

## Preface

*The economic crisis has left us with a number of challenging legacies, including high unemployment – particularly for youth. In many European countries, youth unemployment averages around twice the adult rates. Other groups are also affected. Women, immigrants and seniors all have higher levels of labour market inactivity or poorer labour market outcomes. OECD projections suggest that these challenges are unlikely to be resolved soon.*

*We need an “all on board” approach to ensure a future built on both inclusion and growth. The OECD’s Inclusive Growth initiative has pinpointed a number of policy areas that can achieve this, including skills and entrepreneurship. This book focuses on inclusive entrepreneurship, i.e. ensuring that people from all backgrounds have the opportunity to start up in business or self-employment. Government policy can help people who are unemployed or disadvantaged in the labour market to create their own jobs by helping them gain entrepreneurship skills and motivations, access to finance and entrepreneurial networks so that they can have a chance to create their own job. At the same time, it is important that policy makers complement such efforts by continuing to support the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and culture.*

*The book provides data on rates of entrepreneurship and self-employment by women, youth, seniors, the unemployed and the foreign-born in European Union countries and the nature of the barriers they face. It also examines two key policy themes, namely the potential of entrepreneurs from disadvantaged and under-represented groups to create strong, growth-oriented businesses and the keys to designing effective entrepreneurship coaching and mentoring schemes for disadvantaged groups.*

*There is evidence that policies for inclusive entrepreneurship can work. But we must be careful in maintaining reasonable expectations. Entrepreneurship is not a suitable activity for everybody and it will not resolve all of the labour market challenges in the European Union. The cost of doing nothing, however, is extraordinarily high, and the opportunity should be seized to boost entrepreneurship and self-employment support in the tools used by governments to promote labour market participation.*

*I would like to thank the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission for partnering with the OECD on this important project and hope that policy makers at the national, regional and local levels use the policy advice in this book while they are designing and delivering actions to promote and support inclusive entrepreneurship.*



Stefan Kapferer,  
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In June 2015, more than 23 million people were unemployed in the European Union and half of them have been unemployed for more than one year. Job creation is clearly a top priority for the EU and its Member States, and entrepreneurship is one of the most promising ways to create jobs.

The European Union strongly supports the development of entrepreneurship across all the population. The Europe 2020 Strategy recognises entrepreneurship and self-employment as critical levers for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and several flagship European Union initiatives explicitly support entrepreneurship, including the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, Youth on the Move and the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion. This strategy is further reinforced by the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan.

As we move into the new programming period 2014-20, we must not overlook some of the key structural funds available to deliver these initiatives. The European Social Fund (ESF) is available to support entrepreneurship and self-employment through the thematic objective of promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility. European Union countries can use the ESF to co-finance entrepreneurship training programmes and to build an entrepreneurship support infrastructure. An extremely important initiative for the new programming period is the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), which includes the Youth Guarantee. This initiative offers additional funds for efforts, including self-employment initiatives, to help young people enter the labour market in the regions hit hardest by youth unemployment.

However, as of now, Member States are not taking full advantage of the European Union and national resources available and are under-exploiting the potential of the entrepreneurship component of their active labour market policies. It is my hope that this book increases awareness amongst policy makers about the various approaches that can be taken to promote inclusive entrepreneurship. The book, produced in partnership with the OECD, provides an evidence base and a source of inspiration for policy makers. I encourage them to use the policy guidance and recommendations when designing and implementing inclusive entrepreneurship projects, and to use the policy examples as a source of inspiration.

Finally, I would like to thank the OECD for their partnership on this very important work programme.



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