

## THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP (COPIE)

*“A network of people actively involved in opening up entrepreneurship to all parts of society”*

As recession bites, all the Member States of the European Union are looking for new solutions to create jobs that are being lost across the economy. Stimulating entrepreneurship is one part of a coordinated response.

Micro enterprises employing fewer than ten people already make up 90% of all enterprises in the EU, employ 30% of employees and produce 20% of output. Previous recessions have shown that as larger firms shed labour it is the smaller businesses that produce new growth and jobs. .



Bruno Texeira, 29,  
set up a trade consultancy in Porto, Portugal.\*



Khadija Majdoubi, 38, realised her dream  
of opening a beauty salon in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Many more people have the drive and passion to become entrepreneurs, but for various reasons they do not seize the opportunity. Sometimes it is about enterprise culture, sometimes lack of support or finance and sometimes they start but fail too early because they lack skills in running an aspect of the business or become trapped in the wrong market. It is people, not policy, that create businesses, but good policy can help more people to try the enterprise option, and ensure that more of those who try succeed.

**The ESF (and ERDF) can play a much stronger and more coherent role in supporting and widening entrepreneurship across the European Union.**

COPIE focuses on making this happen.

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\* All pictures in this document by courtesy of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion – European Social Fund. [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/esf/videos\\_photos/videos\\_photos\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/videos_photos/videos_photos_en.htm)

## 1. WHAT IS COPIE ?

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**The Community of Practice on Inclusive Entrepreneurship (COPIE) is a learning network of ESF Managing Authorities and Implementing Bodies at national and regional level in Europe.**

The COPIE partners share a common concern to widen entrepreneurship and make support systems work better across diverse populations. These organisations have demonstrated that it is possible to make it easier for people from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds or places to engage in setting up businesses.

Women illustrate the point, only half as many women as men in Europe set up in business but EQUAL projects demonstrated that there is potential for many more to do so. This could transform their lives while adding to Europe's competitiveness and economic resilience.

Entrepreneurship is already a development strategy for nearly 30 million Europeans. With the right conditions and policies, the members of COPIE believe entrepreneurship has the potential to unleash the creativity and energy of millions more.



Radmila Petroušková, 26,  
opened a health-food café  
in České Budějovice in the Czech Republic.

## 2. WHO ARE THE PARTNERS OF COPIE ?

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**COPIE is led by the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs in Germany through the ESF unit.**

There are three types of COPIE partner available to Managing Authorities and Implementing Bodies:

1. Lead partners
2. Partners
3. Dissemination partners

**Lead partners** organise the COPIE communities of practice in thematic areas. They are responsible for employing experts, convening meetings and ensuring that the work programme is developed in a timely way. The lead partners are:

- **ASTURIAS (SPAIN):** Regional Ministry of Industry and Employment - Department of Trade, Self-Employment and Social Economy  
(Lead partner: *Integrated Start-Up Support*)
- **CZECH REPUBLIC:** Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Department for ESF Management,  
(Co-lead partner: *Access to Finance*)
- **FLANDERS (BELGIUM):** ESF Agency Flanders  
(Lead partner: *Access to Finance*);
- **GERMANY:** Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs  
(Lead partner: *Quality management / Action Planning / European Tool*)
- **SPAIN:** Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs — European Social Fund Unit  
(Lead partner: *Enterprise Education*)

**Partners** participate in COPIE activities as full members of the community, make in-kind financial contributions by hosting meetings, send their representatives to CoP meetings, and pay for a regional facilitator.

Partners are responsible for ensuring that contributions to the baseline study are completed on time (partner profiles etc.) and they convene the regional stakeholder group(s) for thematic activity. The group of partners includes:

- **ANDALUCIA (SPAIN):** Regional Ministry of Employment - Regional Employment Service
- **EXTREMADURA (SPAIN):** Regional Ministry of Equality and Employment
- **GALICIA (SPAIN):** Regional Ministry of Economy and industry - Business & Innovation Centre (BIC Galicia), Regional Ministry of Labour (Directorate-General for Recruitment and Entrepreneurship) and Regional Ministry of Treasure (Directorate-General for Economic Planning)
- **LITHUANIA:** Ministry of Social Security and Labour
- **WALLONIA (BELGIUM):** ESF Agency Wallonia

**Dissemination partners** participate in COPIE activities in a limited way. They attend meetings of CoPs in which they are active but with the intention of disseminating results in their Member States. They pay for their own costs for travel. Dissemination partners are at present:

- **SPAIN:** Incyde Foundation
- **BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG (GERMANY):** Regional Ministry of Economy
- **GERMANY:** German Microfinance Institute (DMI)

### **3. HOW IS COPIE ORGANISED INTO THEMES?**

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COPIE is organised into five Communities of Practice (CoPs). Learning and good practice exchange between partners is organised around the five themes of

- Action planning;**
- Entrepreneurship Education;**
- Quality Management;**
- Integrated Business Support**
- Access to Finance.**

The groups consist of five to seven partners. They have created

- regional baselines studies in each of the five themes;
- international inclusive entrepreneurship strategy workshops;
- regional in-depth analysis and conduction of surveys;
- initiation of a pan-European collaboration networks and platforms;
- the development of a good practice assessment tool for microfinance.

Please find more details in the following paragraphs.

### Thematic Group: Action planning

The main **objective** of this group is to help policy-makers and ESF Managing Authorities to plan cohesive activities that support entrepreneurship in their region alongside their key stakeholders. It helps partners to integrate EU-funded activity with locally-funded activity, and it stimulates practical actions of value to all COPIE partners. The core members of this group are Flanders, Germany, Wallonia, Asturias and the Czech Republic.

**Activities** of the group have included the following international participatory workshops:

- “Creating and sharing a vision of inclusive entrepreneurship”, March 2010 in Flanders, Belgium;
- “Appropriate evaluation mechanism for inclusive entrepreneurship programmes”, August 2010, Wallonia, Belgium;
- “Building a sustained and coherent campaign for inclusive entrepreneurship”, November 2010, Czech Republic;
- “Leaving a legacy”, April 2011, Asturias, Spain *forthcoming*.

As a **result** of its work, the group will produce four guides based on the themes of the individual workshops, and a final report that will present good practice from the partner regions as well as an outline of the learning that has taken place within the group.

**For more information and access to the results, please contact:**

Lead Expert: Iain Willox, UK  
Email: [iainwillox@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:iainwillox@hotmail.co.uk)  
Web: <http://www.cop-ie.eu/thematic-groups-action-planning>

### Thematic Group: Entrepreneurship Education

The main **objective** of this group is to strengthen the links between EU policy on enterprise education and existing practice on inclusive entrepreneurship education on the ground. It creates a broad community of practitioners and policy-makers from within COPIE and beyond, involving the most relevant stakeholders in different countries and regions in Europe so as to learn from each other and exchange good practice.

**Activities** of the group to date include

- an international “Enterprise Education Unconference”, May 2010, Gijon, Spain;
- an international conference on “Entrepreneurial Education In Non-Economic Subjects Brussels”, 19th October, 2010;
- the creation of an Enterprise Education blog;
- a draft policy-paper on “Entrepreneurship education in the EU 2020 strategic framework”.

As a **result** of its work, the group will deliver a policy briefing for “Entrepreneurship education in the EU 2020 strategic framework”. It will publish an “Entrepreneurship Education in non-economic subjects” report, and it will provide a methodology to examine entrepreneurship education in each phase of the educational system.

**For more information and access to the results, please contact:**

Lead Expert: Ivan Diego, Spain

Email: [ivan@valnalon.com](mailto:ivan@valnalon.com)

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### **Thematic Group: Quality Management**

The main **objective** of this group is to identify good practices in quality management for business start-up support in the context of a European exchange; and to develop, apply and transfer them to other interested regions. The core members of this group are Extremadura, Galicia, Andalusia and the Spanish nationwide Incyde foundation.

**Activities** of the group to date include

- study visits to three partners regions to analyse and assess regional start-up support infrastructure in terms of quality standards;
- a survey among business advisors and business starters in two partner regions on requirements for business advisors and the quality of the existing business advice infrastructure;
- the development of a European Quality Management System for inclusive entrepreneurship start-up advisors based on regional Excellence and Awards Centres;
- a draft methodology for implementation of the Quality Management Standard (pilot region for implementation in 2011: Galicia)

As a **result** of its work, the group will provide the following tools and practices:

- A Toolbox for quality management in business advice (including a SWOT analysis tool; training tools for advisors; guidelines for structuring an advice process; quality measurement),
- A standard questionnaire to collect professional and personal requirements for business advisors;
- A European COPIE Quality Management System for inclusive start-up advisors;
- A methodology for implementation of the QM Standard.

A final dissemination event is scheduled for September/October 2011.

**For more information and access to the results, please contact:**

Lead Expert: Norbert Kunz, Germany

Email: [kunz@iq-consult.com](mailto:kunz@iq-consult.com)

Web: <http://www.cop-ie.eu/thematic-groups-quality-management>

### **Thematic Group: Integrated Business Support**

The main **objective** of this group is to support the start-up process of businesses and their long-term sustainability by providing services and actions according to their needs and in line with existing regional policies, taking advantage of Structural Funds for European regions. The group has established links to the two group on Quality Management and Access to Finance. The core members of this group are Galicia and the Czech Republic.

**Activities** of the group to date include :

- an international meeting on “European Programme for support for entrepreneurs and SMEs COPIE September 2010, Asturias, Spain;
- an expert workshop alongside the peer-review event of the group on Access to Finance, January 2011.

As a **result** of its work, the group will provide a European analysis of inclusive entrepreneurship needs towards business support services. It will publish a good practice guide for providing inclusive integrated business support services in European regions, and it will design a standard model of Integrated Business Support.

**For more information and access to the results, please contact:**

Lead Expert: Ana M<sup>a</sup> Mendez, Spain

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### **Thematic Group: Access to Finance**

The main **objectives** of this group are to examine ESF intervention in support of microfinance in Europe, to identify and review current practices, and to make suggestions for future ESF intervention. The core members of this group include the Czech Republic, Germany, Flanders, Lithuania and Spain. Close working relationships exist with the European Microfinance Network and German Microfinance Institute (DMI).

**Activities** of the group to date include:

- a kick-off partner meeting in Brussels, January 2010;
- the collection of case studies from partner regions;
- the development of a peer review tool for the access to finance sector;
- 1st peer review workshop on “Entrepreneurship Promotion Fund – for start ups”, January 2011, Lithuania; workshop report
- 2 further peer reviews scheduled for 2011: Flanders in May, Germany in October; and final conference scheduled for December 2011 in the Czech Republic.

As a **result** of its work, the group will provide a COPIE Access to Finance Evaluation and Assessment Framework on Good Practices, a peer review methodology for the access to finance sector and a manual on “Access to Finance for ESF Managing Authorities across Europe”.

**For more information and access to the results, please contact:**

Lead Expert: Marion Cahen, Belgium

Email: [Marion.cahen@hefboom.be](mailto:Marion.cahen@hefboom.be)

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## 4. COPIE TOOLS

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### European Tool for Inclusive Entrepreneurship

The partners have chosen to participate in individual Communities based on a diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of their respective enterprise support systems as regards to inclusive entrepreneurship. To better understand the quality of the current mode of delivery, and to detect their individual needs, the majority of them have applied the COPIE-own **European Tool for Inclusive Entrepreneurship**.

The **European Tool for Inclusive Entrepreneurship** takes stakeholders systematically through a process which includes an analysis and synthesis of enterprise support in their region, sub region or city. This tool is targeted at entrepreneurship specifically for groups such as the unemployed, women, migrants and ethnic minorities, 50 plus, young people under 30, people with disabilities and social enterprises. It consists of a matrix analysis which identifies the main gaps or challenges to the support system for entrepreneurship in the main themes of strategy, culture and conditions, start-up support and training, support for consolidation and growth and access to finance.

An introduction into the functionalities of the tool can be found here:

[http://wikipreneurship.eu/index.php5?title=Manual\\_for\\_European\\_tool\\_on\\_inclusive\\_entrepreneurship](http://wikipreneurship.eu/index.php5?title=Manual_for_European_tool_on_inclusive_entrepreneurship)

For more information and support in applying the tool please contact Bettina Reuter (bettina.reuter@bmas.bund.de).

**By the end of the project period, the COPIE will thus be able to provide regional and national ESF and ERDF Managing Authorities from other countries in Europe with a comprehensive set of tools to analyse and improve their support structure for inclusive entrepreneurship.**

**More information will be published on our website [www.cop-ie.eu](http://www.cop-ie.eu) .**

## 5. CONTACT INFORMATION

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COPIE's activities are coordinated through a **central coordination structure** which provides project management support, organise training activities, web support, produces capitalisation products and dissemination events.

The central coordination structure is comprised of:

### Lead Partner: The Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, Germany

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### COPIE Project management and events

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## 6. ANNEX A: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### 6.1. WHERE DID THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE COME FROM?

The Community of Practice on Inclusive Entrepreneurship has emerged from the EU Community Initiative EQUAL. It builds on the final stages of the work carried out by nearly 300 development partnerships that focused on opening up the process of business creation to all members of society. Many of the 10 countries involved in this work created National Thematic Networks to exchange and mainstream their findings.

### 6.2. WHAT IS THE COPIE ENTREPRENEURSHIP LADDER?

The main themes dealt with in business creation are very similar across the countries. They have been described as the four parts of “an entrepreneurial ladder out of social exclusion”. The four parts are

- creating the culture and conditions for entrepreneurship;
- integrated start-up support and training,
- access to finance.
- support for consolidation growth

The Community of Practice has also drawn heavily on the work carried on within EQUAL in the Social Economy and from other national and international programmes on entrepreneurship. One particularly influential piece of work was work on policy measures to promote the use of micro credit for social inclusion which developed a tool for analysing practice in eight Member States and is now being used by the European Microfinance Network. A second was the Kiz tool which assessed how business friendly cities were.

### 6.3. WHY INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

Many people across Europe are falling through a gap between entrepreneurship and employment policies. On the one hand, many of those responsible for economic and business development feel that entrepreneurship is primarily the reserve of the more educated and technologically advanced members of society. Enterprise policy focuses heavily on building on Europe’s strengths for competing on world markets dominated more and more by the knowledge economy. Policy measures to support technology centres, clusters, incubators and spin-outs have tended to be the result of this focus

On the other hand, those concerned with social inclusion and employment policy often feel that the way to combat exclusion is through employment. Policy focuses on employability, training, counselling and so on. So, for example, European Employment policy is increasing concentrating on supply side solutions (like “flexicurity”) for helping the labour force adapt to a rapidly changing environment created by globalisation and an aging population.

COPIE argues that many people from disadvantaged groups can help to create their own future rather than hope that decent jobs “trickle down” from the high technology, high growth sectors. Widening participation in enterprise can enable more people to benefit from Europe’s enterprise culture. But the support structures for these new entrants to enterprise are usually weak and need adapting.



Harri Haanpää, 33, set up his own film production company in Helsinki, Finland