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Center for Social
Innovation

I01 European Report

Prepared by CSI

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1. Introduction

To generate jobs, it is important the creation of businesses by people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups (e.g. women, youth, seniors, migrants, unemployed). This action will fight social and financial exclusion and will help economy to grow. Preventing equal opportunities in entrepreneurship, programs and inclusive entrepreneurship policies aim into that specific reason. In order to reduce the gender gap in entrepreneurship, it is important for policy to start early. Among digital entrepreneurs in the EU are women, youth and seniors who are under-represented in this field due to lack of digital skills. However, through digital entrepreneurship, people can have access to wider markets through the internet and thus more advantages may appear for all groups.

Nevertheless, there are many challenges that affects under-represented groups while only 51% of men and 42% of women between 55- and 75-years old use computers daily. This increases the obstacles for people who remain attached to traditional methods and do not have necessary help and skills to evolve. Research and reports show that entrepreneurs from under-represented groups face problems regarding entrepreneurship skills and access to finance. Many initiatives and support programs are available though to help youth, women, and seniors in most EU Member States. Non-governmental organisations play an important role in providing dedicated support to all groups.

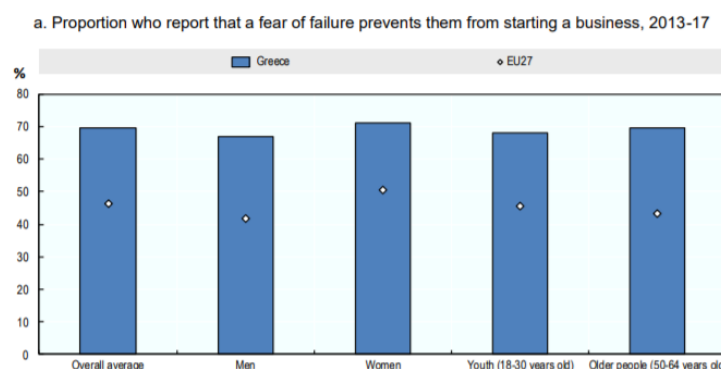




2. Key Findings from Desk Research

It is important for individuals, governments, and companies to prepare the workforce for the digital world. This requires different types of digital competencies like technical and professional, generic ICT skills. It is therefore significant for policymakers to identify the types of competencies required because they require unique training programs and specific resources. For that reason, policy need to start early to deduce the gender gap in entrepreneurship. Between 2014 and 2018, 2.9% of women and 5.3% of men in the European Union (EU) (5.3% of women and 7.9% of men in OECD countries) were actively working to start a business. There is also a substantial gender gap among those who are already self-employed. In 2018, women were about 60% as likely as men to be self-employed in the EU and this gender gap starts young. Young women (20-29 years old) were also about 60% as likely to be self-employed as young men. While the gender gap closed slightly across all age groups since 2002, it is due to a decline in male self-employment rather than growth in female self-employment.

Europe is trying to remain competitive by implementing policies to ensure the dynamism of workforce and its adaptability to different demands. It is important to promote the female entrepreneurship because for example in Greece, the economic crises increase a lot the unemployment rates. Regarding self-employment, women exhibit rates below these of men, 22.4% vs. 34.4% in 2017. Another important notice is that women appear of having a lack of entrepreneurship skills than men. Only 38.4% of women felt that they have the knowledge and skills to start a business. All the above are results from the period 2013-2017, and in the figure below we can see the barriers to entrepreneurship by target group.





New technologies supposed to create new jobs, but they also increase the demand for digital skills and competencies. Unfortunately, there is a digital skill gap in the workforce, where a report by the European Commission suggested that 44% of the European workforce is not equipped with basic digital skills.

Many researchers point out that policymakers should focus on digital skills or the provision of necessary training on digital competencies since ICTs have proliferated around the world and are being adopted by individual users in their daily lives. There are four different levels of digital skills needed during the process of adoption, use and domestication of technologies: those required to adopt technologies, those needed in the basic use of technologies; skills necessary for the creative use and adaptation of technologies, and skills essential for the creation of new technologies, see the Figure 1 below.

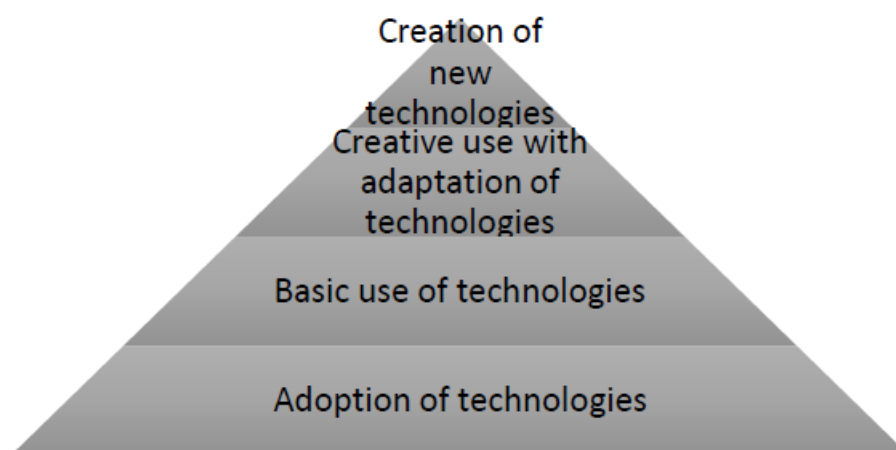


Figure 1: Pyramid of Digital Skills

Seniors are the largest group of self-employed people in the EU. In 2018, 14.5 million self-employed people were over 50 years old, accounting for 48% of all self-employed people. More than 31% of these self-employed seniors employ others, so policy makers will need to support business transfers as they retire to prevent the loss of these businesses and jobs. Entrepreneurship offers an opportunity to extend meaningful working lives, reducing some pressures. Policy can do more to raise awareness and encourage more senior entrepreneurs to use their experience to support other entrepreneurs.





Noteworthy is also the fact that immigrants entrepreneurs are more likely to create businesses that employ others. The number of self-employed immigrants in the EU has nearly doubled since 2002, increasing from 1.9 million to 3.6 million in 2018. Policy makers need to ensure that this entrepreneurial talent is harnessed by adapting policies and programs to the needs of immigrant entrepreneurs, notably by providing language training and supporting the development of stronger entrepreneurship networks.

Furthermore, youth have high ambitions for entrepreneurship. While nearly half of youth express an interest in entrepreneurship, only 4.7% of youth in the EU (7.4% in OECD countries) were actively trying to start a business between 2014 and 2018. In compare to older entrepreneurs, youth that successfully start a business tend to be more growth-oriented. About 11.1% of new youth entrepreneurs in the EU (14.6% in OECD countries) reported that they expected that their new business would create new jobs over the next years. Although, business survival rates for youth entrepreneurs tend to be low and few create jobs for others. Policy makers could do more to help youth entrepreneurs create sustainable businesses by supporting innovative ideas, which will increase the chances of success.





3. Research Results: Best Practices

Title of the best practice: SPEED UP - Supporting Practices for Entrepreneurship Ecosystems in the Development of Urban Policies.	
<i>Underline the type that best describes the best practice:</i>	
Program <u>Project</u> Initiative Report Case study Other: _____	
Website: https://www.interregeurope.eu/speedup/	Social media link(s): Facebook: @speedupinterreg Twitter: @SPEEDUPproject YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJxqnb_lfSI_Cz_zvLyOoeA
Leading organization/Author: Municipality of Florence – Italy.	
Year/Timeframe: 01/04/2016-31/03/2021	
Target group(s)/Beneficiaries: Innovative businesses operated by youth, women and immigrant entrepreneurs.	
Description (<i>provide a detailed description of the best practice focusing on its methodology, main activities, results, benefits, as well as its limitations/gaps/shortcomings</i>): <p>The overall objective of the project was to trigger policy change in the partners' regions improving the implementation of the policy instruments under Structural Funds programs dedicated to support of entrepreneurship, in particular concerning business. It also contributed to capacity building and policy learning in the partners' regions by supporting exchange of experience among relevant stakeholders. They targeted to enable support to specific target groups, such as young people, migrants or female entrepreneurs.</p>	
Relevance to The Missing Entrepreneurs (<i>explain which elements of the best practice could be useful in the framework of the project</i>): <p>Peer-learning project for cities about supporting entrepreneur's business development infrastructure, notably business incubators.</p>	

Title of the best practice: Strategic Partnership for Creativity and Entrepreneurship (SP4CE)
<i>Underline the type that best describes the best practice:</i>





Program	<u>Project</u>	Initiative	Report	Case study	Other: _____
Website: http://sp4ce.eu/el/welcome-to-sp4ce			Social media link(s):		
Leading organization/Author: PIAP -Warsaw https://piap.pl/en//					
Year/Timeframe: 09/2014 – 08/2017					
Target group(s)/Beneficiaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coaches (enterprises, industry)• Mentors (vocational school, university, high school)• Students (vocational school, university, high school)					
Description (<i>provide a detailed description of the best practice focusing on its methodology, main activities, results, benefits, as well as its limitations/gaps/shortcomings</i>): SP4CE program addressed aims and need on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training. Planned activities were also connected with career-oriented continuing VET principles.					
Relevance to The Missing Entrepreneurs (<i>explain which elements of the best practice could be useful in the framework of the project</i>): Project identified problems regarding the lack of trainings by increasing competence of students in areas needed by enterprises. It also identified the lack of innovative solutions for students, teacher and enterprises collaboration in vocational and high education trainings.					

Title of the best practice: Senior Enterprise					
<i>Underline the type that best describes the best practice:</i>					
Program	<u>Project</u>	Initiative	Report	Case study	Other: _____
Website: http://www.nweurope.eu/			Social media link(s): https://keep.eu/projects/7051/Senior-Enterprise-EN/		
Leading organization/Author: Mid-East Regional Authority - Ireland					
Year/Timeframe: 2008-2014					
Target group(s)/Beneficiaries: People aged 50+					





Description (*provide a detailed description of the best practice focusing on its methodology, main activities, results, benefits, as well as its limitations/gaps/shortcomings*):

The objective of the program was to increase in the economic contribution of older people to their local communities through a variety of means like starting new businesses alone or with others, investing in or acquiring businesses started by others, or by advising/ supporting innovation in SMEs. The initiative developed and tested a number of transnational contexts that are suitable to exploit the knowledge and skills that exist among older age groups (50+) in order to increase the number of new enterprises that started and as a means of strengthening new and existing SMEs.

Relevance to The Missing Entrepreneurs (*explain which elements of the best practice could be useful in the framework of the project*):

Entrepreneurship and engagement with enterprise provides a means for these individuals to continue to be gainfully employed while providing a range of other economic and personal benefits.





4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Digital skills are now a prerequisite for anyone in any country to participate meaningfully in the growing digital economy and society. While there is no one-size-fits-all strategy – each country has unique strengths and goals – there are a number of promising approaches that have proved their worth in many contexts, offering every country a range of models to explore and adapt.

In addition, policy makers can help entrepreneurs link with universities and research institutions to improve their access to technical knowledge and technologies. These types of initiatives are increasingly common in the EU, and several good examples are in Austria and the Netherlands. These types of arrangements also offer valuable learning opportunities for youth entrepreneurs in higher education.





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