



Introduction

Young people throughout Europe have been hit hard by the global economic crisis with an increase of over 4 million in the number of youth unemployed. One stark feature of the current crisis is the high number of graduates who are either out of work or working below their skill and educational level. Writing in The Times newspaper, Angel Gurría summed up the current situation as the “painful human face of the crisis as Europe’s best and brightest are wasted”.

Funded under the Leonardo Da Vinci measure of the Lifelong Learning Programme in 2012, “Under My Wing – Supporting Graduate Entrepreneurs” represents a new innovation that aims to support the career progression of graduates from non-business related disciplines as entrepreneurs.



Entrepreneurship drives innovation, competitiveness, job creation and growth. It allows new innovative ideas turn

into successful ventures and can unlock the personal potential of individuals. The critical role

This project has been funded with support from the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

played by micro-enterprise start-ups and young businesses in driving economic development and job creation is increasingly recognised by individuals and governments. Consortium partners are convinced that given the right supports and access to the right resources entrepreneurship can be a viable alternative to dependent labour for young graduates.

Objectives Of Under My Wing

1. Address the high levels of unemployment and underemployment evident among graduates in participating countries
2. Support economic growth by fostering creative mind-sets, initiative and self-confidence; the growth of an entrepreneurial spirit; and create localised



- hubs of entrepreneurial activity
3. Ensure that all relevant actors contribute to the design, development and delivery of the bespoke educational process proposed
4. Promote entrepreneurship as a viable and sustainable option for graduates and impending graduates
5. Encourage graduates to think globally to meet the needs and harness the potential of a globalized economy
6. Ensure equality of opportunity for graduates regardless of gender or ethnicity

A New Approach

While entrepreneurship training is a rapidly developing policy field with strong potential for learning from other areas, it is important to focus on the real needs of entrepreneurs, which extend well beyond traditional business planning and accounting skills. Research conducted indicates that, in some countries, up to 50% of graduates plan to set up their own business in the future. These graduates have highlighted raising finance; dealing with business issues; having the appropriate business understanding; and having the know-how to run a business as the biggest challenges that lie ahead.

Under My Wing will provide a unique opportunity for budding entrepreneurs to gain an insight into the daily routine of existing entrepreneurs. Partners are working with local micro-enterprise owners to develop a bespoke business immersion programme where existing business owners will take budding entrepreneurs “under-their-wing” for a one week intensive business mentoring programme where budding entrepreneurs will be able to witness first-hand the daily challenges and the diverse skill-sets that an entrepreneur needs to survive. As access to finance is a big barrier for most new entrepreneurs partners are planning a trans-national workshop for graduates that explains the European Progress Microfinance Facility, Social Finance, Franchising & Venture Capital and their relevance to graduate entrepreneurs.





The People Behind The Project

The Under My Wing – Supporting Graduate Entrepreneurs project is brought to you by a consortium of nine partners representing Ireland (2), Malta, Germany (2), Cyprus, Spain, Lithuania and Finland. The consortium comprises 6 acting partners and 3 supporting expert partners.

Collective expertise in the areas of vocational education and training, entrepreneurship and business development, research and technology is available within the consortium. Each acting partner has established local development sub-groups to ensure that the views of graduates, education providers and micro-enterprise owners are at the heart of the project's development process.

Acting Partners

1. **Meath Partnership** plays a major strategic role in the economic development of County Meath implementing a series of development strategies to increase local employment prospects particularly for those most distant from the labour market. For further information go to www.meathpartnership.ie or contact sarah.land@meathpartnership.ie

2. **The Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs** promotes opportunities, awareness building, training and research in Malta in the field of entrepreneurship and other gender issues. It aims at establishing entrepreneurship as a culture and way of life for women – not only business owners, but workers, mothers and citizens. For further information go to www.women.org.mt or contact maryrose@women.org.mt
3. **SYNTHESIS Center** is a learning events provider offering bespoke training programmes for young people. Our learning events aim to inspire and empower learners. For further information go to www.synthesis-center.com or contact isaias@synthesis-center.com
4. **ttg Team Training GmbH** provides adult education, vocational training, job services as well as consulting and coaching. Since 2006 we have supported over 400 graduates and clients to establish their own business. For further information go to www.team-training.de or contact andreas.pfeifer@team-training.de
5. **Instituto de Formación Integral** is a key provider of non-regulated vocational training and occupational training. It specialises in the design and implementation of labour market activation training for unemployed people. For further information go to www.ifi.com.es or contact a.garcia-madrid@ifi.com.es
6. **Northern Lithuania College** provides higher education and professional qualifications relevant to labour market needs, especially in business, science and new technologies. The main focus, and successful activity of the college, is in the field of in practical business consultation and training. For further information go to www.slk.lt or contact nakciuniene.zivile@slk.lt

Supporting Partners

1. **Innoventum Oy** has extensive experience in developing easy-to-use web-based applications for purposes ranging from e-learning to online shopping and live video streaming. For further information go to www.innoventum.fi or contact janne.leinonen@innoventum.fi
2. **University of Paderborn** will provide the consortium with expert support for the design of induction to pedagogy courses for adult education providers and micro-enterprise owners. For further information go to www.uni-paderborn.de or contact marc.beutner@uni-paderborn.de
3. **Future In Perspective Limited** specialises in the design and production of media rich learning tools, resources and environments, and audio-visual production. It is also providing design and dissemination supports to the consortium. For further information go to www.fipl.eu or contact philip@fipl.eu

This project has been funded with support from the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein





Research Base

All acting partners conducted in-depth research with the 3 specific target groups that are essential to the successful implementation of the project, namely; graduates, adult education providers and micro-enterprise owners. There were a number of key issues that emerged during the course of the research and these are summarised below for each of the target groups. The full research report is available on the project website www.undermywing.eu

Graduates

Many new graduates felt that the current high levels of unemployment and the mismatch between market needs and labour pool skill-sets left them with little chance of securing gainful employment in their specialist area. The key issues identified by graduates that might prevent them from pursuing a career path as an entrepreneur were:

- the fear of failure;
- the lack of access to appropriate funding mechanisms and schemes;
- the lack of key business related skills;

This project has been funded with support from the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

- the overwhelming level of bureaucracy that would be entrepreneurs have to address;

Graduates interviewed would like practical business training to build on the theoretical skills that they have developed and access to ongoing professional support. For future training graduates would like a mix of on-line courseware and workshops or seminars where they could network with other graduates and support each other.

Educators

Education professionals felt that the dispersed and un-coordinated nature of current training in entrepreneurship was a significant barrier to future progress in this area. Many felt that the lack of entrepreneurial culture within the ranks of teaching staff meant that there was an over-emphasis on the theoretical elements of training, where teachers felt comfortable, and a significant deficit in terms of practical training due to the inexperience of teachers and their lack of confidence where practical business management issues are concerned.

Most tutors surveyed felt that if entrepreneurship training is to be successful it must be participatory; provide business networking opportunities; incorporate master-



and un-coordinated nature of current training in entrepreneurship was a significant barrier to future progress in this area. Many felt that the lack of entrepreneurial

classes from business experts; be available in a blended learning environment; and must address a wide range of soft-skill or personal development training to build the confidence of budding entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs

It was interesting that during the research process today's active entrepreneurs identified the same barriers to business start-up when they were starting out as the current graduates.



The fear of failure; financial issues and isolation were all highlighted. Business owners who have agreed to support the business immersion programme pointed out the diverse range of skills that any budding entrepreneur would have to develop. They have agreed to play a full part in designing the business immersion model to ensure that they can tailor supports to the individual graduates needs without compromising their own busy daily work schedule. All those surveyed agreed that the opportunity being provided by the Under My Wing project would have been of considerable benefit to them when they were starting-out in business.



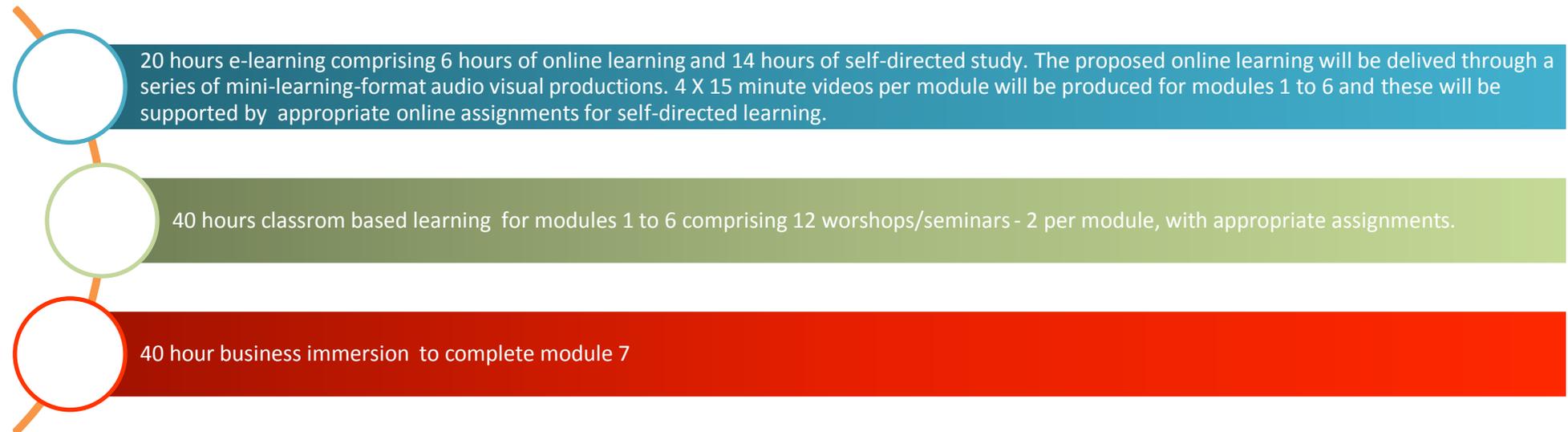


A New Curriculum Format

Seven modules have been agreed to address the key technical, behavioural and management learning-outcomes identified. Modules agreed will address the following areas:

1. Becoming an entrepreneur – have you got the right idea?
2. Starting your business – turning your idea into a success
3. Access to finance – securing capital for you and your business idea
4. Sales and marketing – growing your customer base
5. Business management – organisational skills and human resource management
6. Communication – networking and understanding different business cultures
7. Business immersion – in-company mentoring and support

The proposed Under My Wing curriculum will comprise 100 hours of learning based on a media-rich blended-learning model broken down as follows:



This project has been funded with support from the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

