

Foreword

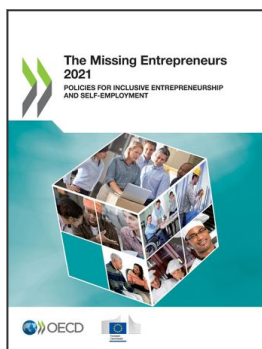
The COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating for entrepreneurs and business owners. This is even more true for entrepreneurs from under-represented and disadvantaged groups such as women, immigrants, youth and seniors. A growing body of international evidence shows that self-employed people and entrepreneurs from these groups were disproportionately impacted by the crisis, often due to the sector in which they operate, poor access to resources and the inaccessibility to the policy response. Although many governments implemented a range of measures to support the self-employed and micro businesses, these supports were not always accessible to those from under-represented and disadvantaged groups due to minimum revenue and hours worked thresholds, linkages between support and previous tax returns, poor communication and more.

As the policy focus shifts to economic recovery, inclusive entrepreneurship policies can help governments “build back better” by untapping the entrepreneurial potential among women, immigrants, ethnic minorities, youth, seniors and people with disabilities. Inclusive entrepreneurship policies seek to give everyone an opportunity to create a successful and sustainable business, regardless of their gender, age, place of birth, work status or other personal characteristics. Expanding entrepreneurship can create jobs, fight social and financial exclusion, leverage technologies and help respond to economic challenges. *The Missing Entrepreneurs* series of publications of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union discuss how public policies and programmes can support inclusive entrepreneurship. This includes:

- Reducing disincentives to business creation in regulatory and welfare institutions;
- Facilitating access to finance;
- Building entrepreneurship skills through training, coaching and mentoring;
- Strengthening entrepreneurial culture and networks for target groups; and
- Putting strategies and actions for inclusive entrepreneurship together in a co-ordinated and targeted way.

This sixth edition of *The Missing Entrepreneurs* has several new features. Most notably, it contains a systematic policy mapping across the 27 EU Member States that describe policy approaches in inclusive entrepreneurship such as the instruments used and the characteristics of these instruments. This qualitative information was collected during the preparation of biennial notes that are prepared on inclusive entrepreneurship policy in each country. Moreover, the report contains new estimates of the number of “missing” entrepreneurs.

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