



# Startup Preschool by Startup Migrants

Startup Preschool is an intensive 3-day course in business, networking, and ideation to empower multicultural founders and discover business talents.



## iQ | GOOD PRACTICE to the point

### *Target groups for transfer:*

chambers of industry and commerce, local startup eco-systems, business development organisations, entrepreneurship mentors, integration practitioners and policy-makers, municipalities

### *Startup Preschool in a nutshell:*

The preschool is a fast-track entrepreneurship programme for migrants to learn about local business culture and to get a business network.

### *Implementing organization:*

Startup Migrants is a Norwegian/German company. It conducts research on migrant entrepreneurship. After studying the eco-system in Europe the company noticed that a speed bump for integration was the allocation of diverse talent in the business world.



### **Norway**

Population (09.2020): 5.4 million

Population with a migration background (first and second generation): 18.2 percent

Unemployment rate for population with non-western migration background (2020): 9.5 percent (non-migrant population unemployment rate: 3.4 percent)

Source: Norwegian Statistical Bureau: <https://www.ssb.no/innvarbl>

### **Starting position/challenge**

Covid-19 will change the makeup of our towns and cities. Businesses will disappear. Unemployment and inequality might rise. Inhabitants may move to get more space. As a result, some places will experience depopulation, while others will grow.

During an economic downturn many, especially migrants, will turn to entrepreneurship to make a living. Already we see an increase in new sole proprietorships and limited companies being founded. The goal should be that these companies become as successful as possible. That means that we need to tackle the main challenges for migrant founders, which are: They start sole proprietorships alone instead of limited companies with a partner. They lack a business network, and struggle to understand laws and regulations, as well as the local business culture. As a result, they struggle to find their first customer.

At the same time, there is a huge talent gap between multicultural communities and the startup eco-system, the latter being a network of all relevant stakeholders, individuals, startups, institutions from the startup sector in interdependence to each other. There are few initiatives to discover diverse talent and connect them with advisors and key players that can help them to grow their businesses. All preschool teachers come from the local business community and have to commit to one consultation with the participants. It thereby creates a foundation for a business network.

### **Implementation of the Startup Preschool**

Startup Preschool's target group are young migrants between 18 - 35 years. This includes first and second generation migrants. At previous Startup Preschool events in Norway, about 40 percent had a refugee background, 45 percent were women, and 85 percent were initially from outside of the EU. Some were students, employed in the public or



private sector or looking for new opportunities. The benefit of this approach is that participants can create diverse teams where members have different backgrounds, resources, and levels of knowledge about the host country. During the intense three days, they learn how diversity drives job creation, idea testing and pitching, sales and networking, local and national business culture, and the laws governing business.

Startup Preschool puts great emphasis on networking, so every speaker represents the local business eco-system and commits to meeting and following up with the participants. Every participant is provided with a diploma and access to an active alumni-group online. The biggest positive surprise this year has been the power of the alumni. As it grows in number, with 40 new alumni members only in 2021, there are more and more synergies and dynamic connections between the members. In the first months of 2021, Startup Migrants has not only seen companies founded between alumni members – but actually one preschool company hiring alumni members.

# Facts & Figures about the Preschool Oslo

## Startup Preschool kicks off further success of preschool alumni

After running for half a year, Preschool Oslo's alumni totals 118 persons. Alumni members have been successful in different ways, for example:

- 10 limited companies were started.
- 14 have applied to incubator or accelerator programmes.
- 2 have received startup support from Innovation Norway.
- 1 has won a hackerton - and his idea has been implemented in one of Norway's biggest banks (sparebank1).

[www.instagram.com/forskole.no](https://www.instagram.com/forskole.no)

**Luqman Wahood** is 19 years old and partook in a digital preschool in January 2021. He wanted to create a news site for young people - showcasing their views about society and corona. He already had a demo of his website when he attended the preschool but two weeks after the preschool he had founded his own limited company. He has also received press attention through the newspaper Subject whose founder Danby Choi is a strong supporter of the preschool.

**Mohammad Abdelquadir** came to Norway at the age of nine. He partook in the first "demo" preschool in November 2019. In September 2020, together with his brother he founded Digna AS, a company that shall help migrants to integrate in the labour market. The company was admitted to the leading Norwegian Incubator - Startup Lab - in December 2020 and has since then hired another preschool alumni member.



## Three questions for Nicolai Strøm-Olsen, Co-Founder of Startup Migrants

# Creating bonds between talents and the startup eco-system



### *What is the innovative part of the preschool approach?*

Startup Preschool was founded in Norway. Its pilot has been a success in Oslo and Fredrikstad. The innovative elements are:

- We build a network of stakeholders where libraries, municipalities, NGOs, and the business world work together to locate business talent.
- We are a pre-job course, pre-accelerator, pre-incubator. We are not an incubator or a co-working space but connect talent to the eco-system. We introduce inspiring role models, give basic knowledge of startups and generously share our network of advisors and key players in the eco-system. It lowers the entry barrier to the startup scene significantly.
- We have a scalable programme that can develop into a standard for preschool business training.
- We are bottom-up driven. We work with the local network to find talents - and have worked for years with entrepreneurs. Our team has a background as migrants and refugees. We have founded and sold several companies before.

### *Is it possible to introduce the format in other countries? How can challenges be overcome during implementation processes?*

The methodology of Startup Preschool is based on almost two years of research in Europe and the Middle East. We are already trying to

implement the programme in Germany - with a pilot in Berlin and Kiel in 2021. We also were very close to piloting in Sweden but it is currently on hold due to the corona-pandemic. Since the methodology and curriculum is already developed, the main challenge is to bring together the business networks - and to convince stakeholders like libraries, job centres, and municipalities to inform about the programme and work together with us to find participants. To do that, we need local partners.

### *Which long-term achievements does the preschool approach hold?*

During this fall, 250 people applied to the preschool and 45 participated. Had it not been for the lockdown in November and December 2020, the number would have doubled.

That creates a big network quite fast, and we are now developing a digital preschool to make it easier to help people during lockdowns. For 2021, we aim to receive 1.500 applications in Norway and to take in 300 participants. That means that we are able to help a lot more people than other entrepreneurship programmes.

The long-term goal would be to create a standard for pre-stage entrepreneurship programmes in Europe. That means that a person who has participated in a preschool in Germany can go to another European country and show his or her diploma - and they will know what it is. We are already moving in that direction in Norway aiming for preschools in six cities next year.

**Authors:** Maria Amelie, Nicolai Strøm-Olsen  
**Editors:** Fabienne Braukmann, Christian Zingel  
**Photos and illustrations:** Ellen Reiss, Julia Schlax (RockABYTE GmbH)  
**Layout:** Gereon Nolte, ZWH  
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### **Network IQ**

The Network "Integration through Qualification (IQ)" aims to sustainably improve the labour market integration of adults with a migration background. The programme is funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the European Social Fund (ESF). Strategic partners in implementing the programme are the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBWF) and the Federal Employment Agency (BA).

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In cooperation with:

