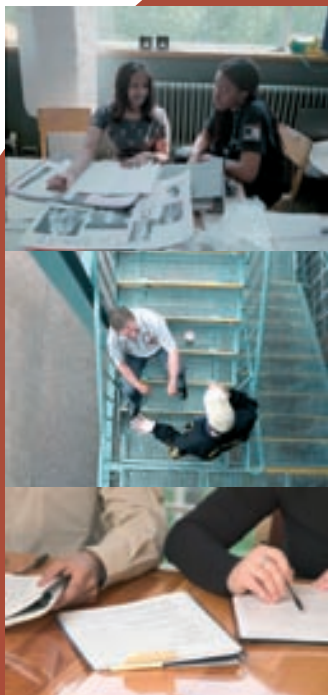


Encouraging Entrepreneurship among excluded groups – insights from the work of the European Enterprise Network



The European Joint Employment Report has identified the creation of new enterprises as essential to reach the Lisbon employment rate targets. One of the crucial success factors to attract more people to set up a viable business, and especially disadvantaged groups, is tailored entrepreneurial support.

This implies a systematic analysis of the needs of potential entrepreneurs at the different stages of business planning and the design and coordination of services corresponding to their actual requirements. In reality, disadvantaged groups, such as young people, ethnic minorities, women, and people with disabilities usually rely on a number of different public and private service providers with overlapping sources and various levels of quality.

In the framework of the EU EQUAL Initiative, the partners of the European Enterprise Network have worked towards a shared approach to business support for disadvantaged target groups. The common framework identified comprises five key stages:

1. Recruitment and awareness raising
2. Profiling
3. Business planning
4. Start-up
5. Post start-up support

As a best practice, any organisation responsible for supporting future entrepreneurs shall provide adequate assistance through all five stages – either through internal resources or through the collaboration in partner

networks. There are different ways of support, but high quality has to be ensured for each individual stage. This implies an adaptation of the services to the individual strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and disadvantages of the entrepreneur.

Best practices of the European Enterprise Network partners include

- a French interactive entrepreneurship database for recruitment,
- a Greek network of animators to spread the idea of entrepreneurship to deprived rural areas,
- a German multi-dimensional profiling to check the entrepreneurial personality and to identify the individual requirements
- a Belgian incubator, which allows potential entrepreneurs to develop further their business idea in the course of a testing period,
- innovative British and German microlending funds to complement business advice with adequate tools for financing, and
- an elaborated British mentoring system to increase start-ups and encourage their survivability.

The experience shows that adequately designed services can indeed enable a considerable number of people from excluded groups to start a business. Hence, the European Enterprise Network will continue to work on collecting innovative approaches as well as defining best practices and quality standards.

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DP Business Mentoring – an EQUAL partnership
The Prince's Trust (UK)
www.princes-trust.org.uk

DP Réseau des Couveuses (BE)
Système d'Accompagnement à la Création d'Entreprise asbl (SACE)
Job'In – Guichet d'Entreprise asbl
Créa Job asbl
www.sace-asbl.be
www.jobin.be

DP Verbund Enterprise – Young people on the road to professional independence (DE)
Gesellschaft für innovative Qualifizierung e.V.
LOK e.V.
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Innovative Entrepreneurship for North Aegean-Vital Prospects (GR)
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