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Promoting Entrepreneurship among Young People with Migrant Background, focusing on the Trade of Natural Products

Policy Brief Recommendations: Leveraging Technology and Collaboration in Entrepreneurship Education for Migrant Youth (Policy Brief 6)

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Executive Summary

Entrepreneurship among migrant youth is crucial for the economic landscape of Greece, Cyprus, Ireland, Turkey, Spain, and Italy, contributing to local economies and cultural diversity. However, they face barriers such as limited access to education, resources, language differences, and inadequate support systems. The natural products market presents a promising opportunity, aligning with traditional skills and offering pathways for innovation and sustainability.

In Greece, migrants represent about 12% of the population and have significant entrepreneurial potential, particularly in the natural products sector. Yet, language barriers, limited resources, and insufficient support hinder their integration into the economic fabric of the country.

In Spain, education is essential for empowering migrants. The rapid development of information and communication technologies facilitates educational delivery, meeting the complex needs of migrant youth. Improved access to digital devices and online learning platforms enables them to leverage technological knowledge for business in local products.

In Cyprus, technology provides valuable opportunities for education and entrepreneurship. Online platforms and courses equip aspiring entrepreneurs with necessary skills. However, migrants often face challenges in accessing these resources. Collaborative learning methods can bridge these gaps, fostering better understanding and inclusivity.

In Italy, the focus is on using technology and collaborative learning to enhance entrepreneurship among young migrants in the natural products sector. Digital platforms, collaborative learning labs, and initiatives to improve digital literacy aim to address the digital divide and create inclusive opportunities.

In Turkey, migrant youth possess immense potential for economic contributions through entrepreneurship. They face obstacles like inadequate access to education, language barriers, and limited business ecosystem integration. Leveraging technology and fostering collaboration can enhance their entrepreneurship education and integration.

In Ireland, technology and collaboration are seen as transformative tools to address barriers faced by migrant youth. By equipping them with entrepreneurial skills and creating inclusive pathways, their potential in the natural products trade can be unlocked, fostering sustainable economic growth.

This policy brief aims to provide actionable insights for policymakers, NGOs, educational institutions, and business development organizations. By integrating digital platforms and collaborative learning models, we seek to enhance access to entrepreneurship education and facilitate migrant youth's entry into the natural products market, fostering sustainable economic growth and social cohesion across these partner countries.



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Introduction

Entrepreneurship among migrant youth is a crucial component of Greece's economic landscape, contributing to local economies and cultural diversity. Migrants represent about 12% of Greece's population and hold significant potential for entrepreneurial ventures. However, challenges such as language barriers, limited resources, and inadequate support systems hinder their integration into the economic fabric of the country. The natural products market offers a promising avenue for migrant entrepreneurs, aligning with traditional skills and knowledge while presenting opportunities for innovation and sustainability.





Background

Greece: Greece's strategic location has resulted in a diverse migrant population, making up about 12% of the total population. Migrant entrepreneurs contribute significantly to sectors like retail, hospitality, and agriculture. However, systemic barriers such as language differences, limited financial resources, and inadequate support networks hinder their full potential. Only 30% of migrants have access to entrepreneurial training, and 20% receive adequate financial support (Hellenic Statistical Authority, Bank of Greece). The natural products market, including agriculture and organic produce, aligns with many migrants' skills and offers growth opportunities, but existing support systems are fragmented and insufficient.

Spain: In Spain, integrating ICT into literacy and education can significantly improve migrant youth's business initiatives. Public-private partnerships have developed innovative responses to these needs, offering effective literacy and educational opportunities in challenging environments. Migrant youth face barriers such as socio-economic, legal, and infrastructural challenges, which include the high cost of technology and internet access, language barriers, and legal status issues.

Cyprus: Technology provides invaluable resources for young entrepreneurs in Cyprus. Programs like StartSmart and online courses on platforms such as Udemy, Skillshare, Coursera, and Khan Academy support entrepreneurial journeys. However, migrants face significant challenges in accessing these technologies. Collaborative learning methods can bridge these gaps, fostering better understanding and inclusivity.

Italy: Migrant youth in Italy face substantial barriers to entrepreneurship in the natural products sector due to language challenges and lower digital access. Collaborative learning models, such as workshops and cultural exchange programs, have shown effectiveness in fostering cross-cultural understanding and skill development, leading to increased entrepreneurial success.

Turkey: Türkiye has seen a substantial influx of migrants, with youth facing unique challenges in education and entrepreneurship. Barriers include inadequate access to education, language difficulties, and limited integration into the business ecosystem. Many show entrepreneurial intentions but lack support, highlighting the need for targeted educational programs and digital skills development.

Ireland: Migrant youth in Ireland face barriers such as limited access to resources, language and cultural challenges, and a digital divide. Entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in equipping them with necessary skills. Innovations in technology and collaboration present opportunities to overcome these challenges, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and community engagement.



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Summary:

Across these countries, migrant youth face common barriers to entrepreneurship, including language difficulties, limited resources, and inadequate support systems. The natural products market presents a significant opportunity for entrepreneurial ventures. By leveraging technology, fostering collaborative learning, and enhancing support networks, policymakers can create an inclusive environment that nurtures the entrepreneurial potential of migrant youth, fostering economic integration and growth.





Analysis of the Issue

- **Digital Platforms for Entrepreneurship Education:**

- Across Europe, online platforms play a critical role in providing entrepreneurial education to migrant youth. These platforms must offer multilingual courses, be mobile-friendly, and accessible on low-bandwidth connections.
- For instance, Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Ireland, Cyprus leverage platforms like Coursera and Khan Academy, while Spain's "Miríadax" platform has significantly increased migrant participation.
- However, many migrant youth face barriers such as the high cost of digital devices and limited internet connectivity. For instance, in Greece, 50% of migrant households lack sufficient digital devices (ITU, 2023).

- **Collaborative Learning Models:**

- Collaborative learning models are essential for fostering mutual learning and understanding between migrant and native youth. These models include joint business planning workshops and cross-cultural product development projects.
- The OECD (2023) found that such environments can increase entrepreneurial success rates by 30%. In Germany, the "Buddy Program" has shown improved integration and entrepreneurial outcomes, and Italy's Erasmus+ projects further illustrate the effectiveness of these models.

- **Access to Technology and Digital Literacy:**

- Migrant youth in countries like Cyprus, Spanish, Italian and Ireland often face limited access to affordable devices, reliable internet, and digital literacy.
- Spain's "Digital Frontiers" study (2023) highlights how digital exclusion impacts migrants' access to opportunities. Cyprus also faces challenges due to unstable housing and limited infrastructure. Programs like the UK's "Digital Divide" project, providing refurbished devices and affordable internet plans, offer solutions to these issues.

- **Educational and Language Barriers:**



- Traditional education systems often do not meet the needs of migrant youth, particularly in entrepreneurship. In Turkey, for example, limited proficiency in Turkish and a lack of targeted educational programs hinder entrepreneurial aspirations. Addressing these gaps through customized, flexible, and multilingual educational content via digital platforms can bridge the divide.
- **Support Networks:** Migrant youth frequently lack access to mentorship, networking, and community support. This issue is evident in Ireland and Turkey, where migrant youth often find themselves isolated from local business communities. Effective support networks, facilitated by collaborations between educational institutions, community organizations, and private sector entities, can provide the necessary guidance and resources.

- **Policy Gaps:**

- Existing policies in many European countries, including this do not fully support the integration of migrant youth into entrepreneurship programs. Comprehensive policy frameworks addressing language support, cultural integration, and tailored financial assistance are necessary. Simplifying regulatory processes and providing financial incentives will help remove barriers to entrepreneurial ventures.





Policy Recommendations

1) Invest in Digital Infrastructure:

- Allocate resources to enhance digital infrastructure in migrant communities for reliable and affordable internet access.
- Partner with local governments and private stakeholders to build infrastructure in high migrant population areas.

2) Support Collaborative Programs:

- Facilitate joint educational and entrepreneurial initiatives promoting cross-cultural collaboration and mutual learning.
- Develop programs pairing migrant and native youth in workshops and projects, supported by educational institutions and community organizations.

3) Enhance Digital Literacy:

- Implement comprehensive digital literacy training tailored to migrant youth.
- Establish community access centers with digital resources and trainers, collaborating with NGOs and private partners.

4) Expand Access to Affordable Technology:

- Partner with tech firms to provide low-cost or refurbished devices.
- Launch initiatives offering affordable devices and internet plans, pre-loaded with educational and entrepreneurial resources.

5) Foster Community-Based Support Networks:

- Develop mentorship programs pairing experienced entrepreneurs with migrant youth.
- Engage local business leaders and institutions to establish mentorship programs, ensuring effective communication and guidance.

6) Promote Sustainable Business Practices:

- Encourage sustainable business practices in the natural products sector.
- Provide training on sustainable practices and support eco-friendly initiatives.

7) Methodologies for Digital Training:

- Develop phased training programs addressing digital literacy, support for digital procedures, and innovative methodologies.
- Create friendly training spaces and strengthen community learning spaces.



8) Access to Tools:

- Collaborate with social initiatives and corporate social responsibility programs to provide necessary tools and devices.
- Rethink the acquisition model for computer equipment.

9) Leverage EU-Funded Digital Solutions:

- Promote self-paced and online learning to enhance time management and focus.
- Develop learning communities for shared challenges and collective strategies.

10) Integrate Digital Learning Tools:

- Develop and distribute digital educational materials tailored to migrant youth needs.
- Ensure these tools are accessible, user-friendly, and available in multiple languages.

11) Develop Tailored Educational Programs:

- Design curricula addressing the specific challenges and opportunities faced by migrant youth.
- Include practical components such as project-based learning and internships.

12) Enhance Language and Integration Support:

- Provide language training programs supporting entrepreneurial education.
- Create initiatives helping migrant youth build social and professional networks.

13) Create Supportive Policy Frameworks:

- Simplify regulatory processes for migrant youth to access entrepreneurship programs.
- Ensure inclusive policies that consider the unique needs of migrant youth.

14) Leverage Community-Based Support:

- Encourage community organizations to develop support networks and resource centers for migrant youth entrepreneurs.
- Organize workshops, seminars, and networking events.



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15) Strengthen Financial Literacy:

- Implement financial literacy programs educating migrant youth on managing finances and accessing credit.
- Partner with financial institutions to offer tailored workshops and resources.

16) Facilitate Market Access:

- Create platforms connecting migrant youth entrepreneurs with local and international markets.
- Organize trade fairs, expos, and networking events.

17) Support Research and Data Collection:

- Conduct research to identify the specific needs and challenges of migrant youth in entrepreneurship.
- Use data to inform policy decisions and develop targeted support programs.

18) Encourage Innovation and Creativity:

- Promote innovation hubs and incubators supporting young migrant entrepreneurs.
- Offer grants and incentives for innovative projects addressing social and economic issues.

19) Promote Cultural Competency Training:

- Offer cultural competency training for policymakers, educators, and service providers to ensure culturally sensitive and responsive entrepreneurship support services.



Conclusion

This policy brief highlights the importance of leveraging technology and collaborative educational strategies to empower migrant youth in entrepreneurship across Greece, Cyprus, Ireland, Turkey, Spain, and Italy. By investing in digital infrastructure, supporting collaborative programs, enhancing digital literacy, and expanding access to affordable technology, we can create a supportive environment for migrant entrepreneurs. Additionally, fostering community-based support networks, promoting sustainable business practices, and providing tailored educational programs are crucial for their success.

Partner countries have demonstrated the value of integrating digital tools and collaborative learning to overcome barriers faced by migrant youth. Greece and Cyprus focus on enhancing digital literacy and infrastructure, while Spain emphasizes methodologies for digital training. Italy advocates for multilingual online platforms and collaborative learning models, and Turkey highlights the need for tailored educational programs and policy support. Ireland underscores the importance of fostering inclusive ecosystems through stakeholder collaboration.

By implementing these comprehensive recommendations, policymakers can unlock the entrepreneurial potential of migrant youth, fostering economic growth, social integration, and cultural diversity across Europe. This collaborative effort will ensure that migrant youth have the resources, support, and opportunities they need to succeed as entrepreneurs, contributing to a more inclusive and prosperous society.



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