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# EMEN

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European Migrant Entrepreneurship Network



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## Working paper on needs of organisations that offer coaching and mentoring for migrants.

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## 1. Introduction

Within the methodological framework of Etienne Wenger’s “Community of Practice” (CoP) the European Migrant Entrepreneurship Network (EMEN) is organised along three key issues: coaching & mentoring, access to finance and diversity management<sup>1</sup>.

With this report we aim at addressing the needs and challenges of Business Support Organisations (BSOs), specialised on support for Migrant Entrepreneurs. In this context, it is key to understand the different political-institutional frameworks and opportunity structures that enable migrant entrepreneurship and the BSOs that support them. Yet, frameworks (i.e. political and legislative) can also hinder the work and let challenges arise that are specific for a certain target group. Thus, one of the main purposes of this paper is to describe and analyse in which way this framework enables or hinders the BSOs in their operation.

The results of Social Impact’s extensive mapping study<sup>2</sup> on the service providers in the EU, focusing on the elaboration of coaching and mentoring schemes for migrant entrepreneurs served as a starting point for the following paper. It built the groundwork in order to formulate the anticipated needs of these BSOs. Logically it was assumed that the needs of the BSOs are linked to the needs and challenges of their target group.

This deliverable also seeks to address a knowledge gap in the discourse around migrant entrepreneurial support schemes and is therefore of particular importance. In the latest paper on the mapping of service providers<sup>3</sup>, we argued, in line with the literature, that migrants have specific needs which should be addressed and that they face specific barriers that need overcome in order to set up their business and start activities. It must be clear that support organisations for Migrant Entrepreneurs face different and very complex challenges due to the practical context of their target groups’ respective beneficiaries. In the following pages, we will shed light on the complexity and potential disparities of supporting Migrant Entrepreneurs.

As an entry point to the following paper, one should bear in mind that for business support organisations the greatest challenge is to address the complex conditions of their target group/s. Individuals with different social backgrounds, education as well motives to start a business are supposed to be supported in the most effective way (see Di Bella & Leicht 2011: 226).

In particular, a migrant specific support programme may help overcome cultural and language barriers. Migrant Entrepreneurs are known to be more distant to native institutions and the level of trust towards these institutions is considerably lower as compared to other entrepreneurial groups. Seen from the supply side, it can be stated that public support services for aspiring entrepreneurs lack

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<sup>1</sup> The design of the EMEN-project anticipates three most critical support factors for Migrant Entrepreneurs that can be best influenced in a short and medium term. Accordingly, the expert-exchange is structured along CoP1: coaching & mentoring led by Social Impact, CoP 2: Access to finance led by THUAS-FINE and CoP 3: Diversity management UNITEE.

<sup>2</sup> See EMEN deliverable [D 2.1.1] “Map of service providers in the EU and working paper on state of the art of coaching and mentoring schemes for migrant entrepreneurs”

cultural competences and empathy for the problems and challenges of Migrant Entrepreneurs. Furthermore, these public institutions rarely employ multi-lingual staff members. Even employees with migrant experiences could have a positive effect on the trustworthiness of an institution (see *ibid.* 227).

Yet, as a precondition for these organisations to deliver quality and tailor-made services, the barriers in their ecosystem as well as their specific needs must be appropriately addressed. The following paper aims at elaborating on these needs through semi-structured interviews, very much focusing on their specific organisational point of view.

It is expected that the needs and challenges of these organisations are connected to the overall support structure that migrant entrepreneurs can rely on. This support structure can be observed from three different levels (see Vogel 2016: 70):

- **Macro Level:** Political and Sociodemographic Framework
  - Structural requirement for start-ups and impact of measures concerning labour market-, economic- and of socio-political developments
- **Meso Level:** Organisational Framework
  - Existing structure of organisations and the demand of being open to a heterogenous target group
- **Micro Level:** Individual Level
  - Skills, professionalism and methods of the consultants

Yet the factors described by Christian Vogel represent an ideal type. Thus the above three-layered support structure is not implemented as efficiently everywhere as it faces challenges. Rene Leicht and Jessica Di Bella analysis adds a pertinent perspective to this model. They have described on which levels migrants face complications. These are:

- On the **macro level** a support programme lacks a sufficient structure. There are no cross-departmental strategies or communication structures on which support organisations could rely.
- The **meso or organisational** level shows very little support for migrant entrepreneurs. municipalities, chambers of commerce or other organisations that do not offer specialised support for Migrant Entrepreneurs. If they do, it is only for a short period of time. Migrant specific support programmes are not very well known in the migrant community (see *ibid.* 228 ff). Migrant Entrepreneurs either use the non-specific business support from the public sector or private council (i.e. law or tax accounting consulting). Supporting start-ups are only a secondary occupation of these private consultants (see *ibid.* 121 ff). So establishing a support programme also has needs to have a sufficient communication strategy to reach out to the migrant target group.
- The **micro level** of migrant support programmes concerns the competences, professionalism as well as the methodology of the support programmes (*ibid.*: 70). There are no standards or regulations concerning the consulting or coaching of (migrant) entrepreneurs. This means that there are no standards to guide oneself when establishing a programme.

With regards to this paper's methodology and in order to shed light on above described assumptions, we interviewed staff members of five organisations that focus on supporting migrant and/or refugee entrepreneurs and ask about their embeddedness in political and social settings, as well as the qualification of their staff and their strategy to get access to their client group. Taking the above-mentioned levels of observations – macro, meso and micro – into consideration we particularly included the following categories in the research design:

- Asking about the **policy trends** and the acceptance of migrant entrepreneurs in the social discourse one can draw conclusions about the political and legal structures these organisations are embedded in and what kind of barriers they face.
- Questions concerning their **network**, their **access to clients** as well as their **business model** can give us information about lacking connectivity and approachability as well as the financial needs of the organisations.
- To get to know the needs concerning **methodology and staff qualifications**, we will ask the interview partner about the quality standards as well as skills set their staff do possess or can acquire.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

As we discussed in our introduction, it is our assumption that migrant specific BSOs face challenges on all levels of observation. Further, we focus our analysis on the policy framework, quality standards of staff, network and business model. The policy framework is located on the macro level. To analyse the meso level of the organisations, we will look into respectively and ask about the networks that these BSOs are active in. To cover challenges that are suspected to be on the micro level, we will be examining the quality standards of their staff as well as the organisations' business model.

The following is an introduction into the theoretical overview of these spheres for Migrant Entrepreneurship support. This introduction may showcase how these spheres impact the work of migrant specific BSOs and what kind of challenges these organisations may face.

### 2.1 Policy Framework

BSOs for Migrant Entrepreneurs are embedded in a wider policy and institutional framework as compared to conventional BSOs. The fact that these BSOs also have to take into consideration the policies and institutions concerning migration and national asylum regulations exposes them to different (legal) barriers. These barriers constrain both their target group to start a company as well as the organisations that support Migrant Entrepreneurs. It is therefore relevant to know to what extent these frameworks affect ME-BSOs.

Furthermore, it is of interest whether or not the topic of Migrant Entrepreneurship is pushed by the national, regional and/or local government and how the topic is received and echoed in the public

discourse. Especially, the topic of migration has been very controversial in recent year all across the continent. Considering the recent **negative framing of migration in the media and public discourse** in many European partner states, there is the possibility that consequently (direct or indirect) restrictive policies against Migrant Entrepreneurs may arise.

Entrepreneurs in general are faced with numerous **institutional barriers**<sup>4</sup>, which BSO have to address in their support schemes. Regulations, market entrance barriers as well as access to finance are common problems that every entrepreneurial group have to face (see Vogel 2016:72). On top of these common issues, Migrant Entrepreneurs deal with a policy framework that is linked with their often-unclear residence status. Studies have shown that especially in Germany, Migrant Entrepreneurs perceive limitations by restrictive policies (i.e. laws that influence their residence status and working permits) (see Ebner 2015: 34). Furthermore, a great issue for Migrant Entrepreneurs is the **acceptance of foreign qualifications**.

There are almost no structures in place that support Migrant Entrepreneurs in this issue. Moreover, getting **access to financial means** to support their entrepreneurial endeavour is a major challenge for migrant entrepreneurs (ib. 36).

## 2.2 Quality Standards

To address the specific problems of Migrant Entrepreneurs, it is not enough that BSOs adapt their content to this target group, but they also need to apply a different methodology. Conventional BSOs often see themselves confronted with the argument that they cannot react to the diversity of their clients, i.e. because their staff is not trained in intercultural competences or has the ability to react in a matter that addresses language barriers (see Di Bella & Leicht 2011: 227).

Migrants have different starting conditions and feature different behaviour as entrepreneurs as compared to native entrepreneurs in the receiving countries. These conditions need to lead to **adapted support methods and strategies** (see ibid. 224). Especially intercultural competencies need to find their way into the standard methods of BSOs for migrant entrepreneurs as well as bi- or multilingual consulting to overcome cultural and language barriers (ibid. 227).

Yet, experts mention that migrant entrepreneurs have a bigger need for trust and that speaking the same language or having the same ethnic background has a positive effect on the relationship between entrepreneur and consultant. However, this argument is not fully supported by research. We therefore assume that **multilingual and intercultural skills** are particularly effective in the starting phase of a coaching or mentoring relationship. This first stage includes the evaluation of the entrepreneurial idea, character as well as the existing resources and weaknesses. The consultant, coach or mentor needs to exhibit a certain level of trust and empathy. Having a migration background, oneself or employing multilingual skills enhances this trust. As a support relationship continues, this importance of this trust

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<sup>4</sup> Our first deliverable, «Map of services providers in the EU and working paper on state of the art of coaching and mentoring schemes for migrant entrepreneur», focussed partly on the institutional barriers that migrant entrepreneurs face and support schemes address them.



and empathy level declines. The advanced support stage focuses on content transformation. This should also be designed in a way that addresses language barriers but does not depend so much on trust (ibid. 228).

## 2.3 Networks

In the mapping study on coaching and mentoring schemes, we highlighted that Migrant Entrepreneurs face the challenge to find **access to networks**. BSOs can support Migrant Entrepreneurs in their networking efforts. Furthermore, most BSOs depend on their network to effectively run their business. Many BSOs have mentors and coaches outside of their own organisation. Thus they rely on expertise from other organisations (i.e. knowledge on law and taxation). For this research, it is thus of interest to understand what kind of networks these specific BSOs are embedded in, not only for the purpose of knowing what kind of information is available for their clients, but furthermore for assessing how these BSOs get access to their target group and how they are being supported by other organisations.

Migrant specific organisations struggle with achieving visibility amongst the vast offer of business support on the market. Migrant Entrepreneurs often lack **awareness of the migrant-specific support**. Furthermore, studies have shown that, in some cases, there is resentment from Migrant Entrepreneurs against migrant specific business support because it is received as a form of positive discrimination (see Di Bella & Leicht 2011: 228). Nonetheless, lacking visibility is a major challenge that migrant specific BSOs face. It is therefore interesting to know if they are in contact with organisations that either target migrants or entrepreneurs.

Presuming that establishing a relationship with these organisations could guarantee a steady flow of clients for the migrant specific BSOs, Migrant (Entrepreneurs) are often involved in migrant clubs, (municipal) integration agencies, language schools as well as community centres (see Vogel 2016: 95). Organisations that (migrant) entrepreneurs seek support or information from are chambers of commerce, employment agencies as well as business (development) associations (see ibid. 119 ff). This is a mix of public and private organisations that migrant specific BSOs could establish relationships with for the purpose of achieving visibility (see Vogel 2016: 340).

## 2.4 Business Model of Operations

Depending on their legal status and their strong link (and dependence to) governmental structures, the access to financial means can be a challenge for migrant specific BSOs. Direct or indirectly, we suspect that most BSOs have some kind of **public funding scheme**. The European Social Fund (ESF) represents an important source of funding in supporting entrepreneurship. Organisations can apply regularly for means to support their social mission.

**Private means** on the other hand are based on private donations from individuals, companies or foundations. Larger enterprises sometimes cooperate with support organisations for migrant

entrepreneurs as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy<sup>5</sup>. Besides monetary support CSR-strategies can also include direct support of employees from the respective company, i.e. as mentors or coaches.

A major challenge for BSOs is to establish a **financial strategy for the long-run**. Most financial and private funding are project-based. The BSOs are faced with an uncertainty and a lot of resources are being deployed for the sake of acquiring new funding. This has an influence on the quality of Migrant Entrepreneurship support. Long-term funds could improve the sustainability of support for Migrant Entrepreneurs and thus mitigate challenges that are linked to financial uncertainty.

It is not uncommon that BSOs co-fund a part of their operation by **offering services and products**. This can include renting out office space to outsiders and/or offering coaching, workshops and seminars on multiple topics. This usually does not fund their entire operation (especially the rent in large cities, which is a major expense) but it can help sustain parts of it. Depending on the size and the number of staff implementing and operating, such a mixed strategy business model can also be challenging and time consuming.

### 3. Methodology

As mentioned above we opted for a research design based on semi-structured interviews that is open to personal accounts of practitioners working for and managing a BSO. While this report does not aim to deliver results that meet the strict quality standards of qualitative research, we nonetheless applied good research practices. We briefly discuss below these quality standards so as to clarify the limits of the report:

**Sample criteria:** Based on the extensive prior research already done on the support organisations' landscape in Europe<sup>6</sup>, we aimed at an appropriate geographical scope for the selection of BSOs to be interviewed; see figure 1 below. Initially we was aimed at integrating six organisations, however it turned out that KMOP in Athens is not specialised in Migrant Entrepreneur support. Thus, we interviewed 6 BSOs out of which 5 interviews where used for this paper. TERN, SINGA France, Start-Up Refugees and KOMPASS were already the object of investigation for our first deliverable<sup>7</sup>. SPARK represents the only new research object<sup>8</sup>. For further information, please refer to Table 1 below.

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<sup>5</sup> "The Human Safety Net" (THSN) of the international insurance company Gnerali can serve as an example in this regard. Amongst other components THSN offers a support scheme for refugees; implemented by the Munich branch of Social Impact gGmbH. See: <https://www.generalide/ueber-generalide/verantwortung/gesellschaftliches-engagement/human-safety-net/>

<sup>6</sup> Besides the afore mentioned Mapping Study (under D 2.1.1) Social Impact carried out a list of key informants and partners as a working document that will be enriched in the course of this project. For further information and contacts to the sampled organisations please refer to EMEN's Deliverable 2.1.2

<sup>7</sup> For more information on these organisations and their programmes, please consult «Deliverable 2.2 Map of services providers in the EU and working paper on state of the art of coaching and mentoring schemes for migrant entrepreneur»

<sup>8</sup> SPARK operates on a global level. Qualifying employees for the labour market as well as supporting start-ups as well as Small and Mid-sized Enterprises (SMEs). There are ten so called Business Support Centres in the EU and Africa from which



Figure 1: Map of sampled BSOs / EU member states (own depiction)

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SPARK enables local partners' organisations to provide existing SMEs and new entrepreneurs with all the tools they need to sustain themselves, such as with business skill trainings, value chain development and access to finance. Also see: <https://www.spark-online.org/>

Table 1 :List of initial sampled BSOs

Organisation	Country	Website	Focus	Address
<b>SINGA</b>	FRA	<a href="https://www.singafrance.com/">https://www.singafrance.com/</a>	#Migrant #Refugee #Entrepreneurship #Incubator #Workshops	50 rue de Montreuil 75011 Paris
<b>TERN</b>	UK	<a href="http://www.wearetern.org/">http://www.wearetern.org/</a>	#Refugees #Entrepreneurship #Mentoring #Network	263-269 City Rd, London EC1V 1JX
<b>KMOP</b>	GRC	<a href="https://www.kmop.gr/">https://www.kmop.gr/</a>	#Migrants #Refugees #Training #Employment #Entrepreneurship	75, Skoufa str. Athens
<b>SPARK</b>	NL	<a href="http://www.spark-online.org/">http://www.spark-online.org/</a>	#Entrepreneurship #Post-Conflict #Mentoring #Coaching #Scholarships #Network	Van Diemenstr. 70 1013 CN Amsterdam
<b>Kompass</b>	GER	<a href="https://www.kompassfrankfurt.de/">https://www.kompassfrankfurt.de/</a>	#Migranten #Refugees #Counseling #State-led	Hanauer Landstraße 521, 60386 Frankfurt
<b>Start-up Refugees</b>	FIN	<a href="https://startuprefugees.com/">https://startuprefugees.com/</a>	#Refugees #Counseling #Training #Mentoring	Liisankatu 8 A, 00150 Helsinki

**Semi-structured interviews guidelines:** This method is useful to react to the conversation as well as to give the interviewee a chance to elaborate on his/her view on the issue being investigated. It can also open up insights into elements the interviewer was not aware of from the start. Guidelines are presented in annex to this document. Furthermore, we transcribed the five interviews in order to proceed with the analysis. In Chapter 4, which is the analysis part of the report, we condensed the findings of our research and consequently used assorted quotes of the interviewees to support our findings.

**Informed research:** In Chapter 1 and 2, we already laid out our working assumptions for the following discussion. Thus the research was guided by both the prior research in the context of the EMEN project as well as scientific discourse around the topic:

- The first questions were aimed at the BSOs' experience in supporting migrant entrepreneurs and what kind of migrant entrepreneurs do take **advantage of the addressed programmes**.

- To find out in what kind of policy framework these BSOs operate, we asked about megatrends in the **general policy framework (in relations to the national context)** for migrant entrepreneurs, the debate surrounding migrant entrepreneurs and if they have experienced administrative barriers (e.g. red-tape).
- To understand their situation with regard to human resources as well as the methodology and tools, we asked the BSOs what experience they had with the quality of the coaches/trainers in the sector and what their experience was with **capacity and skill set of coaches/trainers** in their organisation.
- Concerning networks and their embeddedness in the regional ecosystem, we wanted to know from the BSOs what the **relative importance of cooperation with networks and other organisations was** (e.g. other BSOs scientific partners and public partners).
- Furthermore, we identified as major challenge for migrant specific BSOs, being that their target group is mostly unaware of their programmes and projects. So to find out how they try and overcome this barrier, we wanted to know, how their **access to clients** is and how they create **visibility for BSOs** in the vast offer of Business Support. Lastly we asked how they fund their operations and what their income streams are.

While we are confident about the explanatory power of the report, some of the **limitations** should be made explicit. Besides the obvious limitations of sample size of the interviews on which this report is based, as well as the inherent “pros and cons” of qualitative-deductive research design, there are several pertinent perspectives that eventually – due to the needed reduction of complexity – could not be addressed properly.

Initially, it was envisaged to be more specific about the different approaches of supporting Migrant Entrepreneurs. In this context, it is to assume that the degree of **specialisation towards specific sub-groups** of an overall heterogeneous group of Migrant Entrepreneurs (i.e. BSOs focusing on refugees) would influence their work on both macro-, meso- and micro-level. At the same time, this is also true in the context of a **variety of methodological approaches** of BSOs. As the prior-identification and the later analysis would have been too resource intense, we also dismissed the idea of orienting our research towards particular methodological approaches, such seminars & coaching vs. mentoring.

## 4. Analysis

The following analysis chapter will be structured along the categories defined in Chapter 2. It furthermore follows the inherent structure of the five interviews as they were directed by the semi-structured interview guidelines.

### 4.1 Policy Framework

We examine the policy framework through the question about the “megatrends” in the general frameworks of policy for Migrant Entrepreneurs. These trends may be perceived by the BSOs as administrative barriers and the social acceptance of migrant entrepreneurs. Interviews show that the BSOs assess an **overall positive acceptance and consideration** on the part of policy makers.

Yet most of them view that there are **not many specific policies** in place that support Migrant Entrepreneurs. For one, migrants are a minority in every society, and second, those who start a business are even fewer.

*“Regarding Migrant Entrepreneurs there is nothing really build yet. It is a very specific question that only concerns few people because entrepreneurship is already very specific so when it comes to migrants it concerns even fewer people” SINGA (4:43 – 4:49)*

Furthermore, the interview partners overwhelmingly stated that entrepreneurship is a **very popular topic in politics and the public eye**. Respective policy has been implemented.

*“But overall in France entrepreneurship is really trendy by now. It is recognised as a way to develop an activity if you can’t find a job. So there is a kind of a trend which many supports in different formats that help entrepreneurs” SINGA (4:00 – 4:32)*

*“The UK is a good place to do business. Regardless of ethnicity. There is a lot of support out there for both low income and disadvantaged groups in terms of business support” TERN (7:06 – 7:19)*

All of them stated that **especially migrants face strong barriers** because of the migration policy in their country, language barriers, access to finance as well as lacking institutional knowledge.

*“The community is really supportive of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs. But officials and the bureaucracy are not. There is no guidance on starting a business. (...) The asylum seekers have no residence permit so it is really hard for them to start a company. It seems impossible in a way. Because of the bureaucracy they need a passport to open a bank account. But they don’t have a passport so they can’t open a bank account, which means they can’t start a company. This is a chain of bureaucracy. Also the paper work in Finnish. So even for English-speakers it is really hard. So for people who only can speak their mother tongue, it is really hard. And even the asylum policy is getting tougher and tougher” SUR (3:00 - 5.25)*

*“The asylum system in the UK is one of the strictest in Europe in terms of exclusion from the marketplace and the labour markets. So asylum seekers don’t have the right to work for 12 months. They can’t set up a business activity at any point. So there is a significant gap between the time they arrive in the country until they can start any kind of entrepreneurial activity. (...) The barriers that refugees face are so large that they need specific targeted support to enable them to unleash their undoubted potential. But at the moment there is not a recognition of the amount of money it takes.” TERN (7:32 – 8:45)*

*“The main barriers are of course the level of French plays an important role in the success of entrepreneurs. Because it is really complicated to open a business, to get in touch with clients when you don’t speak French or when you don’t speak perfect French or French in the written form.” SINGA (5.30 – 5:53)*

*“I believe that the access to finance is a huge topic to address. If they are refugees for instance, they cannot use the financial services, which the state provides for the locals. We try to find alternative solutions to access to finance” SPARK (3:08 – 3:45)*

Nonetheless, entrepreneurship and especially Migrant Entrepreneurship is a topic that has enjoyed a lot of attention over the years. There have been initiatives such as projects, networks and departments in traditional organisations that offer business support for migrant entrepreneurs. The BSOs have overwhelmingly stated that they experienced and witnessed a **positive attitude towards migrant entrepreneurship** in their respective societies. However, interviewees are still sceptical because of the overall entrepreneurial environment. Especially for migrants and refugees the general conditions have not improved accordingly.

*“We observe, that the topic [Migrant Entrepreneurship] is finding a lot of consideration. Otherwise there wouldn’t be as many means flowing into these projects as there are at the moment. But there has not been a lot of changes in the entrepreneurial environment. Especially for refugees.” KOMPASS (4:40 – 5:08)*

*“The community is really supportive of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs. But the officials and the bureaucracy is not.” SUR (3:00 – 3.25)*

BSOs are not experiencing a lot of red tape. Most interviewees did not refer to barriers their organisation faced but rather the challenges their target group are exposed to. To efficiently support Migrant Entrepreneurs, BSOs have to address the barriers the target group experience. In this context, the **bureaucratic barriers of Migrant Entrepreneurs do impact the work of migrant specific BSOs** because the influence the success of their support strategy.

*“So in a way we have the same barriers. Because we have to know what the barriers are that they face. So we can be able to provide the right support.” SPARK (5:00- 7:44)*

*“Not hugely because we are CIC, a social enterprise. Which means that we don’t have the same regulatory restrictions as a charity. Which is good! We have not encountered any bureaucracy barriers to our work” TERN (10:40 – 11:10)*

*“We as a consulting organisation don’t face any barriers. Yet, if we support participants that need conformation from the employment bureau or the migration office then this slows down the support process and has an impact on the success of the aspiring business”. KOMPASS (5:51 – 6:44)*

## 4.2 Quality Standards

To analyse the quality standards of the staff, we ask the BSOs about their experience with quality of coaches/ trainers in the sector and if there are any guidelines and standard processes that BSOs use to guide themselves when hiring new staff.

None of the interviewees could answer the question concerning the standards in the sector. Interviewees referred to the **importance of standards within their organisation**.

*“There are no fixed guidelines for this purpose but recommendations exist.” KOMPASS (7:13 – 7:30)*

For the BSOs, it seemed important that their staff is well connected and has **coaching abilities rather than specific entrepreneurial knowledge**. The staff members should be qualified to access the needs and the respective support of their target group. The actual content delivery is scarce and the connection to opportunities is substantial.

*“What we try to do is to give refugees spaces to work on their business and connect them with actual entrepreneurs. So what we are trying to do is to tie the refugees to knowledge and networks they need to move forward. Rather than deliver that content ourselves.” TERN (11:25 – 14:03)*

*“We really see ourselves doing the diagnostic of the need and trying to coach them in the sense that we will try to show them the opportunity to help them to go forward but not to answer questions.” SINGA (7:53 – 10:24)*

We furthermore asked the interviewees if in their opinion a coach/trainer for Migrant Entrepreneurs must have a special set of skills. One BSO stated that **good human skills and empathy** are needed. One has to have good connection to the clients.

*“And the last thing which is really a component of the support is the connection.” SINGA (7:53 – 10:24)*

Furthermore, **having experience with the target group** is helpful. The BSOs stated that this is a good preparation for a coaching because it helps building trust.

*“But for sure one of the criteria is to have an experience in creating a business or to have already supported entrepreneurs or project holders. You are supposed to be able to do the diagnostic of the needs to then be able to connect them to other people” SINGA: (7:53 – 10:24)*

Also **being a migrant themselves facilitates** the work with migrant entrepreneurs because it improves trust.



*“We also work with trainers that are migrants themselves. The not only have entrepreneurial experience but can share their own personal experience. This is very relevant!” SPARK: (11:29 – 14:01)*

*“We are 13 team mates in our organisation. Four of us came as refugees to Finland. Two of us came as migrants. We speak 13 different languages. We are 5 different nationalities. All of us have a different education background. We don’t have any restriction according to the qualification.” SUR (7:44 – 9:55)*

A challenge in working with migrants can always be the language barrier. Some BSOs stated that multilingual sessions are helpful. Furthermore, an **existing language barrier requires more time and patience**. A counselling with a migrant entrepreneur can be more intense and might take a longer period of time, so a different time management is helpful.

*“Partly, we offer counselling sessions in their mother tongue and we have the opinion that counselling should be offered in the mother tongue of refugees. A different time management is also needed. The counselling is more intense and takes longer” KOMPASS (8:33 – 9:33)*

**Flexibility is an important characteristic for counselling** specific target groups. This does not exclusively refer to human characteristics but also to the concept of the programme. Counselling refugees can deviate from native and migrant entrepreneurs.

*“One, the traditional business support model doesn’t really work for refugees. Because a lot of the problems they face is just to create space for everyday work and try to re-establish everyday work methods” TERN (11:25 – 14:03)*

## 4.3 Networks

Being part of a larger network can help the target group receive essential information and relieves the organisation of certain content delivery that external partners may also convey. We thus asked the BSOs what the relative importance of the cooperation with networks and other organisations is. For several interviewees having a **strong network is crucial in order to acquire coaches, trainers, and mentors**.

*“It is crucial, I would say. (...) So there are many other incubators and many other associations doing the same thing so we really try to identify everyone and to make a partnership with them. And we have a very crucial partnership with an association that is doing microcredit and supporting building a financial plan and investment plan. We also have a partnership with associations offering mentors. (...) So we couldn’t do our work without all the other organisations involved. (...)” SINGA (12:19 – 15:09)*

For Kompass and Spark the relationship with other organisations is important but not crucial. It serves as knowledge and experience exchange.

*“For certain it has a high significance! Not only with organisations that are active in the same topics built also with organisations that have the same target group but offer different programmes. They have bordering programmes.” KOMPASS (9:48 – 10:09)*

*“I think sharing knowledge is crucial. Especially between other organisations. We can empower each other to provide better support to migrants. We can bring innovation to organisation. Especially when we talk about networks that have organisations with 20 years of experience. On the other hand, we have organisations that are very young. They can bring innovation” SPARK: (14:19 – 15:45)*

**Networking** does not only hold significance for acquiring partners and essential knowledge but also **to be known in your region and by your target group**. As noticed, a lot of migrant specific BSOs struggle with visibility among the vast offer of other BSOs. We asked them how they try and overcome this problem and if they might have a unique strategy. For one, the BSOs try to target their target group directly. They engage with the migrant community also through their organisations or facilities that have the same target group

*“What we do, we try to engage with the migrant community. (...) We talk with head of organisations such as chamber of commerce, universities and migrant associations to do information events about the project in different areas.” SPARK (18:03 -20:40)*

*“Every 6 months we would have a call for projects and we advertise that. We use a lot of partner organisations.” SINGA (20:47 – 21:21)*

Furthermore, aspiring migrant entrepreneurs find the BSOs on the basis of recommendations either by former clients or by cooperating organisations.

*“Meanwhile, we get recommended from former clients that refer to us in their networks. And then over the network of institutions. We contact or get contacted by other institutions, that have programmes for refugees.” KOMPASS. (12:43 -13:39)*

Others told us that they did not have the need for a unique marketing or communication strategy because they are a key player in the sector. They have a good reputation and are **mostly the only agent in their city** or even in the country that exclusively support refugee or migrant entrepreneurs.

*“We are certainly the only organisation in the UK that speaks exclusively to refugees on business. So in terms of having clarity of communication we haven’t got that difficulty.” TERN: (16:49 – 18:30)*

*“Furthermore, we have been working with refugees for three years and we are the only organisation that supports asylum seekers in the field of entrepreneurship. So word has been spread everywhere. We almost don’t have any social media channels.” SUR: (13:30 – 16.15)*

## 4.4 Business Model

Financing an operation is a critical topic. We therefore elaborated on the income streams and what role public and private funds might play. All of the **organisations rely on either public or private funds**. Only SINGA has a business model that creates a small percentage of their revenue.

*“By now Finkela is by now funded at around 80% by THSN [ed. The Human Safety Net] but we are trying to look into other sources of finances. We’re trying to sell, which is only a small percentage, presentation training or team building or innovative meetings to companies so that they can also finance our activities.” SINGA (15:15 – 15:55)*

SUR is predominantly funded by private funds and was the only organisation that stated to be financially supported by the municipal government.

*“Half of our funding is from private funding. From companies and private donors. The city of Helsinki also funded the programmes for one year. (...) We depend on private funding” SUR: (17:17 – 18.30)*

Kompass is completely funded by project means that are provided by public institutions.

*“We are only funded by public project means” KOMPASS: (13:53 – 14:13)*

We were also interested to learn if BSOs receive funding from the EU, in particular from the European Social Fund. None of the BSOs that were interviewed were supported by EU financing. Although, SUR and TERN are in the process of applying for such funds.

*“No we don’t have any EU funds at the moment. (...) But we are applying to get some next year” SUR: (19:08- 19:24)*

*“We found our organisation through blended financing. So we have 50% private sector collaborations, 25% EU projects and 25% private donations.” TERN: (18:43 – 19:46)*

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can complete our research on a positive note. We gathered some hard facts that gave us an insight on the institutional-political framework the sampled organisations are embedded in, as well as their current institutional situation. Below, we would like to summarise our findings according to subordinate topics.

- Policy Frameworks:** It seems that the need for a migrant specific entrepreneurship policy is not present. Or in other words: it is not a worry of the BSOs. It is a very specific target group, which needs support on other political-institutional levels and not necessarily on the macro level. It is also worth mentioning that these BSO's scarcely have influence on the macro level. Yet, obtaining residents permits is a prevailing topic for migrant entrepreneurs and therefore for the BSOs. Migration policy in general heavily affects migrant entrepreneurship. To support migrant entrepreneurship, migrants in general should have it easier to become self-employed. Meaning that permits for starting a business should be given easier/ more freely.

- Quality Standards:** Our results from the interviews that were conducted represent an ongoing discussion in the sector: formal qualifications versus biographical qualification. Formal qualification is entrepreneurial skills and standardised processes that are needed in BSOs. Biographical qualification is the links to the target group and to the subject matter. The interviews show that biographical qualifications seem to be of more help than sector knowledge.

The BSOs did not mention any specific qualification but rather characteristics and human features that a coach or counsellor should have. Furthermore, the often-mentioned good human skills are not a unique feature for the support of migrant entrepreneurs, but are needed in any business support relationship.

We can furthermore say that the topic of quality standards does not seem to be a significant topic for the BSOs that were interviewed. Most of them do not focus on content transfer, but on assessing the strength and weaknesses of their participants and mediate them to sources of knowledge and problem solution.

We can assume that there are two phases of migrant entrepreneur support that differ in the skills needed: profile phase vs. functioning phase. In the profile phase, participants need to specify his/her business idea, reflect on his/her strength and weaknesses and acquire financial and entrepreneurial skills. For this phase, migrant specific skills are needed to support these entrepreneurs appropriately. Here the mentioned cultural sensitivity, stronger empathy and biographical qualification are applied. In the functioning phase, specific problem solution needs to be found and specific skills are being acquired. In this phase, the trainers do not necessarily need migrant specific skills. They either need to have expertise on certain topics or at least need to know who holds this expertise.

- Networks:** Being part of wide network is important for the BSOs. Knowledge and information flow much easier through a wider, looser network. So having access to such a network is a

valuable resource in order to get in touch with their target group, significant institutions and other BSOs.

Furthermore, some BSOs rely on their network to provide participants with the support they need. They mediate migrant / refugee entrepreneurs to experts in the field of law, taxation, marketing, finance, team management and other significant start-up related topics. It takes a lot of resources to establish such networks. It is mostly smaller and tighter so that the effort to establish and foster it does not use up too much resources.

A result of our research is that none of the BSOs in question rely on a specific marketing or communication strategy to advertise their programmes to the target group. There are some that use their social media channels, but most of them are known in the community because of their unique programmes and by recommendations from former participants.

- **Business Model:** The results for the business model are not surprising. We expected that these organisations would be founded mostly by public mean. None of the interviewed BSOs receive means from private donors exclusively. The sector still seems to be highly dependent on public funds.

Furthermore, a strong part of the business model is found in the cooperation with larger enterprises. This cooperation is mostly based on a CSR-strategy that contains monetary support and/or support in the form of staff being employed pro-bono in the service of the BSO. The latter is a common scheme, but is not always advantageous. One reason is that external staff (i.e. as mentors) are not always prepared for the needs and challenges of the target group. They then need a short introduction or even training to address these differences.

## 6. Literature

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## Annex

### Interview Guideline

1. How long has your organisation XY coached migrant entrepreneurs?
  - a. What kind of program(s) do you run?
2. How would you describe your Target group? (Age, Gender, Country of Origin, etc.)

### Policy-framework

3. What are the megatrends in the general frameworks of policy for migrant entrepreneurs?
  - a. Have you experienced Bureaucracy barriers?
  - b. How do you experience the social discourse concerning the acceptance of migrant entrepreneurs?

### Quality Standards (Human Resources & Methodology and Tools)

4. What is your experience with quality of coaches/trainers in the sector?
  - a. Guidelines and standard processes
5. What is your experience with capacity and skill set of coaches/trainers in your organisation?

### Networks:

6. What is the relative importance of cooperating with networks/ other organisations?
  - a. Cooperating with BSOs, scientific partners and public partners
7. How is your access to clients? How do you create visibility for yourself among the vast offer of Business Support?

### Business Model of Operations (Marketing & Funding)

8. How do you fund your operation? What are your income streams to fund your operations?
  - a. Relative importance of public and private funds?