



Pilot testing of the training courses: Executive Summary Report



**THE
~~MISSING~~
ENTREPRENEURS**



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Table of Contents

1. Document details	3
2. Introduction	4
3. Pilot testing of the training courses	5
3.1. Pilot testing with students	5
3.2. Pilot testing with youngsters	7
3.3. Pilot testing with migrants	8
3.4. Pilot testing with women	9
3.5. Pilot testing with seniors	10
4. Results of the evaluation questionnaires	11
5. Conclusion	14

1. Document details

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2. Introduction

Activity 3.1 of Intellectual Output 5 is meant to pilot test the personalised training courses, the training platform of digital entrepreneurship created by the partnership of The Missing Entrepreneurs project. Each partner had to pilot test the platform with 5 national participants from each of the 4 social groups under-represented in digital entrepreneurship: women, immigrants, youth and seniors. A total of 20 participants from those social groups plus 10 students needed to be engaged. Therefore, during these activities, partners had to involve, at least, 30 people per country.

Partners had the freedom to choose how and where the activity would be implemented. Some partners opted to do the pilot tests on a unique day, with all social groups, or to do it on different dates, with different groups. These activities happened throughout the months of October, November and December. The required total number of participants involved during the pilot tests was achieved. From the 180 participants needed, the whole partnership engaged, **in total, 307 participants** during the pilot tests: 40 participants in France (Amaris), 71 participants in Portugal (APSU), 80 participants in Spain (Blue Room Innovation), 51 participants in Cyprus (CSI), 31 participants in Austria (Die Berater) and 34 participants in Italy (EGInA).

Each partner aimed to test the areas of their responsibility, so all areas could be tested. Therefore, Die Berater tested the Ideation area; EGInA tested the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) area; Amaris tested the Launching and the E-Commerce and Digital Business Models areas; APSU tested the Business Plan and Analytics area; CSI tested the Project Management and the Invoicing, Accounting and Payroll areas; and, finally, BRI tested the Branding and Communication/Marketing area.

The objectives of these activities were the involvement of people in the project, particularly the target groups, by sharing information about the project and its goals, and by testing the training platform. Participants were invited to browse the platform, register and explore it, as well as test some of its areas and tools. Some participants registered themselves on the training platform, however, others didn't due to the lack of technology material during some of the sessions. In order to collect concrete feedback from the participants, evaluation questionnaires were provided to them, for the consortium to analyse what might need improvement and make the platform more efficient and sustainable for everyone.

In this general report, an analysis of every national report is made, through a resume of the results obtained during the activities and the feedback gathered.

3. Pilot testing of the training courses

Each partner organisation chose the best way to implement their activities. Some opted to have the pilot tests on one specific date for all target groups, and others divided the activities through different dates with separated groups. Some pilot tests were also provided virtually, due to some participants who could not make it in person. Partners had to involve in each of their countries a minimum of 10 students, 5 young people, 5 migrants, 5 women and 5 seniors. Thus, a total of 180 participants should be involved in the pilot tests of The Missing Entrepreneurs project. In summary, partners were free to implement these activities in the best way that suited them and had to meet the total goal of participants for the project.

In this report, there is going to be analysed the results of the pilot tests for each one of the target groups separately, since each of them has certain characteristics and perspectives that might have influenced their feedback and their views. Therefore, in the next sections of this report, those pilot tests with students, youngsters, migrants, women and seniors will be analysed.

3.1. Pilot testing with students

What concerns the piloting with students, each partner had to engage at least 10 students per country - number which has been achieved by each partner. AMARIS involved 10 students, APSU involved 12 students, 55 students from BRI, 34 students from CSI, 10 students from Die Berater and, finally, EGINA involved 14 students. A brief analysis of the activities done by each partner follows:

At every session, AMARIS allowed all participants to navigate through the platform and choose a specific tool from a specific training area to follow during the pilot testing. During this activity, 10 students were involved. They tested the e-Commerce and Project Management areas and said that they discovered tools they did not know before. In general, all participants loved the design of the platform, although they found that some resources were not working properly, which allowed AMARIS to identify them and share them with the partnership, in order to discuss them during the virtual roundtable between the consortium.

APSU involved three local schools (Externato Oliveira Martins, Escola Profissional de Cortegaça and Escola Profissional de Espinho) for the activities with students, youngsters, women and migrants. For the activity with students, 12 participants were engaged. The activities started with a Kahoot quick game where the participants could evaluate their knowledge about digital

entrepreneurship and, therefore, make the connection with the objectives of the project. After the game, the project and the partnership were presented, as well as the training platform. Students were invited to register on the platform and learnt how to do so. Business Plan and Analytics was the chosen area and, after going through all of its tools, the attention was focused on LinkedIn. The majority of the students manifested being very happy and interested in the platform and gave very positive feedback. Most of them found the platform useful, especially for their class and for people who are starting their professional careers.

BRI pilot test was carried out in one session with 55 university students (50 from Syria and Jordania Universities and 5 from ESERP Business & Law School). From the beginning, the Marketing and Communication area and the tools included in the platform were explained. Participants also had time to navigate and explore other areas and tools and they were able to ask questions and give feedback. They were also interested in the e-commerce area and tools so an overview of it was made.

CSI engaged 34 students. Each and every one of them explored the platform of the project and found it very helpful and easy to navigate. Even though there were some gaps while testing it, such as missing videos or some links that were not working, they all navigated it and explored it.

Die Berater opted, in all activities, with all target groups, to present certain tools and then leave the participants a self-learning time, so they could have the opportunity to assimilate the general content of the platform and analyse it properly. The testing of the platform was done in a so-called “youth college” so all the youngsters were students at the same time. The participants found the learning platform user-friendly and useful.

EGINA started the activity with a brief review of the project, then, the platform was explained, focusing on functionalities, objectives, reward mechanisms and forum. The students were divided into two groups and after a few times to explore the platform and exchange some ideas, all areas of the platform were tested. Afterwards, they gave their feedback. They found very positive the fact that the platform was free and built for an international perspective, also the graphics and colours used were highlighted. It was also shared that it would be beneficial to have more languages available, as well as a more comprehensive explanation of the path and mission of the platform, so users can know exactly where and how to start the courses. They also suggested having clickable buttons that lead directly to resources.

3.2. Pilot testing with youngsters

For the piloting with young people, each partner had to engage at least 5 youngsters per country - number which has been achieved by each partner. AMARIS involved 9 young people, APSU involved 22 youngsters, 10 young people from BRI, 6 youngsters from CSI, 10 youngsters from Die Berater and, finally, EGINA involved 5 young people. A brief analysis of the activities done by each partner follows:

For the activity with young people, AMARIS involved 9 participants. They tested the Project Management, Launching, Invoicing, and Minimum Viable Product areas. All participants liked the look and colours of the platform, but they found some flaws in the materials, and some of them considered that it would be better to include a guide to teach all learners how to explore the platform correctly.

For this activity, APSU also involved the same schools mentioned previously. The structure of the presentation was the same, as well as the areas and tools tested. The youngsters' feedback was very important for the refinement of the project's materials. Besides some oral feedback, these participants also responded to the online questionnaire where they said that the Platform was very useful and they highlighted the fact of being very visually appealing and also important for their future. They rated the platform positively and the feedback was very positive.

The youngsters engaged by BRI had between 20 and 25 years old. They tested the Communication and Marketing Areas and their tools. The 5 participants agreed on the user-friendly design and structure of the platform as well as the interesting and necessary resources for their future careers.

On the same day as the previous activity, CSI did the pilot tests with 6 young people. Their ages were from 18-27, both women and men. They explored the platform, and all found of them the materials of the platform very interesting. They mentioned that they will try to use some of the digital tools in their daily life.

The feedback from EGINA's participants was overall positive. The platform layout was complimented for being interactive and user/friendly, for allowing an autonomous path, as well as for having a national and international perspective. The main downside mentioned was the existence of bugs in the platform and the fact it is a little "dispersive".

3.3. Pilot testing with migrants

For the piloting with migrant people, each partner had to engage at least 5 participants per country - number which has been achieved by each partner. AMARIS involved 6 migrants, APSU involved 5 participants, also 5 from BRI, CSI and EGINA, and from Die Berater 10 migrants were involved. A brief analysis of the activities done by each partner follows:

Regarding the session with migrants, AMARIS involved 6 participants in the pilot test. They tested the e-Commerce and MVP areas. They found some links that were not working properly, which helped Amaris to identify and fix them.

For the session with migrants, APSU opted to do it in a blended way. Migrant students from the schools involved in the previous activities were engaged plus a migrant woman who participated online. The organisation of the activities was similar to the other ones. The tested area was Business Plan and Analytics and the feedback obtained was very positive, although they suggested more articles and videos in Portuguese and Spanish (their native languages).

A total of 5 migrants were involved by BRI. They focused on the Project Management & Marketing and Communication areas and tools. Participants also had a look at the Branding and E-commerce areas, which they all agreed that platform was easy to understand but that more language will be necessary in order to make the platform more inclusive.

CSI involved 5 migrants in the pilot tests of the training platform. Their nationalities were Greek, Spanish, Romanian and Bulgarian. They all explored the platform in the English language, and they found it very interesting and interactive.

For some of the migrants engaged by Die Berater, who didn't have sufficient knowledge of German, it was difficult to understand the content. It would have been necessary to break everything down into simple language, with less technical explanations. Therefore, some switched to the English version, which was an advantage in this case. But others could make use of the trainer, who helped them by explaining the content.

EGINA involved migrants from Colombia, Algeria and Poland, who tested all platform areas. They were very enthusiastic about the initiative, as it might help people explore new and unknown possibilities. However, they were a little concerned with the platform being too technology-related and not having more options for languages available.

3.4. Pilot testing with women

Concerning the piloting with women, each partner had to engage at least 5 participants per country - number which has been achieved by each partner. AMARIS involved 15 women, APSU involved 22 participants, 5 women from BRI, CSI and EGINA, and 8 women from Die Berater. A brief analysis of the activities done by each partner follows:

The pilot tests activities also aimed to involve women. In AMARIS case, there were involved 15 women, exceeding their expectations. They tested the e-Commerce, Project Management, Branding, Minimum Viable Product, and Launching areas. Some of them missed a “Help” section, as well as an option for chatting with other users.

APSU also exceeded their expectations by involving 22 women in the pilot tests. The women involved were also students from the participating schools. They tested the Business Plan and Analytics area. Their feedback was very positive since they found the platform very easy to understand and follow, it covers the needed areas and tools and it is a great way to improve their knowledge in the business area and to develop skills. The testimonial videos were also very appreciated.

BRI involved a total of 5 women in the pilot testing. Project Management & Marketing and Communication areas were the ones tested. Participants also found out really interesting and tested Invoicing, Accounting & Payroll since they believe that can be useful and time-saving.

Five women were involved by CSI in this piloting. They gave similar feedback as the previous participants, all of them said they will try to use the platform, in order to find better ways to expand their knowledge of digital tools in all these different areas.

Eight women were engaged by Die Berater. They highlighted that some steps were a little bit confusing, so an intro text would be an added value.

Women involved by EGINA tested all areas and were very happy with the platform. Although, they identified some critical points: the platform and related contents might not be understandable by most users, especially beginners; there should be more clearness about the steps of the platform and more guidance concerning national initiatives/support measures.

3.5. Pilot testing with seniors

Finally, the activity with seniors presented more difficulties to the partnership. Some partners were not able to engage the minimum number of senior participants needed, however, other partners tried to tackle those gaps and the total was achieved. This demonstrates that there is a lack of participation of people with a senior profile, which shows the absence of people belonging to this social group in the world of entrepreneurship, and how under-represented seniors are among entrepreneurs. For this activity, AMARIS was not able to engage any senior participants, however, APSU and BRI involved 10 seniors each, and EGINA 5 seniors. CSI involved 1 senior and Die Berater 3 seniors. Thus, the total number was achieved. A brief analysis of the activities done by each partner follows:

APSU aimed to engage 9 people from the Senior University of Esmoriz plus 1 teacher from one of the schools involved. Since all of them had computers, they were aided in the creation of their accounts on the platform. Business Plan and Analytics and Branding were the areas tested, however, the focus was given to the Canva tool, once the participants were invited to prepare a Christmas card on that tool after the presentation and explanation of the platform. The general feedback was very positive, they found the platform very useful and engaging, especially for students or people who are starting their businesses or higher studies. They also said the platform is not so ready for seniors, mainly the ones who have more difficulties with computers: some words are not so perceptible (the colour is not vivid enough), the content is a little complex, they would need a medium-term training about the platform and the tools because they are not autonomous on the computer; also, students would be the ones who might benefit more with the platform. They also suggested implementing this training in the existing Senior Universities as a training course for them.

A total of 5 seniors were involved in the pilot tests by BRI. Project Management & Marketing and Communication areas were the ones tested. They also tested Branding and the Canva tool and had time to do the “Test yourself” Activity.

CSI was only able to engage 1 senior participant in the tests. This participant was also very satisfied with the platform. Some questions came up but the facilitator from CSI answered them on the spot and the participant preferred to explore the platform further, on her own time.

Three seniors participated in the pilot tests provided by Die Berater. Unfortunately, it was hard to reach seniors during pandemic times. Some of the instructions were not so clear to them.

Without the trainer, who showed them the page, they wouldn't know that they needed to log in and earn badges, for example.

EGINA involved 5 seniors in the piloting session. The main opinion from the target group was the non-accessibility of the platform (graphically and functionally). They stressed out the fact that the platform presents too many words and lists and the learning path is not clear.

4. Results of the evaluation questionnaires

At the end of each activity provided by the project partners, evaluation questionnaires were shared with the participants. These questionnaires were crucial to collect the participants' feedback about the platform and the areas and tools tested. With this feedback and other suggestions received during the non-national roundtables and discussions between partners, the training platform will be improved not only until the end of the project but also after. The intention is to keep the platform sustainable by constantly updating and improving it whenever necessary.

For this section of the report, due to an overview of the questionnaires' results from all the partners, those outputs will be divided into strengths, weaknesses, threats and suggestions. It should be noted that even though this feedback will be all gathered below, some of it was provided taking into account the characteristics and perspectives of each target group, therefore, sometimes, it might affect their responses and view.

The most relevant feedback collected was the following:

Strengths

- User-friendly and easy to explore
- Well-designed and easy to use
- Visually appealing
- It is a multidisciplinary platform, although it focuses on the digital business area
- Very useful for people who are starting their businesses or professional careers
- Rich in topics of interest, many contents for each topic
- All tools provide the users with new skills or help improve them
- The introduction videos in each area
- It allows autonomous learning and in accordance with the time of the trainee
- The theme of the project itself, which may really help people find opportunities

- It leads the user to external resources and content
- Promotes the autonomy of the user, who are free to learn when and how they want, using the platform's resources but also external ones
- The platform is very useful for people's daily lives, even the ones who are not so interested in business careers
- The badges are a kind of certification for the users which prove their skills in this field

Weaknesses

- Videos on the platform that are not working
- The platform was created for different target groups which might have very different levels of digital literacy
- The section on the homepage explaining how the platform works is not clear and it is not interactive, moreover, the steps to follow should be visible on the homepage
- The name of the platform is too long and difficult
- Some contents of the tables in the platform are difficult to read
- The language used is too technology-related
- The technical language used comprises a little bit of the accessibility of the platform
- Some contents are not understandable for most users
- Contents on the platform are too synthetic for people who want to deepen their knowledge
- Some of the videos shared (for example, tutorials) do not have subtitles in other languages

Threats

- The colour of the platform is not relaxing
- The platform has many lists and words
- The platform is difficult to find through google, it does not pop up if you look for the project
- A dynamic platform, instead of scrolling down through the pages, would make the content more interactive
- There should be more emphasis on the key point and objectives of the course
- Some resources are in English which makes them not accessible to non-English speakers
- There are glaring bugs on the platform, in various sections
- The platform layout and contents might be a little dispersive and represents a risk for users to losing interest

- Without actual training (given to students or trainees), the badges at the end of each quiz might not have so much value
- For seniors, the platform might be too complex and some content is not so perceptible
- Without the indication that registration is needed to earn a badge, participants might skip the registration or even leave their courses halfway through

Suggestions

- The user should be able to click on the various steps described on the homepage and go to sections and/or get a pop/ explanation of that specific step; also, steps should be numbered
- Add dynamic content based on the actions of other users, where messages, comments, and recommendations can be added
- A chatbot would be useful in case some participants experience any difficulties during the courses
- Work on responsiveness and error correction as well as framing to make it more appealing; pay attention to intuitiveness due to the clicks rule
- Implement the platform at schools or even include them in the current national education programmes
- More prolonged training on the platform could be given in senior universities
- Quiz questions should be more visible or have a more perceptive colour
- The quizzes could have more questions
- When and how to get a badge should be explained more in detail, it is not clear to users
- A glossary and FAQs sections should be created: they would help the trainee along the training path
- There should be more clarity on free-of-charge tools: highlight that most are, and point out which ones are not
- The training tools, divided by difficulty level, offer different training paths for users starting from different points (this should be more visible on the platform)
- An initial quiz should be proposed for the user, to allow them to understand what type of entrepreneurial initiatives can be undertaken
- Some examples of online businesses might be included on the platform
- Provide more information on the level of difficulty, objectives or time needed to complete each programme, for a better prior understanding of each training section

5. Conclusion

Between October and January, The Missing Entrepreneurs consortium prepared and presented the work developed throughout the project, specifically, the training platform. The aim was to pilot test the areas and tools created by each partner with the target/groups of the project: students, young people, migrants, women and seniors.

In total, the final number of participants involved was achieved, however, the major difficulty of this Intellectual Output was actually finding the necessary people for the pilot testing, especially the seniors. Some partners were not able to engage some of the needed participants, nonetheless, that difficulty was tackled with extra numbers from other partners who were able to engage more senior participants than the minimum required. Another difficulty found was complying with this number of participants with the registrations into the platform. Some partners noticed that some participants didn't join the activities with a computer or didn't want to register at the time, which made it hard to achieve a good amount of registrations into the platform.

One of the main objectives of these pilot tests was to collect heterogeneous feedback from the participants based on their different perspectives and, thus, note what are the platform's strengths, weaknesses and threats, as well as suggestions. With this valued feedback, the partnership will not only be able to be aware of their work and the relevance of the platform but also be able to make the project sustainable. With the feedback collected from the non-national roundtables, the pilot tests and the virtual roundtables (between the project partners), the training platform will be improved in the meantime and throughout the future. The intention is to upgrade the platform every 3 to 6 months, to keep it updated (for example, by changing outdated resources) and to engage participants constantly. This also means that this piloting could be useful to be implemented in other countries and regions outside of the partnership.

Therefore, the evaluation questionnaires, from where feedback was collected, provided some important ideas of what kind of improvements need to be done to the training platform. Those suggestions were already mentioned in the previous section and will dictate the refinement of the materials and content of the training platform and the project itself. Even though some of the suggestions from the participants' feedback were already considered (and the platform improved), the compromise of the consortium is to keep updating the platform as much as possible, for instance with new content and materials as well. The majority of the participants

believe in the continuity and sustainability of the project; hence, the partners' job is to make it happen.