



2018

EVALUATION REPORT

Capacity

**Supporting migrants and
refugees since 2015**

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This report is based on data collected and a draft report by Kerstin Sabrina Bütschi, an independent evaluator. Many thanks to Kerstin for her support in 2018 and 2019 with the evaluation of the Capacity entrepreneurship Programme.

Context

Capacity has always had a strong commitment to understanding and measuring its impact. Capacity was able to revise its existing evaluation approach in December 2018, to bring its monitoring, learning and evaluation approach in line with international projects and to more accurately reflect the nature of its impact.

The evaluation of the 2018 Entrepreneurship Programme was carried out by an external evaluator during December 2018 to February 2019. The report was written by the evaluator, with inputs from the team around the aims and context sections. At all times, Capacity is keen to ensure that the work it does really supports the Capacity participants, and the broader Capacity community. The report has already been studied by the Capacity team, and any learnings implemented in the planning for 2019.



The aim of Capacity's evaluation approach

Capacity has a strong mission to identify and increase our impact on our beneficiaries and improve the quality of the programme. Capacity's evaluation approach focuses on 3 levels of impact:

- 1 Quality of the organisation and its programme:** we seek to continually improve Capacity and the programmes that we offer – to ensure that they meet the needs of the beneficiaries, and that they are using the best advice, tailored to our participants. Our success is reflected in the increasing numbers of candidates applying to the programme, as participants and mentors (double the number we can accommodate) as well as the involvement of the community and visitors to Capacity public events.
- 2 Impact on the individuals who participate in the programme:** We seek to ensure that an unemployed migrant /refugee is able to leverage the knowledge and skills acquired through the Capacity Entrepreneurship Programme for their future, and that they feel more integrated and able to participate in society. If they go on to found a sustainable and profitable start-up where they can unfold their potential then that is fantastic, but if they find a rewarding job, or access further education due -or in part- to their participation in the programme, we also regard that as a success.[1]
- 3 Impact on society:** Thirdly, we look at our longer-term desired impacts on society – both in Switzerland and elsewhere. We have participants supporting beneficiaries in their home countries, we have participants looking to support disadvantaged communities here in Switzerland, and we have an amazing network of mentors, trainers and other volunteers who have developed new interests in supporting excluded communities to enter society in different ways. Our impacts at a societal level therefore range from job creation and profit creation, through to changing mindsets and attitudes of individuals towards refugees and migrants.

[1] See section on Definition of Success



The impact measurement process

Capacity defines 3 target groups:

- 1 Primary target group:** The programme participants (23 people in 2018). The participants are people with migrant and refugee background, who want to set up their own business or socio-cultural project. Capacity aims to provide this group with training and knowledge, as well as on-going support, as they set up their businesses/projects.
- 2 Secondary target group:** Mentors (20 people in 2018) and workshop trainers (9 people in 2018). These are generally professionals from the local business community. Capacity aims to encourage interactions between this group and the primary target group in professional contexts, thus challenging many assumptions about who constitutes 'refugees and migrants', and also demonstrating the potential of the primary target group, by connecting them with resources and opportunities held by the secondary target group. Mentors and trainers are also potential employers, investors and clients.
- 3 Tertiary target group:** diverse communities and the wider public: locals, expats, migrants, refugees.

In this evaluation, the primary and secondary target groups were the focus.

Definition of success

Success at Capacity is not defined in a monolithic way. Instead, it means that if an unemployed migrant /refugee is able to leverage the knowledge and skills acquired at the Capacity Entrepreneurship programme and founds a sustainable and profitable start-up where she can unfold her potential, this is considered a successful outcome. Nonetheless, we take into account that refugees and migrants rarely have the same starting conditions as locals when it comes to launching and establishing a business or socio-cultural initiative. Migrant and refugee networks tend to be narrow, and their families may be at risk or in precarious conditions in their country of origin, their foreign language skills are usually limited, and their health may have suffered as a result of trauma and violence. Therefore, we developed an impact model with a holistic frame of the definition of success, which is based on existing problems found in the Swiss society. The impact we as organisation aim to achieve at the personal and societal level as well as at a cross-geographic level are also included in our methodologies.

In this sense, when an unemployed migrant or refugee can leverage the knowledge and skills acquired through the Capacity Entrepreneurship programme and finds employment

or is accepted to a further education programme, we have succeeded at our aims. If an isolated migrant or refugee can connect with a broader community and find tools to navigate the complex and highly regulated Swiss system, we consider this as a certain degree of success as well.

Methodology

“I really enjoyed the community; it was like a family. The path can feel very long as a foreign and entrepreneur. I felt not alone after the first weekend.”

PARTICIPANT

An online survey for the primary target group and a separate online survey for the secondary target group were written following the Capacity Impact Indicators list. These were sent out in January 2019. Surveys were completed by a total of 19 participants (76%) and 11 mentors and trainers (34%).

In a second step, the participants were invited to speak about their experiences in an interview. An external person conducted the interviews to ensure neutral data collection and to create an open atmosphere in which potential criticisms could be expressed. They were conducted with a semi-structured questionnaire and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Fourteen participants (56%) took part in the interview.



Results I: The quality of the programme

1. Workshops and co-working sessions

The Entrepreneurship Programme 2018 offered 10 co-working sessions and two workshop weekends with 15 thematic inputs.

In the online survey, the participants rated the workshops on a scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). They received an average of 4.3/5 points. The input on pitching was rated best at 4.5/5, and the input on understanding profit at 3.1/5 was rated worst.

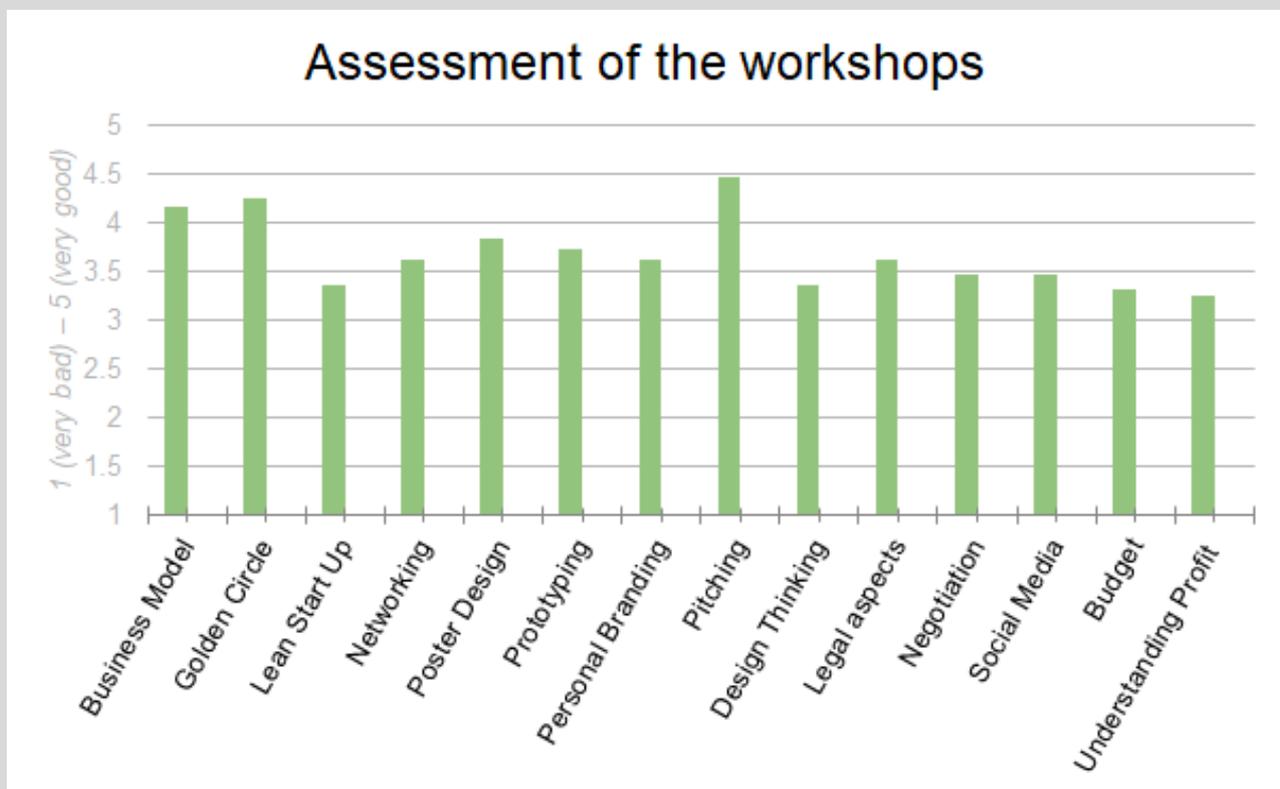


Figure 1. Workshop rating by participants on a scale from 1 to 5 (1:very bad, 5: very good)

All participants stated that their project idea had changed positively or was strengthened by their participation in the Capacity Entrepreneurship Programme. When asked to what extent their idea had changed or was strengthened, participants gave an average change of 4.4/5 points (very much helped). This was mainly the result of feedback from mentors, the Capacity team or discussions at public events as well as newly acquired knowledge. This result speaks for itself: even if not all project ideas can be implemented after the end of the programme, Capacity encourages the participants to believe in their potential and to make it visible in society.

2. Mentoring



“Just having a mentor was keeping me on track. She helped me not being overwhelmed with the amount of information, calmed down my nerves and helped me doing the first step.”

PARTICIPANT

In addition to the thematic workshops, all participants were assigned a mentor with relevant knowledge and expertise of the Swiss business world. The mentoring pairs were matched by the Capacity Team after the interviews, according to the project idea, interests, professional experience and

professional experience and language. The aim of the mentoring was to hold regular meetings in order to further develop the project, provide assistance and obtain further knowledge in order to launch the project idea in Switzerland.

Most participants found the mentoring relationship very helpful. In this context, support in the process of developing ideas was repeatedly mentioned, namely "giving orientation" and access to the network of mentors. The participants also appreciated that the mentors showed understanding for their situation, knew the problems of entrepreneurs and always motivated them for more.

Numerous mentoring couples are still in exchange today. For those who did not assess their mentoring relationship exclusively positively, the main point of criticism was the mentors' time management.

The mentoring meetings were also rated very positively by the mentors. They were asked what they had learned from their mentee. Most of all it was the insight into a new culture, the dedication and commitment of a person to something, but also the difficulty to build a life in a foreign country.

Mentors and trainers perceived participation in the programme as an enriching and exciting experience. When asked about the skills acquired by the mentors through the programme, the answers were varied and included "clear communication", "understanding people with different cultures" and "contributing one's own ideas". However, most mentors and trainers benefited from one-to-one mentoring and getting to know a person with migration and/or refugee background who is motivated and passionately committed to their project idea despite any personal difficulties.



“I am fortunate to have been born and lived in several prosperous countries and enjoyed a good education and full working career (...). At the age of 60 I wanted to pay back some of my experience and skills to people less fortunate.”

MENTOR

3. Public Events

The two public events in 2018, the Pop-Up Fair in June and the Pitch Party in November at the end of the programme were both very well attended.

The aim of the two events was to give participants the opportunity to present their idea to a wide audience, receive feedback and build their network. In the online questionnaire, the Pop-Up Fair received on average 4.2/5 points, the Pitching Party 4.6/5. The participants appreciated the exchange with the visitors on both occasions and felt euphoric especially after their pitch, so that the motivation for the next steps was given.

How did participants enjoy the events

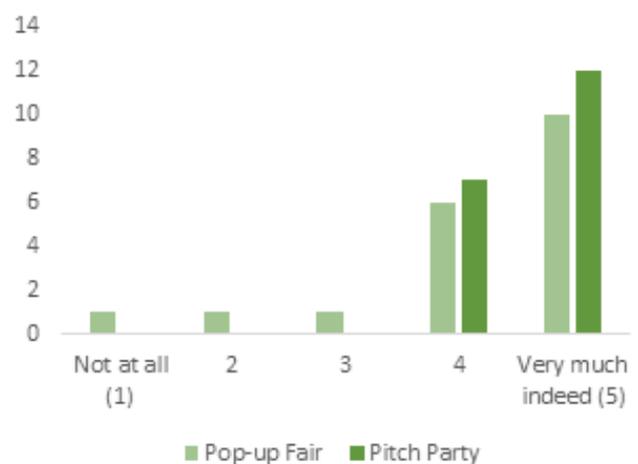


Figure 2. Enjoyment of the public events by participants

4. The overall organisation of the 2018 programme

The overall organisation received a rating of 4.7/5 points (very good). The participants found the support of the Capacity Team very valuable, as they were available at all times and took the problems and needs of the participants seriously. The mood among the participants was also good. For this reason, all participants would recommend the programme to others.



“The programme opened my eyes to the challenges faced by participants, but also the enthusiasm, teamwork and great mutual support that the participants build and share.”

MENTOR

“I was really impressed by how much all entrepreneurs of 2018 developed and grew in skills, insights and confidence.”

MENTOR

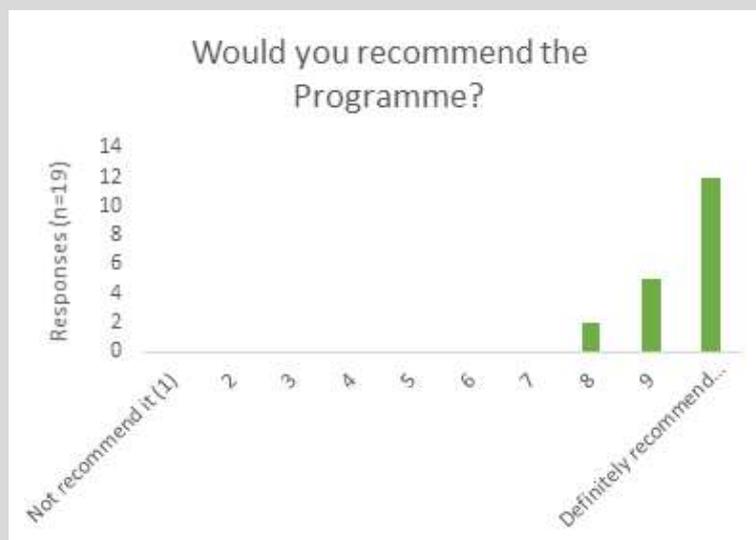


Figure 3. Likelihood of recommending the programme

However, the participants were also asked for improvement points in the interviews. The opportunity for exchange with former participants was mentioned the most frequently, followed by comments from those in employment that the timing of the Office Hours (sessions when the team was available for 1-to-1 support sessions with participants) was rather awkward for them. There were also comments that the amount of content in workshops was at times overwhelming.

The mentors and trainers also assessed the overall organisation very well and recommended the Programme to others. They particularly appreciated the intercultural exchange, the work of Capacity itself and the possibility of engagement.

... what the participants say about Capacity...



... what the mentors say about Capacity...



Results II: Impact on the individual

The evaluation measured the impact of the programme on the participants, not only on acquisition of skills and improvement of the project but on the emotional level and in terms of soft skills, in dealing with difficult situations and their perception in Swiss society.

The participants report an improvement in knowledge and acquisition of skills regarding entrepreneurial activities in the Swiss context. In the interviews, the participants were asked about their concerns regarding the development and implementation of their project ideas. The most frequently mentioned points were: lack of knowledge about the Swiss system, the first steps and project overview as well as financial resources and the network. Some participants also reported a lack of self-confidence in their abilities. In all these aspects, participants report a significant improvement after their participation in the programme.

“It is a programme focused on individual, to boost their potential and to go after their dreams. The team behind is truly inspiring. We need to highlight that, everyone loves what they do and they want to generate impact.”

PARTICIPANT

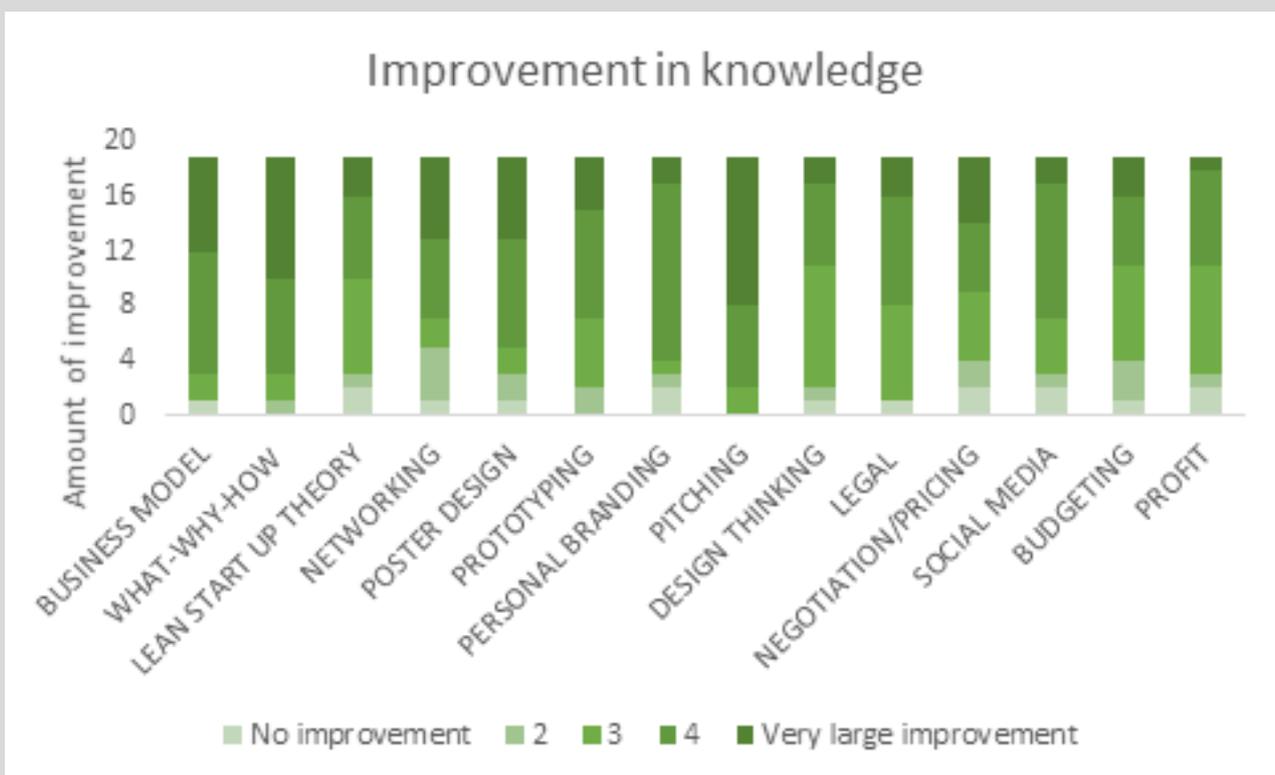


Figure 4. Degree of improvement in knowledge thanks to the programme

Because the Capacity Entrepreneurship programme is bilingual German-English, by attending the bilingual programme the participants noted that they improved their language skills in both languages:

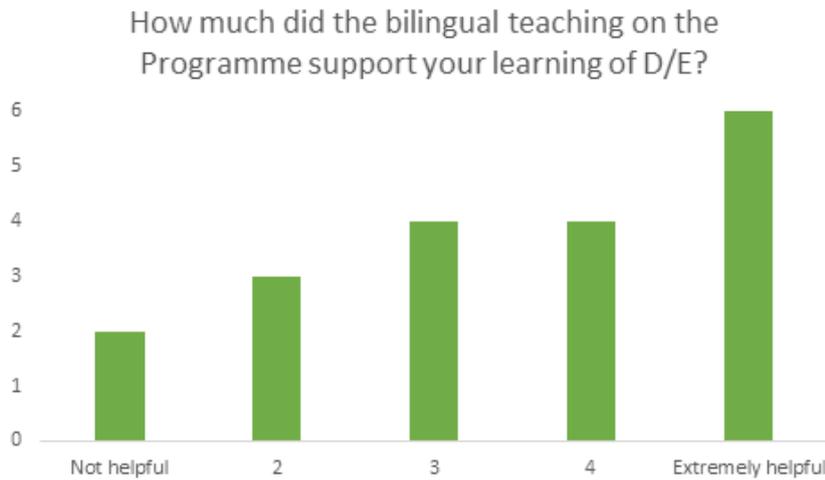


Figure 5. Level of language learning through the bilingual programme

“I was always questioning my capabilities as an entrepreneur. Capacity is a place where I met other people with the same struggles.”

PARTICIPANT

Participants noted that their confidence increased as a result of the knowledge acquired through the programme, the more extended network, an overview of the project stages and the knowledge that more people also believe in their project idea.

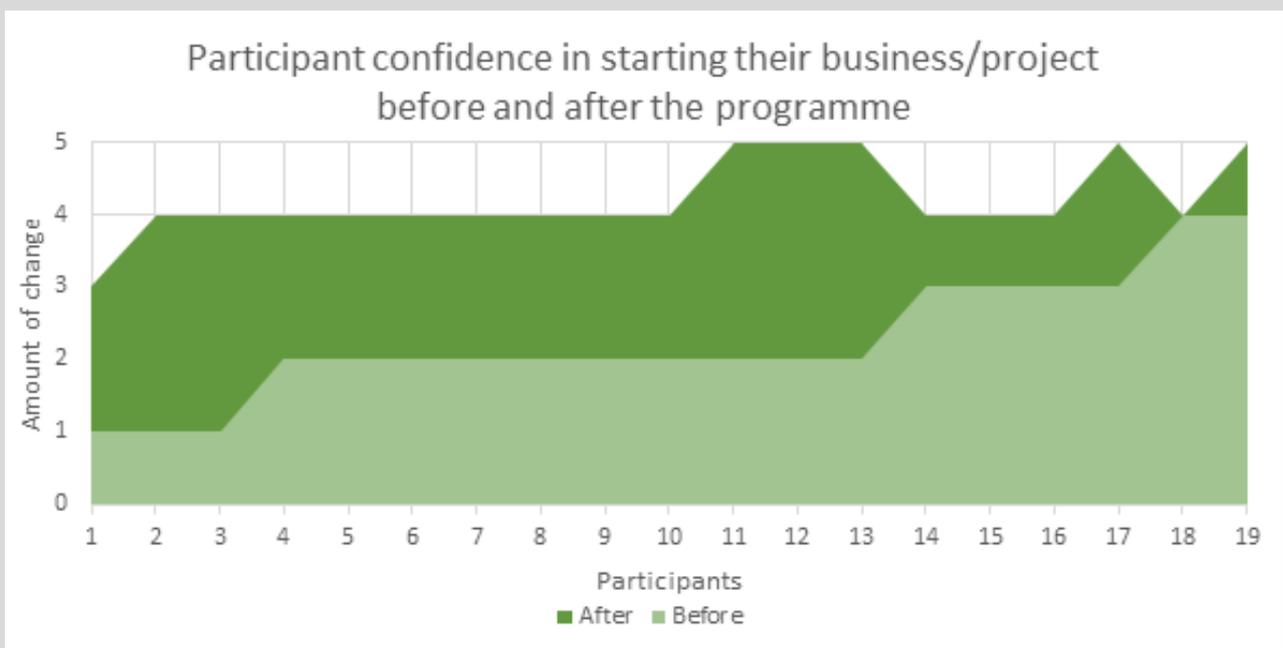


Figure 6. Level of participants' self-confidence before and after the Capacity Entrepreneurship Programme on a scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good).



“I felt less an outsider. I was part of a small community which met about every week and I just felt more like home.”

PARTICIPANT

Participants were also asked what entrepreneurial skills they had acquired or improved through the programme. Entrepreneurial mindset (17.2%), understanding diversity, intercultural communication and teamwork (15.1% each) stand out.

In terms of legal entities, which the participants founded during the participation of the programme to implement their projects into businesses and initiatives, there were substantial accomplishments, as displayed in the chart below.

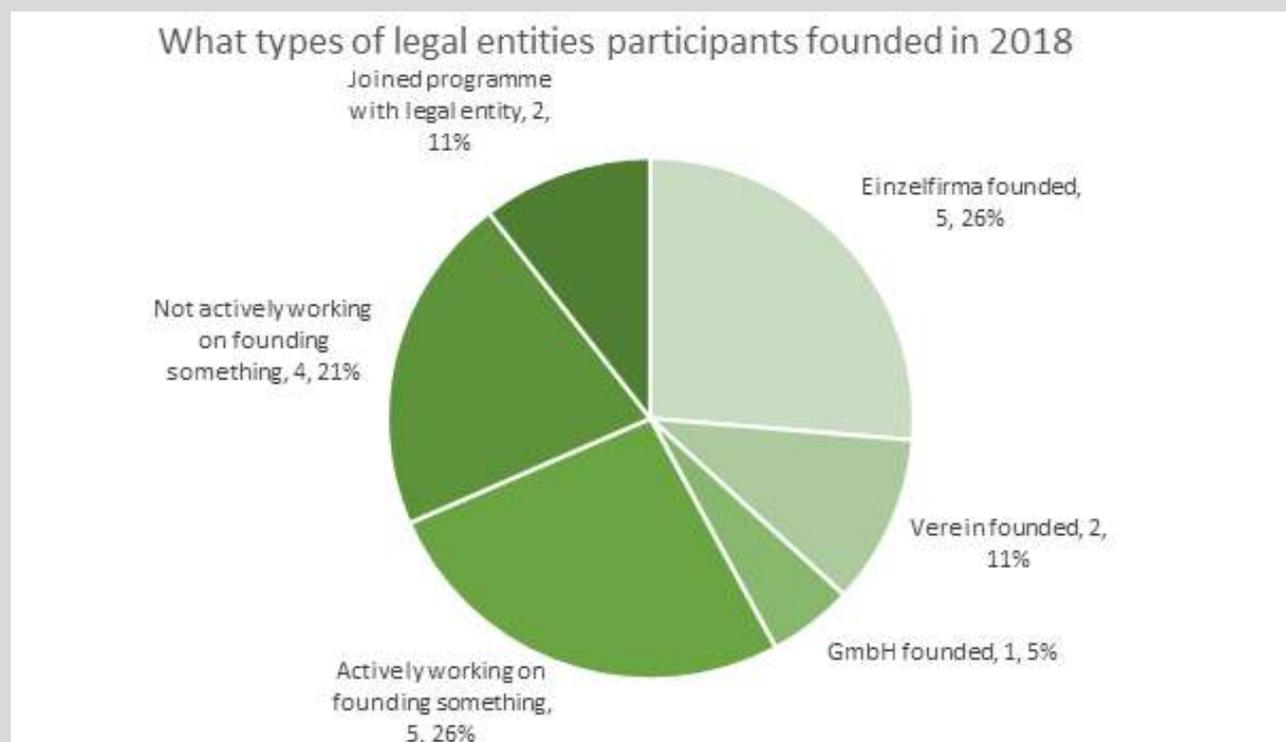


Figure 7. Types of organisation founded by participants in 2018

At the end of the programme, it is still too early to judge if a project will be successful or not. Nevertheless, the entities founded and the improvements in knowledge brought major motivation for participants to continue pursuing their entrepreneurial path, which is also reflected in how empowered they feel at the end of the programme.

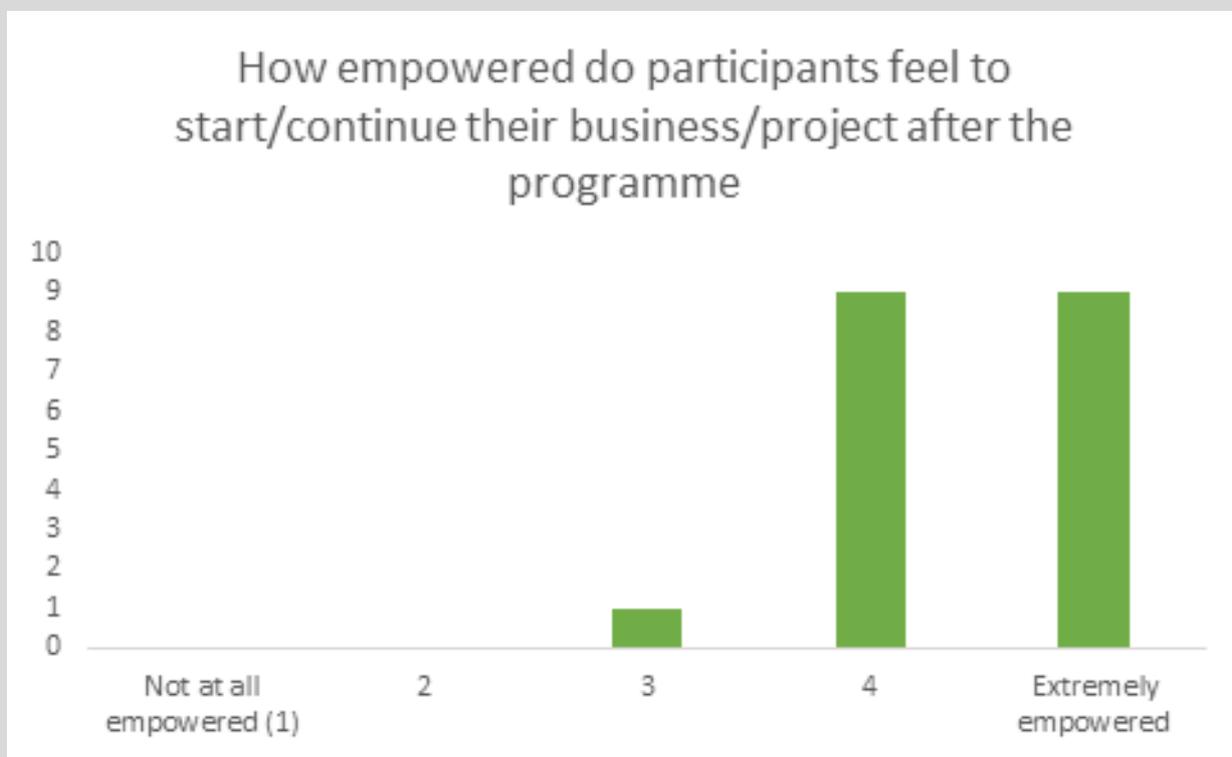


Figure 8. Degree of empowerment to carry on their business / project development

“The best thing about the programme: It’s for everyone and they have the resources also after the end of the programme – it’s amazing!”

PARTICIPANT



At the emotional/soft skills level, participants reported considerable changes. All of the participants both feel prepared for the tasks ahead but also felt that they belong to a community of people with similar obstacles to overcome. Participants felt more connected to Switzerland, felt that they have a contact reference for problem-solving and gained enormous self-confidence, which is also reflected in their day to day life.

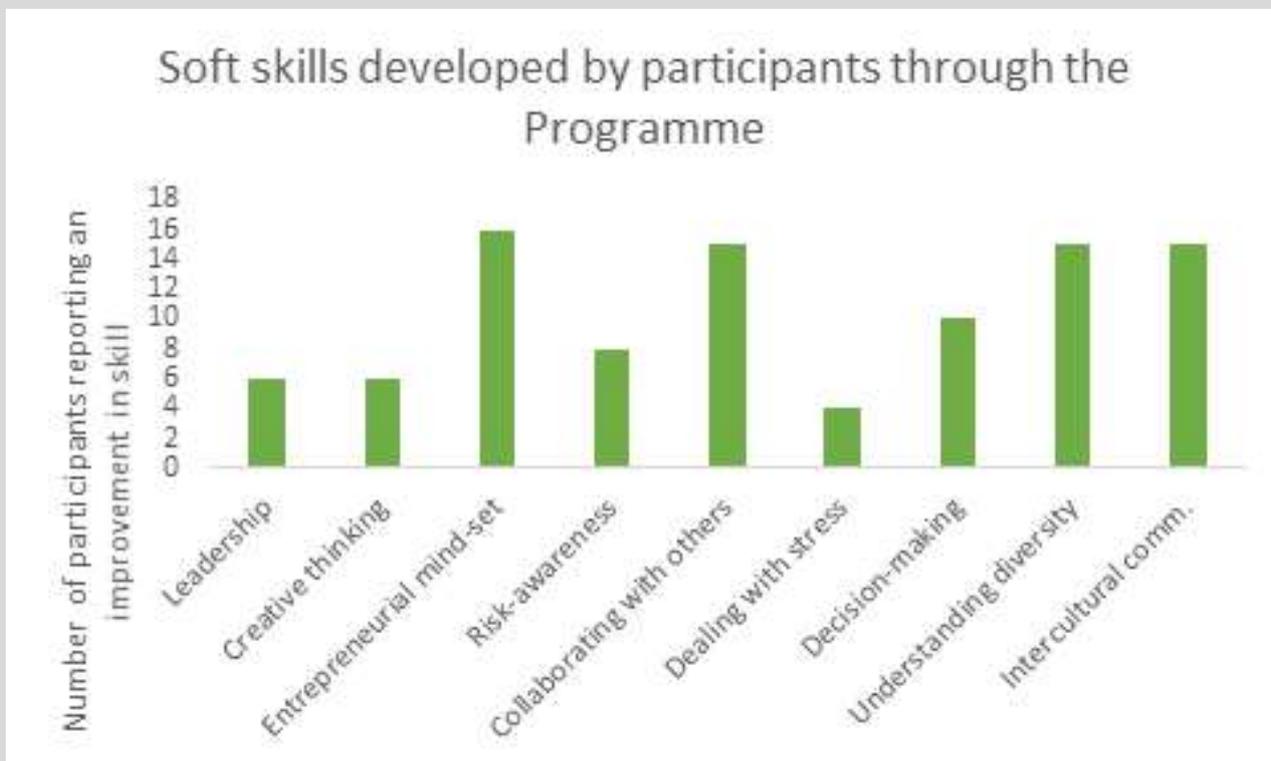


Figure 9. Degree of improvement in soft skills through the programme



Results III: Social Impact

To measure our social impact, namely, if participants are better integrated into the host society both economically and socially, the participants were presented with different statements that they could affirm, deny or answer in detail.

The majority of participants noted that after attending the programme, they were more likely to attend local events in Zurich in a confident way. They all said that their network had expanded.

Financial security was also a key question in the survey and interviews. When asked whether the participants felt financially more secure through the development and implementation of their project idea, almost no one had yet become financially secure solely through their business. This is to be expected, given the early stage of development of most of the projects. The Alumni of 2018, as well as those from 2017 and 2016, will continue to be monitored on their success over time, reflecting the reality of establishing a new business.

Participants were also asked about which skills they improved, making them more attractive for employers. They indicated that improving presenting and pitching (36% indicated a very large improvement) was extremely important, as well as developing confidence in public spaces (34%). Other skills which they improved were confidence, networking and increased knowledge in project management and cv writing.



“I often felt lonely. At Capacity, I was one more [migrant] and not the weird one. It really helped me to understand that I am not the only one and that I can manage it. It was like having a family and support group.”

PARTICIPANT

Attractiveness as an employee as a result of acquired skills and knowledge

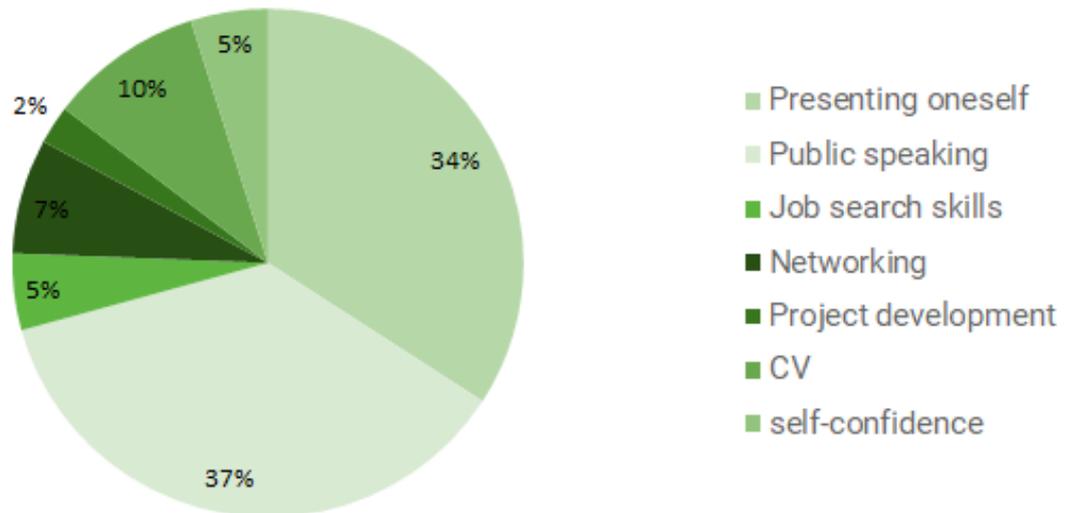


Figure 10. Overview of the assessment of which new skills or knowledge make the participants attractive employees.

“I have master’s degree, but I could not find a job. I felt very bad and I needed people to understand what I was getting through. When I met [Capacity], I was like ‘wow’ and it was the perfect time.”

PARTICIPANT

As part of the social impact, mentors and trainers -our second target group - were asked whether they were more aware of the situation of migrants and refugees in Switzerland. The majority answered the question in the affirmative, others said that they were already aware of the situation. When we asked mentors if they were more willing to employ migrants or refugees after the programme, half of them stated that they had already hired migrants or refugees or recommended them to someone in their network. The other half said that they did not have the opportunity yet because they were not in the position to do so. All mentors were open to hiring migrants or refugees, provided that the conditions, i.e. identity cards, skills and motivation, were aligned. Finally, mentors and trainers were asked whether they have been (more) involved in migration and refugee issues since participating in the programme. Six people answered no and five said yes, suggesting that whilst many of the mentors do end up more engaged with these topics, it is not for everyone.

“They bring everybody forward, make us ready to set up our business. And the best, it continues. They still write us about events and make us think even after the programme.”

PARTICIPANT



Capacity works hard to ensure its mentors learn new skills, as well as using their skills to support their mentees. One way in which this is done is through emphasising inclusive language – a very subtle way for individuals to ensure that those around them are included and not excluded through their choice of words. This is especially important in a migration and gender context, where many phrases and words are very negative/excluding/upsetting for some

groups, or in contexts where multiple languages are used and phrases do not always translate directly. Seven out of eleven mentors and trainers interviewed stated that they had become more aware of their language use when participating in the Capacity Entrepreneurship programme and that they were now trying to communicate more inclusively.

Finally, the mentors and trainers were asked if they felt that through their mentoring role, they had become ‘Changemakers’, working for change in how society is. The answers were very diverse, but the question was answered affirmatively. Many said that through the experience and knowledge gained, they could lead more positive discussions about the situation of migrants and refugees and know that they can make a difference.

“A truly impressive demonstration of cooperation between diverse cultures and backgrounds – the world needs more people like them!”

MENTOR

Conclusion

The results of this evaluation portray the impact that Capacity wants to have on its participants and on society more broadly. After carrying out our programmes and delivering our offer to all target groups, we are gratified to see positive change at the individual and societal level. In this sense, we are confident of fulfilling our mission of contributing to a more diverse and inclusive Swiss society with higher (self)employment opportunities and social interactions between locals and entrepreneurs with migrant and refugee background. In the coming years, we will continue to monitor the 2018 cohort, as well as the alumni from previous and current cohorts of entrepreneurs. Our aim is to better assess the mid- to long-term effects of all Capacity's Entrepreneurship Programmes.

“With Capacity I found people who are really supportive. Here they help selflessly, that's the biggest thing and changes mindsets, you start learning from people. It's all about human connection.”

PARTICIPANT

