PR2 Training course on digital competences for entrepreneurship: Online modules to acquire basic digital competences.

Global report

SUMMARY

PR2 Description

The main objective of the PR2 is to design a training program on basic digital skills for senior entrepreneurs at risk of exclusion following DigiComp & EntreComp frameworks. It will offer participants a large panel of tools and tutorials that might help the users to identify solutions to their needs, and to address the needs of their business.This Project Result consists of the design of a training program on digital skill for senior entrepreneurs at risk of exclusion. This online training programme will help participants to acquire basic competences and skills following the DigiComp and Entrecomp frameworks. It will offer participants a large panel of tools and tutorials that might help the users to identify solutions to their needs, and to address the needs of their business. The tool will be developed using Design Thinking and Lean Start Up methodologies. The aim is to develop digital and entrepreneurial skills including values, beliefs and attitudes, as well as social skills such as interpersonal and communication. Those skills will help them to be aware of the risks and benefits of self-employment, clarify their business idea, understand the needs to set up their own business, how to run a profitable business (finance, human resource management, market research) and generate relevant business knowledge (legislation, taxation, funding sources etc.). In addition to that, the course will incorporate concepts related to how to build social enterprises, taking into account the triple aspect: economic, but also social and environmental. Because it addresses vulnerable entrepreneurs 55+, the training approach will be adapted to their capacities, needs and knowledge. In addition, it will include modules on personnel management and how to establish beneficial human and professional conditions.

The training material will be designed to be given during the training sessions and complemented by the skills acquired during the individual sessions and the practical experiences that will be transmitted by the mentors, who will be professionals from the business world. The training material will be written in English and in the partners' own languages, which will help in its dissemination to other organisations in the countries involved in this project and eventually for use in other EU countries. The training will be tested on at least 20 senior entrepreneurs at risk of exclusion, in order to increase their level of skills and key competences: entrepreneurial, social and psychological. Furthermore, the training material will be available for use or exploitation by other incubators, NGOs and programmes to support entrepreneurship in vulnerable contexts across Europe.

Introduction

The aim of this document is drafted according to the first task of the PR2 (2.1. Identifying training needs of new upcoming entrepreneurs) to analyze main findings from 5 partners (ESE, ANZIANI, iDEC, SIF and ACV) coming from the workshops and interviews conducted with this regard.

ESE, with the collaboration of the rest of the partners, created guidelines in order to review the resources available. This first task was validated through quantitative and qualitative questionnaires designed for these purposes. Therefore, once the questions were approved by all partners, they conducted 5 workshops/interviews with NGOs, companies and entrepreneurs at risk of exclusion. In total 43 responses were collected. The data obtained in these interviews was analysed and reflected upon and integrated as results of the research activity. Based on the abovementioned results from the research, ESE will develop a proposal for a training curriculum for entrepreneurs 55+ at risk of exclusion.

Here below, the main findings from the partner organizations are presented in the document.

Analyses of the results

Demographic data

In total, 43 answers were collected through different means by the respective partners: online questionnaires, focus-groups and interviews. Partners from Italy and Lithuania were able to reach 10 participants, while partners from France and Spain received 8 responses together with 7 participants in Greece. Several similarities can be observed in the profile of the responders.

For instance, most of the participants in all partner countries were females (29 women against only 14 men). Also, in most countries people were no more than 65 yo except for France where half of them were 65+ and some persons older in Greece as well. Most of the participants had higher or at least vocational education except for Spain, whether the education level of the participants was the lowest among the respondents. Regarding their professional situation, here some division can be observed: in Greece and France, half of the participants were still working and half of them retired which can be explained that in these two countries people who answered the questions were older than in others. Thus, in Italy, Spain and Lithuania, there were many people still working or without employment (but not due to their age). Finally, the working sector of the persons differ also from country to country, no common denominator can be observed, even if the education and social fields were privileged by almost all participants in the respective countries.

Use of new technologies and digital skills level

In terms of digital skills and knowledge, we can notice the same answers in almost all partner countries. All responders underlined the importance of digital skills for work and entrepreneurship purposes. For instance, in all countries they said it is essential to know how to work with data analysis and management, online security and privacy, digital communication and collaboration tools (social networks, clouds, collaborative platforms etc). Only some of them didn't find it very useful to use digital skills in order to seek partner opportunities and new projects. In terms of useful materials, the Italian responders cited many useful resources for acquiring digital skills like online training courses available on

SENIOR+
Educational Communities to boost business opportunities
for unemployed people over 55 years old through entrepreneurship

Google or platforms for computer sciences. In France, respondents also proposed MOOCs while YouTube videos were also suggested by the Lithuanian participants.

Finally, only a few participants in Lithuania, Spain and France received some training in digital skills and new technologies. None of them targeted the entrepreneurial digital skills in particular.

Entrepreneurial skills and business knowledge

As for the entrepreneurial skills and experiences, all the participants agreed on the fact that being creative, developing new ideas, having motivation and self-confidence are keys to successful businesses. Also, initiative-taking and decision-making as well as the ability to mobilize the community are crucial skills to start a new business. In Italy, participants underlined that other European projects funded by the Erasmus+ program aiming at helping in creating its own business are very useful for entrepreneurship. In France, Italy and Greece not many persons received any training in business whilst in Spain 50% of the participants and 90% in Lithuania received some training in this field. Finally, all the participants listed some resembling obstacles and barriers they see for why not to start their own business such as: lack of knowledge and motivation, lack of resources and support, lack of confidence, age and also the feeling that there isn't a training adapted to their specific needs. In summary, the mental aspect is a very crucial barrier for the majority of the responders.

Knowledge and training in DigiComp EntreComp

None of the participants had extensive knowledge in DigiComp and EntreComp frameworks. In Lithuania they seemed to be a bit more familiar with DigiComp than EntreComp frameworks. In France, Greece, Spain and Italy, they are not very familiar with both of them. Only a few of the participants in all countries declared that they received some training in this regard. In consequence, the people targeted through this analysis are not very aware of the frameworks proposed by the European commission, probably because of a lack of promotion and interest from stakeholders. Since the project was based on the promotion of those frameworks, the studies were realized and conducted on the aspects proposed in

each of them. Therefore, it became clear to project's partners that these are key instruments to base the SENIOR+ modules on.

Useful sources known by the participants for entrepreneurship

Regarding the sources mentioned during those sessions, Greek participants proposed to find some useful contents on a previous Erasmus+ project named Smart Village (https://smart-village-project.com/) while Spanish participants mentioned interesting initiatives like Sepe's courses (SEPE: Spanish State Employment Service) and Jovesolides (https://jovesolides.org/proyectos-emprendedores/e-inclusion). In Lithuania, sites of labor markets and training centers, sites of vocational schools, as well as vocational education and training: "Skills for today and for the future" were proposed by the panel. In Italy, participants mentioned useful content through an introductory course in computer science (https://www.insi-project.eu/it/intelectual-outputs/o4-elementary-it-curriculum/), the Udemy platform for simplified and accessible training on productivity software, and finally training courses delivered by Google could be also relevant. Finally, the respondents in France declared that MOOCs and other online courses developed by various universities and training organizations are often very well done and useful.

Conclusions

In the five partner countries, respondents are for the majority of them not familiar with the DigiComp and EntreComp frameworks, neither trained on those skills on a personal point of view. They also mostly agreed on the fact that digital skills are essential for developing an enterprise and some aspects in particular like online safety, online communications and collaboration with other stakeholders and management. Also, the participants declared that several soft skills are important for entrepreneurship like creativity, initiative-taking, and problem solving. They mentioned that adapted courses or training could be missing for the senior public as well as lack of information, support and guidance.

Based on the findings in all countries, partners have identified ten modules that could be useful for a future senior entrepreneur:

1) Acquiring basic digital skills for business
2) Interpersonal skills development
3) Designing your business
4) Human resources
5) Communicating your business idea
6) Data protection and online safety
7) Legislation and funding
8) Finances and resource management
9) Marketing and sales
10) How to launch a sustainable business

Those modules will be further developed by the consortium during the coming months of the SENIOR+ project.