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DanubeChance 2.0

Embracing failure to facilitate second-chance entrepreneurship in the Danube region

Output 4.3

Transnational Community-building Workshop

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List of Abbreviations

DanubeChance 2.0	D.C 2.0
AF	Application Form
WP	Work Package
AN	Activity Number
TCBW	Transnational Community-building Workshop

2 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to present main best practices and focus/learning tools for strengthening institutional capacities and supporting transnational multilevel governance, which emerged from the Transnational Community-building Workshop on 19th March 2021.

The Transnational Community-building Workshop is part of activity 4.3 “Second-chance Entrepreneurial Transnational Community Pool of Experts”. Within WP 4 “Strategy development” Output 4.3 is described as follows:

“Transnational Community-building Workshop organized in Hungary (Budapest) guarantees that lessons learned will be further exploited and integrated into Danube region countries’ policymaking practices. The strategy is built on “Transnational Policy Coordination Workshops” and “Policy Learning Dialogues” with the aim of facilitating local, regional, cross-border and transnational uptake of innovative second-chance entrepreneurship policy measures and instruments.”

Within WP4 the aim of the workshop is therefore to jointly exchange best practices and learnings in coaching and mentoring among the affected communities on an international level: coaches and entrepreneurs. This Output presents thus the results in form of best practices and tools, which emerged from the workshop, held virtually on 19th March 2021, due to COVID-19 restrictions.

3 Best Practices and Learning Tools

3.1 International Mentor’s Network

Presented by: Morten Møller, Early Warning Europe (Denmark)

The vision of an international mentor’s network builds on the experience of Early Warning Europe, an expert network providing advice and support to companies in distress. The special targeted impact of an international mentor’s network is to connect mentors with each other, to create a framework for knowledge exchange at all levels and across borders. Based on this exchange opportunity, recurring challenges and successful solutions could be gathered and presented at policy level to achieve a wider outreach and impact. With this, knowledge and experience sharing between mentors and coaches on a wide European level promises to create an immense added value for the individual coach and entrepreneur.

3.2 Re-starter trainings/Re-starter business canvas

Presented by: Bert Overlack, TEAM U (Germany)

In Baden-Württemberg, Germany, TEAM U are providing so-called Re-starter workshops targeting entrepreneurs in a business crisis who want to start over. There, entrepreneurs find a secure and anonymous framework where they can deal and exchange about their experience of failure. Since 2019 there have been altogether 11 workshops with 150 participants in Baden-Württemberg.

The Re-starter business canvas is a new tool to successfully support entrepreneurs in their re-starting initiatives. Developed by TEAM U, it is currently being tested as a pilot to see how it can be implemented and further developed.

Some important learnings gained in the organization of the Re-starter workshops:

- Talking on eye-level with the participants creates a trusting environment and facilitates the exchange on the personal, emotional experiences of business failure
- Providing space for exchange of stories and emotions is essential for mutual learning
- Providing structure on key questions is helping participants in their personal development
- Challenging to find participants in the first place: nobody expects such an offer in the business world, as failed entrepreneurs rather expect to be stigmatized and left alone. As the re-starter trainings are exactly the opposite, a lot of effort was needed to attract the participants at the beginning

All in all, individuals could take a lot from the workshops for their individual situation. The organizers agreed that it was amazing to see how the participants started to communicate and get in touch with each other. As all workshops were highly successful, there could be recorded an increasing interest also in other areas of Germany. To respond to this, possible “train the trainer”-workshops are currently envisioned.

3.3 Pro-bono mentors to support entrepreneurs in distress

Presented by: Mirela Alpeza, CEPOR (Croatia)

Due to an identified lack of advisory support for micro and small enterprises, in Croatia, a mentorship program has been started, where most mentors are retired (SENTOR – Senior Entrepreneurs Club). Choosing a Dutch association as benchmark, they created mentorship teams, made of retired entrepreneurs and a young entrepreneur, who help each other with their specific

knowledge and experience gained. Thus, already 15 mentorship projects have been successfully completed.

To ensure pro-bono mentors to support entrepreneurs in distress, they identified the following important aspects:

- Identification of mentors can be done best through an already existing network
- Motivation of mentors to join: networking, staying in the game, healthy aging, reputation of organization and mentors included
- Challenges: developing procedures, scaling-up, developing sustainable business model that will make it last for a longer period

To address these learnings and challenges, relations and cooperation with other networks will be developed.

4 Conclusions

The Transnational Community-building Workshop successfully united mentors and entrepreneurs in a joint exchange on the topic of mentorship, especially with a focus on entrepreneurs in distress. Throughout the workshop, all presentations, talks, and discussions led to very active and fruitful personal exchanges and left the participants with new thoughts and ideas. The regional approaches in the Danube region combined with general European-wide ideas on a successful mentor's network and personal insights into re-starting entrepreneur's experiences were the perfect mixture to ensure a general understanding of the thematic and the different challenges as well as opportunities. This underlines the high value generated by community-building in this sense, transferring knowledge and experiences from different perspectives and regions. Moreover, all participants agreed that connecting mentors in a network can build a strong institution in Europe as well as outside Europe.

Additionally, to the presented outputs from the presentations, the following aspects on the general significance of mentoring have been identified by participants during the workshop:

- Mentors want to reach entrepreneurs with the right message at the right time
- Experienced senior business managers want to share their expertise, sharing back to society, improving the reputation, networking with other professionals and with other entrepreneurs
- Mentors are "the jewel in our crown" and we need to provide them the infrastructure with the Early Warning Europe network

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- People go bankrupt with a notion that everyone is guilty, but not themselves. For mentors the role is here to coach entrepreneurs to see that they are responsible for their own action and not end up in the same situation once again.
 - The foundation for the re-start of the company must be as solid as possible
 - The entrepreneur must focus on cash flow and budgeting
 - Family matters must be clarified, and all family members have to agree on the future
 - Experience never gets old - retired business owners and managers are an important source of knowledge
 - Mentoring is a combination of personal and professional life
 - A mentor must be somebody, whom the entrepreneur can fully trust
 - Mentoring implies the challenge to have a new perspective in the business life
 - If the business model does not work anymore, it is better to close it down and start from scratch - mentoring can be handy in this process as an external person can be more objective on the real situation the entrepreneur is in
 - There is a need for the training of mentors because there is a need of having a common understanding for the way entrepreneurs should be supported.
 - Mentoring helps the entrepreneur to gain clarity and approve own ideas, as well as proceed with the work on a realistic business plan
 - A good match between the entrepreneur and mentor is of high importance to facilitate the mentoring process