

REPORT

CONCEPT OF PILOT ACTION

D.T3.1.1

04 2021





KEY FACTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Project partner | PP8: Initiative Selbständiger Immigrantinnen (ISleV) |
| City, Country | Berlin, Germany |
| Contact person (for pilot action) | Susan Hennessy |
| Name of pilot (as in application form) | Incubator Cafe for refugee women |
| Focus of the pilot (as in application form) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Labour market integration <input type="checkbox"/> Social integration and cohesion <input type="checkbox"/> both |
| Planned duration of pilot | Start date: 01 April 2021 End date: 30 Sept 2021 |
| Short summary of the concept (max. 500 characters) | <p>The pilot initiative will introduce the opportunities of self-employment in Berlin to women with a refugee status who are not being reached by mainstream migrant services. This orientation programme brings 2 group of 12 women together to explore empowerment, resilience, business ideation, and technical requirements of self-employment. The 10-week programme comprises one weekly 3.5hr workshop and one hour per week one-to-one mentorship. The first cohort will receive training and mentorship exclusively in Arabic.</p> <p>COVID-19 has hindered plans to offer a live space to operate in, or to offer childcare. As a result, the pilot ensures meaningful participation through a laptop-lending and digital training service.</p> |



CONTENT

1. Description of the existing situation / Contextualization of the process (max. 2000 characters)

- What is the existing situation?
- Which problem, challenge, and observation does the pilot react to?
- Is the pilot a new project/service or implemented with an already existing project/service? If implemented: What is the added value?

Research shows that while refugee women, who wish to become self-employed in Berlin, are highly motivated, and also often have previous experience in self-employment. Germany has a high regard for German qualifications and experience and often does not respect qualifications and experience from other countries. This is magnified for people coming from non-EU / Western countries. Reduced access to the labour market, due to low recognition of homeland qualifications motivates people with a refugee status to seek a sustainable income through self-employment. However, they face considerable barriers to success:

- Women with academic degrees seek increasingly to become entrepreneurs -difficult to find stable employment in original profession (Metzger,G. KfW Research,Gründungsmonitor 2015.)
- Representative studies have found that persons with migration histories as adults are more likely to prefer entrepreneurship over regular employment. (Leicht & Berwing 2016,Bundesminist."für Wirtschaft; Leitfels 2017,Nr. 165– KfW Research und KfW Gründungsmonitor 2018)
- High potential for self-employment - 25% of women and 35% of men were self-employed in their country of origin. Only about 3% of the women and 3% of the men had this status in 2017. (refugees entering in 2014) (IAB-BAMF –DIW 01.20200 - rep. study)
- Although female-run start-ups have a 61% success rate, only 14.6 % of German startups are founded by women. (Grace Accelerator)

In addition, an ISleV co-creation workshop with 10 migrant women with self-employment experience in Berlin (July 2020) highlighted five key areas that impact women's capacity to become successfully self-employed.

1. Access to information
2. Access to Networks
3. Access to childcare
4. Access to Finance
5. Discrimination & Racism

ISI conducted five in-depth interviews with female migrant entrepreneurs with different backgrounds to further understand their experiences and learnings during the process of the establishment of their businesses. The interviews, together with national seminar presentations

have confirmed the results of the workshop on the need of specific and ad hoc mentoring especially in the initial phase of the learning journey. Mentoring bridges the gap for refugees resulting from language, lack of experience in the Berlin labour market and lack of networks.

The pilot, *Selbständigkeit und ich (Self-employment and me)*, is a new ISleV service developed to reach an underserved community within migrant groups: women over 35 years, who have been in Germany for six years or less.

By creating and testing a specific programme for this target group, ISI can harness 30 years of experience with female migrant entrepreneurs, while learning how best to tailor its content to the specific needs of this target group.

How do we make entrepreneurial eco-system works for everyone?

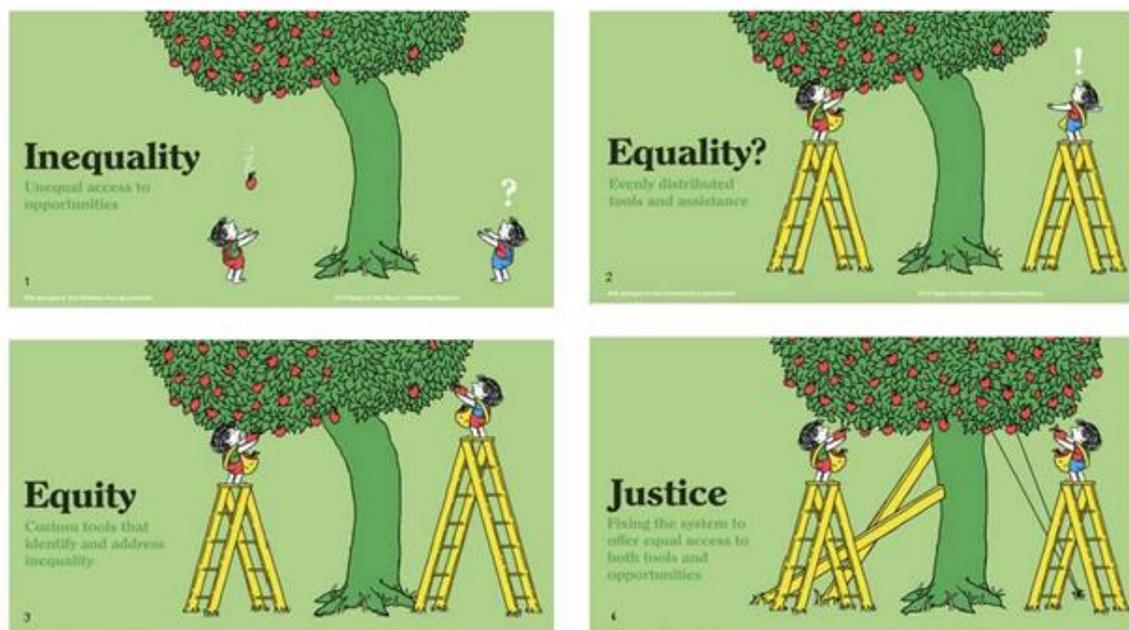


Image credit: Tony Ruth for Design in Tech Report

2. Definition of the target group(s) (max. 1500 characters)

- Who does the pilot want to reach (e.g. refugees, locals, as well as other stakeholders)?
- What are the special needs of the target group?
- How can a diversity of stakeholders be involved?
- How are the target group(s) reached?

Target Group: women over 35 years, with a refugee status, who have been in Germany for six years or less

According to the Central Register of Foreign Nationals (AZR) there were 11,2 million foreigners living in Germany at the end of 2019, of which 1,4 million who have received some level of refugee protection (12% of total migrants).



Although ISI's participants differ greatly both in background and country of origin, the percentage of refugees that participate in ISI programmes is still quite low. In fact, only 5% of the women that have participated in ISI's programme in the last two years has a refugee status (Syria, Afghanistan, Iran Angola, Bahrein). In this time there have been no participants from Eritrea, a country from which a sizable proportion of refugees come from.

Possible causes have been identified, in specific¹:

- Refugee women must first settle themselves and their families into their new surroundings, and get acquainted with the new environment and culture
- Recover from the hardship caused by their flight
- Access safe accommodation
- Ensure the needs of the children and spouse are met
- While free German language and integration are offered by the local government, access is not always easy, causing significant delays to language acquisition.
- Lack of support networks, as well as the Job Centre's disinterest in self-employment, can result in not learning of available services and resources.

Generally, only when the basic needs of the women and their families are met, can one begin to plan for the future.

Specific target group needs

- Empowerment & mentoring: one to one coaching One-on-one and grouping coaching is necessary to elevate the confidence and empower women, who arrive either with family and small children or alone, and face a new language, culture without existing support system of previous social networks.
- In addition especially headscarved women face great hostility in public space in this country and are the objects of hate crimes against Muslims. .
- A safe and creative female-only environment, where facilitators and mentors have a similar background and relate to the participants experiences
- Information through their mother-tongue and accessible language materials to ensure higher rates of knowledge acquisition and retention
- Access to technology and digital training to reduce the digital divide
- Introduction to self-employment requirements and technical information

¹ These findings are based both on above interviews and the experience of ISI, between mid-2016 to the end of 2018 in two different programs developed outside of the normal program to reach out to refugee women. In this time more than 450 women from the primary source countries were reached. Tandem a big sister program was between long time immigrant women new arrivals from primarily Arabic speaking countries. The second program, "First Steps" reached out to 180 women of all backgrounds to counselling them about a potential business start-up process. A handful of these women went on to participate in the regular training programs of ISI. In the final analysis, it was found that these women needed more time to improve language ability, housing, legal status, family and childcare issues before they could focus on their own future self-employment. Most newly arriving women need three to five years depending on their personal/family conditions.



While childcare and coworking spaces are required, this is currently not feasible due to COVID-19 restriction.

Originally it had been intended to work through German as a base language, supported by mother-tongue mentorship. This meant the Programme would have been open to multiple language groups. On review, however, to better serve the participants needs of access to information, it was agreed to test the first cohort in Arabic only. It is anticipated that Farsi may be the second language group tested. Other potential languages are English and French (for African communities).

The Target group is reached through partnerships with three locally operating NGOs who work directly with the target group.

3. Description of the pilot (max. 2000 characters)

- Which kind of pilot action was chosen?
- How is the agency of refugees respected?
- How refugees are concretely involved and made protagonists? How is the access to resources and the voice of refugees enabled?

In order to prepare a greater number of female refugees into regular business programmes in ISI, and hence support labour market integration, ISI will launch its “*self-employment and me*” programme. The Programme, conducted initially in Arabic and Farsi, will act as a bridge to existing ISI services, currently out of reach for newcomers.

Through the creation of strong partnerships with associations that have direct contact with refugees, ISI is identifying the needs and the special requirements of refugee women that are interested in orientating themselves to self-employment. In case there is a need for psychosocial support, the partner associations will also help to identify appropriate resources. Diversity training for trainers and mentors is planned, to equip them with the necessary awareness and tools, and to introduce them to the issues that could arise when dealing with refugees.

Through co-creation process, the programme design puts the needs of the target group at the centre of concept development.

Research phases included:

- Eco-system mapping
- Networking to explore potential implementation and recruitment partnerships
- A co-creation workshop with 10 female migrant and refugee entrepreneurs to review the original concept against the actual needs
- Five in-depth interviews with migrant and refugee entrepreneurs
- Participated in 12 webinars and conferences on migrant entrepreneurship to understand emerging national and transnational trends and needs
- As concept was adapted, regular check ins with NGO recruitment partners to ensure that we were continuing to meet the needs of their clients.



Before the programme starts, interviews are conducted with all prospective applicants to understand individual needs. The start date was delayed to fit the Ramadan season and Eid celebrations.

Language has played a large role in ensuring women can meaningfully engage with the programmes. The development of materials using accessible mother tongue writing and easy to follow design and infographics supports participants needs with literacy needs. Aware that our target group would not all have access to digital means in which to participate meaningfully in the programme, funding was sourced to provide digital training and laptops.

The Model:

Selbständigkeit und ich

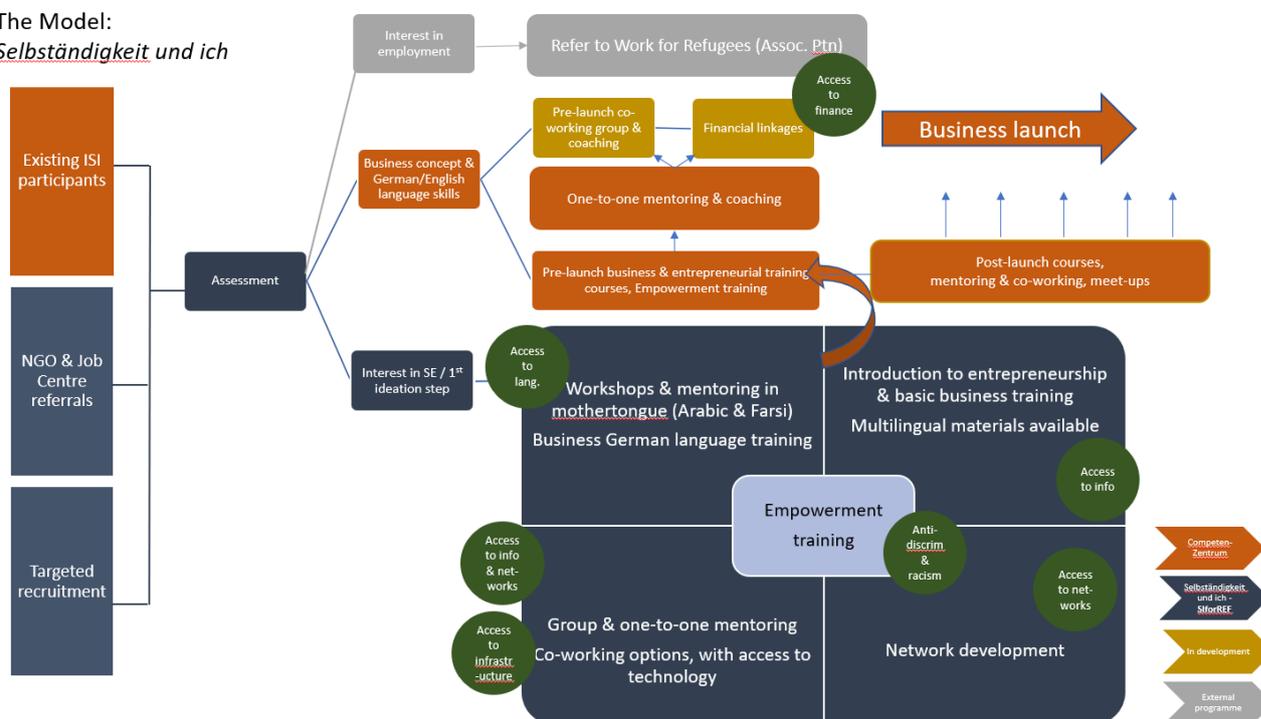


Diagram in annex

The ISI programme will be targeted to two groups of refugee women interested in self-employment:

1. Women who have already have a business concept, and have strong German or English
2. Women who wish to become self-employed but need both language and mentoring support to reach the standards required to access the core ISI entrepreneurship programming.

ISI will then assess the skills and experiences of the interested participants and will assign them according to the different phases of their entrepreneurial activity and their skills. Each participant will have a mentor that will follow their learning journey, will support and encourage them in every step.

Participants with higher business and language skills will be directly integrated into ISI's CompetenZentrum, in the module that best corresponds to their needs. Prospective participants that need stronger support will be directed to *Selbständigkeit und ich*, with workshops and one to one sessions. The strength of the programme is the high degree of personalisation, that can adapt



to the specific needs of the participants. Their mentor will follow the participants, assess the acquired knowledge and agree with them on the further steps of their qualification.

Group work and coaching will foster a supportive and creative environment in which the women can share learnings and motivate each other. An accountability programme will encourage engaged participation and encourage continued progression.

A mentor works at the pace of the mentoree, encouraging, supporting and challenging entrepreneurs as they start a new business journey. Sometimes, the biggest hurdle is simply understanding the local regulations and learning how to earn a living from self-employment. However, without access to a support system or networks, and without the necessary language skills, this critical information evades newcomers.

A maximum of 12 refugee women will partake in two different groups (one Arabic (12), one Farsi (12)). 2 groups of 2-3 female migrant facilitators are being engaged to run a series of 10 workshops. All empowerment related workshops will be led by experienced qualified moderators experienced in working with vulnerable women. Workshops will be creative and build a trusting creative dynamic. Ideation workshops are being led by a qualified design thinking facilitator. In the final workshop participants will have the opportunity to meet with

Selbständigkeit und ich

Workshop schedule

Week 1: Get to know each other & trust building

Week 2: Is self-employment for me?

Week 3: Exploring my personal strengths

Week 4: Introduction to business ideation

Week 5: Resilience building

Week 6: Understanding my customers

Week 7: What do I need to get started?

Week 8: Problem solving

Week 9: Developing my business idea

Week 10: Get inspired!



- What are the goals of the pilot?

Selbständigkeit und ich introduces participants to the first steps needed on the entrepreneurial journey, namely accessing information, resources and a trusted network. Formal eco-systems are not reaching migrants and their business and migrant's economic activity within the informal economy are not being recognised.

The goal of the pilot is to reach underserved groups of refugee women who are interested in exploring self-employment as a means to access the labour market. Reaching them through their own language ensures:

1. Meeting women on their terms, in a language with which they are most comfortable
2. Boost the programme's critical element of empowerment and resilience building
3. Increase knowledge retention and participation rates
4. Strengthen networks
5. Encourage and embolden creativity

Due to enforced lockdown in in 2020 and 2021 and reduced employment and social opportunities, many refugees have lost daily contact with the German language. We anticipate the programme will motivate women to re-engage with the German language to bring them forwards to achieve their business goals.

A secondary goal is to train a pool of mentors and facilitators in the needs of our target group and how best to meaningfully engage with them and their needs.

Empowered women empower women: Ultimately, by supporting and encouraging female refugee entrepreneurs the programme motivates potential role models who will further motivate others within their community and families.

Financial independence and resilience through employment or self-employment is required for all persons capable of joining the labour market to be fully integrated into society. The multitude of hurdles reduce their capacity to earn a stable income and actively participate in the new society, through their services and tax revenue. Refugee and migrant led business do not only provide financial inclusion and stability, but also promotes the value of a diverse labour market. Diversity enriches: potentially matching new ideas for products and services with new markets. Vision created out of the contrast between different lived experiences and different cultures. Impact is not only on livelihoods but on the society as a whole.

5. Measures and activities (max. 2000 characters)

- What measures are taken to achieve the goals?
- What are success indicators, key figures, milestones? How can the results of the pilot be measured?
- Which sequence of steps are to be taken?

A logic model has been developed for *Selbständigkeit und ich* (see Annex). This outlines the impact of the anticipated programme.

The second (of 10) workshop focuses on exploring if self-employment is the best option for the participant at this point in their life. Some participants may need low risk financial security

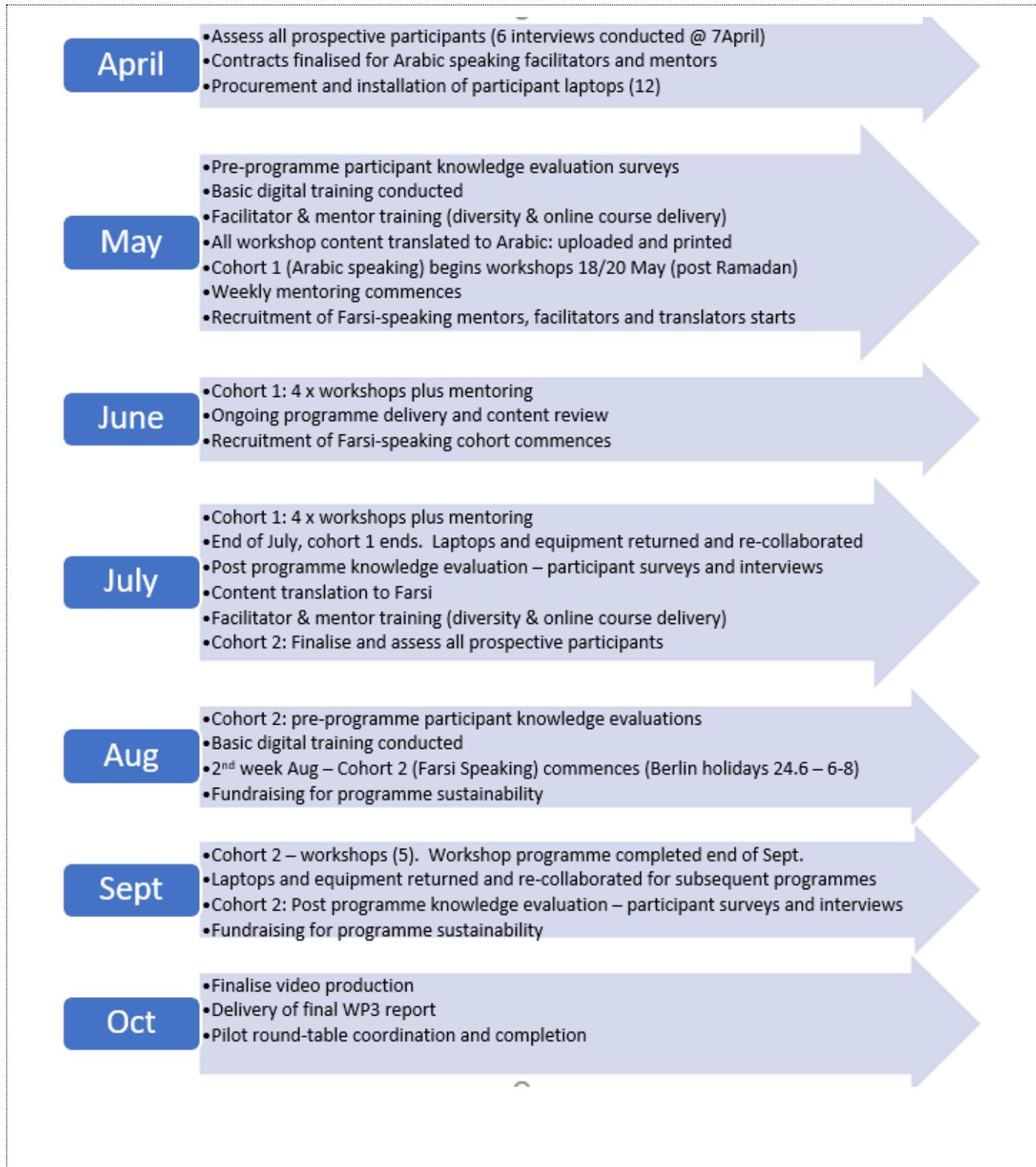


or to gain specific experience for their business idea, which may result in strategically securing employment or further training to meet their current. Hence, we view securing employment or training as a success of the programme

| Short-term outcomes <i>0-24 weeks</i> | Medium-term outcomes <i>6-12 months</i> | Long-term outcomes <i>3 years</i> |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Participants will have increased: business & financial planning, marketing skills; access to business training networks;</p> <p>confidence to navigate business development journey.</p> <p>Impact will be measured through pre- & post-participant surveys the start & completion of program. Case studies and feedback acquired through qualitative interviews. Following iterations will be adapted based on continuous feedback and learning.</p> | <p>Participants more skilled and empowered to continue on entrepreneurial journey</p> <p>3 female migrant-led <u>organisations</u> launched</p> <p>6 women joined formal <u>labour</u> market</p> <p>6 women participating in further training</p> <p>Participants active in relevant networks, and know where to access support</p> <p>Where desired, trusted childcare is secured</p> <p>Information sourced through prog evaluation, pre- & post- participant surveys, monitoring and interviews. Case studies developed.</p> | <p>Increased number of migrant & refugee women running profitable businesses resulting in improved financial security and wellbeing; increased contributions to society and local economy though job generation & tax contribution; improved policies to support migrant entrepreneurship; visible positive contribution in community (role models). Positive storytelling leading to improved community inclusion and sentiment.</p> <p>More available investment for migrant & female entrepreneurship</p> |

6. Timeline

- Include a schedule of the pilot (including milestones)



7. Definition of responsible actors (max. 1500 characters)

- Which actors are responsible for the pilot?
- Who will implement the pilot?
- Are there cooperation partners?



8. Possible problems or difficulties (max. 1500 characters)

- Which problems or difficulties are possible when implementing the pilot?
- How does COVID-19 affect the pilot? Is a Plan B necessary?

The impact of **COVID-19** has resulted in considerable adaptations of the programme: target group, language, online delivery, the requirement of additional resources to ensure programmatic success (technology and accessible language resources). **Risk of illness or quarantine** has the potential to impact participants, facilitators and mentors. Conducting the programme **online** mitigates some of these risks. The downside of an online programme is the impact on **collective trust** and building a dynamic and safe space for interaction. To mitigate this the first of 10 workshops is dedicated to team and trust building.

Access to childcare and to a physical office space to from is a major challenge for newcomers wishing to establish a business. While childcare is provided free of charge to all parents in Berlin, it is not easy to access due to lack of spaces. A key element on the original incubator concept was the provision of a co-working and learning space, and childcare. Some participants will not have sufficient space at home in which to login into the programme from, and some may have children with them. Facilitators will work in a dynamic way to ensure all participants are able to follow the content, this includes the provision of videos and written materials so content can be reviewed after the workshop takes place. Mentors can also review content with the mentee during weekly one-to-one mentorship sessions.



Working in a language not familiar to the Programme Manager has the potential to impact **content quality**. Working closely with a ISleV Arabic and Farsi speaking board members who can review content and liaise directly with participants mitigates this risk.

9. Sustainability (max. 1500 characters)

- What is the sustainability of the pilot?
- How can the pilot or the methods be used after the end of the pilot or the project?

Evaluated workshop formats, inputs and materials will be available for further programmes. An online programme, using Notion software, will be populated and ready for adaption and reuse. Facilitators and mentors will have gained experienced with both the materials and the target group, which can be applied in later initiatives.

Research is highlighting the macro-economic worth of migrant entrepreneurship. One in five founders in Germany have a migrant background. Monique Pariat, Director-General of the EU Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs, has recognised needs for hubs, accelerators and incubators, with mentoring as a key element. Demonstrating the EU's confidence in the economic potential of migrant entrepreneurship, the commission has confirmed the renewal of financial support for mentoring-based initiatives.

Having tested the multi-lingual empowerment and orientation to self-employment concept it is advantageous to promote the concept with an evaluated model. German based foundations who are actively funding refugee and migrant entrepreneur programmes promoting the integration of refugees into the labour force include The Schöpflin Stiftung and The Human Safety Net for Refugee Start-ups (funded through Generali Insurance). A funding and in-kind partnership has been created with Singa Germany who are also advocating to reach underserved refugee communities. Discussions have commenced on how the concept could be implemented and expanded beyond the Interreg pilot period. Tested programme content, materials and workshop formats can be replicated in other vulnerable communities, migrant or otherwise. Local context content adaption would be required if implementing the programme outside of Germany.

In the COVID-19 landscape the refugee public narrative has reduced dramatically. 2021 elections in Germany have the potential to impact future funding and narrative for refugee and migrant integration initiatives.

10. Transferability (max. 1500 characters)

- How can the results or the experiences of the pilot be transferred to policymakers, general public like citizens, experts, etc.?

People with a refugee status do not want to be stamped with a 'refugee' label, but rather to be seen for their capacity. With one in five founders in Germany having a migrant background, societies must begin to see the potential of immigrants. More role models and positive examples are required to replace the negative image of refugees in local and national media. The development of tailored programmes to support the needs of refugees interested in self-

employment, will lead to more success stories, in turn motivating more refugees to begin an entrepreneurial journey. More visibility for refugee and migrant led businesses will help normalise a diverse economy.

The cross-promotion of socially innovate initiatives, rooted in co-creation with strategic partnerships with grassroots NGOs, cooperation partners, and local government, will lead to more willingness to cooperate in sustainable experience-driven initiatives. Piloted concepts remove the risk to local government and other investors when deciding on which initiatives to fund. A tested female refugee entrepreneurship model programme in Berlin can be applied both nationally and transnationally when carefully adapted to the local context.

11. Short film (video) (max. 1500 characters)

- Which steps are planned to create the short film of the pilot?

Following a procurement process in summer 2020 a female videographer was sourced. A video brief was prepared in 2020, together with interview questions for prospective participants. The concept development co-creation workshop was filmed in July 2020, and footage has already been used by UNIVIE team for SiforREF programme promotion.

Project participants, facilitators and other stakeholders will be interviewed over the course of the two cohorts. As all workshop facilitation will be conducted online, some online workshop footage will be incorporated, along with images of prototyping and creative outputs.

It is anticipated that the footage will be used not just for SiforREF pilot promotion, but also for fundraising and ISLeV promotion purposes to support sustainability for the concept.



Logic Model: ISI *Selbständigkeit und ich* – a bridging programme for female migrant entrepreneurs

| Program Objective: Support female refugee entrepreneurs build a sustainable and profitable business | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| <p>Problem statement</p> <p>Female refugees are experiencing high barriers to enter the formal Berlin labour market, either as employed or self-employed. Barriers include qualifications and experience not being recognized; language and literacy skills; access to information, networks, finance and childcare; racism and discrimination</p> | <p>Goal Statement</p> <p>To reach underserved refugee female communities to assess the feasibility and impact of a entrepreneurship bridging program on specified individual and economic outcomes pilot phase.</p> <p>Pilot period: Apr-Sep 2021</p> <p>10-12 participants x 2 x 10 week programme.</p> <p>Participants have expressed interest in learning more about the self-employment environment in Germany. Have resided in Germany since 2014?</p> | <p>Inputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €33k to fund facilitators, mentors, content and materials devel., translation • €12k technology, licenses and maintenance for participants • €10k development of multi-lingual accessible materials (Singa) • Train the trainers (Singa) • Prog Manager, Workshop Facilitators, & Mentors • Existing ISI networks • Strategic partnerships: sector-based mentors; financial ptrns; refugee & migrant led orgs • Eco-system research <p>Post pilot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-working space & infrastructure (post covid) <p>Sozialversicherung</p> | <p>Outputs: Activities</p> <p>Technical workshops: 6 intro to Self-employment - design thinking methodology</p> <p>Empowerment training x 3</p> <p>Peer-to-peer accountability, introduction to networks</p> <p>Train the trainers – diversity, training for low-tech users</p> <p>Mother tongue mentoring</p> <p>Digital literacy training</p> <p>Design accessible materials</p> <p>Business German?</p> <p>Post pilot</p> <p>Sector-based business mentoring (Childcare & Co-working – funding dependent?)</p> <p>Financial linkages</p> | <p>Outputs: Participation</p> <p>Female refugee & migrant entrepreneurs (2 x 10-12 women)</p> <p>Trained facilitators</p> <p>Post pilot</p> <p>Financial institutions investing in migrant/women's start-ups</p> | <p>Short-term outcomes 0-24 weeks</p> <p>Participants will have increased: business & financial planning, marketing skills;</p> <p>access to business training networks;</p> <p>confidence to navigate business development journey.</p> <p>Impact will be measured through pre- & post-participant surveys the start & completion of program. Case studies and feedback acquired through qualitative interviews. Following iterations will be adapted based on continuous feedback and learning.</p> | <p>Medium-term outcomes 6-12 months</p> <p>Participants more skilled and empowered to continue on entrepreneurial journey</p> <p>3 female migrant-led organisations launched</p> <p>6 women joined formal labour market</p> <p>6 women participating in further training</p> <p>Participants active in relevant networks, and know where to access support</p> <p>Where desired, trusted childcare is secured</p> <p>Information sourced through prog evaluation, pre- & post-participant surveys, monitoring and interviews. Case studies developed.</p> | <p>Long-term outcomes 3 years</p> <p>Increased number of migrant & refugee women running profitable businesses resulting in improved financial security and wellbeing; increased contributions to society and local economy though job generation & tax contribution; improved policies to support migrant entrepreneurship; visible positive contribution in community (role models). Positive storytelling leading to improved community inclusion and sentiment.</p> <p>More available investment for migrant & female entrepreneurship</p> |
| <p>Assumptions: Participants can participate for min. 80% of programme. Qualified mothertongue trainers and mentors recruited. Funding for 2 iterations (1st. Arabic , 2nd multilingual tbd) Co-working space (pankow) and technology available. <i>Selbständigkeit und ich</i> is integrated into and promoted by ISI. Childcare?</p> | | | | | <p>External Factors: Election in 2021 could impact policy. Childcare & language course provision free in Berlin. Media representation of refugees. COVID-19 restricting movement and access to retail, drive for online services, upcoming recession, increased unemployment.</p> | | |



The Model:
Selbständigkeit und ich

