

Encouraging integration for newly arrived immigrant women through entrepreneurship

PILOT REPORT GREECE

1. DESCRIBE YOUR GROUP

The pilot was conducted during the first two weeks of July 2021. Due to the measures taken in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, all the sessions were conducted online, through Zoom. This included the final session where the participants presented their entrepreneurship project, in the form of a company.

The group of participants were immigrants from different countries; Georgia, Albania, Russia, Spain, Armenia, Ukraine, Poland. The participants' educational level ranged from secondary education to a Bachelor degree.

All the participants resided in Greece and had working knowledge of Greek, which allowed them to fully participate in the pilot, understand the concepts presented by the facilitator as well as the activities that they had to take part in. Similarly, their level of language allowed them to interact and cooperate with each other, which was necessary in order to discuss, negotiate and finally, agree on the final activity; the entrepreneurship project.

All the participants reported that they were interested in entrepreneurship and felt that this training would help them understand how they can come up with a good entrepreneurship idea and bring it to reality. However, some participants reported that due to the demanding nature of their job, could not finish attend the whole circle of sessions.

2. DESCRIBE YOUR TRAINING

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Number of the session	Date of the session	Number of participants	Topic of discussion Short Content	Invited external organisations (if any) ex. NGOs, business consultancies, municipality, etc.
1.	01.06.2021	15	Creativity	
2.	02.06.2021	14	Cultural Awareness	
3.	03.06.2021	12	Digital Skills- Introduction to the idea of the entrepreneurship project	
4.	08.06.2021	8	Preparation for the	

			Entrepreneurship project	
5.	09.06.2021	9	Preparation for the Entrepreneurship project	
6.	10.06.2021	10	Preparation for the Entrepreneurship project	
7.	16.06.2021	10	Entrepreneurship project-FINAL EVENT	

3. WHAT MODULES DID YOU USE DURING TRAINING? WHY THESE MODULES? WHAT ELEMENTS (EXERCISES, THEORY OR BOTH)?

The modules that were included during the training were the following;

- Creativity
- Cultural awareness
- Digital skills

The selection of the above modules was made based on the participants' needs and preferences. The decision was also affected by our discussions about their entrepreneurship project and the things that the participants considered important in this respect.

In particular, on the first session in order to break the ice and help the participants get to know each other better, we selected the module of Creativity. This particular module and the activities that it included, helped the participants start working on their creativity skills. The participants enjoyed all the activities that we piloted and in particular Disney's Creative Strategy. This activity was particularly chosen by the facilitator as it encouraged them not only to dream 'big' and in a creative way, but also to critically evaluate the idea and come up with ways that would bring it to reality. Participants were asked to reflect on the importance of all those skills.

The next session focused on Cultural awareness. Due to the fact that our group was a multinational one, the topic of Cultural awareness allowed the participants to critically examine their strength as members of a multicultural group, as well as the challenges that could possibly emerge in the future. For this reason, the facilitator presented the theory of the chapter. In particular, we discussed the meaning of culture and the importance of cultural awareness. Great attention was paid to the iceberg metaphor. This metaphor allowed for deep discussions about visible and hidden aspects of culture. A discussion followed on how such aspects could be used to our benefit when designing a company. At this point, the participants started thinking about possible topics for their entrepreneurship project.

The final module that we piloted in our training was the Digital skills module. In particular, we started by discussing the importance of technology in today's world and within their context. It became obvious from the discussion that the participants would benefit from setting up a profile on a professional social media platform, such as LinkedIn. Therefore, we proceeded with the relevant activity. The participants reported that they hoped their LinkedIn profile would lead them to more or new career opportunities.

It is important to add that since all the activities that we piloted had been designed with the assumption that the training would take place face-to-face, we had to proceed with relevant adaptations of the content, necessary for the transfer of the training in an online environment. This included the facilitator sharing screens with the participants, as well as the use of Breakout rooms for group or pair work.

4. DESCRIBE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECTS YOUR PARTICIPANTS ELABORATED

The participants engaged in a brainstorming session which aimed at identifying possible entrepreneurship ideas. Numerous possible ideas were identified. The participants finally narrowed their options down to two, and then to one. The final idea for the entrepreneurship project was the one that received the most positive feedback by all, and, most importantly, allowed them to build on the strengths of the multicultural background of the group.

The project proposed was a Delicatessen shop, in which customers would find the best food, drinks, spices from the women's countries. The participants started the idea by identifying the products that best represent their countries. They came up with a selection of excellent-quality, biological products, such as olives, honey, etc, as well as typical food, such as cheese and meat. Having identified the products that they wished to work with, they started working on a business plan, in groups. The business plan allowed them to make decisions about:

- the location of the shop
- the name of the shop
- the logo of the shop
- its floorplan
- possible partners
- how they would price the products
- how they would display the products
- ways of advertising the shop
- whether they would also have an online shop
- how they would respond to potential challenges met
- how they would respond to the costs and the financial needs (e.g. get a loan, what kind of loan, sponsorships, etc)
- how they would stand out from the crowd
- what kind of relationship they would nurture with possible clients (e.g. friendly and professional)

The business plan helped the participants prepare a PowerPoint presentation, which was presented in front of audience and stakeholders in the final event. Each participant presented 1-2 slides. The audience was involved as they were invited to ask questions and give constructive feedback to the participants. The feedback received was excellent and the final event was successful. The participants reported that their level of confidence with regards to their entrepreneurship skills increased significantly after the pilot training.

5. FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

The participants gave us very positive feedback. They felt that they gained knowledge about different aspects of entrepreneurship. As mentioned before, all participants were driven by a need to learn the practical aspects of starting a company. They said that this training was very helpful in this respect.

One of the things that they mentioned as a valuable lesson they took from the training was the importance of brainstorming and group work. The participants came up with very innovative ideas about different aspects of their project, through negotiation with their peers.

6. INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS

During the final session, participants presented their entrepreneurship project. The presentation was made online. We invited different stakeholders, mostly trainers, to attend the final session and give their feedback to the participants. Participants had the chance to present in front of a friendly audience and receive honest, positive and constructive comments. The audience was asked not only to give their opinion on the participants' idea, but also provide alternative ideas so that they could help the participants enrich their ideas and engage in critical thinking.

7. LEVEL OF THEIR SKILLS BEFORE AND AFTER THE TRAINING (USING RINOVA'S QUESTIONNAIRE)

Participants reported that their participation in the pilot session helped them develop their entrepreneurial thinking. The training sessions gave them the opportunity to improve their skills and gain confidence. The training's impact is reflected in the responds to the evaluation questionnaires.