

L'INTEGRATION des MIGRANTS par L'ENTREPRENEURIAT

Foster the inclusion of migrants in Brussels through self-employment via increased awareness, improved support services and reinforced partnerships



Lead implementing partner
Microstart Support ASBL



Total budget
EUR 602 000



Other implementing partner
hub.brussels



Implementation timeline
March 2023 - February 2025

Migrants in Brussels, Belgium frequently face administrative, financial, linguistic and cultural barriers to access the labour market or to become entrepreneurs.

The **Foster the inclusion of migrants in Brussels through self-employment via increased awareness, improved support services and reinforced partnerships** project aimed to improve access to self-employment opportunities, entrepreneurship included, for migrants and refugees – particularly women and youth – with a legal residence in Belgium.

The pilot project – which was part of the EU-funded **Partnerships and Financing for Migrant Inclusion (PAFMI)** initiative – was led by Microstart, a Belgian microfinance institution providing advice and microcredits to entrepreneurs who do not have access to or qualify for financing in the commercial banking sector.

The project provided tailor-made support to migrants wanting to launch businesses. This took the form of information, advice, training and coaching (mainly by volunteers), and technical advice on how to access financial and non-financial support schemes. Key activities also included training for microcredit advisors on administrative requirements for migrants, and training on how to start a business in Belgium.





Results

- **Over 1 500 migrants** were informed of how to start a business in Belgium, which organisations could assist, and where to find financing to start their business. Close to 47% of the participants were women.
- **86 migrants** participated in collective training on starting and managing a business.
- **66 migrants** benefitted from individual business coaching.
- **48 migrants** gained access to microcredit to start and develop a business after participating in a project activity.



Best practices and lessons learnt

- **Working with both social media and migrant and refugee ambassadors is effective** in generating interest and increasing attendance at information sessions.
- **Partnerships are very important.** Involving hub.brussels increased the impact of the project. This was due to the ability of hub.brussels to disseminate information to beneficiaries and partners, and their key role in strengthening collaboration between entrepreneurs.
- **Photo exhibitions with testimonials are an effective means to engage with local institutions and municipalities.** Four awareness-creating events, bringing together a total of 245 migrants, were organised. At three of these, the photo exhibition 'Entrepreneurs of the world' was presented together with testimonials and/or information sessions about starting a business in Belgium.



Olivia Van den Bogaert
Partnership Fundraising Advocacy, Microstart



For people who arrive here, one of the biggest barriers [to starting businesses] is knowing where to find the right information. Providing this information, adapted to the realities of migrants, and in their language, brings them a step closer to launching their businesses – and in so doing, their integration within Europe.”

This publication was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.