dragging

Entrepreneurship
with the public administration

BUSINESS MANUAL PR3.3

TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR PERSONS AT
RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Co-funded by
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INTRODUCTION

DRAGGING: THE PROJECT

In the last decades, NGOs have faced different and consecutive crises: the 2008 financial crisis and the current COVID crisis. These events have put into a delicate position these organisations in terms of financing resources. Most of their incomes come from public funds which are decreasing year every year. On the other hand, their profits coming from private corporations are not a reliable source of income. Therefore, they are obliged to find new models to generate profits that could make sustainable their services. Apart from that, this project will help them to offer new services to their target groups. For example, they could provide entrepreneurial services to persons at risk of exclusion they are working with. DRAGGING project results will meet all these needs by creating several project results that could be transformed into different services and tools for its target groups. Regarding local public administrations, the model proposed by DRAGGING will help them to create local synergies with local social services providers. Local public administrations mostly are not aware of the capacities and services local NGOs and local third sector organisations could provide.

Therefore, they launch calls for providers that normally are won by other non-local corporations specialised in such calls.

Our approach consists in reduce the gap between local administrations and local social organisations in order to generate a bank of business opportunities to which these organisations may apply. DRAGGING will set up the tools and the methodology that will make this possible.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

DRAGGING has a clear objective, to help with the following three challenges: to diversify the sources of income for NGOs, take advantage of new legislations/public hiring opportunities and generate job opportunities for people at risk of exclusion. This will be done by training professionals through a mentoring process where they will be provided with training in different subjects (business strategy, finance, marketing, etc.) while consulting work on the ideal business model is carried out to meet all administration needs. Everything will serve to create companies together with people at risk of exclusion with whom they are working with and to cover the main need, employment.

The project has 2 outcomes and results: **a Business Ideas Marketplace** and **Online Training Course**.

The **marketplace of ideas** will have a positive impact on the public and private spheres: It will allow companies to identify and develop business opportunities that respond to the shortcomings of their respective sector. It will allow mentoring centres to have a database of potential business ideas, already analysed and validated by professionals in the sector, and whose elements can be incorporated into their curricula.

The **objectives** of this PR are:

- To identify opportunities and business niches that can be carried out by NGOs (+ entrepreneurs at risk of exclusion).
- To identify services, works or goods that can be acquired by the PAs through direct procedures and that are the easiest to request.
- To create a marketplace as a digital resource that will help our project to collect all the business ideas identified during this activity and to organise them.
- To increase collaboration between the public and private sector: NGOs will create micro-enterprises thanks to the ideas of the PAs and the PAs will receive services from local contractors.

To be able to achieve the consortium will do a definition of selection criteria and, after that, a workshop with local stakeholders will be conducted to collect the business ideas. This way stakeholders from each partner country will have a chance to contribute to the development of the marketplace. Technological development of the marketplace online will help disseminate the results to wider groups.

The **online training course** is aimed at providing basic competencies and skills on digital tools and topics related to entrepreneurship and business management. The main idea is to give support that will help vulnerable entrepreneurs manage their own micro companies. It will include modules on personnel management and how to establish beneficial human and professional conditions. All the training materials will be tested and validated. The tailormade approach and the complementarity with other existing incubation methodologies will make this result an innovative and effective tool.

The **objectives** of this PR are:

- Provide mentoring for NGOs and for persons at risk of exclusion.
- Providing basic competencies and skills on digital tools and topics related to entrepreneurship and business management.
- Support in launching and managing micro companies.

To be able to achieve the consortium will do a focus group will be organized with NGOs working with vulnerable people and questionnaires will be distributed to identify training needs of persons at risk of exclusion. A report will be created to summarize the findings. An analysis and a report on entrepreneurship training courses in Europe will be issued. A business manual and the training contents will be tested and evaluated with new entrepreneurs and mentors selected in the project. An online platform will be created and connected with the business marketplace.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Dragging team is made up of a consortium of 5 partners:

- **FI Group** is a Global Consulting Company specializing in the management and consultancy of companies on the management of their R&D&I financing, through the design and implementation of actions aimed at boosting their technological and economic development. These actions focused on the integral treatment of R&D&I tax incentives and the management of calls for public grants and subsidies, resulting in an improvement of the companies' profit and loss accounts. Since 2018, FI Group is involved in social innovative projects taking advantage of its expertise in R&D grants assuming the leadership of the sector, both at the national and European levels, promoting an ambitious internationalization plan with a clear objective: to help clients in the generation of value.

- **PCG Polska** is an integral part of Public Consulting Group, a global firm specializing in professional services and project management for institutions and companies operating in the public sector. Founded in 1986 in Boston, PCG launched its operations in Poland in 2009. PCG has vast experience within 4 sectors: K-12, higher education, health, and social care. The recipients of PCG services in Poland include over 3,500 schools, 60 universities and numerous Government Agencies and Local Government Units, through their hospitals, long-term care centers or social policy agencies. PCG leads an Innovation Generator grant distribution project for social innovations supporting ageing societies.

- **The Rural Hub** was set up as an association by a group of education, training and rural development professionals as a response to the impact of the economic crisis on small rural villages and towns in Ireland. Since it was first established in 2012, The Rural Hub has been providing a wide range of training and capacity development programs to local residents and community groups. We specialize in the area of community development and have developed a number of local initiatives to support the social inclusion of disadvantaged rural youth, migrant communities and isolated older residents. We work with these groups, using creative approaches and the testing of digital media resources to support greater social cohesion among local communities in County Cavan. We have a developed network of county-wide stakeholders who support our work on a thematic basis. Through our community-based office, we deliver informal adult and youth education programs through our Social Mornings and Educational Afternoons programs; and through our 'youth into digital media' programs we run in our Digital Media Zone (DMZ) in Virginia, Cavan.

- **Con Valores Association (ACV)** is a non-profit organization supporting work reintegration & social economy. Founded by Melquiades Lozano, a former businessman, ACV bridges the gap between business and societal issues, helping entrepreneurs at risk of exclusion through inclusive incubation models and professional support. Over 624 entrepreneurs have been assisted, and +50 new business models designed with the help of 759 professionals. ACV's adaptive approach incorporates agile methodologies and aims to create a resilient model for small business incubation supported by new technologies, even amid COVID-19 conditions and restrictions.

- **RDA BSC SMEs** (Regional Development Agency with Business Support Centre for Small and Medium-sizes Enterprises) was established in 1996 as a non-governmental, non-profit organization, and is registered in Bulgaria under the new Act for non-profit organizations with socially useful activities: regional development & improvement of the economic environment creating a local mechanisms for development and support of the businesses (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises), government and administration (at national, regional, municipal and local level) and NGOs sectors. RDA BSC SMEs – Plovdiv is an active participant in the process of creating the regional economic development and innovation policies, social entrepreneurship, green infrastructure and energy efficiency, vocational education and development of labor market, historical and cultural heritage, and tourism, in the development of regional and municipal development plans and strategies, regional innovation strategies, communication strategies and others. Participation in regional, district and municipal development councils, councils for cooperation and tripartite councils at regional, district and municipal levels, in national and international networks.

MANUAL OBJECTIVES

The manual aims at developing entrepreneurial skills including values, beliefs, and attitudes, as well as social skills such as interpersonal and communication to potential entrepreneurs to:

- Be aware of the risks and benefits of self-employment,
- Clarify their business idea,
- Understand the milestones' needed to set up their own business, and how to run a profitable business (involving finance, human resource management, market research) and generate relevant business knowledge (particularly on legislation, taxation, funding sources).

The manual incorporates concepts related to how to build social enterprises, considering the triple impact: economic, but also social and environmental. In particular, the manual addresses the following groups that are underrepresented in the entrepreneurial arena: young people, women, persons with disabilities, seniors, mi grants, and refugees.

Promoting social business creation by under-represented and disadvantaged groups can further help create jobs and fight social and financial exclusion, while stimulating economic growth across the economy, in particular in disadvantaged areas. However, while entrepreneurship plays an

important role in stimulating innovation and driving job creation, only a relatively small part of the population is involved in starting a business, and not all people have the same opportunities to create and run a business.

Education and training have an important role to play in promoting labor market integration and the social inclusion of population groups that face discrimination, such as young people, women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and migrants.

The training methodology disclosed in this manual shall help allow the creation of social enterprises by persons at risk of social exclusion. It shall give us the bank of ideas useful to address the most economically and socially viable entrepreneurship projects.

Because it addresses vulnerable entrepreneurs, the training approach will be adapted to their capacities, needs and knowledge. In addition, it will include modules on personnel management and the establishing of beneficial human and professional relations.

The manual has been designed to be given during training sessions and it will be 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 manual will be an innovative training material to support entrepreneurs who come from disadvantaged groups and with low education. We take into account a double difficulty: empower people at risk of exclusion with normally low levels of education and provide them with entrepreneurial skills, unfamiliar to them, for the creation of viable business.

All in all, the manual shall help potential entrepreneurs develop and deepen new skills, knowledge, and attitudes, as well as social skills such as interpersonal and communication. These skills shall mainly help them become aware of the risks and benefits of self-employment, clarify their business idea, understand the milestones needed to set up their own business and how to run a profitable business.

METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES OF THE INCUBATION PROCESS

Entrepreneurial education programs **MUST** provide knowledge and understanding about various aspects of bringing a business idea into reality, such as the characteristics of an entrepreneurial mindset, the entrepreneurial intention development and technical expertise as well as encouraging participants' empowerment and self-awareness.

However, to become a successful business entrepreneur from a disadvantaged background, the **DRAGGING** training curriculum is based on an intensive incubation process where selected participants will work in real-time in developing their business idea and strategy while being trained. The training sessions shall provide them with the needed knowledge to develop their project, followed by a **STEP-BY-STEP** approach and agile methodologies (including design thinking, lean startup etc.). The implementation of the lessons learnt in their real business start-up is the core of the incubation process.

Crucial factors for the success of an entrepreneurship initiative run by vulnerable entrepreneurs are:

- A personal plan and a strong motivation.
- Holding awareness about one's own skills and potential.
- Having confidence in one's own chances of success.
- The combination of a notional part in fact + more practical portion of coaching professionals and specialists in the field.
- Teamwork that allows disadvantaged and more fragile people to give each other courage, to reflect in others and confront, seeing that some fears or difficulties are shared and are manageable in a group dynamic.

In order to achieve success in the business project, planning is a central issue, and it IS ESSENTIAL that participants have a high degree of involvement during the training: a specific work is required on individual mentoring, building a plan in function OF THEIR needs, objectives and limitations. With a particular reference on planning personal goals and next steps, a personal action plan is an important tool that may **HELP PARTICIPANTS** to meet their expectations and to autonomously manage their business activity, helping them to think in terms of objectives, both from a personal and professional point of view.

The main topics to be developed within this training curriculum are:

1. **AGILE METHODOLOGIES FOR BUSINESS MODEL DESIGN.**
2. **BUSINESS STRATEGY AND MARKETING.**
3. **PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.**
4. **PUBLIC PROCUREMENT.**
5. **FINANCES.**

Moreover, during the support of the creation of entrepreneurship, soft skills are considered a central issue due to the fact that these personal capacities are **BENEFICIAL DURING** the management of one's own business. Due to that, a specific attention **WILL BE** paid to their development. More than a specific module focused on them, participants will develop them through teamwork, having the opportunity to make **THEIR PERSONAL** skills available to the group. Through formal and informal learnings, entrepreneurs can acquire or reinforce:

- Communication skills.
- Mediation ability.
- Problem-solving.
- Adaptation.
- Flexibility.

PARTICIPANTS PROFILES AND NEEDS

This training curriculum is oriented to **people at risk of exclusion** living in areas with low employment rate or high demand labour market and other complex conditions. Entrepreneurs' profiles can be described as: low education level, previous working experiences, low or no knowledge and skills already acquired, have specific implications in the definition of the training needs and the specific training program in an incubation process.

The disadvantaged status of entrepreneurs can relate to limited knowledge, skills, labour experience, access to labour market, poor human and social capital and discrimination in terms of ages, race, and gender. The training program must take into consideration these aspects. Entrepreneurship education and training is key to developing and expanding their skills and capabilities.

When it comes to the selection of incubation participants, the following criteria needs to be evaluated:

- Education level.
- Previous working experiences.
- Knowledge and skills already acquired.
- Analysis of relative marginalised neighbourhood.

Secondly, it's fundamental that participants have a high degree of involvement during the training. A specific work is required on individual mentoring in order to de fine their own business development strategy. Therefore, the training and incubation facilitators will build with them a specific plan in function of their needs, objectives, and limitations. This **personal action plan** is an essential tool that may help participants to:

- Meet their expectations.
- Manage autonomously their business activity.
- Allow them to think in terms of objectives, both from a personal and professional point of view.
- Provide strategies to balance work and personal sphere.

Thirdly, it is crucial to consider possible psychological, health, gender, living context related challenges, not forgetting the ones related to the economic stability of participants (i.e. the possibility to afford to eat everyday) that might affect incubation and learning processes. These kinds of challenges might be expected but it's fundamental to know strategies and tips to manage them. It is recommended to offer the opportunity to work on self-awareness and empowerment with coaches specifically prepared to lead those processes.

In order to formulate a comprehensive report on the analysis of training needs for individuals at risk of exclusion, we employed a meticulous methodology to gather relevant data and insights. The **primary objective** was to establish a specialized incubation program tailored to the unique requirements of the target audience. The data collection process was executed through **CAWI questionnaires**, ensuring accessibility and convenience for participants. The questionnaire comprised a combination of quantitative and qualitative inquiries designed to extract valuable information for course customization. The CAWI method differs from other types of methodologies such as CATI Surveys and CAPI Surveys due to the autonomy provided to the interviewer; it is

usually a less invasive and impersonal process. The survey was then **distributed through various digital channels**, such as email invitations and social media platforms, reaching a diverse audience. As responses flowed in, we collected and organized the data, minimizing errors and streamlining the analysis process. In conclusion, the CAWI survey response collection process enabled a seamless and efficient gathering of diverse perspectives. The use of digital platforms and robust data management practices ensured accuracy, accessibility, and security throughout the entire survey administration and data collection journey.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The [questionnaire](#) consists of 14 questions, although we will ask you for first and last name and country of origin at the beginning of the questionnaire.

Question 1 and 2: Work experience

We ask them about their work experience so that we can adapt the course to some extent to the experience they already have and work from there.

Question 3 and 4: What is your educational background?

Their educational level will be of great help to us when teaching the course. In this way we will be able to adapt to the knowledge they have and know from which base to start from.

Question 5: What skills do you have?

It will help to know what skills they have from work experience and education; thus we will be able to adapt the training course.

Question 6 and 7: Have you taken any training courses in recent years?

It will help to know if they have taken courses in recent years, or if they have been several years without receiving training. If the answer is yes, they will explain very shortly what the subject of the course was.

Question 8: For what reasons do you or would you undertake a training course?

To find out the reasons that made them look for new courses, enroll in them and want to be trained.

Question 9: If we proposed an online course, how long would you like the course to be?

We will give them options for you to indicate what they consider to be the approximate appropriate time.

Question 10 and 11: Please indicate the two main reasons that prevent or hinder you from attending training courses.

To let us know if they have difficulties enrolling in an online training course.

Question 12: Would you be interested in an entrepreneurship course?

This will help us know how many people approximately will enroll in the training course.

Question 13: What would you like to learn from an entrepreneurship course?

We will give them several options on different themes they would like to learn from an entrepreneurship course.

Question 14: Do you think that this course can pleasantly improve your knowledge about entrepreneurship?

This question will let us have an insight if they feel motivated to enroll in the training course.

TARGET GROUP

BULGARIA

In analyzing the responses to Bulgaria's survey, we've compiled a comprehensive profile of the participants based on various demographic and professional characteristics. Here's a breakdown of the key findings:

Age Distribution:

- 6.6% of respondents fall within the 20-30 age group.
- 46.7% of participants are aged between 40-50.
- 26.7% of respondents are in the 50-60 age range.
- 20% of participants are over 60 years old.

Work Experience:

Most participants have diverse work experiences, with 13 individuals having a background as employees, 2 as self-employed, and 1 person having experience both as an employee and a manager. Work experience among respondents spans from 8 to 65 years, showcasing a broad range of professional backgrounds and expertise.

Education Level:

Most respondents exhibit a high level of education, representing a well-educated and diverse group. Educational backgrounds include disciplines such as engineering and economics, philology, accounting and control economy, engineer-economist, technical university, IT, journalism, physics, mathematics, economics, biology, economy, public administration, and

management of medico-social activities and public health. The diversity of educational backgrounds highlights a broad spectrum of expertise among survey participants.

SPAIN

In analyzing the responses to Spain's survey, we've compiled a comprehensive profile of the participants based on various demographic and professional characteristics. Here's a breakdown of the key findings:

Age Distribution:

- 30 % of responding participants are between the ages of 30-40
- 40 % of responding participants are between the ages of 40-50
- 20 % of responding participants are between the ages of 50-60
- 10 % of responding participants are over +60

Work Experience:

Participants bring a wealth of professional experience to the survey, with 6 individuals having work experience solely as employees and 4 navigating a dual role as both employees and self-employed. Impressively, work trajectories span from 20 to 30+ years, underlining the depth and diversity of professional backgrounds within the surveyed group. Notably, 40% of respondents have ventured into entrepreneurship, highlighting a significant entrepreneurial spirit within the participants' answers.

Education Level:

The educational landscape of participants is high, with 40% holding university degrees, 20% having completed vocational training, 30% possessing secondary education qualifications, and 10% with primary education. This diverse educational background suggests a well-prepared and adaptable group ready to face the challenges and opportunities in their professional journeys. The majority's high level of education positions them as individuals equipped with a strong foundation for continuous learning and success in various domains.

POLAND

When examining the feedback from Poland's survey, we have created an extensive profile of the participants, considering a range of demographic and professional attributes. The subsequent breakdown outlines the significant discoveries derived from this analysis.

Age Distribution:

- 57,1 % of responding participants are between the ages of 31-40
- 28,6 % of responding participants are between the ages of 41-50
- 14,3 % of responding participants are between the ages of 51-60

Work Experience:

The professional background of participants includes 6 individuals with experience solely as employees and 1 person serving as a self-employed social entrepreneur. The majority of respondents boast work experience ranging from 10 to 30 years, showcasing a wealth of expertise and longevity in their respective fields.

Education Level:

An impressive 80% of participants hold master's degrees, emphasizing a high level of education within the surveyed group. All respondents have graduated from higher education, with diverse academic backgrounds including pedagogy, marketing, history, international relations, law, and gerontology. This educational diversity signifies a well-educated and versatile group, poised to contribute valuable insights and expertise.

In conclusion, the survey data represents a picture of a diverse and experienced group of participants across different age brackets. The respondents bring a wealth of professional backgrounds, with varying degrees of work experience, from employees to entrepreneurs. Educational diversity is also present, showcasing most of the participants holding advanced degrees. This rich diversity of age, experience, and education enables us to collect the feedback of a group with a deep well of knowledge and diverse perspectives.

RESULTS

The survey was conducted in Poland, Bulgaria and Spain. In total 32 people answered, 15 from Bulgaria, 10 from Spain and 7 from Poland.

In Poland the results analyzed were that the participants' reason for entering a training program are to seek personal growth and development. When choosing training programs, Polish participants prefer courses that have flexibility and user-friendly. Regarding the duration of the course, polish participants preferred 10-20 hours course the most voted for subjects were Business Management, Marketing, Sales and Soft skills. In Bulgaria the results analyzed were that the participants' reason for entering a training program are to seek personal growth and development.

Most participants prefer a more extensive training program of 30+ hours in an online format, except participants of Poland that prefer a 10h course, which allows them to balance their adult lives and other responsibilities effectively. The main obstacles to attending a training course include a lack of awareness and time constraints. Addressing these challenges by promoting courses more actively and providing flexible, online learning opportunities is essential.

In summary, the survey findings underline the significance of personal development as a key motivator for individuals seeking training, while also emphasizing the importance of offering a diverse range of course options to accommodate varying preferences and responsibilities. Additionally, addressing awareness and time-related challenges is crucial to ensure broader access to training programs in these countries.

Having all of the above in mind we present the final incubation proposal, tailored to address the identified needs and preferences of our diverse participant pool. The comprehensive insights obtained have guided the formulation of a robust plan, aligning with the aspirations and challenges expressed by the answers. The incubation proposal will be done online through a comprehensive and user-friendly platform where mentors will assist mentees. The subjects chosen, based on the feedback provided, are divided into 5 modules. The first module is **Introduction to Agile Methodologies**: Recognizing the crucial role and interest in Agile methodologies, our proposal includes a detailed introduction to Agile practices. This section aims to equip mentees with the tools and principles necessary for dynamic project management and adaptability in today's fast-paced business environment. The second module is **Personnel Management**: Acknowledging the significance of effective personnel management, our proposal emphasizes strategies for fostering a productive and motivated workforce. It delves into topics such as team building,

leadership development, and talent retention to ensure the success of emerging ventures. The third module is **Business Strategy and Marketing:** This crucial section encompasses a comprehensive Commercial Plan, providing insights into effective business strategies. It further explores communication strategies, ensuring entrepreneurs can effectively market their products and services in an increasingly competitive landscape. The fourth module is **Finances**: Understanding the pivotal role of financial management, our proposal covers the basics of financial literacy, emphasizing budgeting, and exploring various avenues for funding. This section aims to empower mentees with the financial knowledge needed for sustainable business growth. The fifth and last module is **Public Procurement**: Recognizing the importance of accessing public procurement opportunities to secure the future of own's venture, our proposal includes a dedicated section on navigating the intricacies of public procurement processes. This equips entrepreneurs with the knowledge and skills required to engage with government contracts and procurement opportunities effectively.

TRAINING METHODS

The training and incubation methods must be aligned with the education level and personal requirements of entrepreneurs, mixing different methodologies:

- Frontal.
- Non-formal.
- E-learning.
- Peer mentoring.
- Learning by doing.
- Meetings with successful entrepreneurs or experts.
- Study visits.

Non-formal training methodologies are generally more engaging and motivating as an aspiring entrepreneur can see live experiences and situations that can relate to his own project, rather than limiting himself to a theoretical study and further away from concrete cases.

In that sense, it is essential to avoid training sessions providing a high academic dimension. A net of trainers composed of professionals and entrepreneurs might be more able to connect with participants' needs and to provide a learning environment based on concrete life and business experiences.

However, the incubator coordinators need to work together with the trainers in the training preparation. They will review together the sessions and adapt contents and dynamics if required in order to fit into the overall incubation programme and objectives.

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING APPROACH

Emphasizing the importance of independent learning.

Those non-formal activities might also offer spaces and inputs for self-directed learning habits among students. To better understand the processes involved in this learning mode, this training tip outlines key components that foster independent learning: being ready to learn, setting learning goals, engaging in the learning process, and evaluating knowledge.

READINESS ASSESSMENT

Students need various skills and attitudes towards learning: being autonomous, organised, self-disciplined, able to communicate effectively, and able to accept constructive feedback and engage in self-evaluation and self-reflection. Activities should then facilitate Learning Skills Assessment Tools that help students to measure their habits and needs in terms of learnings.

Based on this self-evaluation, students might define learning goals related to their business ideas. Those learning goals are identifying main needs, priorities and already acquired abilities or competences. They allow students to design their own learning paths with the support of the rest of the group and/or their mentors and coaches.

Engaging and empowering

Students need to see themselves as learners in order to understand their needs as self-directed learning students. The developed approach of learning involves a transformation which is crucial in this learning process. This approach is about understanding ideas on your own, applying knowledge to new situations and using novel examples to explain a concept, learning more than is required for unit completion. Students need to generate their own connections and be their own motivators.

LEARNING EVALUATION

For students to be successful in self-directed learning, they must be able to engage in self-reflection and self-evaluation of their learning goals and progress in a unit of study. To support this self-evaluation process, they should regularly consult with the advising instructor, seek feedback, and engage in reflection of their achievements.

MENTORSHIPS

The purpose of the Mentoring Framework is to support DRAGGING mentors in delivering high-quality mentoring to entrepreneurs and provide them with a comprehensive set of practical teaching materials and effective strategies.

Within the DRAGGING project, the Mentoring Framework is geared towards furnishing mentors and mentees with valuable resources. Its primary goal is to enhance the capabilities of DRAGGING mentors in delivering top-notch mentoring to entrepreneurs. This is achieved by offering an array of mentoring techniques, answering frequently asked mentoring questions, presenting practical tips for each mentoring session, supplying lists of best practices for both mentors and mentees, and offering mentoring tools such as session plans and mentee action plans.

Distinguishing itself from conventional mentoring programs, the DRAGGING Mentoring Framework presents a comprehensive toolkit, encompassing mentoring techniques specific to the DRAGGING program, answers to common mentoring queries, hands-on advice for every mentoring session, guidelines for both mentors and mentees, and mentoring aids like session plans and mentee action plans. Furthermore, it incorporates a mentor specification, session-specific tips, and a mentoring plan template.

The DRAGGING Mentoring Framework is meticulously designed to not only aid DRAGGING mentors in delivering top tier mentoring to entrepreneurs but also to nurture and cultivate fresh business concepts aimed at addressing the identified market gaps as recognized by local authorities.

Mentoring Techniques

1. **Beginning Rapport and Setting Boundaries:** This technique is used to establish the purpose of the mentoring program, explain the process and content, discuss roles, manage expectations, and set boundaries. The benefits of this technique include managing expectations, maintaining commitment, and providing structure for the program. The step-by-step of this technique is the following:
   a. Contact mentee and send an overview of the mentoring cycle.
   b. First meeting – explain what mentoring is and explain the mentoring process; number of meetings, focus of meetings, role of mentor, expectations of mentee.

Explain the Dragging programme is to support entrepreneurs to turn new ideas into successful small businesses that will fill gaps in their local area.

    c. First meeting – build rapport i.e., provide some basic background about yourself and gain some background information about your mentee. Do not cross professional boundaries.

    d. Explain the role of the mentor, what support and help you can offer and how each session will be managed.

    e. Ask the mentee about their understanding of the programme, their expectations and discuss your expectations of them during the process.

2. **Setting Goals and Guiding the Mentee:** This technique is used to guide mentees appropriately to help them achieve their goals and make the progress they want to make. The benefits of this technique include supporting the achievement of mentee goals, widening knowledge and information sources useful to mentee, and supporting mentees' cultural integration. The step-by-step of this technique is the following:

    a. Ensure mentee goals are clearly established from the start of the mentoring process.

    b. Establish what the mentee already knows and understands and identify any gaps.

    c. Once gaps have been identified, support the mentee to improve knowledge and understanding of systems and processes.

    d. Provide references and/or resources that will help the mentee.

    e. Where and when appropriate provide advice and guidance in relation to specific mentee issues.

3. **Effective Listening:** This technique is used to build effective relationships with mentees, ensure that time is directed to meet mentee needs, and enable mentors to provide targeted advice and support. The benefits of this technique include building effective relationships with mentees, ensuring that time is directed to meet mentee needs, and enabling mentors to provide targeted advice and support. The step-by-step of this technique is the following:

    a. Develop active listening as a technique from the first session with your mentee.

    b. As you listen to your mentee make notes (mentally or on paper) of any patterns or themes you think would be useful to explore.

    c. Avoid interrupting, over-sympathising, or telling your own stories.

d. Practice the art of being truly present – provide non-verbal engagement through nodding, eye contact, gesture, sitting position, focusing on the mentee completely and avoid distracting thoughts of your own!

e. Use the skills of summarising and clarifying to ensure you have 'heard' correctly (see below).

4. **Effective Questioning:** This technique is used to help mentees explore concerns and thoughts. The benefits of this technique include helping mentees understand emotions or other barriers when they are stuck, enabling mentors to better understand mentee's situation or challenges, and providing more insightful guidance and support. The step-by-step of this technique is the following:

a. Ask open questions and think about the purpose of the question.

b. Ask questions that will challenge your mentee's thinking but be sensitive.

c. Use questioning that enables your mentee to develop solutions.

d. Ensure you allow sufficient time and space for your mentee to ask you questions.

e. Review your notes from each mentoring session and identify any further follow up questions for the next session.

5. **Effective Feedback:** This technique is used to enable mentees to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their thoughts, hear their own words and explore concerns and emotions in an objective way, and enable the mentor to gain more insight and understanding. The benefits of this technique include enabling mentees to feel a sense of progress through continuous feedback. The step-by-step of this technique is the following:

a. Follow up from your mentee by summarising – e.g. "So, what I think you said is xxxxx. Is this correct?"

b. Ensure you use clarification questions or strategies to check your own understanding of what your mentee is saying – e.g. "Just to clarify, does that mean….?"

c. Ask your mentee to summarise again for themselves – e.g. "So, could you just explain that again to me …."

d. Use feedback to celebrate successes for your mentee, but also to challenge the mentee in a sensitive manner where appropriate.

e. Feedback should be objective, non-judgmental and constructive.

6. **Ending Mentoring Sessions Effectively:** This technique is used to move mentees forward and enable them to progress, provide clarity and motivation to enable action, and allow a sense of satisfaction and achievement. The benefits of this technique include moving mentees forward and enabling them to progress, providing clarity and motivation to enable action, and allowing a sense of satisfaction and achievement. The step-by-step of this technique is the following:

   a. At the end of each session ask your mentee to summarise what has been discussed, what they have learnt and how they will move forward.

   b. Clarify any actions for mentee/mentor and make sure these are noted for review at the next session.

   c. Ensure your mentee has had an opportunity to ask any questions/clarified any concerns.

   d. Help your mentee by asking them how as well as what they are going to do before the next session.

   e. At the end of the programme review progress and map out with your mentee how they are going to move themselves further towards their goals.

Because of the type of mentoring and target group that the Dragging mentoring program is aimed at there are some specifications that mentor must have. The specification includes the following qualifications and experience required for mentors in the DRAGGING Mentoring Program:

1. **Emotional Competence:** Mentors should show high levels of social awareness, understand their own and others' emotions, and manage them effectively. They should work with passion, integrity, and be highly motivated. They should also act with courage to respectfully challenge others to be challenged themselves.

2. **Communication Skills:** Mentors should be able to adapt their communication style to suit the situation and mentee. They should show empathy for others and have enhanced relationship skills and networks. They should also act to build trust and inspire vision, enabling the mentee to feel a sense of progress through continuous feedback.

3. **Resilience:** Mentors should be able to overcome obstacles and demonstrate emotional strength. They should be solution-focused and positive about future opportunities. They should also work effectively in the face of uncertain circumstances.

4. **Time Management:** Mentors should understand the need for prioritization and how to effectively prioritize tasks. They should be able to delegate and support others effectively. They should also be able to multitask and meet deadlines with ease.

5. **Decision-making:** Mentors should be able to analyze complex situations as appropriate to make informed, justifiable, and rational decisions. They should be able to systematically sequence information to find the best fit solutions. They should also contribute to problem-solving and facilitate the decision-making of others, acting outside their own sphere of influence.

6. **Personal Development Skills:** Mentors should develop themselves through reflection and feedback and actively seek opportunities to fill any knowledge and behavior gaps. They should actively demonstrate lifelong learning. They should also think outside the box and challenge the status quo.

7. **Commitment:** Mentors should demonstrate an understanding of the needs of business communities. They should show passion for and experience in promoting and supporting others to achieve their potential. They should also embody the culture and values of the DRAGGING project, acting as a role model for entrepreneurs.

8. **Experience as a Leader in Entrepreneurship:** Mentors should have experience in developing and leading on the vision and direction of projects or organizations. They should actively engage organizations in their local areas to seek out solutions for current gaps/shortages. They should also value and capitalize on opportunities to fill business gaps in the local area.

DO's and DON'Ts

Within the framework, practical guidance is provided for both mentors and mentees throughout the mentoring journey. Here are some practical tips outlined in the framework:

DO's	DON'Ts
• Be prepared for all sessions.	• Overplease mentees by agreeing with everything they say.
• Manage time effectively.	• Give lots of personal anecdotes.
• Be open and non-judgmental.	• Dominate the conversations.
• Listen.	• Be judgmental.
• Be solution-focused.	• Be over emotional.
• Be supportive.	• Be negative.
• Provide any information or resources you have promised.	• Think you have all the answers/ be a 'know it all'.
• Ask insightful open questions.	• Over-promise and under-deliver.
• Be empathetic and understanding of the pressures and challenges of your mentee.	• Become over-familiar with your mentee.
• Be flexible in dealing with issues.	
• If the match is not right, then alert the programme co-ordinator.	

BANK OF IDEAS

Before launching the incubation program, the coordinators and volunteers **WORKED TOGETHER** to identify and analyse business opportunities in different analysed **SECTORS CHARACTERISING** the selected neighbourhoods. Those ideas are presented with an overall description, a first market analysis, and practical advice to guide the entrepreneurs in their business development process.

This bank of ideas proposes surest options for incubation participants who desire **TO UNDERTAKE** their business. Their development models have already been evaluated **BY PROFESSIONALS** and are often based on experiences that have already been successfully implemented. Those opportunities are presented to participants on the first day **OF THE** incubation programme. They can either choose one of those business ideas or **TO WORK** on their own idea.

During the following weeks of the incubation process, the participants will work **ON DEVELOPING** selected business idea. They will apply what they have learned from **THE TRAINING** sessions to the idea, developing their business plan with the support of **THE RESPECTIVE** mentors. Mentors and incubators' staff might analyse the steps they **ARE MAKING** in this process in order to constantly upgrade the bank of ideas (both in case of success or failure). The students will then benefit from improved business **IDEAS THAT** they could take over.

TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

During the incubation programme, students are organized in groups of two or three persons.

Each group member is working on the same business idea independently than if they want to undertake their business individually or together. Those groups are set during the first session (introduction session) when they get to know each other for the first time and choose the business idea they want to take over.

During the incubation programme the team members are carrying on together the different learnings and tasks related to their entrepreneurship. By the end of the incubation programme they will choose if they want to keep on developing their business together or independently.

Since those groups are created within a concise and intense time, it is crucial to display a strong "group dynamic" strategy. Those activities are based on non-formal education principles and creating a safe learning space where students could grow up and develop new skills, competences, and ideas.

Those activities foster group building and teamwork among participants and provide an ownership feeling on the incubation process. Also, during the different sessions, group dynamics are implemented to facilitate interaction, networking, and peer learning.

The main aims of this process are:

- To break the isolation of the participants in a situation of exclusion.
- To create a safe and supportive space within the incubator.
- To impulse self-directed learning habits.
- To develop soft skills (communication, problem-solving, focus, creativity, loyalty, leadership).
- To foster networking and teamwork between future entrepreneurs.

GROUP BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Those activities aim to facilitate the participation of new members into the group and to foster dynamics among them but also with the support team (incubator staff, trainers, mentors…). Those activities are very relevant during the first moment of the training course. Still, they could also be included during the whole programme in order to reinforce group spirit or to solve possible conflicts between students.

Icebreakers:

Get-to-know-you type icebreakers (or introduction games) help people become more acquainted with each other — helping people to learn and remember names and as well as sharing their unique interests, experiences, memories, and so on. The results are often humorous, interesting, or fascinating, as people explain these details about themselves.

Before you notice it, the ice is broken, and a common ground is discovered as people feel closer to each other! Spending a short amount of time playing these kinds of games early on can be well worth the investment for greater productivity and trust.

Fears and expectations:

The hopes and fears activity is an effective way to gauge participants' attitudes about a project, workshop, or any other collaborative engagement. Those activities address individual expectations related to the project. This allows the students to face their specific needs. It allows to "capitalise" expectations and have a clear starting point to be shared with the hosting organisations in order to give a continuum to the preparation and monitoring activities abroad as well as to the final evaluation activities.

Personal and professional objectives

Setting personal and/or professional goals is often the first step towards training paths. It is a critical moment to clarify needs, wishes, personal resources and motivations to achieve them. Through those activities, students are defining those goals and sharing them with the rest of the group. Throughout this process, they benefit from direct feedback from other participants and possible inputs from the group. They can also gain future collaborators to share experiences with during the learning process and the business experience.

Group building dynamics.

Those activities aim to improve constructive exchange between students, to boost collective intelligence and to generate a supportive environment that fosters peer learning. Those activities might be implemented during the whole incubation process either for the full group of students during training sessions or in specific teams.

They focus on developing soft skills (communication, problem-solving, focus, creativity, loyalty, and leadership) within the full group of participants. They are mostly based on games that contribute to generate an informal environment where exchanges get more personal and often easier. Those spaces are also essential to boost morale and motivation.

Teamwork activities

These activities are intended to improve performance in a team-based environment. They focus on improving collaboration between team members to achieve goals, build effective working relationships, reduce team members' role ambiguity, and find solutions to team problems. They are used to enhance social relations and define roles within teams and might expose and address interpersonal issues. Over time, these activities are intended to improve performance in a team-based environment.

Networking

Even if networking might happen organically during the incubation process, specific activities are organized in order to foster interactions. Activities such as "speed-dating" or "pitch" sessions can be organised between students and involve professionals as trainers, mentors, coaches or volunteers in the organisation. Those encounters between professionals are creating a first business community for the future community.

ONLINE GROUPS DYNAMICS

COVID situation boosted new practices online in order to keep on developing group activity in spite of social distance rules. Even if those new practices reduce the human factors of those group activities, the technologies offer practical options that allow to maintain the incubation process and contact between students and/or mentors.

They are also an opportunity to learn and practice in real-time in this virtual environment that is becoming everyday more important in business. However, students get a practical opportunity to test online practices and tools that could be used in their entrepreneurship paths.

Video conferencing platform

Those platforms offer a comfortable option to arrange training sessions or group meetings. Tools like screen sharing or breaking rooms make easier learning works and group activities and maintain a high interactivity level among participants. By practising those tools, the students are developing strategies to use them at a personal and professional level. They can also put into

practice, test and evaluate group dynamics that could be needed within their business, either in their team or with clients.

Collaborative tools

Collaborative tools are offering a large panel of possibilities to organize the work collectively. Students can develop new practices to improve their soft skills: communication in the distance, decision making (dates, votes, strategies…), coordination and monitoring of processes. Nowadays, it looks that technological options had no limits. So, students might define first their needs in terms of practices and then choose the best tools to fulfil those needs.

TRAINING CURRICULUM

Presenting the curriculum and modules covered in the training.

EXISTING COURSES AND PROGRAMS

Social incubators have emerged as a powerful tool in the fight against social exclusion, providing support and resources to individuals at risk of marginalization. These innovative organizations play a crucial role in fostering social inclusion and empowering those who are most vulnerable, by offering opportunities for personal and professional growth, and ultimately, creating opportunities to improve their overall well-being.

Social exclusion is both a process and a state that encompasses a wide array of factors such as economic, social, cultural, and political barriers, which prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic, and political life and from asserting their rights. This way, understanding and tackling social exclusion has the potential to contribute in a significant way to long term poverty reduction by focusing on the notions of vulnerability and capabilities (Frota, 2007).

In response to this challenge, social incubators have emerged as a solution-oriented approach to provide targeted support and resources. Therefore, social incubators aim to address these barriers by providing a nurturing and supportive environment for those at risk of exclusion through tailored programs, resources, and mentorship. By equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and networks, social incubators strive to break down the barriers that contribute to social exclusion and create more inclusive societies for all.

CONCEPTUALIZING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

United Nations (2016:18) defines social exclusion as "a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state."

According to the 2022 World Bank report by Cuesta, López-Nova, and Niño-Zarazúa (2022: 3), – whose findings are also rooted in and informed by a rich body of preexisting scholarly literature such as Atkinson (1998), Sen (2000), Levitas (2006) and Hoff and Walsh (2018)–, social exclusion arises from a diverse array of deprivations, generally stemming from three primary dimensions. First, individuals may be excluded due to identities that deviate from established norms and customs, such as gender, age, race, caste, ethnicity, religion, or political affiliations. Second, exclusion may result from specific circumstances, like forced displacement due to conflict or poverty, or victimization from gender-based violence, particularly in settings where discriminatory norms, laws, and institutions prevail. Third, individuals in disadvantaged socioeconomic positions face exclusion due to restricted access to labor, credit, and insurance markets, or limitations in exercising political rights, resulting from low educational attainment, unemployment, or poverty.

In the European context, it is pointed out that since the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 1999, the European Union has incorporated social exclusion into its social policy framework. Later initiatives, such as the 2000 Lisbon strategy to combat poverty, the 2008 recommendation for including those excluded from the labor market, and the 2021 European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, all prioritize reducing poverty and social exclusion risks (European Commission, 2021).

While a consensus on the most critical dimensions of social exclusion for global empirical analyses remains elusive, there is a general understanding of its multidimensional, dynamic nature and the relational processes that result in this phenomenon. Alongside its multilayered dimensions, it is also a reality where various actors contribute, including economic forces related to globalization, nation-states and their institutions, and individuals, whose interactions produce outcomes at different levels, from local to global, individual to structural.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that nature of social exclusion is as dynamic and changing as the emergence of political crises, disasters, conflicts, economic shocks, or demographic transitions, which can result in the heightening of exclusion and discrimination risks among underrepresented groups (European Commission, 2021).

In addition, we must acknowledge that social exclusion is long-term and structural. Therefore, in light of the complexities and multifaceted nature of social exclusion, addressing this issue calls for innovative and pragmatic solutions. One such approach that has been gaining traction is the development of social incubators, which can help operationalize strategies to tackle social exclusion through grassroots projects.

In the following section, we will delve into the concept of social incubators and explore how they can serve as a valuable instrument in combating social exclusion and fostering a more inclusive society.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL INCUBATORS

As entrepreneurship has become a key driver of social and economic development, there has been a surge in entrepreneurial support activities. In this context, incubators have emerged at the forefront of these efforts, offering a wide array of services, such as office space, capital, training, and support, to assist start-ups and entrepreneurial teams in their quest to survive and thrive.

Hackett and Dilts (2004 cited in Sansone, Andreotti, Colombelli and Landoni, 2020: 122) defined incubators as "enterprises that facilitate the early-stage development of firms by providing office space, shared services and business assistance".

While various types of incubators have been explored in the literature (Mian et al., 2016 cited in Sansone, Andreotti, Colombelli and Landoni, 2020: 124), social incubators remain relatively under-researched. As a newer concept, a clear definition for social incubators is still lacking, and existing studies indicate that more research is necessary to better understand this emerging topic.

Rudy Aernoudt (2004) is one of the first to use the term *social incubator*, stating that they provide the same services as other incubators, but with a distinct mission. He describes their aims as:

"[…] To stimulate and to support the development, growth and continuity of companies employing people with low employment capacities. The aim is to bridge the social gap by increasing employment possibilities for people with low employment capacities such as disabled people, minimum guaranteed income beneficiaries, low-skilled workers, long-term unemployed, immigrants, political refugees, etc." (2004: 129).

Similarly, Casasnovas and Bruno (2013: 180) described social incubators as "programs that support the scaling process of organizations that primarily address social challenges through innovative and market-oriented solutions."

However, Lundgren and Youcefi (2017: 9) argue that Aernoudt's *social incubator* term should instead be labelled *social business incubator*, indicating its focus on the business development itself. However, there are incubators that take a different approach to addressing social issues. For instance, some incubators bypass the intermediate step of incubating businesses and instead work directly with individuals experiencing the issue.

These authors coin the expression *individual incubators*, to describe those that focus on directly incubating individuals. Encouraging individuals to act entrepreneurially benefits not only the incubate and society as creating an entrepreneurial environment spurs economic growth and development, but also may eradicate social and institutional void. Social incubators help both micro-entrepreneurs and other individuals by addressing their needs and, by extension, reduce educational, social, and economic gaps.

Therefore, we understand social incubators as organizations or programs designed to support and nurture the growth of social enterprises, startups, and initiatives that focus on addressing social, environmental, or community challenges. These incubators provide resources, mentorship, training, and networking opportunities to help entrepreneurs and innovators develop and scale their projects with the goal of creating positive social impact.

In summary, while incubators have been extensively studied, social incubators are a relatively new concept that requires further research. They share similarities with traditional incubators but are specifically focused on supporting organizations addressing social challenges and employing individuals with low employment capacities. As social entrepreneurship continues to grow, social incubators are likely to become increasingly important in fostering the development of socially driven enterprises.

CASES OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL INCUBATORS

To select our case studies, we began with a comprehensive search for incubators. Next, we examined the initial sample to determine if they met the criteria for social business incubators based on the given definition. From this refined sample, we analyzed their incubation approaches to identify the most diverse methods. Lastly, we gathered qualitative data from publicly available sources regarding the business models and practices of fifteen well-established social business and individual incubators.

THE HUMAN SAFETY NET (ITALY)

The Human Safety Net (THSN) is a global initiative launched by Generali, a leading insurance company, aimed at creating a positive social impact by empowering disadvantaged communities. The program focuses on three main areas: supporting families, unlocking the potential of refugee entrepreneurs, and helping children with early childhood development.

➢ **For Families**: The goal of this program is to support parents in vulnerable situations by providing them with the tools, knowledge, and resources necessary to ensure a nurturing and supportive environment for their children. This is achieved through parenting workshops, home visits, and community events that focus on early childhood development, positive parenting practices, and the importance of a strong parent-child bond. In 2021, THSN expanded its network of Family Centers, reaching over 5,600 parents and children across 22 countries. These centers provide parenting workshops, home visits, and community events focusing on early childhood development, positive parenting practices, and the importance of a strong parent-child bond. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the program adapted its approach, offering online resources and remote support to ensure continued assistance to families in need.

➢ **For Refugee Start-ups:** This program focuses on unlocking the potential of refugee entrepreneurs by providing them with the necessary support to establish and grow their businesses. The Human Safety Net offers tailored business training, mentorship, access to networks, and funding opportunities for refugees with innovative business ideas. By empowering refugees to become self-sufficient, this program aims to promote social inclusion and economic integration. The Human Safety Net's refugee entrepreneurship program supported 1,100 refugees in starting and growing their businesses in 2021. By

offering tailored business training, mentorship, access to networks, and funding opportunities, the program aims to promote social inclusion and economic integration. In response to the pandemic, THSN provided emergency grants to support refugee businesses, while also offering webinars and online resources to help entrepreneurs adapt to the new economic landscape.

- ➢ **For Newborns:** This initiative aims to improve the lives of newborns in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) by offering specialized training for healthcare professionals and investing in advanced medical equipment. The program seeks to reduce infant mortality rates and improve the quality of life for premature and at-risk babies, while also providing support and guidance to their families during this critical period. In 2021, THSN continued its efforts to improve the lives of newborns in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) by providing specialized training to over 1,000 healthcare professionals and investing in advanced medical equipment. Their commitment to reducing infant mortality rates and improving the quality of life for premature and at-risk babies extended to 12 countries and reached over 6,000 newborns and their families.

By combining these three programs, The Human Safety Net aims to create a safety net for vulnerable individuals and families, empowering them to overcome challenges, unlock their potential, and ultimately transform their lives for the better.

In 2021, THSN introduced the THSN Community, a digital platform aimed at fostering connections and engagement among beneficiaries, partners, and supporters by facilitating the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices. This initiative further demonstrates THSN's dedication to establishing partnerships and collaborations, as they work closely with local organizations, experts, and volunteers to optimize the impact of their programs.

TERN (UNITED KINGDOM)

TERN (The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network) is an organization, founded in 2016, dedicated to empowering and supporting refugees in the United Kingdom to start and scale their own businesses. The idea came out of the recognition that, despite the emerging forced migration crisis that was happening at the time (particularly in wake of the Syrian conflict), European societies were failing to include refugee populations effectively into society and local communities.

Their mission is to enable refugees to thrive through the power of their ideas and business ventures, fostering economic independence, integration, and community contributions.

TERN's primary focus is on assisting refugee entrepreneurs throughout various stages of their business journey. They offer an array of services, including access to funding, mentorship, tailored business support, and a community of like-minded individuals. Their support helps refugee entrepreneurs overcome challenges and barriers specific to their situation, enabling them to create successful businesses and contribute to their local communities.

Their approach aims to overcome three significant obstacles faced by refugee entrepreneurs in the UK:

➢ **The scattered refugee population** (with no central registry or support organizations). Refugee entrepreneurs often lack the necessary networks to promote their brands, as they may not have friends and family in the UK to support them. TERN addresses this issue by connecting them with potential customers and launching an online marketplace for refugee entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services.

➢ **The absence of local credit (or personal) history for refugees**. The lack of credit and capital can hinder their businesses from taking off. TERN is working to overcome this challenge and help refugee entrepreneurs secure the financial resources they need to succeed.

➢ **Their limited familiarity with a new culture and intricate bureaucratic systems**. Accessing knowledge and adapting their previous experience to the UK market can be challenging due to isolation and unfamiliarity with local regulations and customer preferences. TERN helps bridge this gap by providing guidance on business registration, idea validation, and market competitiveness.

Their 12-weeks-program (plus other 12-week-final growth coaching) includes three core components:

1. **Onboarding** - This stage is focused on helping refugees generate business ideas, identify their target market, and develop their unique selling points.

2. **Incubation** - In this stage, TERN assists refugees in testing their business concepts, mentoring, refining their ideas, and validating their products or services with potential customers.

3. **Growth Acceleration** - TERN supports refugees in the final stage of launching their businesses, including registering their company, accessing financing, and developing marketing strategies.

By fostering a strong network of refugee entrepreneurs and partners, TERN is promoting a positive change in the narrative surrounding refugees and encouraging a more inclusive, diverse, and innovative business ecosystem.

Furthermore, TERN strives to change the misconceptions surrounding refugees by highlighting their entrepreneurial potential and reframing the narrative from hardship to livelihoods. The organization emphasizes that refugees have valuable skills and experience that, if supported, can help them create businesses and jobs in their new communities.

One effective way to change the narrative is by showcasing the success stories of refugees who have started businesses in local communities, rather than focusing on high-profile examples like Steve Jobs or Michael Marks. TERN's online marketplace, which features refugee-led businesses, allows people to directly support these entrepreneurs, fostering a more positive perception of refugees.

By connecting the refugee experience to local entrepreneurship, TERN aims to create a more inclusive environment and change the way people view refugees. Encouraging people to support and buy from refugee-owned businesses can ultimately shift public opinion and promote a more inclusive and understanding society.

LIAISE PROJECT (EUROPEAN UNION)

LIAISE (Linking Incubation Actors for Inclusive and Social Entrepreneurship) is a European Union funded project, under the program framework of Employment and Social Innovation. Its main objective is to encourage inclusive and social entrepreneurship across Europe. LIAISE focuses on empowering and mobilizing business support organizations (BSOs) to offer efficient support to social enterprises and potential entrepreneurs from underrepresented communities, assisting them in securing financial resources and expanding their businesses.

This project is a collaborative effort between The European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN), Impact Hub (IHUB), and the European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA) – three leading organizations and networks that have come together to drive systemic change by enhancing the skills, methods, and approaches of BSOs in assisting entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs from diverse social backgrounds.

Each of the project partners shares the same vision and values, while bringing complementary expertise and unique experiences that are essential for the project's success. Additionally, Caritas Europa contributes valuable hands-on experience working with vulnerable groups, further enriching the project.

LIAISE's program is built on two key elements, a capacity building program for business support organizations (BSOs) and a cultural paradigm shift. The program recognizes that pure learning and knowledge exchange is not enough to create real impact in the incubation industry because incubators and BSOs work within larger regional, national, and European ecosystems.

The project intends to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment as a means to create job opportunities, enhance skill development and enable unemployed and vulnerable individuals to participate fully in society and the economy.

With the collaboration of the three networks, LIAISE is working towards a paradigm shift in the industry, ensuring that incubation services are integrated into a more inclusive and impact-driven ecosystem to extend their reach to inclusive and social entrepreneurship. The project aims to help under-represented groups access financial resources and increase the survival and growth of their businesses.

BETTER INCUBATION (EUROPEAN UNION)

Better Incubation is an initiative funded by the European Commission, driven by the LIAISE Project. In line with the vision of the project, this initiative aims to introduce a systemic change by bringing incubation and business support services closer to society.

Better Incubation strives to advance entrepreneurship as a significant solution to social, ecological, and economic problems in Europe. It aims to provide inclusive opportunities for self-employment and job creation to underrepresented groups, allowing them to fully participate in society and the economy.

Better Incubation offers a series of capacity building and networking opportunities that are organized along 4 key pillars within the LIAISE project:

1. **Capacity building:** The provision to BSOs with knowledge and tools to pilot incubation programs for social and inclusive entrepreneurs through the development of 5 thematic Communities of Practice (CoPs) and delivering capacity building online program to BSOs.
2. **Cultural paradigm shift**: The project aims to involve various stakeholders in developing a more inclusive and impact-focused ecosystem. The partners will ensure that the outcomes of the project are implemented and validated by national and European ecosystem players.
3. **Impact assessment framework for incubation programs:** The project aims to develop, prototype, and implement a shared assessment framework to evaluate and measure the impact of the incubation programs conducted by the project's participating members.
4. **Stakeholders' mobilization and alliances:** Ensuring cohesive communication and widespread dissemination of project outcomes across the three networks. Additionally, the project seeks to foster long-term partnerships among key stakeholders in the realm of social and inclusive entrepreneurship support, with the aim of continuously improving the practices and assistance provided by mainstream incubators and other BSOs.

PULSE (FRANCE)

PULSE is an association created in 2006 whose mission is to support and promote entrepreneurship as a lever for inclusive and sustainable development. Founded with the conviction that everyone can become an actor of change, PULSE promotes, in the 18 countries where it is active, accessibility to entrepreneurship and its financing through awareness-raising actions and support programs.

PULSE operates several incubation sites in Africa and Europe, including Lab'ess (Tunisia), Oribi (South Africa), Jógjëf (Senegal) and PULSE Montreuil (France). Each year, more than 500 project leaders are supported in the launch and development of their activity.

PULSE Montreuil has been actively involved in supporting various entrepreneurial initiatives that focus on diverse social and environmental themes. Some of these areas include:

➢ **Refugee entrepreneurship**: Pulse Group assists entrepreneurs who are refugees, helping them develop their businesses and integrate into their host countries' economies. This support can foster economic independence, social inclusion, and create job opportunities for

both the entrepreneurs and their communities. Their program, #tempo, is aimed at making entrepreneurship accessible to refugees in France. Through the creation of ecosystems and the deployment of specialized support pathways in various regions, #tempo aims to facilitate the development of entrepreneurial ideas and projects led by refugees, providing them with the necessary tools and connections to bring their ideas to life. The program's goal is to enable 40 aspiring refugee entrepreneurs to solidify their ideas and provide 25 of them with support to launch their businesses.

➢ **Women entrepreneurship**: Pulse Group promotes women-led businesses by offering tailored support and resources to female entrepreneurs, aiming to bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship and empower women to achieve economic success. Operating in both Marseille and Île-de-France, and in collaboration with local partners, #EllesEnsemble aims to support women who are distant from entrepreneurship, particularly the younger generation or those residing in priority districts (QPV). Through this program, PULSE seeks to facilitate the emergence of socially and environmentally impactful projects led by women.

➢ **+45 entrepreneurship**: Recognizing the potential and experience of older entrepreneurs, Pulse Group supports individuals aged 45 and above in launching or growing their businesses, tapping into their skills, and leveraging their unique perspectives. Their initiative, #NoveauCap, is a support program designed for individuals over 45 years old who wish to give new meaning to their careers by exploring the opportunities provided by impact entrepreneurship. The program offers inspiration sessions, training, individual guidance, and personal development, all free of charge. It aims to help participants move from idea to action, giving their careers a new direction.

➢ **Circular economy**: Pulse Group encourages projects that focus on the circular economy, promoting resource efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable practices. By supporting businesses in this area, they contribute to a more environmentally friendly and economically viable future. #LaSaisonCirculaire is a 6-month incubation program aimed at project leaders in the circular economy. The goal is to accelerate the ecological and economic transition by promoting the identification and development of projects that focus on the pillars of the circular economy. This program offers an incubation program for its winners, combining PULSE's expertise in the social and solidarity economy (SSE) with SUEZ (utility company which operates largely in the water and waste management sectors) knowledge of circular

economy processes. PULSE and SUEZ designed this program to have a regional impact in Île-de-France, particularly in the Seine-Saint-Denis area.

➢ **Solidarity projects**: #LaSaisonSolidaire is a 6-month incubation program for project leaders responding to one or more solidarity issues (promoting employment and integration, building a more inclusive society, strengthening social ties and civic engagement). The primary aim of #LaSaisonSolidaire is to provide participating entrepreneurs with optimal conditions to launch and accelerate their impact projects. This is achieved through a combination of coaching, training, mentoring, inspiration sessions, and personal development opportunities. The program has a significant influence in the Île-de-France region, with a particular focus on the Seine-Saint-Denis territories.

RISE (WESTERN BALKANS)

The RISE (Regional Incubator for Social Entrepreneurs) project is focused on supporting social entrepreneurship in the Western Balkans. The project considers the region's unique needs, as well as its historical and political context, in to foster reconciliation.

RISE is funded by the French Development Agency (AFD), the European Union, and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office for the Balkans (RYCO). The coordinating consortium includes RYCO, the Franco-German Youth Office (OFAJ), South-East Europe Youth Network (SEEYN), and PULSE (Groupe SOS).

Local implementation of the RISE project is carried out by social incubators in the region, such as ARNO (North Macedonia), Nesto Vise (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Yunus Social Business Balkans (Albania), Smart Kolektiv (Serbia), IEC Technopolis (Montenegro), and Balkan Green Foundation (Kosovo*).

The primary goal of the RISE project is to address a crucial need in the Western Balkans by fostering reconciliation among the region's youth through social entrepreneurship. Given its regional focus, the project aims to increase cross-border interactions surrounding social entrepreneurship over its three-year duration and beyond.

Key objectives of the RISE project include:

➢ **Enhancing the capacity of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem**: This objective focuses on local support structures (RISE incubators), which promote innovative and social projects as well as project leaders.

➢ **Promoting reconciliation through social entrepreneurship**: Creating a conducive environment for the development of entrepreneurial projects is essential. Raising awareness of social entrepreneurship in Western Balkan societies is a critical aspect of the project, intended to cultivate a dynamic and informed community of young social entrepreneurs.

The RISE Journey is a tailor-made support program for young change-makers in the Western Balkan region. It aims to help them develop their impactful ideas into sustainable social businesses. The program is implemented by six local incubators from different parts of the region. The RISE Journey consists of several steps:

➢ **Design Thinking Workshop**: Participants learn about social entrepreneurship and Design Thinking, an interactive session based on five stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test.
➢ **Call for Projects**: Young people aged 18 to 35 from the Western Balkans are encouraged to apply for the RISE Journey with their ideas for positive impact.
➢ **Ideation Phase**: The local incubator helps transform ideas into sustainable social business models through trainings, workshops, and interactions with other projects in the region.
➢ **Demo Day**: Participants pitch their projects to a jury, who selects the best social projects to join the incubation program.
➢ **RISE Bootcamp**: A 6-day event for knowledge and ideas exchange, networking, and participation in sessions such as peer learning, prototyping, and social business development training.
➢ **Regional Mobility Program**: Participants receive a business development and mobility grant to travel across the region, connect with peers and experienced businesses, and share lessons learned.
➢ **RISE Forum**: A gathering of RISE participants and key actors of social entrepreneurship in the region to discuss the state of social entrepreneurship, best practices, and European initiatives.
➢ **RISE Alumni Community**: Graduates of the program join the RISE Alumni community, sharing successes and opportunities with all generations of Risers.

One of the key motivations behind the RISE project was the high youth unemployment rate in the Western Balkans, states RISE's Project Coordinator Adrien Delaby (Sermaxhaj, 2021), which is among the highest in the world. The labor markets in the region are still divided, and there is significant room for improvement in cross-regional mobility and exchange.

On the other hand, although progress has been made in youth participation in decision-making processes, it still lags behind the level of youth participation seen in EU countries.

Considering these challenges, the development of social entrepreneurship initiated by the target group is an effective solution to combat youth unemployment and address social and environmental issues in the region. The RISE project aims to empower young people to become change-makers and drive sustainable social business growth, thereby fostering reconciliation and regional collaboration.

SOY EMPRENDEDORA (SPAIN – COSTA RICA)

"Soy Emprendedora" is a project that was created in May of 2020 to provide support to women entrepreneurs and business owners in Costa Rica who relied on their businesses for their livelihoods. As a collateral effect of the pandemic and the adopted health measures, these women saw significant impacts on their income, with some even experiencing the closure of their ventures.

The project was implemented in all regions of the country, financed by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and executed by the National Women's Institute (INAMU) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

This initiative seeks to promote gender equality, reduce the gender gap in the labor market, and foster economic growth. The program focuses on improving women's technical, digital, and entrepreneurial skills, ultimately enhancing their self-sufficiency and financial independence.

The training process took place from September 2021 to June 2022, a period in which 276 women from all over the country managed to improve some aspects of their business, for example, the dissemination processes on social networks. Other women managed to strengthen the venture and the image of the product or formalized the venture.

Training topics included talks on internal logistics, external logistics, infrastructure, purchasing, after-sales service, human resources, and operations.

Participants in this training and accompaniment process included: women heads of household with active productive businesses prior to the pandemic and/or during the pandemic; women with care responsibilities; entrepreneurs/businesswomen who hired personnel with emphasis on hiring women; and entrepreneurs/businesswomen who led businesses in the productive activities that were most affected by the crisis, such as agro-industry, services, textiles, handicrafts, agriculture

and livestock, commerce, and tourism. The training process was carried out by the school of the School of Administration of the National University.

The final product of the project was the creation of the *Soy Emprendedora* website www.soyemprendedora.inamu.go.cr which contains a series of videos and documents that provide and based-on-needs guidance to those women (an in general, to those) who wish to start and formalize a business, so that they can find, in a single place, practical advice on how to do so.

DO SCHOOL (GERMANY)

The DO School is an international non-profit organization that focuses on empowering and inspiring individuals to become purpose-driven leaders, entrepreneurs, and changemakers. Its mission is to create a more equitable, sustainable, and innovative world by fostering an ecosystem of collaboration and learning.

Founded in Germany, the DO School operates across various locations worldwide, offering a range of programs, events, and initiatives designed to develop the skills and mindset necessary to tackle global challenges. Their approach combines hands-on learning, mentorship, and peer-to-peer support to help participants transform ideas into action.

The DO School unites prominent organizations, esteemed experts, and gifted impact-driven entrepreneurs to refine innovative ideas and rapidly transform them into new products, processes, and services. By inspiring profound cultural changes, The DO School fosters the evolution of people, businesses, and society as a whole. The ultimate goal is to create not only better businesses but also a better world for everyone.

Key features of The DO School:

➢ **Innovative Programs**: The DO School offers a variety of programs such as fellowships, workshops, and incubators, tailored to different stages of personal and professional development. These programs often focus on themes like social impact, sustainability, and entrepreneurship.

➢ **Global Network**: Participants in The DO School programs become part of a diverse and global network of like-minded individuals, organizations, and alumni. This network fosters collaboration and provides opportunities for networking and future partnerships.

- ➢ **Expert Mentorship**: The DO School connects participants with experienced mentors and industry experts who can provide valuable guidance, insights, and support in the pursuit of their goals.
- ➢ **Hands-on Learning**: The DO School emphasizes experiential learning, enabling participants to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world situations. This helps to deepen understanding and ensure that the learning outcomes are practical and relevant.
- ➢ **Focus on Impact**: The DO School's core philosophy is centered on creating tangible, positive impact on society and the environment. Participants are encouraged to think critically about the consequences of their actions and develop solutions that address pressing global challenges.

By offering these resources, The DO School aims to empower individuals and organizations to create a better future for all.

ELLAS LO BORDAN (SPAIN)

Ellas lo bordan is a social enterprise project that operates under the umbrella of the Manresa Foundation's social inclusion programs, which belong to the Society of Jesus. Established in 2017 in the Entrevías neighborhood of Madrid, its primary goal is to provide professional skills to women at risk of labor market exclusion due to their educational background or personal and family circumstances.

At the heart of this transformational process is a textile workshop, where women receive technical training in a trade while enhancing their versatile skills to support social and professional integration. The entire workforce consists of women, with the company focusing on textile manufacturing and offering quality standards above the market average.

Newcomers to Ellas lo Bordan undergo two months of intensive training before joining the workshop, where a team of textile experts oversees operations and services to produce high-quality products tailored to individual client needs.

The company also focuses on sustainability and circular economy processes, creating various products from recycled fabrics, including tablecloths, aprons, tote bags, and cardholders. This approach fosters personal growth, contributes to local development, and offers a responsible purchasing alternative for social transformation.

Ellas lo bordan's unique model combines economic activity with social impact, emphasizing dignity, equality, and cooperation. By promoting innovative, creative, and respectful methodologies, they facilitate the autonomy of the women they employ and create a meeting space free of discrimination. This triple-impact approach – economic, social, and environmental – sets them apart as a sustainable production company dedicated to social transformation.

As we have examined, all these initiatives, projects, programs and incubators share the same elements, which include:

➢ **Focus on social impact**: Unlike traditional business incubators, social incubators prioritize projects and ventures that seek to solve social problems or address community needs. Their primary objective is to create social value rather than solely focusing on financial gain.

➢ **Training and capacity building**: Social incubators provide educational programs and workshops to help participants develop essential skills for managing a social enterprise, such as business planning, marketing, financial management, and impact measurement.

➢ **Mentorship and guidance**: Experienced professionals, often from the social entrepreneurship or nonprofit sectors, offer guidance, advice, and support to participants in a social incubator. This mentorship helps entrepreneurs overcome challenges and make informed decisions as they develop their projects.

➢ **Networking opportunities**: Social incubators create opportunities for participants to connect with like-minded individuals, potential partners, investors, and other stakeholders in the social impact ecosystem. This helps them build a strong support network and collaborate on projects.

➢ **Funding and resources**: Social incubators may provide seed funding, grants, or other financial assistance to support the development and growth of social enterprises. Additionally, they may offer resources such as office space, equipment, or technical support to help participants bring their ideas to fruition.

➢ **Advocacy and Awareness**: Social incubators play a significant role in raising awareness about social exclusion and promoting the importance of social innovation. They advocate for inclusive policies and create opportunities for dialogue between policymakers, social entrepreneurs, and disadvantaged communities. This helps foster a more inclusive and equitable society.

RETHINK IRELAND (IRELAND)

Rethink Ireland is a non-profit organization that supports social entrepreneurs and innovative projects that have the potential to create positive social impact in Ireland. Rethink Ireland provides funding, mentoring, and support to social enterprises, charities, and non-profits through a range of programs and initiatives.

Rethink Ireland's main funding program is the Social Enterprise Development Fund, which provides grants and support to social enterprises at all stages of development. Rethink IRELAND also operates the Ability to Work Fund, which provides funding to organisations working to support people with disabilities in the workforce, and the Children and Youth Education Fund, which supports innovative projects focused on improving education and opportunities for children and young people in Ireland.

In addition to its funding programs, Rethink Ireland also provides training, mentoring, and support to social entrepreneurs through its Academy for Social Entrepreneurs program. This program offers a six-month course that helps social entrepreneurs develop their ideas, build their skills, and create sustainable businesses that have a positive social impact.

Overall, Rethink Ireland is committed to promoting social innovation and entrepreneurship in Ireland, and to supporting innovative projects and organisations that are working to create positive social change in their communities.

UPSOCIAL (SPAIN)

UpSocial is a non-profit organisation based in Spain that provides support and resources to social entrepreneurs and organisations working to create positive social impact in their communities. The organisation was founded in 2013 with the aim of promoting social innovation and entrepreneurship in Spain and beyond.

UpSocial's main focus is on providing training, mentoring, and financial support to social entrepreneurs, with the aim of helping them to develop sustainable and scalable businesses that have a positive social impact. The organisation runs a range of programs and initiatives, including an incubation program for social enterprises, a social investment fund, and a mentorship program that pairs social entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders.

In addition to its work with social entrepreneurs, UpSocial also collaborates with a range of partners, including corporations, foundations, and universities, to promote social innovation and

entrepreneurship more broadly. The organisation has a strong focus on impact measurement and works closely with its partners to track and evaluate the social impact of its programs and initiatives.

Overall, UpSocial is committed to building a more inclusive and sustainable economy through social entrepreneurship and innovation, and to supporting individuals and organisations that are working to create positive social change in their communities.

UpSocial's work is organised around five lines of action:

1. **Innovation:** UpSocial supports social innovators in developing and implementing new ideas and solutions to social problems. It provides resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities to help social entrepreneurs and organisations develop innovative business models, products, and services that address social and environmental challenges.

2. **Capacity building:** UpSocial provides capacity-building support to social entrepreneurs and organisations to help them strengthen their operations and achieve greater impact. This includes providing training and coaching on topics such as financial management, marketing, and strategic planning.

3. **Scaling:** UpSocial helps social entrepreneurs and organisations scale their impact by providing access to funding, mentorship, and other resources. It also helps social innovators identify and navigate new markets, partnerships, and opportunities for growth.

4. **Policies:** UpSocial works to promote policies that support social innovation and social entrepreneurship. This includes conducting research on best practices in social innovation and advocating for policies that create a more supportive environment for social entrepreneurs.

5. **Learnings:** UpSocial believes in the importance of learning and sharing knowledge in the social innovation space. It conducts research and gathers data on social innovation trends and best practices and shares this knowledge with its community of social innovators and stakeholders to promote collaboration and learning across the sector.

ASHOKA (EUROPE)

Ashoka is a global non-profit organization that supports social entrepreneurs and changemakers around the world, including in Europe. Ashoka's work in Europe is focused on identifying and supporting social entrepreneurs who are developing innovative solutions to social and

environmental problems, and on creating a more supportive ecosystem for social entrepreneurship across the region.

One of the keyways that Ashoka supports social entrepreneurs in Europe is by identifying and selecting Ashoka Fellows, who are social entrepreneurs with a track record of success in creating and implementing innovative solutions to social problems. Once selected, Ashoka provides its Fellows with a range of resources, including financial support, mentorship, and access to a global network of peers and supporters. Ashoka also works to connect its Fellows with other stakeholders, such as policymakers, business leaders, and civil society organisations, to help them achieve greater impact.

Ashoka also works to create a more supportive ecosystem for social entrepreneurship in Europe. This includes advocating for policies that support social innovation and changemaking and fostering collaborations between social entrepreneurs and other stakeholders in the region. Ashoka also conducts research on social entrepreneurship and shares best practices with its network of social entrepreneurs and supporters.

In addition to its work supporting social entrepreneurs, Ashoka also runs programs and initiatives to promote social innovation and changemaking across Europe. For example, Ashoka's "Changemaker Schools" initiative works with schools across the region to promote social and emotional learning, and to help students develop the skills and mindset needed to become changemakers in their communities.

YUNUS SOCIAL BUSINESS (SPAIN, FRANCE AND GERMANY)

Yunus Social Business (YSB) is a non-profit organization that was founded by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus in 2011. YSB works to promote social entrepreneurship and to create sustainable solutions to some of the world's most pressing social problems.

YSB focuses on supporting social entrepreneurs who are developing innovative and sustainable business models that have a positive impact on society.

Yunus Social Business (YSB) has a presence in several European countries, including Germany, France, and Spain. In Europe, YSB works to support social entrepreneurs who are developing innovative solutions to some of the region's most pressing social and environmental problems.

One of the keyways that YSB supports social entrepreneurs in Europe is by providing seed funding and other financial support. YSB works with social entrepreneurs to develop and refine their business models, and then provides funding to help them get their businesses off the ground. YSB also provides mentorship and other resources to help social entrepreneurs scale their businesses and increase their impact.

YSB also works to create partnerships with corporations, governments, and other organisations in Europe to promote social entrepreneurship and social business. These partnerships help to create a more supportive environment for social entrepreneurs, by providing access to resources such as funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities.

In addition to its work supporting social entrepreneurs, YSB also conducts research and advocacy on social entrepreneurship and social business in Europe. It works to raise awareness of the importance of social entrepreneurship and to promote policies and practices that support the growth of the social entrepreneurship sector in Europe.

IMPACT HUB (EUROPE)

Impact Hub is a global network of social business incubators and coworking spaces that support social entrepreneurs and changemakers around the world. Impact Hub was founded in 2005 in London and has since grown to become a network of over 100 Impact Hubs in more than 50 countries.

In Europe, Impact Hub has a strong presence, with Impact Hubs in cities such as Berlin, Amsterdam, Vienna, and Madrid, among others. Each Impact Hub provides a coworking space where social entrepreneurs and changemakers can work, collaborate, and network with like-minded individuals. In addition to coworking space, Impact Hubs also provide a range of resources to support social entrepreneurs, including mentorship, training, and access to funding.

Impact Hub's focus is on promoting social innovation and entrepreneurship. It provides support to social entrepreneurs who are developing innovative solutions to social and environmental problems and aims to create a more supportive ecosystem for social entrepreneurship around the world.

Impact Hub also runs programs and initiatives to promote social entrepreneurship and social innovation. For example, the Impact Hub Fellowship is a program that provides funding and support to social entrepreneurs who are developing innovative solutions to social problems.

Impact Hub also runs accelerator programs and hackathons to support social entrepreneurs at different stages of their entrepreneurial journey.

Overall, Impact Hub's work in Europe is focused on creating a more supportive ecosystem for social entrepreneurship, and on supporting social entrepreneurs who are developing innovative solutions to social and environmental problems. Its network of coworking spaces and social business incubators provide a platform for collaboration, innovation, and impact across Europe and around the world.

THE YOUNG FOUNDATION (UNITED KINGDOM)

The Young Foundation is a UK-based social innovation organization that was founded in 1954 by the social entrepreneur Michael Young. Its mission is to create and sustain social innovation by empowering people and organisations to develop and implement new ideas that tackle some of the most pressing social challenges of our time.

One of the keyways that The Young Foundation supports social innovation is through its research and thought leadership activities. They conduct research and analysis on social issues, exploring innovative solutions and developing new insights into how social problems can be addressed.

The Young Foundation also works in partnership with government, business, and civil society organisations to promote social innovation and support the development of effective policies and practices. They have worked on a range of social issues, including health, education, employment, and community development.

The Young Foundation operates as a social incubator, supporting social entrepreneurs and social enterprises to develop their ideas and grow their impact. They provide a range of services and resources to help these organisations, including funding, mentoring, coaching, and networking opportunities.

The Young Foundation provides a range of support services to social entrepreneurs to help them develop their ideas and grow their impact. Here are some of the ways in which they help social entrepreneurs:

➢ **Funding:** The Young Foundation offers funding and investment opportunities to social entrepreneurs, including seed funding and venture capital. They also help social entrepreneurs to access other sources of funding, such as grants and loans.

- ➢ **Mentoring and coaching:** The Young Foundation provides one-on-one mentoring and coaching to social entrepreneurs, helping them to develop their skills and knowledge and overcome any challenges they may face.

- ➢ **Training and workshops:** The Young Foundation offers training and workshops on a range of topics, including business planning, marketing, fundraising, and impact measurement.

- ➢ **Networking opportunities:** The Young Foundation provides opportunities for social entrepreneurs to connect with each other, as well as with investors, policy makers, and other stakeholders in the social innovation ecosystem.

- ➢ **Incubation space:** The Young Foundation provides incubation space for social entrepreneurs, giving them access to office space, meeting rooms, and other resources they need to grow their organisations.

- ➢ **Research and insights:** The Young Foundation conducts research and provides insights into social issues and emerging trends in social innovation, helping social entrepreneurs to stay up-to-date and informed.

UNLTD (UNITED KINGDOM)

UnLtd is a leading UK-based social incubator and charity that supports social entrepreneurs who are working to create positive social change. Their mission is to provide funding, mentoring, and other support services to help social entrepreneurs develop their ideas and grow their impact.

UnLtd offers a range of programs and services to support social entrepreneurs, including:

- ➢ **Funding:** UnLtd provides funding to social entrepreneurs at all stages of their development, from early-stage startups to established social enterprises. They offer seed funding, development funding, and investment funding, as well as access to other sources of funding such as grants and loans.

- ➢ **Mentoring and coaching:** UnLtd provides one-on-one mentoring and coaching to social entrepreneurs, helping them to develop their skills and knowledge and overcome any challenges they may face.

- ➢ **Training and workshops:** UnLtd offer training and workshops on a range of topics, including business planning, marketing, fundraising, and impact measurement.

- ➢ **Networking opportunities:** UnLtd provides opportunities for social entrepreneurs to connect with each other, as well as with investors, policy makers, and other stakeholders in the social innovation ecosystem.

- **Research and insights:** UnLtd conduct research and provides insights into social issues and emerging trends in social innovation, helping social entrepreneurs to stay up-to-date and informed.
- **Advocacy and policy:** UnLtd work to influence policy and advocate for the interests of social entrepreneurs, helping to create a more supportive environment for social innovation.

Overall, UnLtd's support services are designed to help social entrepreneurs at all stages of their development, from early-stage startups to established social enterprises. By providing funding, mentoring, training, and networking opportunities, they help social entrepreneurs to build sustainable, impactful organisations that create positive social change. UnLtd has supported thousands of social entrepreneurs over the years and has played a key role in promoting social innovation in the UK and beyond.

CONCLUSIONS

The mapping of European social incubators resulted in the identification of several key findings. Firstly, social incubators have emerged as a powerful tool in the fight against social exclusion, providing support and resources to individuals at risk of marginalization. Secondly, social exclusion arises from a diverse array of deprivations, generally stemming from three primary dimensions: identities that deviate from established norms and customs, specific circumstances, and disadvantaged socioeconomic positions. Thirdly, social incubators aim to address these barriers by providing a nurturing and supportive environment for those at risk of exclusion through tailored programs, resources, and mentorship. The social challenges that the analyzed incubators address are:

- **Poverty and unemployment**: Social incubators provide resources, mentorship, and training to individuals at risk of exclusion, empowering them to start their own businesses and create job opportunities for themselves and others.
- **Social exclusion and marginalization**: Social incubators aim to address the barriers that contribute to social exclusion by providing a nurturing and supportive environment for those at risk of exclusion through tailored programs, resources, and mentorship.
- **Environmental challenges**: Some social incubators focus on promoting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices, such as reducing waste and promoting renewable energy.

- **Health and well-being**: Social incubators may address health and well-being challenges by supporting initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles, mental health, and access to healthcare.

- **Education and skill development**: Social incubators may provide training and resources to individuals who lack access to education and skill development opportunities, empowering them to improve their employability and overall well-being.

- **Refugee integration**: Social incubators may support refugees by providing them with the necessary resources and support to establish and grow their businesses, promoting social inclusion and economic integration.

The mapping identified several key pillars for capacity building and networking opportunities that are organized in social incubators programs, which include:

1. **Training and capacity building**: Social incubators provide educational programs and workshops to help participants develop essential skills for managing a social enterprise, the most commons being business planning, marketing, financial management, and impact measurement.

2. **Mentorship and guidance**: Experienced professionals, often from the social entrepreneurship or nonprofit sectors, offer guidance, advice, and support to participants in a social incubator. This mentorship helps entrepreneurs overcome challenges and make informed decisions as they develop their projects.

3. **Networking opportunities**: Social incubators create opportunities for participants to connect with like-minded individuals, potential partners, investors, and other stakeholders in the social impact ecosystem. This helps them build a strong support network and collaborate on projects.

4. **Funding and resources**: Social incubators may provide seed funding, grants, or other financial assistance to support the development and growth of social enterprises. Additionally, they may offer resources such as office space, equipment, or technical support to help participants bring their ideas to fruition.

5. **Advocacy and Awareness**: Social incubators play a significant role in raising awareness about social exclusion and promoting the importance of social innovation. They advocate for inclusive policies and create opportunities for dialogue between policymakers, social entrepreneurs, and disadvantaged communities. This helps foster a more inclusive and equitable society.

In summary, the mapping of incubation and training programs has provided us with valuable insights into the available resources for individuals at risk of exclusion and third-sector organizations. It is evident that several essential elements are crucial for the successful implementation of incubation initiatives. However, it is noteworthy that there remains a gap in the landscape of social incubator programs, as very few comprehensively integrate these critical elements while adopting a human rights perspective for individuals facing exclusion.

In light of these findings, our conclusion emphasizes the need to incorporate the best practices identified in the report and address the challenges that have been identified but remain unaddressed. This necessitates the development of an innovative incubation program that can bridge these gaps and better serve the needs of marginalized individuals and third-sector organizations.

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO AGILE METHODOLOGIES FOR BUSINESS MODELS DESIGN

This training curriculum is based on agile business methodologies. In this first part of the training course, entrepreneurs will explore those methods to set up their own strategies during the mentoring and teamwork sessions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- to get to know current methods and tools to help them in designing their business strategy.
- to identify and analyze needs and to provide adequate solutions.
- to be able to adjust a business idea in front of realities.
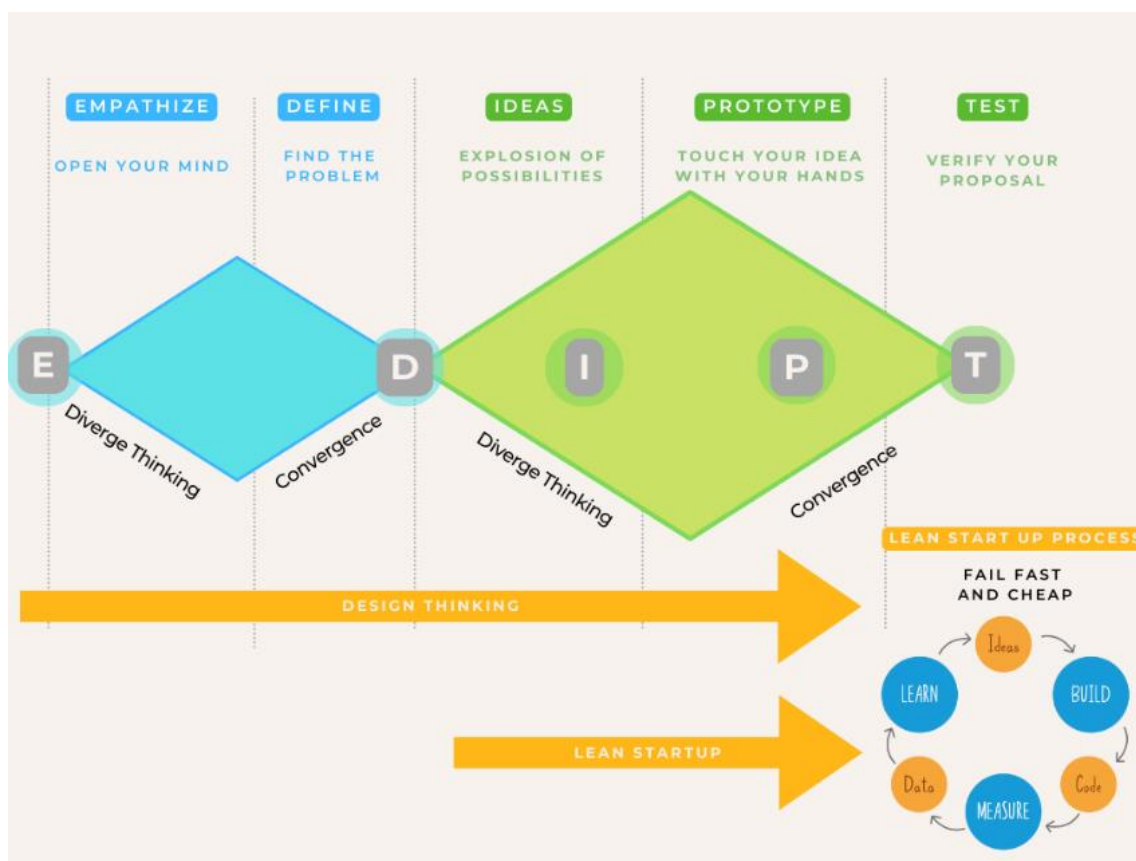- to plan their business idea and to be able to explain it.

Figure 1. Design Thinking Diagram

DESIGN THINKING

Entrepreneurship is beginning to be seen not just as an engine of job creation and economic growth, but also as a mechanism to develop 21st century skills such as creativity, collaboration, self-efficacy, and critical thinking. In parallel, there has been an increased interest in the methods, tools, and processes of human-centered design, and their applications in the workplace and educational settings. The incorporation of a formalized design thinking process model in entrepreneurship allows divergent and convergent thinking within business journeys of new entrepreneurs.

Design thinking follows a double-diamond approach that allows for both divergent and convergent thinking styles. Divergent thinking is typically associated with imagination, originality, curiosity, and exploring multiple possibilities, whereas convergent thinking focuses on bringing ideas together to form single, concrete solutions. The key consideration is to have separate phases for these thinking styles, to avoid overly critical inputs at exploratory stages that could inhibit the creative process, or conversely, too many open-ended options without an actionable solution. Tools such as empathy mapping and customer journey mapping are great for divergent thinking, whereas idea selection, action planning, and prototyping tools are well-suited to convergent phases.
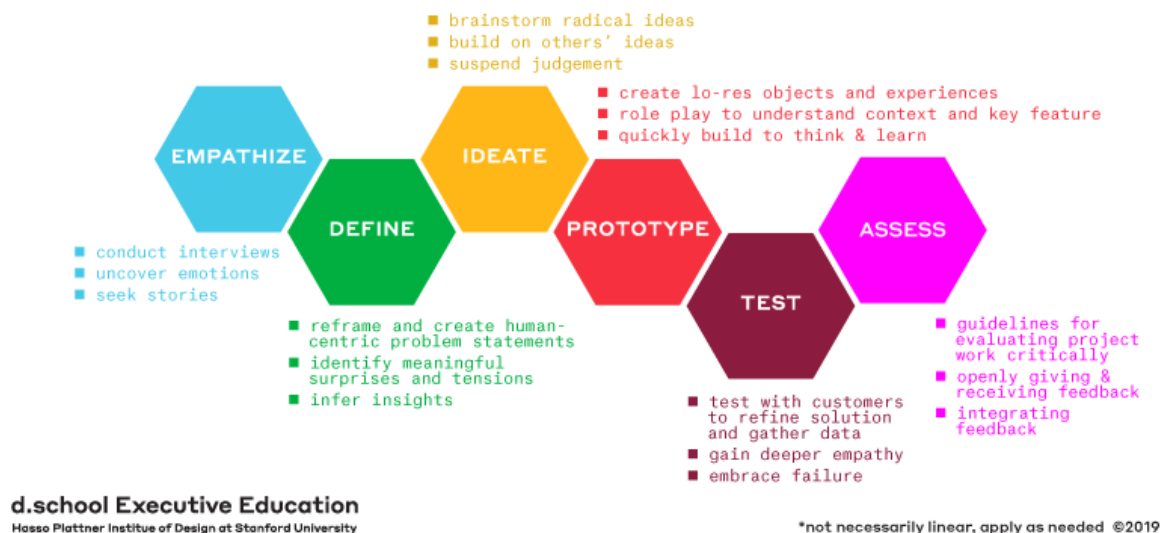
Figure 2. Standford d.school Design Thinking Process

Design thinking is the main methodology used during the incubation process. It provides clear steps on the identification and validation of problems and solutions. The trainer will clarify and make easily understandable those steps to guide entrepreneurs in their paths to design their own business.

THINKING ON PROBLEMS	
Step 1: Empathizing	Divergent thinking: **"Open your mind".** During this first step, the entrepreneur will set up a list of problems in the area or field he would like to start his business. He should explore the whole situation and consider all the possible problems, not putting limits to his imagination.
Step 2: Defining	Convergence: **"Find the problem"** For this second step, the entrepreneur is getting in touch with a large panel of persons affected by those possible problems. He is asking them to prioritize those problems in order to identify the most relevant. The problem that is coming first more often is the problem to be tackled on.
THINKING ON SOLUTIONS	

Step 3: Getting ideas	Divergent thinking: **"Explosion of possibilities"** Based on the main problem he has identified; the entrepreneur is coming up with ideas to solve this problem. This is time for imagination and creativity. The entrepreneur might explore all the possible solutions without considering other parameters such as realism or resources.
Step 4: Prototyping	Convergence: **"Touch your ideas with your hands"** For this step, the entrepreneur is coming back to the panel of persons affected by the problem he is working on. He explains to them the different solutions he is developing and gets direct feedback. From that feedback, the entrepreneur concretizes the solution he wants to set and starts prototyping the products or services he can offer.
Step 5: Testing	Convergence: **"Verify your proposal"** Once the prototype is defined (including prices) the entrepreneur is coming back to his panel of persons and offers the service or product he has described.
Step 6: Assessing	Convergence: **"Asses the feedback"**

	According to the feedback received the entrepreneur will have to implemented in the product or service offered. This step is important since Design Thinking encourages continuous evaluation and improvement throughout the entire process, ensuring that the final solution effectively addresses the problem and meets the needs of the end-users.

LEAN STARTUP

The lean startup methodology seeks to eliminate wasteful practices and increase value producing practices during the earliest phases of a company to have a better chance of success without requiring large amounts of outside funding, elaborate business plans, or a perfect product. Customer feedback during the development of products or services is integral to the lean startup process, and it ensures that the company does not invest time designing features or services that consumers do not want.

When a startup company cannot afford to have its entire investment depend upon the success of a single product or service, the lean startup methodology proposes that by releasing a minimum viable product that is not yet finalized, the company can then make use of customer feedback to help further tailor the product or service to the specific needs of its customers. The lean startup methodology asserts that the "lean has nothing to do with how much money a company raises"; it rather has everything to do with assessing consumers' specific demands and how to meet that demand using the least number of resources possible.

Within our incubation process framework, the lean startup methodology is applied on the steps 4 "prototyping" and 5 "testing" of the design thinking process. During those steps entrepreneurs are constantly improving their products or services by following the Build Measure-Learn approach.
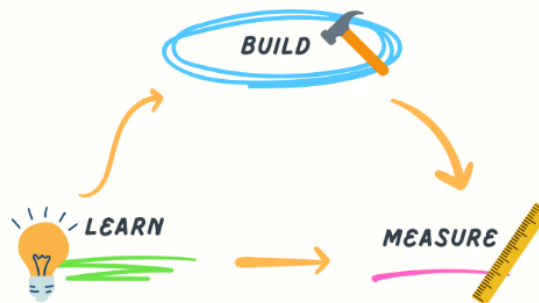
Figure 3. BML approach

CANVAS BUSINESS MODEL

In this part, we will use the Business Model Canvas innovation tool to approach either a personal or corporate challenge or opportunity. We will teach how to learn, identify, and communicate the nine key elements of a business model: Customer Segments, Value Proposition, Channels, Customer Relationships, Key Resources, Key Activities, Key Partners, Revenue Streams, and Cost Structure.

The Business Model Canvas reflects systematically on the business model, so entrepreneurs can focus on their business model segment by segment. This also means you can start with an "empty brain", filling out the segments that spring to their mind first and then work on the empty components to close the gaps. The following list with questions helps brainstorm and compare several variations and ideas for business model innovation.

Key partners	- Who are your key partners/suppliers? - What are the motivations for the partnerships?
Key activities	- What key activities does your value proposition require? - What activities are essential in distribution channels, customer relationships, revenue streams...?

Value Proposition	▪ What core value do you deliver to the customer? ▪ Which customer needs are you satisfying?
Customer Relationship	▪ What relationship that the target customer expects you to establish? ▪ How can you integrate that into your business in terms of cost and format?
Customer Segment	▪ Which classes are you creating values for? ▪ Who is your most important customer?
Key Resource	▪ What key resources does your value proposition require? ▪ What resources are important the most in distribution channels, customer relationships, revenue streams?
Distribution Channel	▪ Through which channels that your customers want to be reached? ▪ Which channels work best? How much do they cost? How can they be integrated into your and your customers' routines?
Cost Structure	▪ What are the main costs in your business? ▪ Which key resources/ activities are the most expensive?
Revenue Stream	▪ For what value are your customers willing to pay? ▪ What and how do they recently pay? How would they prefer to pay? ▪ How much does every revenue stream contribute to the overall revenues?

THE BUSINES MODEL CANVAS	Designed for:	Designed by:	Date:	Version:

KEY PARTNERS:

Who are our key partners?
 Who are our key suppliers?
Which Key Resources are we acquairing from partners?
Which Key Activities do partners perform?

Motivations for partnerships:
Optimization and economy
Reduction of risk and uncertainty
Acquisition of particular resources and activities

KEY ACTIVITIES:

What Key Activities do our Value Propositions require?
Our Distribution Channels?
Customers Relationships?
Revenue streams?

Categories:
Production
Problem Solving
Platform / Network

KEY RESOURCES:

What Key Resources do our Value Propositions require?
Our Distribution Channels? Customer Relationships? Revenue Streams?

Type of resources:
Physical
Intellectual (brand patents, copyrights, data)
Human
Financial

VALUE PROPOSITIONS:

What value do we deliver to the customer?
Which one of our customer's problems are we help to solve?
What bundles of products and services are we offering to each Customer Segment?
Which customer needs are we satisfying?

Characteristics:
Newness
Performance
Customization
"Getting the job done"
Design
Brand / Status
Price
Cost reduction
Risk reduction
Accessibility
Convenience / Usability

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP:

What type of relationship does each of our Customer Segments expect us to establish and maintain with them?
Which ones have we established?
How are they integrated with the rest of our business model?
How costly are they?

Examples:
Personal assistance
Dedicated Personal Assistance
Self-service
Communities
Co-creation

CUSTOMER SEGMENTS:

For whom are we creating value?
Who are our most important customers?

Mass Market
Niche Market
Segmented
Diversified
Multi-sided Platform

CHANNELS:

Through which Channels do our Customer Segments want to be reached?
How are we reaching them now?
How are our Channels integrated?
Which one work best?
Which ones are most cost-efficient?
How are we integrating them with customer routines?

Channel phases:
1. Awareness: How do we raise awareness about out company's products and services?
2. Evaluation: How do we help customers evaluate our organization's Value Proposition?
3. Purchase: How do we allow customers to purchase specific products and services?
4. Delivery: How do we deliver a Value Proposition to customers?
5. After sales: How do we provide post-purchase customer support?

COST STRUCTURE:

What are the most important costs inherent in our business model?
Which Key Resources are most expensive?
Which Key Activities are most expensive?

Is your business model more:
Cost Driven (leanest cost structure, low price value proposition, maximum automation, extensive outsourcing)
Value Driven (focused on value creation, premium value proposition)

Sample characteristics:
Fixed costs (salaries, rents, utilities)
Variable costs
Economies of scale
Economies of scope

REVENUE STREAMS:

For what value are our customers really willing to pay?
For what do they currently pay?
How are they currently paying?
How would they prefer to pay?
How much does each Revenue Stream contribute to overall revenues?

Types:	**Fixed pricing:**	**Dynamic pricing:**
Asset sale	List price	Negotiation (bargaining)
Usage fee	Product feature dependent	Yield Management
Subscription Fees	Customer segment dependent	Real-time-Market
Lending / Renting / Leasing	Volume dependent	
Licensing		
Brokerage fees		
Advertising		

MODULE 2: BUSINESS STRATEGY AND MARKETING PLAN

Based on the agile methodologies, students will work on designing their own business strategy and marketing plans. Those training sessions will provide theoretical schemes and concrete examples on structuring their business ideas and testing them according to market needs and challenges. The development of those business and marketing strategies might be weekly reviewed by mentors.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- To be able to design a business plan based on Design Thinking and Lean startup methodologies.
- To acquire competencies to test and to validate hypothesis related to market needs and value propositions.
- To plan marketing strategies adapted to resources available.

WHAT IS A STRATEGY?

The word "strategy" derives from the Latin "strategĭa", which in turn comes from two Greek terms: "stratos" ("army") and "agein" ("conductor", "guide"). Therefore, the primary meaning of strategy is the art of directing military operations. The concept is also used to refer to the plan devised to address an issue and to designate the set of rules that ensure an optimal decision at all times. In other words, a strategy is the selected process through which a specific future state is expected to be reached.

Main learnings to be acquired:

- Understanding: Mission, vision and values.
- Analyse and evaluation: the SWOT methods.
- Getting ideas and selecting them: mappings options and fixing priorities.
- Resources.

UNDERSTANDING
The Strategic Plan must include in detail what the company aspires to be in the next few years. Meetings need to be held to understand the criteria and the different sensitivities between their members. Together team members will identify the current mission of the company (which makes the business different from others), the current vision (which is wanted, where we want to get there) and its values (how we want to get there).

Vision: the common project of the organization	**Mission:** it must respond to how the company wishes and wants to be perceived in the future.	**Values:** They are the set of norms, values, attitudes, and shared beliefs.
The disaggregation of each component contributes to precisely define its scope, meaning and implication. This form is framed and delimits where and how the company will develop itself for years to come. It defines its purpose or reason for being. The company's strategic purpose (Vision / Mission) is a long-term goal and establishes the criteria by which the company will measure its achievements and progress. The way the company is directed to the LONG TERM serves as a direction and incentive to guide future decisions. The DREAM of the company is a declaration of Aspiration of the company in the medium or long term, it is the future image of how we want the company to be later. It may express: • What is the desired image of our business? • How will we be in the future? • What will we do in the future? • What activities will we develop in the future?		

ANALYSE AND EVALUATION
During this phase, the intent is to collect all the key information: • to make and define strategic decisions, • to be able to establish the expected objectives. In each of the four areas of the SWOT matrix, the strengths and weaknesses of a company are respectively represented, as well as the opportunities and threats that this company may encounter in its environment. • The objective is to carry out a SWOT analysis, to detect the opportunities and threats that the company faces, such as the strengths and weaknesses it has, and assess each one. • Within this section, this methodology is combined with the business model map in order to carry out a structured debate. • Combining these two techniques allows a rigorous evaluation of the business model of a company and all its modules. • The four questions of the SWOT analysis are asked for each of the components of the business model. • The current mission/vision of the company is retaken to evaluate its validity in the future context, and if necessary, they will be reformulated to adapt them to future challenges. > The CAME Analysis is a supplementary methodology to the SWOT Analysis. It provides guidelines to act on the aspects found in the situation diagnoses previously obtained from the SWOT matrix.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
They bring together the set of internal resources, positions of power and any type of competitive advantage of your business. > KEEP IT	They are any factors outside the business that favor its development or offer the possibility of implementing improvements. > USE IT
WEAKNESSES	**THREATS**
They are the limiting aspects of the development capacity of your business, due to their internal characteristics. > CORRECT THEM	They are all those external factors that can prevent the execution of your business strategy or endanger the viability of your business. > FACE THEM

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To complete the analysis, it is necessary to listen first-hand to external agents, clients... to understand motivations and behaviors.

Surveys and focus Group sessions will be conducted to complete the subjective vision of the company about its clients, deepening the knowledge of the final client and knowing the reasons for purchasing and not purchasing,

IDEAS AND SELECTION

With the information from the previous stages, we will work on some disruptive focuses to develop creatively and ensure that the plan contains strategic initiatives "outside the box" and focuses on what the company is today.

From the SWOT analysis, we use Design and Visual Thinking techniques, identify relevant focuses for the company in the future. Then they are energized by creativity sessions to identify new opportunities and solutions for each focus. To do this, use will be made of different techniques, depending on the needs or objectives established, incorporating internal or external staff.

The creativity sessions will focus on:

- Identification of market opportunities
- Selection of the company's most important strengths for innovation
- Identification of important weaknesses of the company
- Definition of the probable market scenario in 5 years ahead with explicit or intuitive prospects

In order to prioritize the actions and changes that need to be implemented in the organization, an analysis must be carried out based on:

Probability: difficulty level at the time of implementation, this is the level of investment required, time, technical and professional capacity, etc.	**Impact:** level of impact that it can have on the organization in relation to the income statement, funding needs, in terms of human resources, change management, etc.

This last reflection serves to define the final business model map: the roadmap to be followed by

the management team where the changes to be made in each of the company's modules are identified.

Once the points with the most significant impact and probability have been identified, the different strategic initiatives are listed, outlined and related to the mission/vision developed at the beginning of the process.

Enumeration of strategic initiatives:

- once the initiatives with the highest level of impact and probability have been selected, a meeting will be held with the team to determine how the selected initiatives contribute to the achievement of the vision / mission.
- in this section, the business objectives will be established both at a quantitative and qualitative level, as well as the key levers to achieve those objectives and the strategic lines that must be developed.

Initiative Prioritization: Priority Matrix

As companies do not have unlimited financial and human resources, it is necessary to prioritize how the different initiatives are managed. Therefore, human, and economic resources are prioritized based on knowledge and contribution to company results.

All current projects of a company, whether strategic, operational or of any other type, are compiled in the **portfolio of initiatives**.	The overall image of the portfolio (time, knowledge, type of initiatives) and respect for the strategic line say a lot about the company's overall strategy. It indicates the measures to be taken.

The strategic map allows the visualization of all the strategic initiatives. It ordered them according to the strategic objectives that they respond to. They will be framed according to the defined.

mission / vision.

Finally:

- determine the strategic initiatives, relating them by areas and by their contribution to the strategic results.
- Develop a strategic map of the company.

RESOURCES

Finally, the results at the profit and loss account level are projected based on the objectives set at

the corporate level as well as on each of the defined strategic lines. The economic projections will

describe how the strategic plan defined above will impact the income statement in the medium /

long term.

Comparing the actual results with the economic projections is an information of great interest for

the company. It usually shows a difference, or "variance", which can be favorable or unfavorable.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Every strategic plan leads to a review and adaptation of the organization towards the defined objectives. As a direct consequence of the realization of a strategic plan, there is a review of the

current organization's adequacy to the objectives. The development of the plan may contain the

adequacy of points depending on the level of adjustment that is detected.</td></tr>
<tr><td>**With whom?**</td><td>**How do I do things?**</td></tr>
<tr><td>Do I have the right structure? How much equipment does the company need?</td><td>Am I managing talent well? Do KPIs need to be redefined?</td></tr>
<tr><td>At this point, the structure is working organization, company culture and the need for new forms of relationship (autonomous teams)</td><td>In this section, the necessary adjustments are reviewed and determined at the level of key Human Resource processes</td></tr>
</table>

HYPOTHESIS VALIDATION

When we start thinking about a project, all we have in our minds are hypotheses or ideas of how we think the market works or how it will react to our product or service. Therefore, if we start from the point where we already have our business model, we still have a long way to go to see if our business looks profitable or not.

In this section, we discuss the steps to follow to check whether the hypotheses that we have embodied in our initial business model are true or not, to persevere in our strategy or pivot and change direction.

Main learnings to be acquired:

- Why is it important to validate hypotheses?
- Where are we coming from and where are we going?
- Identification, prioritization, and validation...
- Practical tool for hypotheses validation: survey, landing pages and metrics, crowdfunding.

What is the VALIDATION OF HYPOTHESIS?
Developing businesses and services that nobody finally needs is the main reason for failure. The client must always validate the hypotheses. If we don't, they won't stop being assumptions
Why is a hypothesis validation important? ▪ Entrepreneurs are managing a business and making it profitable in an environment of uncertainty: validating quickly and cheaply is essential. ▪ A business plan must always be validated. ▪ The Canvas does not reflect contact with customers. ▪ With each hypothesis we make, we capture leads that can become future clients. ▪ We generate precious information in the form of metrics: cost of acquiring a client, visits, emails.

Traditional development of a product / business: > Conception and specifications > Development > Testing > Launch	Development through hypothesis validation of a product / business:
The launch to potential clients is done after having developed and invested a lot in the product/business, without taking them into account.	> Create a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) > Validate hypotheses > Obtain metrics > Improve or pivot.
Our concept of what the customer wants hardly changes from start to finish AND it may not be correct	Develop quickly, with little cost and time, adapting to customer feedback

The sooner we validate our value proposition, the better we will be able to invest our budget and time

WHAT DO WE START FROM AND WHERE DO WE MOVE?

Starting from the Business Model Canvas, we will identify and assume the main business hypotheses:

- Analysis of the Business Model Canvas / Identification of the assumed hypotheses / Assignment of experiments to validate them.
- Leads acquisition / Presentation of a Minimum Viable Product / Validation of hypotheses and willingness to buy.

Identification of hypotheses

> Entrepreneurs interview and evaluation of their Business Model Canvas.

> Support in the identification of hypotheses according to the points of the Business Model

Canvas:

- How many people do you think would be willing to pay for the first x months?
- What is the customer profile you will be targeting?
- What is the channel and how to interact with the client?
- Where should I invest time and resources?

Prioritization of the hypotheses to be validated and commitment of effort in their validation

Hypothesis validation: Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

Goals:

- To validate the selected hypotheses.
- Get leads (potential future clients) and feedback.
- Create fans Groups Beta tester.
- Know if our business model generates interest.

Validation "through ...... (the most common and fastest)	**Validation through digital means**
- Flyers, posters, videos. - Free trials in exchange for feedback (If feasible). - Focus Group. - Interviews.	- Creation of Landing Page (via Instapage or similar) and obtaining metrics. - Use of digital promotional media, social networks, and communication channels. - Creation of mockups. - Crowdfunding.

MARKETING

Dr. Philip Kotler, considered the father of modern marketing, defines marketing as the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the demands or requirements of a target market for a profit. Marketing identifies unmet needs and intentions. Define, measure, and quantify the size of the identified market and profit potential. It points out which segments of the company can serve best and designs and promote the right products and services.

Main learnings to be acquired:

- What is and what is not marketing?
- Marketing in business planning.
- Strategic marketing and operational marketing.
- Designing SMART objectives.
- Products, Strategy, Prices, Distribution.
- Relational marketing.

MARKETING PLAN	
Useless marketing plan ▪ Detailed to the maximum. ▪ 30 sheets or more ▪ Based on beliefs ▪ Unrealistic goals	**Helpful marketing plan** ▪ Based on listening ▪ With SMART goals ▪ Less than 3 pages ▪ Helps us to think. ▪ It is done in 1 week, although it is never finished.
PARTS OF THE PLAN	
Analysis: Where are we? ▪ External and internal situation ▪ Target audiences ▪ Value proposal ➔ What are my clients' needs? What motivates them? ➔ What companies offer the same as me? At what price? What is its differential value? ➔ Needs to start ➔ SWOT (Later)	

OBJECTIVES: What do we want to achieve?

- SMART Objectives
- KPIs definition

SMART objective examples

➔ Example A: Increase sales

➔ Example B: Get 1,000 followers on Instagram in a month

➔ Example C: Increase turnover by 80% in one quarter

STRATEGY: What am I going to offer?

- Marketing Mix

➔ Experiment fast and cheap

➔ Get wrong fast and cheap

➔ Hit fast and cheap

➔ The strategy needs

➔ Previous experimentation

Strategy: Product	**Strategy: Place**	**Strategy: Promotion**
This is what we are going to sell. It can be tangible or intangible (in the form of a good or service) whose objective is to satisfy the desires and needs of the target (target market	Place the product within reach of your customers, using the appropriate distribution.	This is a variable of communication. It makes the target find out about the product, where they can find it and at what price.
> Experience, Benefits, Value		**Advertising, Public Relations, Direct Marketing, Personal Sales**

Action plan: How do I achieve the objectives?

"A small step for the entrepreneur, but a big step for the startup"

> Discounts, synergies, press appearances, partners, specifiers, events, fairs

MEASUREMENT: What do we repeat and what do we discard? Analyze, learn, replicate.

- What has happened?

➔ Have the objectives been achieved? Why?

➔ Learning

➜ New goals

➜ Start again

➜ What service or product do you offer?

➜ What benefits does your product or service offer?

➜ What are the motivations for your target audience to buy from you?

➜ Price, product / service benefits and distribution channels of 3 competitors.

➜ Through which channels do you think you will sell more?

➜ What will be attractive about your product or service?

➜ Set 3 goals to meet one month later

DIGITAL MARKETING

How to listen to digital marketing?

- Through the keywords (Ubersuggest, keywordtool.io, Keyword Shitter, Ahrefs, Semrush, Sistrix, Answer The Public ...)
- Trends (Google Trends, KeyWords Everywhere)
- Listen to social networks (TweetDeck, Hootsuite ...)

What are we going to sell? How can digital marketing help us?

- Check Interest (Keywords)
- Identify trends
- Analyze competition (Volume, prices, etc)
- Communicate (RRSS)
- Digital sale

Online sale

- Feasibility: High competition, low prices
- Investment: Is it free to sell online? Is it cheaper?
- How to build trust?
- Main KPIs: How much does it cost me to attract a new customer? What is the average ticket? How many times do you buy from me a year?

Online Sales: SEO Positioning

- It's David's way of fighting Goliath.
- It is not free, but it does not require as much investment.
- Content strategy
- Link building strategy (Ronaldo and Messi)
- Good practices Constant algorithm changes (Uncertainty)

Online Sale: Facebook ADS

- Campaigns from 5 euros
- Target audience segmentation
- Immediate results
- Same tool for Facebook and Instagram "Simple" tool
- Remarketing

Online sale: Google ADS (SEM) ▪ Advertising on Google ▪ Purchasing intent ▪ High conversion ▪ High investment ▪ Tool "somewhat more complicated"	**Online sale: Linkedin ADS** ▪ B2B sale ▪ Expensive advertising (Min. Investment € 3,000)
Online Sale: Native Advertising ▪ Taboola and Outbrain ▪ Advertising in the media ▪ Economic traffic ▪ Poor quality traffic	**Online sale: Email marketing** ▪ Less and less effective ▪ Offer value for users ▪ Branding
Online Sale: Marketplaces ▪ Amazon, Weddings.net, GuruWalk ▪ They get traffic ▪ They have organic positioning ("SEO") ▪ You can start selling soon ▪ Each one has its rules	**Online Sale: E-commerce** ▪ Shopify, Mabisy, Wordpress, Prestashop, Magento ▪ Payment gateways (Stripe, Paypal, Banks...) ▪ Stock, shipping policy, return policy ... ▪ Dropshipping

COMMERCIAL PLAN

The business model and the marketing plan of each project are the basis from which we can start to build a commercial plan. The commercial plan helps the company launch a new product into the marketplace. Companies will develop these plans to ensure they have operations in place to handle the distribution and feedback from consumers, among other things.

Learning goals:

▪ To get to know the main elements of a Commercial plan.
▪ To set up business options for participants ventures.
▪ To understand the importance of customer experiences and how they impact business growth.
▪ To identify essential elements of the customer journey for your ventures.

COMMERCIAL PLAN AND SALES CHANNELS

How and how much am I going to sell.
 	
  ▪ What is my market?
  ▪ How much could I sell?
  ▪ How much can I sell?
  ▪ How much am I going to sell?

Elements of the business plan:
 	
  ▪ Clients and segments
  ▪ Product or Service
  ▪ Value proposition
  ▪ Customer relationship
  ▪ Commercial strategy (Market, Competition, Prices, Distribution, Sale, Promotion...)

Customer relationship level
 	
The relationship with the client is a key factor to define how much and where we should dedicate to our commercial effort:
 	
  ▪ How often do I contact my clients and they need to access my product or service?
  ▪ How much assistance customers need with the product or service due to its complexity or customization?

Commercial Strategy: Where am I going to sell?	**Commercial Strategy: Competition**
The market is the area in which I can reach my clients with my product and the commercial resources that I have.	How to identify my competition and what should I keep in mind. • The first level of competition is in the Value Proposition
Commercial Strategy: Complementary Sale	**Commercial Strategy: Prices and Product Offer**

How can I expand the solution I offer to my clients?
 	
  ▪ Do I have a product that meets more needs or in a better way?
  ▪ How can I go beyond meeting clients' basic needs?
  ▪ Will you need anything else to get the full value or benefit of my product or service?
	Define the price and the different product combinations to maximize the value obtained from each sale.
	
	  ▪ Maximize received value.
	  ▪ Be competitive.
	  ▪ Increase the volume.
	  ▪ Optimize margin.

Commercial Strategy: Prices and Product Offer	**Commercial Strategy: Sales channels**
	The channels provide different coverage of

The pricing policy and product offer (pricing & bundling) are strategies to maximize the value we obtain from the client by managing the margin to sell more product quantity.	markets, segments, and degrees of value and customer service. Factors for choosing a sale channel ▪ Market scope or coverage ▪ Customer relationship level ▪ Product or service complexity ▪ Capacity and cost
Sale promotion Define the tactic to go to the market to meet customers and to sell our product or service ▪ Sales Tools ▪ Sales stages ▪ Commercial Action Plan	**Sales Promotion: Tools** Each resource available for sale must add value to the customer. ▪ Online: Web, Mail, App, RRSS, etc. ▪ Advertising ▪ Merchandising: Catalog, brochures, samples, etc. ▪ Pricing & Bundling ▪ Complementary Sale

Sales Promotion: Sales Stages

Some sales are immediate, but others require going through stages which connect and work with customers. We need a plan for each step that will advance clients to the next stage.

The development of the pipeline depends on the relationship with the client and the complexity of the product or service.

Sales forecast. How much am I going to sell?

Translate stocks into amounts and income for a period of time.

▪ Top-down approach: starting with SAM (total market) we apply criteria to limit the market share that we can obtain.
▪ Bottom-up approach: starting from the real clients, products and commercial strategy, I add the result of commercial actions to a total sales figure. It is essential to identify and validate the assumptions to know which are the levers that move the results.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (CX)

What is Customer Experience (CX)

The CX is the experience that the customer has with the brand, product, or service, from the beginning to the end of each interaction, throughout the life of their relationship with the company.

It is the regular and consistent delivery of what the brand promises to the customer and the resulting expectations through each and every one of the interactions and in all contact channels. From the client's perspective, it is what he experiences in each interaction, the resulting sensations, and emotions that he associates with the brand, product or service and that determine the assessment and response you will have towards them.

Customer Lifetime Value

The CLV makes it possible to evaluate the total profitability of a client and identify those that add greater value or have more potential for the business. This is essential to define strategies that maximize the client portfolio's total value and differential client experiences that provide greater value for the company.

- CLV = Total Customer Value - Acquisition Cost
- VTC = Selling Margin x Transactions
- CA = Spending to win a customer

➔ Measures the total economic value of a customer, not a transaction

➔ Consider both revenue and acquisition cost

➔ Includes the value of customer loyalty, measured in repeat purchases and the level of

participation in the total of their purchase (Share of Wallet)

Stages in the customer's purchase (Marketing Funnel)

It is not enough to achieve the customer's choice and buy the product or service. It is necessary to generate brand loyalty so that it maintains its relationship with the company, increasing its value in the long term. Since digital technologies allow people to be permanently connected, customers' ability to recommend and share their experiences is decisive in the growth (or failure) of the business.

The purchase process responds, and it is based on people's psychological aspects and through the

progression between its stages to influence the customer's decision.

The level of emotional involvement increases the stages of the purchase decision and, therefore, the importance of the Customer Experience:

1. Attention: TV, Radio, Online search, Mentions, Blogs...
2. Interest: Mailing, leaflets, Web exploration, comments...
3. Desire: testing product, comparing...
4. Action: Social networks, YouTube, sale in shops...
5. Loyalty: Online sale, rewards, loyalty programs, followers, personalized up-selling
6. Recommendation: Word of mouth, reviewing, shares, "likes".

Concepts> Walkthrough from the Customer's Perspective

Knowing the customer journey first requires an outside-in perspective. We need to see how it evolves and experiences the purchase steps.

Different clients will have different personal experiences, so it is necessary to identify these differences in profiles and segments.

Customer contact points (Omnichannel Experience)

The customer experience needs to evolve from multi-channel experiences (different and particular in each channel) to an omni-channel experience, unique and integrated through all contact channels.

Customers are increasingly sophisticated in their

purchasing habits and do not choose a unique

contact channel, but rather use all of them, simultaneously, and even in real time. They may

use both those of the company itself and those of

the competition!

Impact of the channels on the purchase recommendation

The channels or points of contact with the customer have a different relative influence on the purchase decision. Those channels with a personal component are the most referred to when looking for recommendations before the purchase.

An **omnichannel experience** requires being able to interact and transact with customers on any and all channels he chooses and when he chooses.

It requires a personalized message and experience that is consistent with the time and stage of your purchase process

The key parts of the Customer Journey	
The Customer Journey Map should identify the moments and interactions that are the most important in the customer's experience. It will be used to manage them individually and throughout the entire journey. Defining the objective and the expected response in each one is essential to know how to manage the key organizational resources for the experience's success.	
Key Moments (MoT) Interactions that have an over-dimensioned emotional impact or connection on the client and that therefore can motivate significant actions or behaviors. Clients make or change their decisions in these moments of their experience in which they decide to move forward.	**Opportunities (Pain Points)** Aspects of the operation that make the customer uncomfortable or upset by making their experience not fully satisfactory at one point of contact or between different moments of the customer journey. They are the opportunities to correct, improve or even innovate the customer experience at key moments
Objective and expected response. It is the definition by the company of what should happen at each point of contact to meet customer expectations. It defines the decisions we are looking to make, and the emotional response expected as a result of that interaction. All organizational operations and resources must be aligned to make this happen.	

COMMUNICATION

Everything that comes out or is seen by the company is communication. The colors, the advertisements, the treatment on the phone, an email, advertising, publications, a website, the logo, the colors, and the sensations. Everything! And everything must be aligned.

Learning goals:

- Drafting a communication plan for the company.
- Building up a web page and online store.
- Creating graphic and audiovisual materials.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Why is it important to have a Communication Plan?

- To carry out an internal and external analysis of your company.
- To define the objectives of its communication plan.
- To identify your target audience.
- To define its message.
- To select channels.
- To plan your time and resources.
- To develop the strategy that you are going to follow.
- To evaluate and measure the results obtained.

An advertising campaign must have:

- An objective.
- An audience.
- A clear start.
- An incentive (gift / discount / benefit).
- A specific duration.
- A way to measure results.

The target and the audience will tell us which channel is the right one. When defining a communication plan is should be taken into account it's crucial to acknowledge the way of shopping. Are you buying or are you distributed? The answer lies in the power of repetition. To effectively engage and inform your audience, it's imperative that your messaging maintains a consistent and uniform presence across all channels and interactions.

There are five essential elements for crafting effective storytelling:

1. Begin by identifying your target audience for the story. Who is your intended audience or client?
2. To capture your audience's attention, you must strike a chord or address a pain point effectively.
3. Determine the specific brand perception you wish to cultivate. Align your storytelling with causes that resonate coherently with your brand.

4. Ensure your story has a well-structured narrative, consisting of a beginning, middle, and end, all tied together with a consistent theme.

5. Select a character that embodies the core values of your brand. Every company has unique values and policies; what do yours represent?

CONTENTS:

If you know who your ideal client is, you will know ...

1. How to talk to them.
2. What to tell them.
3. Where to find them.

The contents have	What is your contribution of value? Is your client able to recognize it?
- a <u>social part</u>, which will be closely related to your type of client and their interests. - a <u>creative part</u> because you must reach them and connect through words. - a <u>structural part</u>, because search engines must perceive your content as something useful and attractive so it can be shown to more people.	- Content can determine the success of a website or campaign, but also make constant growth possible. - The use of keywords and their synonyms. - The way of writing is fundamental. - Neuromarketing and re-education towards your strengths.

When redacting forms, it should be kept in mind that forms hold significant importance and contribute to your overall image:

- No spelling mistakes.
- Always talk about yourself (posts are not read in groups).
- The technical level of your interventions will depend on that of your audience, not that of your product.

Each social network offers you the possibility of creating a profile or page (personal or professional) and you must make sure that:

- You complete all required fields without leaving any information unfilled.
- Ensure that your logo and images accurately reflect reality, avoiding any misleading alterations.

Remember that this will be the image of your company.

How do I reach people?

Whether your business is physical or digital, you can't open a new business and sit and wait. Opening an account on Google My Business will allow others to find you, but social networks will also play an important role in all this.

RRSS management, which ones and why?	RRSS management, which ones and why?
"Tell me what you sell, and I'll tell you where. " In the world ranking of the use of networks, these would be the main or most used: Facebook - YouTube - WhatsApp - Facebook Messenger - Instagram - TikTok - Snapchat / Twitter and Pinterest (with a third of users than the previous option)	- Shine on LinkedIn and network. - Create a community for your brand on - Facebook. - Sell on Instagram. - And discuss on Twitter. All RRSS are different and are used in different ways, with their own rules. You must plan your image and publications independently for each of them.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR ENTREPRENEURS

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is one of the most unknown and different, but very useful in business environments or work collaborations. It's the most similar to networking. Most of the profiles are male, between 25 and 35 years old. It is an especially active network in the mornings during the week and on Sunday afternoons.

How to grow as a brand and gain popularity?

1. Complete **all parts of your personal profile**; images, studies, job data (at least the last three), skills. * Very important: the photo which profile you are going to choose. To be sure that it is suitable you can use this application: snappr.co/photo-analyze.
2. Use the keywords for which you want yourself to be seen in the **description of your profile**. * Very important; add in your profile all the information that can improve your status and renew it every few months (courses, talks, milestones).
3. **Do not use the default URL or address**, * Very important; choose the first two words of your new URL to position yourself as a personal brand.

4. **Invitations.** Once your profile is ready, it's time to get connectors or like-minded people. But BEWARE, LinkedIn is not a network to make friends. It penalizes making "friendships" with your acquaintances or relatives. Think:
    a. Which people would you like to see your profile?
    b. What profiles would you be most interested in seeing or following you?
5. When you invite somebody, **add a personal message.**
6. Remember **to participate** in conversations, opinions, or debates. Don't be afraid to give your opinion in any publication of other people, even if they are unknown (it is highly valued). Recommend the contributions that you have looked interesting (the equivalent of giving the Like).
7. **Check your score** or the assessment that LinkedIn gives your profile through social selling ranking. How is this done? With your LinkedIn profile open in another tab, type the following address (in a new tab): linkedin.com/ sales / ssi.
    Here you will get an assessment in various aspects:
    a. Your profile or personal brand.
    b. If your contacts are adequate or you are looking for possible synergies correctly.
    c. If you interact with people.
    d. The relationships you create.

What is LinkedIn's claim to its members? It is crucial to be clear about this. LinkedIn wants:

- to identify the most influential people in each sector.
- to strengthen professional relationships in the medium and long term.
- to show the most professional facet of each of the members of this network.
- to share valuable contents and generate ideas.
- to provide you with feedback regarding what others think of you.
- to offer you the possibility of getting clients or new jobs.
- to provide you with the possibility of getting collaborators.
- to enhance your personal brand.

Why is it important to create and enhance your personal brand?

We all want to be different. Within the professional sector in which we offer our services, we have to differentiate ourselves.

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In other circumstances, we would talk about the 4 P of marketing:

- Be the cheapest (Price).
- Be the fastest (Point of sale or Place).
- Be the highest quality (Product).
- Be the most viewed (Promotion).

Here you must add a fifth option (Person): There is a recognized and recognizable person behind your business. It brings a humanist vision of your companies (whether they are products or services).

Can I then have a professional profile and company page on LinkedIn?

Of course. But two pages will mean double work and consistency is important. Each company will be able to choose three hashtags with which to relate their business. * Very important; hashtags must identify your sector or occupation and relate to what a client would look.

WEBSITE RESOURCES

1. **WORDPRESS**
   a. Global share: 34.1%
   b. Hogging the CMS market: 60.8%
   c. Review: There is no doubt that it is the most used. Since its appearance in 2003 it has been used as a platform for blogging. Today it incorporates tools that make it the most versatile CMS on the market. It has HTTPS support and accepts any server that supports PHP. Its version 5.0 represents 5% of all websites in global terms.
   d. Active websites: 24.8M approx.
   e. Success Stories: Adobe Blogs, AMC, BBC, BitlyURL, Bloomberg.
   f. The Positive: it is an open source and it's quick to install. It has an infinity of plugins and themes that will allow you to design your website in multiple ways and it gets along very well with external tools.
   g. The Negative: certain themes frequently encounter issues, such as incompatibility with plugins, and, in some instances, updates hinge on the actions of their developers.

2. **WOO COMMERCE**

   a. Why is it so easy to use? This intuitive interface allows WordPress users to set up their business-friendly website in just a few hours. Its initial configuration can be extensive; however, most users notice that this plugin becomes a very comfortable tool when it is used regularly. Although there are many manuals to learn how to use WooCommerce, it is unnecessary to opt for a course or master to use it.

3. **WIX**

   a. Global share: 1.1%

   b. Hogging the CMS market: 2.0%

   c. Description: Wix is a platform that has currently been gaining followers for the ease of setting up a free website without the need for programming knowledge. Created by Israeli developers, it allows the user to have eye-catching designs. It is ideal for different types of photography endeavours, online stores and sites for indie artists.

   d. Active websites: 3.3M approx.

   e. Success stories: Pelé, Sergio Agüero, Mr Ping.

   f. The Positive: It provides numerous templates with highly appealing and user-friendly responsive designs. The premium version offers discounts for Adwords and Facebook Ads campaigns.

   g. The Negative: You essentially relinquish control over your content, and, therefore, you lack access to its source code. The free version doesn't ensure sufficient visibility, so you may need to consider Premium packages, which can be relatively costly compared to other content management systems.

4. **SHOPIFY**

   a. Global share: 1.6% / Hogging the CMS market: 2.9%

   b. Description: It is a cloud-based CMS (Saas), so the customer's data is stored on its servers. It has been taking a stir among those companies that venture into their online stores. It has many templates and themes to edit them at ease, not for nothing many websites deserving of design awards use this platform. It has a large community to get support.

   c. Active websites: 1.07M approx.

   d. Success Stories: Taylor Stitch, Marc Wenn, Whipping Post, Thinx, GymShark

   e. The Positive: Its security protocols enable seamless and less risky payment transactions, with flexible payment methods supporting various currencies. Editing is straightforward and user-friendly.

f. <u>The Negative</u>: For scalability of a business, it can be cumbersome, especially with the budget. Your transactions are guaranteed but commissioned by Shopify.

5. **PRESTASHOP**

a. <u>Global share participation:</u> 0.8% / Hogging the CMS market: 1.4%

b. <u>Description:</u> It is an exclusive CMS for electronic commerce, another good option to build your online store without having to mess with any code. Its paid version allows you to access interesting data to better control your finances in general, with detailed statistics and billing systems.

c. <u>Active websites:</u> 275.2K approx.

d. <u>Success stories:</u> BienManger, RCD Espanyol, Pro-air

e. <u>The Positive:</u> It offers the capability to oversee multiple stores using a single administrator. With a wide selection of plugins to enhance functionality and various design templates for customizable sections, it provides flexibility. Its user-friendly interface and control panel are compatible with the majority of payment platforms.

f. <u>The Negative:</u> Paid templates and modules that enhance SEO and improve the user experience are the ones that yield significant benefits.

MODULE 3: PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Human resources are the people working in an organization, including the directors and the executives. For every organization, it is necessary to have the capital that allows it to carry out its activities; this capital includes both cash and goods, but employees are the most important element in the production and the flow of the capital within the organization.

Nowadays, the business sector is defined by fast changes and instability, and all firms need to be properly prepared to cope with these changes and manage them in order to succeed. In this module, we are going to examine the different aspects of human resources and how to manage them properly in order to make your business thrive.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After the completion of the module, you will have the following learning outcomes:

- Definition and Importance of the Human Resources Department.
- Which are the most essential skills for Human Resources.
- How to build a strong HR strategy.
- How to establish a CSR culture in your business.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Since human resources constitute an important element for any enterprise, it is important to establish an HR Department. The responsibilities of this department are the increase of the productivity of the workforce and the protection of the enterprise in possible disputes that may arise between the staff. Other responsibilities concern the provision of benefits and compensation, the recruitment of new employees and their training, redundancies and staying tuned with the legislative changes that may directly or indirectly have an impact on the activity of the enterprise.

THE 5 MAIN ROLES OF HUMAN RESOURCES

As we've said before, the main area of the HR Department is the regulation of a company's culture and environment. In this section, we are going to describe in more detail the 5 main roles of this department[1].

TALENT MANAGEMENT

One of the key areas of Human Resources is the recruitment of employees. HR managers are usually looking for potential staff that can work in their organization and can produce the best results. The first step is to place a recruitment advertisement and then assess the profiles of those interested in the organization. Then, the HR Department proceeds with the recruitment of the suitable staff and, where necessary, it provides them with appropriate training in the area that they will work; however, HR managers are also responsible for the dismissal of employees. In most cases, the HR department collaborates with the organization's executives, and it takes their advice into account.

Talent Management does not only focus on the recruitment of potential staff, but it is also responsible for the strengthening of the employer-employee relations. HR managers are authorized to measure the employees' satisfaction and assess their engagement in the organization together with its culture. They also operate as third parties when it comes to conflict resolve.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

This HR Unit deals with the provision of benefits and reimbursement; it evaluates the pay practices of the workforce in order to form the benefits or compensation structure. More specifically, it negotiates with the company's administrators in order to define the coverage rates of a benefit or a reimbursement (e.g., health insurance). This Unit also deals with the payroll of employees but, in some cases, this task may be entrusted to the company's accountant. Last but not least, it collaborates with the HR managers, in terms of describing the job positions, and with the Talent Management, in terms of succession planning[2].

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[1] In smaller companies, these roles may fall entirely under the HR manager.
[2] Succession planning is the identification of critical positions within a business and the development of action plans in order to put persons into the right job positions.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The desire of every employer is to see their employees perform professionally so that in this way the company can thrive. This HR Unit is responsible for providing continuous training on the staff by and keeping a track of its performance. It can also implement instructional or other programs that lead to the success of the company.

HR COMPLIANCE

As we have said before, it is very important for the HR Department to know the labour law rules and be aware of any legislative changes that may influence the company's activities. Every business must comply with these laws and such control shall be subject exclusively to the unit of HR Compliance. This Unit must monitor a company's policies and carry out an investigation if one or more employees complain about discriminatory attitudes or poor working conditions. Moreover, the HR Compliance, together with other units of the HR Department, are responsible for making the employee handbook[3].

WORKPLACE SAFETY

This Unit is responsible for the development of a safe working environment and for keeping records which document in a detailed way work-related accidents. It is also cooperating with the Compensation and Benefits or other benefits specialists in order to handle the compensation claims.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS IN HUMAN RESOURCES

Since the HR Department holds a very important position within a business because it is the connecting link between workers and employers, this job requires many qualifications. In most countries, taking up a human resources position requires you to have studied the specific field. However, degrees are not the only things that matter; they may provide a certification, but in practice you need to develop a range of skills to take on the job. In this subsection, we will take a detailed look at these skills.

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[3] The employee handbook describes the company's vision, values, and policies and it provides guidance to the employees about the working procedures and the workplace code of conduct.

Employee relations

A successful business is defined by the quality of relationships it builds between employers and employees and the HR Department is responsible for the support of this connection. Employees must feel safe within the workplace in order to express their concerns and complaints without being afraid that they are going to get stigmatised or fired. The HR Department is also responsible for taking into account these concerns and complaints and finding a solution for them. In some cases, this department may act as a mediator between two conflicting parties, so it is necessary to know how to solve problems and advocate for both of these parties.

Teamwork and collaboration

Since we have mentioned that HR professionals are focused on creating the best workplace by strengthening the relations between the staff, it is highly important to be communicative and able to work in teams. After all, no enterprise was set up by itself but thanks to the cooperation of all its members.

Technological aptitude

In order to occupy a position related to HR, you need to be fluent in managing data and making projections and analyses. But since we are living in an era where technology is constantly evolving, the knowledge of use of digital tools is now a must for every job position; the same applies for Human Resources. One common tool used in the HR Department is the Human Resources Information Software (HRIS) which is a database that stores information about a business' employees. It is a very helpful tool since it reduces paperwork and duplication of information. It is also user-friendly, but you will certainly need to invest some time in order to get familiar with them.

Other relevant skills for someone performing HR activities in a company could be onboarding, performance management, scheduling, and payroll processing.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

There is a tight connection between the HR department and conflict management. Conflict management is one of the most relevant skills for a successful HR worker, since that is their key to maintain a team's productivity and efficiency. The capacity to deal with conflict makes HR managers help their team members work together and achieve common goals.

1. **Analyze the Situation**: Understand the conflict's causes and potential impact.

2. **Decide on Intervention**: Assess if HR intervention is necessary or if team members can resolve it themselves.

3. **Provide Guidelines**: Offer conflict resolution guidelines to address conflicts early.

4. **Identify Potential Causes**: Communicate changes in business processes to reduce conflict chances.

5. **Support Conflicting Members**: Empathize with members and help them understand each other's perspectives for a mutually beneficial solution.

6. **Maintain Neutrality**: Approach conflicts from a neutral standpoint to ensure employees feel supported and not against them.

Tips for conflict management in HR

Besides the steps an HR department can take to manage conflict, there are a few tips they could follow when trying to resolve a conflict. These include:

Remaining calm	Focusing on facts	Maintaining boundaries	Establishing goals

HR STRATEGY

Since Human Resources is involved at all levels of a business' functions, it is important to develop an HR strategy so that we can talk about business development. However, the adoption of such a strategy requires a profound knowledge of an enterprise's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis).

Here are the four HR strategies:

- The limitation of transactional problem solving

- Proactivity rather than reactivity

- Provision of solutions that focus on bigger challenges and on people

- Connecting people who can provide solutions to each other.

More specifically, you could follow these steps:

Understand the business and its objectives	Evaluate employee skillsets	Conduct a gap analysis	Assess talent strategy

Invest on developing your existing staff	Limit turnover	Make a plan for succession	Rely on analytics	Create a mission and a vision

ESTABLISHING A CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) IN YOUR BUSINESS.

Corporate Social Responsibility describes a company's actions that are designed for the tackling of environmental and social issues that arise in the business world. Since all the companies are linked with the social context in which they operate, it is important to acknowledge their responsibility towards the society and the environment. More specifically, they are encouraged to respect the principles and values that promote human dignity, and to fight for equal opportunities. It is also important for every enterprise to respect the environmental rules and be sustainable in order to maintain a good level of living standards and quality of life. Other nouns that are synonymous with Corporate Social Responsibility are Corporate Citizenship, Social Responsibility, Social Responsiveness, Corporate Responsibility, and others.

The role of the HR Department is very important in terms of CSR culture since it is the link between management and employees and it has at its disposal all the data of a company (practices, policies, etc.).

Let's have a look at these ways for HR to play a key role in establishing a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in your business:

1. **Adapt your mission, vision, values, and value proposition:** Redefining your business mission, vision, and values, considering the community where you operate, is a key step towards a transversal integration of Corporate Responsibility in your company. This will help you focus your business brand and value proposition in implementing social principles, which will eventually attract individuals who are in line with them.

2. **Aim for an impact beyond your HR department:** The HR department is the bridge between your business and the people, not only employees but also other departments in your company, stakeholders, and the society. Therefore, if your HR policies and practices are in line with CSR principles such as diversity and inclusion, you will not only attract employees who agree on these principles, but also work with other departments and stakeholders who have shared goals.

3. **Believe in the influence of individuals:** There is no need for an employee to be a director or manager, to have an influence and help generate a real change. Your HR team can help each employee understand their individual capacity to have an impact in their own spheres.

Your HR team and the corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles will have an impact in your business, the industry, your stakeholders, and the society. If your company shows a real commitment to CSR, you will attract equally committed individuals who will boost your positive impact.

MODULE 4: PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

This module provides comprehensive information on public procurement, including its principles, procedures, and legal framework, which are essential for individuals and organizations engaging in public procurement activities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the fundamental principles, importance and goals of public procurement
- To familiarize with the types of procurement procedures
- To acquire knowledge of the public procurement framework in the EU
- To be aware of the public procurement landscape in Spain, Poland, Bulgaria and Ireland

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN THE EU

As stated by the European Commission (2023) Public procurement involves the acquisition of work, goods, or services by public entities, including government departments or local authorities, from companies. EU law establishes minimum standardized regulations for public procurement to ensure fair competition among businesses throughout Europe. These regulations dictate the procedures public authorities and specific public utility operators must follow when procuring goods, works, and services. These EU rules are incorporated into national legislation and are applicable to tenders surpassing a designated monetary threshold. In the following link you will find more detailed information on the monetary thresholds established by the EU for tenders considered of high value contracts. The objective is to promote a harmonious and equal framework for public procurement processes and practices across the EU.

The overarching goals of public procurement include promoting transparency, competition, and efficiency in the acquisition process. The methods and regulations governing public procurement can vary between countries, but the fundamental principles aim to ensure fair and accountable practices.

TYPES OF PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

Tenders can be organized into lower, medium and higher value contracts. For lower value tenders the public procurement procedure must be carried out by national rules only, even though that the general EU principals of transparency and equal treatment should be respected and applied. The standard way of awarding contracts is through competitive tendering for medium and higher value contracts. Within competitive tendering there are different types of public procurement procedures, here are some examples:

- **Open procedure**: the most used in tenders. There aren't restrictions for applying, anyone can submit their proposal.
- **Restricted procedure**: Participants interested to participate need to ask to participate and only those pre-selected may submit tenders.
- **Competitive negotiated procedure**: Similar to the restricted procedure, participants interested need to participate and only those pre-selected will be invited to submit the initial tender and negotiate with the contracting authority. This type of procedure is used usually with contracts that have a specific or complicated nature, but sector such as defence security, water, transport, or postal service can use it as a standard procedure.
- **Competitive dialogue**: This procedure allows bidders to submit initial solutions after being successful at the selection stage. It allows you to negotiate proposed solutions with bidders. This may help to open cross-border markets by encouraging bidders to discuss possible solutions. Unlike the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation, here the specification requirements concentrate on your organisation's needs without having to detail the nature, characteristics, or solutions to be offered.
- **Innovation Partnership**: This procedure is used when the contracting authority wants an innovative solution for a need defined in the tender.
- **Design contest**: this procedure is used when there's a need to obtain an idea for a design.

There's more information regarding types of contracting procedures in the following link.

PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE

To differentiate the different procurement procedures, we have divided them into 2 categories:

1. **Call for proposals (grants):** the contracting authority selects an organisations or natural person to implement projects co-financed by the EU. Usually, this type of public procurement includes advance payments and a final report justifying the completion of the project.

2. **Call for tenders**: the contracting authority purchase goods, services and works for an agreed price. Usually, this type of public procurement includes payment to agreed conditions and delivery of goods, services or works as agreed on the contract.

GRANT AND TENDER'S PROCEDURE

The process of submitting proposal to tenders or grants is very similar, and the only difference is the portal you're using to log in or to submit.

1. **Find an appropriate proposal for you**: The European Commission publish their grants and tenders in the [Funding & Tender Portal](). Calls for proposals are organized by funding programs that focus on different priorities for the EU, for example: Creative Europe Program, European Social Fund + (ESF) or Horizon Europe (HORIZON). Calls also are divided into topics, which can help if you are looking for a program that fits your organization's field. For Tenders, all of them are shown in [TED Portal]().

2. **Find project partners**: In some calls this will be optional, while in other calls there are certain requirements that you must meet in order to submit the application. Carefully read the requirement conditions to be eligible in the procedure. For Tenders it depends on what you want to offer, if it's valued by the Contracting Authority or if it adds value to the proposal you can choose to submit as a consortium.

3. **Create an EU Login account**: having an EU Login account is necessary to submit proposals. The process of registration is very easy, and it can be done through this [link]().

4. **Register an organisation**: EU Login accounts are personal and, to participate in grants as an organisation you need to register your entity through this [link](). You can search, also, your organisation in case is already registered with the PIC number, as well as other organisations.

5. **Submit your proposal**: When you are registered and you have identified a call for proposal that fits your area of work, you can start submitting proposals following the requirements and guidelines that are indicated in the documents of the call.

SPAIN

Public procurement in Spain is an important pillar within the national economy, constituting approximately 10% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Public procurement is used as a legal authority or tool at the disposal of public entities, helping achieve the effective fulfilment of public objectives and policies. This use of public procurement is essential in the execution of public policies, contributing to societal well-being. Beyond the economic value, public procurement in Spain assumes a proactive role: it acts as a catalyst for innovation, ensures the delivery of high-quality public services, promotes social integration, and enhances the overall productivity of the country.

The impact of public procurement expands throughout the national landscape, a good and efficient execution is crucial in advancing governmental agendas, fostering a dynamic governance structure, and optimizing resource utilization. A bad execution could lead to increased financial burdens on government agencies, necessitating higher expenditures for goods and services that will ultimately impact in the citizen's economic burden.

In Spain the National Body Responsible for Public Procurement is the Ministry of Finance and Public Function / State Public Procurement Consultative Board. The public procurement framework in Spain is primarily governed by Ley 9/2017, de 8 de noviembre, de Contratos del Sector Público (Law 9/2017 on Public Sector Contracts). This law transposes into Spanish law the directives 2014/23/EU and 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and Council, dated February 26, 2014.

Law 9/2017 on Public Sector Contracts establishes the state centralized contracting system in Spain, aligning with the Directives of the European Union. The Centralized Contracting Board, attached to the Ministry, acts as the contracting body. This system offers a homogeneous contracting model for supplies, works and services to state entities. Proposal management is electronic through the CONECTA-CENTRALIZACIÓN application. Users, as public organizations, can access services such as consulting catalogs and monitoring proposals, while successful bidders have services such as contract notifications and management of updates in their catalogues. The system benefits state entities and, through voluntary agreements, Autonomous Communities, Autonomous Cities and local entities.

Additionally, the public procurement landscape is further influenced by the Orden HAC/1272/2019, de 16 de diciembre (Order HAC/1272/2019, of December 16). This order publishes the limits for various types of contracts concerning public sector procurement, effective from January 1, 2020. These limits could encompass financial thresholds or other criteria that define the scope of contracts eligible for different procurement procedures.

Understanding these laws and orders is crucial for businesses and entities engaging in public procurement in Spain. They provide the legal framework, procedural guidelines, and restrictions that govern the entire procurement process, ensuring transparency, fairness, and competition in public contracting activities.

The key principles of General Procurement for Goods and Services are:

1. Transparency
2. No conflict of interests
3. Publicity
4. Open access
5. No discrimination and equality
6. Integrity
7. Expense control
8. Ensure free competence.

There are procurement thresholds for different procedures in the context of EU procurement rules. These thresholds indicate the financial limits below which certain procedures can be applied.

1. **Open Procedure**:
   a. For Works contracts, the threshold is 5.382.000€.
   b. For Services and Goods contracts, the threshold is 215.000€.

2. **Simplified Open Procedure**:
   a. For Works contracts, the threshold is 2.000.000€.
   b. For Services and Goods contracts, the threshold is 140.000€.

3. **Super Simplified Open Procedure**:
   a. For Works contracts, the threshold is 80.000€.
   b. For Services and Goods contracts, the threshold is 60.000€.

4. **Minor Contract**:
   a. For Works contracts, the threshold is 40.000€.
   b. For Services and Goods contracts, the threshold is 15.000€.

These thresholds help determine the appropriate procurement procedure based on the estimated value of the contract. The Open Procedure is used for higher-value contracts, while the Simplified Open Procedure, Super Simplified Open Procedure, and Minor Contract procedures are designed for contracts with lower values. The goal is to streamline the procurement process based on the complexity and financial scale of the contract.

In conclusion, understanding public procurement regulations is crucial to comply with the legal and ethical business practices, ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability in the allocation of public funds. Knowledge of procurement rules helps organizations avoid legal pitfalls and potential penalties. Moreover, public procurement regulations contribute to efficient resource allocation. Clear and easy to understand guidelines help streamline processes, reduce

bureaucratic hurdles, and enhance the overall effectiveness of public spending. This efficiency is vital for achieving value for citizens' money and meeting public policy objectives. in essence, knowledge of public procurement regulations is an indispensable asset, ensuring integrity, efficiency, and responsible use of public resources in the procurement process.

BULGARIA

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT ACT shall define the conditions and procedure for awarding public procurements for public works, supply or services and for conducting competition for project by contracting authorities in view to provision of effectiveness in spending of:

The implementation of the state policy in the field of public procurement in Bulgaria is in accordance with the Law on Public Procurement. This law enters into force from 15.04.2016 with additions and amendments and the last one is from 19 December 2023.

The Minister of Finance implements state policy in the field of public procurement through the Public Procurement Agency.

The Public Procurement Agency is a budget-supported legal entity with its seat in the city of Sofia.

- The Public Procurement Agency is managed and represented by an executive director appointed by the Minister of Finance.
- The activity, structure, work organization and numerical composition of the Public Procurement Agency are determined by organizational regulations adopted by the Council of Ministers.

This act shall define the conditions and procedure for awarding public procurements for public works, supply or services and for conducting competition for project by contracting authorities in view to provision of effectiveness in spending of:

1. Public funds.
2. Funds, provided by the EU funds and programmes.
3. Funds, related to performing activities in the sectors of water supply, energy, transport and post services.
4. The funds of companies and undertakings, which are contracting authorities in the meaning of this Act.

Public procurement is acquiring by one, or several awarding authorities through a public procurement contract of public works, supply or services by selected by them contractors, and in sector awarding authorities – for fulfilment of sector activities.

The public procurements are awarded in compliance with the principles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and more specially the ones for free movement of goods, freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services and mutual recognition, as well as the principles, comprising from them:

1. Equality and non-admittance of discrimination;
2. Free competition;
3. Proportionality;
4. Publicity and transparency.

With awarding public procurement, the awarding authorities shall not have the right to restrict competition by including conditions or requirements, which give undue advantage or unduly restrict participation of economic subjects in public procurement, and which are not coordinated with the subject, value, complexity, quantity or volume of the public procurement.

Subjects to public procurement shall be:

1. Public works, including:
   a) Fulfilment or design and fulfilment of public works, related to one of the activities under Annex No1
   b) Fulfilment or design and fulfilment of public works;
2. Supply of goods, realized through a purchase, leasing, rent or financial leasing with or without the right to buying, as well as all the needed preliminary activities on the sue of the goods, as installation or mounting works, test of machines and facilities, etc.;
3. Provision of services.

As public works under Para. 1, p. 1, letter "b" shall also be accepted fulfilment of a public works, for which the contracting authority has decisive influence over the type or its design regardless of the form of cooperation and origin of the used resources.

With awarding public procurement, the codes of the nomenclatures in the Common Procurement Vocabulary shall be used, adopted by Regulation (EC) No 2195/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 November 2002 on the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV).

Where the awarding authorities use other nomenclatures in their activity, while awarding public procurements, their compliance with the Common Procurement Vocabulary shall be indicated mandatory.

The contracting authorities shall be liable for the correct forecasting, planning, conducting, finalization and accounting the results of the public procurement. The Contracting authorities shall be public and sector.

Public contracting authorities shall be:

1. the President of the Republic of Bulgaria;
2. the President of the National Assembly;
3. the Prime Minister;
4. the Ministers;
5. the Ombudsman of the republic of Bulgaria;
6. The Governor of the Bulgarian National Bank;
7. the President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Bulgaria, the administrative heads of the judiciary bodies, which govern independent budgets, as well as the administrative heads of Prosecutions in the Country;
8. the Regional Governors;
9. Municipality Mayors, of regions, of City Halls, as well as Deputy Mayors, where they are budgetary spending units;
10. the Chairpersons of state agencies;
11. the Chairpersons of the state commissions;
12. the Executive Directors of executive agencies;
13. heads of state institutions, established by an act or a Council of Ministers Decree, including separate structures of the executive, where they are legal persons and budgetary spending units;
14. representatives of public-legal organizations;

15. heads of diplomatic and counselor representations of the Republic of Bulgaria abroad, as well as the permanent representations of the Republic of Bulgaria at the international organizations;

16. the representing medical establishments – trade companies under Art. 36 – 37 of the Medical Establishments Act, owned by the state and/or municipalities, of which more than 50% of the revenues are from the state and/or the municipal budget, and of the budget of the National Health- insurance Fund;

17. heads of central bodies for purchases, established for satisfaction of the needs of the public contracting authorities.

Sector contracting authorities shall be:

1. Representing public undertakings and their unifications, where they perform one or several sector activities.

2. Representing the traders or other persons, which are not public undertakings, where on the basis of special or exclusive rights perform one or several sector activities.

3. The heads of central bodies for purchase, established for satisfaction needs of sector contracting authorities.

Technical specifications

The contracting authority determines the technical specifications in accordance with the requirements of the applicable regulations in the relevant field, applying one of the methods.

1. Bulgarian standards that introduce European standards;
2. European technical assessments;
3. General technical specifications;
4. Bulgarian standards that introduce international standards;
5. International standards;
6. Other technical benchmarks established by European standardization bodies, or when there are none - through national standards, national technical approvals or national technical specifications relating to the design, calculation method and construction execution, as well as to the use of the goods;

7. Technical specifications created and widely adopted by the industry;

8. National defence standards and similar specifications for defence equipment and supplies.

Procedures applied by sector contracting authorities.

Free choice of procedure

When awarding public contracts, sectoral contracting authorities choose a freely open and limited procedure, negotiation with prior invitation to participate and competitive dialogue.

Value thresholds.

These thresholds help determine the appropriate procurement procedure based on the estimated value of the contract.

There are procurement thresholds for different procedures in the context of EU procurement rules. These thresholds indicate the financial limits below which certain procedures can be applied.

These procedures apply when:

1. **Public contracting authorities**, as well as their associations, award public contracts with an estimated value greater than or equal to:

a) 10 526 116 BGN. - for construction;

b) 273 812 BGN. - for supplies and services;

c) 1 466 850 BGN. - for services under application No. 2;

3. **Sectoral contracting authorities** award public contracts with an estimated value greater than or equal to:

a) 10 526 116 BGN. - for construction;

b) 842 950 BGN. - for supplies and services.

5. The contracting authorities hold a tender for a project with a value greater than or equal to BGN 100,000.

(2) The contracting authorities apply the procedures when public procurement has an estimated value:

1. During construction - from BGN 300,000 to BGN 10,526,116 in force since 01.01.2024

2. From BGN 100,000 to the corresponding threshold under para. 1 depending on the type of contracting authority and the subject of the order, in force since 01.01.2024.

(3) Contracting authorities apply the procurement procedure by collecting tenders by advertisement or invitation to specified persons when public procurements have an estimated value:

1. For construction - from 80 000 BGN till 300 000 BGN; in force since 01.01.2024

2 For supplies and services, except for the services under Annex No. 2- From 50 000 BGN till 100 000 BGN - in force since 01.01.2024

(4) Contracting authorities may directly award public contracts with an estimated value of less than:

1. 80 000 BGN – for construction; in force since 01.01.2024

2. 100 000 BGN – for services under Annex 2; since 01.01.2024

3. 50 000 BGN - for deliveries and services other than those under item 2; since 01.01.2024

(5) In the cases under para. 4, items 2 and 3, the contracting authorities can prove the expenditure only with primary payment documents, without the need to conclude a written contract.

(6) Public contracts under para. 1, item 4 of a value lower than the corresponding threshold can be awarded directly, but the contracting parties are obliged to conclude a written contract.

(7) The assignors under Art. 5, para. 2, item 15 applies the procedure for awarding by collecting offers with an announcement or invitation to certain persons, when public procurements have an estimated value:

1. For construction – from 300 000 BGN till 10 526 116 BGN; in force since 01.01.2024

2. For deliveries and services - from 100 000 BGN to the corresponding threshold under para. 1 depending on the order; in force since 01.01.2024.

Types of Procedures

(1) The procedures under this act shall be:

1. Open procedure;
2. Restricted procedure;
3. Competition procedure with agreement;
4. Agreement with preliminary calls for participation;
5. Negotiation with publication of call for procurement;
6. Competition dialogue;
7. Partnership for innovations;
8. Agreement without preliminary call of proposals;
9. Agreements without preliminary call for participation;
10. Agreement without publication of call for procurement;
11. Competition for a project;
12. Public competition;
13. Direct agreement.

(2) Open procedure and public competition shall be procedures in which all interested people may submit an offer.

(3) Restricted procedure is the one, in which offers may submit only applicants, who have received   invitation by the contracting authority after preliminary selection.

(4) In procedures under Para. 1, p. 3 – 5, the contracting authority shall conduct negotiations with applicants, received invitation after conducted preliminary selection. As a basis for conducting the   negotiations, the applicants shall submit initial offers.

(5) Competition dialogue shall be a procedure, in which the contracting authority conducts a dialogue with the admitted applicants after preliminary selection in view to determine one

or more proposed decisions, meeting its requirements, after which he shall invite the proposed applicants to submit final offers.

(6) Partnership for innovations shall be a procedure, in which the contracting authority conducts   negotiations with the admitted applicants after preliminary selection in view to establishment of   partnership with one or more partners, which will carry out a certain scientific-research and development activity.

(7) In the procedures of agreement under Para. 1, p. 8 – 10 and 13 the contracting authority shall conduct negotiations for defining the clauses of the contract with one or more exactly determined   persons.

(8) (Amend. and suppl. - SG 86/18, in force from 01.03.2019) A competition for a project shall be a procedure, in which the contracting authority shall acquire basically in the areas of city and village public planning, architecture, engineering activity or data, processing a plan or conceptual design, selected by independent board on the basis of a conducted competition with or without awarding prices. The competition for a project may be open or restricted.

The Public Procurement Law offers also:

- Methods for calculating the estimated value of public procurement;

- Publicity and transparency;

- Public procurement documents;

- Publication of the information;

- Preparation of the procedure;

- Technical specifications. Markings. Test reports;

- Requirements for applicants and participants;

- Criteria for awarding contracts;

- Procedures offered by public contracting authorities;

- Specific procurement techniques and tools

- Carrying out procedures for awarding public contracts

- Completion of the procedure

- Guarantees for the performance of a public procurement contract

- Public procurement file

- Special rules for the awarding of public contracts by sectoral contractors

- Procedures applied by sectoral contracting authorities

- Rules for awarding low-value public procurement

- Annulation of contracts or Framework agreements

- Management and control

POLAND

Public procurement is a key form of public sector participation in the economy. According to the European Commission, spending on public procurement accounts for as much as 19% of the European Union's GDP, which amounts to €2.3 trillion annually. In the case of the Polish economy, the share of public procurement in GDP is at least 10%, and the amount - about 200 billion zlotys - this is how much public procurers spend annually on goods and services purchased through the public procurement system.

In Poland, the document regulating public procurement is the Law of September 11, 2019. - Public Procurement Law, which has been amended several times. The last consolidated text of the Law was published on August 14, 2023.

When do we apply Public Procurement Law?

The provisions of the Public Procurement Law govern the award of contracts above PLN 130,000. Its provisions serve to ensure that the contracting entity spends public funds in procurement proceedings that are conducted in a manner that:

1. fair competition and equal treatment
2. Transparency (procedure is public, but information constituting a business secret within the meaning of the regulations shall not be disclosed)

3. proportional
4. Bring the best quality of results (social, financial, environmental)
5. Based on current law
6. impartiality and objectivity
7. the process of procurement shall be conducted in writing.

The law also specifies, among other things, the sought-after rules of the popular negotiated procurement, the amount of the bid bond, the rules of electronic communication in the tender, and how to amend the public procurement contract.

Among other things, public procurement regulations must be applied:

- **Public procurers**, for example, public authorities, local governments, courts, health care institutions, universities, administration.
- **Sectoral procurers**, i.e., entities that are singled out for the type of activities performed that are of a special nature from the point of view of the state economy, for example, energy sales and production, operation of rail transport networks, water management services.
- **Subsidized procurers**, i.e. entities that do not belong to any of the above-mentioned groups but must apply the PPL due to the fulfillment of specific conditions.

Threshold for application of the PPL

The provisions of the Public Procurement Law apply to contracts and competitions whose value is equal to or exceeds PLN 130,000 (excluding VAT).

For contracts below PLN 130,000 net, contracting entities are required to comply with - among other things - the Law on Responsibility for Violation of Public Finance Discipline and the Law on Public Finance.

In practice, institutions that carry out public procurement below the thresholds under the Public Procurement Law operate according to internal regulations.

EU thresholds

When it comes to correctly defining the procedures by which the order must be executed, the EU thresholds are important - orders above these thresholds are subject to more stringent obligations. Specific procurement modes apply to them. These include the obligation to conduct an analysis of the needs of the ordering party or to appoint a tender committee, as well as specific requirements concerning the documents of the procedure or the rules for publishing contract notices.

Currently, the following EU procurement thresholds apply (amounts in Polish zloty refer to the values adopted for 2020):

Construction works:

- EUR 5,350,000 net (equivalent to PLN 22,840,755 net) - regardless of the type of contracting authority and the nature of the contract.

Supplies and services:

- 139,000 euros net (equivalent to the amount of 593,433 zlotys net) - basic threshold (for public sector units, for example, from the government sector).
- 214,000 euros net (the equivalent of PLN 913,630 net) - the threshold for supplies and services ordered by local government procurers, which are, among others: local government units, public universities, state cultural institutions.
- 428,000 euros net (equivalent to the amount of PLN 1,827,260 net) - the threshold for sector supplies and services and in the fields of defense and security.

Social services

- 750,000 euros net (the equivalent of PLN 3,201,975 net) - the threshold for procurement of social and other special services ordered by public procurers.
- EUR 1,000,000 net (the equivalent of PLN 4,269,300 net) - the threshold for contracts for social services and other specific services ordered by sector contracting authorities and in the fields of defense and security.

Information about the EU thresholds and the exchange rate for converting euros into zlotys is published by the President of the Public Procurement Office in a notice, which is posted on the Public Procurement Office website.

Public procurement modes

Public contracts can be awarded in several modes. Which mode is appropriate is determined by regulations - the contracting authority is not free to choose the mode.

Public procurement modes differ depending on whether the value of the contract to be awarded exceeds the EU thresholds or not.

The modes for contracts above the EU thresholds are:

- Open tender.
- Restricted tender.
- Negotiations with announcement.
- Competitive dialogue.
- Innovative partnership.
- Negotiations without an announcement.
- Negotiated procurement.

IRELAND

In Ireland, public procurement is governed by EU rules and national regulations. These provide for an open, transparent, competitive, and non-discriminatory public procurement environment. Public procurement is the process by which public bodies use public contracts to purchase goods, services or works from suppliers, ranging from the purchase of routine goods or services to large scale contracts for infrastructural projects. As part of the Public Service Reform Plan, the Irish Government established the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) in 2013 to drive a new consolidated and integrated approach to public procurement. In Ireland, public procurement amounts to approximately €17 billion per year. It represented roughly 8.8% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020. Policies, guidance, and a range of procurement solutions exist at national and sectoral level, including a national electronic tendering platform for publishing all public procurement opportunities.

To create a level playing field for all businesses across Europe, EU law sets out minimum harmonised public procurement rules. The European rules ensure that the award of contracts of higher value for the provision of public goods, services or works must be fair, equitable, transparent, and nondiscriminatory.

These rules govern the way public authorities and certain utility operators purchase goods, works and services. The rules are set out in three principal EU Directives which are transposed into national legislation and apply to tenders for public contracts whose monetary value exceeds a certain threshold. For tenders of lower value, national rules apply (see Table 1).

Nevertheless, these national rules also have to respect the general principles of EU law. The current EU Directives are:

1. Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement (goods, services and works)

2. Directive 2014/25/EU on procurement by entities operating in the Utilities Sector, i.e. the water, energy, transport, and postal services sectors.

3. Directive 2014/23/EU on the award of Concession contracts

The EU Procurement Directives were transposed into Irish Law in 2016 and 2017 by way of the following regulations: S.I. No. 284/2016 (the "2016 Regulations"); S.I. No. 286/2016 (the "2016 Utilities Regulations") and S.I. No. 203/2017 (the "2017 Concessions Regulations").

Much of the content of the EU Procurement Directives broadly reflects the pre-existing framework of procurement law (which was set out in a now repealed set of EU Directives dated 2004) and will, therefore, be familiar to practitioners. In line with previous practice, the 2014 Directives incorporate important procurement principles emerging from the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union over the intervening period since 2004.

At the National Level, for tenders of lower value national rules apply, which must respect general principles of EU law. The Office of Government Procurement sets out the public procurement procedures to be followed under national and EU rules. For higher value tenders, the procedures are based on general EU public procurement rules outlined above. The value limits (thresholds) that mark when EU rules are used depend on the subject of the purchase, and who is making the purchase. The EU thresholds are revised regularly, and the current thresholds (exclusive of VAT) above which advertising of contracts in the OJEU is obligatory, applicable from 1 January 2022 are:

Table 1: EU Procurement Thresholds as of 1st January 2022:

Works	Value	Who it applies to
Contract Notice	€5,382,000	Threshold applies to Government Departments and Offices, Local and Regional Authorities and public service bodies.
Goods and Services		
Contract Notice	€140,000	Threshold applies to Government Departments and Offices.
Contract Notice	€215,000	Threshold applies to contracting authorities that are not central government – that is sub-central public sector bodies including Local and Regional Authorities.
Contract Notice	€750,000	All services concerning social and other specific services listed in Annex XIV of the EU Directive 2014/24/EU
Utilities		
Works Contracts/ Periodic Indicative Notice	€5,382,000	For entities in Utilities sector covered by GPA.
Goods and Services	€431,000	For entities in Utilities sector covered by GPA.

National Procurement Thresholds

The diagram below, demonstrates the thresholds and procedures for Public Procurement in Ireland in line with Circular 05/2023 which was published on 28th March 2023 by the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform.

Less than €5,000	€5,000 - National Advertising Threshold*	National Advertising Threshold - EU Threshold
Obtain verbal quotes from competitive suppliers	Consider using the electronic Request for Quotes function on eTenders	Draw up tender documents and set basis for award criteria and selection criteria
Select the most suitable	Email a request for quotes and a description of requirement to at least three suppliers	Agree weighting of award criteria
	Evaluate quotes objectively against specified requirements (using a scoring sheet)	Advertise on eTenders
	Select the most suitable offer	Evaluate tenders using weighted criteria sheet
	Advise all tenderers of the award of the contract	Select the highest scoring tender
		Award the contract and provide unsuccessful tenderers with sufficient commentary

*The national advertising threshold as set out in Circular 05/2023 can be found on the OGP website.

There are no prescribed time limits in relation to above threshold procedures. However, sufficient time must be permitted for preparation and submission of tenders to allow for genuine competition and SMEs to participate in the tender process. Contracting authorities should consider the complexity of a contract when placing time limits on the receipt of tenders.

In relation to contracts with an estimated value in line with the national advertising thresholds and above, tender evaluation should be carried out by a team with the requisite competency. Transparency and objectivity are achieved by the publication of weighted criteria, including price, which allows a comparative assessment of tenders under each criterion. All tenderers should be informed of the result of the tendering process without delay.

Using eTenders

eTenders (www.etenders.gov.ie) is Ireland's free-to-use national procurement portal. The OGP manages the portal and is responsible for setting policy on its content and functionality, with the day-to-today management, maintenance and development outsourced to an external provider. eTenders serves as a central facility for all contracting authorities to advertise public procurement opportunities and award notices, both nationally and in OJEU. eTenders can be used by the wider public sector including commercial and non-commercial semi-state bodies. Publically funded voluntary and community groups can also use the platform for their procurements. There is no charge to contracting authorities or suppliers for the use of eTenders.

MODULE 5: FINANCES

A financial plan is simply an overview of your current business financials and projections for growth. Think of any documents that represent your current monetary situation as a snapshot of the health of your business and the projections being your future expectations.

Financial planning allows entrepreneurs to estimate the quantity and the timing of money needed to start the business and to keep it running. It might help the entrepreneurs to answer the following questions: is it worth investing time and money in this business? What is the cash burn rate? How to minimize dilution by external investors? Scenario analysis and contingency plan?

When entrepreneurship is made by persons at risk of exclusion, finances is often a critical dimension to take into account. Financial aspect could become a stress factor for the new entrepreneurs, and it is crucial to bring support and relevant advice taking into account each person's specific situation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the completion of this module, the participant will acquire following knowledge and skills:

- He/She will be able to draft a financial plan and adapt it within the whole business plan.
- He/She knows the main concepts and methods for an efficient financial plan.
- He/She will be able to sustain a financial plan.

IMPORTANCE OF A FINANCIAL PLAN

A financial plan is the most important thing a small business' needs. It's a road map, a guideline, a reminder of what your goals are –**what you are trying to achieve in the short-term and the long-term**. It lays out what your possible costs are, and it seeks out to address avenues for how to manage these costs. It is so important that investors, bankers, and creditors won't even set up a meeting with you if you don't have a financial plan for your small business. A solid financial plan can be a reminder of all the necessary expenditures to keep your small business growing to stay ahead of the competitors in your market. The decisions the small business owner takes can have positive or negative consequences. A good financial plan can spot positive and negative trends where they may have become lost in a sea of numbers. This will help you better allocate funds to

the areas that are making your business money and avoid expenditures that didn't yield enough results.

FINANCE: ACCOUNTING, FINANCIAL PLAN, FUNDRAISING

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	
Introduction	From a financial perspective, successful entrepreneurs typically possess three key characteristics: 1. A very aggressive risk-taker. 2. A keen ability in formulating and implementing strategic plans. 3. Clarity and precision in their ideas and vision, enabling them to communicate and implement their objectives effectively.
Planning > Financial Matrix	
Rentability	The initial stage of **any effective financial planning** process involves understanding: • The target sales volume. • The anticipated costs. • What will be sold, and what portion of the earnings will be retained
	While many entrepreneurs express their goal to increase sales by 25%, the crucial question lies in the 'how.' This strategic exercise involves breaking down my sales and examining their behavior or how I envision them behaving and. One essential tip is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of factors such as volume, pricing strategies, distribution channels, existing customer relationships, and supplier dynamics. By gaining a deep understanding of my customer base, sales volume, and the methods by which I generate sales, I can more effectively project the expected increase in my sales figures. Essentially, I'm disassembling and reassembling the sales numbers in euros to form a cohesive strategy
	How many types of costs are there? • Fixed • Variables • Semi-fixed • Semivariables

Working capital	I must establish a payment and collection forecast in days, starting from the moment I purchase raw materials or initiate a project until I receive my investment in euros, along with my anticipated profit. The principal means of financing in this context is through the commercial credit offered by suppliers, a practice often referred to as spontaneous financing. Net working capital (a key financial metric) = accounts receivable + inventory-accounts payable (in days)
Return from assets	When evaluating my investment in a specific asset, I must consider whether it is tangible or intangible and how it impacts my return on profitability. In the case of services, I need to assess factors such as my time commitment, reputation, and their contribution to utility and profitability. If I find myself operating within a tight margin due to pricing constraints, I must reassess my strategy. It may be necessary to realign my cost structure, explore outsourcing opportunities, or even consider transitioning to a different business altogether.
Capital structure	Who should opt for debt or equity financing? **The costliest** form of capital is the one you fund directly from your **own resources**. However, this doesn't imply that accumulating excessive debt is the solution. There's a pivotal threshold where minimizing your debt can result in a higher weighted cost. Beyond this point, the cost of capital begins to rise as you demand more from your business than the bank is willing to provide. As your debt load increases, your cost escalates due to the heightened risk of default associated with higher leverage
Financing	

- National or regional grants
- Microcredits EEFF
- Foundations
- Venture Capital
- Crowlending / crowfunding
- etc

MENTORING PROGRAM

During the incubation, a mentoring program is organized to supervise and support new entrepreneurs' progress. A mentor will be assigned to accompany each team/entrepreneur following agile methodologies steps.

- The mentor is a professional with a good knowledge of those agile methods (design thinking, lean startup, canvas business model...) with good experiences in designing businesses model and launching companies.

Mentors and entrepreneurs are meeting at least in 4 sessions to define the main part of the business strategy:

INCOME	▪ Where will they come from? ▪ From whom? ▪ How often? ▪ What is the possible forecast for the next 6 months?
EXPENSES	▪ A small cost analysis (simple, but they must be clear about how much will cost each product or service they want to sell) ▪ What other expenses do they have?
PRODUCTION	▪ Time analysis ▪ How long does it take to make each product / service? ▪ If they need equipment or not, ▪ Where they will do it, ▪ Do they need special facilities, etc ..
COMMERCIAL	▪ How are they going to get clients? ▪ What channels will they use? ▪ How often? ▪ What kind of tools, argumentation will they use?
VALUE PROPOSITION	▪ A clear elevator pitch (being able to explain their business in 30 seconds), ▪ A clear value curve to be able to compare with the competition
MARKETING / COMMUNICATION	▪ Brand image, logos, media, ▪ Which channels will they use? How often? How?

All this information needs to be documented by the end of the process. It sets up the base of the upcoming business and will be used as indicators to evaluate the entrepreneurship progress after the incubation period.

During the incubation, the mentors are organizing the monitoring following this **3-part methodology**:

Part 1: Getting Ideas	
Unit 1	PROJECT ANALYSIS: Human and economic objectives
Unit 2	CANVAS MODEL BUSINESS
Unit 3	CLIENT PROFILE + VALUES MAPPING
Unit 4	ADAPTABILITY + DEFINING VALUABLE PROPOSAL
Part 2: Validation	
Unit 5	EXPERIMENTS DESIGN
Unit 6	HYPOTHESIS VALIDATION: becoming researchers, Archaeologists, Journalists...
Unit 7	ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: designing new values proposal
Part 3: Prototyping	
Unit 8	CREATING THE SMALLEST VIABLE PRODUCT
Unit 9	VALIDATING MARKETS
Unit 10	ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: Business model validation

After completing the incubation phase, our new entrepreneurs are encouraged to take their businesses to the next level by launching them into the market. During the subsequent three months, dedicated mentors maintain close contact with their mentees. This ongoing mentorship serves to assess both the outcomes and the processes, allowing for adjustments if deemed necessary.

These follow-up sessions involve an analysis of the indicators that have been carefully tailored to each business's unique context. The aim is to analyse he evolution of the business, comparing it against the initial forecasts made during the mentoring sessions. This analysis provides valuable insights into the factors influencing business outcomes.

By examining the data and drawing from the real-world experiences gathered 'from the street,' mentor and mentee will collaborate to refine the business model. They adapt and fine-tune strategies based on the new information and initial results, ensuring that the business continues to progress effectively.

COACHING: 10 WEEKS AND 5 GOALS TO WORK ON SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the dynamic landscape of entrepreneurship and business incubation, coaching plays a pivotal role in nurturing and guiding emerging entrepreneurs. As individuals and startups navigate the challenges of developing their business concepts, products, and services, the presence of a skilled coach can be a beacon of support, providing invaluable guidance, motivation, and mentorship.

This coaching program is structured around five core components, each addressing a fundamental aspect of personal development and the role of coaching in incubation: Values, Beliefs, Self Steem, Mental Map, Deservingness. Throughout this program, participants will engage in practical exercises, self-reflection, and discussions to deepen their understanding of these fundamental concepts. We will also employ effective mentoring techniques, including active listening, powerful questioning, and constructive feedback, to facilitate your personal growth journey.

By the end of this module, you will:

- ✓ Possess a profound understanding of your core values and beliefs.
- ✓ Cultivate higher self-esteem and self-confidence.
- ✓ Navigate your mental map to perceive the world from a more empowered perspective.
- ✓ Embrace your deservingness of success and abundance.
- ✓ Prepare to embark on a transformative journey of self-discovery and personal growth. Let's begin this empowering module together.

Values (Understanding Your 'Why')

Objectives	The Power of Values as Catalysts for Change
1. Initiating Positive Self-Discovery 2. Inward Reflection at One's Own Pace 3. Empowering Emotional Self-Management	In this module, we delve into the profound influence of core values as catalysts for personal and professional change. By engaging with and defining their core values, participants establish a **direct connection with their motivation and decision-making processes**. The coaching journey is designed to guide entrepreneurs in exploring these values and addressing essential questions: 1. Why Have I Chosen to Participate in this Program? 2. What Ventures Have I Embarked Upon? 3. What Purpose Does It Serve? **Recommendations:** For our initial session, it is highly recommended to create a nurturing and confidential space where entrepreneurs feel secure and understood. Here, the coach's role is to actively listen and provide unwavering support throughout the journey of self-discovery and transformation.

Beliefs: Breaking Free from Self-Imposed Perceptions

Objectives	Unlocking the Unconscious
1. Identify with the entrepreneur behavioural patterns that may constrain and those that empower him/her. 2. Work the empowerment of self-image. 3. Strengthen emotional anchors that will support the entrepreneur in low moments.	Approximately 90% of our actions unfold unconsciously, in automatic pilot mode. Our subconscious is a mosaic of beliefs we've accumulated throughout our lives, with a significant influence from our early years, particularly childhood. The pivotal task is to discern between **limiting beliefs** (e.g., "I lack painting skills," "I struggle with technology," "I'm not a confident public speaker," "I lack creativity") and **empowering beliefs** (e.g., "I excel at connecting with people and making them laugh," "I'm adept at problem-solving and innovation," "I have a knack for generating business ideas"). This identification process is key to realizing our true aspirations. Without it, we may find ourselves caught in repetitive patterns, inadvertently self-sabotaging our potential for growth. **Recommendations:** Given the great impact of beliefs on our lives, a single session may be insufficient. Therefore, it is advisable to dedicate this initial session to laying the groundwork, reserving 10-15 minutes in 1 or 2 follow-up sessions, if necessary, for further exploration and reinforcement.

Self-Esteem: If Not You, Then Who?	
Objectives 1. Work the "I AM…" adapted to each entrepreneur.	**"I AM..."** The human capacity for perceiving the external world is truly remarkable, but when it comes to introspection, it can prove to be more challenging. With a simple exercise, you can witness this for yourself: • Create a list of aspects you dislike or believe you are not proficient in. • Upon completion, compose another list enumerating qualities and strengths you admire or excel in. Typically, the first list is effortless to compile, with entrepreneurs readily expressing their reservations and self-critiques. Conversely, crafting the second list may demand more time. This tendency is a reflection of our innate self-defence mechanisms. The reassuring news is that **this dynamic is changeable** and can be reshaped. **Recommendations:** In every session with entrepreneurs, it is beneficial to assess their self-esteem. This practice ensures that tools and strategies can be provided to help individuals recognize their inherent greatness and foster a powerful self-image.

Mental Map: Our Interpretation Shapes Our Reality	
Objectives	**Navigating Beyond the Map**
1. Awakening Self-Awareness 2. Defining the Ideal Self-Image	In this section we embark on a profound journey alongside the entrepreneur—a voyage of self-discovery where we explore their mental landscape. Our objective is **to channel all learning experiences without judgment or self-reproach**, acknowledging that there is no distinction between good and bad; there is only learning. **Recommendations:** During each session with the entrepreneur, it is beneficial to assess their self-esteem. This practice ensures that tools can be provided to help them recognize their inherent greatness and nurture a powerful self-image.

DESERVING: You deserve more than enough	
Objectives	**You Deserve To Be Happy**
1. Defining Happiness 2. Provide guidance and support to help the entrepreneur let go of sources of suffering. 3. Facilitate the process of self-forgiveness and introduce the concept of merit into their daily life.	The natural state of the human being is to be happy. This basic idea, that is obvious in the current educational system practically worldwide, is not reached so easily because we think we don't deserve it. One of the most conscious liberator awareness is **understanding that we deserve the good things** that happen to us and be happy. **Recommendations:** In this session, it is advisable to introduce concrete exercises related to the concept of "merit." These exercises aim to instil the habit of recognizing and embracing the idea of deserving happiness while reprogramming the subconscious mind.

INCUBATION PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Session	Training Sessions	Mentoring	Coaching
1st Session	Design thinking (Module 1)	• Project Analysis: Human & Economic	**+ Values (Understanding Your 'Why')**
	Lean Startup (Module 1)		
	Canvas Business Model (Module 1)	• Canvas Model Business	**+ Beliefs: Breaking Free from Self-Imposed Perceptions**
	Business Strategy (Module 2)		
	Hypothesis Validation (Module 2)	• Client Profile + Values Mapping	
2nd Session	Marketing Plan (Module 2)	• Adaptibility	**Self-Esteem: If Not You, Then Who?**
	Digital Marketing (Module 2)		
	Communication Plan (Module 2)	• Experiment Design	
	Importance of a Financial Plan (Module 5)		
	Finance: Accounting, financial fundraising (Module 5)	• Hypothesis validation	
3rd Session	Human Resources Management (Module 3)	• Analysis of Results	**Mental Map: Our Interpretation Shapes Our Reality**
	The 5 Main roles of Human Resources (Module 3)	• Creating the smallest viable product	
	Conflict Management (Module 3)		
4th Session	Module 4: Public Procurement	• Validating Market Analysis Results	**DESERVING: You deserve more than enough**

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ANNEX I: MODULE 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **True or False: Design thinking is a human-centered approach to problem-solving that allows for both divergent and convergent thinking styles.**

   [Answer: True]

2. **Which step of the design thinking process is associated with divergent thinking?**
   a. Step 1: Empathizing.
   b. Step 2: Defining.
   c. Step 3: Getting ideas.
   d. Step 4: Prototyping.
   e. Step 5: Testing.
   f. Step 6: Assessing.

   [Answer: c. Step 3: Getting ideas]

3. **Which of the following is NOT one of the nine key elements of a business model in the Business Model Canvas innovation tool?**
   a. Customer Segments.
   b. Value Proposition.
   c. Channels.
   d. Customer Relationships.
   e. Key Resources.
   f. Key Activities.
   g. Key Partners.
   h. Revenue Streams.
   i. Cost Structure.

   [Answer: There is no option that is not one of the nine key elements of a business model in the Business Model Canvas innovation tool.]

4. **True or False: The lean startup methodology seeks to increase wasteful practices during the earliest phases of a company.**

   [Answer: False]

5. **What is the main purpose of the lean startup methodology?**
   a. To increase wasteful practices during the earliest phases of a company.
   b. To require large amounts of outside funding, elaborate business plans, or a perfect product.
   c. To tailor the product or service to the specific needs of its customers.
   d. To assess consumers' specific demands and how to meet that demand using the least number of resources possible.

   [Answer: d. To assess consumers' specific demands and how to meet that demand using the least number of resources possible]

ANNEX II: MODULE 2 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **True or False: A strategy is the selected process through which a specific future state is expected to be reached.**

   [Answer: True]

2. **Which of the following is NOT a learning goal of Module 2?**

   a. To be able to design a business plan based on Design Thinking and Lean startup methodologies.
   b. To acquire competencies to test and to validate hypothesis related to market needs and value propositions.
   c. To plan marketing strategies adapted to resources available.
   d. To learn how to manage finances and accounting.

   [Answer: d]

3. **Which of the following is a reason why hypothesis validation is important?**

   a. Entrepreneurs are managing a business and making it profitable in an environment of uncertainty: validating quickly and cheaply is essential.
   b. A business plan must always be validated.
   c. The Canvas does not reflect contact with customers.
   d. All of the above.

   [Answer: a]

4. **True or False: The SWOT analysis is used to detect the opportunities and threats that a company faces, as well as the strengths and weaknesses it has.**

   [Answer: True]

5. **Multiple Choice: What is the main reason for failure when developing businesses and services?**

   a. Lack of funding.
   b. Lack of marketing strategies.
   c. Developing businesses and services that nobody finally needs.
   d. Poor management.

   [Answer: a, b, d]

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ANNEX III: MODULE 3 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **What is the most important element of an organization?**
   a. Money
   b. Employees
   c. Products
   d. Goods

   [Answer: b]

2. **How many are the roles of the HR Department?**

   a. Only 1
   b. 4
   c. 5
   d. 7

   [Answer: c]

3. **HR is responsible for the recruitment of the staff.**
   a. True
   b. False

   [Answer: b]

4. **Taking up an HR position requires a bachelor's degree in the specific field.**

   a. True
   b. False

   [Answer: b]

5. **The HR Department should always go on the side of the directors.**
   a. True
   b. False

   [Answer: b]

ANNEX IV: MODULE 4 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **What are the fundamental principles of public procurement in the EU?**
   a. Transparency, competition, and efficiency
   b. Confidentiality, exclusivity, and flexibility
   c. Openness, monopoly, and cost-effectiveness
   d. Secrecy, restraint, and economy

   [Answer: a]

2. **Which of the following is NOT a type of public procurement procedure?**

   a. Open procedure
   b. Restricted procedure
   c. Competitive negotiation procedure
   d. Confidential procedure

   [Answer: d]

3. **The Public Procurement Act in Bulgaria defines the conditions and procedures for awarding public procurements for public works, supply, or services.**
   a. True
   b. False

   [Answer: a]

4. **Public procurement in Spain constitutes approximately 20% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).**

   a. True
   b. False

   [Answer: b]

5. **National advertising thresholds for works contracts in Ireland, as of January 1, 2022, are €2,500,000 for Government Departments and Offices.**

   a. True
   b. False

   [Answer: b]

ANNEX V: MODULE 5 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **What is a financial plan?**
   a. A snapshot of the health of your business.
   b. A list of all the necessary expenditures to keep your small business growing.
   c. An overview of your current business financials and projections for growth.
   d. A guideline for how to manage your costs.

   [Answer: c]

2. **Why is a financial plan important for small businesses?**
   a. It's a reminder of what your goals are and what you're trying to achieve.
   b. It lays out what your possible costs are and how to manage them.
   c. Investors, bankers, and creditors won't meet with you without one.
   d. All of the above.

   [Answer: d]

3. **What are the three key characteristics of a successful entrepreneur from a financial perspective?**
   a. Risk-taking, strategic planning, and effective communication.
   b. Aggressiveness, clarity, and precision.
   c. Risk-taking, strategic planning, and clarity.
   d. Aggressiveness, strategic planning, and effective communication.

   [Answer: a]

4. **What is net working capital?**
   a. The amount of money you have left over after paying all your bills.
   b. Accounts receivable plus inventory minus accounts payable.
   c. The amount of money you have available to invest in new assets.
   d. The amount of money you owe to your suppliers.

   [Answer: b]

5. **What are some examples of financing options for entrepreneurs?**
   a. National or regional grants, microcredits, and venture capital.
   b. Crowdfunding, foundations, and commercial credit.
   c. National or regional grants, microcredits, and crowdfunding.
   d. Venture capital, foundations, and commercial credit.

   [Answer: a]