



POLICY BRIEF ON IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INCLUSIVE AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING SCHEMES



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**IMPROVING THE
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OF INCLUSIVE AND
SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
TRAINING SCHEMES**

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HIGHLIGHTS

- **Skills gaps remain an important barrier to sustainable inclusive and social entrepreneurship activities.** Surveys frequently highlight entrepreneurship skills gaps across the population. For example, only 50% of men in the European Union self-reported having the skills and knowledge needed to start a business between 2016 and 2020, and, for women rates were even lower, at 39%. Furthermore, there are important skills gaps for social entrepreneurship, which requires specific skill sets and access to knowledge and resources to maintain the social purpose and implement their specific business models.
- **Governments commonly use inclusive and social entrepreneurship training programmes to address these gaps.** Training can be delivered through multiple formats such as courses, workshops, bootcamps, coaching and mentoring, among others. In addition to boosting entrepreneurship skills, there is some evidence showing that entrepreneurship schemes can increase employability and that short formats can boost motivations for business creation and social entrepreneurship, especially among vulnerable groups who typically have lower levels of self-confidence.
- **The format of training programmes is evolving rapidly with online delivery becoming more common.** The use of digital platforms has accelerated greatly since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has improved the reach of many schemes but has also created challenges for training providers due to this format requiring a high level of self-motivation to self-manage learning. Another important trend is the shift from passive learning to experiential learning.
- **Overall, governments can strengthen training schemes for inclusive and social entrepreneurship in four areas:**
 - **Tailor training content** by identifying training needs for different target groups through *ex ante* evaluations and stakeholder consultations, focussing on the specific skills gaps faced. For example, older people often have lower levels of digital skills which may hinder their ability to register a business online and manage online VAT accounts. Decisions on the scale and format of training should consider existing support offers by government, private, and social economy actors.
 - **Improve access** to inclusive and social entrepreneurship training schemes by seeking to minimise barriers to training such as location, hours, accessibility (e.g. digital, physical) and lack of childcare. Many of these issues can be identified through stakeholder consultations and by partnering with training providers that have experience working with the target groups.
 - **Engage stakeholders and local actors** in the design and implementation of training schemes to ensure that they are relevant and appropriate for the targeted groups. Many schemes are delivered in partnership with organisations that have a history of working with the target groups, which sends a signal that governments are serious about engaging diverse client groups. The benefits of a partnership approach include increased trust between support provider and beneficiaries, improved outreach, and strengthened connections with other support offers.
 - **Use ongoing monitoring** to track key performance indicators, such as activity, participant satisfaction, output and outcome indicators, to ensure that the scheme is performing as expected, and conduct impact evaluations at regular intervals (e.g. every 3 years) to assess the success of training schemes, learn about what worked well and identify areas for improvement.

■ 1 THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING FOR INCLUSIVE AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship training can help increase the number and chances of success of start-ups and improve employability

Entrepreneurship training¹ is one of the most important tools used by governments to develop entrepreneurship skills (Box 1). Training schemes seek to build knowledge and skills among (potential) entrepreneurs so that they can successfully start and grow their businesses. When integrated as part of inclusive and social entrepreneurship support schemes, entrepreneurship training typically seeks to equip participants with the skills needed to start a business or social enterprise, with a focus on addressing specific skills gaps faced by the target population group. In addition, these types of schemes seek to improve access to training offers to increase opportunities for target groups to try entrepreneurship (OECD/EC, 2013). Entrepreneurship training schemes can also increase the overall quality of start-ups and the success of scaling strategies (OECD/EC, 2013; European Commission, 2021a).

Entrepreneurship training also has a range of other benefits for entrepreneurs beyond addressing skills gaps, including increasing entrepreneurial motivations and boosting employability. There is a link between entrepreneurship training and the formation of positive entrepreneurial intentions (Peterman and Kennedy, 2003), notably through trainers, coaches and mentors who act as role models (Van Auken, Fry and Stephens, 2006). Furthermore, the mere existence and

associated outreach and visibility of trainings can in itself create the motivation in target groups to become (social) entrepreneurs. Participation in training schemes can also facilitate the development of peer networks and increases awareness about how to obtain information and support, increasing an entrepreneur's dynamic capability to learn (Chrisman, McMullan and Hall, 2005). Even when training participants – notably the unemployed and youth – are not successful in entrepreneurship or social entrepreneurship, they can more easily move into paid employment with new skills and experience (OECD/EC, 2013; OECD/EC, 2020). Some training programmes offer accreditation, which are useful to signal to outside stakeholders and investors that the entrepreneur has skills and credibility.

Within the European Union (EU), nearly every Member State offers a range of tailored entrepreneurship training schemes for youth, women and the unemployed (OECD/EC, 2021a). However, tailored schemes for other population groups such as immigrants, seniors and people with disabilities are less developed. Social entrepreneurship training activities have increased over the past decade but have yet to become widespread and produce their effects, in particular in Central and Eastern Europe and rural areas (European Commission, 2021a).

1 In the context of this policy brief, the term "entrepreneurship training" is referring to both inclusive and social entrepreneurship training.

Box 1. Defining inclusive and social entrepreneurship policy

Inclusive entrepreneurship policies seek to ensure that all people have an opportunity to be successful as an entrepreneur. This includes using tailored policies and programmes to help people from groups that are under-represented and disadvantaged in the labour market (i.e. women, immigrants, youth, seniors, the unemployed and people with disabilities) in starting and growing businesses, as well as efforts to make general entrepreneurship schemes more accessible to all. However, another important outcome is the attainment of skills and experience by participating in entrepreneurship programmes and by starting businesses, increasing their employability for salaried employment.

Social entrepreneurship policies aim to support the process through which specific types of actors – “social entrepreneurs” – create and develop organisations that may be either social enterprises or other types of organisations seeking to make a social impact. Social entrepreneurship designates a field including a broad set of initiatives with a social impact dimension in a spectrum ranging from

for-profit to non-profit (OECD, n.d.). A **social enterprise** is an entity, acting in the general interest or in the interest of specific groups, which trades goods and services and whose main purpose is not the maximisation of profit for the sake of personal enrichment but its reinvestment for the attainment of certain economic and social goals (OECD, 1999; OECD, 2018a). According to this perspective, social enterprises emerge within the social economy (Noya and Clarence, 2013) and extend its scope beyond the traditional forms of the social economy, namely associations, cooperatives, mutual organisations and foundations. Similarly, the European Commission (European Commission, 2021b) understands social enterprises as operating by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and often innovative fashion, having social and/or environmental objectives as the reason for their commercial activity. Profits are mainly reinvested with a view to achieving their societal objective, and their method of organisation and ownership also follows democratic or participatory principles or focusses on social progress.

Skills gaps remain a significant barrier to increasing inclusive and social entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurs use a range of skills when starting up and operating a business. These include both general workplace skills and additional skills that reflect the demands of running a business. The suite of competences often used by entrepreneurs are described in the European Union’s Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp), under three broad categories: (i) generating ideas and identifying opportunities (e.g. creativity, vision), (ii) managing and leveraging resources (e.g. fundraising, financial literacy) and (iii) converting opportunities into action (e.g. taking initiative, planning) (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). Additionally, social enterprises often require specific skills beyond those required for purely commercial activities such as the ability to need to demonstrate and have a social impact (OECD, 2021a), interact effectively with the state as regulator, partner or purchaser, and engage diverse stakeholders, such as employees, volunteers, donors, funders or users, in their operations and decision-making processes (OECD/EU, 2017a).

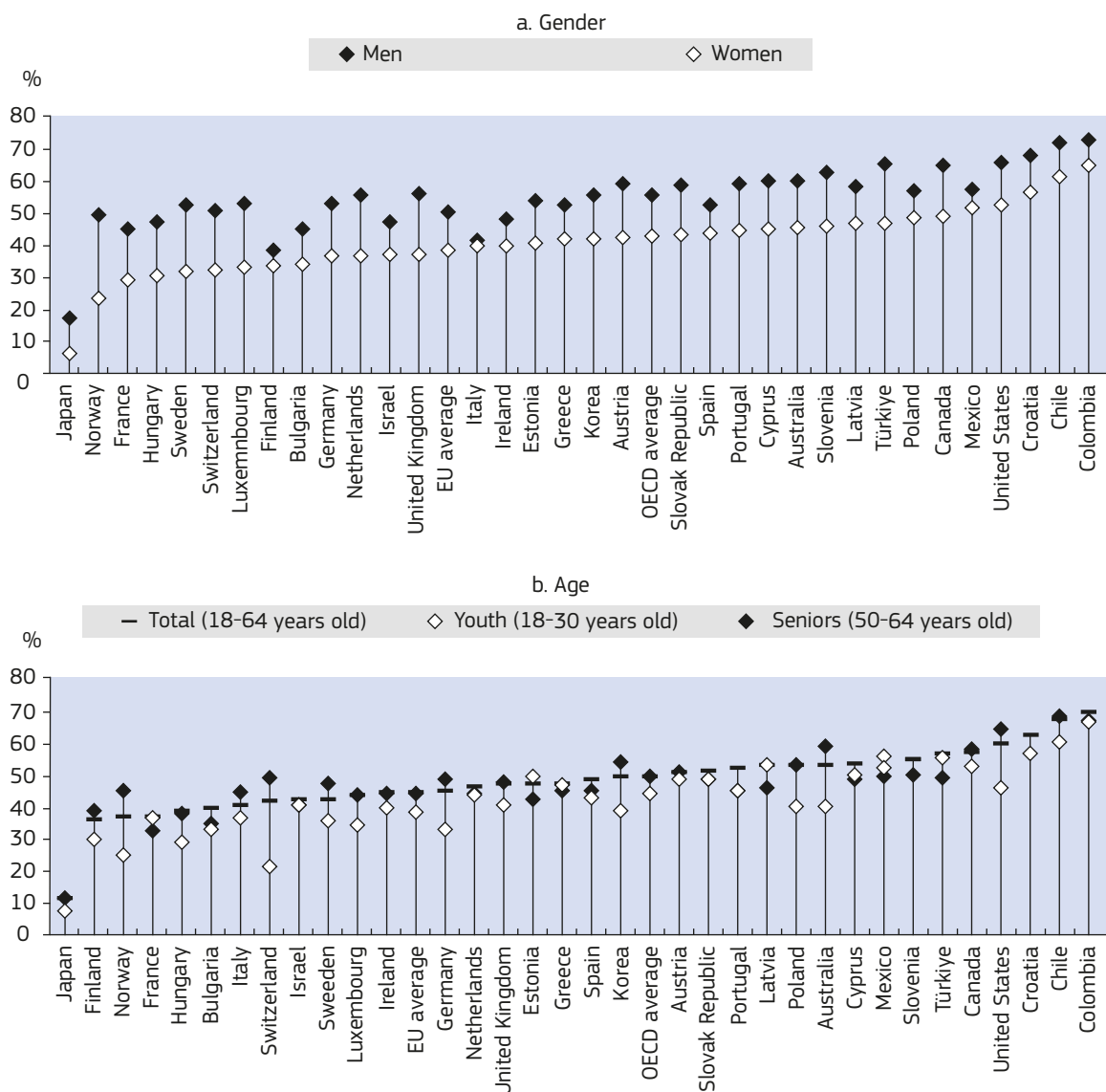
A common framework of social entrepreneurship competencies on the international or national level could help harmonise, disseminate and measure these skills (Spear et al., 2013; OECD/EU, 2017a; OECD, 2020a). With this aim, the EntreComp framework has, for example, been extended to social entrepreneurship, highlighting the additional competences that are often associated with successful social entrepreneurs (e.g. social impact, alliance building) (McCallum et al., 2018; European Commission, 2021a; Cortés and Ferrer, 2018).

Despite these and other efforts of harmonisation, conceptualisations of social entrepreneurship competences still diverge in the literature and skills outcomes are not yet measured reliably and comparably (Kraemer, 2016; García-González and Ramírez-Montoya, 2020; Åstebro and Hoos, 2021). While entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs can be successful without having all of these competences, possessing them is likely to increase the quality of an entrepreneur’s business and the chances that it will be sustainable and grow.

A lack of entrepreneurship skills is often considered one of the most significant barriers to successful business creation and development (OECD/EC, 2013). People from groups that are under-represented are more likely to self-report that they lack the skills needed to start a business. For example, only 39% of women in the EU self-reported having the skills and knowledge needed to start a business between 2016 and 2020 relative to 50% of men (Figure 1). Similarly, 38% of youth (18-30 years old) in the EU reported having the skills needed to be an entrepreneur over this time period, relative to the overall active population average (18-64 years old) of 44%.

Figure 1. There are gender and age gaps in the share of entrepreneurs who report having entrepreneurship skills

“Do you have the knowledge and skills to start a business?”, percentage of population who responded “yes”, 18-64 years old, 2016-2020



Note: All EU Member States participated in the GEM survey between 2016 and 2020 except for Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Lithuania, Malta and Romania. Furthermore, the following countries did not participate in the survey in every year over this period (years of participation are indicated): Austria (2016, 2018, 2020), Bulgaria (2016-2018), Estonia (2016-2017), Finland (2016), France (2016-18), Hungary (2016), Ireland (2016-2019), Latvia (2016-2017, 2019-2020) and Portugal (2016, 2019). Similarly, the following OECD countries did not participate in the GEM survey between 2016 and 2020: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania and New Zealand. The following countries did not participate in the survey in every year (years of participation are indicated): Australia (2016-2017, 2019), Austria (2016, 2018, 2020), Estonia (2016-2017), Finland (2016), France (2016-2018), Hungary (2016), Ireland (2016-2019), Japan (2017-2019), Latvia (2016-2017, 2018-2019), Mexico (2016-2017, 2018-2019), Mexico (2016-2017, 2019), Norway (2019-2020), Portugal (2016, 2019) and Türkiye (2016, 2018).

Source: (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), 2021)

The measurement of specific entrepreneurship competences is challenging but some insights can be gleaned from international surveys. Digital skills, for example, are increasingly viewed as being critical for entrepreneurs (OECD, 2021b) but vary greatly across the population of entrepreneurs by nature of the business activity, gender and age of the entrepreneur. Labour Force Survey data from the European Union show that self-employed seniors (55-74 years old) are about

one-third as likely as self-employed youth (15-24 years old) to use cloud computing daily (OECD/EU, 2019a). In addition, financial literacy skills gaps appear to be another important challenge for entrepreneurship. Research suggests that these gaps are particularly pronounced for women entrepreneurs (Oggero, Rossi and Ughetto, 2020) and immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs (OECD/EC, 2022), partially due to their smaller professional networks.

There are few data sources available on social entrepreneurs' skill gaps and, due to different definitions of social entrepreneurs, results are less conclusive². Despite differences in their demographics, gender and age gaps in entrepreneurship skills equally affect social entrepreneurs. In two European studies, women have reported additional training needs with regards to soft skills, such as leadership, self-confidence and time management, (33%) and hard skills, such as computer science, legal and accounting (27%) (Empow'Her, 2019; Usher Shrair, 2015). In a recent OECD survey on youth-led social enterprises, the large majority of stakeholders also cited a lack of knowledge and skills to create a social enterprise as the main challenge for young social entrepreneurs (OECD, forthcoming). Social entrepreneurs also face a complex legal and financial landscape, having to access and manage various sources of funding (e.g. public sector, impact investors, businesses, foundations, individuals) (Noya and Clarence, 2013). Building knowledge of these financing opportunities, understanding the link between different benefits produced by different legal forms and the possible investors (Young, 2007)

in addition to accessing the array of finance vehicles have been identified as major challenges. Linked to this is the need for social entrepreneurs to know what best fits their organisation and social mission at a given moment of growth (Noya and Clarence, 2013).

Inclusive, collective and democratic governance and management practices require additional skills not typically expected from individual entrepreneurs. Social enterprises often build on collective or cooperative entrepreneurship, which require specific approaches to management and governance. 75% of European social enterprises report high involvement of staff in decision-making (Dupain et al., 2021). Many social enterprises also rely heavily on volunteers (Bosma et al., 2016; Dupain et al., 2021). The skills required to engage these stakeholders and involve them at the right level of governance while deriving full benefit from their expertise and collective decision-making are not commonly addressed in conventional entrepreneurship training.

Approaches to training are evolving rapidly in particular due to the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically altered the environment for entrepreneurs and training providers, including an acceleration in the digitalisation of business activities and support offers. The restrictions on face-to-face interactions forced inclusive and social entrepreneurship training schemes to move online. Experience since the start of the pandemic suggests that the rapid rise in delivering training online has increased participation, notably by those outside of urban areas (OECD/EC, 2021a). Some organisations have unexpectedly been able to deliver their trainings beyond their

original target numbers and groups. This has, for example, been the case with the Social Impact Award's programme, that has been able to increase its geographic scope through the digital format (Social Impact Award, 2020). Moreover, some schemes such as "Yes I Start-Up" for youth entrepreneurs in Italy report that the programme monitoring has improved since online formats allow for a more systematic collection of information on participants and performance data of their activities through a digital platform (OECD, 2020b).

² Internationally comparative data is available from the following studies: 2009 and 2015 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) special topic study (representative sample from 49 and 58 countries, respectively), 2021 European Social Enterprise Monitor (ESEM) (convenience samples from 8 countries). Other past EU-level projects such as SEFORIS, ICSEM or EFESIEIS have also collected data from non-representative samples on a much smaller scale.

■ 2 OVERVIEW OF INCLUSIVE AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING SCHEMES

Different approaches to training

Entrepreneurship training can be delivered through various formats and serve different purposes. Training schemes for inclusive and social entrepreneurship have been traditionally delivered through one-to-many formats where an expert trainer delivers courses to a group of students in classroom training courses, workshops, masterclasses and bootcamps. However, it is also possible to deliver training online, to adopt one-to-one formats such as coaching, mentoring and business consultancy, or to implement peer learning. All formats seek to help participants develop practical skills that can be applied in starting and managing their activity. The choice of format depends on a range of factors, including the training objective (e.g. developing financial plans, identifying business models that facilitate social impact), targeted entrepreneurs (i.e. training formats are not equally effective for all entrepreneurs) and budget constraints. An overview of the main training formats for inclusive and social entrepreneurship is provided in Table 1.

Regardless of format, entrepreneurship trainings for inclusive and social entrepreneurship are commonly offered both as stand-alone schemes and as part of integrated packages. Training programmes differ in length, ranging from one or two hours to courses that are delivered over several months. The length of a training depends in part on its objectives. Most very short training schemes (e.g. workshops) seek to provide an introduction and aim to inspire participants to seek further support. Longer and more intensive formats tend to support the creation of businesses and growth through their early stages of development. Governments also often provide support for scaling ventures through their suites of business development services, which are not typically considered part of entrepreneurship training.

Governments can deliver trainings in several ways. These can be direct offers by government, through public-private partnerships (e.g. with social economy organisations), or by providing financial support to private training providers, including social economy actors. Training also occurs in the private market, without governmental involvement.

Table 1. Mapping of inclusive and social entrepreneurship training formats

Type	Training format	Short description	Examples
One-to-many	Classroom training/ Course	Most common type of entrepreneurship training. The trainer-led format delivers a range of materials on a range of relevant topics in an in-person group setting.	Impact School (Portugal) – Pre start-up social entrepreneurs or long-term unemployed Youth work empowering women entrepreneurship (Bulgaria) – Women entrepreneurs
		Short-format trainings in either a single session or a series of short sessions, which aim to address specific topics and skills to a narrow target group.	School for social entrepreneurs (Canada, India & United Kingdom) – Social entrepreneurs Work for Yourself@50+ (United States) – Senior entrepreneurs
		Single session or small series of workshops taught by a recognised world-class trainer.	Resilience Programme (Netherlands) – Social entrepreneurs Women in Business Masterclasses (Northern Ireland, United Kingdom) – Women entrepreneurs
	Bootcamp	Series of short, intensive training sessions, typically ranging between 3 days and 2 weeks that can combine different modalities of coursework, workshops, peer coaching etc.	Ashoka Emerging Innovators Bootcamps (Global) – Social entrepreneurs Women Entrepreneurship Bootcamp (European Union) – Women entrepreneurs
One-to-one	Coaching and mentoring	Facilitated relationships designed to provide tailored support to develop a specific skill or address a business challenge (short-term coaching) as well as long-term personal development (mentoring).	Parcours COOP (Canada) – Social entrepreneurs Young Entrepreneurs Succeed! (Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain & United Kingdom) – Youth entrepreneurs
	Business consultancy	Fixed-term expert-led training focussed on strategic and transformational support to address a specific issue and strengthen business performance.	enterability (Germany) – Entrepreneurs with disabilities REALIS (France) – Social economy enterprises
Peer learning	Peer coaching or mentoring	Semi-structured learning format where entrepreneurs learn through structured dialogue and problem-solving with their peers, typically led by an experienced entrepreneur.	Going for Growth (Ireland) – Women entrepreneurs UnLtd Mentoring & pro bono programme (United Kingdom) – Social entrepreneurs
	On-the-job training	Work placement or job shadowing experience in an entrepreneurial setting, ranging from several months up to 1 year.	Erasmus+ for Social Entrepreneurs (European Union) – Social entrepreneurs Year Here Fellowship programme (United Kingdom) – Mid-career change

Online learning	Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)	Course-based training available online and free of charge to a large audience - often available for a limited timeframe (i.e. 6-12 weeks). Number of self-study hours required to complete course rarely exceeds 40 hours.	<p>Big Ideas Wales (Wales, United Kingdom) – Youth entrepreneurs</p> <p>YOUCOOPE MOOC (European Union) – Aspiring cooperative entrepreneurs</p>
	Online training courses	Trainer-led course delivered online to a group of pre-registered students over multiple weeks (i.e. between 2 to 17 weeks). Similar to in-person courses, programme fees and additional coursework may be required.	<p>The Common Foundations of Impact Measurement (SEI) (Canada) – Social entrepreneurs</p> <p>Work-based Entrepreneurship Training for People with Disabilities (WOT) (European Union) – Entrepreneurs with disabilities</p>
	E-learning portals	Self-directed open-access learning materials (e.g. articles, short videos, games, self-tests).	<p>Ascent Digital Learning Platform (United States) – Women entrepreneurs</p> <p>Social Impact Measurement Platform (Lithuania) – Start-up social entrepreneurs</p>
Training that is integrated with many other supports	Incubators	Long-term tailored-support packages (i.e. 3 to 4 years), which aim for participants to achieve a set of milestones and often include pre and post-incubation training, workshops and networking opportunities.	<p>Coop City/ SEEDS Programme – Social entrepreneurs</p> <p>EntrePrism (Canada) – Immigrant entrepreneurs</p>
	Accelerators	Short-term support packages (i.e. 3 to 12 months) designed to speed up the business creation process, focussing on managing influxes of capital and rapid growth. Programmes tend to take an ownership stake in the company.	<p>INCO Academy (International) – Social entrepreneurs</p> <p>YEI Start (France) – Youth entrepreneurs</p>

One-to-many training formats

Entrepreneurship training schemes for specific population groups and for social entrepreneurs are commonly delivered by a trainer to groups of (potential) entrepreneurs. This approach to delivering training has many benefits, including a low marginal cost for delivering support to a large number of participants. However, there is typically less scope to tailor the contents and methods to the needs of the participants. This can make it less attractive for participants relative to more individualised supports and less likely, than targeted training, to have a significant impact on the performance of the entrepreneur's business. Common formats used in the context of inclusive and social entrepreneurship include classroom training, workshops, masterclasses and bootcamps.

The traditional approach to entrepreneurship training is to deliver a collection of modules on various themes to a group of (potential) entrepreneurs in a classroom setting. This format is one of the most commonly offered supports for inclusive entrepreneurship (OECD/EC, 2021a) and social entrepreneurship. Training is often based on building business and financial plans but also focussed on boosting motivations for starting a business and increasing self-confidence. Training within inclusive entrepreneurship schemes address the specific barriers faced by the targeted population. For example, Utrecht Refugee Launch Pad (Netherlands) sought to help refugee entrepreneurs build networks by offering start-up training and co-housing arrangements with local entrepreneurs (OECD, 2019a). Training for social entrepreneurship also focus on problem analysis, social value proposition and questions linked to structuring and launching a social enterprise (Grassl, 2012), including legal requirements and funding opportunities, as done by the *Maison de l'Économie Sociale et de l'Innovation Sociale* in Luxembourg (Box 2).

Classroom training for (potential) entrepreneurs generally has a positive impact on participants. Some estimates suggest that women and men are about 4% more likely to start a business after they have gone on an entrepreneurship training course (Cowling, 2009). There is also evidence showing that entrepreneurship training can increase awareness and entrepreneurial efficacy among youth (Ho et al., 2018), as well as

increasing start-up intentions and problem solving abilities (Kim et al., 2020). Similarly, entrepreneurship training is often effective in supporting unemployed people in moving back into work through self-employment (Rotger, Gørtz and Storey, 2012), particularly when delivered with other types of support. Despite these positive results, some studies suggest that classroom training is less effective than more intensive supports such as coaching and business consultancy (OECD/EC, 2013). As social entrepreneurship training is a relatively recent phenomenon, the import of tools and content from other fields including entrepreneurship may result in a misfit, in particular in addressing specific needs linked to collective efficacy and collective identity (Solbreux, Hermans and Pondeville, forthcoming).

Training can also be delivered in short formats that focus on building entrepreneurial intentions, addressing a specific skill barrier or as a gateway to more intensive support. For formats such as workshops and masterclasses (i.e. single session or a series of short sessions) it is common to focus on specific issues (e.g. preparing a business plan) or to narrow target groups (e.g. women social entrepreneurs), and these can be offered as part of integrated support packages (e.g. microfinance). For example, the Impact Entrepreneurs master class series run by the city of Amsterdam (I Am Amsterdam, 2020) features topics like designing business models or finding capital presented by well-known members of the social impact scene in the Netherlands. Evaluations such as for OzGirlsEntrepreneurship (Australia) show that workshops can have a positive impact on building entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions but are less effective at building entrepreneurial competences (Shahin et al., 2021).

Bootcamps are typically longer than workshops and masterclasses and have a slightly different focus. They are often targeted at entrepreneurs with a high likelihood of starting a successful business and therefore have a greater emphasis on building networks and establishing mentorship relationships. Since bootcamps are more intensive and selective in identifying participants, participants tend to report stronger outcomes. For example, 82% of women entrepreneurs in the WiRE Program (Australia) which is based on a 19-hour bootcamp reported an increase in entrepreneurship skills and 85% on building networks (Wiesner, 2018).

Box 2. National hub for the social and solidarity economy, Luxembourg

What?

The House of Social Economy and Social Innovation (*Maison de l'Économie Sociale et de l'Innovation Sociale* – MeSIS) was created as a national hub for the social and solidarity economy in Luxembourg. It represents the first contact point and one-stop shop for those wishing to know more about the social and solidarity economy and more specifically about the modalities to obtain the accreditation as a social enterprise ('*Société d'impact sociétal*' or SIS). MeSIS offers tailored support to any person, company or association with a social impact project and wishing to create an SIS.

Why?

Following the creation of the new social enterprise legal status of SIS by Luxembourg's Ministry for Labour and the Social and Solidarity Economy in 2016, offers for appropriate training and capacity building were accelerated, so that companies and individuals could access the new SIS-accreditation even more easily. Since 2020, the offer has been enlarged and fully customised. MeSIS also offers free

Source: (Maison de l'économie sociale et de l'innovation sociale, n.d.; Guichet.lu, n.d.)

working spaces and a privileged environment for social entrepreneurs at the launch of their activities.

Key activities

The training offer that MeSIS provides is divided into four phases:

- Phase 0: The Entrepreneur's Profile: focussing on developing entrepreneurial spirit and skills, feasibility and assessment of the project and the leader's profile.
- Phase 1: From idea to concrete project (0-2 years): focussing on the development of a strategy and a social business plan.
- Phase 2: From the project to the creation of an SIS (0-2 years): helping with the application of the SIS law in concrete terms, providing support for all administrative procedures linked to obtaining the SIS status.
- Phase 3: Scaling-up (over 2 years): focussing on the development of a scaling-up strategy

One-to-one training formats

Entrepreneurship training can also be delivered in one-to-one formats such as coaching, mentoring and business consultancy. These types of training are often more effective than training in large groups because the content and methods can be better tailored to the needs of the individual participant. A key success factor for inclusive and social entrepreneurship schemes is establishing an effective match between the entrepreneur and the coach or mentor (Snowden, Oberoi and Halsall, 2021; OECD/European Union, 2014). The main drawback is that these are resource intensive schemes that can be expensive to deliver when professional coaches, mentors and consultants are used (which can be alleviated to some extent by using volunteers).

Coaching and mentoring are commonly offered by governments as part of their inclusive and social entrepreneurship support schemes (OECD/EC, 2021a). Coaching usually refers to a short-term relationship that focusses on a specific skill or business challenge, while mentoring is typically a longer-term relationship that has a greater emphasis on personal development. These types of support are particularly important for entrepreneurs from under-represented groups because they, on average, have lower levels of self-confidence, motivation and skills (OECD/European Union, 2014). Coaches and mentors provide important support, including psychological support (e.g. provide reassurance and motivation, help

reflect on strengths and weaknesses), career-related support (e.g. help expand networks, serve as a sounding board for new ideas), and role-model function (e.g. share personal experiences and lessons learned) (St-Jean, 2012). For social entrepreneurs, coaching and mentoring can support creating and maintaining social enterprises (Jeong et al., 2020), notably supporting collective and cooperative entrepreneurship that often rely on different management approaches. Evaluations tend to show that coaching and mentoring are effective for developing entrepreneurship skills (OECD/European Union, 2014) and increase the sustainability of businesses, notably for youth (Jones, Brinkley and Crowley, 2015) and women entrepreneurs (OECD/EU, 2016a).

Another individualised type of training is business consultancy, which is the transfer of expert knowledge and advice to improve business performance. This is similar to entrepreneurship coaching but is usually more focussed on strategic and transformational support. In practice, it is delivered through professional business advisors using a mix of formal techniques (e.g. business excellence models, assessment tools, social impact measurement tools) and informal tacit knowledge gained through experience (e.g. extracting lessons from advisors' previous experiences). The REALIS programme offered by the city of Montpellier, for example, combines individual support, tailored training with a mandatory minimum and optional training, networking, events and co-working space access for 36 months.

Business consultancy for inclusive and social entrepreneurship is especially effective when it is integrated into support packages that include financial instruments. Consultancies can provide training as part of an array of services which include peer-learning, networking, regulatory compliance and coaching. For example, an evaluation of the Small Business Assistance programme in Romania shows that consultancy was important for supporting job creation by recipients (Rodríguez-Planas, 2010). Part of these services was the provision of financial advice paired with short term capital loans which helped individuals with little access to the labour markets (youth, less educated, lower prior earnings, etc.) reduce barriers to enter self-employment. [Box 3](#) provides another example of customised support including consultancy – *École des entrepreneurs du Québec*, which delivers training to both conventional and social entrepreneurs.

Peer learning formats

Training schemes for inclusive and social entrepreneurship are starting to use methods that facilitate knowledge exchange amongst peers. Peer learning activities can be integrated into various training formats or offered as stand-alone schemes. This format is centred on sharing experiences and lessons learned, as well as collecting multiple perspectives on challenges faced. In addition to learning about how to overcome challenges, this format can help entrepreneurs build their networks and receive moral support (Kutzhanova, Lyons and Lichtenstein, 2009). The latter is particularly important in the context of inclusive entrepreneurship since many entrepreneurs from under-represented groups have a lower level of self-confidence (OECD/EC, 2021a). For example, the EU-funded “Social Entrepreneurship and Innovative Solutions” (SEIS) project, which focusses on entrepreneurship education for young people with

an emphasis on social entrepreneurship, aims to create an app through which social entrepreneurs around the world could interact and learn from each other.

Evidence from peer learning schemes suggest that this approach can improve entrepreneurial attitudes and business performance. For example, monitoring data from Going for Growth peer coaching scheme for women entrepreneurs in Ireland shows that the 66 participants in the 2018 cohort hired an additional 90 full-time and 20 part-time staff during the 6-month programme. Moreover, four participants exported for the first time (OECD/EC, 2021b). In practice, peer support schemes are typically facilitated by an experienced entrepreneur. Ashoka, who regularly facilitates peer learning and networking sessions as part of their programmes, has been able to demonstrate its positive effect on long-term collaboration in the social entrepreneur network (Ashoka, 2008).

On-the-job learning through work placements or job shadowing is emerging as a way to train entrepreneurs.

Work placements allow learners to experience working under guidance and supervision in a specific role within an organisation for the period of a few months. This type of training is more common for social entrepreneurship than inclusive entrepreneurship and it is often targeted towards people changing from another type of organisation towards a social enterprise mid-career. As a consequence, many of these programmes do not require a participation fee as their administration is funded through the receiving organisation’s allowance in exchange for a seasoned professional. Typically, they run for one to six months as is the case for the Erasmus for Social Entrepreneurs programme as part of the larger Erasmus Young Entrepreneurs Programme funded by the European Commission (Euclid Network, n.d.).

Box 3. École des entrepreneurs du Québec, Quebec (Canada)

What?

The *École des entrepreneurs du Québec* (EEQ) is an educational institution devoted to training both conventional and social entrepreneurs, with the aim to support the launch and/or growth of their businesses. The EEQ itself is a non-profit organisation that is funded by the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada. Among EEQ's partners the *Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation du Québec*, *Développement Économique Canada*, *Affaires Mondiales Canada*, as well as a number of foreign associations and governments.

Why?

In order to account for the entrepreneurs' unique needs, the EEQ provides a variety of training schemes, including lectures, workshops and training —à la carte—. With eight active campuses, one campus in Bogota (Colombia), and an enhanced online offering, the EEQ, it follows an innovative and successful approach maximising complementarity and collaboration with the entrepreneurship support ecosystem in the province of Quebec.

Key activities?

Entrepreneurs can choose from a wide range of trainings of different length and participation cost, covering a diversity of topics:

- *Workshops à la carte* (3 to 6 hours long workshop), *Les Essentiels* (series of masterclasses with experts from across the province) or *Les Parcours* (5 to 8 months of training) enable entrepreneurs to acquire essential entrepreneurship skills;
- The *Support for Women Entrepreneurs* project supports women in achieving their entrepreneurial goals through four online courses and *Mon Commerce En Ligne* enables retail owners to make a digital transition with specialised resources;

EEQ is also recognized for training trainers with the EEQ growth coaching method (*Roue de la croissance*).

Impact

During the year 2021/22 alone, more than 10 000 entrepreneurs were trained across EEQ campuses and online. Since 2000, over 70 000 entrepreneurs have been trained by EEQ.

Source: (Ecole des Entrepreneurs du Québec, 2021; Ecole des Entrepreneurs du Québec, n.d.)

Online learning formats

The use of online platforms for entrepreneurship training has grown over the past 20 years. This has accelerated even further since 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic due to restrictions on face-to-face interactions (Alqahtani and Rajkhan, 2020; Young, Deller and McCallum, 2021). Overall, online learning allows (potential) entrepreneurs to develop their skills flexibly and entails low marginal cost of delivery, once fixed costs have been met (OECD, 2021c). Other benefits of the digitalisation of training include improving the quality of programme monitoring and evaluation, which helps to ensure training programmes remain accessible to entrepreneurs from target groups by addressing issues as they arise. However, it must be recognised that different target groups differ in terms of their self-efficacy in online environments (Peechapol et al., 2018), cognitive styles and abilities (Rodrigues et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2018), prior knowledge (Rodrigues et al., 2019; Mayer, 2017) and the motivation to learn (Peechapol et al., 2018; Rodrigues et al., 2019). This is an important consideration for inclusive entrepreneurship policy because each of these factors varies greatly by gender, age, place of birth, ethnicity and disability, as well as greatly within each group.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are online courses that are made available free of charge for anyone to

access. MOOCs hold potential for opening access to training (Harden, 2013) but others note that only people with high levels of motivation, discipline and skills fully benefit from this type of training (OECD, 2021c; Legon, 2013; Ettinger, Holton and Blass, 2006). While it is not common for governments to offer MOOCs as part of their suite of inclusive entrepreneurship support, there has been growth in the offerings by foundations and public sector over the past 15 to 20 years (Harden, 2013). This trend has further accelerated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another type of online training is via training courses that are delivered through online platforms. Although they are delivered online, they operate much like a traditional training course would, i.e. a formal in-take process is used to selected participants that will follow a structured programme. These types of courses are offered by governments, as well as education institutions, chambers of commerce and more. There is a growing body of evidence that shows that online formats can be as effective as traditional classroom formats (i.e. face-to-face) (Nguyen, 2015). Participants often assess their experience as being more positive for online formats relative to the classroom format, but there are fewer opportunities for building networks and for informal learning through interactions with other participants.

A third type of training is online learning portals that make a wide variety of content (e.g. articles, short videos, games, self-tests) available for self-directed learning. The main benefit of this type of online learning tool is that users can access content at a time, place and pace of their own choosing (Aparicio, Bacao and Oliveira, 2016). Recent research shows the use of gamification in trainings can lead to higher levels of motivation and engagement, enhanced workforce recruitment and retention, and improved performance (Larson, 2020). However, these types of platforms require a high degree of self-motivation and discipline to self-manage learning (Ettinger, Holton and Blass, 2006). While the number of online learning portals is growing rapidly, very little of the content is tailored for inclusive entrepreneurship (OECD, 2021c) or for social entrepreneurship.

Training formats that are integrated with other supports

Entrepreneurship training in the context of inclusive and social entrepreneurship is commonly offered as part of integrated support packages. The main advantage of this type of support is that it can more effectively address multiple barriers in parallel, which is a common challenge for entrepreneurs from under-represented groups (OECD/EC, 2013). In practice, integrated schemes can be managed by a single programme or through partnerships (e.g. training providers and microfinance institutes).

While not yet widespread, business incubator and accelerator programmes hold promise for effectively delivering support in the context of inclusive and social entrepreneurship (OECD/EU, 2019b). Business incubator programmes typically offer entrepreneurs training, workshops, consultancy, networking opportunities, introductions to investors and often a workspace. Support can last for several years and some programmes include pre-incubation and post-incubation support. While similar, business accelerator programmes are more focussed on managing rapid growth and tend to be shorter (i.e. less than 12 months). Another key difference is that accelerator programmes often take an ownership stake in the company. Overall, evaluation evidence shows that business incubator programmes can increase business survival rates, increase profitability and job creation, grow networks and improve access to finance (Madaleno et al., 2018; Ayatse, Kwahar and Iyortsuun, 2017). These findings appear to hold for inclusive and social entrepreneurship. For example, evidence from Spain suggests that youth stand to benefit more than older entrepreneurs from business incubation due to their lack of experience and small networks (Albort-Morant and Oghazi, 2016). Accelerator programmes on the other hand tend to have mixed impacts on business survival rates, but the effect tends to be positive for women and ethnic minority groups (Madaleno et al., 2018).

■ 3 DESIGNING MORE EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING SCHEMES

Tailor training to the needs of the target group

What's the issue?

One of the most important decisions governments face in designing training schemes for inclusive and social entrepreneurship is the extent to which it should be tailored to the needs of a specific group. Evaluation evidence routinely illustrates the benefits of tailored training schemes, notably (OECD/EC, 2021a; OECD/EC, 2013):

1. The content of tailored training can include group-specific offers and emphasis on specific issues (e.g. self-confidence for women, language skills for immigrants, digital skills for seniors, specific managerial skills to maintain the triple bottom-line, measure social impact for social entrepreneurs), which is more relevant than generic approaches;
2. The delivery of training (e.g. one-to-many, one-to-one, etc.) is more adapted to the targeted entrepreneurs;
3. Take-up and participant satisfaction is higher among the target group because the content appears more relevant and the delivery methods are appealing, which gives the scheme credibility; and
4. Training outcomes are greater because the content and in-take mechanisms are better adapted.

However, tailored training is more expensive to design and deliver so these benefits need to be weighed against a wide range of factors. Governments need to consider the potential benefits of tailored support against the increased costs of designing and delivering support, taking into account the availability of financial resources. Another important consideration is the scale of demand for tailored training, since it will not be possible to develop tailored schemes for all possible target groups. Finally, governments should also consider similar support offers by the private sector and non-governmental actors.

What can governments do?

1. **Identify the need for training, assess options and set objectives**

The first step in preparing to launch a training scheme for inclusive or social entrepreneurship is to determine the need for a government intervention. *Ex ante*

evaluation can be conducted to assess the need for action, including whether it is coherent with policy objectives and other entrepreneurship support that is already in place. It is also relevant for *ex ante* evaluations to assess if expected impacts are realistic. Logical frameworks are often used during an *ex ante* evaluation as a tool to ensure that policy and scheme objectives are clear and that an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system is in place (see subsection “Establish ongoing monitoring and impact measurement” below). This exercise also helps in mapping the gaps in current support offers.

Once the need for training is confirmed, governments need to assess the available options for offering the training. This includes identifying the extent to which training needs to be designed and delivered for specific target groups. Important considerations include the extent to which general entrepreneurship support schemes are relevant, the size of the targeted group(s) of entrepreneurs, the scale of demand from the target group and the availability of resources. It will also be important for governments to assess the options for delivering support, including potential formats (e.g. in-person course vs. online course) and delivery arrangements (e.g. offer training directly vs. providing financial support to a non-governmental provider).

Finally, the objectives will need to be set once the preferred option of delivering the training is selected and prior to its application. Generally, the objectives of inclusive and social entrepreneurship training schemes are to (i) increase motivation; (ii) increase the number of people who launch businesses and social enterprises; (iii) increase the likelihood that the start-ups will survive over time; and (iv) have start-ups realise their growth and/or social impact potential. Within these general objectives, more precise goals can be set based on the desired outcomes and could include, for example, increasing start-up rates among female university graduates or scaling up the social impact of social enterprises that create employment opportunities for the Roma. Moreover, there may be additional objectives that training schemes may wish to consider, including supporting broader policy objectives. This could include, for example, addressing environmental challenges by training social entrepreneurs in the circular economy or addressing youth unemployment by helping young people create their own business.

2. Tailor training content

Generally, entrepreneurship training is moving away from a “one size fits all” approach to a more tailored approach to meet the needs of different profiles of entrepreneurs. This nearly always includes adjusting the content delivered during training to the specific needs of participants, which are typically different in the context of inclusive and social entrepreneurship relative to general entrepreneurship training initiatives. It is also important to take into account differences in local labour market conditions, as well as other economic and social factors (e.g. industrial structure, demographics). Training content should be tailored to address specific employment gaps, business opportunities, culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Inclusive entrepreneurship training schemes are often focussed on the pre-start-up phase of entrepreneurship where the individual characteristics are strong determinants of training needs. These include experience in the labour market, education and access to entrepreneurship ecosystems, as well as other factors that influence entrepreneurship motivations and ambitions, such as self-confidence. While it would be unlikely to design training programmes to meet the needs of each individual participant, there are often many common challenges faced by people in a target group including gender, age or place of birth:

- **Women entrepreneurs** tend to face different barriers than men in business creation due to lower levels of management and entrepreneurship experience, including access to finance (OECD/EU, 2016a). Therefore, training schemes for women entrepreneurs tend to place a greater emphasis on business management tools, building networks to leverage the knowledge and experience of others and build self-confidence to promote their business. It is also common for training schemes targeting women to seek to build and increase start-up motivations, since there is a significant gender gap in early-stage entrepreneurship (OECD/EC, 2021a; OECD, 2021d).
- **Youth entrepreneurs** typically have very little work experience, thus training programmes targeting youth tend to provide a broad range of basic business management skills, including accounting and finance, law and legal issues, team building and personal development (OECD/EC, 2020).
- **Immigrant entrepreneurs** have a tendency to limit their market to their own local community. Therefore, entrepreneurship training for immigrant entrepreneurs such as EMERGE in Ireland commonly focus on developing strategic plans to reach markets outside of their own ethnic community, including marketing and sales strategies, network development and how to seek financing. It can be effective

to also offer coaching to support the implementation of these strategic plans (OECD/EC, 2021a).

- **Refugee entrepreneurs** face specific challenges related to their status and have very weak connections to their local community and entrepreneurship ecosystem. Training schemes for refugees should, therefore, seek to go beyond traditional start-up training schemes (e.g. developing a business plan, identifying markets) to cover the implications of different migrant legal statuses and citizenship on running a business, as well as administrative obligations and the local regulatory environment, including the acquisition and renewal of relevant permits, and tax payment (OECD, 2019a).

Social entrepreneurship training typically seeks to address the specific needs of social entrepreneurs, including in terms of scaling their business and developing a sustainable flow of income. This is largely due to the hybrid nature of social enterprises mixing traditional non-profit and for-profit elements (Krlev, 2012), bringing economic benefits as well as social, cultural and environmental impacts (Trowbridge et al., forthcoming; OECD, 2021a), and evolving within a larger ecosystem of stakeholders, often applying participatory and democratic governance models including many of these stakeholders (Borzaga et al., 2020). This results in challenges to embrace a sustainable business model that aligns social purpose with economic viability, navigate the financial and investment landscape, access markets and develop appropriate scaling strategies (OECD, 2020c; OECD/EC, 2016; OECD/EU, 2017a). Social enterprises often build on collective or cooperative entrepreneurship, democratic governance and volunteering, which requires different approaches than individual social entrepreneurship primarily geared towards market activity (Tracey and Phillips, 2007). On the one hand, these are linked to the specific competence requirements social entrepreneurs experience, such as an explicit need to develop systemic thinking and entrench social innovation, impact assessment or advocacy and stakeholder and volunteer management in their operations. On the other hand, the precursors of skills among social entrepreneurs and social enterprise staff require reinforced training on some more conventional entrepreneurship skills that other entrepreneurs may already have obtained at the business development stage. Organisations that aim to address both conventional and social entrepreneurs sometimes solve these issues by proposing “à la carte” workshops and trainings to cater to specific needs, as does, for example, *École des entrepreneurs du Québec*, Quebec (Canada) ([Box 3](#)).

Tailored training also needs to take into account the intersecting challenges of social entrepreneurship and other dimensions, such as youth and women entrepreneurship. For example, youth aspiring to become social entrepreneurs without prior training can have very different

training needs and challenges when setting up and growing their business. There seems to be an increasing interest of youth in pursuing social entrepreneurship (Bosma et al., 2016) and youth-led social enterprises often face business discontinuation risks that are twice as high as for conventional entrepreneurs (Guelich and Bosma, 2018).

3. Select appropriate formats and delivery mechanisms

Another important way in that inclusive and social entrepreneurship training can be tailored is through the format and delivery mechanism used. In general, entrepreneurship training has shifted the balance of teaching methods from classroom teaching to more interactive, hands-on, and experiential methods such as role playing, simulations, games, and short term business start-ups. This makes entrepreneurship training more attractive to participants and offers realistic experiences. While this shift is also true for inclusive and social entrepreneurship, governments need to give further consideration to the approach used to deliver training to increase access for those who face barriers to general training schemes and to increase its effectiveness.

The use of dedicated schemes will improve access to entrepreneurship training for population groups that have lower levels of self-confidence. For example, surveys suggest that women entrepreneurs are less likely to apply to entrepreneurship training schemes because they feel intimidated when the majority of participants are male entrepreneurs (OECD/EU, 2016a). Similarly, people with disabilities who are interested in entrepreneurship also often report lower levels of self-confidence and a hesitation to participate in entrepreneurship training schemes. This calls for the use of dedicated schemes for women and other groups to improve access, which is the first step in increasing the impact of entrepreneurship training for inclusive and social entrepreneurship. This is especially important when the scheme is delivered online and participants may also have lower confidence with their abilities to use digital technologies (OECD, 2019b; OECD, 2018b).

Furthermore, the formats of training can also vary in effectiveness for different target groups and for different objectives. Training formats that use a one-to-many approach such as training courses can be effective at increasing motivations and delivering a broad base of basic entrepreneurship skills, but can also be extremely important to help participants build networks. This is important for groups such as youth who have little work experience, or women who, on

average, have smaller professional networks (OECD, 2015). Moreover, these more traditional training formats may be preferred by senior entrepreneurs while younger entrepreneurs may prefer coaching and mentoring or online training that offer a great deal of flexibility. Different training formats can also help appropriately address social entrepreneurs needs, such as non-formal social entrepreneurship trainings more targeted to practical skills (OECD/EU, 2016b).

The growing use of online and digital training formats requires careful consideration for inclusive and social entrepreneurship due to lower levels of digital skills among many of the targeted population groups. Older entrepreneurs are less likely to regularly use basic technologies such as the internet (OECD/EU, 2019a), thus training schemes may also need to provide additional basic training on computer use. This, however, may not be sufficient for everyone and other formats may be more appropriate (and preferred) by some target groups such as seniors, refugees or the unemployed. In addition, it is critical to ensure that trainers are well-equipped with skills and training materials for online formats. For example, the scheme TREND (Training Refugees in Entrepreneurial Skills Using Digital Devices) provides trainers with tailored tools and training materials for refugee entrepreneurs (see (OECD/EU, 2019a) for more information on the programme).

Finally, governments need to consider the use of integrated support schemes to address multiple barriers (e.g. skills gaps and access to finance) because barriers are usually inter-related. There are two different approaches that can be used to create linkages between training and other types of support. First, the support can be offered together in an integrated package. This is the approach taken by the Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund in Lithuania that offers small loans and training that covers business planning and management, financial accounting, business law and marketing. The combination of support has led to positive outcomes for the businesses started with the loans: each loan recipient created about 1.8 net new jobs and one-year survival rates were 97% (OECD/EU, 2016b). The second approach is to construct a system of support where participants can move easily from one scheme to another. This is the case in Belgium with the DreamStart scheme that provides training and coaching to unemployed youth. Participants can then apply for microfinance from the MicroStart scheme (OECD/EU, 2016b).

Improve access to training schemes

What's the issue?

Access to inclusive and social entrepreneurship training schemes can be impeded by several factors, many of which are related to the content and delivery methods.

This includes factors such as the location of the training schemes and the hours when training is offered. For example, some people such as those with disabilities face a range of barriers in being able to access training locations, including the accessibility of the training centre (i.e. is the location accessible for someone with mobility challenges such as a wheelchair?) as well as the route to the training centre (i.e. is the training centre located on a public transportation route?) (Park and Chowdhury, 2018). A recent study also points out persistent gaps in trainings offered in rural and remote regions in the context of social entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2021a). In addition, the in-take process for entrepreneurship training typically favours entrepreneurs with growth-oriented projects. The criteria used to select participants, therefore, tends to put entrepreneurs from under-represented groups (e.g. women, immigrants, seniors, people with disabilities) at a disadvantage, as well as those with social entrepreneurship projects.

It is also important to recognise that some barriers to accessing training schemes are related to the entrepreneur, including their perception of the support.

This includes low levels of awareness about the availability of training schemes among the targeted entrepreneurs due to ineffective outreach methods used to promote the scheme (e.g. training for immigrant entrepreneurs is not advertised in the targeted community). However, it could also be due to other factors that are more difficult for governments to address, including:

- Low levels of self-confidence that prevent entrepreneurs from seeking support (e.g. some research suggests that women entrepreneurs are less likely to seek support when they perceive that it will be male-dominated (OECD/EU, 2016a);
- Distrust of government and public services (e.g. some immigrant and ethnic minority populations are reluctant to use public support schemes due to experiences of poor public support in their home country (OECD/EC, 2021a); and
- The personal circumstances of the targeted entrepreneurs may hinder participation in training schemes (e.g. a potential entrepreneur may have difficulty attending training if they have childcare responsibilities).

What can governments do?

1. Use dedicated schemes, reserved slots and adjusted selection criteria

Entrepreneurship training can be delivered through a range of alternative models. These options include the following main options (OECD/EC, 2013):

- Training that is fully integrated into mainstream provision (i.e. there is no tailored training for entrepreneurs from under-represented groups and social entrepreneurs; only general entrepreneurship training is offered);
- Targeted outreach used to promote general entrepreneurship training (e.g. a promotion campaign is used to promote entrepreneurship workshops to women entrepreneurs through a women's business association);
- Specialised training delivered through mainstream programmes and agencies (e.g. youth-only entrepreneurship or social entrepreneurship workshops that are delivered by the business support agency); and
- Specialist agencies deliver specialised support (e.g. an entrepreneurship training course for the unemployed or for social entrepreneurs is delivered by a local employment office).

Each of these approaches has strengths and weaknesses.

Evaluations typically show that tailored and dedicated training schemes are more likely to have stronger outcomes (OECD/EC, 2013) and tend to have higher take-up amongst the target groups because they are perceived as more relevant than general training programmes. This is particularly true for women entrepreneurs, who tend to operate different types of businesses than men (OECD/EC, 2021a; OECD/EU, 2016a), and for social entrepreneurs, who need an additional set of competences that are not typically covered to any great extent in general entrepreneurship training schemes. However, these tailored approaches are more expensive to design and deliver, which might not always be justified if the target group is very small.

In contexts where fully tailored and dedicated training schemes are not cost effective, governments can use a number of approaches to facilitate access for those populations that face greater barriers to general entrepreneurship trainings.

One option for schemes is for the selection criteria to favour entrepreneurs from some population groups. For example, it is common for entrepreneurship schemes in Romania to award additional points for personal characteristics such as gender, age, place of birth,

labour market status and more to ensure that there is a greater representation of under-represented groups in training and other support schemes (OECD, 2020d). Another option is to reserve a certain proportion of places in training schemes for specific population groups that are less likely to access support (e.g. immigrants).

2. Remove barriers to training

Even with dedicated training schemes, some (potential) entrepreneurs face difficulties accessing training due to a number of barriers. Training programmes that are not offered in a language the target group feels comfortable in will likely not experience high uptake. For example, evaluation evidence from the United States indicates that integrating language training into entrepreneurship training programmes increases the likelihood that refugee entrepreneurs will seek further business support (Changemakers, 2017). The location of a training programme could be prohibitive for some if it is not connected to public transportation routes. Other important factors include the suitability of facilities and equipment (i.e. can the targeted entrepreneurs – and trainers – work with the tools used?) and the hours at which support is offered (i.e. do

training times conflict with work or child care responsibilities?). Addressing these concerns in the conceptualisation of trainings can help improve access. Such issues could be effectively identified through a consultation with the target groups early in scheme design.

The cost of training schemes as well as the opportunity costs to participate in them instead of pursuing gainful employment can impede access. It is quite common for public training schemes for inclusive and social entrepreneurship to charge low or no fees. However, participants face a range of additional costs such as travel and potentially forgone income (from employment or from an already operating business). There are a number of training schemes that provide some form of allowance to participants while they are on training. For example, the scheme Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship in Slovenia (Box 4) offers a small allowance to participants to help facilitate their participation by reducing the costs of going on training. Another option to increase access to training programmes for women entrepreneurs is to offer childcare during the training sessions as done in the scheme *Cursos de Formación Empresarial* in Chile.

Box 4. Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship, Slovenia

What?

The Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship programme (*Podjetnost je ženskega spola*) provided entrepreneurship training to unemployed women with tertiary education (unemployed for at least three months) across five cities in Slovenia: Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje, Nova Gorca and Novo Mesto. The aim of the training is to prepare and equip participants with the necessary skills, information and contacts to begin a successful entrepreneurship activity. In addition to providing entrepreneurship training, participants received a start-up lump sum support as well as follow-up training and mentorship. The programme ran from 2016 to 2019 as a joint initiative between the public entrepreneurship and business development agency SPIRIT Slovenia and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MDDSZ), Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MGRT), Public Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS).

Why?

Slovenia created and operated Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship programme to provide potential women entrepreneurs with support, which the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology funded through a dedicated measure to promote women in entrepreneurship. The programme focussed specifically on unemployed women with tertiary education, as women tend to face more challenges in the labour market, notably in entrepreneurship.

Source: (OECD, 2020e; European Union, 2022; SPIRIT Slovenija, 2016)

Key Activities

The programme included an introductory workshop as well as 15 training sessions provided by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia in collaboration with local partners and mentors. These 15 in-person training sessions covered entrepreneurial themes such as idea development, business modelling and legal advice. The trainings also informed participants of all the public measures and incentives for entrepreneurship available. Upon completing the 100 hours of trainings, participants received a certificate to provide to the Employment Service of Slovenia who distributes a one-time lump sum start-up subsidy of EUR 5 000.

Impact

The Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship programme occurred between 2016 and 2019 with two iterations per year (fall and spring). EUR 1 million in funding was made available for the training programme in both 2018 and 2019. Overall, about 1 500 women participated in the training, of whom 90% had active businesses for at least two years.

3. Leverage online delivery when appropriate

Online delivery of entrepreneurship training courses can offer more flexibility, reduce some barriers and expand training outreach. This delivery approach can help to improve the accessibility of entrepreneurship training programmes by reducing barriers related to inaccessible locations and time-constraints as the online format facilitates easy access to learning material. Another benefit of online delivery is that a programme's reach is extended to participants in harder-to-reach locations, including entrepreneurs in rural and remote locations. While the digitalisation of policy delivery has created open access and other easily accessible resources for entrepreneurs, an important element of this approach is to ensure programmes address the gaps in digital skills by boosting digital literacy, notably for women and senior entrepreneurs. Online training can be inaccessible for those who do not have a computer or have low levels of digital skills. On this topic, policy makers might partner with social economy organisations,

including social enterprises, that are active in addressing digital divide through educational programmes to acquire ICT skills and the provision of necessary hardware and devices, often collected from public and private actors and refurbished to make them accessible for disadvantaged individuals (OECD, 2020c; OECD/EC, 2022).

Digital learning platforms also serve as open access resource points, which improve accessibility to specific groups of entrepreneurs. These platforms act as one-stop-shops for entrepreneurship training and resources, including online webinars, workshops and guides to support current and potential entrepreneurs. Certain platforms have been designed to develop and grow businesses for specific target groups, such as women entrepreneurs. For example, the Ascent Digital Learning Platform was designed for women entrepreneurs in the United States. The online format allowed for the initiative to improve accessibility to entrepreneurship training to women entrepreneurs in rural and emerging markets.

Engage entrepreneurs, networks and intermediaries in the design and delivery of training schemes

What's the issue?

Governments are not always best placed to design and deliver support for entrepreneurship training programmes. It is, therefore, important to involve stakeholders and main actors in the local entrepreneurial ecosystem in the design and implementation phases of entrepreneurship schemes while ensuring that public tailored-support does not reinforce the barriers faced by entrepreneurs from target population groups. In the context of inclusive and social entrepreneurship, a wide range of actors, such as networks, intermediaries and incubators operating at the local and national level, are active in the training field (European Commission, 2021a; OECD/EC, 2021a). For example, JA Europe – a non-profit providing amongst others entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship training to young people – is almost completely independent from public funding (OECD/EU, 2017a). In 2015, only 14% of its total annual budget stemmed from public funding and 82% from private sources (OECD/EU, 2017a).

What can governments do?

1. Engage in design

One of the most important methods of ensuring that training schemes for inclusive and social entrepreneurship are effective is to engage the targeted entrepreneurs in policy design. Governments can use different models to approach this, such as to collect feedback on proposed actions through a consultation process that should include entrepreneurs from the targeted groups or representative organisations

(e.g. women's business associations, youth entrepreneurship networks, social economy and social enterprise networks). This is especially important for entrepreneurship schemes for people with disabilities, as they are often designed by "outsiders" who have little, or no knowledge of the specific challenges faced by the intended recipients (OECD/EU, forthcoming). It is also important to collect the views of other actors in the entrepreneurship support system to ensure that new policy actions and schemes fit into a cohesive system (i.e. duplication is minimised and linkages are built across schemes when relevant).

2. Partner in delivery

Another way that governments can achieve engagement is to involve members of the target groups in the management and delivery of schemes. The most common approach used is to ensure that there is some representation of the target group (e.g. women, youth, immigrants, seniors, people with disabilities, social entrepreneurs) among the trainers and advisers who deliver the support. Entrepreneurship trainers, coaches, mentors and advisers from the different population groups should have a good understanding of the needs and operating preferences of the particular target group. This can also help build trust quickly with participants. An alternative method is to provide training to those interacting with participants but this will never replace first-hand knowledge and experience that someone from the target group would have. Another approach is to (also) include representation in the management of the scheme. This includes membership and active participation in the boards and advisory bodies used to guide scheme managers. This sends a signal that support schemes

are serious about engaging with the target groups and provides a mechanism through which the needs and concerns of the targeted entrepreneurs can be addressed. Social entrepreneurs can be involved in the management and delivery of schemes and serve as potential trainers or mentors to support local ecosystems in alignment with their respective needs.

Another commonly used method is to deliver inclusive and social entrepreneurship schemes in partnership with organisations that have a strong history of working closely with the targeted entrepreneurs. This type of delivery benefits from the expertise of the partner organisation, which helps to ensure that training content is relevant and that delivery methods are appropriate. For example, the training series Self-Employment for People with Disabilities in Ireland was developed by professors at the Technical University of Dublin in

partnership with the non-governmental organisation Towards Work, which is a member of the Open Doors network that works to facilitate work opportunities for people with disabilities (Box 5). Social entrepreneurship training is already frequently conducted by social enterprises or other social economy organisations at the local and national level. On the European level, programmes such as ESF, ERDF and ERASMUS+ are perceived to have an important influence on social entrepreneurship training. However, national and local initiatives, especially in rural areas are relatively rare (European Commission, 2021a). An example worth mentioning is the Croatian Strategy for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship (adopted in 2015), which allocates 28% of its total budget to educational activities, for example through replicating innovative educational programmes and supporting institutions providing formal and informal programmes on social entrepreneurship (OECD/EU, 2017a).

Box 5. Self-Employment for People with Disabilities webinar series by Towards Work and TU Dublin, Ireland

What?

Towards Work was approved and funded by the Government of Ireland and hosted by the non-governmental organisation Towards Work within the Open Doors Initiative – a network of non-governmental organisations. The Self-Employment for People with Disabilities webinar series is an online course for people with disabilities interested in pursuing entrepreneurship. The programme is free of charge for accepted participants and includes an entrepreneurship training course, grants and support and mentorship opportunities.

Why?

A recent OECD report Disability, Work and Inclusion in Ireland: Engaging and Supporting Employers reported only one in three persons with disabilities in Ireland have a job, among the lowest shares across EU Member States and OECD Countries. Following the recommendation to increase access to training programmes for people with disabilities, the Government of Ireland in collaboration with non-governmental organisations has introduced and supported initiatives like Towards Work with the aim to support and empower people with disabilities to pursue entrepreneurship.

Source: (O’Dea, 2021; TU Dublin, 2021; OECD, 2021e; Cooney, 2022)

Key Activities

The course includes twelve modules designed to develop a range of entrepreneurship skills, including customer segmentation, developing financial projections, understanding legal matters and preparing a business plan. Each webinar includes guest speakers who have relevant expertise and experience to share with participants and to act as role models. Additionally, participants develop their business idea on a weekly basis through an online tool, allowing for a customised experimental learning approach. Each participant is allocated a business mentor, whom they meet once a month to get feedback on the development of their business plan.

Impact

The programme received funding for 20 places and had 38 applications for its first iteration. Following the launch of the programme in September 2021, participants reported higher confidence in becoming an entrepreneur, attributing the entrepreneurial inspiration, in part, to the programme’s use of role models (i.e. successful entrepreneurs with a disability). Moreover, the entrepreneurship training course led to the creation of 6 start-ups among the first cohort.

3. Support outreach

The success of training schemes often depends on the take-up levels among the target groups, which requires tailored outreach efforts to reach the target groups.

Evaluations often show that schemes are more successful when greater efforts have been made to reach the targeted communities, which is more effective when the community has been

engaged in establishing the outreach plan. This often makes use of community media (e.g. local newspapers, websites) and community organisations that already have credibility within the targeted media. Effective outreach is a critical success factor for immigrant entrepreneurship training programmes (OECD/EU, 2017b). An additional success factor is the need to develop strong linkages with integration policies and programmes to ensure effective outreach.

Establish ongoing monitoring and impact measurement

What's the issue?

Monitoring and evaluation are essential tools for strengthening entrepreneurship policy tools, including training schemes for inclusive and social entrepreneurship. Monitoring and evaluation techniques are an important part of policy development at all stages of the policy development cycle. In the context of inclusive and social entrepreneurship training, measures of effectiveness and efficiency need to become more widespread to improve the quality of training offers. Many training providers simply report on input metrics such as the training budget or the number of participants (OECD/EU, 2013), which falls short of measuring the impact of training. This is due partly to a lack of investment in monitoring and evaluation, low capabilities in monitoring and evaluation among training providers, a lack of clearly defined concepts (e.g. specific competences needed for inclusive and social entrepreneurship) and key performance indicators. All of these hinder learning from experience.

What can governments do?

1. Establish a monitoring and evaluation system

A common misperception is that evaluation is only applicable at the end of a training programme. On the

contrary, it is critical that monitoring and evaluation occur at all stages of the entrepreneurship training life cycle. The key evaluation inputs in the early stages of impact measurement consist of action planning or needs diagnosis, which involve assembling information on the problems faced by target groups, current policy activities and options for strengthening training (i.e. filling gaps). It also involves *ex ante* evaluations, which can be used to assess relevance and coherence of the training scheme as well as to set up training targets and procedures for subsequent evaluations. All available information should be considered, including an analysis of existing data and research as well as previous evaluations of similar support schemes (OECD/EU, 2013). For example, the Portugal Social Innovation initiative includes an *ex ante* needs assessment prior to applying the most appropriate modules from an 18-month training programme (Box 6). Overall, these steps are critical to ensure that resource allocations are sufficient, which can undermine the impact of training schemes. This is a common pitfall in inclusive and social entrepreneurship training, as highlighted by the evaluation of the Ignite scheme for refugee entrepreneurs in Melbourne, Australia (Collins, 2017).

Box 6. Initiative to promote social innovation, Portugal

What?

Portugal Social Innovation (PSI) is a national government initiative aimed at promoting social innovation and stimulating the social investment market in Portugal. PSI mobilises approximately EUR 150 million from the European Social Fund, as part of the Portugal 2020 Partnership Agreement. The funds are channelled to the market through four financing instruments, each of them focussing on a specific stage in the life cycle of social innovation projects. The financing instrument Capacity Building For Social Investment supports the development of the organisational and management skills of teams from social sector organisations that are involved in implementing social innovation and social entrepreneurship initiatives (SISEIs).

Why?

The initiative is the first of its kind in Europe, given that Portugal is the only EU Member State to have set aside EU funds until 2020 to use new financing instruments to foster innovation and social investment.

Source: (Portugal Inovacao Social, n.d.a; Portugal Inovacao Social, n.d.b)

Key activities

To address the specific training needs of social sector organisations, a fixed non-payable amount of up to EUR 50 000 will be allocated to fund a capacity-building programme. The 18-month programme should include up to 5 different interventions in the following areas: a value creation model, impact study, strategy, partnerships and growth, marketing, communication and fundraising, organisation, governance, leadership and human resources, financial, control and risk management, operations and IT management. Prior to applying for funding for their capacity-building programme, applicants have to carry out an Assessment of Training Needs.

Impact

Portugal-wide, 201 projects have received funding amounting to EUR 7 441 804 through the Capacity Building for Social Investment.

A critical step during *ex ante* evaluation is to define key performance indicators (KPIs). The nature of these KPIs depend on the objectives of the training programme and whether the programme is dedicated to developing a specific set of skills (i.e. finance, digital or management skills). For example, a skills-based entrepreneurship training course could include policy activity indicators (e.g. the number of people who attend the course), customer satisfaction indicators (e.g. programme participants' levels of satisfaction with content and delivery method of the entrepreneurship training), policy output indicators (e.g. the change in the level and quality of entrepreneurship skills), and policy outcome indicators (e.g. the success of participants in raising start-up finance, the number of start-ups, or survival rates of enterprises). Identifying and

defining indicators at the outset and taking a baseline measurement is important for measuring the impact of the training scheme against what would have occurred otherwise (i.e. the counterfactual).

The creation of a logical framework for each policy action allows for testing of the logic and assumptions of the actions as well as for setting intermediate targets for achievements. A practical guide to best practice evaluation methods for SME and entrepreneurship policies and programmes are described in the OECD Framework for the Evaluation of SME and Entrepreneurship Policies and Programmes (OECD, 2008). An example of a logical framework is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Illustrative logical framework for policy action for entrepreneurship training

	Narrative	Indicator	Information source	Assumptions
Costs	Spending on entrepreneurship training programme development, teacher training and training implementation	Budget allocated and spent on new entrepreneurship training programme	Provider records (i.e. budget)	Adequate financial and human resources can be made available
Activities	New entrepreneurship training programme is designed and implemented	Number of qualified trainers (i.e. the number of those who underwent dedicated-training) Number of people participating from target populations	Provider records	Trainers are willing to be trained People from target population groups are willing to participate Providers have capacity to support the training (i.e. location, hours, mobile accessibility, etc.)
Outputs	Improvement in entrepreneurship skills and attitudes Expansion of professional networks	Proportion of participants who intend to create a business Proportion of participants seeing entrepreneurship as feasible Quality of business plans produced Number of new contacts	Survey of participants Programme records (e.g. programme evaluations, impact reports)	Increased understanding of entrepreneurship will lead to increased business and social enterprise creation
Outcomes	Participants set up business or begin (self-)employment	Number of new businesses Business survival rate Number of participants who found employment	Follow-up surveys of participants Programme records (e.g. impact reports)	Other barriers such as finance availability can be overcome

	Narrative	Indicator	Information source	Assumptions
Impact	Increased entrepreneurship rate among target population groups (i.e. people from under-represented and disadvantaged as well as those with social enterprise intentions) Lower unemployment rate	Number of owned enterprises Unemployment rate	Business and labour market statistics	People starting up would otherwise be unemployed or under-employed New enterprises do not displace existing ones

Source: OECD based on (Hempel and Fiala, 2011)

Governments face a number of challenges when establishing monitoring and evaluation systems for training schemes. First, it can be difficult to define KPIs related to success in the context of inclusive and social entrepreneurship. For example, some people may realise that entrepreneurship is not an appropriate career path for them. This is particularly important in entrepreneurship training schemes for people from under-represented groups because it may be unwise for them to take on debt and risk if they are already at risk of falling into poverty. Other benefits of training programmes should also be considered as indicators of success, such as the opportunity to acquire skills and work experience as well as build professional networks. These benefits lead to higher levels of employability for participants of entrepreneurship training programmes. Second, the timeframe for measuring success can vary greatly. Participants do not necessarily start a business immediately upon completion of a training scheme. It could take several years to start a business and it is difficult for evaluations to account for this delay when assessing the impact of training schemes.

2. Monitor and organise interim evaluations

Monitoring can be used to track in-take, the progress of participants and expenditures. These can inform whether training schemes are being used by the targeted entrepreneurs and can also signal potential issues that need to be addressed such as cost overrun or low take-up. Additionally, interim evaluations can be used to assess outcomes and impacts before the scheme is completed. These interim evaluations can help programme managers adjust content and delivery methods. However, such monitoring is often limited on the side of training providers due to gaps in capacity as well as resource constraints. Resource needs, both in terms of financial and human resources, are even higher for larger scale or longer-term efficacy assessments and further impeded by a frequent lack of engagement from previous trainees. Increased digitalisation

can lead to additional measures of effectiveness within and throughout trainings.

3. Conduct impact evaluations and learn from results

Once an entrepreneurship training scheme has completed, two tools can be used to assess the success of training schemes. This includes terminal evaluations, which occur immediately on the closure of a training programme and seek to ensure that there is institutional memory of the experience (e.g. collecting statistics and qualitative information), as well as *ex post* evaluations. These evaluations take place when the final impacts are known or can be estimated and provide a more detailed view of the impact of particular aspects of the training scheme by considering a range of factors such as:

- **Relevance** aims to identify the extent to which the training programme is suited to the priorities and policies of a target group, focussing on programme objectives versus needs;
- **Effectiveness** indicates whether or not the objectives of training programme were achieved;
- **Efficiency** highlights the outputs of the training programme (i.e. were there more resourceful ways of implementing the training programme?);
- **Impact** evaluates the positive and negative changes for participants following the training programme. Participants can be directly or indirectly affected by intended or unintended aspects of the training programme; and,
- **Sustainability** of the training programme refers to whether the benefits of the training are likely to continue in the future.

One method used to measure the impact of training schemes is the counterfactual impact evaluation. This

technique compares the behaviour and outcomes of a control group of individuals with that of programme participants. This allows for an assessment of the impact of the training scheme by measuring the difference between the change in behaviour and outcomes of programme participants with that of those in the control group of individuals. The gold standard of finding the counterfactual in policy evaluation is the random control trial (RCT) technique. Examples of entrepreneurship training programmes that have used RCT in evaluating programme impact include the Ticket for Change social entrepreneurship programme (Åstebro and Hoos, 2021) and the Growing America Through Entrepreneurship (GATE) in the United States

(Thompson, 2013). While evaluation methods like this are commonly used in other policy areas, it remains quite rare in the context of inclusive and social entrepreneurship.

The results of monitoring and evaluations only have value to the extent that they inform future policy development. A good practice example of setting up robust monitoring and evaluation systems is the Prince's Trust Enterprise Scheme, which provides entrepreneurship training to youth who are not in employment, education or training (i.e. NEETs). This scheme uses ongoing monitoring and ongoing evaluations to regularly adjust training content and delivery methods ([Box 7](#)).

Box 7. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Prince's Trust Enterprise, United Kingdom

Programme

The Enterprise programme is an entrepreneurship programme which offers training, mentoring and financing to unemployed youth (18 to 30 years old) interested in starting businesses. The programme consists of a four-day intensive entrepreneurship workshop, using interactive and peer-to-peer learning. Business mentors work with youth entrepreneurs for up to two years to ensure they receive personalised one-on-one support in planning and testing business ideas. Enterprise also offers start-up grants and low-interest personal loans between GBP 500 to GBP 25 000 (EUR 600 to EUR 30 000).

Monitoring

The Prince's Trust has an evaluation system with a variety of indicators, materials and processes to monitor programme performance. The Trust collects profile data on participants and monitors the proportion of youth entrepreneurs from different population groups, considering targets' backgrounds, demographic profiles and the specific needs of each population group. Participation is also monitored (i.e. retention rates, average team size, achievement of qualifications and positive outcomes) to ensure effective

programme performance and management. Programme effectiveness is measured using the distance-travelled method to determine the soft outcomes achieved by participants. My Journey record sheets collect data on participants' skill levels at the beginning and end of a programme to determine the change in skill levels. These include six Trust-wide skills (e.g. communication, working with, setting and achieving goals, managing feelings, confidence and reliability) as well as programme-specific skills.

Evaluation

The My Journey record sheets also include a variety of questions, which serve to evaluate programmes and provide feedback to programme coordinators. Additionally, the Trust records outcomes of youth entrepreneurs once they have left the programme. Participants are asked three months and six months after leaving the programme to respond to a series of automated texts sent to their mobile phones.

The Evaluation team prepares monthly, quarterly and annual reports featuring key information from the monitoring and evaluation process. External evaluations supplement the internal evaluation system and feedback from stakeholders, donors and partner organisations is encouraged.

Source: (The Prince's Trust Group, 2021; Prince's Trust International, 2022)

■ 4 CONCLUSIONS

One of the most commonly used instruments by governments to support entrepreneurs from under-represented groups and social entrepreneurs is training.

Entrepreneurship training in the context of inclusive and social entrepreneurship has several roles, including addressing specific skills gaps that might not be addressed in general entrepreneurship training, boosting self-confidence and expanding professional networks. Many schemes show positive impacts for women, immigrants, youth, seniors, the unemployed, people with disabilities and social entrepreneurs, but these impacts vary according to a range of factors such as format, intensity and the extent to which the content is tailored to the specific needs of the targeted participants.

Governments, therefore, need to consider several critical questions when designing and delivering entrepreneurship training schemes as part of inclusive and social entrepreneurship schemes, starting with the extent to which training content needs to be tailored.

Recent evaluation evidence underlines the importance of designing training for specific objectives and target groups. For example, entrepreneurship training for refugee entrepreneurs likely needs a greater emphasis on basic regulatory issues since this group will not be familiar with registering a business, paying tax, acquiring licences, etc. For social entrepreneurs, the regulatory framework and financial environment may hold additional challenges due to less common legal forms or business models. The identification of the specific training needs is typically done through an *ex ante* evaluation and stakeholder consultation process, but these are not yet common practices in the EU. While the benefits of tailoring training are clear, they must be weighed against the increased costs of developing and delivering specific training schemes for different groups. These decisions need to be directed by resource availability, as well as the scale of demand for differentiated training.

Governments also need to consider the impact of the format used to deliver training.

A growing number of training formats are used in practice and each one has benefits and drawbacks. Longer and more intensive training formats typically have stronger impacts but the costs of delivering these types of training are greater. In addition, different target groups likely have different preferences that also need to be considered. For example, youth entrepreneurs may prefer the flexibility offered by online training whereas seniors may prefer traditional classroom training. Governments must also consider the different obstacles to the targeted entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs that different formats present. Some groups may have low levels of digital skills to prevent access to online training while some may face challenges related to location, hours, language and the opportunity cost (e.g. time away from business, childcare).

Finally, governments are increasingly open to delivering training online given the necessity to move government support online during the COVID-19 pandemic so there is a question about whether this is appropriate for inclusive and social entrepreneurship.

The delivery of training through online channels appears to have many benefits, including increased reach to non-urban areas and cost effectiveness since the marginal cost of delivering online training is essentially zero once the programme has been developed. Governments should consider the extent to which online formats can be applied in inclusive and social entrepreneurship schemes, but it must be recognised that many of the targeted (potential) entrepreneurs face digital skills barriers. This calls for the integration of basic digital training in entrepreneurship training schemes.

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This policy brief on improving the effectiveness of inclusive and social entrepreneurship training schemes was produced by the OECD and the European Commission. It discusses the importance of training schemes and presents an overview of the types of training schemes available. It also analyses the opportunities for governments to strengthen these training schemes and provides guidance on how to design more effective inclusive and social entrepreneurship training schemes.

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