

Fresh Start

Education and Evaluation Framework

About the project

Fresh Start is a project funded by DG GROW under the Entrepreneurial capacity building for young migrants Programme and delivered by LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY (LSBU), NWES and CITIZENS UK (CUK) in the UK, STICHTING ZUYD HOGESCHOOL (ZUYD) in the Netherlands and UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LEUVEN LIMBURG (UCLL) in Belgium.

The project started on the 1st June 2017 and will run for 2 years finishing on the 31st May 2019.

The **overall objective** is to develop and deliver a programme to support 120 migrant entrepreneurs across 3 EU states, UK, Belgium and The Netherlands; offering the possibility to acquire the necessary competences and the abilities for an entrepreneurial future.

The **specific objectives** are:

1. to develop and pilot a replicable and scalable platform for an ecosystem of support services to empower and to nurture their entrepreneurial spirit
2. to provide access to local knowledge, networks and business and finance support to assist young migrants to navigate the system in the host country
3. to support them to start-up enterprises
4. to support migrants to gain skills that will help them be more entrepreneurial in the broadest sense
5. to support recent migrants to the EU to work collaboratively to develop new enterprises (e.g. through the development of co-operatives and social enterprises); to connect recent migrants with 'mentors' – EU citizens who were once migrants "*new arrivals*" but who have now established themselves as successful entrepreneurs
6. to gain a complete picture and skill set that will allow support for migrant entrepreneurs to become a mainstream part of day to day activity through co-working, dual learning and listening/learning from migrants (either existing or aspirant entrepreneurs)
7. to develop a model that will be easy to mainstream in many different regions and nations across the EU

The success of the programmes will be measured against the following key success indicators:

- Recruitment targets achieved
- Development of new enterprise ideas and start ups
- Migrant access to local knowledge, networks and business and finance support
- Positive mentor/ migrant relationships
- Development of key skills and competences of migrants
- Positive migrant relationships and experiences
- Development of a migrant entrepreneurship model for other EU regions
- Social impact of FS programme- benefits to wider community

Project principles and ethos

The project is based on mutual respect, shared expertise and mutual learning, drawing from all the partners and also from the participants in the project. It is based on the creation of a co-learning environment that recognises the value that migrants offer to local communities and enables them to create added value through the medium of entrepreneurship.

We will carry out a variety of best practice sharing activities under 3 broad headings: Sharing for Awareness (to promote and publicise what we are doing); Sharing for Understanding (to help fellow practitioners and policy makers empathise with our motivations, to engage in debate with us, to follow our progress – both our triumphs and setbacks); Sharing for Action (to take on board what we have learnt and to apply it to new settings. On the basis of our achievements to be sufficiently inspired to change practice and policy in their own regions and countries.

EntreComp defines entrepreneurship as a transversal competence, which applies to all spheres of life: from nurturing personal development, to actively participating in society, to (re)entering the job market as an employee or as a self-employed person, and also to starting up ventures (cultural, social or commercial). It builds upon a broad definition of entrepreneurship that hinges on the creation of cultural, social or economic value. It thus embraces different types of entrepreneurship, including intrapreneurship, social entrepreneurship, green entrepreneurship and digital entrepreneurship. It applies to individuals and groups (teams or organizations) and it refers to value creation in the private, public and third sectors and in any hybrid combination of the three. Lastly it is domain neutral: one can act upon ideas and opportunities to generate value for others in any domain and possible value chain.

Why do we need a specific programme for migrants and refugees?

Mainstream entrepreneurship courses presuppose knowledge of the social, cultural and business contexts of the country and therefore are unable to address the specific needs of this target group. Many participants will have prior experience and expertise in running businesses in their home country and this can be built on and developed for a different context. They will also have developed many business ready aptitudes and competences, such as resilience and adaptability.

Language and cultural sensitivity are also essential for this target group. Many migrants have qualifications and skills from their home country but these are frequently not recognised or demand lengthy processes to get recognition. Hence their employment routes are rather restricted and therefore entrepreneurship offers an opportunity to make use of the valuable attributes which they bring with them and hence add value to local communities and achieve greater self fulfilment and integration. The Fresh Start model has taken all this into account and developed a model which can be contextualised for different regions and countries. This contextualisation is essential as not surprisingly there is no 'one size fits all' solution. Key target groups may also differ as there are wide ranging differences in refugee numbers and countries of origin in each country and region. This also needs to be taken into account in order to shape the education programmes.

The Fresh Start programme is developed within the following framework and each country has designed a pathway which is appropriate to the local context, conditions and particular target group.

Evaluation and Education Framework

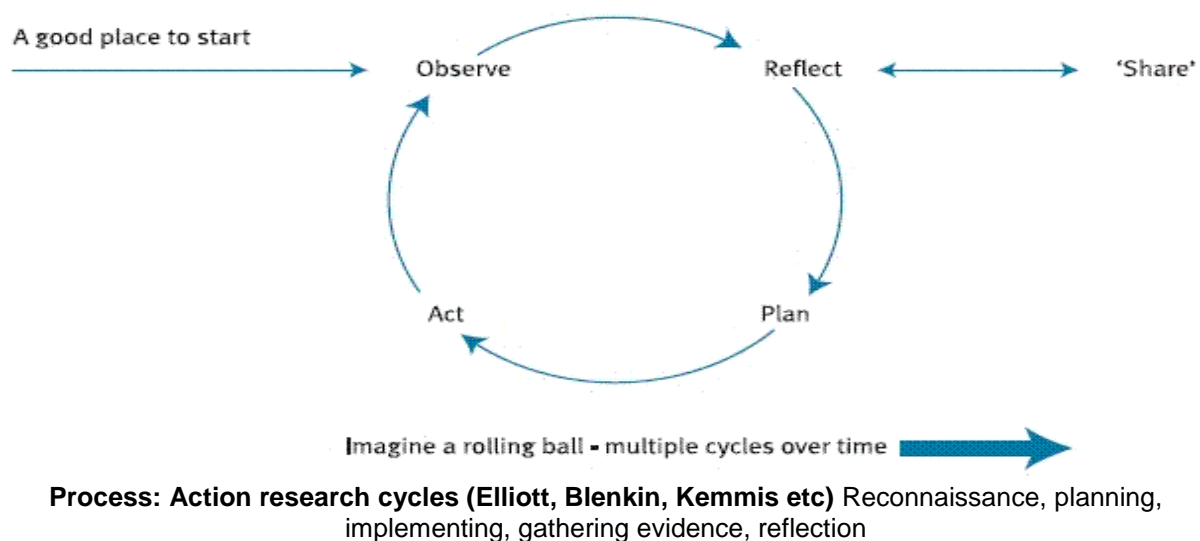
Methodology: Participatory Action Research (PAR)

We have chosen this methodology as the most appropriate for Fresh Start as it is based on ongoing enquiry, reflection, co learning and analysis by both trainers and participants in order to promote good, effective practice. It is based on mutual respect, shared expertise and mutual learning, drawing from all the partners and also from the participants in the project, with the aim of developing a co-learning environment

There will be two full cycles of action research. At the end of the first cycle we will review findings with the team and build on these for planning the second year. At the end of the second year we will review findings with the team to produce a summative report for dissemination on the Fresh Start model.

The following elements are key to PAR:

- People (project leaders and participants and themselves generate the data and then process and analyse it).
- The knowledge produced is used to promote actions for local change.
- People are the primary beneficiaries of the knowledge produced.
- Research is a rhythm of action-reflection where knowledge produced supports local action.
- The knowledge is authentic since people generate it for the purpose of improving their lives.



PAR in the Fresh Start context

Use of short questionnaires, listening events, group discussions, 1:1s (as appropriate) for each phase of the programme: starting points, recruitment, teaching programmes, mentorship programme.

We will continue to track the participants over the course of their second year to measure social impact and effectiveness. At each stage, we will review our findings with participants and partners and feed key learning into the second stage of the project in year 2.

Dissemination will take place through short reports, discussion, blogs, social media, conferences and discussion events. The Fresh Start web site is a key tool for the dissemination.

Pedagogy

Our pedagogical approach is participant centred and based on reflective, active, enquiry based, transformative learning (Mezirow, O Sullivan) and also draws on design learning (Nelson etc). As reflective, critical learners participants will be encouraged to help to shape their own learning and give regular feedback, thus enabling participant voices to help to shape the programmes according to their needs. Participants will be asked to complete self assessments in order to chart their learning journeys. Their ongoing self assessment draws on Entrecomp and feeds into the overall FS evaluation and dissemination.

Education Programme Framework

3 pathways model

From our enquiry and audit of the terrain at the start of the project we found that, although there were many common issues for migrants across the three countries, the context for each programme was different in each country and region. In the UK it is national government which sets the rules, in the Netherlands and Belgium the local municipalities are the main authority. This underlines the importance of subsidiarity, of developing pathways which are appropriate to the particular locality. Hence, while sharing the overall framework of the Fresh Start model, each country team designed a pathway which was most effective and relevant.

The London pathway

Key words: co-creation, active learning, transformative pedagogy, collaborative, mutual learning, mixed group settled migrants and refugees

Target group, promotion and selection process

The partners in London decided to target first generation migrants who relocated to London from countries outside the EU for reasons such as: escaping war, famine, political turmoil, economic hardship, political/social oppression and discrimination, environmental degradation of their homeland, etc. and with a social/economic deprived background, with limited financial and cultural capital, potentially at high risk of economic exclusion from the labour market.

We decided that our main selection criteria would be a knowledge of English sufficient to understand and take advantage of the training and an explicit ambition to start a business. Participants also had to show commitment to participate in the Programme and be able and prepared to attend classes and make home work every week for 12 weeks. Finally, we decided that, in case of a tie between 2 candidates we would give our preference to a woman.

CUK has years of experience in working with migrant communities and they held a number of Listening Events for potential participants and promoted the programme at meetings with the communities they support in South London. They had built up trust over a number of years and we found that this was essential for reaching out. We also contacted migrant communities in a number of other ways - through LSBU based settled refugee colleagues who belonged to migrant networks; through local refugee organisations and support groups; through a welcome event at LSBU for potential participants and families.

Candidates were screened through an application form and a face to face interview which allowed the organisers to question and evaluate the feasibility of the candidates' business ideas, the research they had already done around it and their commitment to setting up a business and to attending the programme.

Co-creation

In London we used the promotion activities to involve migrant communities into the development of the programme and ask them what kind of support they needed to start a business and which elements they wanted to see in the programme. We did this through questionnaires distributed at the Listening Events and through a co-creation workshop organised at the Launch Event.

Training Course

We based our plans on a review of resources within the university and we mainly draw from LSBU expertise and training courses on entrepreneurship to build our programme.

The Training Programme lasted 4 months and included the following activities:

An Introduction Workshop designed to allow participants to meet and get to know each other, to meet the trainers and to start working on their goals and business ideas.

10 Core Workshops delivered every Monday evening by LSBU School of Business Academics and covering the fundamental aspects of business practice needed to successfully develop an idea, grow a business and access finance if required:

- A. Self-Development
 - 1. English in a business world
 - 2. Developing me
 - 3. Getting to know the right people
- B. Core Business Development
 - 4. How do I start in the UK?
 - 5. Developing my idea
 - 6. Planning my business
 - 7. Looking for funding
- C. External Marketing
 - 8. Selling to others
 - 9. Making sure my business has a brand
 - 10. Marketing tools

10 Masterclasses delivered every Wednesday evening by LSBU School of Business Academics and covering more advanced and specific topics on the basis of the participants needs:

- A. Self-Development
 - 1. Managing my time
 - 2. Sales skills
 - 3. Becoming a good leader (incorporating managing and hiring)
- B. Core Business Development
 - 4. Managing clients
 - 5. Developing new areas for my business
 - 6. Understanding how to sell to the shops
 - 7. Managing money
- B. External Marketing
 - 8. Digital and social media
 - 9. Getting my message out (PR)
 - 10. Knowing your customer

Trainers employed learner centred, active, reflective and transformative pedagogy in their workshops and classes.

An end-of-programme event held for participants, their families, course organisers and trainers where certificates of participation were awarded and where participants were invited to briefly present their business ideas and experiences of the Fresh Start course.

Business Advice

Participants received individual Business Support during 3 one-to-one sessions with a SFEDI qualified Business Advisor arranged for each participant throughout the programme. The advisor supported with the development of the idea and the business plan.

Mentoring

At the end of the programme, participants were matched with a mentor by Fresh Start organisers. The match was based on participants' business ideas, their needs and what the mentor has to offer in terms of skills and experience. Mentor support involved a minimum of 10 contact hours spread over 4 months.

Additional Support

Participants in the Fresh Start Programme were given access to a range of free additional services:

Online Training Courses: participants in the Fresh Start Programme had access to the Start & Grow online learning platform developed to provide guidance from business start-up to growth journey through videos, factsheets, case studies and online business support.

Additional workshops: participants in the Fresh Start Programme had access to the LSBU workshops delivered every week to its students and to London-based SMEs.

Language Classes were arranged for interested participants.

Legal Advice Clinic: LSBU offers a free, on-campus legal advice clinic staffed by law students working under the supervision of practicing solicitor, run on a drop-in basis.

Business Solutions Centre: Students of LSBU's School of Business offer a free drop-in service providing advice on: small business accounting, marketing, social media and IT solutions.

NB: The London Model has been evaluated and reviewed during and after the delivery of the first round of the programme and a new version is currently under development for the second round.

The Limburg pathway

Key elements: Cocreation- connectivism- design thinking-transformative pedagogy-mutual mentoring-highly qualified refugees

Target Group

UCLL targets highly qualified refugees to co-create a training for entrepreneurs with an international background. UCLL used design thinking to create the FRESH START trajectory.

UCLL first connected all initiatives for refugees and for entrepreneurs in a portal site. We then gathered representatives from the entrepreneurial agencies, volunteer organisations, refugee and migrant organisations and adult education in an advisory board. Based on what we learnt from both the portal site and the advisory group we created events for refugees: a breakfast event and co-design days. The purpose of these events was not only to inform potential refugee-entrepreneurs but most importantly to gain trust. We invited former refugees who had already started up their business to tell their stories. We stressed the fact that the refugees were our co-creators and that we need new models of entrepreneurship.

After these events, we connected to the participants through telephone calls, through a Facebook group and finally through the safest medium, a WhatsApp group. Half of them joined the training. From this group, we also invited people in our advisory board. We offer maximum choice: they can attend a few sessions; they can attend six sessions in the training and six in the rhizome, they can attend all sessions from the training. But to be able to participate in the mentoring sessions they have to have created a roadmap of 12 steps (choice two or three) and presented their roadmap and pitch their business on the demoday. Respect plays a crucial role in their narratives: not feeling respected anymore as the motivator to leave their country and not feeling respected during their journey and sometimes by officials. So, we showed our respect for them in creating a state of the art training and selecting excellent mentors but also in the selection of the locations. As most of the participants lived in Brussels or Louvain we organized the course in locations from the Flemish education ministry in Brussels and Louvain. And for the second training which we organized in close cooperation with the city of Genk, we convened in the beautiful library in a room called 'Discovery. Finally, listening and autonomy also proved to be of the utmost importance to convey our respect and to gain trust. And that is what we aimed for in our training course and mutual mentoring.

Promotion

We presented 'FRESH START' in networking events, conferences, similar projects and in the company, local and national papers. We introduced it to the intermediaries. And we talked to refugee communities and had many informal talks with refugees.

Selection process

We don't decide whether the refugee is a future entrepreneur but we give them self-assessment tools. We have created a 2D-game in Dutch (level B2) and we offer them the entre-spiegel self-assessment tool: <https://fresh-start.eu/yourfastrack> and <https://www.entrespiegel.be>.

Based on their results the participants can decide whether they want to continue their journey into entrepreneurship.

Training course

The training course consists out of four layers: the portal, 'the trainer's handbook', the rhizome and the calendar.

The portal connects initiatives for refugees to official agencies of employment, entrepreneurship, integration and education. The portal is structured from the questions of refugees. It is based on connectivist learning.

The trainer's handbook is subdivided in twelve chapters: wellbeing (2), networking (2), start-up (4), legal issues (2), finance (2). Each chapter is linked to the competences of EntreComp, suggests activities and offers links for further reading or watching. The manual can be used as a Flipped Class where students prepare the links and work through the activities in class or as a manual for self-study. In both cases the 'students' are their own teachers. The participants use the self-assessment tools to define their own roadmap. After the two sessions on wellbeing they create a digital story which they complete during the training and present at the demoday. It is based on the principles of transformative pedagogy.

The rhizome connects the chapters to training courses organized by other organisations and MOOCs which allows participants to deepen their knowledge on one aspect if this is relevant for their roadmap.

The calendar indicates when and where the training takes places and also which expert will be running the session. The experts are educators, entrepreneurs, lawyers, bankers who

give tailor-made sessions linked to the subjects of the trainer's handbook. Both expert and participant prepare the trainer's handbook and the experts add their specific expertise to it. The group of experts is a mix of immigrant and native speakers. Participants are prepared and can ask questions to further their trajectory into finding their job or starting their business. Again, it is based on connectivist learning and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978).

Mentoring

resh Start Flanders opted for mutual mentoring where Flemish experts coach refugees in the employment and entrepreneurship culture of the host country and where refugees share the entrepreneurship models of their home country and their strategies to find their way in the Flemish society.

Participants get mentor cheques after presenting their digital story and their pitch at the demoday. The mentors present themselves in the community of mentors on our website. Participants link the expertise of the mentors to their challenges and book the mentors.

We also offer communities of practice (CoP) where participants with similar ambitions are gathered. These CoP are run by a migrant and Flemish expert.

The Maastricht pathway

Recruitment

Zuyd University of Applied Sciences approached the relevant organisations in the region, that is, the organisations that have direct contact to potential migrant entrepreneurs. One of those organisations is the local branch of the Dutch Refugee Council. Others are:

- municipalities and their work coaches (who are coaching migrants depending on social benefits to access the labour market)
- the Starter's Centre, that assesses and supports potential entrepreneurs and their business ideas
- the COA's, the Centres for the Reception of Asylum seekers
- LaunchBase (pre-incubation platform) and MC4E Maastricht Centre for Entrepreneurship
- the language providers and the Maastricht Refugee Network in which all local parties involved in different issues regarding migrants are united.

Furthermore, Zuyd developed a communication campaign that consisted of flyers, input to the general website, information and an application form on Zuyd's website, posters, announcement on social media (Zuyd's Facebook, LinkedIn), publications in the local press, and targeted mailing. Judged by the reactions, the campaign was successful and reached the wider public. A second general information session was organised December 20th, 2017. The selection procedure changed somewhat during this process due to the requirements of the municipality of Maastricht. The work coaches wished to be present during the interviews with potential candidates depending on social benefits, and as a result, the interviews took place at the municipality. The municipality had a very strong say concerning the suitability of the candidates. We have to say that we think that at times they were a little rigid in their selection, something we could not influence and that time.

The deadline for applications was mid-January, and 26 applications were received. These potential participants received a short questionnaire to get some more and detailed information about their business ideas and possible obstacles for participation, and late January / early February they were invited for an interview. The interviews were held in collaboration with our partners the Starter's Centre and Jong Ondernemen. The interviews with potential candidates depending on social benefits and accompanied by the municipality

of Maastricht took place at the municipality together with their work coaches. We selected 14 capable candidates out of 26 applications.

The campaign for the second round of training will now start and the same strategy will be used: disperse posters and flyers (this time in English, Dutch and Arabic as to reach a larger target group), contact organisations, municipalities and other partners that are in close contact with the target group, organising an information event, and put the information on the Zuyd website

The Education Programme

The training started on February 19th. Every Wednesday afternoon, a lecturer from the College for Intermediate Vocational Training Leeuwenborgh delivered the more theoretical part of the programme, following the structure of the *EigenBaas* programme that was developed by Qredits and adapted by Zuyd. The Tuesday afternoons were reserved for guest lectures, coaching, and homework in the e-learning environment. The guest lectures were either provided by Qredits (twice) or organised by Zuyd. The latter were organised on an ad-hoc basis, based on the immediate need of the participants. The training was reduced to 14 weeks (instead of the initial 20) owing to practical considerations. Topics addressed included tax issues, how to start a business when depending on social benefits, pitching, marketing through social media, personality and communication.

On February 24th a bootcamp was organised in collaboration with the MC4E Maastricht Centre for Entrepreneurship. International business students, experts from the field, and the participants worked together for a day to talk things through and further develop the initial business ideas, by using the business model CANVAS. New contacts were made and essential feedback was given to the participants.

Based on the feedback of the participants, lecturer and other stakeholders the programme for the next round is improved. An additional half-day is added that will be used to work in the online environment in class, so that it can be more closely monitored. The themes and dates of the guest lectures are already known, since the adhoc approach was perceived as unstructured.

Mentorship

The programme worked with three mentors, and could have used additional mentoring sessions offered by Qredits. The idea of the mentor sessions was to give participants the opportunity to talk to experts (rather than to civil servants) about their business plans, potential pitfalls, worries and ideas. Not all the participants made equal use of the mentors, which can be explained by the fact that they were in different stages of developing their business ideas and some needed it more than others. The mentoring offered covered the need. Participants also talked to different mentors, to get different views and opinions, which was very much valued. One of the mentors has a Syrian background which proved to be very valuable for our Syrian and other Arabic speaking participants (all but two).

Fresh Start in context

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Fresh Start programme supports SDG 4 (Inclusive, equitable quality education); SDG 8 (Promote decent work for all); SDG 10 (Reduce inequality within countries); SDG 11 (Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable); SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies). This pedagogy involves key elements from education for sustainability (UNESCO 2007):

- Future thinking: actively involves stakeholders in creating and enacting an alternative future
- Critical thinking: helps individuals access the appropriateness and assumptions of current decisions and actions
- Systems' and design thinking: understanding and promoting holistic change
- Participation: engaging all in sustainability issues and actions

Key aptitudes

- Resilience
- Living with the unknown
- Adaptability and openness
- Creativity
- Inter cultural understanding and communication (including translanguaging)
- Tolerance and compassion
- Respect and care for the natural environment
- Self-respect and empathy

The Fresh Start programmes draw on the following

- International Entrepreneurship Skills Europe: INTENSE (ERASMUS+, 2016-2019)
- Liminality & Educational Entrepreneurship: L33N (ERASMUS+, 2016-2018)
- PAL Network for ROMA Entrepreneurs (Erasmus+, 2017-2019)
- Stories for Learning: TALES (Comenius, 2013-2015)
- Self-, peer, and audience assessment based on the EntreComp progression model: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/jrcsh/files/EntreCompFullA3.pdf>
- *The Seven Dimensions of Culture. Understanding and Managing Cultural Differences.* from <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/seven-dimensions.htm>
- Migrant skills: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrantskills/#/>
- A map of social enterprises and their eco-systems in Europe: ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=12987&langId=en
- Migrant entrepreneurs https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/promoting-entrepreneurship/we-work-for/migrants_en

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