



55+ people and entrepreneurship

- a study based on results from five partners in the Best Agers–project

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Foreword

The European Union has defined the demographic challenge as a key issue for European regions. The project Best Agers, that is a strategic project in Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007–2013, involves 19 partners from 8 countries. The aim is to extract facts about the demographic challenge in the region, but also working to involve 55+ in the economic life of the community. In addition, the methods will be tested in the regions.

This study is part of the project and is about taking advantage of 55–plus' own competencies, such as through entrepreneurship and volunteering.

The report is written by Agneta Lundgren. She has a Master´s degree in Social Sciences. Many thanks to all partners.

Luleå March 2, 2011

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NLL

1. Introduction

The study is about 55+ people and entrepreneurship and it is carried out by partners in the Best Agers–project in Germany (Research Association of Mecklenburg–Vorpommern), Latvia (Stockholm School of Economics), Lithuania (KTU Regional Science Park), Poland (Institute for European Initiatives) and Sweden (County Council of Norrbotten). A central question to answer is: Which aspects are important to consider in the development of a draft training program concerning entrepreneurship for 55+ people?

The overall aim of the Best Agers project Work package 6, is partly to create mechanisms for encouraging entrepreneurship and partly to promote activities for developing curricula that could be used in different contexts (see "Best Agers Work Package Action Plan"). The aim of Work package 6 "Motivation and skills", activity 1, step 5 is to develop a training program by using experiences of 55+ entrepreneurs. This study is a partial project in the overall development of a draft training program and toolbox directed at companies in organisations and institutions in the Baltic Sea Region. An interview guide and a theoretical framework was developed by Luleå University of Technology (LTU) as a base for exploring entrepreneurship training among 55 + people. See the report "55+ people and entrepreneurship: A theoretical framework and interview guide" published by the Best Agers–project.

Agneta Lundgren has worked with this report to sum up the results of similarities and differences in possibilities for entrepreneurial training among 55+ people in Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

2. Methodology and method in the summary of the results

According to the theoretical framework (55+ people and entrepreneurship: A theoretical framework and interview guide), entrepreneurship policy is about how to influence individuals to entrepreneurship. The framework states that individuals in a society can be influenced by political measures independent of their situation. It also describes how “the MOS model” could be particularly suitable to encourage entrepreneurship through policy measures by focusing on individuals who are potential (rather than already established) entrepreneurs. According to the framework, the model could be used to increase people’s agency (skills and motivation) and also the entrepreneurial structure (opportunities) by developing a program for transforming 55+ people’s experiences of entrepreneurship. And, the Best Agers project could be a context to encourage entrepreneurship in the continual development of entrepreneurs.

In the MOS model, increased entrepreneurship is regarded as the desired political outcome. The model describes how there might be more entrepreneurial activities among 55+ people if they were more aware of entrepreneurship as a, for them, possible option. In WP6, interviews were done with people who had experiences of entrepreneurship among 55+ people, according to the interview guide in the given theoretical framework. The answers were also compiled by each country according to the given tool for analysing. The written reports differed only a little between the countries in the presentation of the results. But therefore, just a few adjustments have been done to sum up the answers in a concluding report. For instance, in the Latvian report there was richness in answers (and perhaps they were not ranked) and a summary was done in the report by including the answers that were written first. And in the Lithuanian report where the answers were listed but not ranked, the answers were put together in categories that were regarded as suitable.

This report is a summary of the explorative interview studies that were done in Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden to find out more about entrepreneurial training among 55+ people in each country. This is not a scientific investigation. For instance, I compare the answers generally between the countries even though 8 interviews were done in Germany, Lithuania and Sweden while 9 interviews were carried out in Poland and 20 in Latvia (in Latvia, the results were also presented “by average” in some questions). And some of the answers were not ranked or categorized but I did include some aspects in “important aspects to consider” (Germany). Further, some of the comments that I didn’t understand the meaning of (those were very few) I did not include. Also, in some of the questions only the answers that each country has listed as “top answers” are included. Rather, the result shows tendencies in similarities and differences about which aspects could be important to consider in the development of a draft training program.

Initially, some background information of the interview projects in the different countries is presented followed by the conclusions of the study. Then, a summary of the interview results of every question is presented together with some conclusions of “important aspects to consider” in the development of a draft training program.

3. Background information of the interview projects in the different countries

In Germany, 8 interviews were done with 5 men and 3 women aged 54 to 61 years. One of the respondents is 54 years and the other 7 are 55+. The respondents work as: university lecturer, advisor, economist, CEO, employee, business coach and entrepreneur. Two of the women have no earlier experience from entrepreneurship.

In Latvia, 20 interviews were done with about 10 men and 10 women with the average age of 62. Some of the interview persons are not 55 years, but almost. The respondents work in the following (diverse) fields: for instance, art and craft shop, director of a research center in an higher education institution, hotel owner, car service owner and manager, business coach, a farmer, book publisher, travel agent, artist and doll shop owner, financial consultant, lawyer with own firm. The interview persons value professional knowledge highly and their career background is often related to their current field of business.

In Lithuania, 8 interviews were done with 6 men and 2 women aged 26 to 58 years. The average age of the respondents is about 45 years. Their average time of experiences from entrepreneurship is about 14 years for men and 17 years for women.

In Poland, 9 interviews were done with men and women aged 55+.

In Sweden, 8 interviews were done with 4 men and 4 women. The interview persons are aged between 45 to 68 years. Five of the respondents are 55+, three are 45, 46 respective 53 years. 4 of the respondents are 55+ entrepreneurs (2 women and 2 men) (category 1), 2 respondents (1 woman and 1 man) are representatives from industry and trade organisations (category 2) and 2 respondents (1 woman and 1 man) are advisors, for instance start-ups or business coaches, bank managers etc (category 3). The respondents work in tourism, project management in economics and organisation, running a commercial shop, manufacturing industry, business enterprise in education, running a hotel and consulting in new business creation.

4. Conclusions

So, according to this study, which aspects are important to consider in the development of a draft training program among 55+ people?

- *In general*
Experience is an important aspect in increasing 55+ peoples´ attractiveness to bringing ideas into business, while insecurity in finances is decreasing the attractiveness in general.
- *Gender aspects*
In Sweden, most of the respondents think there are differences between women and men while many of the respondents in Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland give no answer or don't think there is a gender aspect.
- *Facilitators*
Experience is an aspect to regard as important in what facilitates the bringing of ideas into business among 55+ people. Also, knowledge, networks and capital are important facilitators.
- *Barriers*
55+ people experiencing "lack" of something (for instance, knowledge, confidence, enthusiasm, ideas or a network of like-minded people) is an aspect to regard as important in what could hinder the bringing of ideas into business among 55+ people. Also, negative attitudes among themselves are important to consider as barriers.
- *Motivation to entrepreneurship*
To realize one's dreams is an aspect to regard as important in what motivates 55+ people to entrepreneurship. Also, to create something, to have a challenging job, economic opportunity and authority are important to consider.
- *Skills*
Creative problem solving is a skill that seem strategic to train when 55+ people decide on their future career path. Also, intuitive decision making and time management are important aspects to consider.
- *Opportunities*
Advice/counselling is an aspect to regard as important in what resources are accessible as opportunities for 55+ people interested in bringing ideas into business.
- *Essential knowledge that is needed*
Knowledge about marketing is an aspect to regard as important in what 55+ people need to develop to bring ideas into business. Also, IT skills, law rules and financial management are important.

- *How to develop essential knowledge*
Education and training are aspects to regard as important in what essential knowledge best can be developed through policy tools. Also, advice and counselling are important.
- *Policy activities*
Training is the most important aspect to regard as important in what policy activities could increase entrepreneurship among 55+ people. Also, mentorship is important.
- *Designing of entrepreneurship training*
In terms of *recruitment* different aspects are important when designing entrepreneurship training for 55+ people. For instance, marketing with a view of best agers life, good feedback from previous attendees and to be directional are important to consider. *Content* is a key factor in the training and should be relevant to the individuals' situation. Also, regarding *schedule*, it's important to take a starting point from the concrete and practical situation. Regarding *teachers*, it's important that they have relevant experience from business. On the one hand, they have to be professional and on the other hand, best agers themselves could be teachers. In terms of *pedagogy*, participants' own experiences and group work are important aspects to consider in the designing of entrepreneurship training.

To sum up, both individuals' experiences and financial questions seem to be similar important aspect to consider concerning entrepreneurial training among 55+ people. Also important is to take the different countries' contextual differences into consideration. Then, perhaps a draft training program from many different aspects might lead to new possibilities in bringing 55+ peoples' ideas into business?

5. Summary of the interview results

5.1 General questions

Q1-2 What factors influence how attractive 55+ people find it to bring ideas into business?

1. Factors increasing the attractiveness to bring 55+ people' ideas into business are:

Germany: The questions 1 to 2 are not ranked or categorized but I did include some aspects in "important aspects to consider". Here are the answers: great experience, special skills, reputation, new project, more income; enlargement of the Network, transfer of knowledge, reputation, financial reasons; great network, motivation; self-realization, long-term ideas, the use of long-term experience; social networking, supporting high potential, economic reasons, realization of dreams; own development opportunities, senior experts; job experience; to bring own leanings into business.

Latvia: Experience and having developed confidence in: being able to take responsibility, take things seriously, ability to work in a team and to compromise, persistence, contributing to an interesting life. Other factors are: creativity, positive view, scarcity of resources in Soviet times trained creativity in problem solving, contacts and international network (this is rare in Latvia), need to adjust to new times, independence to have something fun and something interesting to do, opportunity for self-development, to sustain health requires activity.

Lithuania: Experience in: motivation by using examples of success/failure stories, network of potential clients, responsibility and maturity, thought-out business idea (5). Other factors are: Risk-free, weighed and measured ideas (1); more concrete goals and objectives (1); practical and easy to use (1).

Poland: The main factor is financial security.

Sweden: Economic possibilities (3). Other factors are: Greater independence (for instance, the family situation is solved, a desire to test, time) (3), having experiences and knowledge (2), having contacts/networks (2).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities between countries

In all of the countries except Poland, experience is an important aspect to consider. Also, responsibility (in Latvia and Lithuania) and economy (in Poland and Sweden) are important similarities between countries.

Differences between countries

Creativity in problem solving (Latvia), concrete goals (Lithuania) and independence (Latvia and Sweden) are presented as important aspects in respective country.

2. Factors decreasing the attractiveness to bring 55+ people' ideas into business are:

Germany: The questions 1 to 2 are not ranked or categorized but I did include some aspects in "important aspects to consider". Here are the answers: unsafe retirement pension, slack demand, financial pressure, unfair competitors, problems with family; subordination (Hierarchies), have prejudice against best agers; risks, financing; age (acceptance of business partners), flexibility, health aspects; no participation in the whole process; incompetence.

Latvia: Lack of confidence or lack of knowledge how to start a new business, fears to change one's lifestyle, lack of financing, health.

Lithuania: Lack of innovativeness (often ideas are not realized at all), traditional business ideas (no high growth potential ideas) (4), traditional ideas (3).

Poland: The main factor is financial security (experience and knowledge).

Sweden: Financial endangerment (for instance, if someone already has economic security) (4), unhealthiness (4).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries, insecurity in finances is an important aspect to consider.

Differences

Reluctance to change (Latvia and Lithuania) and health issues (Latvia and Sweden) are important.

5.2 Gender

Q3 Do you think there are differences between women and men (55+) regarding what factors that increase/decrease the attractiveness to bring ideas into business?

Germany: No answer (4). No (2). Yes (2). For instance, older women are less willing to take risks.

Latvia: No (16). Yes (8), whereof “half were in favour of men, half in favour of woman”. The respondents’ comments regarding difference states that men or women are more proactive, ready to risk or being more flexible in their views, persistence etc. The author of the report concludes that no significant difference between the sexes exists.

Lithuania: No (7). Yes (1). Only one respondent thought that women’s business ideas have a more social background.

Poland: No (8). Yes (1). The majority of the informants do not see any contradictions in terms of sex.

Sweden: Yes (6). No (1 man). No answer (1 woman). For instance, women are more precautious/not as prone to risk-taking as men.

Q 73 Concerning the areas we have talked about, are there any differences between men and women, you think?

Germany: No answer (3). No (2). Yes (3). For instance, women have less social freedom and less social robustness; a more conscientious piece of work by women.

Latvia: No differences. But comments as men are more confident and more sceptical. Women are more receptive and more accepting everything. Women take everything more personally, are less receptive to constructive criticism, more difficult to separate professional issues from personal. Men are more proactive, ready to risk. Women are ready to learn more. Men are better at business because business is a man’s world. Women are more intuitive so it’s easier to build a contact network.

Lithuania: 4 answered yes and 4 answered no (in regard to the areas in the questionnaire).

Poland: No (7). Yes (2). Only 2 pointed knowledge and responsibility/common rights and obligations out as additional facts.

Sweden: Yes (7). No answer (1 woman). Women are regarded as more cautious, are asking more questions about starting their own business.

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, that most of the respondents don't think that difference between women and men is important to consider. In Sweden and Germany, some of the respondents think there are differences between women and men when it comes to bringing ideas into business.

Differences

Women might want to increase their knowledge about starting a business (Sweden) and women have less social freedom (Germany) are important aspects to consider.

5.3 Facilitators

Q4–6 What facilitates the bringing of ideas into business among 55+ people?

4. Factors related to the individual concerning facilitating bringing ideas into business among 55+ people are:

Germany: The questions 4 to 6 are not ranked or categorized but I did include some aspects in “important aspects to consider”. Here are the answers: Good preparation, knowledge in the market, think longer about an idea, good self organisation, sense of responsibility, good social skills; thirst of knowledge, flexibility, openness, patience; have more time, good social environment; amount of experience, fitness, financial problems; self realization, to work in other branches; state of health, bigger network; appreciation of best agers experience in public; flexibility, learning readiness, mobility, control.

Latvia: Professional knowledge, courage to take risks, confidence, experience how to deal with people, acquired network within the industry or network of customers.

Lithuania: Experience/personality (related to communication skills) (6), needed capital and good contacts (1), curiosity and willingness to do something (1).

Poland: 4 of the 9 informants didn't recognize any individual factor. 5 informants answered that the experience, knowledge, free time, business and enterprise (in the meaning of the actual state/position in the company) might facilitate the ideas.

Sweden: experiences (like already having made valuable mistakes, having a network and understanding how the society works) (3), support by family and friends (3), having capital (2) and advisors (2).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries, experience is an important aspect to consider. Also, knowledge (Latvia and Poland), network (Latvia and Sweden) and capital (Lithuania and Sweden) are important.

Differences

That 4 of 9 respondents didn't recognize any individual factor (Poland) is an important aspect to consider.

5. Factors related to *the society* concerning facilitating bringing ideas into business among 55+ people are:

Germany: The questions 4 to 6 are not ranked or categorized but I did include some aspects in "important aspects to consider". Here are the answers: demographic trend, best agers admission rises; government support; social recognition and willingness to provide assistance; responsibility of the society; creditworthiness; appreciation of best agers experience in public; older people should be considered as work-worthy, micro lending should be made available more often.

Latvia: Society appreciates services and customers are happy. Society often recognizes authority and life experience.

Lithuania: Recognized achievements (1); support by people of the same age (1), experience is acknowledged, more trusted (it depends on the field of business) (1); the society is more positive about older people (1); financial stability (1); reliability (1); society has more negative attitude to 55+ start-up (with no experience) (1); benefit for the society (1).

Poland: 2 of the informants couldn't give any example. The other 7 informants mentioned contacts with the other people (2), finances, experience, activation and (2) informants said that there are society factors in principle.

Sweden: Economic support (the pension system with the possibility to have an early pension and to have an additional job at the same time) (3), on leave (2).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries except Sweden, experience is an important aspect to consider. Also, finances (Lithuania, Poland and Sweden) are important.

Differences

Possibilities to have on leave (Sweden) is an important aspect to consider.

6. Other factors related to facilitating bringing ideas into business among 55+ people are:

Germany: The questions 4 to 6 are not ranked or categorized but I did include some aspects in “important aspects to consider”. Here are the answers: inquiries from clients; synergy effects; older people are considered as being reduced in their working performance.

Latvia: Pride in self-achievement, friends, friends’ ideas, support, skills and education, once you are the owner you become responsible for your team, it isn’t a freedom anymore, support from family gives push to continue, despite tiredness of the age family encourages to write book about experience, crisis time is difficult for judging situation because there is lots of pessimism and few success stories, the world is open and available today, it’s a global market opportunity, keep busy and keeps one’s mind active, having own business creates worries about many issues that employees do not need to worry about, before being a business owner one does not have the experience of thinking like a business owner. Retirement is not about sitting around doing nothing, it’s about remaining active and interested in a variety of people and activities.

Lithuania: Success stories/cases.

Poland: 2 of the informants answered lack of finances and popularity. The other 7 didn’t have an opinion about this matter (not applicable).

Sweden: Attitudes like 55+ people themselves wanting to do something and others regarding 55+ people positively (2), tax reductions (1) and health (1).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

That older people are considered as being reduced in their working performance (Germany), success stories (Latvia and Lithuania) and interest (Latvia and Sweden) are important aspects to consider.

Differences

Lack of finances and popularity (Poland) are important aspects to consider.

5.4 Barriers

Q7-9 What hinders the bringing of ideas into business among 55+ people?

7. Factors related to the individual that hinders the bringing of ideas into business among 55+ people are:

Germany: The questions 7 to 9 are not ranked or categorized but I did include some aspects in “important aspects to consider”. Here are the answers: acceptance of other ideas, problems with health, learning ability; personal work time, no social competence; want small

financing problems with IT and new media; health aspects, lack of time; no motivation, no incentives; health restrictions, lack of current knowledge; fear.

Latvia: Family responsibilities and opinions, finance, health, shy personality, personality with lack of confidence, embarrassment about the age, appearance, need to learn to accept one's age. No personal barriers, responsibility to the team, because everyone depends on the business owner. Doubts about suitability of one's self, uncertainty related to the risk, fear of losing stable income at the beginning, laziness, weak personality doesn't provide much hope, inner barrier from Soviet times – less confident. Taking initiative was often punished, younger people are more confident, older people have ability to communicate easily but have barrier with English language and IT, this generation is afraid of IT and technology.

Lithuania: Fear (to take risks, to be unsuccessful, lack of enthusiasm/self-confidence, internal) (4). Old fashioned thinking (2).

Poland: Some of the informants singled out lack of ideas, age, stereotypes and physical fitness. 4 of the informants didn't point any barriers out.

Sweden: Attitudes among the individuals themselves like "I'm too old" and beliefs about the administration being too hard (3). Not having a network (of like-minded people) (2). Not having the health (2). Not having capital (1).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries, lack of something (like current knowledge, confidence, enthusiasm, ideas, network of like-minded people) are important aspects to consider.

Differences

That taking initiatives was often punished, language and IT (Latvia) and that the informants didn't point any barriers out (Poland) are important.

8. Factors related to *the society* that hinders the bringing of ideas into business among 55+ people are:

Germany: The questions 7 to 9 are not ranked or categorized but I did include some aspects in "important aspects to consider". Here are the answers: competition; stereotypes to best agers; acceptance; to have a dislike of a particular technology; no acceptance in the society; youth obsession in the public.

Latvia: Peer opinions, attitudes towards older people, dividing point of view: pensioner vs person with experience. Location and access to resources. Society might not accept professor or teacher stepping in to business, lowering their social status. Not enough state support to the individual with initiative. Bureaucracy is off-putting. Young people might not

accept older person and see it as authority. Jealousy. Younger ones are sceptical of older women being in the manager position.

Lithuania: Negative attitude/approach (3). New technologies/business environment (2).

Poland: Conservatism, competition, development of informatization and low pensions. (4). 1 informant said that there are barriers in principle and 3 informants considered the question as not applicable.

Sweden: Financial hindrances (it might be more difficult to get help from the bank when you get older, being disfavoured by tax questions) (3). Negative attitudes from society and banks that 55+ people are not able (2).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries except Poland, negative attitudes are an important aspect to consider.

Differences

Not enough state support to the individual with initiative (Latvia), new technologies (Lithuania), conservatism and competition (Poland) and financial hindrances (Sweden) are important.

9. Other factors related to what hinders the bringing of ideas into business among 55+ people are:

Germany: This question did not show any barriers of bringing ideas into business.

Latvia: Banks to be more supportive, risk, lack of funding, competition, difficult to enter existing niche, to find own niche within niche.

Lithuania: Legislation.

Poland: Age and health problems (1).

Sweden: Elders wanting to give younger people the chance instead (1).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

There are no similarities between the countries.

Differences

That banks could be more supportive (Latvia), legislation (Lithuania), health problems (Poland) and elders wanting to give younger people the chance instead (Sweden) are important.

5.5 Motivation

Q10–42. In your opinion, to which degree do you agree or disagree that the following factors are important to consider when 55+ people decide on their future career path?

Motivation to employment

Q10–23. The following factors are important to consider when 55+ people decide on their future career path regarding motivation to employment:

Germany: (18) To be member of a social “milieu” 49p, (10) job security 45p, (17) participate in a social environment 45p, (11) job stability 43p, (13) to have leisure 34p, (15) not to have a stressful job 34p.

Latvia: (17) Participate in a social environment 6p, (18) to be member of a social “milieu” 5p, (11) job stability 5p, (10) job security 5p.

Lithuania: (10) Job security 49p, (11) job stability 44p, (15) not to have a stressful job 43p, (13) to have leisure 39p, (17) participate in a social environment 39p, (18) to be member of a social “milieu” 39p.

Poland: (10) Job security 52p, (15) not to have a stressful job 45p, (14) to have fixed working hours 42p, (12) not having to work long hours 41p, (18) to be member of a social “milieu” 40p, (17) participate in a social environment 38p.

Sweden: (17) Participate in a social environment 44p, (18) to be member of a social “milieu” 42p, (13) to have leisure 40p, (10) job security 37p, (15) not to have a stressful job 35p, (11) job stability 34p.

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries, to participate in a social environment, to be member of a social “milieu” and job security are regarded as important aspects to consider. Also, job stability (Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden) and not to have a stressful job (Lithuania, Poland and Sweden) are regarded as important.

Differences

Not having to work long hours (Poland), and to have fixed working hours (Poland) are regarded as important.

Motivation to entrepreneurship

Q24–42. The following factors are important to consider when 55+ people decide on their future career path regarding motivation to entrepreneurship:

Germany: (28) To have an interesting job 48p, (30) to have a motivating job 46p, (34) be able to choose your own work tasks 46p, (38) realize one’s dreams 45p, (39) to create something 44p, (40) to take advantage of your creative needs 43p.

Latvia: (27) To have a challenging job 7p, (28) to have an exciting job 7p, (29) to have an interesting job 7p, (30) to have a motivating job 7p, (33) to be your own boss 7p.

Lithuania: (28) To have an exciting job 48p, (29) to have an interesting job 47p, (30) to have a motivating job 47p, (38) realize one's dreams 47p, (24) economic opportunity 46p.

Poland: (36) Have authority 51p, (33) to be your own boss 50p, (29) to have an interesting job 47p, (38) realize one's dreams 47p, (34) be able to choose your own work tasks 45p, (42) to follow work tasks from a to z(ö) 44p.

Sweden: (29) To have an interesting job 53p, (30) to have a motivating job 52p, (39) to create something 50p, (35) have power to make decisions 49p, (38) realize one's dreams 49p.

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries except Latvia, to realize one's dreams is an important aspect to consider. Also, to create something (Germany and Sweden) is important.

Differences

And, to have a challenging job (Latvia), economic opportunity (Lithuania), and have authority (Poland) are important.

5.6 Skills

Q43–52 In your opinion, to which degree do you agree or disagree that training in the following skills have an impact when 55+ people decide on their future career path?

Skills that have an impact when 55+ people decide on their future career path are:

Germany: (47) creative problem solving 41p, (50) strategic thinking 39p, (45) general knowledge of business skills 38p, (49) negotiation skills 37p, (46) positive thinking 36p, (43) opportunity spotting 35p.

Latvia: (46) Positive thinking 7p, (47) creative problem solving 7p, (43) opportunity spotting 6p, (44) team building 6p, (45) general knowledge of business skills 6p, (48) intuitive decision making 6p, (49) negotiation skills 6p, (50) strategic thinking 6p, (51) time management 6p, (52) persuasion 6p.

Lithuania: (48) intuitive decision making 50p, (49) negotiation skills 49p, (50) strategic thinking 49p, (47) creative problem solving 44p, (46) positive thinking 43p, (51) time management 42p, (43) opportunity spotting 40p, (45) general knowledge of business skills 39p, (44) team building 36p, (52) persuasion 34p.

Poland: (47) Creative problem solving 44p, (51) time management 43p, (46) positive thinking 42p, (49) negotiation skills 42p, (45) General knowledge of business skills 41p, (50) strategic thinking 41p, (48) intuitive decision making 38p.

Sweden: (45) General knowledge of business skills 44p, (46) positive thinking 44p, (47) creative problem solving 43p, (50) strategic thinking 41p, (48) intuitive decision making 37p, (49) negotiation skills 35p, (51) time management 35p, (43) opportunity spotting 33p, (44) team building 29p, (52) persuasion 21p.

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries except Lithuania, creative problem solving is one of the most important aspects to consider regarding similarities in how skills have a higher impact when 55+ people decide on their future career path. Also, in all of the countries except Lithuania and Germany, positive thinking is an important aspect to consider when 55+ people decide on their future career path.

Differences

Intuitive decision making (Lithuania) and time management (Poland), are important aspects to consider.

5.7 Opportunities

Q53–57 In your opinion, to which degree do you agree or disagree that the following resources are accessible for 55+ people interested in bringing ideas into business?

Resources that are accessible as opportunities for 55+ people interested in bringing ideas into business are:

Germany: (53) Advice/counselling 47p, (57) experts 46p, (55) networks/contacts 45p, (56) encouragement 35p, (54) funding 32p.

Latvia: (53) Advice/counselling 5p, (55) networks/contacts 5p, (57) experts 5p, (56) encouragement 4p, (54) funding 4p.

Lithuania: (53) Advice/counselling 48p, (57) experts 43p, (55) networks/contacts 39p, (56) encouragement 36p, (54) funding 25p.

Poland: (53) Advice/counselling 42p, (54) funding 41p, (55) networks/contacts 37p, (56) encouragement 32p, (57) experts 31p.

Sweden: (53) Advice/counselling 51p, (55) networks/contacts 50p, (54) funding 46p, (56) encouragement 44p, (57) experts 39p.

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries, advice/counselling is an important aspect to consider.

Differences

Funding (Poland) is an important aspect to consider.

5.8 Essential knowledge

Q58–60 What essential knowledge do 55+ people need to develop to bring ideas into business?

Essential knowledge that 55+ people need to develop to bring ideas into business is:

Germany: Marketing, presentation, IT.

Latvia: General knowledge of business skills, creative problem solving, team building.

Lithuania: Marketing, financial management, business planning.

Poland: IT skills, law rules, financial management.

Sweden: “Concrete” economy (i.e. knowledge about the market, business administration), business networks and knowledge about their specific trade, economic thinking (understanding about how to earn money).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries except Poland, knowledge about marketing is an important aspect to consider. Also, business planning and economic thinking (Lithuania and Sweden), financial management (Lithuania and Poland) and IT skills (Germany and Poland) are important.

Differences

Presentation (Germany), creative problem solving and team building (Latvia), and law rules (Poland) are important.

Q61–63 How can this essential knowledge best be developed through policy tools?

The way to best develop this essential knowledge through policy tools is by:

Germany: Seminars/training, consulting/coaching, (no answer).

Latvia: Advice and counselling, advice on how and where to get the funding, networks and contacts.

Lithuania: Training and work shops/vocational training, studies/consultations, participation at trade fairs.

Poland: Courses and training, employment law, statue books of entrepreneurship (a record of the **Sweden:** Education (in economy/start your own business courses, in enterprise, at first by “teaching” and later on by individuals’ ”learning”), social support (like opportunities to meet like minded people, “door-unlockers” and consultants), mentorship (for instance, by engaging professionals).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries except Latvia, education and training are important aspects to consider. Also, consulting (Germany and Lithuania) is important.

Differences

Advice and counselling (Latvia), employment law (Poland), and mentorship/engaging professionals (Sweden) are important.

5.9 Policy activities

Q 64–67 In your opinion, to which degree do you agree or disagree that the following activities are important for increased entrepreneurship among 55+ people?

Policy activities that are important for increased entrepreneurship among 55+ people are:

Germany: (65) Mentorship 46p, (64) training 40p, (66) boards/shadow boards 32p, (67) legislation/adjustment 29p.

Latvia: (64) Training 5p, (65) mentorship 5p, (67) legislation/adjustment 5p, (66) boards/shadow boards 3p.

Lithuania: (64) Training 42p, (66) boards/shadow boards 37p, (67) legislation/adjustment 37p, (65) mentorship 33p.

Poland: (64) Training 46p, (67) legislation/adjustment 45p, (65) mentorship 28p, (66) boards/shadow board 27p.

Sweden: (64) Training 45p, (66) boards/shadow boards 44p, (65) mentorship 43p, (67) legislation/adjustment 33p.

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries except Germany, training is the most important aspect to consider.

Differences

Mentorship (Germany) is the most important aspect to consider. Also, boards/shadow boards is important aspect to consider as having a high impact in Sweden, middle impact in Lithuania and very low impact in Latvia and Poland.

5.10 Entrepreneurship training

Q68–72 What do you think is important to consider when designing entrepreneurship training for 55+ people in terms of recruitment, content, schedule, teachers, pedagogy?

68. Important to consider when designing entrepreneur training for 55+ people in terms of recruitment is:

Germany: Marketing with a view of best agers life, small groups, oriented at the target group.

Latvia: Good feedback from previous attendees of the offered training would be the main encouragement to attend. There is scepticism of advertising because of the risk that consultants might increase their own business rather than provide value and quality to best-agers. Training courses must be based on real experience. Recruitment means to do marketing of the programme. There might be greater trust if trainers run follow-on courses. Since beginners' economic resources are limited, training advertising should be for free.

Lithuania: Important or very important (5), not all new ways of communication are acceptable and efficient with older people (1), form of information delivery (1), depends on situation (1).

Poland: To be understandably prepared (1), to be directional (1), to include qualifications (1), to include lack of employment (1), to be based on special activity (1), is very important in principle (1).

Sweden: Diversity and multi-culture (to have different subjects; to take care of women, the "blue collar" and the public sector as entrepreneurs) (4), having respect for 55+ peoples' experiences because they are a competent group (1), marketing directly addressed to 55+ people (1), the use of positive role models (1), having different courses for women and men (1).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

There are no similarities between the countries.

Differences

"Marketing with a view of best agers life" (Germany), "good feedback from previous attendees" (Latvia), "not all new ways of communication are acceptable and efficient with older people" (Lithuania), "to be directional" (Poland), and "diversity and multi-culture" i.e. to have different subjects, to take care of women, the "blue collar" and the public sector as entrepreneurs (Sweden) are important.

69. Important to consider when designing entrepreneur training for 55+ people in terms of content is:

Germany: To take the experience into consideration, practical information, focussing hard skills than soft skills.

Latvia: Content is a key factor of the training. It should be relevant, interesting, useful, fitting with interests, theory together with practical aspects, contents should be as promised. Specialized courses, not just general courses with specific and relevant content, courses

could also provide information on EU norms. New entrepreneurs could start with a general business course first, followed by selected specific courses later.

Lithuania: Important or very important (5), too simplified content can offend older people and turn away from training (1), divide into several levels from beginners to advanced (1), depends on situation (1).

Poland: Be available in polish language, be thematic, include finances, be based on ideas development, include business plan.

Sweden: Direct towards individual needs (not include what 55+ don't need because of their experience, give them the possibility to directly take part of front edge knowledge, start from their own ideas, individual and group counselling) (4), certain subjects (financial means and internationalization of what they're doing, about the whole enterprise with book-keeping and taxes etc, selling, marketing and administration) (3).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries, relevance to the individuals' experience/ideas/situation is an important aspect to consider.

Differences

Practical information (Germany), including specialized and not just general courses (Latvia), several levels of training (Lithuania), to be thematic (Poland) and subjects about the whole enterprise (Sweden) are important.

70. Important to consider when designing entrepreneur training for 55+ people in terms of *schedule* is:

Germany: Change of methods (active and passive), compact training, not fulltime.

Latvia: Short and concentrated, compact, not too long. But also, specifics depend on the subject (eg. you might not be able to learn accounting in a short time). Only on weekends, otherwise there might be no time or strength to stretch the day with additional engagements in the evening (for older people). Quality of content is most important, time should be dedicated for theory and practical group work. Needs to be a variety of courses, short, long, deep, shallow, beginners, advanced etc. Should be regular and occasional courses taking into account work-time constraints.

Lithuania: Very important or important (3), not important (2), after work hours (2), depends on situation (1).

Poland: Be based on conversations (1), be detailed (1), be based on exercises (1), include a lot of practice (1), be in short terms (1).

Sweden: activities at nights and weekends (different forms of courses and seminars linked to other arrangements) (2), cooperation with time for conversations and possibilities to learn from each other (in small groups) (2), activities on weekdays (1), individual counselling by someone who has practical experience instead of "just reading a book" (1).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries except Germany, to take a starting point from the concrete and practical are important aspects to consider. Also, a compact, short and concentrated schedule (Germany, Latvia and Poland) is important.

Differences

Change of methods (active and passive) (Germany), activities at nights, weekdays, and weekends; and cooperation with time for conversations in small groups (Sweden) are important.

71. Important to consider when designing entrepreneur training for 55+ people in terms of teachers is:

Germany: With experience, best agers as teachers, can address the target group, entrepreneurs.

Latvia: Must have business experience, be credible, interesting, experienced, knowledgeable, either professional real experience or something radically new and modern, good to have practical examples. Balanced theory and practice. Teachers have to be professional but they should know how to explain in simple ways. Attractive and perfect, teachers need to be inspiring personalities.

Lithuania: Important or very important (5), not young age (2), traditional training (1).

Poland: Be realists (1), know how to make people listen (1), be experienced (1), have openness (1), be well prepared (1).

Sweden: participants themselves (they often have the relevant competence) (3), consultants (local seniors with experience from entrepreneurship, to use the commercial and industrial life instead of pedagogy, someone who is all-round educated and understands each persons needs) (3), pedagogues (who are able to talk in an interesting way, who knows about business enterprise and the field of subject) (2).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries, to have relevant experience (from business) is an important aspect to consider.

Differences

To have to be professional (Latvia), best agers themselves could be teachers (Germany and Sweden), consultants or pedagogues (Sweden) are important.

72. Important to consider when designing entrepreneur training for 55+ people in terms of pedagogy is:

Germany: no stocked-up learning, oriented to short-term applicability, round of talks.

Latvia: Doesn't need a special approach because own knowledge is appreciated, not too important if it is credible and believable; have to be interesting, to have good explaining skills, to use real examples and case studies. Complementary visual materials, literature and internet portals to be able to keep up learning and exploring. Clear presentation, individual approach. Important to give practical examples based on teachers' real experience.

Lithuania: Important or very important (4), depends on situation (1).

Poland: Be without philosophical language (1), be characterized by pragmatism (1), including groupwork (1), give examples (1), be well prepared (1).

Sweden: the group (exchange of experiences, direction to participants needs, working practically, situated pedagogy) (4), flexible pedagogy (universities could help with the structuring of education, both theory and the concrete) (4).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

In all of the countries, participants' own experiences/situation is an important aspect to consider. Also, group work (Germany, Poland and Sweden) is important.

Differences

There are no differences between the countries.

5.11 Final question

Q74 Is there something more one should consider concerning the matters of bringing ideas into business from several aspects other than barriers, facilitators, training etc, you think?

74. Other matters to consider concerning the matters of bringing ideas into business is:

Germany: The classic image of entrepreneurs has to be changed, positive examples are needed.

Latvia: Business allows a person to stay young, it is important not to let the apathy of the pensioner to develop. Responsibility about the team keeps concentration and continues strength. Factors are individually specific. Tax uncertainty, one has to plan and predict next steps, identify risk factors. Older people will find it difficult to be an entrepreneur if for the first time. Her business is not standard so the innovation is not appreciated by customers, banks, advisors etc. The main thing is fun, otherwise it's not worth doing anything. People should not be so afraid to try (within managed limits), should assess and recognize their abilities, be objective, need to have a vision for the business. Tax policy needs to be much more supportive to small business.

Lithuania: Financial support opportunities for older people and possible risks; financial support measures, financial security in case of bankruptcy.

Poland: Visits in similar companies/practitioners, lack of finances, belief in a business success, preferences for willingness to open business.

Sweden: Many 55+ people leave with knowledge (2), self-employment (for instance, Convoj which is half a step towards business enterprise, could be a way to test entrepreneurship and work with the customers without having to handle the administration in a company) (1), shadow boards could make it possible for women to try board work (1), 55+ people might have experience and knowledge about strategy and control of economy and information which could be useful in board work (1), 55+ people have experiences to know what they want or don't want (1), mix start your own business groups with competent consultants and teachers who "live the way they teach" (1), introduction of a "business driver's licence" in society about law and the basics about business enterprise to make it simple and get rid of criminality (1).

Important aspects to consider

Similarities

Financial questions (Latvia, Lithuania and Poland) are an important aspect to consider. Also, positive examples and belief in a business of success are needed (Poland and Germany).

Differences

That the classic image of entrepreneurs has to be changed (Germany) and questions about knowledge, self-employment and board work (Sweden) are important.