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THE UPthEM PROJECT

NEWSLETTER 2



Erasmus+



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DESK RESEARCH

This issue of the Newsletter from the team of project **Upskilling Pathways for Employability, project UPthEM**, is entirely dedicated to the desk research in the scope of the project, conducted by the project partners in the period February – April 2020. The research established baseline knowledge for the design of the UPthEM training programme for disadvantaged learners. The innovative training programme is a key product of UPthEM project. It targets disadvantaged people in four different groups: people facing socio-cultural (gender, ethnicity or religion related), economic (related to unemployment and poverty), geographical disadvantages (living in remote and rural areas with limited employment opportunities and higher, in relation to other regions, rate of long-term unemployment) and the group of people with disabilities.



The research maps out the situation of adult education in the five participating countries: Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Romania and Spain, in terms of policies, programmes, and links between educational institutions and the business. Further, the researched reviews the formal and informal training in entrepreneurship in the countries.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The desk research aims at providing a review of the policies and practices of adult education in each of the participating countries with a focus on programs in entrepreneurship targeted at disadvantaged adult learners. The research further identifies and assesses the particular needs of learners, educators and employers in the participating countries.

The findings of the research will feed into the design of the UPthEM adult learners programme and its key components: learning outcomes framework; modules on different themes and UPthEM facilitators' guidelines.



SCOPE AND APPROACH OF THE RESEARCH

The adult educational systems in the five participating countries are reviewed by provision of statistical data on level of education, opportunities for upskilling, educational institutions providing educational opportunities for adults, willingness to learn, preferences what to study for the adult learners generally and adult learners from the disadvantaged groups in particular.

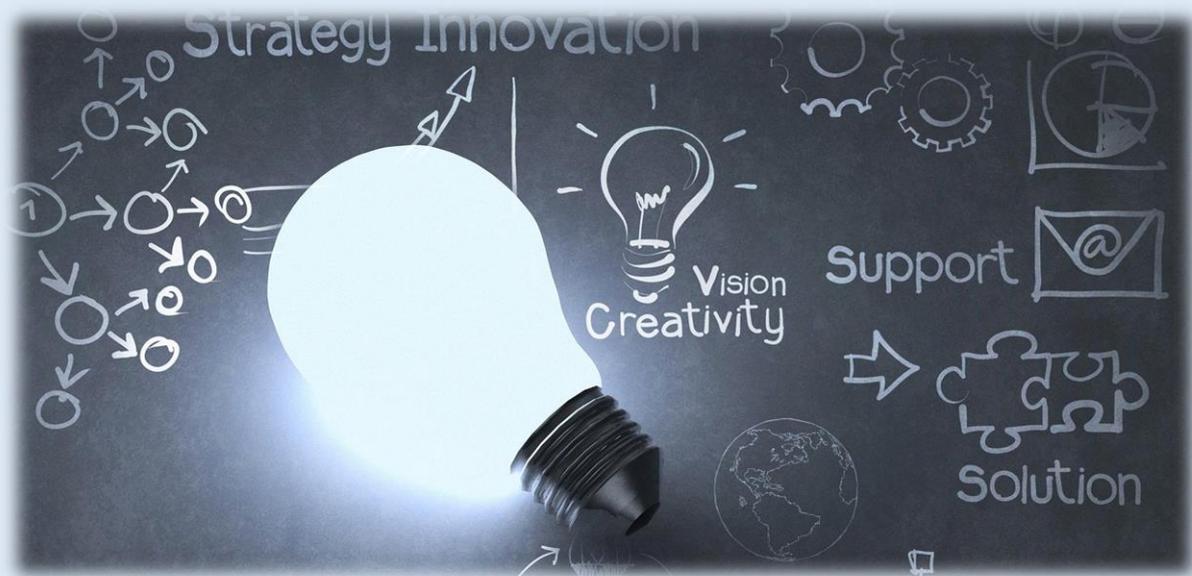
The second topic in the scope of the research is on the needs of learners, trainers and employers, pertaining to the adult education.

A particular focus of the research is on policies, practices and aspects of entrepreneurship education / entrepreneurship skills' training of adult learners with emphasis on disadvantaged groups.

The findings of the research are presented in SWOT analyses of the existing practices in the sphere of entrepreneurship training for the five reviewed countries.

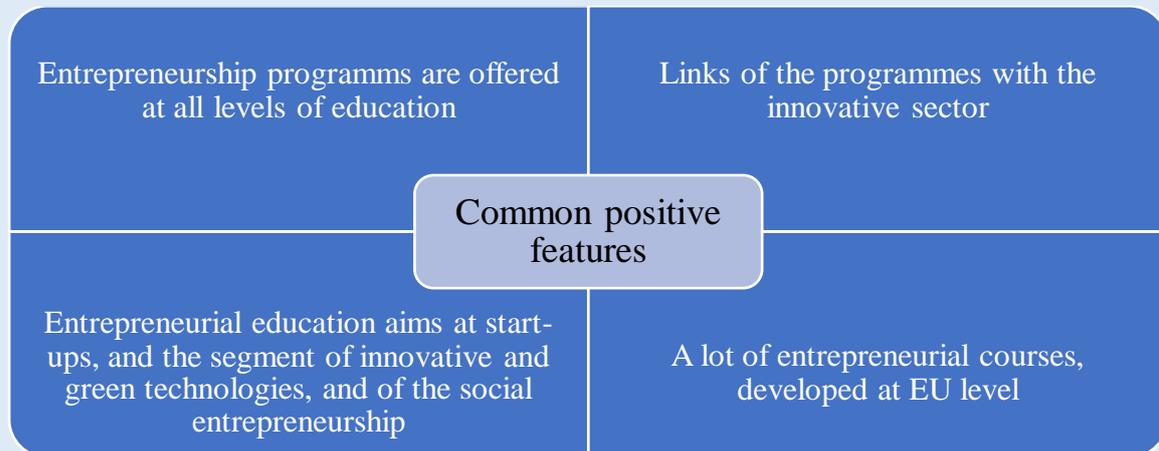
KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The project team reviewed and analysed statistical data (comparative where necessary), educational and training programmes, political and strategic documents in the countries to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats regarding policies and practices in the entrepreneurship training in each of the five countries. A particular focus was given on adult learning and disadvantaged learners.

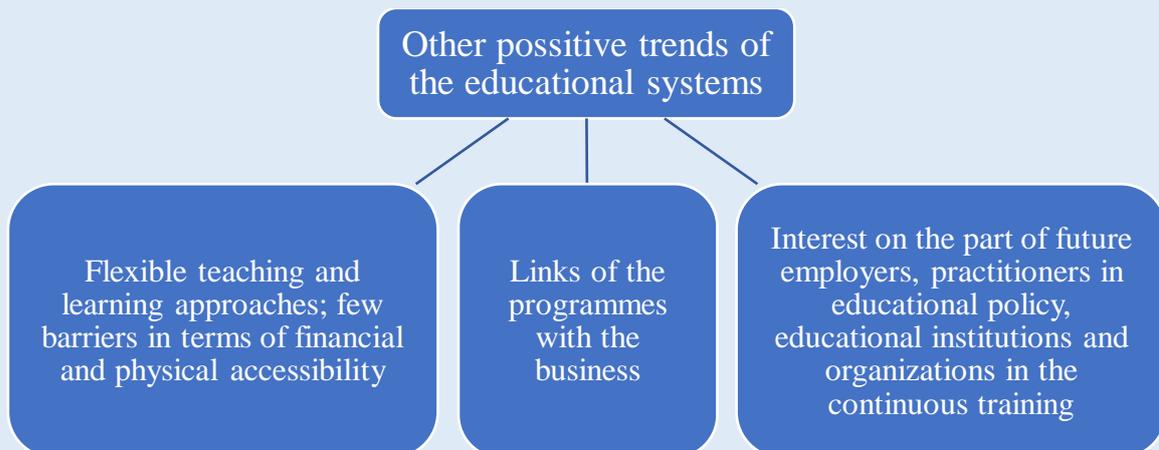




The general characteristics of the reviewed five educational and training systems (ecosystems) demonstrate strong similarities. The analysis of the systems of entrepreneurship education in the target countries identifies a set of common positive features that present strengths of the systems and opportunities for improvement. **Shared positive aspects** in the participating countries are the following:



To a different extent, the reviewed educational systems show other positive trends:

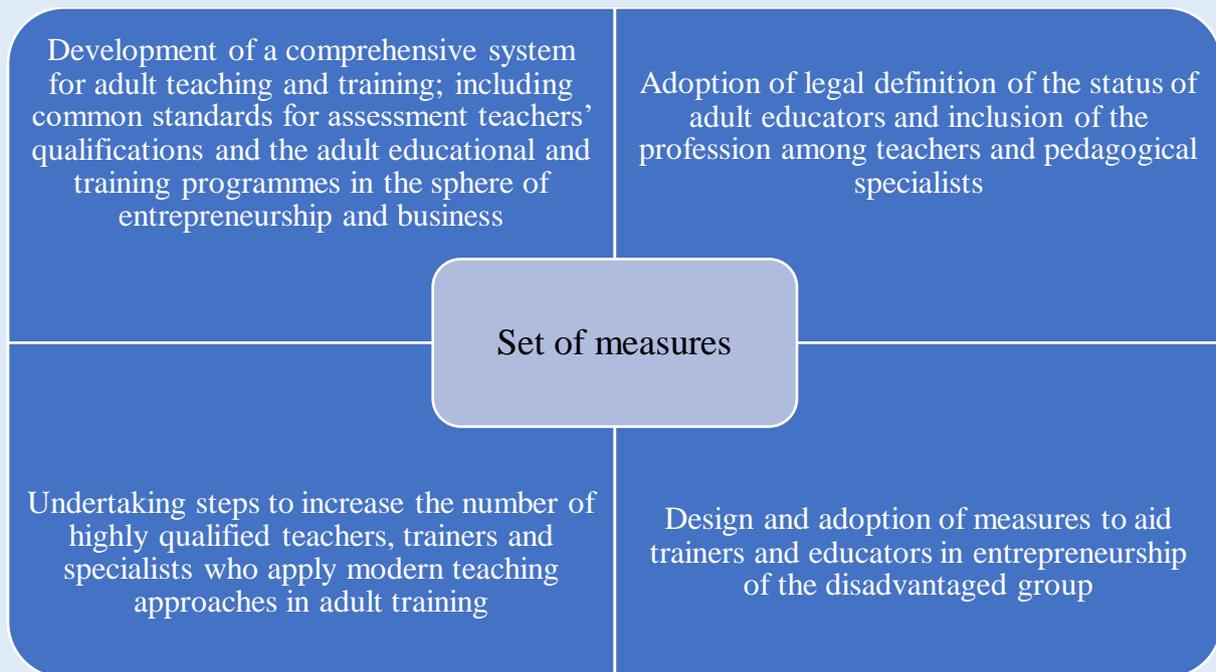


The omissions in the entrepreneurial education and training, identified in the five countries in the scope of the project are in two regards. First, **the degree of institutionalization of the entrepreneurial education in general at national level** – lack of common standards and varying quality of educational programmes and courses. The second problem is, **lack of programmes, courses and materials in entrepreneurship specifically targeted at disadvantaged adult learners**. This is in the context a broad and, generally, accessible (on line) offer of such opportunities. However, courses are generally addressed to all and do not take into account the special educational needs of these groups.

The research concludes that the educational systems need to adopt a set of measures towards higher degree of institutionalization of adult learning and the training of disadvantaged adults, including:



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Key conclusion of the analyses of project partners is that it is necessary to strengthen entrepreneurial education of adult disadvantaged learners. The gaps, apart from those that apply to all adult learners, that the UPthEM programme has to address are as follows: stronger attention directed at raising the qualifications and supporting educators who work with disadvantaged groups, tailored training programmes, recognition of the qualifications, awarded by such programmes.

Information about the project can be found at our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/UPthEMProject>