



Migrant **E**ntrepreneurs  
team-up with mentors

# Evaluation Report (country specific and overall)

**Deliverable: 3.2.2, WP 3**

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**WP Leader: Codici Ricerca e Intervento**

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## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY.....	3
The preliminary design .....	3
Problems and solutions .....	4
QUALITATIVE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY .....	7
IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS: 1ST CYCLE RESULTS .....	8
Background information on the participants .....	8
Evaluation of the Short Training Session - day 1 .....	17
Evaluation of the Short Training Session - day 2 .....	20
Evaluation of the Light Incubation .....	23
QUALITATIVE EVALUATION 1: NARRATIVE EVALUATION.....	26
First cycle .....	26
Second cycle .....	28
QUALITATIVE EVALUATION 2: FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS .....	31
Some preliminary considerations.....	31
An overall picture of MEnt .....	32
MEnt as a support of migrant entrepreneurs' business ideas .....	35
MEnt as a support of migrants' "soft" and "hard" entrepreneurial skills.....	39
MEnt as a support for improving migrants' social capital and favouring social integration.....	41
OVERALL EVALUATION AND FINAL REMARKS .....	43
INDEX OF TABLES.....	45

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# INTRODUCTION

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This is the final report of evaluation of the project MEnt – Migrant Entrepreneurs team-up with mentors. The evaluative process was conducted throughout the course of the project, that evolved in two incubation cycles (the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle between 2017 and 2018; the 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2018). It aims at achieve three main objectives. The first one is the MEnt impact evaluation on the beneficiaries' lives. It can be achieved by the analysis of collected data at the country level. More specifically, an impact is the way in which the project meets three specific objectives:

- support migrants' "soft" (e.g. leadership, vision, risk propensity, ...) and "hard" (market knowledge, sector specific and technical competencies, ...) entrepreneurial skills via Short Training Sessions;
- select and support the most promising and impacting business projects, via light incubation (an incubation focused on the validation of the business idea and concentrated in time) and mentorship programmes;
- favour cultural integration and social capital, via the engagement of a large number of mentors who will be guiding new entrepreneurs.

Secondly, the analysis of the first and the second incubation cycles could set relevant inputs to develop a sound effective methodology for light incubation to be used in different contexts.

Finally, lessons learned and recommendations could implement further projects on the same topic.

The impact evaluation is based on evidence collected using the tools designed during the "Impact assessment methodology phase" and the "Qualitative evaluation phase". Moreover, evidence concerning the methodology for light incubation was collected during the Consortium meetings held in Milan on the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2017 and in Berlin on the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2018.

In the following part the preliminary design of "Impact assessment methodology" will be analysed (p. 1) also by identifying the main problems encountered (p. 2). Then, it will be important to describe the reason why the evaluators opted for a qualitative evaluation methodology (p. 4). The first evidence to be discussed is those collected in the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle during the "Impact assessment methodology phase" (p. 4). A first qualitative analysis of the two cycles will be based on the "Narrative evaluation" tool (p. 21). A second qualitative analysis will collect evidence from focus groups and interviews (p. 25). An overall evaluation and some final remarks are finally presented (p. 36).

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

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### *The preliminary design*

The project evaluation was originally based on the impact evaluation methodology. As defined in the "Description of the action", the evaluation would have measured the impact (or casual effect) of the project, considering the effect as the difference between what is observed in the presence of the treatment (the actions implemented by the project) and what would be observed in the absence of the treatment. The effect would have been, therefore, defined as the difference between two values. One of these two values would have been observed among subjects exposed to treatment and after treatment (factual result); the other is a hypothetical value. It refers to what it would have been observed between the same subjects, during the same time, if they had not been exposed to the treatment (counterfactual result).

In the application form the Difference in differences (D-I-D) is indicated as the non-experimental method most suitable to measure the effect of the project. Difference in differences (D-I-D) is a method that allows to compare the changes in outcomes over time, between a population that is enrolled in a program (the

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**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy **Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

treatment group) and a population that is not (the comparison group). The difference-in-differences approach combines two different counterfactual scenarios to produce a better estimate of the effect: before-and-after comparisons and comparisons between the treatment group and the comparison group. To apply difference-in-differences, it is necessary to measure the outcomes in the treatment group and in the comparison group, before and after the program. The method allows to identify the effects of the intervention at one condition: the dynamics observed among people that have not been treated, must be the same that we would observe between treated subjects. So, between treated and not treated subjects, the only differences are in the levels of the outcome variable and not in the trends. In general, all non-experimental methods produce accurate estimates of the impact assessment when the previous assumption is true or when it's possible to check for any error.

The first months since the beginning of the project were dedicated to the design of the Impact Assessment Methodology (Deliverable 3.1) and to the desk research on the local and national context (Deliverable 3.2). Once defined the overall methodology, all the questionnaires<sup>1</sup>, needed to evaluate the first Light incubation cycle, were designed and provided to the local teams. The local teams were also provided with a Short Guide to Impact Assessment (Deliverable 3.3) to facilitate the use of the common repository as an effective tool for collaboration and exchange.

### Problems and solutions

The 1<sup>st</sup> cycle ended with only few questionnaires filled by participants (both, mentees and mentors) and shared with the evaluator by the local teams. In the following table are reported the number of filled questionnaires for each partner is reported.

<b>TABLE 1: questionnaires filled (1<sup>ST</sup> cycle)</b>	<b>Avanzi</b>	<b>Kiron Belgium</b>	<b>Kiron Germany</b>	<b>MakeSense</b>	<b>ZSI</b>	<b>Total</b>
ANNEX 1 Entrepreneurs	19	7	0	8	2	36
ANNEX 1bis Mentor	0	0	0	0	0	0
ANNEX 2 STS   Day 1	11	6	2	6	0	25
ANNEX 2bis STS   Day 2	15	6	5	0	0	26
ANNEX 3 LI   A	14	1	5	5	0	25
ANNEX 3bis LI   B	0	0	11	0	0	11
ANNEX 4 BusseVAL (pre+final)	0	0	0	0	0	0
ANNEX 4bis BusseVAL MENT	34	0	0	0	0	34
ANNEX 5 MENTevening	0	0	0	0	0	0
ANNEX 5bis MENTevening Mentors	0	0	0	0	0	0

The ANNEX 1 Entrepreneurs and the ANNEX 1bis Mentor contain all the information relevant to value the differences among the different participants in the project, both the mentees (defined as entrepreneurs) and the mentors. So, the lack of questionnaires is a serious threat to one of the main objectives of an evaluation: to understand for whom the project work and for whom doesn't.

The ANNEX 2 STS | Day 1, the ANNEX 2bis STS | Day 2, the ANNEX 3 LI | A and the ANNEX 3bis LI | B are useful to value the design of the sessions and to have suggestions to review the design.

The ANNEX 4 BusseVAL (pre+final) and the ANNEX 4bis BusseVAL Ment are needed to evaluate if the participation in the project was effective to improve and strengthen the selected business ideas.

<sup>1</sup> All the designed questionnaires are printed as annexes to the Deliverable 3.1

The ANNEX 5 MENTevening and the ANNEX 5bis MENTevening Mentors are needed to evaluate one of the main assets of the project: the mentorship as a tool to improve social integration and to strengthen the business ideas of both the mentees and the mentors.

The ANNEX 6 MENTpitching is needed to evaluate the assessment of the pitching session.

The ANNEX 7 MENT4months is needed to evaluate the economic, social capital and the business outline after 4 months the end of the Light Incubation.

The lack of much background information and the poor quality of the collected data seriously limited the chance to have a deep analysis of the intervention. The lack of evidence was one of the main threats to the quality of the evaluation process that we had to face in the first cycle, but not the only one.

A major threat was given from the process of selection of the business teams: too few applications caused the lack of a selection between the Short Training Sessions and the Light Incubation. From the methodological point of view, this meant that the foreseen groups of control (those who participated in the Short Training Session but who were not enrolled in the Light Incubation) simply did not exist. So, no impact evaluation was methodologically possible.

One more threat was represented by the fact that not all the local teams used the same activities to implement both the Short Training Sessions and the Light Incubations. A common methodology was declared in the application and a common process had been designed by the partner who lead the WP1 "Preparation", but during the implementation each local team used a different planning of the activities. So, the evaluation of the design of the cycle was only valid at a local level and could not produce any kind of generalization.

During the consortium meetings in Milan, held in September 2017, and in Berlin, June 2018, we could share some reflections and lesson learned with the partners, to understand how to improve the evaluation process. During the discussion, three main weaknesses emerged:

- it has been hard to gain a commitment to the evaluation process from the mentees (the "entrepreneurs"): some of them did not have the linguistic knowledge to use the questionnaires, some of them did not want to share personal background information, many of them were exhausted at the end of the sessions and felt the evaluation a too demanding task to be fulfilled;
- it has been hard to gain a high level of engagement to the program by the mentors: the low engagement made impossible to the local teams to ask for more than the participation in the mentors' evening;
- the local teams were probably not enough aware of the relevance of the evaluation process for the project. Many of them did not plan the evaluation as a part of the sessions, or simply did not consider the evaluation as one of their task. A first reason could be the fact they hardly perceived the evaluation as an opportunity for self-improvement.

The local teams addressed to the evaluators some suggestions:

- allow local teams to better see the sense and understand how to develop the counterfactual methodology;
- more closely involve the local teams in building the questionnaires;
- use online questionnaires which can be also remotely used by the mentees and the mentors.

Given the impossibility to use a methodology based on the impact approach, five main changes have been introduced after the consortium meeting in Milan, held in September 2017:

- a Letter to stakeholders has been prepared as a form to be used to explain to both mentees and mentors the importance of the evaluation process, to gain a stronger commitment;
- an Excel based tool has been developed to provide to the mentees feedback on their business ideas as an output of the ANNEX 4 BussEVAL (pre+final) and the ANNEX 4bis BussEVAL Ment, improving the idea that evaluation is also useful to them;

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy **Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

- the ANNEX 1 Entrepreneurs and the ANNEX 1bis Mentor have been re-designed, shortening them and avoiding questions that could be considered as sensitive by the participants;
- a Narrative evaluation has been introduced after the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle to gain qualitative evidence from the point of view of the local teams, to face the lack of overall evidence on the effectiveness of the intervention: this is the first step of the qualitative evaluation phase;

Despite these attempts and some improvements in the collecting data from some partners, most of the problems described above and encountered in the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle were also faced during the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle. In the following table the number of filled questionnaires for each partner during the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle is reported.

<b>TABLE 2: questionnaires filled (2<sup>nd</sup> cycle)</b>	<b>Avanzi</b>	<b>Kiron Belgium</b>	<b>Kiron Germany</b>	<b>MakeSense</b>	<b>ZSI</b>	<b>Total</b>
ANNEX 1 Entrepreneurs	17	14	0	0	10	41
ANNEX 1bis Mentor	0	0	0	0	7	7
ANNEX 2 STS   Day 1	12	11	0	0	9	32
ANNEX 2bis STS   Day 2	0	0	0	0	8	8
ANNEX 3 LI   A	12	0	0	0	4	16
ANNEX 3bis LI   B	8	0	0	0	3	11
ANNEX 4 BusseVAL (pre+final)	0	0	0	0	6	6
ANNEX 4bis BusseVAL MENT	32	0	0	0	0	32
ANNEX 5 MENTevening	0	0	0	0	2	2
ANNEX 5bis MENTevening Mentors	0	0	0	0	3	3
ANNEX 6 MENTpitching	0	0	0	0	1	1
ANNEX 7 MENT4months	0	0	0	0	3	3

In conclusion, also for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle no impact evaluation was methodologically possible.

A final solution was approved during the consortium meeting in Berlin, held in June 2018, after most of the cycle 2 had been implemented in the different countries, apart the case of France, whose 2<sup>nd</sup> incubation cycle finished in September 2018 (without enough time to collect data from questionnaires). In this period, even if some questionnaires had been already collected, the evaluators proposed to re-design the overall process in an evaluation based on qualitative methods (interviews and focus groups with mentees, mentors and staff members). During the meeting, some team members declared a qualitative inquiry would have represented a greater chance to gain feedbacks from mentees, mentors and to inspire a self-reflection on the project. This evaluation process was undertaken from July to September 2018.

# QUALITATIVE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

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The main goal of the qualitative evaluation has been to enrich the evaluation process primarily based on the impact evaluation methodology. As previously mentioned, some feasibility problems concerning the difference-in-differences method after the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle obliged the evaluators to opt for a qualitative approach, based on focus groups and in-depth interviews. This approach concerns the evaluation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle and the overall evaluation.

Such an approach enables to define the impact by considering heterogeneous points of views. This means to identify not only the recurring similarities between people belonging to the same “type” of beneficiaries and participants (e.g. mentees, mentors and staff members) but also to understand the way in which different socio-economic contexts are perceived as influential factors in the framework of the project. Moreover, a comprehensive narration has the virtue of conceiving and defining the social change by a rich repertoire of words, images and stories describing the knowledge and the experience of participants. This approach was carried out by two main methods and tools.

A “Narrative evaluation” has been introduced, with a new tool provided by the evaluator, to gain qualitative evidence from the point of view of the local teams, to face the lack of overall evidence on the effectiveness of the intervention. It is a form to be filled in.

A second qualitative process has been introduced in the form of focused workshops (focus groups) and semi-structured interviews, carried out by the evaluators. A focus group foresaw the physical presence of a group of participants involved in the same activities. Unless a minimum number of people, fixed as 3 participants, in-depth interviews (in particular virtual calls) were implemented. In each core country workshops and interviews were organized with the mentees, mentors and teams’ staff members.

In order to select the participants, each staff was asked to select about 10 beneficiaries and 10 mentors from the first and the second incubation cycles. The role of the evaluator-facilitator was to interact with participants, to guide open discussions and to stimulate a collective reading of MEnt experience. As a result, different interpretations, emotional reactions and critical evaluations emerged.

The focus groups and the interviews were both face-to-face and by virtual calls had it not been possible the presence of the evaluator in the core country.

Each focus group or interview foresaw two main activities. The first one was conducted by using figurative instruments (i.e. playing cards) to collect overall images of MEnt by a reading of the main elements, feelings and states of mind which have mainly marked each personal experience in the project. Secondly, a simplified SWOT analysis was proposed to define the weaknesses and the strengths related to the effectiveness of MEnt project in reaching the three specific objectives of the projects (i.e. supporting migrants’ business ideas; supporting migrants’ “soft” and “hard” entrepreneurial skills; favouring cultural integration and social capital of both mentors and mentees).

# IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS: 1ST CYCLE RESULTS

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In this paragraph the results of the different evaluation processes are discussed. Concerning the evaluation of the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle an analysis of the questionnaires collected is proposed. This is also included in the Deliverable 3.4 “Mid-term evaluation report”.

Concerning the evaluation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle and the overall impact of the project an analysis of qualitative data is proposed on page 22, such as the “Narrative evaluation” and the results from the focused workshops (focus groups) and semi-structured interviews.

## *Background information on the participants*

According to the Deliverable 2.1 “Report on Light incubation in each Country and critical/design remarks”, the local teams selected 46 projects for the first cycle, for a total number of participants of 81 persons.

<b>TABLE 3: Country/Applications</b>	<b>Applications Received</b>	<b>Applications Eligible</b>	<b>Projects Selected</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Austria	22	4	4	2
Belgium	23	20	13	22
France	20	12	9	12
Germany	56	10	10	22
Italy	27	20	10	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>81</b>

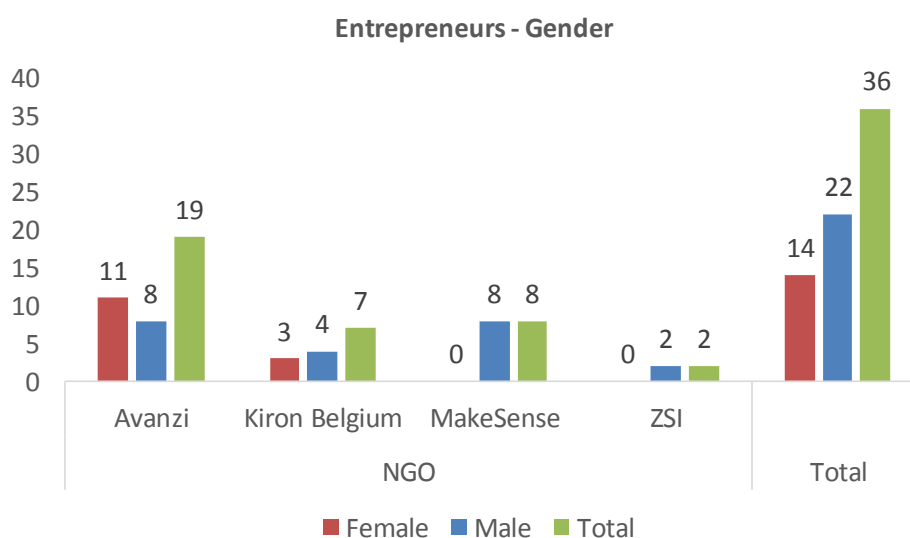
The evaluators received by the local teams only 36 questionnaires ANNEX 1 Entrepreneurs of the expected 81, missing 45 questionnaires. A serious loss that jeopardizes the reliability of any analysis of the collected data.



<b>TABLE 4: Missing questionnaires</b>	<b>Avanzi</b>	<b>Kiron Belgium</b>	<b>Kiron Germany</b>	<b>MakeSense</b>	<b>ZSI</b>	<b>Total</b>
ANNEX 1 Entrepreneurs	19	7	0	8	2	36
Missing questionnaires	4	15	22	4	0	45

Anyway, a short description of the main collected information could be given. It represents some features of the profiles of the entrepreneurs enrolled in the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle.

The questionnaires revealed a gender gap, with male participants more numerous than female. The gender gap could be an effect of the gender composition of the migrant collectives in the Country represented in the Consortium, most of all of the asylum seekers.



The participants are mainly from 26 to 35 years old and arriving from different countries.

<b>TABLE 5: Entrepreneurs - Age</b>	
from 21 to 25	3
from 26 to 30	10
from 31 to 35	11
from 36 to 40	8
from 41 to 50	1
from 51 to oldest	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

The most numerous countries of origin are Syria and Iran, but with low numbers. In general, the participants came from many countries, with 23 different nationalities (those with two different nationality counted as one for).

<b>TABLE 6: Entrepreneurs - Nationality</b>	
Missing	1
Afghanistan	2

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**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy

**Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

Belgium	1
Bolivia	1
Burundi	1
Colombia	1
Congo	1
Croatia	1
Cuba	1
El Salvador	1
Ethiopia	1
France	1
Gambia	2
India	2
Iran	4
Italy	1
Italy/Rwanda	1
Italy/USA	1
Libya	1
Nigeria	1
Senegal	1
Somalia	1
Syria	7
To	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

Many of them live alone, but summing all those who live in a family context (with or without the partner or with or without children) they are the most represented group. An interesting image of how migrations are becoming more and more a family affair.

<b>TABLE 7: Entrepreneurs - With whom they currently live</b>	
I live alone	11
With my partner, but without children	9
With my partner and with our child/children	4
Only with my child/children	1
With my parent/parents	0
With other relatives	2
With friends	1
None of these answers, but with	3
Missing	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

The housing conditions describe a relative stability of the participants. Only few of them are living in an Institution or in conditions different from living in a house or a rented room.

<b>TABLE 8: Entrepreneurs - Where do they currently live</b>	
In a home owned by me	2
In a rented apartment	15
In a rented room	7
In an Institution (e.g. Center managed by the Government or an Ngo)	2
In a shelter	0
None of these answers	4
Missing	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

The largest part of them live in the country where the program is run less than 3 years. However, only few of them are long stayers. So, many of the selected participants are in a pretty early stage of their integration process in the country of migration.

<b>TABLE 9: Entrepreneurs - They live in [Country] since</b>	
less than 3 years	19
from 4 to 6 years	8
from 7 to 10 years	2
more than 10 years	4
Missing	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

Of the 36 persons who answered the questionnaires, 7 are European citizens and 4 have long-term permits. 42% of them is part of vulnerable groups: asylum seekers, refugees, with humanitarian status.

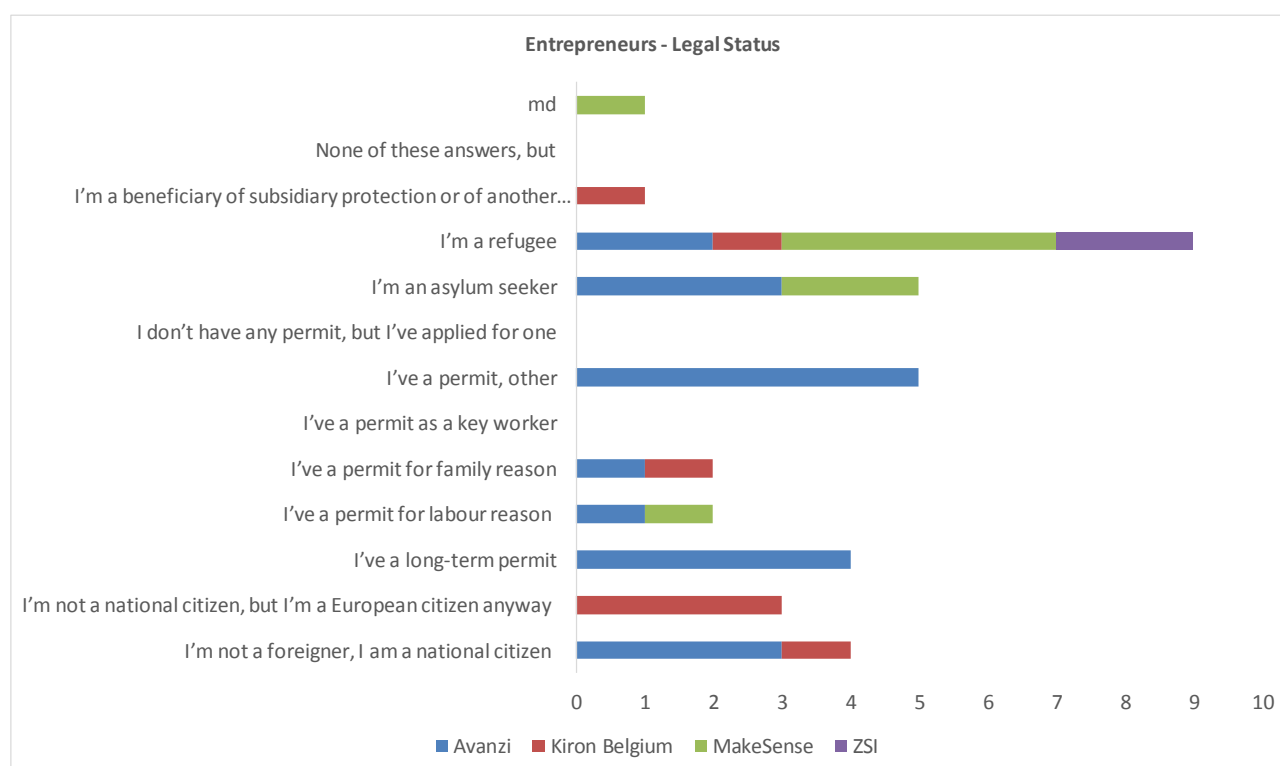
<b>TABLE 10: Entrepreneurs - Their legal status as a foreigner</b>	
I'm not a foreigner, I am a national citizen	4
I'm not a national citizen, but I'm a European citizen anyway	3

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy **Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

I've a long-term permit	4
I've a permit for labour reason	2
I've a permit for family reason	2
I've a permit as a key worker	0
I've a permit, other	5
I don't have any permit, but I've applied for one	0
I'm an asylum seeker	5
I'm a refugee	9
I'm a beneficiary of subsidiary protection or of another humanitarian status	1
None of these answers, but	0
Missing	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

The legal statuses of the participants are different among the different countries involved. Such strong differences could be the result of the diversity of the networks each partner is connected to and that each partner used to disseminate the call and to recruit applicants.



Most of the respondents migrated only in the participant countries, even if some of them have transnational links with other relatives in migration.

<b>TABLE 11:</b>	
<b>Entrepreneurs- Other than in [Country], they have ever migrated in another Country</b>	
No, this is the only country I've migrated to	20
No, I didn't migrate here because I was born here	0
Yes, I did	8
Missing	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

24 of the participants attended to school for more than 12 years, 11 of them for more than 18 years. Two data useful to value that many of them reached secondary or tertiary level of education, with a high level of cultural capital. Many of them reached the highest level of education in their country of origin.

<b>TABLE 12: Entrepreneurs - Years of school they have you attended to</b>	
From lowest to 5	1
From 6 to 11	0
From 12 to 17	13
More than 18	11
Missing	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

<b>TABLE 13: Entrepreneurs - Where they reached their highest level of education</b>	
In [Country]	9
In my Country of Origin	15
In another Country	5
Missing	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

Their cultural capital is also accounted by the languages that they can use at at least at a minimum level of proficiency, defined as an A2 level under the Common European Framework of Reference for Language: 23 of them can use the participant country national language, and 21 of them a language other than their native language and the participant country national language.

<b>TABLE 14: Entrepreneurs - Languages used at least at a minimum level of proficiency</b>	
[Country national]	23
My national language	26
My local language	11
Other language	21

If the presence of cultural capital is quite relevant among the respondents, a little more problematic is the level of vocational training related to the business idea proposed by the participants: 11 of them declared that they did not attend vocational trainings even if “it would be better if he/she had it”; 7 of them attended a vocational training, but without a final certification.

<b>TABLE 15: Entrepreneurs - They attended vocational training related to their business idea</b>	
I still don't have any business idea	1
No, because no vocational training is needed	5
No, but it would be better if I had it	11
Yes, but I didn't receive the final certification	7
Yes, and I received the final certification	5
Missing	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

The integration into the job market is quite problematic for many participants: 11 of them don't have a job, even if they are looking for one; some of those working declared to have an occasional or an irregular job; some of the participants suffered of underemployment or unemployment in the last year. Quite interesting evidence that in some job careers the choice of entrepreneurship relates to the struggle to reach a satisfying level of insertion in the labour market.

<b>TABLE 16:</b> <b>Entrepreneurs - Statement that best describes their present condition?</b>	
I've a job	10
I don't have any job, but I'm looking for one	11
I don't have any job and I'm not looking for one	2
I'm still in education	9
Missing	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

<b>TABLE 17:</b> <b>Entrepreneurs - If they have a job, the statement that best describes their condition?</b>	
Missing	16
I've an occasional or irregular job	5
I'm regularly employed	6
I'm self-employed	5
I'm an entrepreneur	5
I'm working in a family business	
Other	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

<b>TABLE 18:</b> <b>Entrepreneurs - In the last year, statement that best describes their condition?</b>	
In the last year I've always regularly worked	12
In the last year I've regularly suffered of underemployment, working less than what I need	5
In the last year I've regularly suffered of long term unemployment	3
Missing	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

<b>TABLE 19:</b> <b>Entrepreneurs - Their present jobs use all the skills that they obtained in their training and work life?</b>	
My job matches my skills & training	10
My job matches my skills, but it does not concern the area I trained for	6
My job does not require the skills & training I have	1
Missing	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

We did not report data on the economical capital of the participants because we could collect too few data: in most of the questionnaires the questions regarding the economic status were not answered.

We collected, instead, data on the social capitals of the future businessmen, participating in MEnt. They have mainly supportive networks made relatives who are of their country of origin, but also made by friends who are a mixed combinational of people who share with them the country of origin, citizens of the

country participant in MEnt, and other immigrants. Based on a primary network based on the common origin, many of them build up new secondary networks more mixed and integrated.

<b>TABLE 20: Entrepreneurs - Supportive networks. Relatives mainly</b>	
[Country nationals]	3
Citizens of my Country of origin	13
Other immigrants	1
A mixed combination	11
Missing	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

<b>TABLE 21: Entrepreneurs - Supportive networks. Friends mainly</b>	
[Country nationals]	4
Citizens of my Country of origin	1
Other immigrants	1
A mixed combination	19
Missing	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

More than a half of the respondents are engaged in voluntary activities: most of them are part of organizations and associations other than those based on immigrant or ethnic group. This information is relevant to describe participants who are engaged in a multidimensional process of integration, active citizenship included.

<b>TABLE 22: Entrepreneurs - Belonging to voluntary groups</b>	
Political party or group	3
Trade unions	2
Immigrant/ethnic group organisation (support or promotion of groups' social, cultural, or political interests)	7
Other organisations or associations (e.g. sports, cultural, social, religious, local, professional, humanitarian, environmental)	16
Missing	15

As well as it is relevant to describe their engagement in the society they live in that 23 of 36 read daily news, and 7 sometimes during the week.

<b>TABLE 23: Entrepreneurs - How often they read news (newspaper, magazines, online news)</b>	
Daily	23
Sometimes during the week	7
Only now and then	1
Quite never	0
Missing	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

Half of the respondents have other relatives in migration, mainly in countries other the country where they are living, so many of them have transnational family ties connected with migration.

<b>TABLE 24:</b> <b>Entrepreneurs - Any other relative in migration?</b>	
Yes, mainly here in [Country]	6
Yes, but mainly not here in [Country]	12
No	14
Missing	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

Half of them have a socio-economic level of the family of origin that can be defined as high: the same level of that of the other people living in their not poor neighbourhood, or even higher than that of the other people living in their neighbourhood.

<b>TABLE 25:</b> <b>Entrepreneurs - The socio-economic level of the family of origin</b>	
Lower than that of the other people living in the neighbourhood	5
The same level of that of the other people living in the neighbourhood, but they live in a poor neighbourhood	4
The same level of that of the other people living in the neighbourhood, and they don't live in a poor neighbourhood	14
Higher than that of the other people living in the neighbourhood	4
Missing	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

Half of them have relatives who are entrepreneurs, even if most of them not in the country where they live. But, hardly our future businessmen were able to receive help from the relatives who are entrepreneurs: few of them received information or contacts, none of them received an economic help.

<b>TABLE 26:</b> <b>Entrepreneurs - Relatives who are entrepreneurs</b>	
Yes, mainly here in [Country]	5
Yes, but mainly not here in [Country]	12
No	15
Missing	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>



<b>TABLE 27:</b> <b>Entrepreneurs - If they have relatives who are entrepreneurs, they are helping them to become an entrepreneur?</b>	
Yes, mainly giving me information relevant for my business	3
Yes, mainly sharing with me their contacts useful for my business	2
Yes, mainly providing me with an economic help	0
Yes, mainly providing me with a concrete help e.g. unpaid work or aid for tax or bureaucratic issues	2
No, no one is helping me at all	12
Missing	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

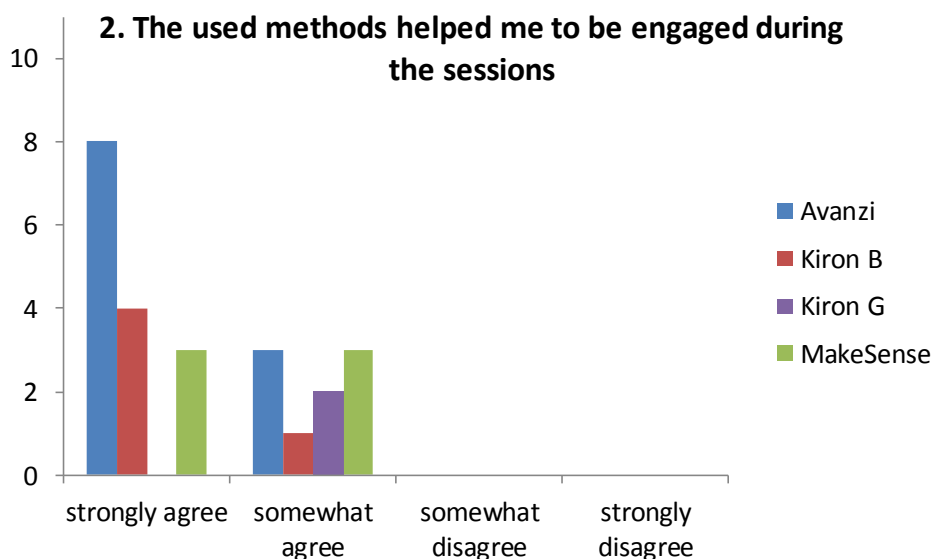
### *Evaluation of the Short Training Session - day 1*

We could collect 25 questionnaires evaluating the first day of Short Training Sessions implemented in Italy, Belgium, Germany and France.

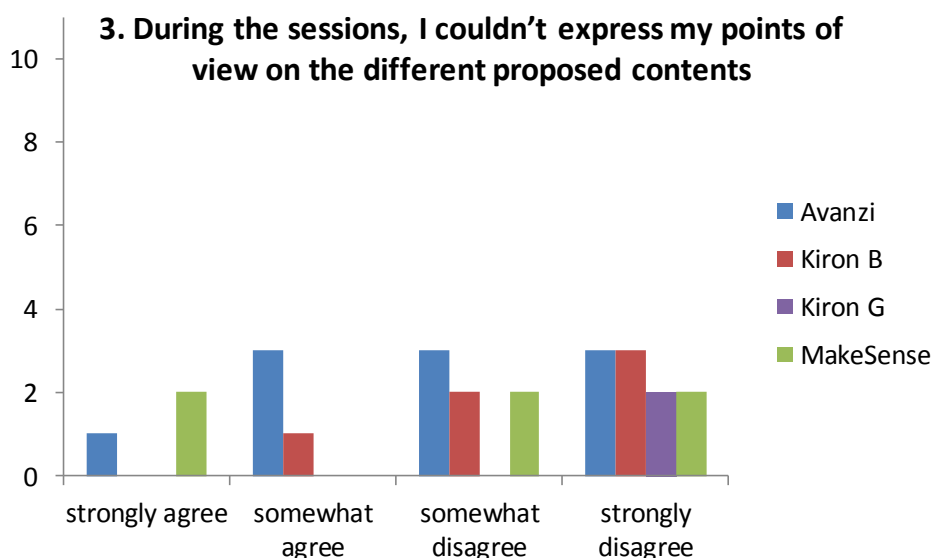
The training confirmed the participants' expectancies: appreciation is stronger for the Italian team with 8 respondents who strongly agree with the statement and 4 somewhat agree with it; a little bit lower for the French team, but still only positive.



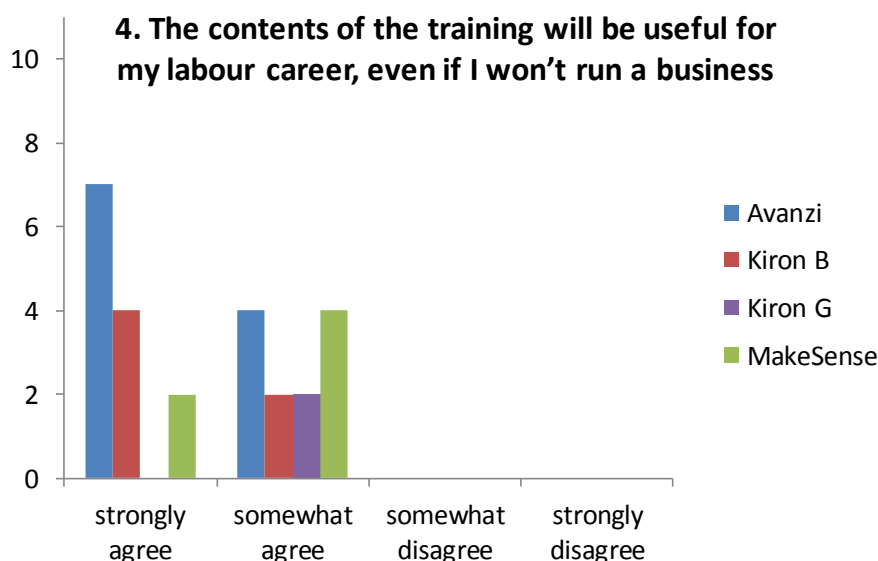
Participants strongly agree with the sentence "The used methods helped me to be engaged during the sessions", with the Italian team and the team from Belgium who receive a stronger appreciation.



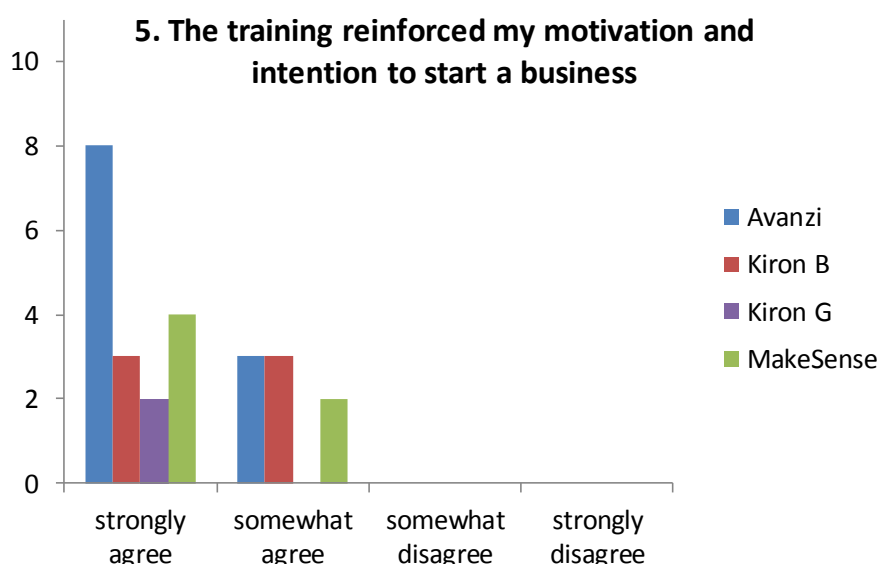
A little more problematic is the evaluation by the participants of to what extent they could express their point of view on the different proposed contents. Some of them declared that they strongly or somewhat agree with a sentence that is negative in its form. This is the only statement expressed in negative terms, and, maybe, some of the respondents couldn't identify correctly its different orientation. To be sure of the orientation of the answers in the second cycle also this question will be written in positive terms.



The contents of the training are evaluated as useful for the labour career of the participant, even if they will not run a business. An interesting suggestion that this kind of programs could be useful not to produce more entrepreneurs, but to improve general soft skills.



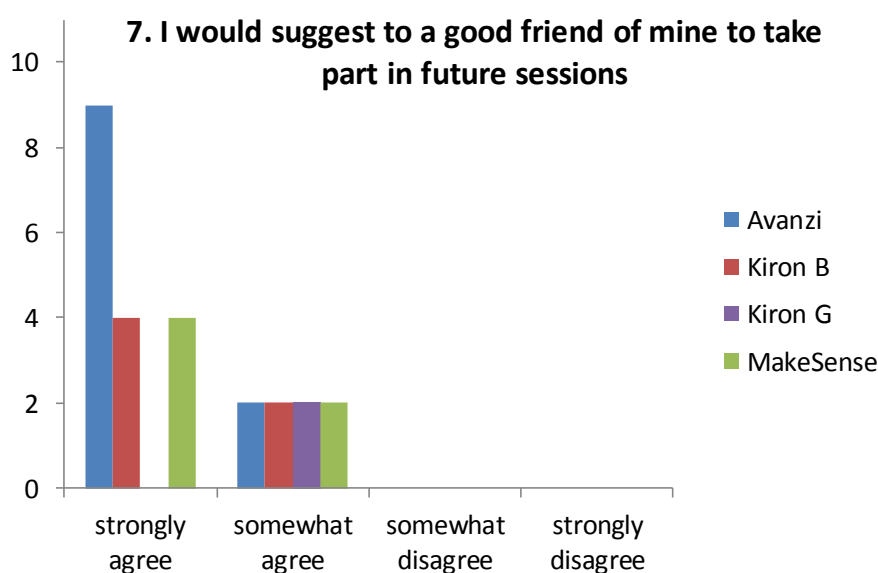
The participants evaluated the Short Training Sessions as relevant also because it reinforced their motivation and intention to start a business.



But also, because it allowed them to identify critical issues in their business ideas to copy with to make it stronger and more successful.

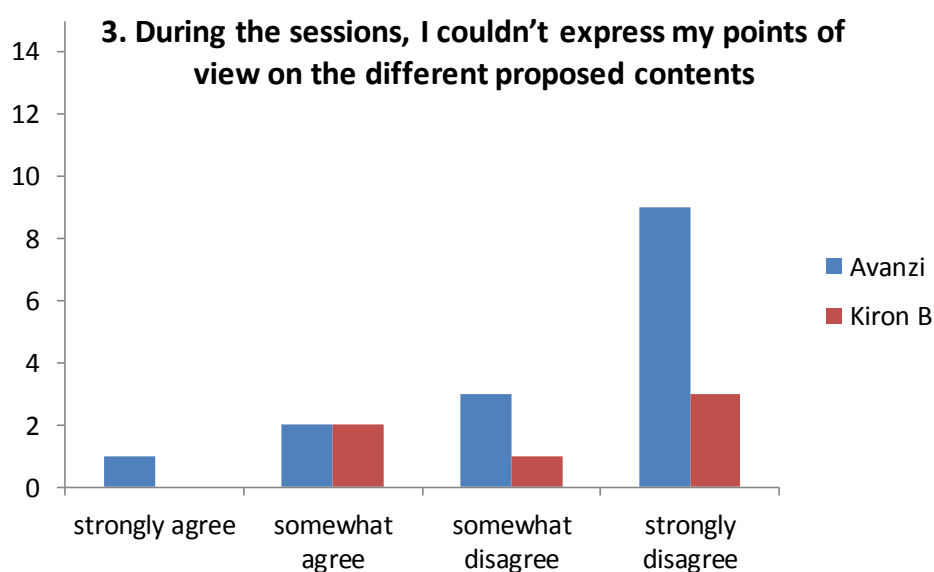
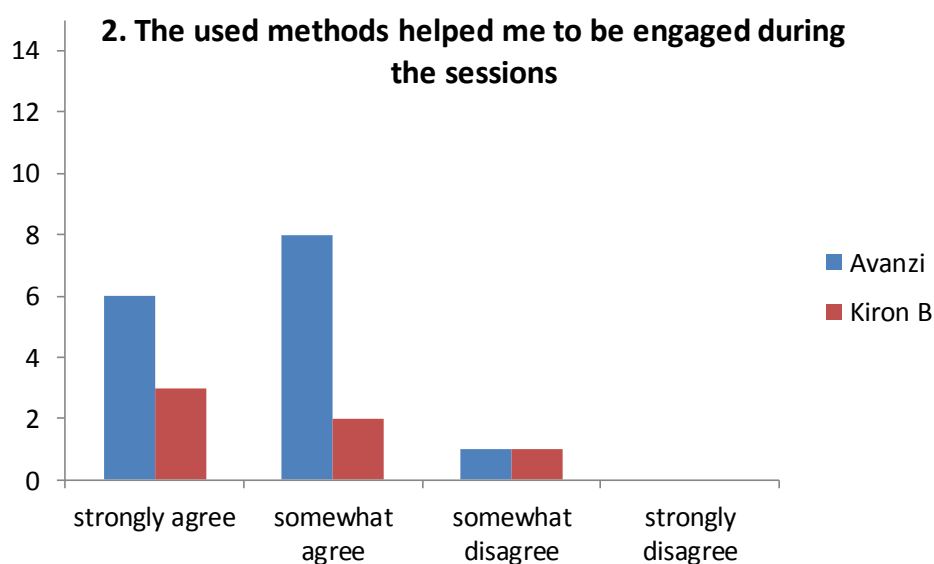


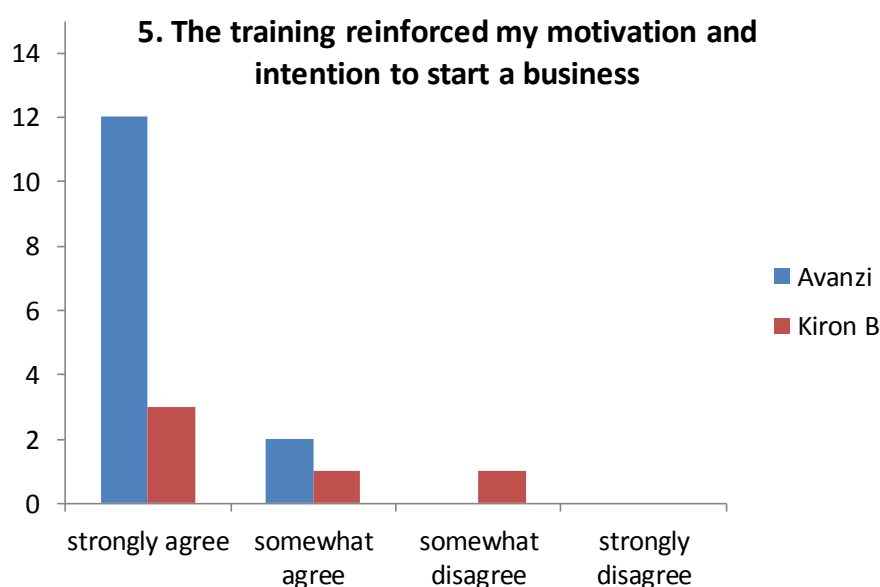
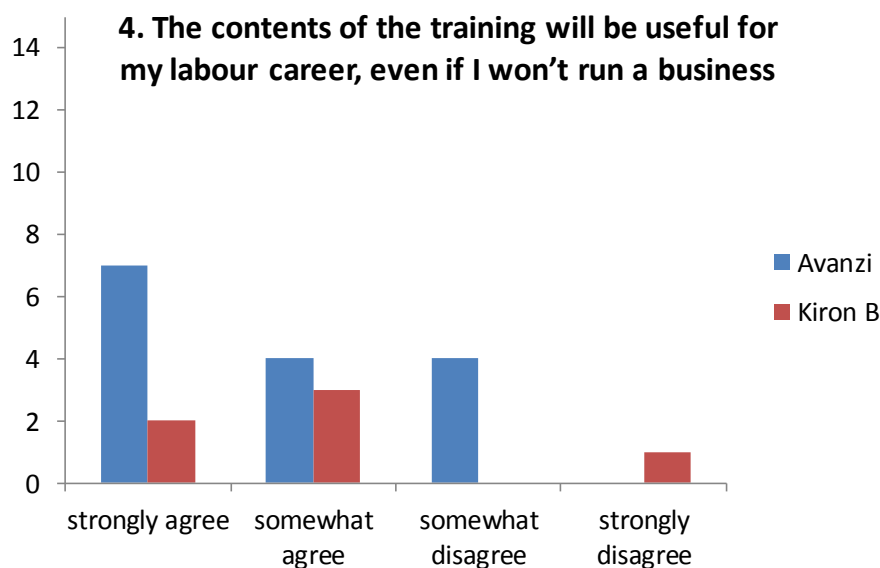
The final evaluation is that all of them would suggest to friends to take part in future sessions.

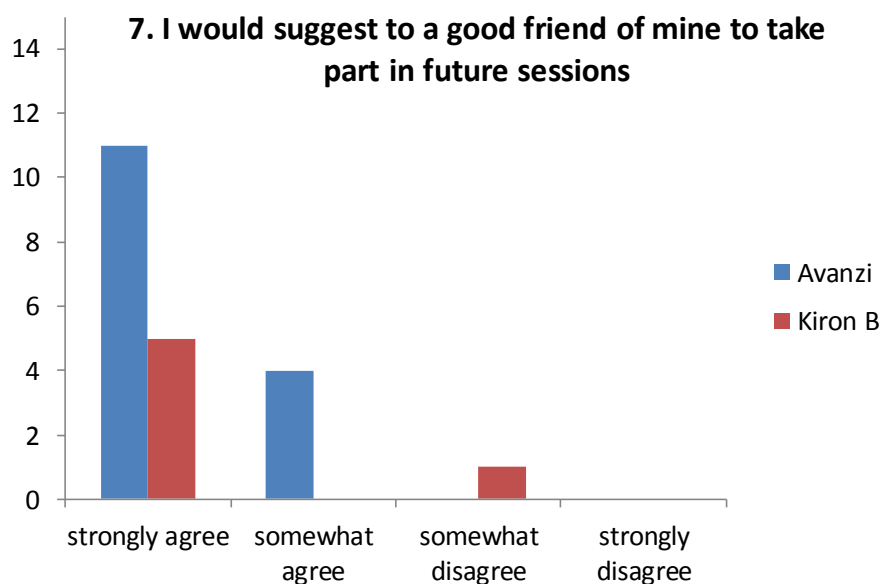


### *Evaluation of the Short Training Session - day 2*

The evaluator received questionnaires only from Avanzi and Kiron Belgium, the two organization who planned their activity in a two-day session. The second day was lightly less appreciated by participants than the first. In the following graphs are reported the results of the questionnaire, with no other comments.



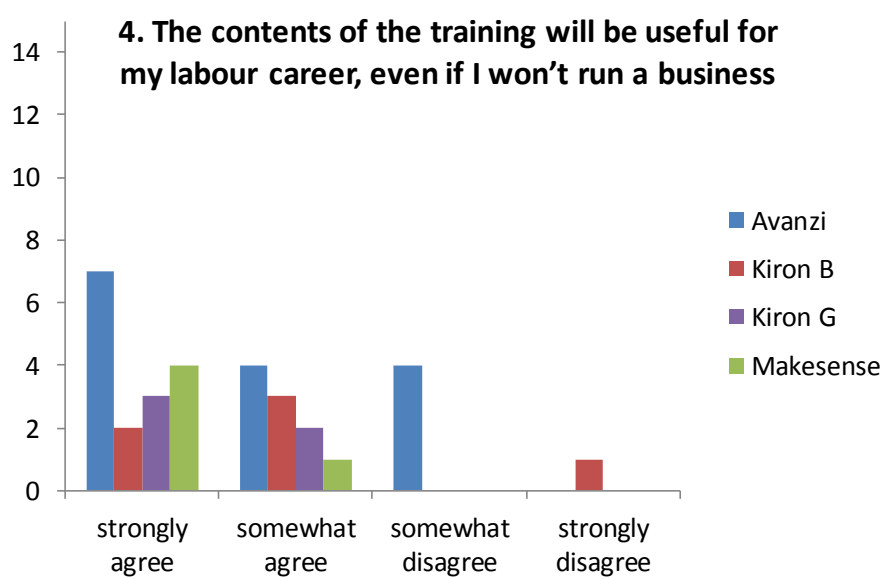
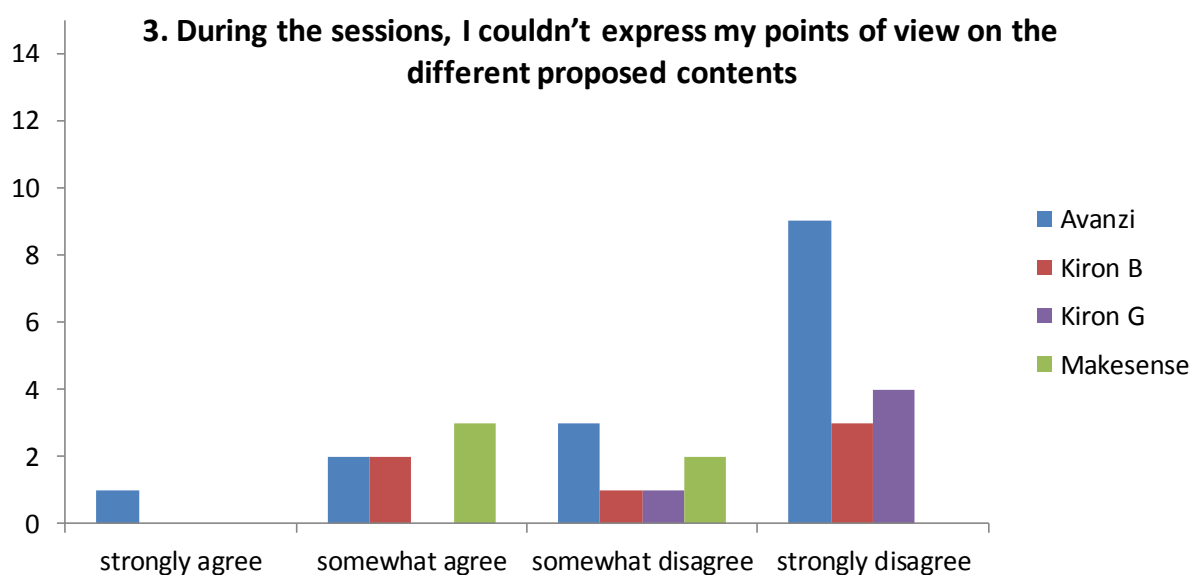
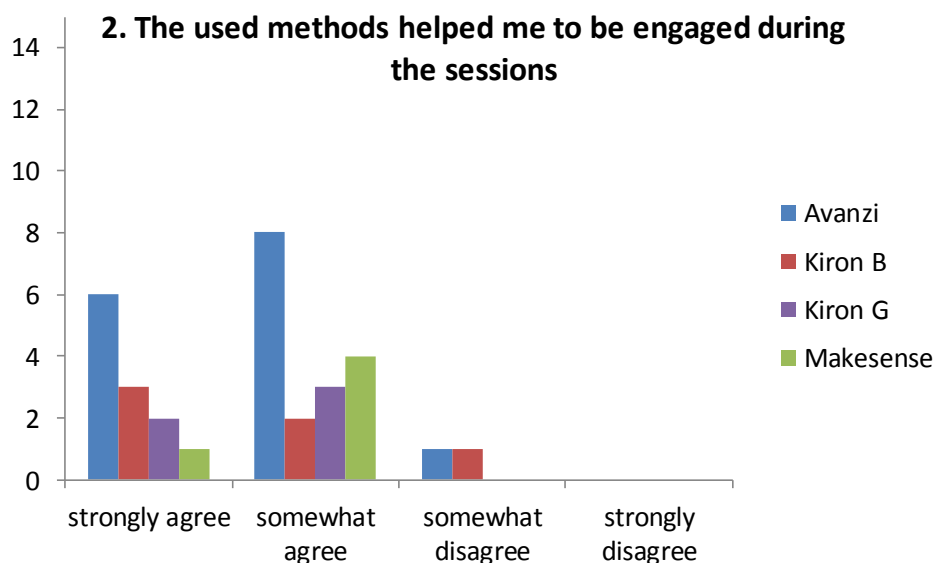




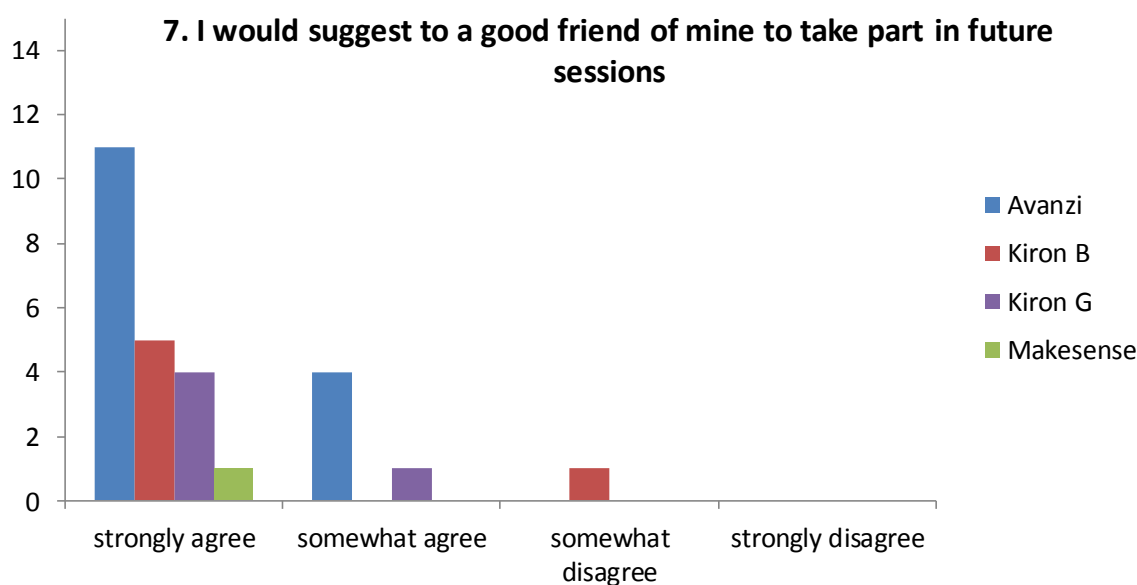
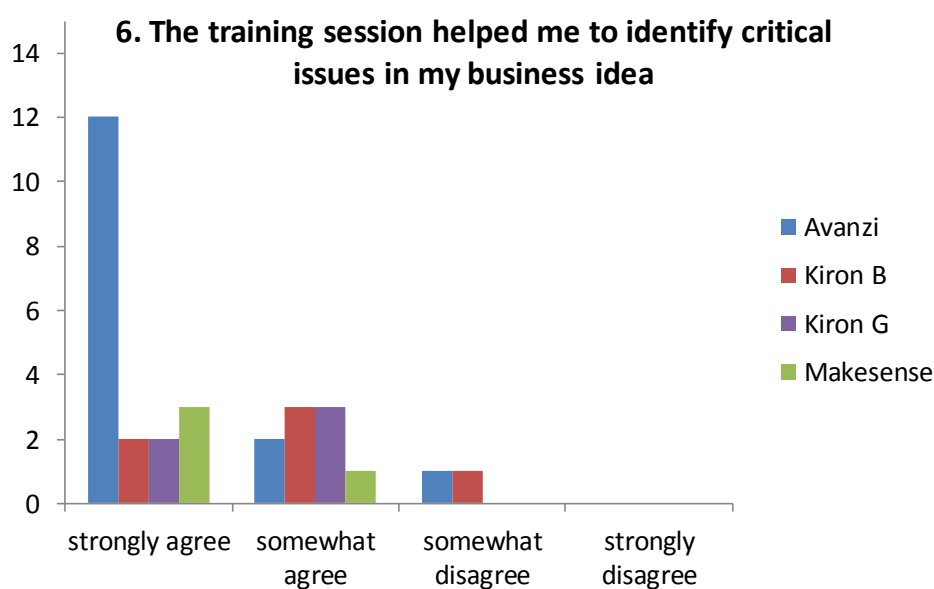
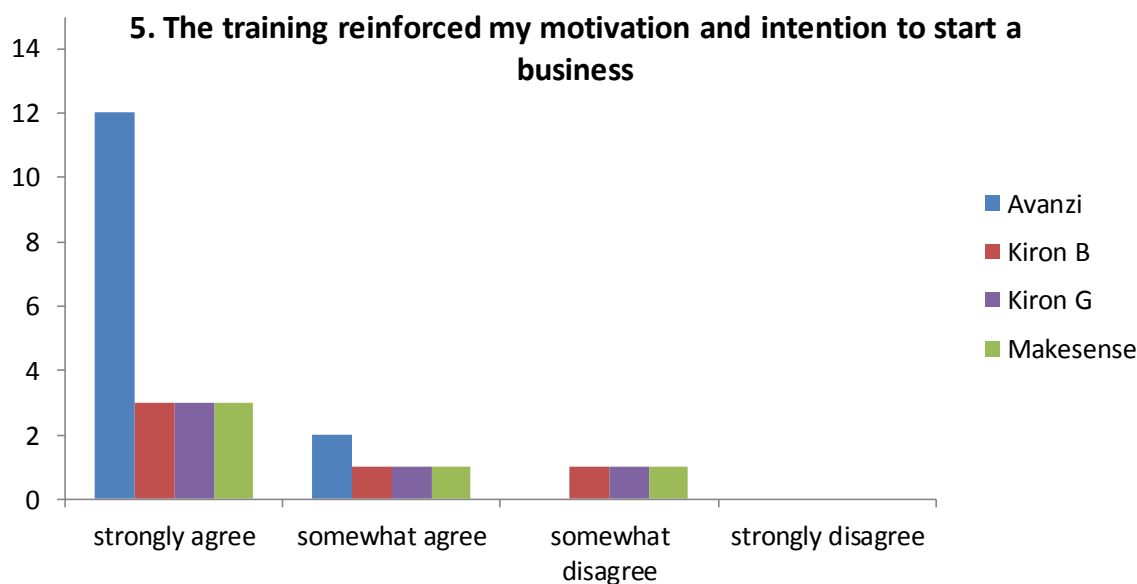
### *Evaluation of the Light Incubation*

The evaluator received questionnaires evaluating the Light Incubation from Avanzi, Kiron Belgium, Kiron Germany and MakeSense. The sessions were valued as effective by most of the respondents, with only a little minority that evaluated them as ineffective.









# QUALITATIVE EVALUATION 1: NARRATIVE EVALUATION

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As already mentioned, a Narrative evaluation template was distributed to each partners to gain a deeper analysis of the effectiveness of the project from their point of view. The template concerned separately both the first and the second cycles:

## First cycle

- differences between the first cycle as designed and as implemented;
- lessons learnt from the first cycle;
- strengths and weaknesses of the first cycle;
- an overall picture of the teams and the mentors involved in the first cycle.

## Second cycle

- differences between the design of the first and the second cycle;
- differences between the second cycle as designed and as implemented;
- lessons learnt from the second cycle;
- strengths and weaknesses of the second cycle;
- an overall picture of the teams and the mentors involved in the second cycle.

## *First cycle*

### **Differences between the first cycle as designed and as implemented**

The first cycle was rearranged in all the five countries, under the influence of at least three different needs. The original training was planned with long and intensive sessions (for instance, the Short training session was designed with a two or three days and all-day sessions), a significant number of working hours in a few days with a too strong impact on the participants, many of them with a busy life. So, the local teams had to find strategies to gain more commitment and a more regular participation.

The training was planned with a lot of contents, some of them at a basic level, some of them more advanced. According to the different characteristics of the teams involved in each country, the contents have been redefined, referring to only some foreseen topics and trying to make the language and tools more accessible even to the participants with a low level of their linguistic or entrepreneurial skills.

All the local staff didn't easily reach out the foreseen target groups, but they had to identify context-based strategy to involve potential participants.

Some teams provided services that were not planned, but that were considered as needed. For instance, in France the local team decided to grant to the participants with access to its co-working space; in Germany budget has been allocated for the organization of community building events.

Only in Austria the local team decided not to run all the first cycle, due to the lack of participants.

### **Lesson learnt from the first cycle**

The teams had to figure out that to find participants is the first challenge to copy with. As the Austrian team wrote in its evaluation: "We figured out, that there must be some more barriers to apply than we thought of first sight".

A second lesson is that the legal status and the migration background matter. Those participants with a long term legal status, those with sounder integration in the hosting country or those with higher socioeconomic status are those for whom the program is more favourable and more accessible. Participants living vulnerable conditions are those for whom the program should provide more support to

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy **Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

let them access to the incubation process, to help them to face fragile financial situation, to connect with other stakeholders and supportive networks. Linguistic skills revealed to be a sensitive issue, many of the teams had to find strategies to ease the language used during the session or to use English (or other non-national language) as a medium of instruction.

Not all the future entrepreneurs were realistic about their business idea. Some have too high expectations but need to know the basics to start a business. Some others are more realistic and ask for a more active role during the incubation. Different expectations and different levels of commitment ask for more time dedicated to the single business idea, but also for more time dedicated to managing the group dynamics during the sessions.

### **Strengths and weaknesses of the process**

The overall feedback from the future entrepreneurs, collected by the local teams, was in general positive about the program. Most of them found useful the training and supportive the tutors of the local teams.

Tutors and many of the mentors have been considered effective in providing concrete feedback and suggestions on the business ideas and in helping to find strategies to foster them.

The hard to gain equilibrium between time to dedicate to the training by the participants and the time needed to work on topics and tools is one of the main weaknesses of the program.

As already mentioned, some participants live in a vulnerable condition from a legal, social or economic point of view. The lack of measures within the program to cope with these vulnerable conditions has been defined as a weakness by some local teams: the lack of a final grant, of a reward for those attending the program, of benefits that could strengthen the commitment.

The German team pointed out another weakness: the difficulty “to anticipate the status, next steps and priorities of every single participating team and their business idea”, with the risk to develop training that were not fitting.

### **Overall picture of the teams involved in the first cycle**

The Italian team is the only local team who involved participants who were expert in practical business and with skills, with many participants who are under 30 and with a high degree level of education. Some participants had already business experience in their own Country.

The French team underlined that the business ideas were realistic, but that for most of them the challenge was to go from an idea to a real project. Only one of the 9 business teams dropped out, and the other 8 teams prototyped their business, thanks to the support received during the incubation.

In Germany, most participants were able to develop their business idea, taking them several steps closer to setting it up or to making it more viable or realistic. Most participants are still implementing their idea, building their networks, looking for customers.

In Belgium the business ideas covered a wide range of diversity and heterogeneity: from traditional to digital services, to non-profit organizations focused on refugees’ integration.

### **Overall picture of the mentors involved in the first cycle**

In France, mentors and mentees were paired at the beginning of the training and their relationship lasted during all the training, some of them are still in contact. Most mentors had a strong commitment to the process, often meeting their mentees and providing updates to the tutors.

In Italy, mentors interacted with the teams mainly during the Mentors’ evenings. They were selected among mentors that already participated in similar programs previously run by the Italian team. In half of the case the relation mentors-mentees built during the evening had a follow up with other meetings.

In Germany, most of the mentors are active in the private sector and started their own business. Their level of commitment varied, but with a general satisfying level of participation in the program, especially during the meeting with the teams they were committed to giving advices and suggestion to the mentees.

In Belgium, the local team used its networks of experts, entrepreneurs and partners, set up through past collaborations. Mentors were mostly interested in improving their teaching and facilitating skills, as well to apply their own tools. They mostly appreciated the pitch session and bilateral meetings with mentees, to work on concrete challenges.

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy **Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

## *Second cycle*

### **Differences between the design of the first and the second cycle**

The contents, the methods and the organization of the second cycle was rearranged in all the five countries, under the influence of at least two main needs emerged at the end of the first cycle.

The heterogeneity of mentees' profiles, in particular in terms of entrepreneurial background, social and human capital, and the lack of a mix between theory and practical applications during trainings pushed all the local staff to reconsider the incubation framework and the contents.

In all the countries involved, the staff members intensified the analysis of the feedbacks from mentees and mentors from the 1<sup>st</sup> incubation cycle. Each staff opted for more personalised tutoring sessions. In Milan and in Paris they decided to dedicate one hour and half of one-to-one sessions to each team to work more analytically on the need assessment, on business plan writing and marketing strategies and the preparation of clear presentations. The French team also decided to pay more attention in mixing theory and practical applications during the training sessions. The German and Belgian teams requested of additional funds to pay four external experts to strengthen the knowledge on some specific topics, like legal and financial issues.

In order to better adapt the incubation programme to the needs of the single business projects also some methodological and organisational issues were prompted. For example, in Paris the local staff decided to dedicate more individual time to meet the mentors engaged. They could better explain the incubation objectives and introduce the single business projects. The Italian and the Austrian staff worked more specifically on the linguistic simplification of the tools to be delivered to mentees: in Vienna the staff enhanced the linguistic communication also by trainings bilingually delivered.

Finally, it is also important to underline changes in terms of external resources. The Austrian team had at its disposal more personnel resources in the second cycle and the French staff provided a grant for the mentees financed by a partner (a dotation funds of 500 euros per month during 6 months).

### **Differences between the second cycle as designed and as implemented**

As already mentioned, some trainings and materials were added in order to take in account more analytically mentees' theoretical and practical needs. The most relevant changes in terms of contents concerned Italy, France and Austria. The Italian team declares to have paid more attention on the need assessment and the analysis of business and financial plans. The French team intensified the preparation of mentees in managing meetings with potential partners or clients. In Vienna, the local staff delivered a deeper information on some relevant issues: potential influent stakeholders (i.e. funding bodies, calculations, web-links), pitching abilities, strengthened by two external experts at the end of trainings, and other additional topics (i.e. sales funnel, sales train, cultural diversity of countries, calculation of Austrian tax, excursion to a migrant social entrepreneur-team).

Some changes affected also the organization of the second cycle. In Berlin, a program calendar was handed out to clearly structured the program and have everyone be committed to the different sessions. In Paris, the local staff tried to use an internal chat (slack) to foster communication between staff and mentees. In Vienna and in Milan, the timing of each workshop was discussed with the participants, trying to accommodate the needs of the majority.

### **Lesson learnt from the second cycle**

The teams figured out that the heterogeneity of the entrepreneur's needs and their normal lifestyles considerably influenced the development of the project. "Testing a common methodology while at the same time addressing individual needs of participants is virtually impossible. [...] The training period is too short and too less concentrated to reach the targeted goal" is a relevant statement written by the Austrian team in its evaluation.

So, the first challenge to copy with was to find the way to personalize the incubation support. It was firstly reached by enhancing the relations between staff members and mentees. In Berlin, the local staff gave

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy **Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

importance to individual meetings with each participant at the start of the project. Also in Paris, most of the session required individual adaptation and meetings to make sure that all the mentees were at the same level of information, but also to adapt the rhythm according to the different kind of projects.

A second lesson learnt concerns the importance to reinforce each individual commitment and motivation in the project community. For instance, in Berlin the local staff organized one community building session at the beginning of the programme to foster group cohesion and motivation to participate in the programme (also by using a WhatsApp group and joint lunches).

### **Strengths and weaknesses of the second cycle**

The overall feedback generally considers the implementation of an incubation support more targeted to the mentees' needs as the main strengthened point. The actions realized to meet the needs are several. For instance, the Italian and the French teams worked to reinforce their relationships with mentors: this effort contributed to better clarify the commitment requested and verify the feasible objectives. In Germany, the same importance was given to the cohesion amongst mentees: investing time in team building augmented a mutual support. In Austria, staff members intensified the links between mentees and targeted external networks with whom they could exchange experiences.

Considering the main weaknesses, an overall point could be sum up by the Austrian team who wrote in its evaluation that "the programme was far too short, even for those with rather mature ideas". This sentence introduces more specific problems. The Italian team focuses on the incapacity to structure a strong framework for the follow-ups after the end of the incubation period. The French team would prefer a longer program (e.g. 8 months, in 2 or 3 phases): "It could foresee an evaluation meeting at the end of each phase to make sure the requirements are reached to go on the next project step and incite mentees to do market surveys and questionnaire before prototyping". The French staff also felt that creating a "refugees/migrants" group risked to create an "apart" in regards to entrepreneurs of others incubator programs: "With a longer program it would give us more time to create a sense of belonging in the group and launch the collective intelligence dynamic (i.e. organising more mentoring day in which participants and mentors are welcome to advice and suggest ideas on all projects, common events with the rest of the incubator to create a general and shared sense of belonging and break down gaps)".

Other relevant weaknesses are pointed out by the Austrian staff, such as the delivery of too abstract materials, which were also too complex by considering the limited language skills both in English and in German of some mentees.

### **Overall picture of the teams involved in the second cycle**

Most of business projects were run by individuals and not teams. They were in a close personal connection with their business idea, which covered a heterogeneous group of economic sectors. The Italian team is the only local team who declares that most of mentees had a high level of education.

In almost all countries most of mentees incubated are still running their projects and activities even if mostly without incorporation of a company. However, in Austria it is probably that only two of the originally eleven participants are still working on their idea and plan to found a business. Others dropped out due to job obligations and it is not easy for the local staff to define a follow-up framework.

### **Overall picture of the mentors involved in the second cycle**

In Italy, mentors were selected for specific competence and knowledge such as service development, commercial, agriculture, education and training. In particular, some of them belonged to non-profit organizations or foundations who usually worked with migration issues.

For the German and the Belgian staff mentors' role was really important in encouraging the participants and in being open to meet the participants individually and giving them more concrete advice individually. In Belgium, mentors and trainers from migrant communities were involved also in the second cycle.

In France, all mentors are considered highly involved in the program, also because most of them worked in the same consulting company of the French partner and joined the MEnt program through a partnership that Make Sense set up with them. Thus, they had time in their worktime dedicated to the mentees. Most

of them were seen as available for each mentoring sessions or are very reactive to get all information to support the entrepreneur in their reflexion.

In Austria, 4 out of 6 mentors who were matched with participants were entrepreneurs themselves or had entrepreneurial experience. Moreover, 4 out of 6 mentors had a migrant background themselves.

# QUALITATIVE EVALUATION 2: FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

## *Some preliminary considerations*

This analysis collects overall images of MEnt by considering the perspectives of the focus groups participants and people interviewed. They are mentees, mentors and staff members from the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycles.

It also delineates the effectiveness of MEnt in reaching the three specific project objectives (i.e. supporting migrants' business ideas; supporting migrants' "soft" and "hard" entrepreneurial skills; favouring cultural integration and social capital of both mentors and mentees).

In the following paragraphs the points of views of mentees, mentors and staff members will be discussed separately. 40 participants took part in the qualitative evaluation: 17 mentees, 13 mentors and 10 staff members. 37.5% of them live in Italy, 22.5% in France, 15% in Belgium, 12.5% in Austria, 12.5% in Germany.

<b>TABLE 28: Number of participants (Qualitative evaluation 2)</b>	<b>Avanzi</b>	<b>Kiron Belgium</b>	<b>Kiron Germany</b>	<b>MakeSense</b>	<b>ZSI</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mentees	5	4	2	4	2	17
Mentors	6	1	2	3	1	13
Staff members	4	1	1	2	2	10
Total	15	6	5	9	5	40

<b>TABLE 29: Methods employed</b>	<b>Avanzi</b>	<b>Kiron Belgium</b>	<b>Kiron Germany</b>	<b>MakeSense</b>	<b>ZSI</b>
Mentees	Focus group	In-depth interviews	Focus group	Focus group	In-depth interviews
Mentors	Focus group	In-depth interviews	Focus group	Focus group	In-depth interviews
Staff members	Focus group	In-depth interviews	Focus group	Focus group	In-depth interviews

The following tables show the level of the development of mentees' business ideas before MEnt started and the state of the entrepreneurial projects after MEnt. This information is relevant for the following analysis.

<b>TABLE 30: Before MEnt: mentees' entrepreneurial background</b>	
Mentees starting MEnt with a rough business idea	5
Mentees starting MEnt with a well-developed business project	7
Mentees starting MEnt with an enterprise	2
Unanswered	3

<b>TABLE 31: After MEnt: the current state of mentees' entrepreneurial ideas</b>	
Mentees having radically changed their business idea	1
Mentees in a period of pause and confusion	4
Mentees having developed their business project but not an enterprise	6
Mentees having started an enterprise	3
Unanswered	3

### *An overall picture of MEnt*

Participants were asked to associate images, feelings and states of mind with their personal experience in MEnt. This activity was intended to give a synthetic meaning to the entire process, to allow each participant to retrace his own experience and stimulate personal evaluations.

#### **Mentees' perspectives**

Five different types of experiences are narrated by mentees.

- **MEnt as an empowering experience**  
The incubation programme has permitted to some mentees to receive useful instruments to better design their business and identify details not previously considered. It has been also an occasion to better visualize their role as "entrepreneurs".
- **MEnt as a networking experience**  
Others consider the networks activated among the group of mentees and mentors as the most significant impact of the project on personal and business experiences.
- **MEnt as a set of too rigid templates**  
Some criticise incubation programmes by defining mentors and trainers' approaches too focalised on fixed templates and abstract theories. They suggest not to teach fixed business models to be followed, but deliver a methodology to reflect on mentees' personal experiences and socio-economic needs.
- **MEnt as a programme with limited human resources**  
Some criticise MEnt because of a limited resources deployment (i.e. not enough human resources involved). This weakness concerns the need for the mentees to be better connected to trainers, mentors and staff members.
- **MEnt as a reproduction of separated world**  
For some mentees being considered under the "migrant entrepreneur" category represents an obstacle. Indeed, migrants are often associated with vulnerable people in socio-economic terms. This could be an obstacle to create relationships with other entrepreneurs in the country of arrival. Therefore, if MEnt exclusively addressed to "migrants" it is easy to reproduce a sort of "separated world". An Ivorian mentee encountered in Paris named this problem "greenhouse effect": "Migrants, refugees or, more generally, foreign people are considered vulnerable people. Many integration projects hardly permit a good contact with local entrepreneurs. [...] My fear is that we learn less rigid business implementation criteria than the real ones only because we are considered vulnerable".

The entrepreneurial background and the degree of advancement of each business project seem to be influent for these comments (see the previous Tables 3 and 4).

It appears that all mentees only having a rough business idea before applying to the project describe MEnt as a highly empowering project and a positive occasion to create new relevant networks.

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy **Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018



On the contrary, the most critical people are those who had not begun an enterprise before the incubation programme, but had a well-developed idea ready to be put into practice. Also those who consider themselves still disoriented after the end of MEnt, and not sure to continue their project, generally express a critical point of view.

### **Mentors' perspectives**

Each mentor taking part in the focus groups or in the interviews was asked to describe his personal experience. Three main points are interesting for a cross-country comparison.

- **MEnt as a coloured combination of diversities**

Most of them underline that the most typical aspect of the project is the vast heterogeneity led by the mentees. This diversity regards the countries of origin, the human capitals and the economic sectors of the business projects. It has represented a new challenge because it requested a set of different linguistic skills, knowledge of various economic sectors and a good understanding of migration issues, such as the legal aspects of the country of destination. "I was really worried about one of the entrepreneurs I was following. It was arrested by the police and I was thinking how to help him, but no answer" said a mentor interviewed in Paris. "My idea about the entrepreneurs enrolled is that they are all on unstable boats: I hope they will not go out of the project".

- **MEnt as an occasion of mutual support networks**

Some mentors agree that a relevant aspect of the project has been the opportunity to create networks among the mentees. It was a sort of peer education: "I believe it is very important to find the way to implement peer relations among participants in order to reach a high level of mutual support" said a mentor from Berlin.

- **MEnt as a counter-intuitive experience**

Mentors from Italy and France specifically discussed on their role in the project and tried to better define what a mentoring programme is. It appears that the incubation process is considered not only a set of suggestions or a way to teach instruments and skills. It is above all a dialectic and counter-intuitive process. This means the incubation programme should not be a rigid set of answers, but especially a set of questions and reflection processes the beneficiaries can use to test their convictions and beliefs and, where appropriate, to reverse their perspectives to ameliorate their actions.

- **MEnt, a project with ambiguous objectives**

"What is MEnt?" some mentors from different countries asked in a challenging way. "If I do not know the real objective I cannot understand if my support is effective or not" says a mentor from Milan. So, did MEnt pretend to incubate business projects with an operational and detailed programme for the mentees or, more simply, is it considered a sort of symbolic set of meetings having the aim to kick-start an entrepreneurial project?

- **MEnt, not an occasion to understand the mentees**

A complaint expressed by some mentors regards the insufficient time to comprehend the reasons why the entrepreneurs decided to start their own projects. "For a mentor this knowledge is necessary. In an entrepreneurial process not the hard and the soft skills but the ability to question yourself is the most important ability to develop" said a mentor in Milan.

- **MEnt as a reproduction of separated world**

A last point developed by two mentors from France and Italy is well related to the last image given by one Ivorian mentee of MEnt as a "greenhouse". They agree to consider MEnt a sort of separated world for migrants. Moreover, they add a new point: "With migrants it is important to be careful about cultural issues. I am afraid that the incubation process was characterized only by white European successful mentors and trainers and, on the other side, by foreign participants named with the category of "migrants". This is a reproduction of the status quo".

### Staff members' perspectives

Most of staff members involved describe their “personal experience” in the programme by focusing on the roles covered during the stages of the project (i.e. call for ideas, Short Training sessions, Light incubation, mentors' matching and pitching sessions). They consider themselves as “crucial actors”: a liaison between mentees, mentors and the other teams in the European partnership. To this “**central position**” some feelings are associated.

- **MEnt is an opportunity to strengthen a sense of responsibility.**
- **MEnt requires to be multitasking** (i.e. to switch work details, from a project manager to be an incubation trainer).
- **The risk is to be burned out** by the stress which all these roles provide.

Other staff members consider MEnt as a great opportunity to deeply study **new migration issues**. In particular, it is:

- **an opportunity to deepen a proper political analysis:** migration is currently a touchy subject for European societies and MEnt is considered a crucial project;
- **an opportunity to be implied in migration stories:** working with migrant entrepreneurs means to study each profile in a deepen way and be aware of the strict connection between their business projects and their personal stories, ambitions and desires;
- **an opportunity to build new European partnerships** connected to the thematic of migrant entrepreneurship.

## *MEnt as a support of migrant entrepreneurs' business ideas*

Different obstacles could appear in setting up, maintaining and expanding a business during or after a migration process: access to credit from financial institutions, limited information on local markets, insufficient skills to face bureaucratic burdens. Also obstacles concerning legal status and social capital are connected with the success of implementing business.

A cross-country and a country-level typology of strengths and weaknesses could be identified to evaluate the impact of MEnt to support migrants' business projects.

### **Mentees' perspectives**

#### **Strengths**

For some mentees **MEnt has been an opportunity to get out from confused objectives**. In particular, Light Incubation sessions contributed to "test" participants' business ideas by the help of experts. If a mentee in Austria declares "it was the first time I went into the real core of my idea", others from Austria, Belgium, Germany and Italy agree to consider MEnt as an important **opportunity to better define, clarify, design and discuss** their own **initial project**. Preparations of pitching sessions, meetings with staff members and the possibility to write down the projects are considered a good support: "They helped me to put the reality on the core of my project" says a Syrian entrepreneur in Berlin. "MEnt helped me to better define my projects from a nebula of ideas to organise my goals and my actions" is the comment of an entrepreneur in Milan.

**MEnt as a protective environment** is a second strengthen point. Some entrepreneurs from Austria, Germany and France agree to say that the staff members' "we-can-do-it mentality" (to use an expression from an entrepreneur in Brussels) was an encouraging and open-minded way to conduct the programme. Some refer to the term "protection" also to describe the possibility to freely use co-working spaces and others the informal and kind atmosphere with the staffs and among the mentees themselves. "It is hard to share different cultural origins in a group. On the contrary, I feel in a safe environment when I was not asked about my past but I could think about my future" an entrepreneur from Cameroun said.

The third factor considered an advantage is the **mentors and trainers' expertise** during Short Training sessions and Light incubation cycles. Others also underline the kind ability to follow all the participants at the same time and the useful materials and references given (i.e. helpful exercises, general and specific templates).

Five mentees in Austria, Belgium, France and Italy consider MEnt as a useful **help to create financial projections and carry out market analysis**.

#### **Weaknesses**

Ten mentees among a total of seventeen agreed to consider the **incubation cycles not enough targeted on their business projects**, while this specific focus was often declared as a fundamental project task. In their

#### **COUNTRY-LEVEL STRENGTHS**

**In France** all the mentees interviewed declare they benefited from the "Make Sense label". They recognise that Make Sense staff reached to ensure visibility to their business ideas and looked after possible trusted stakeholders.

**In Germany and in Belgium** mentees agree to consider the relations among them as a big opportunity to ameliorate their own business projects. They feel integrated in a **close-knit community built by** the work of Kiron staff.

opinion, staff members should have used more specific criteria to enrol the projects during the Calls for ideas. The vast heterogeneity of profiles would have slowed down the level of the incubation.

Others found the **Short Training sessions** plenty of too general topics and **not enough connected to what they needed**. Also the idea of an incubation programme as **a process where pre-designed models have to be delivered is criticized**, while, from their own experience, an approach permitting to participants to define models is more desired: “The incubation method was based on an explanation of some general basics and only after mentors and trainers asked us to translate what we have learned into models for our projects. So, it is like learning what it means to build an enterprise within text books or internet” said an Egyptian entrepreneur. “There was no serious review of our resulting work on these items. We received forms and we filled them. The mentor provided to me a very minimal support” a Syrian entrepreneur said.

Five mentees from Belgium, France and Italy agree to define the **selection criteria too general, ambiguous and ineffective to permit to a high-quality mentoring support**. The lack of strict selection criteria has influenced the creation of heterogeneous groups of mentees and a high diversity between migrants’ profiles, skills, social and economic resources, business projects and sectors. “I asked very specific types of question, specific for myself. As a result, I did not have specific tips for my specific type of business”.

A third weakness is the **perception of mentors’ disengagement**. “Disengagement” tries to sum up 8 mentees’ opinions concerning the fact the mentors were lacking in use appreciable teaching methods and communicational skills. This “distance” or “lack of empathy” is often perceived as an obstacle to a good interaction with participants.

Finally, four mentees are agreed to define MEnt as an intensive programme developed in a **too short time and with small budget**. In their opinion also some compensations could help both mentees and mentors to create stronger relations and to have more interests in the programme.

#### COUNTRY-LEVEL WEAKNESSES

**In Italy** three mentees interviewed agree to consider the aim of the **incubation programme pretty vague**: was it the setting up of an enterprise or having a general background on methods and instruments useful to set up a future business?

**In Belgium** some entrepreneurs declare they had **not enough time to interact with mentors**.

### Mentors’ perspective

#### Strengths

Four mentors from Belgium, France and Italy agree to consider MEnt a **well-designed project**: the steps of the programme were logically connected (selection, training, incubation, pitching sessions).

Others are convinced that the most important benefit for mentees would be the **opportunity to create a network among them and with mentors**. “It is very important they have some bonds of trust with the other mentees and with mentors: they are from different countries, different backgrounds and objectives. This is a challenging and unique mixing. When you are outside these incubation programmes you are alone with your business: so you are fragile” said a mentor from Berlin.

On the other side, a woman from Milan considers MEnt as a great opportunity for **mentors** too: they had the possibility to **exchange ideas on their job** and share the challenge to organize mentoring sessions together.

Finally, the last positive point is expressed by 3 mentors from Berlin, Paris and Milan. In their opinion, it is really important to consider that a good mentoring incubation is not when mentors give answers but when they ask questions: good questions are the ingredient who permit to the entrepreneurs even to criticize

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy

**Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

their initial business idea and to better reflect on their own project. So, they agreed to consider the **approaches and the methods** they used have favoured an “**unexpected and external point of view**”.

### Weaknesses

The most relevant type of weakness is expressed by 8 mentors from Austria, Belgium, France and Italy. They criticise the **timing organization**. That means **too little time for the preparation of the entrepreneurs** (demand side) **and the mentors** (supply side). “A deeper preparation of the entrepreneurs before light incubations means, for instance, a connection with some key cases of migrant entrepreneurs having already run some businesses. This could permit to better design the light incubation programme” said a mentor from Berlin. “One of the most specific aspect of migrant entrepreneurship is the link between the successful of the business and of migrants’ life. It is important to study analytically all the stories in order not to fall into confusion. This is a new challenge for us.” said a mentor from Paris. However, more time for preparation steps is a request that some mentors also address to prepare themselves. “If I had been better connected to migrants or aware of their backgrounds I would not have taken for granted a basic information they needed to go on with the programme” it is the opinion of a mentor from Brussels. From Milan, a mentor complained the lack of a deep analysis of the business projects to incubate. Finally, others expressed the idea that more time was necessary to help mentees after the end of the incubation: “Without follow-ups it is impossible to know anything about the effectiveness of the project” it is the opinion of a French mentor.

#### COUNTRY-LEVEL WEAKNESSES

**In Austria** two specific weaknesses are identified by the mentor interviewed. She would have **more focused the training sessions on financial and cost issues** by the instrument of feasibility study (what the product will cost; who it is for; who your customers really are; how much income you need to “survive”, etc.). Secondly, she would have paid **more attention on mentees’ linguistic skills**.

Another relevant weakness is the **difficulty of creating effective connexions between the mentees and the mentors at the end of MEnt** (also other mentoring programmes). It could be implemented by a better preparation of the pitching sessions (i.e. scheduling in advance).

### Staff members’ perspectives

#### Strengths

A first common point of view is that the **designed methodology** has been able to **clarify** to the mentees the aim of their business idea and to give relevant **information** concerning labour market skills.

Secondly, the developing of **tailored tools** has permitted to mentees to receive suggestions on different issues (business model, access to markets, access to skills and know-how) really targeted to the migrant entrepreneurs’ own projects.

Staff members also underline both the **high accessibility of the project** (a relevant number of participants were able to enter) and the vast **heterogeneity led by the mentees** (i.e. countries of origin, human capitals economic sectors of the business projects). The positive side is the potential high number of different instruments and skills which MEnt could propose to the mentees. However, others focused their attention on the need to support this heterogeneity by instruments and incubation methods really useful and targeted to each project.

Another cross-country strengthen point is the possibility to create **“community” of potential entrepreneurs** who can work and cooperate with each other, use co-working spaces and have relations with mentors.

Finally, for some staff the project has been able to link the mentees to **strategic partners** and **local professional networks**.

### Weaknesses

A first weakness pointed out by the teams concern the **requisite commitment** for the entrepreneurs and the mentors. Some staff members consider it as less than it should be to properly follow the mentoring programme.

Indeed, the **diversity of business profiles, technical knowledge and managerial skills** render more difficult mentoring and coaching activities. In some cases, this generated a sense of frustration in staff members.

Another point is that **the evaluation methodology was not enough shared with the entrepreneurs**. This could have been useful to clarify the main aims of the programme and try to develop and appropriate strategy to follow them.

### COUNTRY-LEVEL WEAKNESSES

In **Italy** and in **France** staff point out the need to implement the time to dedicate for the interaction between mentors and mentees. For this reason, the staff propose **compensations** for mentors and **“incubation grants”** for mentees.

In **France** the local staff perceives the difficulty to see the development of business projects: all the ideas were in an embryonic stage. So, it has been **hard to understand where mentees can really improve**.

In **Austria** the team found the **materials** given to mentees **too complex** in terms of content, languages and methodologies.



## *MEnt as a support of migrants' "soft" and "hard" entrepreneurial skills*

The support of entrepreneurs' "soft" (e.g. leadership, vision, risk propensity) and "hard" (market knowledge, sector specific and technical competences) entrepreneurial skills was the focus of the Short Training sessions.

A general and specific typology of strengths and weaknesses could be identified to evaluate the impact of MEnt.

### **Mentees' perspectives**

#### **Strengths**

Most of mentees, 10 of them, agreed to consider the **"hard" skills** the main ones learnt from MEnt. They are managerial abilities to organize an enterprise by drawing a business plans, studying market strategies, designing websites, implementing the use of social media and web application and finding funding opportunities, confounders or investors.

Other kinds of skills the mentees think they have learnt the most concern **pitching abilities**: "Presenting ideas and projects is not trivial and some presentation techniques are needed" said an entrepreneur from Italy. We have learnt how to use pitching tools also to know how to visually represent our idea. Visual identity is so important to our brands" said an entrepreneur from Belgium.

#### **Weaknesses points**

The main weakness concerns the **little emphasis on business strategies** and a detailed study of business plan. The business model was effectively presented but not enough analysed. This is considered as one of the main reason of the problems to clear business strategies: "how to write a financial proposal" is a common question the mentees continue to pose.

For others the **Short Training sessions** were **too generalist** and not so much developed in terms of number of topics trained. Others agree also to consider this step as too short in terms of time.

#### **COUNTRY-LEVEL STRENGTHS**

**In Italy** all the mentees interviewed underline they acquired the **"lateral thinking"** and the **"problem solving" abilities**: "MEnt gave us the link between the usefulness of the tangible instruments and the abilities we can develop".

### **Mentors' perspectives**

#### **Strengths**

Most of mentors agree to consider that the most important skills acquired by the entrepreneurs are the **soft skills** and in particular the **pitching abilities**: that is the ability to define and to expose their own business project.

#### **Weaknesses**

The most relevant point is the **lack of time to build competences and trust bounds between external trainers, mentors and mentees**. Trainers could have more resources (time or budget) to prepare training sessions. Indeed, for two mentors it was really difficult to understand the real needs of their mentees in terms of competences: "My mentee was very busy in producing the products she wants to sell. This was an area I could not support so much. As a consequence, the timing for the Mentoring Support was a bit difficult to find as the need of support would have come later in form of supporting her with marketing activities and suggest events where she can present her products".

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy **Ver**

#### **COUNTRY-LEVEL WEAKNESSES**

**Italy** is the only country where mentees underline the necessity to pay more attention on the **linguistic abilities** of the participants.

Secondly, the **linguistic difficulties** were a big obstacle for some mentors to implement a good training.

## Staff members' perspectives

### Strengths

All staff agree to consider the **interaction between mentees, mentors and staff** as a great opportunity of mutual exchange of skills. In particular, one-to-one sessions were organised for each mentees' team during the second incubation cycle to have a more-personalise tutoring. This personalization is considered crucial for the developing of **soft skills** (i.e. definition of business ideas, ability to translate objectives in implementing instruments, pitching and communication skills).

Another general strengthen point is the delivery of **effective materials during the tutoring sessions**. It concerns, for instance, materials on how to calculate the price of a product/service each mentee or team would deliver, how to calculate expenses and cash flows for the first years of business and how to conduct interviews with potential customers using open questions.

### Weaknesses

One cross-country weakness point emerged in the analysis. Indeed, some think that some **training methods** assumed a too high level of education and they were **not targeted to less educated groups of people**. In particular, the Austrian staff specifies there were too much information in no time, while the French staff adds that the teaching languages were not effective to represent the point of view of all the mentees involved.

#### COUNTRY-LEVEL WEAKNESSES

In particular, **Italian staff** explains that during the preparation phase there were **not enough** discussions to choose **methods which could have supported the heterogeneity** of business profiles, technical and managerial skills among the mentees selected for the programme.

#### COUNTRY-LEVEL WEAKNESSES

The **French staff** criticize some tutoring **tendencies to propose fixed models** and sets of knowledge to a group of people, considered as a "homogeneous", such as the "migrant entrepreneurs' group". They realized that a mentoring coaching should propose a distinction of

#### COUNTRY-LEVEL WEAKNESSES

The **Austrian** and the **French staff** underline it was problematic to **teach skills without the possibility to see the application** of the content of the training courses on personal business projects, such as follow-up analysis



## *MEnt as a support for improving migrants' social capital and favouring social integration*

Different obstacles could appear in setting up a strong network of social bounds in the countries of arrival. The third main objective of MEnt project is “favouring social capital and cultural integration” via the engagement of a large number of mentors able to guide new entrepreneurs. A cross-country and a country-based typology of strengths and weaknesses could be identified.

### **Mentees' perspectives**

#### **Strengths**

From Belgium, Germany and Italy some interviewed identified as strengths the contacts built with interesting and useful people, such as mentors, trainers or other migrant entrepreneurs. In particular, it is important to underline that three entrepreneurs having attending MEnt in Brussels, two in Berlin and one in Milan underline the great networking efforts made by the staff members to stimulate the creation of networks among the participants: “I got the best ideas from my classmates, by comparing our own projects and having **the possibility to copy the best**” said a Syrian entrepreneur living in Brussels.

From Paris, Milan and Brussels some mentees underline that the project was a real space **a space for different backgrounds** to exchange experiences and points of view. The most common word is “intercultural”.

#### **Weaknesses**

A first cross-country aspect concerns the **external communication of the project**. Some interviewed are convinced a better communication could have better linked their business projects to the local reality. They said the website was not effective or either funny events to connect the participants to the public were not organized.

Secondly, 4 mentees in Italy, France and Belgium criticize the idea of **mentoring programmes intended only for “migrant entrepreneurs”**. They explained that having as equals people who share only the fact to be foreigners does not allow an effective exchange between mentees and a rich network. On the contrary, this approach would increase the perception that a mentoring programme for native-born entrepreneurs would have demanded higher standards in terms of quality of business projects and more detailed training sessions. They also say they would have preferred to hear evidences from entrepreneurs more linked to their specific economic sector or migration story and not the general condition to be “migrant entrepreneurs”. To sum up, being a “migrant entrepreneur” is not a complete category to describe the complexity of social, economic and business realities they represent. They perceived that MEnt contributed to augment the **risk of “isolation” in local socio-economic contexts** because being a “migrant” is often associated with a vulnerable condition from a socio-economic point of view.

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy

**Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

#### **COUNTRY-LEVEL STRENGTHS**

**In France** all the mentees interviewed not only agree that Make Sense has **ensure visibility** to their projects by looking after trusted stakeholders, but also it tried to publically **change the image of refugees and asylum seekers**. “They disseminated the idea that refugees are not

#### **COUNTRY-LEVEL WEAKNESSES**

**In France** some mentees denounce the **lack of internships and links with local enterprises**.

**In Belgium** the mentees interviewed agree to say that mentors did **not offer a network of contacts to share**. “I never met a **Belgian mentor or tutor**. This could be useful to enlarge our network of contacts in Brussels” said a potential entrepreneur.

## Mentors' perspectives

### Strengths

Most of mentors consider that the most important network in the project is the **internal network of the project in each country**. "There was a friendly approach given by the team members. It was important to this group of participants to feel supported and welcomed" say a mentor working in Brussels. "Given the difference in the entrepreneurs' backgrounds team member cultivated good relationships via activities getting to know each other, lunch and other refreshments (with foods that are inclusive)" say a mentor living in Berlin. "If you reach the "emotion" of the mentee and can position yourself in the situation that he/she currently is facing it will work well" affirms a mentor in Vienna.

### Weaknesses

The only cross-country weakness perceived by mentors is the **lack of contacts between migrant entrepreneurs and native-born entrepreneurs, local start-ups, other mentoring programmes or other employment institutions**. "I think that the mentees were quite difficult to find as there are several similar mentoring activities going on in Austria. Maybe it would be a better idea to combine and integrate this mentoring programme into other initiatives (bigger ones) that are already running, and have a better base" say a mentor in Vienna.

#### COUNTRY-LEVEL STRENGTHS

**In France** the **co-working space** open even out of MEnt activities is considered a great opportunity for mentees to increase social capital, to receive useful information and to meet local stakeholders.

## Staff members' perspectives

### Strengths

Two main cross-country strengths are identified.

The first one is related to the **tailored incubation sessions** designed, which are considered useful for each mentee to **activate close relationships** between tutor, staff and mentors potentially influent after the end of MEnt project. Related to this point, staff agreed to consider that MEnt has helped potential entrepreneurs to build relations also with the **local professional networks** supervised by the partner organisations.

MEnt also would have encouraged a **multicultural environment** stimulating reciprocity within different mentees coming from a relevant number of countries and with different entrepreneurial backgrounds.

### Weaknesses

Two main cross-country weaknesses are identified.

Firstly, there was **not enough time dedicated to build up relationships between mentors and mentees**, so staff evaluate the global interaction as limited.

Secondly, staff denounce the lack of evaluation instruments in **measuring the mentees' social capital after 6 months** from the end of the project.

#### COUNTRY-LEVEL WEAKNESSES

**In Belgium** and in **Germany** the staff points out the impossibility for some mentees to use their own **mother languages**. It affects the ability to express their point of view.

# OVERALL EVALUATION AND FINAL REMARKS

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When MEnt was set up it had some general makings of other similar projects. The cultural framework it referred to consider the incubation process as a transfer of models, knowledge and tools (empowerment) offered by some experts in a short timeframe (mentoring). As analysed in the “Analytical Framework” (Deliverable 3.2, p. 32), at the European level, most of the mentoring projects are characterized by some similarities: typically, they are designed for participants living in vulnerable conditions or receiving social assistance benefits and, at the same time, for those with high or medium level of education and linguistic skills. They also refer to an optimistic objective: entrepreneurship is considered a way to reduce social and cultural distance between migrants and host societies.

Thanks to MEnt it is possible to say that it is indeed possible to reach this objective, but the mentoring programme design should be slightly changed.

The high heterogeneity of entrepreneurial profiles, the legal status and the migration background of each mentee, contributed to influence entirely the project design over the two years. After the first incubation cycle, each local team became aware that the project was more favourable and accessible for participants with a long-term residency, a sounder integration in the hosting country or participants with higher socioeconomic status and more developed linguistic skills. Therefore, all local teams decided to find strategies to increase commitment and a more assiduous participation also for other types of mentees. Two common approaches may be identified among these common strategies, followed by all five European countries partners involved in MEnt.

First, each staff opted for a more personalised mentoring programme, more focused on the needs assessment of each mentee or business idea. In all countries, this common approach was characterized by different actions, aimed at increasing the attention on mentees’ feedbacks, redesigning the tutoring sessions contents by mixing theory and practical applications, simplifying the language and the tools or fostering relations with mentors.

A second common approach, was related to the strengthening of mentees’ commitment and participation by developing relations, fostering communication, networks and community bounds between mentees, mentors, staff members and external actors. Therefore, each local team seemed to be less focused on direct coaching activities especially with a top-down teaching approach, and more engaged in reinforcing the project community and networks in each country. Moreover, different types of actions were undertaken in the five countries: some tried to bring external resources into the project (e.g. dotation funds to provide grants for mentees), others organized community building sessions or provided services not originally planned (e.g. co-working spaces, budget for community events, etc.).

To sum up, migrants’ profiles high heterogeneity has shaped contents and methods used for the incubation programmes. Therefore, it is difficult to say that an effective common methodology for light incubation has been developed (as stated in the fourth specific objective in the “Description of the action” document). Rather, a common approach or way of thinking has emerged from each local incubation programme. This approach is defined by the idea that a mentoring programme should not provide a set of rigid models, expertise and pre-designed answers to be followed by the mentees, as one would expect. On the contrary, incubation should provide sets of “good questions” and inquiry methods, so that each entrepreneur can think on his own barriers and opportunities. Developing a common incubation methodology would have taken more efforts, as all partners agree to say that a longer programme, with more resources, should have been set up.

Anyway, MEnt project has produced relevant outcomes concerning the other three specific objectives: 1. support migrants’ “soft” (e.g. leadership, vision, risk propensity, ...) and “hard” (market knowledge, sector specific and technical competences, ...) entrepreneurial skills; 2. select and support the most promising and impacting business projects, via light incubation (an incubation focused on the validation of the business

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy **Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

idea and concentrated in time) and mentorship programmes; 3. favour cultural integration and social capital, via the engagement of a large number of mentors. The results of the qualitative evaluation process confirm the project has been an empowering experience both for most of mentees and mentors. Empowering means not only setting new skills and knowledge, but also better defining, clarifying, designing and discussing each initial business idea and the opportunity to live a networking experience. Even if many mentees do not yet start an enterprise or developed a project, being in a period of pause and confusion or having radically changed a business idea are not per se a failure. It is, on the contrary, the indication that MEnt have given to beneficiaries a real opportunity for self-reflection.

The analysis of the weaknesses could represent, on the other hand, an occasion to better focalise on lessons learnt. Three most frequent suggestions were collected during focus groups and interviews: 1. identifying more criteria to select business ideas and entrepreneurs adequate to the mentoring programme (i.e. insuring everyone gets the possibility to access to the same level of coaching and the same ability to apprehend); 2. augmenting human and economic resources for staff members; 3. including a financial reward for mentors and mentees.

It is also extremely important to consider another relevant weakness underlined by mentees and mentors: the teaching of a fixed set of models risks not to take into account the migrants' profiles heterogeneity. Indeed, most of mentees did not appreciate to be considered all belonging to the category of "migrant entrepreneurs" and they seem to demonstrate that each of them has its trials and paths. As laid out in some of the specialised literature, different types of entrepreneurs can emerge during migration processes and adaptability in host countries is often permitted by a combination of factors. These factors could be the ability to be cultural, social and political brokers, maintain links with the society of origin and use mobility as economic resource. However, the mentees interviewed seem to consider that their social status is still not defined by their work and their entrepreneurial skills, but much more by the fact to be "migrant" or "foreign" (i.e. being simply the bearer of different cultural and social backgrounds). So, the incubation they would like to receive seems to need personalised guidelines to reflect on their own resources and the obstacles they could find in their specific socio-economic context. Without taking into consideration this diversity of careers, the risk of incubation programmes is to reproduce a "separated world" (a special programme for special entrepreneurs), where being a "migrant" is perceived as a discriminatory and static condition, which is not related to entrepreneurial abilities. Mentees affirms that being considered as a "special", "precarious" or a "vulnerable" entrepreneur could reproduce social isolation or discrimination. For this reason, some mentees ask to better define the selection criteria, which, in case of MEnt, were too general and ambiguous.

In conclusion, in order to give value to heterogeneity between migrants' profiles, skills, social and economic resources, business projects and sectors, it will be extremely important to understand the possible ways in which future programmes could stimulate and foster reciprocity and contacts between different migrant and native-born entrepreneurs, local start-ups, professional networks, other mentoring programmes or other employment institutions.

# INDEX OF TABLES

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TABLE 1: questionnaires filled (1 <sup>ST</sup> cycle)	2
TABLE 2: questionnaires filled (2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle)	4
TABLE 3: Country/Applications	5
TABLE 4: Missing questionnaires	6
TABLE 5: Entrepreneurs - Age	6
TABLE 6: Entrepreneurs - Nationality	6
TABLE 7: Entrepreneurs - With whom they currently live	8
TABLE 8: Entrepreneurs - Where do they currently live	8
TABLE 9: Entrepreneurs - They live in [Country] since	8
TABLE 10: Entrepreneurs - Their legal status as a foreigner	8
TABLE 11: Entrepreneurs- Other than in [Country], they have ever migrated in another Country	9
TABLE 12: Entrepreneurs - Years of school they have you attended to	10
TABLE 13: Entrepreneurs - Where they reached their highest level of education	10
TABLE 14: Entrepreneurs - Languages used at least at a minimum level of proficiency	10
TABLE 15: Entrepreneurs - They attended vocational training related to their business idea	10
TABLE 16: Entrepreneurs - Statement that best describes their present condition?	11
TABLE 17: Entrepreneurs - If they have a job, the statement that best describes their condition?	11
TABLE 18: Entrepreneurs - In the last year, statement that best describes their condition?	11
TABLE 19: Entrepreneurs - Their present jobs use all the skills that they obtained in their training and work life?	11
TABLE 20: Entrepreneurs - Supportive networks. Relatives mainly	12
TABLE 21: Entrepreneurs - Supportive networks. Friends mainly	12
TABLE 22: Entrepreneurs - Belonging to voluntary groups	12
TABLE 23: Entrepreneurs - How often they read news (newspaper, magazines, online news	12
TABLE 24: Entrepreneurs - Any other relative in migration?	13
TABLE 25: Entrepreneurs - The socio-economic level of the family of origin	13
TABLE 26: Entrepreneurs - Relatives who are entrepreneurs	13

**Deliverable:** WP 3.2.2, Evaluation and review

**WP Leader:** Codici Ricerca e Intervento **Partner Country:** Italy

**Version:** 2.0, Milan, 28.12.2018

TABLE 27: Entrepreneurs - If they have relatives who are entrepreneurs, they are helping them to become an entrepreneur?	13
TABLE 28: Number of participants (Qualitative evaluation 2)	28
TABLE 29: Methods employed (Qualitative evaluation 2)	28
TABLE 30: Before MEnt: mentees' entrepreneurial background	28
TABLE 31: After MEnt: the current state of mentees' entrepreneurial ideas	29