



Business coaching for ethnic minorities, Denmark

What?

The objective of the initiative is to help new entrepreneurs with a migrant background better understand the business support system in Denmark. It attempts to shift the business advisory role from family and friends to a professional coach, improving the quality of the advice. The initiative seeks to improve the success rate among entrepreneurs who are new to Denmark.

Why?

The project was initiated because mainstream business support services were not attractive for entrepreneurs from migrant and ethnic minority communities. The main challenge was that this community had very little trust with the local business support service providers. The initiative was designed to match professional coaches who also belong to migrant and ethnic minority communities, who likely have an in-depth understanding of the challenges and needs (in particular with regard to non-business issues such as immigration and work permit status) and can be more empathetic towards clients.

Key activities

The initiative started in Vejle (municipality) in 2005. It helps build personal and professional relationships between entrepreneurs from migrant and ethnic minority communities by offering professional advisory services from someone from the same community. The role of the advisor/coach is to provide professional advice pertaining to the regulatory and social norms in the new country and to build and strengthen ethnic minority social networks. Consultations are provided through informal and flexible arrangements. The initial focus is on the business plan to identify and develop the central elements of the business idea such as the opportunity, the market, financing needs and the competences of the entrepreneur. Based on these discussions, the coach refers participants to formal business and entrepreneurship training provided by regions and municipalities. Following business start-up, participants can continue to receive coaching and mentoring from their counsellor to help them develop and grow their business.

Initially, most of the supported entrepreneurs were Turkish, however participants now hail from a broader range of areas, including North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe.

Impact

Since 2005, 210 people have set up their business, out of about 900 that the coach has assisted, resulting in an opening rate of about 23%. All 210 of these businesses survived their first year and still exist. The project won the European Trailblazer Award in 2007 and was selected as a European best practice in the Interreg IVC project, Enspire EU (Entrepreneurial inspiration for the European Union), in 2011.

This case study was adapted from material published in: OECD/EU (2016), Inclusive Business Creation: Good Practice Compendium, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251496-en> [1]

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Links

[1] <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264251496-en>