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NATURAL ORIGINS

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

Policy Recommendations Paper

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NATURAL ORIGINS

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1.Executive Summary

The "Natural Origins" project targets social inclusion of youth with migrant backgrounds by developing better opportunities for entrepreneurship within the natural products sector. Based on lessons learned during the implementation of the project in various partner countries, this Policy Recommendations Paper tries to detail how targeted training activities and collaborative approaches can help overcome significant social and economic challenges standing in the way for migrant communities.

The paper also makes some actionable recommendations for public authorities, policymakers, NGOs, and local organizations toward the integration of third-country nationals through entrepreneurship in the natural products area. Key lessons from training activities emphasize a pressing need for culturally sensitive training programs, accessible upskilling opportunities, and better access to finance and mentorship. These latter aspects have been identified as the key factors that enable migrant entrepreneurs to overcome various fixities, including lack of language proficiency, difficulties in financial access, and unfamiliarity with local regulations.

Core Recommendations:

- **Tailor Development of Training and Upskilling Programs:** Business skills, digital skills, and regulatory understanding are common themes throughout the training programs from partner country activities. Resources must be tailored for cultural adaptability, and languages are critical preconditions for inclusivity and effectiveness.
- **Ease Access to Finance and Market Integration:** Partnerships with financial institutions and the creation of microfinancing programs can help migrant entrepreneurs win the financial backing they require. Regional hubs and coworking spaces link migrant entrepreneurs to the local market and other resources.
- **Enhancing Cross-Sector Collaboration:** A multi-stakeholder relationship involving government agencies, NGOs, educational institutions, and private sector players establishes a strong support network for migrant entrepreneurs. In fact, such networks establish sustained support, continuous mentorship, and a system for follow-up.

The following paper provides a comprehensive guide on how to create an instrument of social inclusion through entrepreneurship by drawing from best practices and lessons learned within the partner countries.

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2. Introduction

The policy recommendations paper entitled "Natural Origins" represents an evidence-based strategy for the social inclusion and economic empowerment of youth with migrant backgrounds through entrepreneurship, with a specific focus on natural products. This initiative aligns with the broader objectives of the European Union for social cohesion and inclusive growth. This project will leverage entrepreneurship to tackle the structural barriers that prevent migrants from fully contributing to the economic and social life of their host countries. The introduction sets the rationale, context, and strategic approach to the policy recommendations, further underscoring how relevant and potent they may be.

The following Policy Recommendations Paper is elaborated upon experiences and knowledge gained with collaborative training activities across Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Türkiye, and Spain. Partners, through customized upskilling programs for migrant communities, tackled particular challenges such as language barriers and needs for cultural adjustments in educational programs. The paper synthesizes those experiences and translates them into actionable recommendations for public authorities, policymakers, NGOs, and all other relevant stakeholders who would want to support inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystems.

1. Context and Rationale

Over the last couple of years, the challenges to the integration of migrant flows within the European Union have been on the rise, with specific emphasis on the economic and social inclusion of young migrants. This influx of migrants as refugees or asylum seekers has shown that policy responses need to ensure temporary and immediate relief while creating sustainable pathways for integration. The particular problems these young migrants face include poor linguistic proficiency, lack of recognition of qualifications, and limited access to professional networks and capital. These often lead to significant social and economic marginalization, placing this group in a very vulnerable situation within the EU labor market.

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a significant tool to address these challenges. It allows young migrants to leverage their competencies, experiences, and cultural heritage to build businesses that contribute to the development of their host communities. Both the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan and the Social Economy Action Plan have called for more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems that support marginalized groups, including migrants, by ensuring access to training, finance, and networks (European Commission, 2013; 2021). These frameworks are integral to the objectives of the "Natural Origins" project, which seeks to enable young migrants through entrepreneurship in the natural products market—a sector with substantial potential for economic and social impacts.

2. The Natural Products Sector: A Strategic Opportunity

The natural products sector, including agriculture, organic products, herbal goods, and sustainable crafts, offers a promising platform for young migrants to engage in entrepreneurship. Many migrants bring traditional knowledge and expertise in agriculture and natural product development from their countries of origin. Building on this foundation, the project aims to create opportunities that are both economically sustainable and culturally enriching by combining these traditional skills with market-oriented business strategies.

The European market for natural products has experienced steady growth, fueled by consumer demand for sustainable and locally sourced goods. This demand aligns seamlessly with the skills and knowledge of migrant communities, providing them with a unique competitive advantage. Furthermore, the sector supports small-scale, locally embedded businesses, making it an accessible option for young entrepreneurs who may lack the resources to enter more capital-intensive industries (UNHCR, 2024). By encouraging these ventures, the "Natural Origins" project not only enhances economic self-reliance for migrants but also contributes to the sustainable growth of local economies, aligning with the European Union's green transition agenda.

3. The Role of Policy in Supporting Entrepreneurship for Social Inclusion

Public policy is paramount in delineating the enabling environment in which entrepreneurship can flourish. This includes policies aimed at removing systemic barriers and providing essential support mechanisms, such as access to finance, training, and market integration. The policy recommendations in this paper advocate for a multilevel governance approach, calling for coordinated actions at EU, national, and local levels. This approach ensures that young migrants receive continued support in their entrepreneurial endeavors (European Commission, 2020; UNHCR, 2024).

Several existing EU policies provide a foundation for the recommendations proposed in this paper:

- **The European Pillar of Social Rights** affirms the need for inclusive labor markets and equal opportunities, advocating for targeted support to marginalized groups, including migrants (European Commission, 2017).
- **The Social Economy Action Plan (2021)** promotes an inclusive economy by integrating disadvantaged groups through social entrepreneurship, cooperative models, and public-private partnerships.
- **The Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027** emphasizes the importance of inclusive education, labor market integration, and entrepreneurship as pathways to migrant inclusion (European Commission, 2021).

By building on these frameworks, the "Natural Origins" project incorporates best practices and develops innovative models that can be adapted and scaled across diverse European contexts, drawing from the experiences gained during the project's implementation.

4. Structure of the Policy Recommendations Paper

This paper draws on experiences, lessons learned, and best practices adopted while implementing the "Natural Origins" project. Policy recommendations are organized to provide practical insights and tools for stakeholders across various aspects, including:

- **Upskilling and Training:** Comprehensive programs that combine language support, digital literacy, and vocational training tailored to the specific needs of young migrants entering the natural products industry.
- **Access to Finance:** Strategies to connect migrant entrepreneurs with microfinance institutions, social investors, and government support programs, enabling them to secure the financial resources needed to start and grow their businesses.
- **Market Integration:** Recommendations for developing business incubators and co-working spaces that foster networking, skill-building, and market access for migrant-led enterprises.

- **Policy and Governance Support:** Advocacy for a multi-level governance approach to ensure aligned support across EU, national, and local levels, addressing the unique challenges faced by migrant entrepreneurs.

5. The Need for a Comprehensive and Scalable Approach

The policy recommendations are crafted to be scalable and adaptable. This paper emphasizes strategies that can be implemented and tailored to various European regions, ensuring flexibility to suit diverse contexts and needs. A dissemination strategy targeting approximately 200 relevant organizations and 300 trainers ensures widespread visibility, facilitating the replication and scaling of effective practices. By leveraging the successful models developed through the "Natural Origins" project, this paper aims to promote a cohesive, inclusive, and resilient economic ecosystem across Europe.

3. EU Migration and Integration Policies: An Overview of the Current State

Current State in the EU

The integration of migrants and refugees is a complex and critical challenge for the European Union (EU). Over the past decade, migration inflows driven by conflicts, socio-economic inequalities, and environmental changes have reshaped the demographic and socio-economic landscapes of EU member states. The influx of migrants, especially from regions like Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine, presents both opportunities and challenges, necessitating a comprehensive approach to integration. This section examines the current state of migrant integration in the EU, focusing on demographic trends, policy frameworks, challenges, and successful practices across member states.

1. Demographics of Migration in the EU

The EU hosts millions of migrants and refugees, with significant variations across member states. Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Poland are among the largest recipients of migrants due to geographical location and established migration routes (Eurostat, 2023). Germany, for example, leads in asylum seeker reception, underpinned by robust infrastructure and policies for integration (European Commission, 2023). Meanwhile, Southern European countries like Greece and Italy face resource limitations and administrative constraints, complicating effective management of migration flows.

The demographics of migrants arriving in the EU are diverse, spanning age groups, education levels, and skillsets. A substantial proportion comprises young people seeking economic opportunities or fleeing conflict. Despite their potential, these migrants face structural barriers, including language challenges, unrecognized qualifications, and limited access to labor markets (European Commission, 2021).

2. Employment and Economic Integration

Employment is central to successful integration, providing economic independence and social mobility. The EU's *Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027* promotes labor market integration through tailored programs such as vocational training, language courses, and entrepreneurship support (European Commission, 2021). However, implementation and effectiveness vary across member states.

- **Northern European Countries**: Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands have advanced policies, including job placement services, language support, and vocational training aligned with local markets. Germany's integration courses, combining language and civic education, have proven effective in improving labor market outcomes for migrants (OECD, 2022).
- **Southern and Eastern European Countries**: Resource constraints and high inflows in countries like Greece and Italy hinder comprehensive support, resulting in higher migrant unemployment rates and reliance on informal, low-skilled work (UNHCR, 2024).

3. Social Inclusion and Public Services Access

Access to public services—healthcare, education, and housing—is crucial for migrant inclusion. The EU's *European Pillar of Social Rights* seeks to ensure fair access to these services, promoting social cohesion (European Commission, 2017). However, disparities persist:

- **Northern and Western Europe**: Countries like Sweden offer robust welfare systems, including free language courses and healthcare access, facilitating smoother transitions for migrants (OECD, 2022).
- **Southern Europe**: Municipalities in Greece and Italy face financial and administrative constraints, leading to service gaps and bureaucratic hurdles, exacerbating migrant exclusion (UNHCR, 2024).

4. Entrepreneurship as a Tool for Inclusion

Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a pathway to economic empowerment and social inclusion for migrants in the EU. The *Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan* and the *Social Economy Action Plan* emphasize entrepreneurship's role in creating economic opportunities and integrating marginalized groups, including migrants (European Commission, 2013; 2021). These policies advocate for supportive ecosystems that provide access to finance, mentorship, and networks to foster the success of migrant entrepreneurs.

The natural products sector, which prioritizes sustainable and locally sourced goods, presents a strategic opportunity for young migrants. Many migrants bring traditional knowledge and skills in agriculture and natural product development, making this sector an ideal fit. Several EU countries have implemented programs to support migrant entrepreneurs. For example, France's Migrant Business Incubators provide tailored support for business planning, market access, and regulatory navigation (UNHCR, 2024).

Despite these efforts, systemic barriers persist. Migrants often struggle to access financing due to limited credit history or collateral and face challenges in navigating local business regulations. Language barriers and discrimination further hinder entrepreneurial success. Overcoming these obstacles requires coordinated action across governance levels and collaboration between public and private stakeholders (European Commission, 2021).

5. Policy Frameworks and Integration Initiatives

The EU has developed a comprehensive set of policy frameworks to enhance migrant integration across member states. The *Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027* offers a strategic roadmap for improving socio-economic inclusion through targeted measures in education, employment, health, and housing (European Commission, 2021). It advocates for a whole-of-society approach, promoting collaboration among governments, private sectors, and civil society organizations to build cohesive support systems for migrants.

Municipalities play a critical role in implementing these integration policies at the local level. The UNHCR (2024) Policy Brief highlights how local governments are at the forefront of these efforts, providing both immediate reception services and long-term support programs. Successful examples include Berlin's integration program and Portugal's municipal initiatives in Fundão, which showcase how local authorities can mobilize resources and partnerships to achieve positive outcomes. However, municipalities in high-inflow regions often face limited financial and administrative capacities, hindering effective support.

6. Challenges and Areas for Improvement

- Despite progress, several persistent challenges hinder migrant integration in the EU:
- **Uneven Resource Distribution:** Resource allocation varies significantly across member states, resulting in disparities in integration outcomes. Southern and Eastern European countries, which are often the first points of arrival, lack the infrastructure to manage large migrant inflows effectively (European Commission, 2023).
- **Fragmented Governance and Coordination:** A lack of coordination between EU, national, and local authorities creates gaps in policy implementation and service delivery. Addressing these fragmentation issues through improved multi-level governance is critical for cohesive and efficient integration efforts (European Commission, 2021).
- **Labor Market Barriers:** Migrants face challenges in accessing labor markets due to unrecognized qualifications, language barriers, and discriminatory hiring practices. Comprehensive vocational training programs and initiatives for skills recognition are essential for addressing these barriers and meeting the goals outlined in the EU's integration frameworks (UNHCR, 2024).

4. Methodology

The methodology used for developing the policy recommendations for the "Natural Origins" project was comprehensive, participatory, and based on well-established frameworks for social and educational research. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods, the project ensured a detailed and nuanced understanding of the needs, barriers, and opportunities faced by young migrants engaging in entrepreneurship through the natural products sector. This methodology was designed to be adaptable across different EU regions, ensuring the recommendations could be effectively scaled and implemented.

4.1. Data Collection and Sources

To ensure a comprehensive and accurate analysis, the project employed a variety of data collection techniques to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights:

a. Surveys and Questionnaires

Structured questionnaires were central to data collection, targeting project partners to gather information on:

- The effectiveness of training tools and methods used during educational sessions.
- Challenges faced by trainers and participants, such as language barriers and digital literacy gaps.

The questionnaire adhered to best practices in survey methodology, combining closed-ended questions for quantitative data and open-ended questions for richer, qualitative insights. Areas of focus included digital tools, participants' prior knowledge, and the impact of partnerships with local organizations, enabling comprehensive statistical and thematic analysis.

b. Stakeholder Engagement and Consultations

Engaging stakeholders was a cornerstone of the methodology, ensuring recommendations were grounded in practical, real-world insights through:

- **Educational Activities Across Partner Countries:** Tailored training sessions focusing on entrepreneurship and natural products. These included hands-on workshops, discussions, and digital learning modules, with direct observations providing immediate feedback on participant experiences.
- **Three-Day Intensive School for Trainers in Italy:** This event equipped trainers with advanced entrepreneurship and pedagogical strategies through workshops, role-playing, and strategy discussions. Feedback from trainers informed the refinement of methodologies.
- **Regular Partner Meetings and Policy Brief Discussions:** Partners met to review outcomes, share lessons learned, and develop eight policy briefs. These briefs provided evidence-based insights into regional challenges and successes, shaping the final recommendations.

4.2. Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data underwent rigorous qualitative and quantitative analysis to ensure a holistic understanding of the project's outcomes:

a. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, was applied to qualitative data such as meeting notes and interview transcripts. Key themes identified included:

- The need for tailored digital tools accommodating diverse linguistic and technical skill levels.
- The value of partnerships with local organizations, such as chambers of commerce, in enhancing training effectiveness.
- The importance of culturally sensitive mentoring in building trust and engagement with young migrants.

This approach ensured that the recommendations were informed by diverse perspectives and sensitive to the unique experiences of the target groups.

b. Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data, including demographic details and training effectiveness ratings, were statistically analyzed to measure impact and identify trends.

4.3. Lessons Learned from the Use of the Platform

The *NaturalOrigins Online Learning Space* played a pivotal role in training delivery. Insights from its usage included:

- **Enhanced Accessibility:** The platform's flexibility allowed participants to engage at their own pace, accommodating the unpredictable schedules of young migrants.
- **Interactive Engagement:** Multimedia elements and quizzes improved engagement and practical learning, increasing retention and application of knowledge.
- **Challenges with Digital Literacy:** Some participants faced difficulties navigating the platform due to limited digital skills, emphasizing the need for preparatory digital literacy training.

4.4. Utilization of Data in Developing Recommendations

The gathered data informed the development of evidence-based policy recommendations through the following steps:

- **Synthesis of Qualitative and Quantitative Findings:** Combining statistical feedback with qualitative testimonials provided a holistic understanding of the project's impact, addressing multiple dimensions of challenges faced by migrants.
- **Identification of Best Practices:** Successful practices, such as collaborations with chambers of commerce and NGOs, were identified as models for replication.
- **Comparative Analysis Across Project Countries:** Policy briefs enabled a cross-regional analysis, ensuring the recommendations addressed both shared challenges and region-specific needs, fostering adaptability.

4.5. Limitations and Considerations

While the methodology was robust, several limitations should be acknowledged:

- **Regional Variability:** Diverse socio-economic conditions and migration patterns across project countries posed challenges in creating universally applicable recommendations. Flexible recommendations were designed to address these differences.
- **Digital Access and Literacy:** Challenges in digital access and literacy highlighted the need for foundational skills training and greater technology access, which should be prioritized in future initiatives.

5. Key Findings during the implementation period (Partner Countries Analysis)

5.1. Spain

The "Natural Origins" project in Spain focused on practical training and hands-on learning experiences to support migrant participants in exploring entrepreneurship within the natural products sector. This section outlines the tools and methodologies used, barriers encountered, insights gained, and recommendations for future initiatives.

Tools Used in Training

The Spanish team employed a variety of tools to enhance learning and engagement:

- **Presentation Tools:** A projector and screen were used to display project information, including its website and social media channels, providing participants with an understanding of the initiative's broader context.
- **Printed Materials:** Physical copies of the trainers' manual were distributed, allowing participants to follow the content in a tangible format.
- **Natural Product Samples:** Participants interacted with local natural products such as natural paints, scented candles, healthy sweets, and organic wine. These samples offered practical insights into the products' quality and potential marketability. Participants also learned about the success stories of local entrepreneurs.

Feedback indicated that these tools effectively enhanced understanding and engagement during the workshops.

Educational Methodology Employed

The training approach was tailored to the diverse profiles of participants, with a focus on:

- **Adaptable Workshops:** Content was customized to accommodate varying language skills and interests in business, ensuring inclusivity.
- **Hands-On Learning:** Practical and visual exercises, including group role-playing, engaged participants actively and fostered interactive learning.
- **Real-World Relevance:** By focusing on entrepreneurship in the natural products sector, the methodology connected theoretical knowledge to practical applications, making the training engaging and meaningful.

This adaptable approach proved successful in fostering active participation and ensuring that the content was relevant and accessible.

Barriers and Practical Problems Encountered

The primary challenge was designing activities that catered to a wide range of participant profiles, including diverse backgrounds, skill levels, and interests. Despite this, participants remained engaged and actively contributed to the sessions, minimizing significant barriers to engagement.

Meeting Target Group Needs

Many participants initially lacked motivation or did not view themselves as potential entrepreneurs. The workshops addressed this by:

- Providing **success stories** of local entrepreneurs.
- Offering **hands-on activities** that showcased the potential of the natural products sector.
- Delivering **accessible and relatable content** that encouraged participants to consider entrepreneurial opportunities.

These strategies successfully fostered interest and motivation among participants.

Target Group's Vision on Entrepreneurship

Participants highlighted challenges in pursuing entrepreneurship in Spain, including:

- **Regulatory Complexity:** Participants found Spain's legal and regulatory environment for businesses daunting, with significant variation across Autonomous Communities.
- **Proposed Solutions:** Suggestions included the establishment of dedicated public administration services to guide migrant entrepreneurs through legal requirements and provide accessible resources for compliance.

Prior Knowledge of Natural Products

There was a range of familiarity with natural products:

- Trainers had moderate knowledge of the sector, while participants, particularly young individuals, had limited understanding.
- Workshop content was tailored to address these differences, ensuring an accessible introduction to the natural products industry.

Collaboration with Third Parties

External partnerships played a critical role in the success of the training program:

- **Support from Local Organizations:** Entities such as Fundación Caja Granada, Hotel Gar Anat, and IES Cartuja secondary school provided training spaces and logistical support.
- **Contributions from Entrepreneurs:** Local entrepreneurs shared their experiences and offered practical insights, inspiring participants and enriching the program's content.

These collaborations enhanced the training's comprehensiveness and relevance.

Feedback from Participants and Partners

Feedback from participants and trainers was overwhelmingly positive:

- Participants valued the workshops' organization, content, practical activities, and real-world applications.
- Suggestions for improvement included expanding training materials and resources, such as offering additional information about the Spanish learning space.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the experiences in Spain, the following recommendations are proposed for future training programs:

1. **Engage with Secondary Schools:** Partner with schools in areas with significant migrant populations to increase outreach and participation.
2. **Expand Training Resources:** Provide additional materials and resources to support participants in exploring entrepreneurship further.
3. **Simplify Regulatory Navigation:** Advocate for public administration agencies to establish dedicated guidance services for migrant entrepreneurs.

By building on these insights, future training programs can better support migrant participants in achieving entrepreneurial success.

5.2. Italy

The "Natural Origins" project in Italy, led by EGInA, focused on training young migrants and future trainers in entrepreneurship within the natural products sector. With a particular emphasis on olive oil and wine production, central to the Umbrian economy, the project employed tailored tools, methodologies, and collaborations to address participant needs and overcome challenges. Below is an overview of the tools used, methodologies employed, barriers encountered, and recommendations for future programs.

Tools Used in Training

The Italian team utilized a mix of digital, physical, and interactive tools to facilitate learning:

- **Natural Origins Learning Platform:** This self-paced online resource offered theoretical content on local products like olive oil and Sagrantino wine. It provided participants with foundational knowledge, accommodating those who benefited from flexible learning environments.
- **Digital Presentations:** Used to introduce historical, cultural, and market contexts of Umbrian natural products, offering visual clarity for complex topics like market trends and production techniques.
- **Miro Board:** Facilitated collaborative activities for trainers, enabling resource sharing and ongoing collaboration beyond the workshops.

- **Sensory Analysis Kits:** Included samples of olive oil and wine, specialized glasses, and tasting sheets to teach sensory evaluation techniques. Participants applied these techniques in practical sessions, learning to assess product quality through smell, taste, and sight.

These tools effectively combined theoretical and practical learning, with participants particularly valuing the hands-on elements.

Educational Methodology Employed

The training employed a **blended learning methodology**, balancing online and in-person workshops to cater to adult learners. Key elements included:

- **Experiential Learning:** Practical sessions, such as sensory analysis workshops, enabled participants to directly engage with products, developing critical skills for quality assessment.
- **Cultural and Historical Contextualization:** Theoretical sessions emphasized the cultural and historical roots of Umbrian products, fostering a deeper connection and engagement among participants.
- **Interactive Techniques:** Group discussions, role-playing, and collaborative exercises ensured active participation, enhancing both engagement and understanding.

This approach was particularly effective in balancing theoretical knowledge with real-world application.

Barriers and Practical Problems Encountered

The team faced several challenges during implementation:

1. **Language Barriers:** Many young migrants had limited proficiency in Italian or English. This was addressed by using linguistic mediators, simplified language, and visual aids to support comprehension.
2. **Limited Access to Digital Resources:** Some participants lacked access to computers, necessitating reliance on smartphones and printed materials. While this ensured continuity, it highlighted the need for greater digital resource accessibility.
3. **Cultural Perceptions of Sensory Characteristics:** Differences in how participants interpreted flavors (e.g., "bitter" or "strong" tastes) influenced sensory evaluations. Trainers addressed this through discussions, which enriched the understanding of sensory diversity and its implications for entrepreneurship.

Meeting Target Group Needs

The training addressed several key needs identified through feedback from participants and trainers:

- **Hands-On Learning:** Practical activities complemented theoretical knowledge, offering participants tangible skills in sensory evaluation and business planning.

- **Personalized Guidance:** Mentorship and language support helped bridge gaps in communication and understanding, catering to the diverse socio-economic backgrounds of participants.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Interactive and inclusive approaches ensured that training was relevant to participants' varied experiences and needs.

Participants emphasized the importance of multilingual training materials to enhance accessibility.

Target Group's Vision on Entrepreneurship

Migrant participants identified several challenges in pursuing entrepreneurship in Italy:

- **Regulatory Complexity:** Navigating Italy's bureaucratic processes, including obtaining permits and managing taxes, posed significant obstacles.
- **Limited Resources:** Participants faced barriers such as restricted access to startup capital, networks, and market information.
- **Discrimination:** Experiences of bias and exclusion hindered opportunities for some participants.

Proposed solutions included:

- Establishing public mentorship programs and business incubators tailored for migrants.
- Encouraging community-building initiatives like shared workspaces and cooperative marketing to reduce costs and improve visibility.

Prior Knowledge of Natural Products

Knowledge levels varied among participants:

- **Trainers:** Had a foundational understanding of sensory analysis and product evaluation, allowing them to guide participants effectively.
- **Migrants:** Often had limited prior knowledge, with familiarity primarily rooted in cultural backgrounds. Practical workshops successfully bridged these gaps, enhancing their understanding and engagement.

Collaboration with Third Parties

The success of the project was bolstered by partnerships with local organizations:

- **Associazione Italiana Conoscere l'Olio d'Oliva** and **La Strada del Sagrantino:** Provided expertise in olive oil and wine production, enriching the training with specialized knowledge.
- **Caritas** and **Informagiovani Foligno:** Facilitated access to migrant communities and provided logistical support.

These collaborations expanded the program's reach and relevance, ensuring participants received comprehensive support.

Feedback from Partners on Educational Activities

Feedback from trainers and facilitators highlighted the program's strengths, including:

- The effective balance between theoretical and practical learning.
- The cultural contextualization of training content, which deepened participants' engagement.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- Offering more personalized support to accommodate varying skill levels.
- Extending follow-up sessions to reinforce learning.
- Integrating more interactive digital tools and mentorship opportunities to support migrant entrepreneurs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the Italian implementation, the following recommendations are proposed for enhancing future entrepreneurship training programs for migrants:

1. **Tailored Learning Pathways:** Design flexible training programs to meet diverse educational backgrounds and skill levels.
2. **Language and Communication Support:** Provide multilingual resources and communication aids to bridge language gaps.
3. **Mentorship and Peer Learning Opportunities:** Establish mentorship networks and collaborative platforms to support migrant entrepreneurs.
4. **Partnerships with Local Businesses:** Strengthen collaborations with businesses to provide practical training and real-world insights.
5. **Financial Literacy and Micro-Financing:** Incorporate training on financial literacy and improve access to funding options for migrants.

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5.3. Cyprus

he implementation of the "Natural Origins" project in Cyprus, led by DOUMAG Ltd., provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for fostering entrepreneurship among young migrants. Tailored to diverse linguistic and educational needs, the training sessions emphasized accessibility and adaptability. This section highlights the tools and methods used, barriers encountered, and recommendations derived from the Cyprus implementation.

Tools Used in the Training

DOUMAG Ltd. utilized a combination of digital and printed resources to ensure accessibility for participants with varying levels of technological familiarity. Recognizing the linguistic diversity of the young migrants, the training incorporated online materials in Arabic and Somali, which were the

primary languages of most participants. Translators played a pivotal role in navigating the content, enabling participants to engage effectively with the material. Visual aids, including YouTube videos and PowerPoint presentations, were employed to deliver information in an engaging and comprehensible manner.

A standout tool in the training sessions was the Business Model Canvas, introduced to help participants visually map out and conceptualize their entrepreneurial ideas. This tool was provided in printed form, ensuring that all participants could use it regardless of their digital literacy levels. For the sessions aimed at adult trainers and teachers, entirely online resources were utilized, including PowerPoint slides and instructional materials, to communicate the project's objectives and approaches. This ensured that educators could effectively relay the training content to their migrant students.

Educational Methodology Employed

The training methodology focused on group learning and collaboration, recognizing that interactive approaches are particularly effective for young migrants. Sessions were developed in consultation with translators and care workers from IOM Cyprus to align with the specific needs of participants. Collaborative, task-oriented activities were central to the training, keeping participants engaged and fostering a sense of teamwork.

Group tasks, such as brainstorming entrepreneurial ideas and completing the Business Model Canvas, helped sustain participant interest and provided practical applications of theoretical concepts. Trainers observed that this interactive approach contributed positively to the learning experience. However, they also noted that some participants struggled to stay engaged, which highlighted the need for more inclusive structuring of activities in future sessions.

Barriers and Practical Problems Encountered

Several challenges emerged during the training sessions, including participant distraction and language barriers. The multilingual nature of the sessions, conducted in both Arabic and Somali, extended their duration and led to fatigue among participants. Trainers identified this as a critical issue, recommending smaller, linguistically homogeneous groups to enhance focus and streamline activities.

Another challenge was the limited motivation and engagement of some participants, attributed to their precarious social and economic circumstances. Trainers adapted by incorporating multimedia resources and simplifying the language of instruction, yet systemic constraints such as limited time and resources within mainstream educational settings continued to hinder progress.

Target Group Needs and How They Were Met

The training highlighted key needs among the young migrant participants, particularly in terms of engagement, language support, and access to entrepreneurial resources. Participants often struggled with traditional educational approaches, requiring multimedia and hands-on methods to stay motivated. Trainers addressed this by introducing audio and video materials, which helped maintain interest and supported varied learning styles.

Language barriers remained a significant issue, as many participants lacked proficiency in the host country's language or English. Translators and simplified instructional materials helped mitigate this challenge, but trainers emphasized the need for additional language training tailored to

entrepreneurship. Participants also expressed a strong need for financial and logistical support, with many citing their limited awareness of existing business resources as a major hurdle.

Target Group's Vision on Entrepreneurship

Young migrants in Cyprus viewed entrepreneurship as a potential pathway to economic independence but expressed concerns about financial instability and a lack of basic business knowledge. Many participants were unaware of business incubators or support systems that could assist them in launching ventures. Trainers introduced these resources during the sessions, explaining eligibility requirements and offering guidance on accessing them.

Participants highlighted the need for ongoing support to bridge the gap between training and actual business formation. Caregivers and trainers recommended providing additional mentorship and practical assistance to help migrants navigate the complex process of starting and managing a business.

Prior Knowledge of Natural Products

Participants demonstrated a strong foundation in natural products and agriculture, often drawing from their experiences in their home countries. Many had worked on small-scale farms or managed fruit cultivation, which gave them valuable insights into the potential of the natural products sector. This prior knowledge made it easier for them to engage with training content focused on business conceptualization in this field.

The trainers noted that this familiarity with agriculture enhanced participants' enthusiasm and understanding of entrepreneurial opportunities in the natural products sector. Hands-on experience with cultivation and land management allowed participants to connect their personal expertise to the concepts introduced in the training sessions.

Collaboration with Third Parties

Collaboration with local organizations played a significant role in the program's success. Partnerships with IOM Cyprus and the Technical School of Paphos provided access to participants and logistical support. IOM Cyprus's insights into the needs of the target group informed the training design, ensuring that sessions were relevant and effective.

These partnerships facilitated a tailored approach, with preparatory discussions allowing trainers to adapt the program to the specific needs of each group. Local schools and NGOs contributed resources and support, enhancing the program's overall impact and creating a foundation for future collaboration.

Feedback from Partners on Educational Activities

Feedback from trainers, caregivers, and participants underscored the importance of preparatory work in ensuring successful outcomes. Teachers and caregivers highlighted the value of pre-training discussions to align the program with participant needs. They also recommended keeping group sizes under 15 to minimize distractions and enhance engagement.

Additionally, partners suggested incorporating more foundational reviews at the start of each session, as some participants lacked familiarity with basic entrepreneurial terminology. This feedback emphasized the need for structured and accessible training programs tailored to migrant populations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The experiences in Cyprus revealed a critical need for formalized entrepreneurship training programs for migrants and refugees. DOUMAG Ltd. recommends the establishment of structured courses that provide practical business knowledge and insights into local market practices. **Financial support mechanisms, including tailored loans and subsidies, are essential to enable migrants to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.**

Further, the Cypriot government should explore partnerships with banks and NGOs to create **affordable land leasing and business development opportunities for migrants**. Comprehensive support, addressing legal, financial, and practical aspects of business formation, is essential for fostering sustainable entrepreneurial success among migrant communities in Cyprus.

5.4. Greece

The "Natural Origins" project in Greece, implemented by MD Brainnovation, aimed to empower young migrants by providing training on entrepreneurship within the natural products sector. Designed to address the diverse backgrounds and skill levels of participants, the program utilized practical tools and inclusive methodologies to enhance learning outcomes and engagement. This section details the tools and methodologies used, barriers encountered, and the key insights gained during the training sessions.

Tools Used in the Training

MD Brainnovation employed a combination of digital and interactive resources to cater to the educational needs of participants. PowerPoint presentations were extensively used to deliver structured, visually engaging content that simplified entrepreneurial concepts. These presentations ensured accessibility for participants with varying levels of prior knowledge, allowing them to better understand fundamental business strategies. Additionally, participants were encouraged to use PowerPoint for their presentations, fostering both familiarity with technology and the development of professional communication skills.

To enhance creativity and digital literacy, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Lumen5 were introduced. These tools allowed participants to explore innovative ways to create content and streamline communication processes. While these AI tools were well-received and proved effective, the online collaboration tool Miro posed challenges due to participants' limited digital literacy. Although Miro was introduced to encourage teamwork and interactive learning, some participants struggled to engage fully with this platform. This revealed a need for basic digital skills training, which could be integrated into future programs to ensure effective use of such tools.

Educational Methodology Employed

The training program employed a participant-centered approach that acknowledged the linguistic and cultural diversity of its target group. Team-based learning was a cornerstone of the methodology, with groups comprising participants, translators, educators, and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce of Corinth. This collaborative model fostered an inclusive environment where participants could share ideas and learn from each other. It also provided a space for translators to bridge language gaps, ensuring that all participants could engage with the training materials.

Storytelling was another central element of the training. The program featured success stories of migrant entrepreneurs, such as Syrian refugee chef Taher Jasmati, whose journey from adversity to business success inspired participants. These real-world examples helped participants envision possibilities for their entrepreneurial paths, despite potential obstacles. Additionally, trainers used real-time presentations and videos to support active learning, which provided relatable and practical examples. This combination of theoretical and experiential learning methods proved highly effective in maintaining participant engagement and deepening their understanding of entrepreneurship.

Barriers and Practical Problems Encountered

Language barriers were among the most significant challenges faced by the training team. Many participants struggled to understand technical business terminology, which hampered their ability to fully engage with the content. To address this issue, translations were provided in five languages, and bilingual facilitators supported participants during sessions. The involvement of a representative from the Chamber of Commerce further bridged these gaps by providing practical, real-world insights into business concepts, making the content more accessible.

Another challenge was participants' limited familiarity with entrepreneurial concepts and digital tools. Many participants lacked prior exposure to business practices or the necessary skills to navigate platforms like Miro effectively. This revealed a digital literacy gap among the target group, which affected their ability to fully participate in team-based activities and online collaboration. Future programs could address this by integrating introductory sessions on digital tools and providing ongoing support for participants unfamiliar with technology.

Target Group Needs and How They Were Met

The feedback gathered during the training highlighted several key needs within the target group. Financial support emerged as a critical requirement, as many participants faced difficulties accessing credit or securing loans. This lack of financial resources discouraged participants from pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. Similarly, the complexities of Greece's bureaucratic processes, coupled with uncertainty around legal residency and business regulations, created additional barriers.

To meet these needs, the program provided basic legal information and facilitated connections with the Chamber of Commerce of Corinth, which offered mentorship and practical advice. Participants were also introduced to structured training materials and an online platform for further learning. While these steps addressed some immediate concerns, participants emphasized the need for more comprehensive support, such as government-backed microfinancing initiatives, to make entrepreneurship more accessible.

Target Group's Vision on Entrepreneurship

Participants shared their perspectives on the unique challenges of entrepreneurship in Greece. Establishing credibility with financial institutions was a common concern, as many participants lacked financial histories or were perceived as high-risk due to their migrant status. This often restricted their access to traditional credit or loans, making it difficult to secure the capital needed to start a business. Furthermore, the complex legal and regulatory environment, including residency requirements, deterred participants from committing fully to entrepreneurial ventures.

During discussions, participants proposed several potential solutions, such as government-supported microfinancing programs tailored to migrants and simplified bureaucratic processes. These measures were viewed as essential for reducing financial and administrative barriers. Participants also

suggested creating mentorship programs and cooperative initiatives that could support migrant entrepreneurs in navigating the business landscape and fostering community-based collaboration.

Prior Knowledge of Natural Products

Both trainers and participants demonstrated varying degrees of familiarity with natural products. Trainers often had a solid foundation in agricultural and artisanal practices, allowing them to provide in-depth insights during the sessions. Participants, on the other hand, brought diverse experiences shaped by their cultural backgrounds, particularly in herbal remedies, agriculture, and handmade goods. This prior knowledge enriched discussions and provided a basis for participants to connect new concepts to their existing expertise.

While some participants initially struggled with technical aspects of natural product quality evaluation, hands-on activities bridged these gaps effectively. Sensory analysis exercises, for example, allowed participants to engage directly with products and understand key quality indicators. These practical experiences not only enhanced learning but also increased participants' enthusiasm for applying entrepreneurial strategies to the natural products sector.

Collaboration with Third Parties

The collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce of Corinth was instrumental in the project's success. The Chamber provided mentorship, practical advice, and insights into the Greek market, helping participants better understand local business dynamics. This partnership also helped participants feel more integrated into the local business community and confident in pursuing their entrepreneurial goals. Additionally, the Chamber's involvement inspired participants by showcasing the potential for success within the natural products sector.

The Chamber's contributions extended beyond mentorship, offering participants networking opportunities and practical knowledge about market access. Trainers observed that this collaboration enriched the learning experience by connecting theoretical concepts to real-world applications, making the training more relevant and impactful.

Feedback from Partners on Educational Activities

Feedback from participants and trainers was highly positive. Participants appreciated the quality of the training, the use of translated materials, and the welcoming atmosphere. These elements created an inclusive environment where participants felt encouraged to engage and learn. Trainers emphasized the effectiveness of storytelling and collaborative learning techniques in maintaining participant interest and facilitating understanding.

Suggestions for improvement included organizing site visits to successful migrant-owned businesses. Trainers believed that these visits would provide tangible examples of success and further inspire participants. Additionally, trainers recommended expanding mentorship opportunities and incorporating more digital literacy training to better equip participants for the challenges of modern entrepreneurship.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the implementation in Greece, several recommendations have emerged to enhance future programs. These include introducing government-supported microfinancing initiatives tailored for migrant entrepreneurs to address financial barriers. Simplifying legal and bureaucratic requirements would also encourage more migrants to pursue entrepreneurship. Strengthening partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce could facilitate mentorship and market access, while digital literacy

programs could help participants engage more effectively with online tools. Lastly, culturally sensitive and language-accessible training materials would ensure that programs remain inclusive and practical. The Greek experience underscores the importance of collaborative approaches and targeted support in empowering migrants to succeed as entrepreneurs in the natural products sector.

Recommendations at a glance:

- Introduce government-backed **microfinancing initiatives for migrant entrepreneurs** to address financial barriers.
- **Simplify legal and bureaucratic requirements for business** setup to make processes more accessible.
- **Strengthen partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce** to provide market access and mentorship.
- Offer **digital literacy programs** to improve engagement with online tools and collaborative platforms.
- Develop **culturally sensitive and language-accessible training materials** to ensure inclusivity.

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5.5. Türkiye

The implementation of the "Natural Origins" project in Türkiye, led by KEVADER, highlighted the unique challenges and opportunities associated with fostering entrepreneurship among young migrants. Through a combination of tailored tools, experiential learning methodologies, and collaborative partnerships, the program sought to address the diverse needs of its participants. This section explores the tools and methods used, barriers encountered, and key recommendations derived from the training sessions.

Tools Used in the Training

KEVADER employed a combination of digital tools, physical materials, and interactive approaches to enhance the learning experience. Digital platforms facilitated remote engagement and provided participants with access to essential resources, while hands-on activities allowed them to practice applying the skills they were learning. Interactive workshops were particularly successful, enabling participants to collaborate, problem-solve, and actively engage with entrepreneurial concepts.

Despite the effectiveness of these tools, the program faced challenges with digital resources. Participants with limited digital literacy struggled with online tutorials and complex user interfaces, which hindered their engagement. To address this, simpler and more accessible digital tools were recommended for future initiatives. Visual aids and printed materials were also utilized to cater to participants who were less comfortable with technology, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.

Educational Methodology Employed

The training methodology centered on **experiential learning**, **peer collaboration**, and **role-play**, all of which helped participants connect theoretical concepts to real-world applications. A notable activity involved participants creating mock business plans, allowing them to integrate and apply their learning in a practical context. This approach made the training more relevant and engaging, particularly for participants with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds.

Traditional lecture-based teaching methods were less effective, especially for participants with varying levels of formal education. To address this, KEVADER emphasized interactive techniques, including group discussions and contextualized examples. By adapting the training to the participants' real-life challenges and experiences, the program fostered greater engagement and learning retention.

Barriers and Practical Problems Encountered

Several barriers were encountered during the training sessions, including language differences, limited digital literacy, and diverse educational levels among participants. To mitigate these challenges, KEVADER implemented bilingual resources and used simplified instructional materials. Visual aids and practical demonstrations further supported participants with limited language proficiency.

The diverse learning speeds of participants also posed challenges. Some participants required additional time and support to grasp complex business concepts, which necessitated adjustments in teaching strategies. Trainers incorporated personalized learning approaches and provided extra support to participants struggling with the material. These adaptations highlighted the importance of flexibility in addressing the varying needs of the target group.

Target Group Needs

Feedback from participants and trainers identified several key needs, including enhanced language support, practical business knowledge, and access to local networks. Many participants required assistance in understanding business terminology and navigating local market regulations. There was also a strong demand for resources on business planning, financial management, and engaging with the market.

Networking opportunities were identified as a critical gap. While the program introduced mentorship and provided initial business knowledge, participants emphasized the need for sustained resources and ongoing support to ensure long-term entrepreneurial success. This feedback underscored the importance of structured, continued engagement beyond the initial training phase.

Target Group's Vision on Entrepreneurship

Participants shared their perspectives on the obstacles they face in pursuing entrepreneurship in Türkiye. Financial constraints emerged as a significant barrier, with many participants highlighting difficulties in securing startup funding or accessing financial services. Additionally, unfamiliarity with local market dynamics and complex regulatory environments deterred many migrants from initiating business ventures.

Proposed solutions included expanded mentorship programs, introductory sessions on local business environments, and community-based support systems to strengthen entrepreneurial efforts. Participants suggested that government-backed microfinancing initiatives tailored to migrants could provide essential financial support and enable them to overcome economic barriers.

Prior Knowledge of Natural Products

The participants demonstrated varying levels of familiarity with natural products. Some had prior experience with agriculture, herbal products, or artisanal goods, which enabled them to engage more proactively with the training material. Others, particularly those with limited prior exposure, required foundational knowledge to fully benefit from the sessions.

Hands-on activities focusing on natural product trade proved highly effective in bridging knowledge gaps. Practical workshops, such as those involving sensory evaluation or market analysis, increased engagement and sparked interest among participants who initially lacked familiarity with the sector.

Collaboration with Third Parties

Collaborations with local organizations played a pivotal role in the success of the program. Partnerships with chambers of commerce and trade associations provided participants with practical insights into local market dynamics and regulatory requirements. Guest speakers from the natural products industry enriched the sessions by offering real-world advice and relatable success stories, which inspired participants and reinforced the training content.

These collaborations not only enhanced the quality of the training but also helped participants establish valuable connections with local networks. Trainers noted that the involvement of established business organizations added credibility to the program and motivated participants to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Feedback from Partners on Educational Activities

Feedback from trainers and facilitators emphasized the value of interactive and context-specific teaching methods. Role-playing exercises and real-world case studies were particularly effective in helping participants apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios. Trainers also suggested incorporating additional mentoring sessions to provide participants with sustained guidance and support.

External evaluators recommended increasing the use of interactive components, such as group projects and collaborative discussions, to maintain engagement throughout the training. These suggestions highlighted the importance of ongoing adaptation to participant needs to ensure the effectiveness of the program.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on KEVADER's experience in Türkiye, several recommendations are proposed to enhance future entrepreneurship training programs for migrants:

- **Enhanced Language Support:** Provide bilingual resources and simplified materials to address linguistic barriers and improve accessibility.
- **Expanded Mentorship Programs:** Develop structured, long-term mentorship initiatives to guide migrants through the entrepreneurial process and connect them with experienced professionals.
- **Stronger Partnerships with Local Businesses:** Collaborate with chambers of commerce, trade associations, and industry leaders to facilitate market access and offer practical insights.

- **Practical and Culturally Relevant Content:** Tailor training materials to reflect the diverse learning needs and cultural backgrounds of participants, ensuring relevance and inclusivity.
- **Ongoing Support Systems:** Establish mechanisms for transitioning participants from training to real-world application, such as financial literacy workshops, microfinancing options, and follow-up mentorship.

5.6 Ireland

KT, an Ireland-based IT company, participated in the "Natural Origins" project by providing insights rooted in their expertise in technology and business solutions. Although KT did not conduct direct training activities or have significant prior experience working with migrant communities, their perspective highlighted the potential role of digital tools in addressing the challenges faced by migrant entrepreneurs. This section summarizes KT's observations on migrant needs, recommendations for digital solutions, and the potential for IT-driven support models.

Observations on Migrant Entrepreneurship Needs

KT identified a critical need for clear, accessible information for migrant entrepreneurs, particularly in understanding local business regulations and navigating Ireland's bureaucratic processes. They observed that one of the primary barriers migrants face is confusion around legal and administrative requirements, which often discourages them from pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. KT noted that the complexity of these systems is further exacerbated by language barriers, making it difficult for migrants to access essential resources and information.

While KT's IT-focused expertise limited their ability to provide direct insights into the lived experiences of migrants, they highlighted the transformative potential of digital platforms. Specifically, user-friendly, multilingual tools could offer step-by-step guidance on legal, financial, and regulatory matters, reducing confusion and empowering migrants to confidently engage with the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. Such platforms could also serve as scalable solutions, reaching a broader audience and minimizing reliance on in-person assistance, which is often constrained by resources.

Recommendations for Digital Solutions

Based on their technological expertise, KT proposed several digital solutions to support migrant entrepreneurs. A key recommendation was the development of an online portal designed to address the specific needs of migrants entering the business world. This portal could include resources in multiple languages, interactive guides on starting a business, and automated assistance through chatbots. These features would provide accessible and practical guidance, helping migrants navigate the entrepreneurial process step by step.

KT also emphasized the importance of ensuring that these digital tools are user-friendly and culturally sensitive. For example, incorporating visuals, interactive elements, and context-specific examples could make the platform more intuitive for users with varying levels of digital literacy. KT suggested that such tools could not only bridge language gaps but also serve as a reliable and

scalable resource for disseminating accurate information, reducing the reliance on physical support channels.

Potential for IT-Driven Support Models

KT identified IT-driven models, such as virtual mentorship programs, as an innovative way to address the lack of local networks for many migrant entrepreneurs. They proposed the creation of online platforms where migrants could connect with business mentors who provide guidance and share expertise remotely. This approach would be particularly beneficial for migrants living in rural or isolated areas where access to in-person support may be limited. Virtual mentorship could also facilitate connections between migrants and successful entrepreneurs from similar backgrounds, fostering a sense of community and shared learning.

In addition to mentorship, KT highlighted the potential for digital networking platforms tailored to migrant entrepreneurs. These platforms could enable participants to build professional relationships, access industry-specific knowledge, and collaborate with peers and experts. By leveraging IT infrastructure, such initiatives would provide continuous and flexible support, ensuring that migrants have access to guidance and resources throughout their entrepreneurial journey.

Conclusion

KT's contributions to the "Natural Origins" project underscore the transformative role of technology in supporting migrant entrepreneurs. Their recommendations for multilingual digital platforms, interactive guidance, and virtual mentorship solutions offer a roadmap for enhancing accessibility and empowering migrants to navigate Ireland's business environment more effectively. While KT's involvement did not include direct training with migrants, their expertise in IT and business solutions provided valuable insights for designing scalable, technology-based support systems. By implementing these digital tools, the project could address key barriers faced by migrant entrepreneurs, fostering greater inclusivity and success in the entrepreneurial landscape.

6. Policy Recommendations for Fostering Migrant Entrepreneurship

The "Natural Origins" project underscores the importance of creating targeted, adaptable, and inclusive policies to support migrant entrepreneurship, especially in the natural products sector. Based on the experiences of partner countries detailed in Unit 5, the following recommendations aim to enhance social and economic inclusion for migrant entrepreneurs through education, resource accessibility, and cross-sector collaboration.

6.1. Tackling Social Exclusion through Educational Programs for Migrants

Educational programs tailored to the specific needs of migrants have emerged as a vital tool for promoting integration and developing entrepreneurial skills. Unit 5 underscored the success of culturally adapted training programs in countries such as Greece and Italy, where group settings with translators and familiar mentors created an inclusive learning environment. Similarly, Cyprus highlighted the role of community-based resources in building trust and engagement, while Spain's

focus on practical, skills-oriented workshops demonstrated the effectiveness of hands-on learning for young migrants with limited formal education.

1. Enhancing Lifelong Learning Opportunities

Lifelong learning plays a crucial role in equipping migrants with the skills needed to adapt to evolving job markets. Greece's use of storytelling and peer mentorship serves as a model for integrating practical skills training with language learning and cultural sensitivity (European Commission, 2021; UNHCR, 2024). For instance, the Italian approach of combining language courses with vocational training enables participants to acquire industry-specific terminology while gaining practical knowledge applicable to sectors like natural products.

Partnerships with educational institutions and local employers further enhance lifelong learning opportunities. Cyprus exemplified this by aligning training curricula with local market demands, in collaboration with chambers of commerce and trade associations. Such partnerships ensure that educational programs remain relevant to regional economic contexts, thereby increasing the employability of migrants.

2. Non-Formal Education for Upskilling and Reskilling

Non-formal education offers a practical and accessible avenue for equipping migrants with skills that align with community and market needs. In Greece and Cyprus, non-formal education initiatives provided training programs that directly connected participants with local economic opportunities, emphasizing the importance of practicality and relevance. Similarly, Spain's workshops concentrated on developing marketable skills in areas such as agriculture and digital technology, equipping participants with tools for immediate application in the workforce (European Commission, 2020).

Community-centered learning approaches further enhance the impact of non-formal education. By leveraging trusted local figures and culturally familiar mentors, programs in Cyprus effectively fostered inclusion and encouraged migrants to view their cultural heritage as an advantage rather than a limitation. These approaches create a supportive environment where migrants can develop both confidence and competence.

3. Linking Non-Formal Education to Formal Systems

Recognizing and validating prior skills is critical for ensuring the credibility of migrant training programs. Ireland's emphasis on digital solutions, such as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) systems, offers an innovative means of certifying migrant skills and experiences. By integrating these systems into educational frameworks, migrants can transition seamlessly from non-formal to formal qualifications, enhancing their ability to access opportunities in public and private sectors.

Flexible and modular training programs, as demonstrated in Italy and Greece, serve as effective pathways for linking non-formal education to formal systems. Such programs allow migrants to build on existing skills and progress toward formal qualifications while addressing their unique circumstances and needs (European Commission, 2021). Recognizing and building upon prior learning not only boosts individual potential but also strengthens integration into local economies and communities.

6.2. Promoting an Entrepreneurial Mindset for Migrants

Entrepreneurship is a vital pathway to economic independence. Key findings from Unit 5, especially from Greece and Spain, highlighted the need for support in building entrepreneurial networks and overcoming regulatory hurdles.

1. Engaging Key Players to Connect Migrants with Market Stakeholders

Migrants often face barriers to accessing established business networks, a challenge effectively mitigated through local partnerships in countries like Cyprus and Greece. Collaborative initiatives involving NGOs, chambers of commerce, and local businesses, as demonstrated in Spain, foster opportunities for knowledge exchange and resource sharing. These partnerships allow migrant entrepreneurs to gain critical insights into local market dynamics and build skills for navigating financial and legal systems (European Commission, 2021).

In practice, these collaborations connect migrants to key stakeholders, enhancing their ability to identify market opportunities and develop sustainable business strategies. For example, involving chambers of commerce provides access to mentorship, networking events, and resources tailored to local economic contexts. Such efforts also facilitate migrants' integration into their host communities, bridging cultural and professional gaps.

2. Establishing Comprehensive Mentoring Programs

The importance of structured mentorship programs was underscored in findings from Greece and Italy. These programs offer tailored guidance to migrants through partnerships with local business owners or industry experts. By addressing specific entrepreneurial challenges—such as business planning, marketing strategies, and financial management—mentors can significantly reduce the hurdles faced by migrants in establishing their businesses.

Mentorship programs also provide group workshops, which create a supportive environment for participants to learn collaboratively. Additionally, digital mentorship platforms, as proposed by Ireland, expand access to guidance for migrants in remote locations or with limited mobility. These platforms ensure that entrepreneurs can receive sector-specific advice regardless of their geographical constraints, fostering inclusivity and sustained support.

3. Provision of Digital Tools for Business Development

Digital tools are indispensable for modern business development, yet digital literacy remains a challenge for many migrants. In Greece, participants struggled with foundational digital skills, highlighting the need for targeted training. Programs like the *Natural Origins Online Learning Space* offer a practical solution, enabling migrants to acquire essential skills such as digital marketing, online inventory management, and financial tracking (UNHCR, 2024).

Access to these tools not only enhances operational efficiency but also expands the market reach of migrant-led businesses. By integrating digital platforms into entrepreneurship programs, migrants can build competencies that are critical in today's competitive markets, ultimately increasing their likelihood of success.

4. Improving Access to Capital for Migrant Entrepreneurs

A lack of access to traditional financial services was a recurring challenge across all partner countries, with particular emphasis in Spain and Cyprus. Migrants often face difficulties in securing loans due to limited credit histories or perceived financial risk. Microfinance and community-based lending initiatives, such as solidarity groups, offer viable alternatives by providing tailored financial solutions for migrants (European Commission, 2017).

Partnerships with microfinance institutions (MFIs) and social investors can facilitate access to startup capital, empowering migrants to launch or expand their businesses in the natural products sector. These collaborations also reduce reliance on conventional banking systems, which may be inaccessible to migrants, ensuring that financial inclusion supports entrepreneurial growth.

5. Addressing Language Barriers in Business Development

Language barriers present a significant obstacle to migrant entrepreneurs, particularly in accessing regulatory information and communicating with clients. Findings from Greece highlighted the necessity of language courses tailored for business purposes. Such courses equip migrants with the terminology and communication skills needed to navigate legal frameworks, engage with stakeholders, and attract customers effectively.

Additionally, Cyprus demonstrated the value of multilingual resources and interpretation support, which enable migrants to access critical business information in their preferred languages (European Commission, 2020). Incorporating multilingual digital tools, such as interactive guides and chatbots, further ensures that language barriers do not impede entrepreneurial success.

6.3. Policies to Enhance Entrepreneurship in the Natural Products Sector

The natural products sector, with its reliance on traditional knowledge, is ideally suited for migrant entrepreneurs. Findings from Greece and Italy demonstrated the potential of this sector to support sustainable, culturally significant businesses.

1. Social Entrepreneurship and Community-Based Business Models

Social enterprise models are particularly suited to the needs of migrant communities, especially in rural areas where shared resources and mentorship can drive economic activity. In Greece, the collaborative model employed through community centers demonstrated the value of pooling resources and building collective knowledge. These hubs served as platforms for mentorship, training, and connecting migrants to local market networks, significantly enhancing their entrepreneurial prospects.

Local authorities and NGOs should replicate this model by establishing resource hubs focused on sustainable natural products. These centers could provide migrants with access to equipment, technical training, and shared market opportunities. Such hubs would not only reduce startup costs but also promote inclusive entrepreneurship, enabling migrants to contribute meaningfully to local economies (European Commission, 2021).

2. Financial Support and Certification Programs

Access to certification programs is critical for enabling migrant entrepreneurs to enter premium markets such as organic, fair trade, and eco-certified products. Findings from Italy and Cyprus emphasized that certifications not only validate the quality of natural products but also position businesses to command higher prices and reach environmentally conscious consumers.

To support this, governments and financial institutions should introduce targeted financial programs, including low-interest loans, grants, or subsidies for eco-friendly practices. These incentives would help migrant entrepreneurs meet certification requirements, such as compliance with organic standards or fair-trade guidelines. Additionally, simplifying access to financial support for

certification processes would ensure that more migrants can tap into high-value markets, fostering the growth of sustainable businesses (European Commission, 2013).

3. Streamlined Administrative Processes

Navigating business registration and tax compliance often poses significant challenges for migrants unfamiliar with local regulations. Spain's experience highlights the benefits of reducing bureaucratic complexity through streamlined processes. Digital "one-stop-shops" could offer a single access point for business registration, licensing, and compliance, significantly reducing administrative burdens for migrant entrepreneurs.

Such platforms should be multilingual and user-friendly, incorporating step-by-step guidance to help migrants understand regulatory requirements. Automating processes where possible would further minimize delays and confusion, ensuring that entrepreneurs can focus on developing their businesses rather than navigating complex administrative procedures (UNHCR, 2024).

4. Building a Supportive Ecosystem for Migrant Entrepreneurs

Creating a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem requires ongoing collaboration between public and private sectors. Cyprus's community-based approach serves as a valuable model, demonstrating how local governments and NGOs can partner with private businesses to provide mentorship, market access, and shared resources. These partnerships not only create opportunities for migrant entrepreneurs but also strengthen ties between migrants and local communities.

In addition to local collaborations, digital platforms can play a vital role in fostering a supportive ecosystem. Online forums and peer learning networks, as recommended by the Irish partner, allow migrant entrepreneurs to share best practices, exchange knowledge, and collaborate across regions. These networks promote both social and economic integration, enabling migrants to develop businesses that align with local market demands while maintaining connections to their cultural heritage (European Commission, 2021).

7. Conclusion

The "Natural Origins" project has highlighted the transformative role of tailored entrepreneurship programs in promoting the social and economic inclusion of young migrants. These recommendations focus on three main areas: education and skill-building, entrepreneurial support, and sector-specific policies for the natural products industry. By synthesizing lessons learned from project implementation in diverse European contexts, this paper provides actionable strategies for stakeholders to foster a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Summary of Key Points and Practical Recommendations:

1. Educational and Skill-Building Opportunities

Migrants benefit from educational programs that address their specific needs while building their capacity for economic participation. Flexible, culturally responsive lifelong learning programs incorporating language training, digital literacy, and vocational skills are vital. Collaborative partnerships with educational institutions can formalize non-traditional education through

certifications that validate prior learning, enabling migrants to transition seamlessly into formal employment or entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2021; UNHCR, 2024). Blended learning models combining in-person, online, and mobile-friendly formats further enhance accessibility and cater to diverse schedules.

✓ **Practical Recommendations:**

- Develop flexible lifelong learning programs tailored to the natural products sector.
- Partner with institutions to establish recognized certifications validating non-formal education.
- Implement blended learning models that incorporate digital tools and mobile-friendly formats.

2. Entrepreneurial Support Systems:

Migrant entrepreneurs require robust support systems to navigate market entry, compliance, and business growth. Establishing mentorship networks with local business owners and industry experts can bridge knowledge gaps and provide tailored guidance. Local business incubators and co-working spaces dedicated to migrant-led enterprises offer resources and foster community engagement. Access to digital tools, including training in e-commerce and business management, is equally critical for scalability and competitiveness.

✓ **Practical Recommendations:**

- Establish mentorship programs connecting migrants with local experts and peers.
- Build dedicated business incubators and co-working spaces for migrant entrepreneurs.
- Promote access to digital tools and training in areas like e-commerce and social media marketing.

3. Sector-Specific Policies for the Natural Products Industry:

The natural products sector is uniquely suited to migrant entrepreneurship due to its reliance on traditional knowledge and sustainable practices. Social enterprise hubs focusing on natural products provide shared resources, mentorship, and access to premium markets, such as organic or fair trade. Simplified administrative processes and multilingual resources help reduce barriers for small migrant-owned businesses. Additionally, targeted financial programs such as microfinance and low-interest loans empower migrants to meet certification requirements and compete in high-value markets.

✓ **Practical Recommendations:**

- Develop social enterprise hubs with shared resources and mentorship opportunities.
- Simplify administrative processes through multilingual support and digital platforms.
- Offer financial incentives, such as microloans, for eco-friendly and certified products.

<u>Calls to Action for Stakeholders</u>

Each category of stakeholder has a vital role in implementing these recommendations. Here's how different groups can drive the success of migrant-led entrepreneurship programs:

1. **Governments and Policymakers**

   - **Call to Action**: Prioritize policies that support culturally inclusive education and entrepreneurship as a pathway to social inclusion. **Allocate funding for lifelong learning programs** that target migrants and **establish partnerships with financial institutions to create microfinancing options** for migrant-owned businesses. Ensure **regulatory frameworks accommodate social enterprises**, especially those in sectors like natural products, by **simplifying administrative processes** and offering grants or incentives for sustainable practices.

2. **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

   - **Call to Action**: NGOs are essential in providing direct support to migrant communities. Design programs that **offer culturally adapted training in language and business skills**, focusing on **practical, hands-on learning.** Partner with local educational institutions and chambers of commerce to connect migrant entrepreneurs with **mentorship opportunities and resources.** Additionally, advocate for funding opportunities that allow NGOs to provide financial support and training resources to migrant-led enterprises.

3. **Municipalities and Local Authorities**

   - **Call to Action**: Municipalities and local authorities play a pivotal role in fostering inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems for migrants. They should support the establishment of **local training centers and business incubators that act as community hubs, providing migrants with access to resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities.** These hubs can also serve as shared spaces where migrants can collaborate, receive guidance, and build community ties.

     To enhance accessibility and inclusivity, municipalities should equip these hubs with **free digital tools, such as computers, tablets, and software, enabling migrants to develop essential skills in digital marketing, business management, and e-commerce.** Additionally, municipalities can promote local partnerships with chambers of commerce and NGOs to create a coordinated support network. Offering shared working spaces, multilingual services, and digital access will empower migrants to navigate the business landscape more effectively, integrate into the local economy, and thrive as entrepreneurs.

4. **Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations**

   - **Call to Action**: Chambers of commerce should **facilitate integration by connecting migrant entrepreneurs with local business networks** and offering specialized **advisory services on regulations, market trends, and tax compliance.** Organize networking events, trade fairs, and exhibitions dedicated to migrant-led enterprises, particularly those focused on natural products, to promote visibility and market access. **Chambers can also play a role in developing certification pathways,** providing legitimacy and recognition for skills and products in high-value markets.

5. **Educational Institutions**

   - **Call to Action**: Design **culturally inclusive curricula** that address the specific educational needs of migrants, including language and business terminology relevant to the natural products sector. Partner with local employers and NGOs to **create modular certifications** that allow migrants to build credentials over time. Educational institutions can also offer **digital learning resources, ensuring that training materials are accessible to those with limited access to traditional classroom** settings.

6. **Financial Institutions and Social Investors**

   - **Call to Action**: Develop and promote **tailored financial products, such as microloans or community-based savings models,** that meet the unique needs of migrant entrepreneurs. Partner with local governments and chambers of commerce to offer financial literacy workshops and guidance on funding options. Social investors, including ethical investment funds, are encouraged to support businesses in the natural products sector with social impact, contributing to sustainable local economies and inclusive growth.

A Collaborative Path Forward

The recommendations outlined in this paper emphasize the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem that empowers young migrants. By integrating reforms in education, enhancing access to financial resources, and streamlining regulatory frameworks, stakeholders can address the unique challenges faced by migrant entrepreneurs. These strategies are not one-size-fits-all but are designed to be adaptable to local contexts, ensuring that solutions are relevant and effective across diverse European regions.

Stakeholders are urged to implement and advocate for these recommendations while tailoring them to the specific needs of their communities. Educational institutions, governments, NGOs, financial institutions, and the private sector each have a critical role to play in creating pathways for migrant entrepreneurs to thrive. Through coordinated efforts, we can establish an inclusive and resilient European economy, where diversity and innovation are celebrated. Together, we can empower migrants to not only integrate into their new communities but to become valued contributors and drivers of sustainable economic growth.

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