial compact and intensive format enables building up relationships between the participants and the pro-

gram team, sets the spirit and atmosphere for the upcoming months and creates the space for the subsequent development processes. It further provides the mothers with relevant tools and knowledge necessary to draft their individual milestones and next steps. After the initial organisational assessment, the participants were paired (individually or in teams) with mentors that fit their individual needs and goals. Together, they worked on their individual goals and the mentors accompanied the participants from drafting their initial idea and business plan, through creating prototypes and first market tests. Regular peer to peer check-ins keep the cohort together, allows encouragement, peer feedback and experience sharing. Monthly workshops facilitated by GoDaddy ideally complemented the peering and mentoring and enabled the participants gain necessary competencies and the entrepreneurial skills set as well as gaining competence in their self-efficacy. Throughout the journey of the program, the mothers became part of the Impact Hub Munich community and had access to our space and infrastructure as well as a wide range of community and workshop formats hosted at the Impact Hub.

Phase 4: Closing

A closing ceremony breakfast for all participants, mentors and GoDaddy workshop facilitators was held to mark and celebrate the end of the program. This format allows for check out, presentation and celebration of the individual growth journeys and the co-creative learning process. We measured and tracked the success of the program qualitatively complemented with quantitative methods reasonable for social accounting in early entrepreneurial stages.

Post program support

Mompreneus received discounted membership to the Impact Hub for 6 additional months and keep communicating through their own slack channel.

Results

20 women took part in New Roots at Impact Hub Munich, they represented a total of 16 ventures. 100% of the entrepreneurs graduated.

All participants entered the program with an entrepreneurial idea. The program supported them to develop it further and some of them are close to becoming self employed or are deciding on the right legal entity.

The program successfully contributed to develop the entrepreneur's business skills and knowledge. Furthermore, the mothers acknowledge a change occurred in all their skills after their experience in the programme. The largest differences are in pitching, operations, product/Service development and Investment- readiness areas. New Roots entrepreneurs at Impact Hub Munich also gained significant clarity on their next steps and increased their confidence to refine an actionable project idea.

LINK

To learn more about the project click here

EWA - Empowering Women in Agrifood



COUNTRY
Romania



ORGANIZATIONS
Impact Hub Bucharest

DATE OF RELEASE
May-November 2020, first edition

Introduction and Background

In Europe, only around 30% of women account for top positions in agricultural and livestock farms. Additionally, rural women still face serious disadvantages, compared not only to rural men, but also to urban women. Despite policy efforts to reduce these differences, results of recent studies (European Parliament 2019) and reports show that progress remains insufficient. As a fact, therefore, that female leadership and entrepreneurial potential are an under-exploited source of economic growth that should be further explored.

The objective of EIT Food's is to "future proof" the food system, which includes building an inclusive and innovative community to "foster innovation at all stages of business creation".

EWA is one of the programs supported by EIT Food and it has grown from 5 participant countries and 50 entrepreneurs to 8 countries and 80 entrepreneurs. Part of EIT Food's inclusivity goals include supporting female entrepreneurs through education, network

building, and dedicated programme resources- that is EWA- Empowering Women in Agrifood mission. The ultimate goal is to overcome the existing gender gap in the agrifood sector with a special focus on less innovative European regions: promoting inclusivity and diversity between business founders, and increasing female founded startups.

EWA in Romania, implemented by Impact Hub Bucharest, has taken a different approach in tracking the mentorship sessions, allocation of resources and the communication and engagement of the team project and the entrepreneurs based on their needs, by using a special form in order to track the monthly evolution of the participants and to support them in being more organized and responsible. Regarding the trainings within the masterclass they replaced hard skills trainings with mentorship on real problems that the entrepreneurs face.

The program's potential is of growth and development in the future years, as this year's edition is very well received by the public as well as other stakeholders who would like to get involved into such opportunities.

Approach and Methodology

80 talented female entrepreneurs from countries with modest to moderate innovation rates go through a 6-months entrepreneurial program tailored to create business solutions for specific challenges in agrifood. EWA in Romania is implemented by Impact Hub in partnership with EIT FOOD and has the following milestones and activities:

1. Online training

Selected entrepreneurs benefit from 5 months long tailor-made training on specific business and entrepreneurial topics and access to resources to improve their skills.

2. Mentorship/Ongoing Support

More than 20 hours of personalized mentoring, from experts in business, agrifood and successful entrepreneurs.

3. Power of community

Participation in entrepreneurship and networking events with high-level stakeholders. All applicants will have access to our EWA Community and will benefit from a network which provides direct access to over 200 mentors and female entrepreneurs within the agrifood ecosystem.

4. Funding opportunities

Beneficiaries have the chance to win up to 10,000 euros per country, discover other EIT Food programs and access investors, and corporates to take their businesses to the next level. A pitching event is organised where 2 start-ups will receive funding after an evaluation by specific jury members (10.000 euros and 5.000 euros).



Results

Some important results in the development and growth of the 10 businesses participating in the program are:

- **30%** of the startups had their first clients during the program
- **40%** have improved business operation
- **50%** have expanded their teams
- **40%** have improved their marketing strategy
- **60%** have established new partnerships
- **40%** have improved their pricing strategy
- **20%** have created new products
-

LINK

You can read more about the programme on the website

What do women think?

Quotes from Better Incubation empathy interviews

"For early-stage entrepreneurs who also have another job or anything that they need to keep in order to pay rent etc I feel the investments in time and money you need to make as entrepreneurs are sometimes really hard to balance."

"They matched us with mentors I could not relate to, something that could have been better organised by letting the mentor and mentee choose each other."

"I would like to be part of like a confidently group session, where you come together with only female entrepreneurs and really talk about the things you need as a female entrepreneur."

"I notice that female entrepreneurs are more open in sharing their experiences, than the male entrepreneurs I talk to, and sometimes you need that personal connection to recognise your own learning too."

"What's a barrier? A lack of consideration, people always talk to my male co-founder."

"Because today to be a recognized woman you have to be "strong", as if we had no right to give up ... as if we had to prove twice as much. But again ... this is just one of my beliefs. No right to falter ... no right to fail."

"The answer surprised us because it is: none! We have not, or in any case I have never felt any obstacle or encountered obstacles due to the fact that I am a woman entrepreneur."

"I did not feel any obstacles or challenges to overcome as a woman entrepreneur. I didn't have to do more, or deal with complications resulting from my status as a woman entrepreneur."

"I also felt the glass ceiling: I thought entrepreneurship was not for me because I come from a working class background. And besides, as a woman I have to prove myself even more that you are capable."

You realize what my boss told me, when I told him that I am leaving my job to create my company: "Now is not the right time, you have young children! You will have less time to take care of the children, especially now that you are divorced. "

"Fortunately, there is a fairly strong solidarity among women entrepreneurs: we send each other information, advice, we write to each other. It is not a formal network, it is done as you meet. There is a lot of kindness between us, there is no suspicion of competition."

"We must not forget the inclusive side, there must be diversity in the groups. For example, I also meet and discuss with male entrepreneurs. It is by working together men and women that we can change things. And then, we must not forget that these women will be employers: they must also learn not to discriminate."

"There is a difference between woman and man: for example, the women will take a closer look at the details, and are most likely "yes but, I'm afraid that ..." I think women might need more personal development coaching. We really anticipate things, we watch everything closely. Women must be taught to ask themselves fewer questions. A woman will say: ah I'm sorry, I didn't see that you asked for that too ", a man would say:" no, I don't have that, I'm offering you another solution ".

Additional programmes designed for women to explore

- Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs
- Female founders
- Santander W50: The Next Generation of Leading Women
- The Next Women
- The female factor
- Amsterdam Female-founded startups & scaleups
- FEMpreneurhulp
- GoldUP
- Diana International Research Conference 2020
- The NatWest WISE100 (Women in Social Enterprise 100)
- Women supporting institution
- Startrampe
- Les Premières
- WOMEN IN BUSINESS: Fostering the Young Women Entrepreneurship in the Danube Region
- The Alison Rose Review
- Elite Academy 2021
- A practical guide and e-learning platform for female startups and entrepreneurs in agribusiness
- One Parent Center
- Parents' House
- Childbirth Incentive Programme

Migrants and Refugees



Migrants and Refugees



The number of forcibly displaced people around the world increased in 2020 to an unprecedented 82.4 million, of which 20.7 million are refugees (UNHCR, 2021). Entrepreneurship offers a powerful opportunity for refugees and other migrants to rebuild their lives and contribute to the economy and society of their new home country, often as well as their country of origin, by offering useful goods and services, creating jobs and helping to diversify the economy (UNCTAD, 2018).

- Similarly, migrants entrepreneurs can face a challenge in establishing a customer's network to support business growth outside of their community (**Impact Hub & Generali Foundation, 2021; UNCTAD, 2018**)
- lack of access to a coherent pathway of support services to enable their journey from idea to venture launch, growth and scaling (**Impact Hub & Generali Foundation, 2021; UNCTAD, 2018**).

Some additional barriers for Migrant and refugee entrepreneurs are listed below:

- lack of rights to work/self-employment + lack of clarity on implications of entrepreneurial activity for access to social protection (**UNCTAD, 2018**)
- physical, social & cultural isolation in host societies (**IZA World of Labor, 2019; UNCTAD, 2018**)
- limited/difficult/no access to financial support and capital (**GEM, 2019; UNCTAD, 2018**)
- in the case of refugees and asylum seekers, uncertainty regarding status approval and relocation (two processes that can take a really long time and prevent them to start a business) (**UNCTAD, 2018**)
- The lack of safety nets, either formal (due to absence of labour law coverage & protection mechanisms dedicated to them) and informal ones (which can be particularly hard to build if migrants are moving to a place where there is not a welcoming/pre-established likewise community they can become part of) (**Impact Hub & Generali Foundation, 2021; UNCTAD, 2018**)

MiFriendly Cities

21

COUNTRY
United Kingdom



ORGANIZATIONS
City council of Coventry in collaboration with 10 partners

DATE OF RELEASE
2018-2021

Introduction and Background

In October 2017 the EU's Urban Innovative Actions fund awarded 4,2 million EUR to Coventry, Birmingham and Wolverhampton for the MiFriendly Cities project, a 3-year initiative that looked to develop innovative, community-led and sustainable approaches to enhancing the contribution of refugees and migrants across the region.

"Most critically to our vision, refugees and migrants were involved at every step of project development."

With over 100 languages spoken daily within its borders, the West Midlands is the most diverse region in the United Kingdom outside of London – and the 2nd most diverse region in Europe –and this diversity brings with it an untapped resource of skills and ideas. The aim of the project was to build stronger communities by encouraging employers, health ser-

vices and the wider public to come together to drive change at both city and regional level. While some activities were tailored to specific groups, the overall programme involved a broad range of residents in the region, including a wide range of people who define themselves as 'migrant'.

"Our Mission is to help people realise their entrepreneurial potential."



Approach and Methodology

The innovative programme of activities focused on 5 themes:

1. Jobs

They created a network of 'Migration Friendly Employers' whose common goal was to strengthen the workforce of the West Midlands, creating an infrastructure which offers ongoing support and increases contact between communities in the workplace.

2. Skills

The skills initiative was aimed at identifying skills gaps in the West Midlands and creating pathways towards further education and employment opportunities for refugees and migrants. They put together an innovative training programme that could benefit all communities and acknowledged the region's aspirations to become the centre for advanced manufacturing in Europe.



3. Citizens & Voices

They wanted to encourage refugees and migrants to become more active in their communities, and to feel confident in using their voices to spread a message, share a story, or simply to get to know other people in their city. To build this confidence, it's also important for migrants to understand their legal, civil and political rights.

4. Start-ups & Ideas

By supporting local and refugee and migrant entrepreneurs to start new businesses, MiFriendly Cities hoped to expand job opportunities and strengthen the wider economy. The region also faces many social challenges – in areas such as housing and healthcare – they wanted to meet these challenges by nurturing and funding creative grassroots projects, which are aimed at improving the quality of life for everyone.

5. Futures

The project looked to invest in the future of our region, and inspire cities across Europe to become the MiFriendly Cities of the future.

- Investment in a new community space
- Community furniture workshops
- Sharing the MiFriendly knowledge for 'Migration Friendly' cities of the future

Results

In 2020 the programme invested 80,000 euros in migrant social entrepreneurs, 16 social enterprises were registered as businesses, an initial 45 jobs were created, and 2,361 beneficiaries were supported. To date, 44% of the social enterprises have been able to adapt and continue throughout the lockdown with many more planning for an uncertain future.

Concrete results:

- 4 courses delivered across the West Midlands
- 43 migrants and refugees trained (29 women, 14 men between the age of 18 and 62, from over 20 nationalities)
- 28 pitched for seed funding
- 16 winning ideas selected
- 80 thousand EUR were invested in migrant entrepreneurs
- 16 social enterprises registered

LINK

[Read more about MiFriendly Cities here](#)

MIG.EN.CUBE

Fostering Migrant Entrepreneurship Incubation in Europe

COUNTRY

Italy, Netherlands, France, Austria, Belgium



ORGANIZATIONS

Impact Hub and consortium of partners

DATE OF RELEASE

2021-2023



Introduction and Background

MIG.EN.CUBE is a project that focuses on enhancing the knowledge and competences of diverse incubation professionals who deal with current or aspiring migrant entrepreneurs.

The project acknowledges both the diversity of incubation professionals that carry out these activities, belonging to private companies, civil society organisations, or public institutions. In addition, it acknowledges the super-diversity of migrant entrepreneurs, in terms of legal status (e.g., type of residence permit), nationality, business motivations or business models.

The increasing number of programmes to support migrant entrepreneurs have positively impacted this target group, but have produced a fragmented landscape with many actors offering different services to different groups of entrepreneurs.

Many studies and policy-making reports have called for interventions to provide training opportunities and exchange of best practices for incubation professionals who work with a "super-diverse" population of current or aspiring migrant entrepreneurs.

MIG.EN.CUBE thus aims to:

1. increase the understanding of any specific incubation needs of migrant entrepreneurs and of the competences required for incubation professionals working with them;
2. systematise and share best practices for innovative incubation programmes for migrants across Europe;
3. provide incubation professionals with new, tried-and-tested materials and tools for advising, training, performing, and assessing incubation for migrant entrepreneurs.

Approach and Methodology

1. Mapping and research about incubation services for migrant entrepreneurs

In this phase of the project, the project partners will carry out research to identify the incubation and business support services targeting migrant entrepreneurs or aspiring migrant entrepreneurs, through qualitative/quantitative research to map the characteristics of incubation services, and collection of current practices of incubation in France, Italy, and The Netherlands.

2. Reporting and dissemination about incubation services for migrant entrepreneurs

The project partners will elaborate country-level reports to illustrate the situation about characteristics and performances of available incubation services in France, Italy, and The Netherlands, and one summary report. The available practices will be analysed so as to be summarised into an online Library of current practices to incubate migrant entrepreneurs.

3. Research about incubation professionals' training needs

The project partners will carry out qualitative and quantitative research to understand what the most pressing training needs of incubation experts dealing with migrant entrepreneurs or aspiring migrant entrepreneurs are.

4. Reporting and dissemination about incubation professionals' training needs

The project partners will elaborate country-level reports to describe the training needs of incubation professionals who deal with aspiring or actual migrant entrepreneurs in France, Italy, and The Netherlands, and one summary report. The reports will be available online and presented through multiplier events, academic and policy-practice publications.

5. Development and piloting of the MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses)

Based on the scientific results emerging from the previous steps of the project, the partners will develop a first version of the MOOC and pilot it with incubation professionals engaged in serving migrant entrepreneurs.

6. Finalisation and dissemination of the MOOC

After piloting, the MOOC will be finalised and be published online. It will be made freely available in Dutch, English, French, Italian. The launch of the MOOC will be advertised through the website, social media, and multiplier events of the project in Belgium, Italy, France, and The Netherlands.

7. Developing and piloting the Guidebook

Based on the scientific results emerging from the research undertaken at the beginning of the project, the partners will develop a first version of Guidebook and pilot it with incubation professionals engaged in serving migrant entrepreneurs and with policy-makers.

8. Finalisation and dissemination of the Guidebook

After piloting, the Inclusive Guidebook will be finalised and be published online. It will be made freely available in English, French, and Italian. The launch of the Guidebook will be advertised through the website, social media, and multiplier events of the project in Belgium, Italy, France, and The Netherlands.

Results

Since this project is currently ongoing, results are not available yet.

LINK

Expected results can be consulted on the project website.

What do migrants and refugees think?

Quotes from Better Incubation empathy interviews

"Everyday in Cyprus, people don't like my skin colour. So there are issues from everything like the post office to the supermarket."

"I started at 20 with a small shop in my town that sold everything from food to stationery and clothes. I went to the other city to get the supplies and sold it in my city for a profit. I did this for many years, till the war started and had to get out.."

"I am a financial analyst and a mom, with Lebanese and Turkish passports. The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Lebanon feels more developed compared to Turkey in terms of opportunities. Turkey is more premature and therefore less supportive - operational support was good, but networking and connections were not enough. There are many barriers in terms of openness to foreigners in the local community. It is hard to get into networks and relevant business contacts."

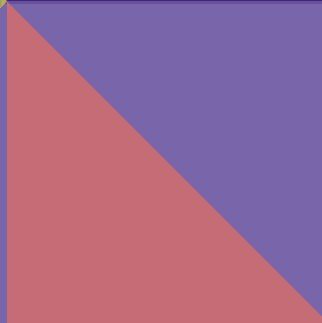
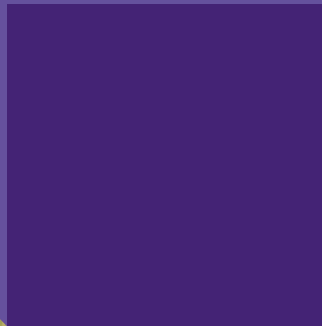
"In Turkey, programmes that are open to foreigners are often not declared openly. Very few highlight that it's not a Turkish-only application and that is open to foreigners, but that's a key point to ensure diversity."

"You reach people that you think are motivating you, but when you want to ask for their help they disappear. Within competitions for programmes, even some Jury members were very critical and not supportive about their idea."

Additional programmes designed for migrants and refugees to explore

- CO:LAB
- Luxembourg: Business MeetUps
- MiFriendly Cities
- Professional English and Mentoring
- Livelihoods Innovation through Food Entrepreneurship (LIFE) Project
- MYOB
- IMECE Project
- Välkommen till Framtiden - Sweden
- Malta Microfinance
- CoE - Intercultural cities - Diversity connectors for Start-ups
- StartUpMigrants
- EasyRights
- Social Challenges
- Participation program
- Re-Lab: start-up your business"
- Mygrants app
- INGEV Entrepreneurship Support Center
- Tech for Refugees
- Accelerate2030 Turkey

Youth



Being a young person who is not in education, employment or training (NEET) can lead to marginalisation or disengagement from society, and it can have long term negative effects on life chances. **Eurostat reported that in 2018, 16.5 % of the 20-34 olds in the EU were neither in employment nor in education and training.** Across the EU Member States there was a wide variation in NEET rates. For people aged 20–34, the lowest rates were below 10.0 % in Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden; this was also the case in Iceland, Switzerland and Norway. There were 10 Member States that recorded NEET rates above the EU average of 16.5 %. Among these, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania and Spain (EEA/Norway grants, 2021). In 2018, the share of young people in the EU who were NEETs was the lowest in cities (15.1 %) and the highest in rural areas (18.3 %), with towns and suburbs reporting a NEET rate that was between these two extremes (17.3 %).

Additional barriers for young entrepreneurs are listed below:

- Low levels of awareness and few entrepreneurship role models, which results in a lack of encouragement (**UNDESA, 2020**)
- Lack of enabling policy, regulatory and institutional environments (**UNDESA, 2020; GEM, 2015; Decent Jobs for Youth, 2017**)
- Rising youth unemployment + increases in temporary, part-time and non-standard working arrangements (**OECD, 2021**)
- Negative misconceptions about the entrepreneurial skills of the group, especially when applying intersectional lenses (for example, disadvantaged groups such as young people with disabilities) (**Generation Unlimited, 2020**)
- Weak entrepreneurial environments for youth. (**Generation Unlimited, 2020; GEM, 2015; OECD, 2020; OECD, 2018; UNDESA, 2020; YBI, 2020; LIAISE project- Empathy interviews**)
- Youth's limited access to finance and investment opportunities (**UNDESA, 2020; YBI, 2020; GEM, 2015; OECD, 2020; OECD, 2018**)
- “Education and training programmes targeted at youth generally do not do enough to nurture entrepreneurial attitudes and skills” (**UNDESA, p.8, 2020**)
- Lack of connections and networks (**UNDESA, 2020; GEM, 2015; LIAISE project- Empathy interviews**)
- Limited skills and knowledge transfer gap (**UNDESA, 2020**)

Social Impact Awards

31

COUNTRY

Founded in Austria & expanded globally



ORGANIZATIONS

Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at WU Vienna, Impact Hub and ERSTE Foundation

DATE OF RELEASE

Founded in 2012 (ongoing)

Introduction and Background

Social Impact Award (SIA), founded in 2009, runs education and incubation programmes in more than 15 countries in Europe, Africa and Asia to support early-stage social entrepreneurs in developing and implementing innovative business solutions to tackle the most important societal challenges of our times.

The path of developing a social venture helps students connect with their aspirations for a better society and their creative talent. It invites them to take an active role as citizens, get in touch with reality and to collaboratively articulate and test workable solutions to societal challenges. Joining this process in a supportive environment provides students with a potentially transformative learning experience: in tools, concepts and practice of social entrepreneurship, in teamwork, and – most importantly – in their own capability to create positive impact.

SIA believes that this experience is valuable for students and society, regardless of whether students choose to apply their learning as social entrepreneurs, in public or private organisations or other forms of civic engagement in course or after the Social Impact Award. Therefore, they aim to increase the number and preparedness of students that use their talent for creating impact.

With over 20 million students in the EU alone, there is an enormous potential for educating and supporting the next generation of social entrepreneurs in Europe. **Currently**, only a small percent of these students get in touch with the topics of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship throughout their formal education and even less receive support in building social ventures. The Social Impact Award promises to reach many more of these students and help them unleash their social entrepreneurial talent. **The SIA community** is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. The 200+ impact ventures that we have promoted with the Social Impact Award since 2009 contribute to these crucial goals.

Approach and Methodology

By hosting events and organising workshops to raise awareness for social entrepreneurship, teaching the necessary skills to navigate from vague intentions to promising ventures, providing access to networks and promoting the best teams with the Social Impact Award.

The main pillars of the activities:

EDUCATION Provide the youth with the necessary input to found a social enterprise. In spring 2020, they conducted 150+ workshops & events reaching 5,100+ participants both in person and virtually.

AWARENESS Create awareness around social entrepreneurship as a potential career. In 2020, they reached 2,500,000+ people online, and offered the programme to 14 countries and 134 cities around the world

COMMUNITY Enable the youth to get feedback from experts and peers. In 2020, the ventures re-



ceived 36,000+ votes online for the yearly Community Voting, and they gathered 300+ members of the community at the annual SIA Summit. They collaborate with 1,000+ partner organisations worldwide and have fostered 860+ alumni ventures.

SUPPORT Support the youth with know-how, incubation, and pre-seed funding. In 2020, they received 550+ applications to their incubation, in which 120 impact ventures took part. They awarded the 52 most impactful ventures.



Results

A number of interesting achievements have been generated by the Social Impact awards :

- 65% of participants found out whether or not they want to become a social entrepreneur
- 69% of applicants have experienced at least one form of economic, social, or political marginalisation
- 87% found the online formats interesting and relevant
- 94% have developed a deep understanding of the social or environmental challenge they address
- 89% have developed a deep understanding of how they will get their product/ service to the target group and funders effectively
- 80% of incubated teams found cohort gatherings very helpful for the development of their venture
- 77% of incubated teams consider working with their mentor after SIA

LINK

[See more here](#)

Raise Youth



COUNTRY

Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania and Spain



ORGANIZATIONS

GTF-Initiative for Sustainable Growth (GTF-ISG) and consortium of partners

DATE OF RELEASE

2018-2021 (ongoing)

Introduction and Background

RAISE Youth Specific Objective is to pilot and promote an innovative RAISE Model of (self)employment, for youth NEETs (not in education, employment or training) with primary focus on age 25-29 based on sustainable agri-business in 4 rural regions of EU with high unemployment rates and depopulation. The RAISE approach is based on the premise that in rural areas NEETs have no job market to be integrated into, but have a potential for pooling resources in socially

innovative ways for (self)employment and entrepreneurial approach. By developing a social innovation, new jobs will be created and filled, using principles of sustainable development in agribusiness, especially rural tourism which is a multiplier of employment and economic development. Although the project addresses primarily rural NEETs aged 25-29 giving special consideration to inactive women and Roma, it will also include younger rural NEETs (18-24) and urban NEETs, in order to pilot an innovative model of sustainable employment in the European Union.

Approach and Methodology

RAISE methodology is based on development of 5 different RAISE elements namely:

- 1. Raise Motivation** - with the objective to outreach, engage and inform target groups of NEETs and stakeholders
- 2. Raise Skills and Competences** - with the objective of providing dynamic and innovative learning methods and content in order to increase NEET skills and competences (targeted and adapted training in 3 thematic areas Agro, Tourism and Digital) and to prepare them in part for a new employment but particularly for self-employment (Pre Incubation Training)
- 3. Raise Demonstration Centres** - hubs of activity; from training, mentoring, learning by doing, group and individual approaches. A common methodology for RAISE Demo centres is produced but each coun-

try adapts programme areas to their own specific rural NEETs situation. Agro, Tourism and Digital components are intermeshed in the centres although specific lines of activity for each area are present. Through activities which are taking place in Demo Centres, with our support and guidance, NEETs are developing new tourism offers and integrated agro-business models.

- 4. Raise Links**, focuses on value chain creation and mentoring, transnational and cross sector cooperation including triple/quadruple helix innovations, but also market access and analysis of new products and services created, leading to clustering of new enterprises nationally and broader (EU and globally).
- 5. Raise Sustainability**, provides the framework for the ongoing support for target new NEETs and support for former NEETs by setting up structures and models prepared in prior RAISE elements.

It is expected that these new tourism offers will become recognisable to a growing population interest-

ed in social tourism, ecological and healthy food production through the help of new digital technologies and tools e.g. new “apps” developed for promotion and coordination of new tourist routes. The incubation and acceleration of these ideas in the centres is crucial to bring them to longevity and realisation i.e. to lead to the establishment of at least 80 new enterprises and 200 (self)employed NEETs. Each

of these components represents a separate unit however while working on them simultaneously, we will produce a unique synergy enabling us to tackle youth unemployment. Although our work is based on a great amount of international collaboration and knowledge sharing, each RAISE element is customised to address peculiarities of a specific target region.

Results

Thanks to Raise Youth initiative, young entrepreneurs (NEET beneficiaries) received a number of services which resulted in :

- 4 Raise Demo Centres established
- 52 New Businesses started by NEETs
- 115 former NEETs enrolled in apprenticeship and/or mobility schemes
- 117 NEETs (self)employed
- 960 former NEETs enrolled in education and training, including work based learning
- 1075 NEET beneficiaries engaged
- 5000+ NEETs approached

LINK

If you want to get more familiar with the project consult raise-youth.com

What does the youth think?

Quotes from Better Incubation empathy interviews

“People often underestimate me, but sometimes lower expectations could be a blessing in disguise.”

“The information about business and entrepreneurial support services is not well spread.”

“Yes, money is never superabundant, but without a team and contacts nothing can happen.”

“The existing acceleration programmes are mostly concentrated in the capital and the big cities.”

“As a young person you often don't realize that things take time and you need someone to help you, to prepare you about the actual process. The lack of quick results could be demotivating for the members of the team.”

“I believe that the most valuable information you can get from practitioners is people who walked if not the same or at least similar path as you. Those contacts give you not only valuable feedback, ideas and knowledge, but also additional motivation and inspiration to go on.”

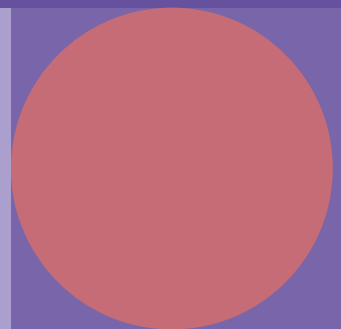
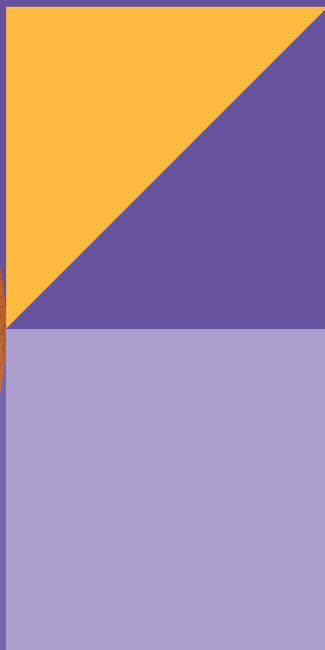
“Most of the people around me claimed that there is enough job opportunities for me and I don't need to invest my time in stupid dreams.”

“Mentoring, meeting with other entrepreneurs during your university and even school years could be very beneficial for young entrepreneurs.”

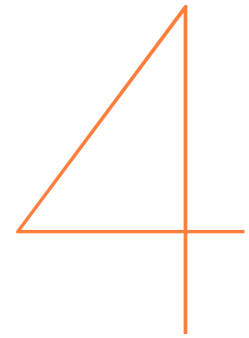
Additional programmes designed for youth to explore

→ Dialogue Place	→ Kilowatt
→ SocialFare, Centro per l'innovazione sociale	→ NOSENE - upcycling shop and charity donations
→ Social Impact Award	→ Pro-hub
→ EFES Project	→ CoopUP BO
→ Cariplo Factory	
→ Torino social innovation	
→ A cube	
→ Fabriq	
→ Zico - Zona a ingegnosità collettiva	
→ Giffoni Innovation Hub	
→ sobi.eco - eco-social innovations	
→ Partnerships with local organisations	
→ Rondine Impresa sociale	
→ Oportunitas	
→ Entreneurs Budapest	
→ Glocal Factory	
→ Incubatore neutral	
→ Missions València 2030	
→ Social Hub Genova	

Seniors



Seniors



Recently, middle-aged workers have found themselves out of work, forced after years and perhaps decades to reinvent a new profession and a new life. With the ongoing demographic change and population aging in Europe, it is however important to ensure the active inclusion of workers over 50s into society through employment, social participation and economic self-sufficiency. Hence, there are more and more known cases of people over 50 who decide to enhance their professional experience, develop their own project, business idea and seize new opportunities. In fact, several studies indicate that people who start their own businesses over 50 are two to three times more successful than those under 30.

The European Commission identified the aging of population as a social problem common to all European countries which must be fought in the context of the Union for innovation, a flagship initiative of Europe 2020. As emphasised by the report, self-employment for the over 50s can be a useful tool to face economic, employment and social problems (EC, 2014). However, almost all entrepreneurship support programmes are aimed at younger entrepreneurs.

Additional barriers for senior entrepreneurs are listed below:

- Low levels of retirement savings (OECD, 2019)
 - Outdated business networks (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2013)
 - Deteriorating health issues (Holienska et al., 2014)
 - Care responsibilities (a problem especially with elderly women) (OECD, 2013)
- Social isolation & anxiety (Duhamel et al., 2016; GEM, 2017; OECD, 2019; OECD, 2013)
 - Vulnerability to skill obsolescence (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2013)
 - Difficulties in mastering digital tools and tendency to be at odds with technological innovations (OECD, 2013)

Silver Workers

COUNTRY

Italy, Spain, Portugal, UK, Belgium



ORGANIZATIONS

VISES ONLUS and consortium of partners

DATE OF RELEASE

2018-2021 (ongoing)



Introduction and Background

Silver Workers is a three-year project co-financed by the European Commission in the Framework of the Erasmus + Programme, KA2 Strategic Partnership in the field of Vocational Education and Training. It is targeted to the people **aged 50 and over**, who are in many cases, too young to retire (also as a result of the recent pension reforms put in place in some European countries which raised the retirement) and, in other cases, are considered too old for being employed or re-employed. It offers them the re-integration into the job market through training programme which helps transforming their hobbies and other interests into self-employment and entrepreneurship.

The goals of this project are:

- Improve educational offer promoting the most appropriate and effective education devoted to over 50s, especially low skilled, jobseekers, in line with the priority "Fostering access to continuing VET (Vocational Education Training), including groups at risk"
- Promote and enhance a new labour market and create new jobs and tasks, much more up to date with the needs and trends of contemporary society and of labour market, with the aim of increasing labour market relevance of VET;
- Comply with the Horizontal priority " Developing basic and transversal skills using innovative methods".

Approach and Methodology

The project consists of three main phases:

During the first phase the consortium conducted a preliminary study and surveys to develop policy recommendations and provide the basis on how the real needs of the groups who participated in the survey (364 participants from 4 countries) will be reflected in the training programme.

In the second phase the training system will be developed, with a modular approach, which will make "silver-workers" able to develop skills and competences for coping with their job loss and for developing their own start up businesses. Further, target groups will benefit from a platform, useful for

them in order to: keep on using training materials on e-learning mode; settle their own start up, access mentoring services by experts/executives; develop networks and potential deals with other expert entrepreneurs.

During the third phase, the beneficiaries involved in the project will also test and evaluate the results, contributing to the fine-tuning and final release of the training system.

It envisages the direct involvement of at least 30 silver workers per country in training and evaluation activities, selected through a contest open to 50+ citizens interested in developing new entrepreneurship initiatives. Besides this, the consortium intends to involve at least 100 representatives of the target group thanks to distant learning activities, commu-

nication and dissemination. Also, the partners will be engaged in the mapping of stakeholders potentially interested in exploiting the results, so as to develop 5 national European databases, including 200 organisations each (more than 1000 in total). These

stakeholders will be addressed by implementing a tailored strategy for dissemination and exploitation, aiming to favour the use of the results on a large scale from the local to the European level.

Results

This project is still ongoing. One of the first project results includes elaboration of the Policy Recommendations based on the analysis of the questionnaires distributed to the sample of 364 persons in the age category 50+, as well as the socio-occupational and demographic picture emerging from the National Reports and the Eurostat statistics. The key recommendation which emerged from the study is that silver workers require appropriate training models tailored to their specific needs, which can be also found in [the analysis of the study](#).

It is expected that the project will include at least 30 silver workers per country in training and evaluation activities, selected through a contest open to 50+ citizens interested in developing new entrepreneurship initiatives. Besides this, the consortium intends to involve at least 100 representatives of the target group thanks to distant learning activities, communication and dissemination.

LINK

For more information go to silverworkers.net

Empreendedorismo 5.0



COUNTRY
Portugal



ORGANIZATIONS
Instituto Pedro Nunes (IPN)

DATE OF RELEASE
2020 (ongoing)

Introduction and Background

There are more and more people in Portugal considering a second career and wanting to create start-ups or start a new activity. When facing the retirement period, around 10% of people dream of starting their own business and 73% need to continue working for financial reasons. Empreendedorismo 5.0 programme is aimed at people over 50 - employed, unemployed, retired or inactive, who have a business idea and want to develop entrepreneurial skills, as well as enhance their experience, strengthen their network of contacts, share and learn.

The intention of Entrepreneurship 5.0 Programme is to support the creation of startups aimed at healthy living, reducing the risk of financial vulnerability and active aging, providing new perspectives, tools and knowledge through courses.

The project was developed within the scope of EIT Health - 'knowledge and innovation community' of 150 partner organisations created in 2015, under the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). The project has been already successfully piloted in several countries, including the Netherlands and Poland.

Approach and Methodology

It is an eight-week entrepreneurship training and mentoring programme delivered in a mixed format. This format provides a combination of 3 face-to-face sessions and several remote/online sessions, with these syllabuses being taught through an online platform.

In this way, regardless of your place of residence, participants can engage in this programme in a convenient way, maintaining permanent online access to contents, trainers and mentors, more easily adapting the pace of progress in the programme to their availability.

The workload is approximately 16 hours per week. It should be noted that no prior training is required, although some knowledge of the English language and computer tools such as e-mail, search engines, chat windows and web browsing is desirable.

With a previously defined training trajectory on the online platform, ENTREPRENEURSHIP 5.0 participants learn to explore the market, and receive permanent personal support from trainers and mentors specialised in various subjects related to entrepreneurship.

Topics covered in this programme include:

- Understand the needs and problems of potential customers;
- Develop the ability to apply design thinking;
- Learn to test business and market assumptions quickly;
- Acquire basic knowledge in business models;

- Acquire basic knowledge in marketing (online);
 - Acquire introductory knowledge in change management;
 - Learn about online tools for prototype development;
 - Learn how to launch a business and use proper follow-up.
-

Results

The programme is still ongoing, however the following achievements could be reported to date:

- 74 applications registered
- 53 selected participants
- 33 mentors involved
- over 40 participants highly engaged
- 3 start-up projects created and supported
- Active participation: 6,000 sessions (individual accesses) and 2,500 interactions (work, comments and messages)

LINK

More information about the programme can be found at cincopontozero.pt

What do seniors think?

Quotes from Better Incubation empathy interviews

"I believe an entrepreneur must have a professional career that allows him to undertake entrepreneurship. Senior entrepreneurs have worked, we have acquaintances, we know potential clients, etc."

"I have seen a lot of younger, much less skilled people asking for favors and taking my knowledge for granted, not offering to pay for it."

"Challenges? Not knowing how much to charge for creative products. How to put a price on it. Also trying to find the right target audience and a specific niche. Finding partnerships to scale has also been a challenge."

"What I appreciate the most is the sense of community involved and the trust that the group has been able to build when it comes to programmes."

"My mental health was not so shaken by the pandemic because I kept working on the project, keeping myself, my hands and mind busy."

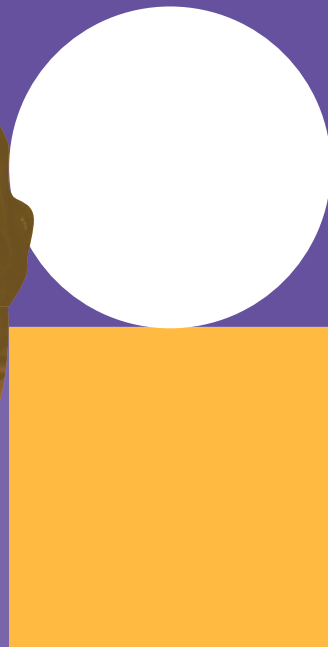
"The old labor market model invited the professional to experience a very specific area and in a very deep way. Today the market demands transversal skills and profiles with the ability to adapt to volatility."

"It was always clear to me that I wanted to be, but for this I was trained and worked for different types of companies: national, international, public, private, SMEs or large companies. All this experience has given me the necessary tables, knowledge, contacts and "gray hairs" necessary to know how to lead an entrepreneurship project with less risk of failure due to lack of knowledge in its management."

Additional programmes designed for seniors to explore

- **Generacion savia**
- **AAL Europe**
- **50 Emprende**
- **Coca Cola Espana**
- **50Pro**
- **Gruender 50 Plus**
- **Empreender 4560**
- **The Care Hub**
- **AgeingNomics**
- **CDPXcelerator**
- **Federmanager**
- **Cinco Ponto Zero**
- **Senior Entrepreneurship: Good Practices Manual**
- **Senior Entreprise**
- **Ignite Talks**

People ^{with} disabilities



People with disabilities



It is estimated that 16% of the working age population in the EU has some form of permanent or temporary disability, and the number of people with some form of disability is likely to increase as the population ages. Self-employment is appropriate for many in this population because it can provide more flexibility than paid employment in terms of workload, work schedule and work location, which can allow for better management of disability and lifestyle.

Although in recent years, there has been a proliferation of programmes that support business creation, traditional programmes are rarely targeting people with disabilities (PWDs) who are interested in starting their business. The conventional business incubators rarely meet the individual needs of these individuals, from a practical, relational and learning perspective. There is some evidence that targeted entrepreneurship training and start-up support programmes can be effective for disabled people, but they are expensive to deliver and the size of the target group will not always justify separate provision. There is strong potential to adapt existing training and start-up programmes to the needs of the disabled.

“Employer discrimination is often highest for those impairments or limitations that are subject to greater prejudice by employers such as those with mental and physical disabilities (Pagán, 2009).”

Business advisors should be ready to recommend self-employment as a career option to the disabled, longer support should be available if necessary, adapted formats (such as Braille) should be used, and language should be adapted to the realities of the clients. Partnerships between business support organisations and specialist disabled support organ-

isations can also help. One of the greatest benefits is that self-employment provides an entry into the labour market as employer discrimination is frequently reported (Kitching, 2014; Blanck et al., 2000). For these people, self-employment might offer the only opportunity for active labour market participation and with it, improved income and living standards.

Business support organisations should also ensure that their entire process and information meet the universal accessibility requirements, which will allow people with disabilities to participate and be supported on equal terms with others.

Additional barriers to entrepreneurs with disabilities are listed below:

- Lack of confidence and limited aspirations **(OECD, 2014; OECD/EU, 2014)**
- Perception of self-employment/entrepreneurship as risky **(OECD, 2014; OECD/EU, 2014)**
- Lack of relevant business knowledge and skills **(Kruger and David, 2020; OECD, 2014; OECD/EU, 2014)**
- Difficulties to access start-up capital **(Kruger and David, 2020; OECD, 2014; OECD/EU, 2014)**
- Discrimination and prejudice coming from consumers/customers **(OECD, 2014; OECD/EU, 2014)**
- Increased labour costs **(OECD, 2014; OECD/EU, 2014)**
- Lack of appropriate business support services **(OECD/EU, 2014)**
- Social exclusion **(Kruger and David, 2020; OECD, 2014; OECD/EU, 2014)**

Aula de Emprendimiento: Aprende y Emprende



COUNTRY
Portugal



ORGANIZATIONS
Fundacion Prevent and partners

DATE OF RELEASE
2014

Introduction and Background

Based on the statistical data more than 90% of the people with disabilities in Spain indicate the existence of barriers to find an adequate employment, mostly due to health reasons, lack of opportunities, lack of qualifications and experience, or due to societal bias (**Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2012**). Although entrepreneurship is presented as an opportunity and alternative form of employment, people with disabilities face considerable challenges related to the development of their business due to the nature of their disabilities. They in particular stress the lack of knowledge and entrepreneurship training that can help

them alleviate common start-up mistakes; mistakes that cost them money, time and emotional energy.

To address the difficulties these individuals face when starting or growing their business, the academic entrepreneurship programme "Classroom of Entrepreneurship: Learn and Undertake" was launched by Fundación Prevent in 2014. Run in collaboration with ESADE Business School, this partnership is based on the complementary expertise and experience of both organisations. While ESADE Business School and its faculty brings academic rigor and quality, Fundación Prevent offers advice and guidance on how to ensure the curriculum and classes are adjusted to the needs of the people with disabilities.

Approach and Methodology

Free training programme takes a holistic approach to professional, personal and interpersonal growth of the people with disabilities. During 7 months, it offers academic and practical learning experience and ensures that participants are exposed to different aspects of knowledge necessary to venture into the entire entrepreneurial process. Each participant who meets all requirements, will obtain an ESADE diploma at the end of the programme.

The following aspects could be highlighted in the programme methodology :

1. Academic entrepreneurship training

Entrepreneurship training (120 hours) is conducted by

the faculty of ESADE Business School, one of the most outstanding academic institutions in the world, and aims to provide entrepreneurs with the transversal knowledge necessary for the creation of venture, including business plan, strategy design, understanding the customers, to reflect on the value proposition and how it fits with the needs of the market. This is combined with the tutors and managers of prestigious companies, who offer a valuable practical experience on how to land the idea in the business world.

2. Mentorship through customised support

The programme is based on the approach of "learning by doing" through customised approach. Every participant is assigned to a mentor/experienced professional to provide individual support and accompaniment to help them through the process of training and starting their own business. The accessibility of the content

and sessions is guaranteed (e.g. sign language, interpreter support, transcribed classes, facilities accessible to people with reduced mobility etc.) and enables participants to fully emerge into the learning process.

3. Networking and alumni support

The classroom is a common space for work and knowledge that enhances synergies between entrepreneurs and facilitates the transfer of know-how. The common space also represents an essential element for entrepreneurs – business network, because building a network of relationships with people in the same situation offers possibilities to enjoy synergies in learning, exchange of information and mutual support. Special bonds have also been created between entrepreneurs and the rest of the actors in the classroom – mentors, teachers, volunteers and members of Fundación Prevent. This creates a foundation upon

which the entrepreneurs build their own network of professional contacts and future networking possibilities. Once the programme is finished there are possibilities to get support by the programme alumni or continue through other programmes offered by the Fundación Prevent (POWERNAUTES).

4. Financial aid

The programme is free and fully funded for all students, with an estimated cost of €6000 per student. In addition, the programme has an economic fund offering financial aid which is available for the implementation of the best valued projects. Those who finalise the academic programme, have the opportunity to ask for the financial support in the amount of €5000 per project. The best projects are selected by the Evaluation committee based on the presentation of the business plans by the participants.

Results

Fundación Prevent has begun its journey towards measuring its social impact in order to understand exactly how its programme contributes to improvement of the participants' socio-economic standing in the society by developing two of the main tools for measurement: Theory of Change and Logical framework.

During the assessment interviews, most of the entrepreneurs mentioned the stories of changes, growth, opportunity and added value of this programme. For some of them it has completely changed their career path, work and personal life. In addition, the professional skills and confidence they acquired during the training has improved their employability prospects and helped them develop their businesses.

The programme in numbers :

- 15 editions of the programme developed (since 2014)
- 202 entrepreneurs have been trained
- 80 professionals and CEOs have supported entrepreneurs with disabilities in the implementation of their business plans and development of personal and social abilities
- € 200,000 on average is annually invested in the programme

LINK

A general description about the project can be found [here](#)

Societes



COUNTRY

Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro



ORGANIZATIONS

Caritas Serbia and consortium of partners

DATE OF RELEASE

2016 (ongoing)

Introduction and Background

The program SOCIETIES is short for Support Of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) In Empowering Technical skills, Inclusion of people with disabilities and EU Standards in Western Balkans an EU funded program that aims at strengthening the CSOs in 5 Western Balkans countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina - BiH, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia), by supporting their participation in public dialogue with the Public Authorities and their influence on the decision-making process. It increases their expertise and capacities in social inclusion policies of people with disabilities and/or mental disorders in line with the EU standards and the pre-accession process of those countries.

The program was built upon Caritas work with CSOs and experience in the field of promotion of mental health and de-institutionalisation.

De-institutionalisation in the care of PWDs is not a new concept neither for the CSOs nor for the local institutions in the 5 targeted countries: this reform

process was officially introduced more than 10 years ago, within different Strategies of Ministries and local authorities in health and social sectors. The legal frameworks in the region are generally supportive, as they plan the gradual closure of large residential institutions (psychiatric hospitals, social institutes for people with disabilities) and the development of community-based services (day/home care services, protected residential units, social enterprises for work inclusion). However, the level of implementation of those reforms varies from country to country.

Due to this jeopardised implementation of the reforms and due to the stigma still largely present, **the PWDs in the region face several difficulties**, discriminatory practices, and social exclusion. The SOCIETIES project is proposed by **the Alliance for social inclusion**, composed of 10 CSOs in the region. Five of them belong to the Caritas network and have worked together on different projects, sharing common values, joint mission and strategies. The alliance is enriched and strengthened by **other organisations** working in the field of social inclusion of PWDs.

Approach and Methodology

The following activities were part of the project:

- Regional research on CSOs capacities in advocacy and experiences in participating in decision making process
- Activation of task forces for advocacy, for developing new policies and application of existing legislation on social inclusion, through meetings, round tables, conferences, policy recommendations
- Creation of country & regional network
- Regional capacity building programme for CSOs - school for social management (10 regional trainings)
- Study visits to best practices in social inclusion and de-institutionalisation in western Balkans



- Sub-granting of local grassroots organisation initiatives (30) on de-institutionalisation and social inclusion for PwDs (community-based services and social enterprises)
- Monitoring, accompaniment and mentoring of sub-granted initiatives
- Regional fair of best practices of CSOs social enterprises and community-based services the content.



Results

With the help of these high level activities the following results have been achieved:

Creation of a Database of more than 450 CSOs and social enterprises in SEE - In a comprehensive Mapping process implemented in all countries, a database with information of 386 CSOs actively working with PwD or MH problems has been created. The total human capital of mapped CSOs consists of approx. 1900 volunteers, more than 1300 operators and personnel, more than 500 leaders, 350 experts and 61 religious leaders. The mapping activity and information collected about the CSOs contributed significantly to designing a tailor-made capacity-building programme. During 2020 more than 85 CSOs were added to the mapped organisations.

- **Support of 11 National institutions** in 5 IPA countries
- Experience and knowhow in promotion of social inclusion of PwD
- Synergy with other regional project (on social economy and on disability)
- Space for **innovation through sub-granting initiatives** (68 initiatives financed with budget of 780.000 EUR)
- Inclusive approach.
- The implementation of aforementioned project resulted in various outputs, recommendations and data on which the project is based.

- 1 CSOs' Mapping and Welfare analysis in the field of Disability and Mental Health in 5 SEE countries (2016-2018);
- In the period 2016-2021, 44 training sessions were organised with participation of 500 people from 130 CSOs from target countries. Number of participants includes 90 CSOs' leaders who benefited from the **capacity building programme** that will continue during the project implementation.
- 5 Policy Papers and 80 Recommendations on social inclusion of PwDs in SEE
- Sub-granting scheme (25 initiatives financed with budget 450.000 EUR in 2017 and 43 initiatives with budget of 330.000 EUR in 2021)
- 8 national campaigns with more than 20.000 people involved
- The 2nd 4-year phase of the programme will be initiated in 2020. It continues with the same cluster of activities, but this time the focus is more on advocacy actions. Unfortunately, the pandemic had a big influence on the way of working and limited field visits and regional exchange.

LINK

You can familiarise yourself with this initiative on this website: projectsocieties.org

What do people with disabilities think?

Quotes from Better Incubation empathy interviews

"It's important to have people that you trust around you."

"When I started working at Hallotex, a fashion company, my boss made a miniature model of the physical space where I was working so that I could orient myself better."

Maria Petit, blind Entrepreneur, founder of "Punt de vista", Speaker, Athlete World champion paralympic, Author of: "Maria de l'ull viu".

"After so many years using a wheelchair, I only focus on the things I can do. My main barriers are physical barriers."

Pau Bach, wheelchair user, Founder of Batec Mobility.

Additional programmes for people with disabilities to explore

- Aula de Emprendimiento Aprende y Emprende
- IN-CUBA Project
- Convocatoria de ayudas para el emprendimiento de personas con discapacidad 2018-2022
- Portamento
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
- Entrepreneurship among young people with disabilities
- Acceleratorul de întreprinderi sociale
- Liminal Access
- SOCIETIES - Support Of CSOs In Empowering Technical skills, Inclusion of people with disabilities and Eu standards in Southeast Europe
- Giomale
- Prorienta
- Wallonia e-health Living Lab - WeLL
- AVIQ (agence pour une vie de qualité - agency for a quality life)
- Association des Entreprises de Travail Adapté (Adapted work companies)
- Cooperathon
- Study Center for the Visually Impaired
- Tennental
- AQUIAS Project
- Ikubator

Conclusions and Recommendations



Conclusions and Recommendations

Entrepreneurship is solving problems, observing reality and making value proposals. This often means starting from a reality that needs to be changed. To advance in this sense, it is important to encourage the participation of vulnerable groups in initiatives that help to understand, seek solutions and contribute to a common inclusive vision. However, the field of inclusive entrepreneurship support is young and practical knowledge is still distributed and fragmented. The Better Incubation Project with five established Communities of practice have developed an interdisciplinary sharing approach to exchange best practices and common challenges identified by business support organisations with experts and entrepreneurs. The present document is a summary of the wide variety of best practices, tools and resources collected by participants in the Better Incubation communities of practice.

This section summarises the lessons learned on the process of inclusive entrepreneurship support gathered by three partner organisations : Impact Hub, EBN and EVPA during the implementation of the project. The collected knowledge will allow for a broader analysis and will be built into future components and outcomes of the LIAISE project to be shared with a wide range of stakeholders while taking into account its final objective of initiating ecosystemic change of the incubation environment.

From an organisational perspective, **Impact Hub** has been leading on the coordination and the methodological approach in the Communities of Practice. 10 Impact Hub Makers from different local Hubs across Europe have actively joined the knowledge generation effort in their communities of practice. Initial insights show that Impact Hubs have quite a lot of experience when it comes to supporting entrepreneurs from refugee and migrant communities, youth backgrounds and women entrepreneurs. Programmatic delivery for those target groups have proliferated in the network, seeing an increased acumen of available resources, mentors, alumni communities and funds available. However, when it comes to senior entrepreneurs and people with disabilities, the expertise and number of programs in the Impact Hub Network is more scarce. The rea-

sons behind that could be partially explained by the historical membership composition in the Impact Hub communities, by the lack of available connection with specialized networks targeting these groups or by the lack of funding available to support groups that require additional resources to be able to fully participate in incubation activities. Impact Hubs are keen to take the Better Incubation opportunity as a learning and piloting space where they could strengthen their value propositions towards these target groups and to build partnerships with experts and entrepreneurs in the field.

EBN as a community of 130+ certified business support organisations believes that mainstream business incubators and accelerators can effectively support not only new and growing traditional businesses but are also well positioned to address social challenges by embracing social and inclusive entrepreneurship. The latter includes providing incubating services for the entrepreneurs from under-represented and vulnerable groups, addressed by the five thematic Communities of practice in the Better Incubation project. The journey of 10 EBN members participating in the Communities of practice has revealed their different levels of experience, diverse cultural contexts and approaches on how to design and implement the inclusive incubation process. A key lesson learned for the mainstream business support organisations is that to unleash the creative potential of these vulnerable groups to become entrepreneurs, implementing pre-packaged solutions might not work. On the contrary, it requires additional effort by the business incubators to attract and engage these individuals, accept a higher level of risk, and deploy a customised approach to address the unique challenges they face.

EVPA is the leading European network of investors for impact, i.e. grant-makers and social investors adopting a patient and high-engagement investment approach to support social purpose organisations both financially and non-financially. Being a community of almost 300 organisations for which impact is non-negotiable, our members are active in a wide range of sectors and they target a large variety of end beneficiaries, among which are differ-

ent vulnerable groups. EVPA members active in the field of inclusive (social) entrepreneurship have valuable knowledge to share about the specific vulnerable groups they work with and have been of great value for the Communities of practice. Moving forward, there has been a growing interest in ensuring diversity and equality criteria among programmes and organisations funded by our members, thus the focus on vulnerable groups is expected to grow further in the years to come.

One of the crucial roles that business incubators play when it comes to support of the under-represented entrepreneurs is facilitating access to funding, which refers to any activities that help entrepreneurs to obtain funding in order to start and/or grow their business. The services provided cover building the entrepreneur's knowledge on how to financially plan and manage the business ('financial literacy'); how to network and connect with investors; and how to communicate and pitch the idea and/or product/service. This support also assists entrepreneurs to gain access to suitable financial products.

Here are some recommendations for BSOs shared by experienced practitioners and EVPA members active in the field of inclusive entrepreneurship:

1. Offer an access to a range of financing tools appropriate to the type of business, with structural collaborations and referrals in place to the key providers in the ecosystem.
2. Represent a source of validation that builds credibility of the entrepreneurs. This relates to being transparent and rigorous in the selection process, and leveraging this as a source of information for funders. BSOs often receive requests for validation recommendations of entrepreneurs, and their validation has strength in part because of the rigor of our due diligence process.
3. Keep entrepreneurs on the top of mind for capital providers. A good practice would be to compile a Capital Provider Lookbook of their programme to capture all past participants looking to build connections with capital providers each year. This would help keep the entrepreneurs fresh in the minds of the capital providers on a continuous basis.

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