**ESMERALD Consolidated Multiplier Events:**

**Final Report**

**Consolidated by: South-East European Research Centre (SEERC)**

This report acts as a summary of the ESMERALD multiplier events undertaken by:

Institut de Haute Formation aux Politiques Communautaires (IHF)

IDP

University of Dubrovnik (UNIDU)

Cracow University of Economics (CUE)

South-East European Research Centre (SEERC)

Mercatus et Civis

Internet Web Solutions (IWS)

Each of the individual reports provided by each partner is provided in the appendices to this document and form an integral and inseparable part of this report.

**Summary:**

Following on from the six pilot studies and validation of the ESMERALD a total of 7 (seven) multiplier events were conducted in Poland (two events), Greece, Croatia, Italy, Belgium, and Spain with a face-to-face audience of 242 and an additional 110 online 352 total. The key summary information related to these events (partner, number of attendees, and background of attendees) is summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Overview of Multiplier Events**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Partner** | **Number of**  **Attendees** | **Overview of attendees** |
| IHF | 10 | Entrepreneurs; professionals; students |
| IDP | 33 | VET Students; young entrepreneurs |
| SEERC | 30 F2F  110 online / streamed | SME owners; professionals (plus online streamed views of 140 total)  Secondary, ad hoc multiplier event: 83 Business owners and managers; professionals |
| UEK | 70 | SME owners and managers; students |
| UNIDU | 22 | SME owners and managers |
| IWS | 47 | VET students; entrepreneurs to be; job seekers |
| MCF | 30 | SMEs owners; NGOs; entrepreneurs to be |
| **Total** | **242 F2F**  **110 online** |  |

Each partner was directly responsible for promoting their individual events and ensuring coverage of applicable stakeholder groups. As can be deducted from Table 1, the consortia managed to attract attendees representing each of the key ESMERALD stakeholder groups thus ensuring a balance representation of the final training outputs.

From both the formal and the informal feedback from attendees the following was identified:

1. High percentage of attendees were attracted to the event by direct contact by partners and associated organizations

Learning: there is a high trust level between attendees and consortia members who are able to specifically target the correct target markets for this project

1. Project Relevance: A very high percentage of attendees indicated that the ESMERALD training offering was of high value and important for today’s and tomorrow’s SMEs

Learning: The specificity of the training, and its direct link to the target has been well founded and the pilot testing (validation) has had a positive outcome on the final results.

1. Training Topic Relevance: It is natural that different target groups, and in fact different country specificities, will impact the relevance and importance of various training topics. It appeared that the trainings devised through ESMERALD will have some longevity given the interest in areas such as all things digital (e.g., cloud, telework), post-pandemic business models, and public assistance for business)

Learning: Integrating effective partner knowledge and research, in combination with the needs of SMEs is critical in the development of future training to ‘stay ahead of the curve’ in terms of where SMEs are going.

1. Word-of-Mouth: There was a high level of positiveness of attendees toward informing their network going forward given the practical application of the ESMERALD training offering.

Learning: There is a need for tools to practically assist SMEs given the challenges they face. When such trainings are made available, word spreads

**Appendices**:

Partner Multiplier reports ordered as:

Partner: IHF Europe

Partner: IDP

Partner: South-East European Research Centre

Partner: Cracow University of Economics (UEK)

Partner: University of Dubrovnik (UNIDU)

Partner: Internet Web Solutions (IWS)

Partner: The Mercatus et Civis Foundation (MCF)

**Multiplier Event report – Institut de Haute Formation aux Politiques Communautaires (IHF)**

**Enhancing SMEs' Resilience After Lock Down (Project reference number: 2020-1-PL01-KA226-VET-095626)**

The ESMERALD Project's Multiplier Event took place on December 13, 2022, at 15:00 CET, focusing on enhancing the resilience and recovery of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) after the global pandemic. The event was attended by a diverse group of 10 participants, including entrepreneurs, professionals, and students.

Throughout the event, the participants engaged in insightful discussions, shared experiences, and explored the various tools and resources presented by the ESMERALD project. Lorenzo Costantino, a representative from IHF asbl, led the event as a speaker and facilitated the sessions, encouraging interaction and collaboration among attendees.

Entrepreneurs in attendance benefited from the operational overview of ESMERALD, learning about the project's consortium, structure, and objectives. They also gained valuable insights from the main results presented during the event, such as the Open Educational Resources (OER) platform's structure and content, as well as the EU context analysis.

Professionals and students had the opportunity to actively participate in the panel discussion on the trajectories of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) resilience in the EU post-pandemic context. This discussion provided a platform for exchanging ideas, challenges, and potential solutions to enhance the resilience of SMEs in a rapidly changing business environment.

During the event, attendees explored the prospects for future cooperation and active involvement of local stakeholders. The participants expressed their interest in continuing collaboration and knowledge sharing, recognizing the value of the ESMERALD project in fostering a supportive network for SMEs across the EU.

The event concluded with final remarks and a sense of optimism for the future of SME resilience and recovery. The ESMERALD project, through this successful Multiplier Event, has proven its potential in providing valuable resources, training materials, and networking opportunities for SMEs in the post-pandemic era.

**Multiplier Event Report - Enhancing SMEs' Resilience After Lockdown**

***Project Reference Number: 2020-1-PL01-KA226-VET-095626***

IDP European Consultants organized a comprehensive multiplier event as part of the ESMERALD project on the 24th of May 2023. This was done to showcase the progress and achievements of the project, focusing on enhancing the resilience of SMEs after the lockdown period.

**24th May 2023 Event**

The event took place on the 24th of May 2023 in Pescara, Italy, and was attended by 33 participants, comprising students and young entrepreneurs, particularly those from the University of Pescara's Faculty of Economics. The event aimed to foster networking and promote the ESMERALD project, providing valuable insights into its objectives, work plan, and intellectual outputs.

The event commenced with a warm welcome and a concise introduction by IDP European Consultants, setting the stage for the day's proceedings. A background project overview session presented the composition and structure of the partnership, emphasizing the collaborative efforts and long-term sustainability of the project.

Attendees were then guided through a detailed explanation of the work breakdown structure, timeline, and expected results and deliverables of the ESMERALD project. They also had the opportunity to gain insights into the ESMERALD OER (Open Educational Resources) Platform, its contents, and functionalities. Additionally, the outcomes derived from the needs analysis, particularly the Italian country report, were discussed, providing attendees with a broader perspective through a comparative analysis with the European panorama.

A practical demonstration of the ESMERALD training courses further enriched the participants' understanding of the project's educational offerings. The event concluded with a session on the political relevance of the project's results and the long-term sustainability of its outcomes, emphasizing their significance in shaping policies and strategies.

**Multiplier Event report – South-East European Research Centre (SEERC)**

**Enhancing SMEs' Resilience After Lock Down (Project reference number: 2020-1-PL01-KA226-VET-095626)**

The South-East European Research Centre (SEERC) and the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) co-organized an informative multiplier event entitled “Working with Millennials and Generation Z: A new beginning or the beginning of the end?” on Monday, March 27, 2023 at the Conference Hall of the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in the frame of the ESMERALD project, funded by the EU Erasmus+ program. The event was held in collaboration with the Chamber and the Exporters' Association of Northern Greece - SEVE. The event was also live streamed on the Chamber’s YouTube Channel. The integration of these two organizations helped to amplify the ESMERALD project across their networks beyond the multiplier event itself.

In the era of the digital content and in order to strengthen SME’s competitiveness and resilience, in the post COVID-19 era, Prof. Leslie Szamosi, Professor at City College, University of York Europe Campus provided an insightful presentation describing the needs of different generations working in the organizations and how to manage multi-generational workforces with a strong emphasis on Millennials and Generation Z. This was followed with a presentation and discussion of the ESMERALD project and its outcomes and their integration with younger generations and SMEs. Mrs. May Demetzi, National & EU project coordinator from SEVE Greek Exporters Association provided a presentation about the next coming up generation of leaders and employees is Generation Z, who want their opinion to be heard in their home workplace, want to have a quick impact and they like to work more independently than collaborative.

A total of 57 people officially registered for the event through the Chamber, 30 participants participated live in the Chamber premises (extremely heavy rain this day) while the live stream of the event (and subsequent online views) currently number 110.

**Overall Summary:**

A summary of the responses to a survey related to the multiplier found the following:

Participants found out about the event through:

* 85% direct contact (heavy promotion done with the TCCI and by ourselves)
* 15% through a friend / colleague

The topics found to be of most interest included (many of the topics were mentioned but the top 6 are presented):

* The use of cloud computing solutions
* Increasing the level of customer service
* Work-life balance in a telecommuting environment
* Value proposition in post-pandemic business models: innovative approach to marketing
* Accessible public assistance for entrepreneurs-tailored solutions + where to find them
* Business models based on flexible organizational structures - implementation of new technologies, digitalization strategy

Participants overwhelmingly (90%) indicated that the proposed training met (and exceeded) their entrepreneurial expectations and that they would recommend the platform to colleagues.

It is also important to note that, although not an official ESMERALD multiplier event, on April 5, Prof. Szamosi presented the outcomes and ESMERALD offering to 83 owners and managers of companies from throughout Central, South, and Eastern Europe (as well as the Caucuses region) during a workshop entitled “Welcome to the Dark Side! The Dark Triad and me: Exploring Leadership From A Different Angle and its Impact on The Workplace”. This event was part of the 13th Annual Strategic People Management Workshop held in the premises of CITY College, University of York Europe Campus. In this ad hoc multiplier event, participants became very engaged in a discussion about business leadership and its link to SME and business success and found great value in the modules offered and were asking if they could pass the information along to others. The panel included Prof. Szamosi, Prof. Psychogios from the Birmingham CITY University along with two online guests from the U.K. and Ireland.

**Multiplier Event report – University of Economics in Kraków (UEK)**

**Enhancing SMEs' Resilience After Lock Down (Project reference number: 2020-1-PL01-KA226-VET-095626)**

A total of approximately 70 participants took part in the study, including SMEs (approximately 20 entities) and UEK students from the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Finance and Accounting. Students are an important target group of our project, as in the future, while practicing their profession as lawyers, they will be able to strengthen the economic position of entrepreneurs (by providing them with legal assistance) and recognize the threats that the pandemic may bring to entrepreneurs. The meeting took place on the premises of UEK in one of the lecture rooms.

At the beginning of the meeting, the ESMERALD project within the Erasmus+ programme was presented. After the introduction, Prof. Monika Szaraniec introduced the partners in the project consortium, the project objectives and the results. He then gave a detailed presentation of the innovative OER platform, its content and its many benefits. An overview of all relevant elements of the ESMERALD project formed the basis for the central part of the multiplier, which included a panel discussion.

The panel discussion focused primarily on the following modules: (1) Business models based on flexible organizational structures - implementation of new technologies, digitalization strategy; (2) Remote working (including new regulations for Poland) and the practice of using it; (3) Flexible working time solutions; (4) Work-life balance in remote working conditions; (5) Use of cloud solutions; (6) Netiquette in business.

The event was very successful and motivating. As can be seen from the agenda, the event was adequately organized with an introduction and operational overview followed by a panel discussion on opportunities for MSMEs after the pandemic with questions and comments. Participants were interested in the materials presented and showed a very proactive attitude by sharing their experiences. The organizer conducted a satisfaction survey, the results of which are presented below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Survey question | Number of votes cast  votes | Percentage ratio  to total number of respondents |
| 1. How did you find out about the event? |  |  |
| from the website of UEK, Department of  Public Economic Law and Labour Law | 6. | ~8% |
| from an individual invitation | 51. | ~64% |
| by order of | 23. | ~28% |
| 2. Which topics interested you the most? |  |  |
| Business models based on flexible organisational structures - implementation of new technologies, digitalisation strategy | 10. | ~13% |
| Remote working (new regulations for Poland) and the practice of using it | 24. | ~30% |
| Flexible working time solutions | 22. | ~28% |
| Work-life balance in a remote working environment | 34. | ~43% |
| Use of cloud computing solutions | 38. | ~48% |
| Netiquette in business | 7. | ~9% |
| Others presented at the meeting | - | - |
| 3 How much would you rate the parcticality of the training topics on a scale of 1 to 5? |  |  |
| on 1 | - | - |
| on 2 | 1. | ~1% |
| on 3 | 11. | ~14% |
| on 4 | 37. | ~46% |
| on 5 | 31. | ~39% |
| 4 Would you recommend the event to others/entrepreneurs? |  |  |
| definitely yes | 30. | ~38% |
| rather yes | 41. | ~51% |
| rather no | 1. | ~1% |
| no | 3. | ~4% |
| I don't know | 5. | ~6% |
|  |  |  |

**Multiplier Event report – University of Dubrovnik (UNIDU)**

**Enhancing SMEs' Resilience After Lock Down (Project reference number: 2020-1-PL01-KA226-VET-095626)**

The University of Dubrovnik - Centre for Research on Digital Transformation (CREDO) organised a multiplier event in Dubrovnik on April 17, 2023. At the beginning, the ESMERALD project within the Erasmus+ programme was first introduced. Following the introduction, Prof. Nebojša Stojčić presented the partners in the project consortium, the project objectives and results. He then gave a detailed insight into the innovative OER platform, its content and its numerous benefits. The overview of all essential elements of the ESMERALD project formed the basis for the central part of the multiplier event, which included a panel discussion.

The panel discussion focused primarily on the following modules: (a) Business models based on flexible organisational structures - implementation of new technologies, digitization strategy, (b) Ways of building strong relationships and meeting their various needs, (c) Work-life balance in tele-working settings, and (d) Health and work-life balance disorders. Although these four modules were the focus, during the discussion participants also addressed the topics of other modules, such as public aid for enterprises, flexible solutions in working time, implementing the omnichannel model, and increasing convenience and netiquette in business contexts.

The multiplier event was held in one of the buildings of the University of Dubrovnik. The participants of this multiplier event were representatives of Croatian micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. A total of 22 representatives of Croatian micro, small and medium-sized enterprises actively participated in the multiplier event. They were informed about the characteristics and opportunities that the post-pandemic period offers to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and how the results of the ESMERALD project can support their activities in the post-pandemic period. The multiplier event was very successful and motivating. As can be seen from the agenda, the event was appropriately structured with an introduction and operational overview followed by a panel discussion on post-pandemic opportunities for MSMEs with questions and comments. Participants were interested in the materials presented and showed a very proactive attitude by sharing their experiences, asking relevant questions and participating in the discussion.

**Multiplier Event report – IWS**

**Enhancing SMEs' Resilience After Lock Down (Project reference number: 2020-1-PL01-KA226-VET-095626)**

IWS organised a multiplier event consisting of one session on the 18th of January 2023 in Málaga. Despite also mentioning the second output of the project, the event presented the first and third outputs of the project, with a focus on the following modules: ‘Implementing the omnichannel model and increasing convenience’, ‘Increasing the level of security of online transactions’, ‘Use of cloud computing solutions’, ‘Development of new e-commerce / m-commerce channels’ .

IWS has engaged Vet students, entrepreneurs to be and job searchers from the organisation in order to deliver an accurate, first-hand experience in the Spanish context.

The multiplier event took place in the facilities of the Secondary School IES Ben Gabirol, a big, educational institution in the City of Malaga, with the collaboration of ARRABAL-AID, an associate partner and stakeholder of the project. In this fantastic venue, 47 attendees have been informed of the characteristics and opportunities this post-pandemic period offers for micro, small and medium businesses.

Given the fantastic venue that was full despite its high capacity, the event was successful. As seen in the agenda, the event had a structure, with an introduction, and an operational overview ensued by a panel discussion on post-pandemic opportunities for MSMEs with questions and remarks. Additionally, the Ben Gabirol professionals, ARRABAL-AID staff and the trainees had a proactive attitude, paying attention to the materials, asking relevant questions and taking notes.

**Multiplier Event report – The Mercatus et Civis Foundation (MCF)**

**Enhancing SMEs' Resilience After Lock Down (Project reference number: 2020-1-PL01-KA226-VET-095626)**

1. On 23.02.2022. the Mercatus et Civis Foundation organized an event to disseminate the results of the ESMERALD project, titled "Strengthening the resilience of SMEs after lockdown". The meeting was held at the Kantoria Hotel in Tarnow, at 28A Piłsudskiego Street in Tarnow.

Announcement about the event was posted on the Foundation's website and disseminated through the individual invitation to selected individuals as well.

http://www.mercatusetcivis.pl/post/116-wydarzenie-upowszechniajace-wyniki-projektu--esmerald---pt-wzmocnienie-odpornosci-msp-po-lockdownie

2

At the beginning of the meeting, Ms. Elżbieta Slugocka-Krupa presented the idea and assumptions of the ESMERALD project - entitled "Strengthening the resilience of SMEs after lockdown".

The meeting, scheduled for 2 hours, lasted more than 3.5 hours during which a lively discussion arose, in the course of which participants not only listened to the speakers but also shared their experiences. In addition, they expressed deep interest in the topics discussed, including asking about the possible continuation of this kind of research.

The following topics were presented during the event:

1. Flexible working time solutions

2. Ways of building strong relationships with customers and meet their various needs

3. Psychological needs and psychological well-being - empathy in the workplace

4. Netiquette in business

5. Processes and quality of work organization

6. Enhancing the security level of online transactions

The meeting was attended by 30 people representing not only SMEs but also other entities (e.g., NGOs) and individuals, including those who (according to the discussion) were considering starting a business in various forms.

3 There was a multi aspect debate owing to the wide spectrum of people taking part in the meeting. A relevant attendance list was compiled from the meeting. The meeting was led by: Ms.Elżbieta Sługocka-Krupa oraz Mr.Krzysztof Podgórski. 4

As part of the meeting, the Foundation prepared refreshments for the participants of the event (cakes, pies, coffee, tea, drinks and hot meals). In addition, to one non-local participant were paid accommodation costs.

II. After the meet the participants filled out a survey answering the following questions:

1. How did you find out about the event ?

2. Which topics did you like the best ?

3. How much do you rate the usefulness of the training topics presented assessing from from 1 to 5 ?

4. Would you recommend this kind of event/meeting to other entrepreneurs ?

1. For the question: *How did you find out about the event* ? –

o From the Mercatus et Civis Foundation website **- 5**

o Through the individual invitation - **14**

o Through the recommendation – 11

2. For the multi choice question : *Which topics did you like the best* ? -

o Flexible working time solutions - **22**

o Ways of building strong relationships with customers and meet their various needs- **9**

o Psychological needs and psychological well-being - empathy in the workplace- **13**

o Netiquette in business - **11**

o Processes and quality of work organization - **11**

o Enhancing the security level of online transactions - **10**

o Other presented during the meeting - 7

3. *How much do you rate the usefulness of the training topics presented assessing from 1 to 5* ? – **all attendees marked the “5”** .

4. For the question: *Would you recommend this kind of event/meeting to other entrepreneurs* ? – the attenders marked the following answers:

* o Definitely yes - 27
* o Rather yes - 3
* o Rather not
* o No
* o I don’t know

**Findings:**

The event/meeting was positively appraised by the participants. The attenders expressed interest in the project and the website promoting its content. They keenly discussed during the meeting and exchanged to each other with the experience they got during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic.