



**IO2 -
Accelerator Business Launch Pad Pilots**

Comparative Report

Project number: 2020-1-UK01-KA202-078857

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Introduction

The Accelerator Business Launchpad training formed part of the Inclusive Business Launchpad (IBL) Erasmus+ project, which aims to support small businesses to develop and grow, to meet the needs of a post-covid society. Doing so by supporting participants with a range of interventions that aid microbusiness owners, to access training and support for their business to grow. Employing a range of tested and proven theories along with innovative training, developed as part of the IO1 phase of the programme, it became clear that IBL has an important role to play in the sustainability of communities across the EU and beyond. This innovative training has been developed by the 5 partners, listed below:-

- Center for Social Innovation (CSI) - Cyprus
- Inova Consultancy - UK
- Consultancy Academy - UK
- Inova Aspire - Netherlands
- FH JOANNEUM (FHJ) - Austria

All partner countries engaged in the IO2 pilot training for IBL. The UK training was delivered by Consultancy Academy with support from Inova Consultancy Ltd. There were 2 pilots per partner country, and partners reported back on both pilots; prior to this comparative report being developed. Each partner report provided details of recruitment, implementation of the training programme, facilitator comments and impact of the training.

RECRUITMENT FOR PILOT 1 AND PILOT 2

All partners used a wide range of marketing activities to ensure successful recruitment to the training programme for both pilots. Recruitment and dissemination were discussed during partner meetings to ensure any partner organisation needing support could access a range of ideas and solutions for recruitment. The individual partner reports for IO2 highlight clearly some examples of recruitment strategies, from flyers, WhatsApp, contact with stakeholders and previous learners to the use of social media to spread the word. For each pilot of the Workshops the Partner Organisation aimed to recruit a minimum of 10 microbusinesses.

Center for Social Innovation (Cyprus)



Center for Social Innovation - CSI
Published by Sofia Themistokleous · September 2 at 10:00 AM · 🌐

👉 Το Κέντρο Κοινωνικής Καινοτομίας σε συνεργασία με τον Σύλλογο Γυναικών Υπαίθρου Λάρνακας διοργανεί στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού έργου Inclusive Business Launchpad - iB, το 2ήμερο δωρεάν εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα ενδυνάμωσης επιχειρηματιών

👉 Το πρόγραμμα επιδιώκει να προωθήσει ίσες ευκαιρίες σε άτομα που ενδιαφέρονται να γίνουν επιχειρηματίες ή να επεκτείνουν την επιχείρησή τους. Απευθύνεται αλλά δεν περιορίζεται σε νέους, γυναίκες, μονογονεϊκές οικογένειες, άτομα ηλικίας 5... See more

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Εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα
ενδυνάμωσης επιχειρηματιών

Θέματα που θα μας απασχολήσουν:

- Πώς αντιμετωπίζονται οι προκλήσεις, ευέλκκη σκέψη, θετική ψυχολογία
- Ανάπτυξη μιας ιστορίας για την προώθηση της επιχείρησής σας
- Πώς να αναπτύξετε επιχειρηματική νοοτροπία

Ημερομηνία: Δευτέρα 12 & Τρίτη 13 Σεπτεμβρίου 2022 και κάποιες διαδικτυακές συνεδρίες που θα ανακοινωθούν αργότερα.
Ώρα: 10:00πμ - 15:00πμ
Μέρος: Σύλλογος Γυναικών Υπαίθρου Λάρνακας, (Διεύθυνση: 1η Απριλίου, 7730, Άγιος Θεόδωρος, Κύπρος)

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iB **LAUNCH PAD** **LAUNCH PAD** **LAUNCH PAD** **LAUNCH PAD**
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29,392 People reached 626 Engagements -1.6x lower Distribution score [Boost again](#)

CSI received 27 online registrations and for the first pilot 6 participants attended face to face and another 8 participated online over 2 days during September 2022. Apart from social media promotion of the training an E-flyer was also produced. Registrants were contacted to check eligibility and availability for both sessions.

For the 2nd pilot as soon as the date was set for January and February 2023, a post was created and sent to all social media accounts and an online registration was created. The promotion reached over 20,000 people.

Consultancy Academy (UK)

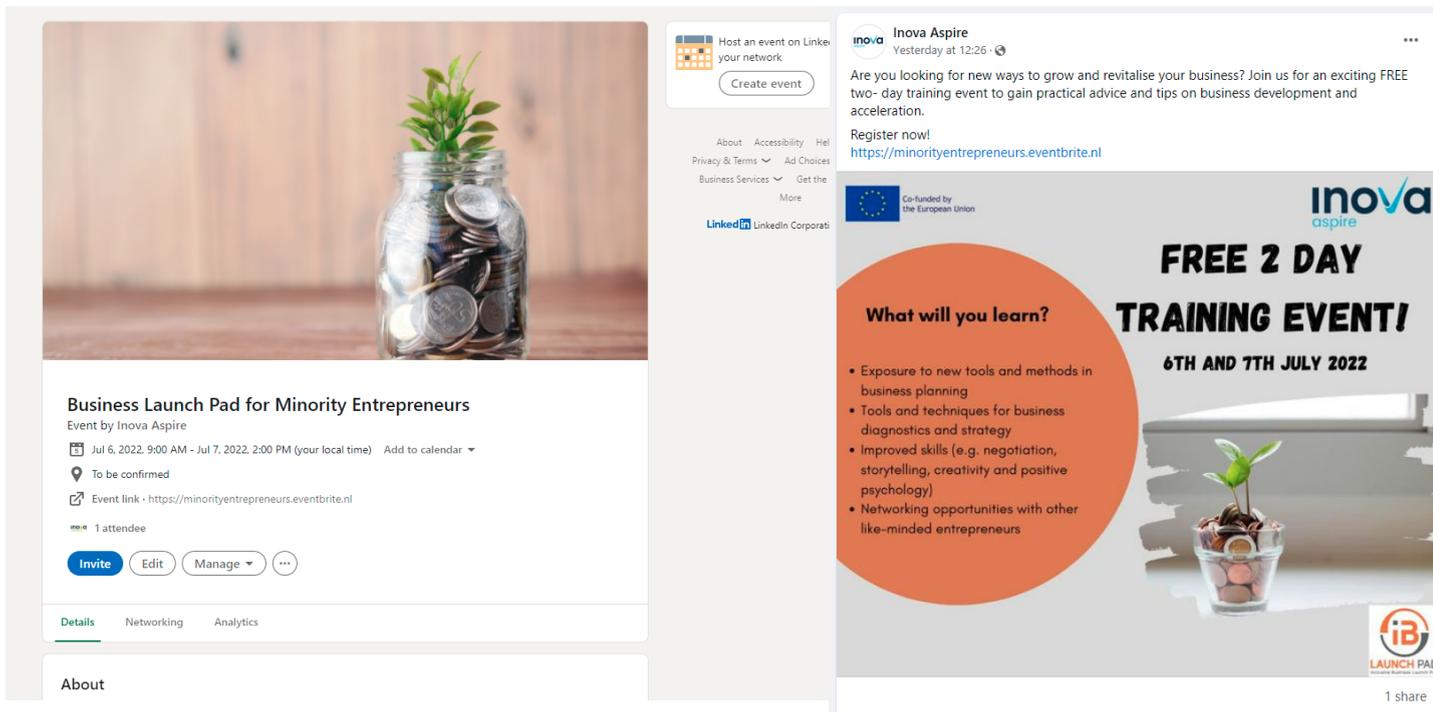
For pilot 1, the aim was to recruit a wide range of disadvantaged entrepreneurs. Recruitment took many forms, including an E-flyer which was distributed through Doncaster Council and Doncaster Chamber of Commerce. In addition a local Women's Network was contacted and the organisation used its own social media channels, including Facebook and LinkedIn. Many participants were recruited as a direct result of the Multiplier event that had taken place and from referrals from the Doncaster Council.

For the 2nd pilot the same recruitment format took place with the addition of a word of mouth campaign and direct contact with participants of pilot 1, in order to cascade the information to their contacts. Although there was no multiplier event prior to pilot 2, participants were contacted from the earlier multiplier event if they had not attended the first pilot.

Inova Aspire (Netherlands)

A decision was made to focus on the recruitment of female entrepreneurs recognising how this meets the need of promoting diversity and challenges inequalities in entrepreneurship. The training was advertised on Inova Aspire's social media channels, including Facebook and LinkedIn. By also directly contacting some stakeholders and women's groups a wider audience was reached. Facebook and LinkedIn were very successful for the recruitment campaign due to them being far reaching. The training was also published on Eventbrite to recruit, which was a great success. There were 36 registrations and a total of 723 people visited the Eventbrite page, highlighting the success of the recruitment strategy.

For Inova Aspire, the recruitment for the 2nd pilot followed similar methods with the addition of contacting female entrepreneurs who had been involved in other training programmes and who matched the criteria. 280 people viewed the 2nd Eventbrite link and 26 people registered to attend the training.



The screenshot displays an Eventbrite event page for "Business Launch Pad for Minority Entrepreneurs" organized by Inova Aspire. The event is scheduled for July 6, 2022, from 9:00 AM to July 7, 2022, at 2:00 PM (local time). The status is "To be confirmed" and the event link is <https://minorityentrepreneurs.eventbrite.nl>. There is currently 1 attendee. The page includes navigation options like "Invite", "Edit", and "Manage".

The event details section lists the following topics to be learned:

- Exposure to new tools and methods in business planning
- Tools and techniques for business diagnostics and strategy
- Improved skills (e.g. negotiation, storytelling, creativity and positive psychology)
- Networking opportunities with other like-minded entrepreneurs

The promotional graphic for the event features the text "FREE 2 DAY TRAINING EVENT!" and "6TH AND 7TH JULY 2022". It also includes the Inova Aspire logo, the European Union co-funding logo, and the LAUNCH PAD logo. A small image of a plant growing in a jar of coins is also present.

FH JOANNEUM (Austria)



A flyer/poster was created and well distributed, mainly amongst female entrepreneurs and contacts of the organisation, via social media platforms such as Facebook. Female entrepreneurship groups were contacted such as the Business Women Graz and Future Female. Eventbrite was used and in addition, personal networks were contacted and emails sent to the Chamber of Commerce, Gain and Sustain, who work with disadvantaged groups, Social Business Hub Styria, entrepreneurship centres like Ideentriebwerk as well as the entrepreneurship department of the city of Graz. For the 2nd pilot in Austria, a decision was made to have the training in English at the university premises of the organisation and to target English speaking female entrepreneurs in

addition to the promotional routes taken for pilot 1.

For pilot 2, all partners made minor amendments to their recruitment drives based on what had proved successful for pilot 1. In addition those who had been unable to attend the first pilot either due to non availability or illness, were contacted again with the new dates for pilot 2. Local stakeholders, social media channels and word of mouth all proved very successful ways of recruiting.

Overview of Participants for Pilot 1 and Pilot 2

	Piloting stage	Number of participants	Total number of participants
Inova Aspire (Netherlands)	1	19	33
	2	14	
CSI (Cyprus)	1	14	37
	2	23	
Consultancy Academy (UK)	1	12	23
	2	11	
FHJ (Austria)	1	4	20
	2	16	
Overall Total			113

FORMAT AND PROCESS OF PILOT 1 AND PILOT 2

Both pilot 1 and pilot 2 of the Accelerator Business Launch Pad training programmes were very well received and analysis of the data and evaluations in partner reports shows how successful the project has been. The success built on the planning and the enthusiasm from partners to deliver a training that was innovative and supportive of business development for the smaller business. Prior to the delivery of the training, partners worked extensively to develop a facilitators guide that contained the proposed methodology and a detailed delivery plan for trainers. Five modules were developed as follows:-

- Module 1 - Strategic Planning - Understanding your Market
- Module 2 - Resources and Capabilities
- Module 3 - Understanding the management of change
- Module 4 - How to develop an entrepreneurial mindset
- Module 5 - Storytelling

Each module contains a range of topics and activities with set learning objectives and outcomes. All the modules aim to help entrepreneurs build confidence, improve resilience, self efficacy and self belief and all with the added intention of creating successful business ventures and supporting existing businesses. The facilitators guide is very detailed, giving trainers the necessary tools and confidence to deliver a successful course. In addition lesson plans were developed and in place prior to the training taking place.

The following chart shows details of the training dates that took place: -

Consultancy Academy (UK)	PILOT 1	24/5/22
		31/5/22
	PILOT 2	15/11/22
		22/11/22
FHJ (Austria)	PILOT 1	4/11/22
		11/11/22



	PILOT 2	15/12/22
		13/1/23
CSI (Cyprus)	PILOT 1	12/9/22
		13/9/22
	PILOT 2	25/1/23
		1/2/23
Inova Aspire (Netherlands)	PILOT 1	6/7/22
		7/7/22
	PILOT 2	29/11/22
30/11/22		

The 2 pilots of the IO2 Accelerator Business Launch Pad Training took place during May 2022 and February 2023. Partners agreed to a flexible approach of delivery to meet the needs of their own learners and recognising that taking time out as a small business owner, can be challenging. However, all partners chose to deliver each pilot over 2 full days as this seemed preferable for entrepreneurs to only need 2 days away from their business rather than it being over 4 half days. Most of the IBL training took place face to face with some online participants engaging for the CSI partner. This was interesting from a sustainability perspective as going forward online delivery would allow partners to meet the needs of a much wider audience. All partners are familiar with blended learning but having both online and face to face learners attending at the same time required careful planning.

Center for Social Innovation (Cyprus)

The first pilot training took place in collaboration with the Women's Association of Rural Larnaca. It was a mix of online and face to face training on the 12th and 13th September 2022. All participants were either new to business or in the process of starting up or were already running businesses and wanted to improve their skills and grow their business. 14 women attended the first pilot with 6 of them being online and 8 face to face. Their businesses were very different, however they recognised common themes with regards the support they needed for their businesses.



The 2nd pilot for CSI took place on the 25th January 2023 and 1st February 2023 with a week in between. Each workshop was a full day, and face to face learners were recruited. Although mainly female participants, there were some male attendees which was interesting for the dynamics and for recognising the different needs that were identified. Feedback for the training was very good and all the participants rated the course very highly. Participants were encouraged to register to the online platform to access the additional resources that have been developed as part of the programme.



Consultancy Academy (UK)

For pilot 1, the chosen training room could only accommodate 12 learners and this number was achieved on day 1 with 11 attendees on day 2. The one who did not attend had important issues to address with regards to their business and this was always a challenge throughout the training as a few of the participants had shops and the cost of closing had an impact and it was not easy to find cover for short periods/days without relying on friends and family. The training was split into morning and afternoon sessions with set coffee breaks and lunch breaks. This allowed the business owners to attend to any urgent work calls or emails as necessary during the set breaks. In addition the training was very fast paced so breaks were necessary. The training took place in the centre of Doncaster on the 24th May 2022 and 31st May 2022.



Pilot 2 was attended by 11 participants and Consultancy Academy held the delivery face to face but changed the venue after feedback from participants as the first venue was too small and this had also limited recruitment. This was the only change as there had been no negative feedback for pilot 1 so the format and lesson plan remained the same. The training took place at Flourish in Doncaster on the 15th November 2022 and 22nd November 2022. This was still in Doncaster but was more accessible. The training had a one week gap between sessions. The same facilitators for pilot 1 conducted the training delivery due to their extensive knowledge of the programme, ensuring that experience gained from pilot 1 could be harnessed. PowerPoint presentations were created to enhance the training, following the same format as pilot 1. A range of additional resources were shared, for example links to youtube videos that could be watched separately, and recruitment to the

Support Circles took place. Evaluations were completed which clearly show the success of the programme.

Inova Aspire (Netherlands)

19 participants engaged in the first pilot of the Accelerator Business Launchpad training which took place over 2 days in Utrecht on the 6th July 2022 and 7th July 2022. The participants were all women from very mixed backgrounds with a range of business ventures. Some were migrants, experiencing double disadvantage. All of the participants were looking to grow and enhance their business.

Pilot 2 of the programme took place on the 29th and 30th November 2022 over 2 full days in Arnhem, Netherlands. 280 people viewed the event on eventbrite and there were 14 participants for the training. On day 2 in addition to the storytelling aspect of the training, more focus was given to positive psychology and managing change. Following feedback from IO1, more case studies were introduced. As before, the feedback was very positive and very detailed. One comment on the evaluation is given below:-

“I was expecting to be confronted with a lot of big business jargon, but was pleasantly surprised by how accessible and easy to follow every segment of today has been. Eye opening and very inspiring”.

The 2nd pilot was delivered by four experienced facilitators, Eric Wijmenga, Marina Larios, Glyn Cartwright and Chiles Cartwright. This allowed a wider range of knowledge to be cascaded to the learners, including a number of useful business tools and theories. The second day also focused on storytelling and developing your own life stories to enhance the business and create a brand. Both days were backed up with in-depth PowerPoint presentations. 2 evaluations were completed for each day that was attended.



FH JOANNEUM (Austria)

Despite extensive promotion, only 4 participants engaged in pilot 1. This was disappointing as many more had registered interest. Sickness and work commitments were given as reasons for non attendance. The training was over 2 days on the 4th and 11th November 2022 and focused on the entrepreneurial mindset on day 1 and then on storytelling for day 2. As the numbers were low the second day was also able to focus more on individual needs and took the form of a group coaching session. All attendees were women with microbusinesses, being the target group. Feedback for the pilot was very good with one participant reporting seeing a benefit of using her personal life for developing a story for her business, and thus making it more authentic, when promoting her business. Some of the resources felt a little too theoretical so the idea of starting from oneself stood well with the group. With the smaller group dynamic, FHJ were able to adapt the training to a more tailored support and spend more time on the storytelling element of the programme.



For the 2nd pilot 16 participants attended over 2 days on the 15th December 2022 and the 13th January 2023. This took place at the premises for FH JOANNEUM, with the university offering fully equipped rooms, allowing for interactive sessions using computers, beamers, flipcharts, and whiteboards. There was a month between sessions due to the Christmas holidays. The second pilot was hosted in English as it engaged female English speaking entrepreneurs. 21 registered and 16 participants engaged. The training delivery was very successful with few suggestions for change. The group were encouraged to work together to challenge each other and in addition they set up their own WhatsApp group to maintain contact and build strong networks.

Final Overview of Pilot 1 and Pilot 2

After feedback from pilot 1, all partners were able to make minor amendments prior to the 2nd pilot and depending on the issues they had identified or issues raised in the learner evaluations. This was left to each partner to ensure they could meet the needs of their learners and in line with decisions from partners meeting after reviewing the reports from pilot 1. Partners were able to consider what worked well and what changes could be made to the programme. Generally the training in pilot 2 took the same format as pilot 1 as it was so well received. Finding the most appropriate venue seemed to be a key consideration.

Cultural differences were considered with regards to meeting expectations and to allow, for example, more time on the story telling aspect and to choose appropriate theories and tools for participants. An abundance of resources had been developed by partners, and pilot 1 highlighted that it was difficult to cover all the tools whilst also allowing for networking and interaction unless the number of days training were to increase. Most sessions took place face to face and were very interactive with participants, who were encouraged to engage in a range of activities to support their personal development and the development of their business.

Additional evaluations and evidence can be found in each of the individual partner reports.

Impact of the IBL Training

Over 100 participants engaged in the IBL training and even more were reached with the multiplier events and the recruitment strategies. The impact of the IBL training has proved very positive in building confidence in microbusiness owners, building and extending networks and sharing new and innovative ideas for business development. In addition a wide audience of small businesses were introduced to the training which has the possibility of supporting their business development.

An abundance of evidence has been collated by partners and added to the shared Google drive along with the individual partner reports. As all partner countries participated in 2 pilots prior to evaluating and producing their own reports, it is evident that partners and their own stakeholders have gained a great deal from participating in the programme. Facilitators commented on their confidence in the programme and in particular for the 2nd pilots. As many of the facilitators were involved in both pilots it is clear that they became more knowledgeable as well as confident and that all partners will benefit from the training that has taken place at facilitator and management level. This will impact confidence to engage in similar projects going forward and to build on this further.

The evaluations and testimonials completed by participants form part of these results and clearly the impact for participants has been very positive from realisation of the steps needed to make their own business successful to understanding key changes needed for business growth. A positive result has been the networking opportunities that came from the training and the sharing of ideas. The training allowed for small business owners to grow in confidence whilst supporting each other. Partners themselves feel more confident from the knowledge they have gained and shared as a result of this project. Facilitators feel more able to participate in delivery of similar training in the future. Partners worked well together, recognising each other's strengths and were able to offer ideas, support and sharing of good practice in all areas from recruitment through to delivery.

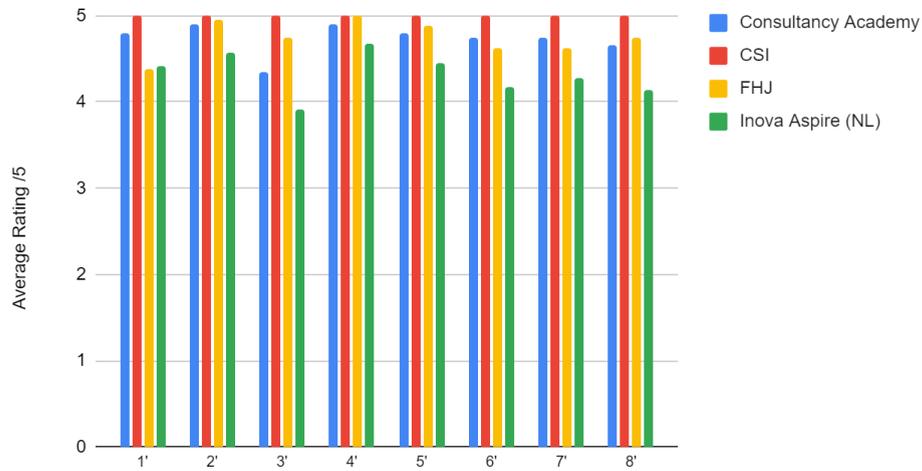
Feedback from participants shows that the training was very well received and that positive changes to business planning and development took place as a result of this intervention. This also included more forward planning and goal setting for participants, being more creative and being more confident. A long term impact on communities will be the increased success for the small businesses and therefore business growth. Giving participants the tools and resources to build successful businesses can only add to thriving communities.

The longer term impact of the training will depend on a number of factors, including outcomes of both IO3 and IO4 and partners' commitment to further dissemination of the project. However the results to date are very promising and it is envisaged that the overall results will indicate further positive impacts of the Inclusive Business Launch Pad programme.

Feedback:

Feedback Responses

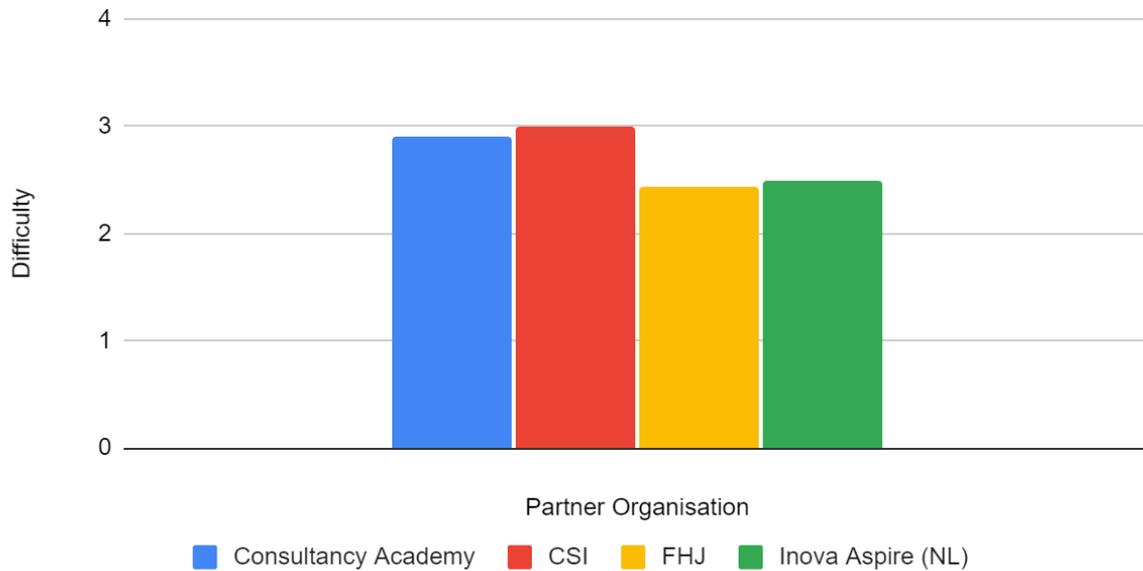
Across 2 pilots



1	Meeting initial expectations
2	Positive impact on personal development and growth
3	Duration of the training programme was just right
4	Trainers actively involved me in the learning process I felt engaged
5	Recieved appropriate support between sessions when needed
6	Methodolgy used was appropriate
7	Methodology helped to develop own thinking and find new ideas
8	Methodology was inclusive of all my learning needs

Average Difficulty Rating

Across 2 Pilots (3 being optimal)



Too easy and did not challenge	1
Mainly aimed at the right level and only challenged in some areas	2
Aimed completely at the right level and all sessions were challenging	3
Too hard and struggling to understand all/some of the sessions	4

TESTIMONIALS

Partners were asked to obtain testimonials about the sessions they delivered. This allowed for further documentation and evidence in addition to the evaluations. The testimonials were conducted on a more one to one basis. The testimonials, evaluations and additional verbal feedback have assisted with the final analysis of the training programme.

Video Testimonials

<https://youtube.com/shorts/Bcxd7BOEmGo?feature=share>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/hhlsop3X4ik?feature=share>

CSI



FHJ

Pilot 1

"I think such programs are very good. It enables further education without financial barriers."

Pilot 2

"Thank you for your precious time, Lisa! It was a truly enjoyable, inspiring, useful and creative / interactive presentation - even from the perspective of an introvert!"

Consultancy Academy

Pilot 1

“It really helped let me take the much needed time to take a step back from my business to see it from an external perspective.”

“Knowing others are in the same boat really put my mind at rest, I felt I could reach out to a safe network including the facilitators”

“Having facilitators who have run their own start-ups really does give credibility to what they are talking about.”

Pilot 2

“I was originally not confident about talking about my business and did not have a plan, these 2 sessions helped me to build confidence.”

“Learned a lot about myself and learning about new models, learnt an incredible amount and would encourage anyone to take up this incredible opportunity. The course was amazing.”

Inova Inspire

Pilot 1

“The content is good. The trainers and training exceeded my expectations. I am going to take a lot home to work on.”

Pilot 2

“The programme is very inspiring for thinking about one’s business before launching. It helped to put the pieces of my business puzzle together in a confident way.”

“Loved the atmosphere in the room. I learned a lot that will help me a lot, not only in my business, but also for my self-development!”

“This was everything and more I needed. It will help me infinitely- personal as well as professional.”

Evaluations show 77% rated the session 5/5. In additional comments, one participant added *“It really helped let me take the much needed time to take a step back from my business to see it from an external perspective”*.

The networking aspect was seen as a key benefit with many participants exchanging contact details. Participants were encouraged to challenge one another with regards to their business.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Inclusive Business Launch Pad programme was delivered as 2 pilots, generally over 2 days. The overall feedback of the IO2 training has been very good, giving a clear insight into the activities which worked well.

Many participants have shown interest in future training and in signposting others to further IBL training programmes. Some participants have set up their own WhatsApp groups to maintain contact, continue to network and to support each other with their business needs. This is really important as sole traders can sometimes feel isolated with no or few work colleagues. The IBL training allowed them to create and tap into their own support networks. Attendees of the training benefitted from working with others who are experiencing similar challenges and in doing so are able to support each other beyond the training.

Participants should be encouraged to recognise that this is a short term intervention and the real journey starts at the end of the programme with the implementation of the tools and methodologies they have been taught. Individual action plans should include this and a commitment to further learning and development. Partners gained a great deal of knowledge from the 2 pilot deliveries and from the reporting that followed. Going forward, recommendations may depend on the level of learning that participants bring to the table but it is clear that the storytelling element of the training for personalising and branding a business has been very successful. Taking out some of the theoretical learning activities to focus more on the personal element may well be an option to explore. Evaluation forms completed by participants show clearly the level of learning that has taken place and that overall expectations were met. Evaluations and feedback from pilot 1, directly informed further development of pilot 2, ensuring learner comments were considered.

A key recommendation relates to the abundance of resources developed for the programme, ensuring these are accessible beyond the face to face or online training to allow for individual continuous improvement. Each facilitator needs to choose the ones more appropriate for their learners and then signpost the participants to the ones not used in class. In addition, encouraging the new found support groups to continue to share information that promotes small businesses.

In conclusion, it is clear that the Inclusive Business Launch Pad pilot of the training has been very successful and that this is an intervention that can be taken forward to support many other micro businesses. The consortium gained a lot of interest at the recruitment stage and in doing so disseminated the project to a very wide audience. The 2 pilots attracted over 100 participants and from the groups, recruitment took place for the Support Circles, which were equally successful. Individual partner reports are available separately, giving more details of each partner's involvement.

Partners

COORDINATOR



Inova Consultancy (UK)



Center for Social Innovation (Cyprus)



FHJ (Austria)



Consultancy Academy (UK)



Inova Aspire (The Netherlands)