

# Digital Inclusive Business School (DIBS)

2021-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000033439

## Project Result 1 Transnational Report Executive Summary

Date: October 2022 – v2

**Erasmus+ Programme**

KA2 – Strategic Partnership Projects

KA220-ADU – Cooperation partnerships in adult education



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This report summarises the main findings of the study conducted in response to the objective of developing a sound and updated knowledge base to provide a solid foundation for the specific needs of the chosen target group to develop the capacity-building program. The scope of the research is not to carry out a preliminary or complex study but to gather intelligence and reflective feedback. We seek to enrich and verify generally assumed conclusions about the entrepreneurial capacity of MALQs at risk of social and economic exclusion. We want to ensure their inclusion in society by inviting insights and feedback from diverse participants, including trainers and coaches specialized in career training, to get a balanced, comprehensive, and up-to-date overview.

Comprehensive research has been designed and implemented, combining desk and field research.

### Desk Research

The preliminary collection of information has served, on the one hand, to contextualise the situation of the target group in each country. On the other hand, the data collected has been used to refine the online questionnaire and guide the focus group development.

### Field Research

- Online questionnaire aimed at migrant entrepreneurs with a low-qualification background. These questionnaires aim to detect catalysing factors and prioritise the difficulties encountered in the entrepreneurial process.
- Focus group or interviews to gather information from MALQs on training needs for entrepreneurship.
- Focus group with educators/professionals/volunteers working with MALQs. The objective of these focus groups has been detecting good practices and prioritising difficulties encountered in the training and education processes of MALQs.
- Focus group with experts in entrepreneurship (university professors or business school professors/entrepreneurs in the country). In this case, the objective has been detecting good practices and prioritising difficulties encountered in entrepreneurship training and education processes.

## 1. Desk and field research: Overall discussion and key findings:

The five countries participating in the project are countries that, for varied reasons, have traditionally been receiving countries for immigrants. With nuances, it is expected that the number of immigrants will continue to grow in the coming years, and the same may happen in other European countries, which means that the challenge of integration and inclusiveness will be more strongly present on the European agenda in the coming years.

Integration problems occur at diverse levels, but without previously alleviating some of them, it is challenging to propose training actions to promote entrepreneurship among immigrants. For example, this occurs with problems related to legal status, social prejudices, and the difficulty in covering basic needs: housing, food, health, education and employment, and digital literacy.

According to the research, the reality in the participating countries is that there is a lack of tailor-made training provisions for entrepreneurship in terms of content and methods.

This offer can be characterised as generalist and unattractive.

In terms of content, needs have been identified, such as language learning, how to find an idea and draw up a business plan, legal advice, or the development of market analysis skills. Training in essential aspects related to financing, accounting, taxes, human resources, marketing, and online commerce has been highlighted.

**In the methodological aspect, the need to adapt methodologies by creating tailor-made courses, the convenience of practical methods with a dynamic theory format and applicable content, and, especially, the need for mentoring, accompaniment, and internships in companies.**

**According to the experts, the most suitable training model for this group should be face-to-face, with individualised professional and psychological support.**

## 2. Needs assessment issues and gaps identified

The studies carried out in the different participating countries have revealed specific common problems related to entrepreneurship training for low-skilled immigrants:

1. Two core issues condition any training process: Lack of language knowledge and the need for legal assistance. Without some training and support in these aspects, the immigrant entrepreneur falls into a complex bureaucratic tangle that is difficult to navigate. This complexity is a decisive obstacle.
2. Another social barrier must be added: the persistence, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the country, of social prejudices against immigrant entrepreneurs. Part of the host society does not fully understand what immigrants can contribute to the country, which generates fear, mistrust, and rejection.
3. A training offer on entrepreneurship adapted to immigrants has not been detected, and it is frequently provided by social organisations that are not experts in business management.
4. In this sense, there is a lack of mentoring for immigrant entrepreneurs, which leaves the process of entrepreneurship and its critical aspects to the whim of unqualified personal decisions due to a lack of training.

5. Another neglected aspect is the development of digital skills among low-skilled immigrants. Given that most social processes today take place in the digital sphere, weak skills in this area hinder immigrants' access to essential social services as well as their economic growth and development.

### 3. Main topics/themes/skills to be targeted during the training

In analysing the different stakeholders' responses, several training aspects have been highlighted that should be addressed in any entrepreneurship training process for immigrants. These have been classified into technical topics, soft skills, and digital skills.

The main technical topics expressed or requested during the research are:

- Legal and administrative issues (taxes, licenses, wages, contracts, insurance, security protocols, certificates, etc.). As each country has its legal and administrative system, migrants feel lost in all these issues, which cannot be extrapolated from their countries of origin.
- Learning the language of business. Understanding management ideas and concepts is essential to handling the business world's basic terminology.
- Developing the idea and formulating a business plan. Most MALQs come with ideas that are not very precise or appropriate for the host country context. They are also often untrained in how to translate an idea into a viable business plan.
- Analysis of local markets and contexts. Immigrants are often unaware of the characteristics of the local context where they want to start their business and lack the skills to make a fundamental market analysis that will lead them to make better decisions.
- Marketing Management. Acquisition of commercial management skills and local positioning techniques.
- Essential financial control tools adapted to their business.
- Search for sources of financing.
- Proper recruitment of staff.

Several digital skills topics should also be addressed in training to improve digital literacy:

- Networking and communication management.
- E-commerce and setting up online businesses.
- Online and social media branding.
- Basic application tools.

The study also reveals a lack of specific soft skills (or a prerequisite for entrepreneurship), which should be working topics:

- Critical thinking
- Risk-taking
- Data analysis
- Creativity
- Problem-solving skills
- Communication skills
- Teamwork
- Strategic thinking
- Decision-making skills
- Negotiation skills
- Intercultural skills
- Emotional skills (patience, resilience, flexibility, motivation)
- Leadership skills

#### 4. Needs and training methods preferred by MALQs

Questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews with MALQs have shown that MALQs are generally reluctant to undergo available theoretical training because the search for ways to guarantee their basic needs leaves them little time for training. Hence, they demand something very practical and applied to their reality.

On the other hand, MALQs - especially those with experience in entrepreneurship - require personalised advice and help for specific issues as they arise. They do not focus so much on general topics or global training needs.

That implies a preference for:

- Practical methodologies and training based on case studies applied to real-life situations.
- Programmes adapted to the students.
- Advice adapted to the problems faced by migrants from professionals and mentors.
- Internships and work experience in companies.

## 5. Needs and training methods suggested by educators, volunteers, and professionals

The needs identified and training methods suggested by educators, volunteers, and professionals align with those highlighted by the MALQS. In particular, the need for:

- Practical modules. Theoretical concepts should be applied based on concrete tools and problem-solving.
- Online and offline sessions (if needed). Face-to-face training should be prioritized. It favours face-to-face encounters, allowing for sharing experiences and developing relational skills. Offline sessions could focus on advice on concrete issues.
- Importance of mentoring. Need for professional and psychological support for immigrant entrepreneurs during the development and implementation of their businesses.
- Education adapted to lower levels of knowledge. Although there may be some differences in the educational background, it is preferable to start from low levels and build on that.
- Sensitivity to different worldviews. It is crucial to empathise with the diverse realities and worldviews of migrants if they are to be involved in their training.
- Training on ways to get help, primarily legal, but other kinds of support. There will be issues that migrants cannot solve on their own.
- The centrality of the immigrant in training, making immigrants the protagonists of their learning.
- Proposed methods of active participation.

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations for future research, as well as practice and policy implications on national and EU levels:

In conclusion, the following aspects should be highlighted:

- Language is one of the main barriers to integrating immigrants, mainly promoting entrepreneurship. Without a basic knowledge of the host country's language, it is complicated to function in a social, legal, and political context that is entirely unfamiliar to this group. In this sense, governments should be more involved by providing resources to contribute to learning the country's language.
- There are two worrying characteristics of the training on entrepreneurship: it is scarce, and there is no continuity. Often, training in this area is left in the hands of well-meaning but non-expert social organisations. This makes it challenging to achieve training objectives and



creates discouragement among immigrants, who have little time to devote to training due to the need to meet their most basic needs. The maintenance of quality training provision and its continuity over time will be challenging to achieve without support at the national and European levels.

- Despite the motivation, enthusiasm, and involvement that immigrants may have in starting their businesses, immigrants need, first and foremost, to meet basic integration needs in the legal, social, and economic spheres. Without resolving these barriers, it will not be possible to propose training programs in entrepreneurship. Here it is necessary to seek synergies at the European level between social institutions to work together to find solutions for the integration of immigrants in Europe.
- Along with language learning, the other significant barrier to the integration of immigrants is legal and bureaucratic aspects. Greater involvement of governments in providing training and free legal advice to this group would be desirable.
- Critical cultural barriers and prejudiced attitudes still hinder the integration of immigrants and even the favourable evolution of their entrepreneurial initiatives. It is necessary to continue working on raising awareness of the contributions that immigrants make to society through their work. The development of public campaigns promoted by public administrations would provide considerable support for entrepreneurship training.
- The success of any training program depends on methods that guarantee practical and dynamic training, with mentoring support to encourage follow-up and response to specific needs or problems. The participation of mentors and the possibility of internships in companies are suggested as unavoidable features. In this respect, public-private partnerships will be essential.
- More research is needed on the effectiveness of training programs to extract best practices that can guide the design of more effective proposals, whether in terms of orientation, themes, or methodologies.
- Finally, future research should further analyse immigrants' specific challenges during their entrepreneurship processes and propose improvement solutions.

## 7. Final recommendation

Based on the critical aspects identified in the study and summarised above, entrepreneurship training for MALQs should be primarily face-to-face. Consequently, a digital platform should be implemented and adapted to each situation by those in charge. It would require that the materials incorporated in the platform should serve as training materials for trainers and be flexible enough to use and adapt them to the specific needs of MALQs.