

SELF

Solo-entrepreneurship in post-pandemic Europe

Mapping and extrapolating solo-entrepreneurship trends & features

ANNEX 2

Country Report Template

Country Snapshot: Portugal

Developed by: University of Aveiro

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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on all sectors of the economy and society, and the realm of solo-entrepreneurship is no exception. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the solo-entrepreneurship landscape in Portugal, with a particular focus on the trends and features that have emerged in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. A key aspect in this analysis is the role of higher education and policy makers in shaping the solo-entrepreneurship ecosystem.

In the context of Europe, Portugal stands out for its resilience and adaptability. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemics, the country has witnessed a surge in solo-entrepreneurship, driven by factors such as digital transformation, changes in work patterns, and evolving consumer behaviours. Higher education institutions have played a key role in this transformation, providing the necessary skills and knowledge for individuals to start their own solo-entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is a concept that has been practiced since ancient times but has gained widespread recognition and acceptance as a respected tool for economic growth, wealth and job creation, as well as national empowerment. Entrepreneurs need to take actions (McMullen and Shepherd, 2006) to begin the entrepreneurial process regarding the uncertainty in their actions and decisions. Considering the literature addressing the characteristics of entrepreneurs, there is no clear definition of the concept (Salmony and Kanbach, 2022), despite the ultimate goal of entrepreneurship in creating employment opportunities and driving economic development (Barot, 2015; Hessels and Naudé, 2019).

Self-employed individuals have different motivations to embrace their projects (Schumpeter, 1931; Tran et al., 2021). On the one hand, there are the so-called opportunity-based self-employed individuals who are highly educated and wish to provide skilled services or to realise themselves (Van Stel and de Vries, 2015; Matzembacher et al., 2019). On the other hand, necessity-based self-employed push individuals that have no other options in the labour market to carrying on their own jobs (Falco and Haywood, 2016; Matzembacher et al., 2019).

This report maps these trends and extrapolates future trajectories, providing valuable insights for entrepreneurs, policymakers and investors alike. It also places Portugal within the broader European context, comparing and contrasting its solo-entrepreneurship trends with those of other European nations. Europe's diverse economies offer a rich scenario of entrepreneurial practices and trends, providing a powerful comparative framework for understanding Portugal's unique entrepreneurial landscape. Therefore, understanding these trends and characteristics, in particular the role of higher education in promoting solo-entrepreneurship, is crucial for developing skills and shaping strategies that can foster a vibrant and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem in Portugal, thereby contributing to the country's economic recovery and future growth.

This report presents a quantitative and qualitative description of the self-employment and entrepreneurship countryside, before and post-pandemic COVID 19 outbreaks. The case studies illustrate some of the gaps in the solo-entrepreneurship landscape in Portugal, such as the need for more robust support systems, digital skills, and the ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. They also highlight the resilience and creativity of the entrepreneurial community in Portugal. Findings suggest that while there is a vibrant culture of solo-entrepreneurship and self-employment in Portugal, there are also areas where targeted policies could help to further encourage future self-entrepreneurship projects.

Quantitative indicators on solo entrepreneurship and self-employment in Portugal

In this section, we provide quantitative indicators on solo entrepreneurship and self-employment in Portugal, especially addressing historic evolution of the phenomenon (e.g., pre and post pandemic), spatial distribution (i.e., per region, north vs south, etc.), gender/generational connotations and other relevant statistics concerning education.

Historic evolution

Solo self-employment has become an increasingly prominent feature of the labour market in several European countries (Milasi and Mitra, 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably had a very relevant impact on the entire solo entrepreneurship and self-employment ecosystem (Meyer, 2021). In 2019, there were about 18 million solo self-employed in the EU, accounting for around 70 per cent of all self-employed workers and for about 9 per cent of total employment¹ (Eurostat, 2021).

Data from Eurostat (2011-2021) shows a residual decrease in solo self-employment / total employment rate (11,70 to 10,50) regarding Portugal before and after the pandemic of Covid-19, but the values are slightly higher when compared to the UE average rate (8,80 to 9,0) from 2011 to 2021, respectively.

Spatial distribution

The national entrepreneurial ecosystem currently consists of 2236 start-ups & scale-ups, 165 incubators and accelerators, and 59 investors, mainly concentrated in the Lisbon metropolitan area and in the northern and central regions of the country. The development of this ecosystem has been changing over the past few years, largely reinforced by national and European public policies (Startup Hub, 2024).

Geographically (see table 1), Porto Metropolitan Area reports the highest survival rate on the continent (58.95%), while the birth rate (17.80%) is lower than Lisbon Metropolitan Area (19.12%) and Algarve (18.00%).

Table 1 - Business demographic indicators by NUTS II* in Portugal in 2022

NUTS II	Birth rate %	Survival rate (two years) %
Portugal	16.08	58.95
Continent	16.13	58.94
North	15.04	61.09
Porto Metropolitan Area	17.80	58.95
Center	13.79	59.65
Lisbon Metropolitan Area	19.12	56.68
Alentejo	13.54	58.30
Algarve	18.00	58.08
A.R. Azores	13.57	58.55
A.R. Madeira	16.01	59.50

Source: Adapted from INE (2023), Statistical Yearbook of Portugal 2022.

Note:* Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes (NUTS)

Gender/generational connotations

In Portugal, self-employment rates are lower for women than for men (see Table 2). From 2019 to 2022, there is no significant change in this figure, although it declines slightly, especially for men, from 16.6% to 15.4%.

Despite this gender gap, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Gemconsortium, 2023) identifies one trend that may have been accelerated by the pandemic and could be the spread of greater entrepreneurial gender equity.

Table 2 - Rates of self-employment for women and men

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Women	10.50%	10.50%	9.90%	10.50%
Men	16.60%	16.20%	15.90%	15.40%

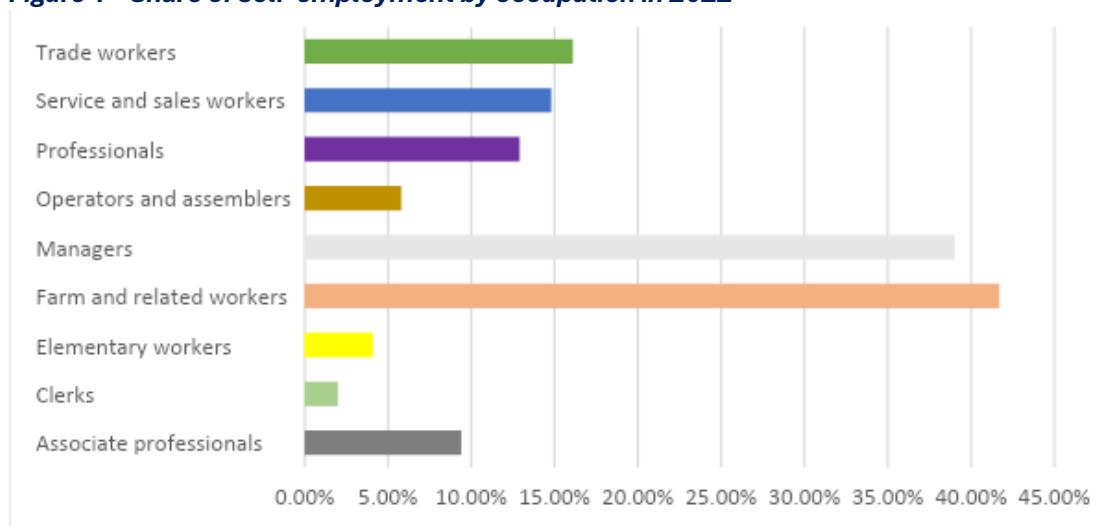
Source: CEDEFOP (2019 to 2022)

Self-employment by occupation

As shown in figure 1, the self-employment average rate in Portugal in 2022 was estimated at 16.2%. Farm and related workers exhibit the highest value at 41.7%, while clerks the lowest at 2%.

High levels of employment in agriculture and low-end services have been pinpointed by some authors to characterize the southern European cluster. In Portuguese rural areas, for instance, agriculture has been used as a source of income and/or products in families' strategies to maximize their earnings (Cabral, 1999).

Figure 1 - Share of self-employment by occupation in 2022



Source: CEDEFOP (2022)

Self-employment by level of education

The characterization of self-employed workers, by their level of education, shows the high incidence of less qualified self-employment, in Portugal. Data reports one high percentage of self-employed people with low level education from 2019 (16.60%) to 2022 (16.40%), which is higher than the average level of EU27 (14.40%) in 2022 (Eurostat, 2022).

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the proportion of Portuguese youths with higher education increased by 35 percentage points between 2000 and 2021 (OECD, 2022). Today, Portugal is one of the 24 OECD countries where higher education is the most common level of schooling among youths (OECD, 2022).

However, as shown in table 3, regional differences still exist. The Lisbon Metropolitan Area reports the highest rate (35.2%) of the proportion of employees with higher education while the A.R. of Azores is the lowest rate in the country (14.8%).

Table 3 - Employees with higher education by geographic region

<i>NUTS II</i>	<i>Higher education rate</i> %
<i>Portugal</i>	25.00
<i>Continent</i>	25.30
<i>North</i>	22.30
<i>Center</i>	19.90
<i>Lisbon Metropolitan Area</i>	35.20
<i>Alentejo</i>	16.20
<i>Algarve</i>	16.00
<i>A.R. Azores</i>	14.80
<i>A.R. Madeira</i>	17.70

Source: Adapted from INE (2022), Statistical Yearbook of Portugal 2021.

Qualitative indicators on solo entrepreneurship and self-employment in Portugal: skills-gap and needs assessment

In this section, we provide a qualitative description of the solo entrepreneurship and self-employment phenomenon in Portugal. Herewith we highlight: policy priorities in the field, competence gaps of young aspiring solo entrepreneurs and education and training areas of interest to nurture the digital readiness and business acumen of aspiring self-employed people.

To illustrate the solo entrepreneurship support in Portugal, this analysis reports some of the programs available in the country.

The Portuguese government launched in May 2016, a program with a strong focus on start-ups known as “Startup Portugal”. The program contains several different measures to support the creation and growth of start-ups. It also includes measures to attract foreign investors, to provide different financing options to support early-stage companies and to accelerate them into the global market (Castro, 2016).

Another important policy - “Industrial Development Strategy for Growth and Employment 2014-2020” (OECD, 2019) - was designed for stimulating entrepreneurship, innovative activities and job creation. Some of the most relevant activities carried out include the creation of a national network of entrepreneurship mentors, training programs based on key areas of entrepreneurial activities, basic education and creation of an entrepreneurship visa.

The Upskill (2020) project, launched in 2020, is the outcome of a joint initiative between an industry association (APDC), the Public Employment Office (IEFP) and partner universities. The 9-month courses aim to address Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) skills gaps identified by technology companies in Portugal and will take place at different Higher Education Institutions (HEI) across the country. Java, .NET, Python, Cloud, Salesforce and Outsystems are some of the courses covered under this project, corresponding to the most demanded skills areas.

Regarding long-standing efforts to support youth entrepreneurship, there are many programmes targeting this group. Most of these programmes use an integrated support approach by offering skills development, financial support, networking opportunities, and others, as part of the support available.

A new programme dedicated to youth entrepreneurs was introduced, the Empreende XXI programme, which provides financial support and incubation services to this group of entrepreneurs. It also aims to promote networking initiatives for this target (Empreende XXI, 2023).

Solo-entrepreneurship and self-employment in Portugal have been the subject of various studies and reports. Here are some key findings:

- 1. Untapped Opportunities: There are substantial untapped opportunities for entrepreneurship in populations such as women, youth, the unemployed, and immigrants (OECD and European Commission, 2021). This suggests that there is potential for growth in these demographics.*
- 2. Need for Differentiated Policies: There is a need for more differentiated government entrepreneurship policies that address the specific barriers faced by these groups (OECD and European Commission, 2021). This implies that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective.*
- 3. Determinants of Transition to Self-Employment: Factors such as age, experience, and professional qualification increase the probability of transition to entrepreneurship (Amaral and Baptista, 2007). Both willingness and opportunity are significant factors influencing individuals' choices.*
- 4. Growth in Self-Employment: Unlike most OECD countries, Portugal has experienced significant growth in (non-agricultural) self-employment in recent decades.*
- 5. Inclusive Entrepreneurship: Portugal has been benchmarked on indicators of entrepreneurship and self-employment by women, youth, seniors, immigrants, and people with disabilities against the European Union average (OECD and European Commission, 2023).*

These findings suggest that while there is a vibrant culture of solo entrepreneurship and self-employment in Portugal, there are also areas where targeted policies could help to further encourage future self-entrepreneurship projects. Based on the mentioned findings, some competence gaps of young aspiring solo entrepreneurs are becoming increasingly prominent.

- 1. Transversal Entrepreneurial Competences: An in-depth study addressing the meaning and the requirements for entrepreneurial competences across four European contexts, including Portugal, identified ten transversal entrepreneurial competences that were at the forefront of requirements for economic and social development (Amorim et al., 2018). These competences are essential for job creation, employability, social emancipation, and personal achievement in the labor environment.*
- 2. Risk Attitudes: The Portuguese Association for Young Entrepreneurs (ANJE) points out the need to encourage young entrepreneurs to adopt a less conservative attitude towards risk. This suggests a gap in risk-taking and risk management skills (ANJE, 2024).*
- 3. Access to Business Activities: Young entrepreneurs often face obstacles in starting and developing companies in Portugal. This means a gap in knowledge and skills relevant to business startup and development.*
- 4. Technological Deficit: Young entrepreneurs' technical shortcomings need to be overcome. This points to a gap in digital and technological skills.*
- 5. Innovation Support: Young entrepreneurs need innovation support. This suggests a gap in the ability to innovate and creative problem-solving.*
- 6. Qualitative research conducted with eighteen startups and entrepreneurs in Portugal affected by the COVID-19 crisis (Silva, Beirão and Torres, 2023) shows that the way to succeed is to be flexible, agile, and adaptable, with technology knowledge focusing on digital channels to find novel opportunities and innovate. Additionally, resilience, self-improvement, education, technology readiness and adoption, close relationship with customers and other stakeholders, identifying environmental changes, seize opportunities timely, and incubation experience seem to shield startups against pandemic crisis outbreaks. The study also shows that today's entrepreneurs are mostly younger and highly educated, with a background in sciences or engineering: The best business and engineering schools are a great source of academic entrepreneurship, with the potential to foster high-impact research to uplift lives by producing knowledge that improves entrepreneurs' results.*

These cases illustrate some of the gaps in the solo entrepreneurship landscape in Portugal, such as the need for more robust support systems, the importance of digital skills, and the ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. They also highlight the resilience and creativity of the entrepreneurial community in Portugal.

Opportunities: training available and operational tools

Based on previous findings, we now provide information on the following: established education and training programmes at HE level tailored on solo-entrepreneurship and evidence supporting solo-entrepreneurship and self-employment as a priority/area of interest in Portuguese HE ecosystem.

Students who have received entrepreneurship education are more likely to have higher entrepreneurial intentions than students who have not received entrepreneurship education. Portuguese universities may integrate entrepreneurship in their educational programs, paying special attention to the engineering and other scientific areas, in order to create a corporate culture to foster start-ups and spin-offs.

A study analysing the changing education distribution of self-employed workers in Europe, found that the high-educated self-employed has increased considerably (van Stel and van der Zwan, 2020). This suggests that there is a growing emphasis on education and training for self-employed individuals.

The Missing Entrepreneurs 2021 report by the OECD and the European Commission (2021) examines how public policies at national, regional, and local levels can support job creation, economic growth, and social inclusion by overcoming obstacles to business start-ups and self-employment. This indicates that there are policies in place at the country level in Portugal to support entrepreneurship and self-employment, which would likely include aspects of education and training.

There are also specific initiatives and programs in Portugal aimed at supporting solo-entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals. For example:

- Entrepreneurship education in Portuguese Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has been promoted and implemented since the beginning of the 2000s (DGES, 2022). Portuguese HEIs work from a business creation perspective and, in a recent shift, also include entrepreneurship as a transversal competency in the curriculum (also through extracurricular clubs and activities) (DGES, 2022).

Universities and polytechnic schools continue to develop their offerings of entrepreneurship programs, mainly at a postgraduate level. They work in a perspective of business creation and, in a more recent shift, also including entrepreneurship as a transversal competence within the undergraduate curriculum.

Here we provide some curricula examples of best practices:

Social Entrepreneurship Education: Changemaker Training at the University. This study presents the analysis of social entrepreneur training in three different curricular study cases (García-González and Ramírez-Montoya, 2021). It indicates that incorporating transversal social entrepreneurship projects in various courses resulted in students feeling more capable regarding their social entrepreneurship potential.

Including entrepreneurial topics into a broad range of courses at the higher education level is quite important (Klucznik-Törő, 2021). The author emphasizes the need for learning and understanding the importance of opportunity recognition, work–life balance, emotion management, learning from failures, and entrepreneurial mindset.

Fabregà (2018) discusses the role of entrepreneurship in higher education in contributing to the economic and sustainable development of the region.

Incubators, such as, UACOOPERA and UPTEC are organizations imbedded in the universities of Aveiro and Porto, respectively, aiming to afford new entrepreneurs a supportive environment in the initial stages of development so that they can gather the necessary resources and capabilities for development and growth until reaching a viable stage. In the pandemics scenario, incubators can function as a connector between the community and the industry, enhancing the generation of novel ideas, inspiration, professional support, resilience, and financing sources, much needed in times of crisis (Silva, Beirão and Torres, 2023).

A study which investigates entrepreneurial overconfidence (EOC) levels among solo entrepreneurs at country level suggests that the solo self-employed have become an important source of potential job creation by virtue of the sharp increase in their numbers in the past two decades (Cieślik et al., 2023).

The Missing Entrepreneurs 2021 report by the OECD presents updated data and trends for European Union Member States and OECD countries. It indicates that women are outnumbered in self-employment by two-to-one by men. In 2020, just under 10% of working women in the EU were self-employed when compared to 17% of men (OECD and European Commission, 2021).

In the context of Portugal, we highlight several opportunities within the solo-entrepreneurship landscape:

- **Untapped Entrepreneurial Potential:** In Portugal, there are significant untapped opportunities for entrepreneurship within specific demographic segments such as women, youth, the unemployed, and, more recently, immigrants. This suggests the potential for fostering economic growth by encouraging entrepreneurial activities within these groups.*

- **Need for Tailored Policies:** Portugal could benefit from implementing more differentiated government entrepreneurship policies tailored to address the specific barriers faced by different demographic groups. Tailored policies could help mitigate challenges and create an environment conducive to entrepreneurship across diverse segments of the population.
- **Factors Influencing Transition to Self-Employment:** Understanding the factors that influence individuals' transition to self-employment, such as age, experience, and professional qualifications, presents an opportunity for targeted interventions. By addressing these factors effectively, Portugal can facilitate smoother transitions into entrepreneurship and foster a more dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- **Promotion of Inclusive Entrepreneurship:** Initiatives aimed at promoting inclusive entrepreneurship, including efforts to support entrepreneurship among women, youth, seniors, immigrants, and people with disabilities, present opportunities for fostering a more diverse and inclusive entrepreneurial landscape in Portugal. By providing targeted support and resources, Portugal can unlock the entrepreneurial potential of underrepresented groups and promote greater economic inclusion.
- **Policy Alignment with Growth Trends:** Portugal's experience of significant growth in (non-agricultural) self-employment presents an opportunity to align policy initiatives with emerging trends in the entrepreneurial landscape. By capitalizing on this growth momentum and implementing policies that support and nurture entrepreneurship, Portugal can further strengthen its position as a hub for innovation and economic development.

These opportunities underscore the potential for Portugal to further develop and expand its solo-entrepreneurship ecosystem by leveraging its diverse demographic profile, implementing tailored policy interventions, and aligning with emerging trends in the entrepreneurial environment.

Challenges

In examining the solo-entrepreneurship landscape in Portugal, several challenges emerge which may have a negative impact for the professional development of young aspiring solo-entrepreneurs and, therefore, warrant attention:

- **Gender Disparities:** Despite efforts to promote gender equality in entrepreneurship, significant gender disparities persist in Portugal. Women continue to face barriers to accessing entrepreneurial opportunities and resources, leading to lower rates of self-employment compared to men. Addressing these disparities requires targeted initiatives aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs and creating a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- **Youth Entrepreneurship:** While Portugal has seen growth in youth entrepreneurship initiatives, challenges remain in supporting young entrepreneurs. Limited access to funding, lack of entrepreneurial education, and regulatory hurdles hinder the ability of young people to start and grow businesses. Overcoming these challenges requires comprehensive support programs tailored to the needs of young entrepreneurs, including access to mentorship, funding, and training.
- **Skills Mismatch:** There is a mismatch between the skills demanded by the market and those possessed by potential entrepreneurs in Portugal. Despite efforts to address

skills gaps through initiatives like the Upskill project, significant challenges persist in aligning educational offerings with the needs of the entrepreneurial workforce. Bridging this gap requires collaboration between educational institutions, industry stakeholders, and government agencies to ensure that entrepreneurship education and training programs are relevant and effective.

- **Digital Divide:** The digital divide poses a significant challenge to entrepreneurship in Portugal, particularly for individuals and businesses with limited access to digital technologies and skills. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of digital readiness for business resilience and growth, making it imperative to address disparities in digital access and literacy. Initiatives aimed at closing the digital divide, such as providing digital training and infrastructure support, are essential for ensuring that all entrepreneurs can fully participate in the digital economy.
- **Regional Disparities:** Regional disparities in entrepreneurship persist in Portugal, with entrepreneurial activity concentrated in urban areas such as Lisbon and Porto. Rural regions face unique challenges, including limited access to resources, infrastructure, and markets, which hinder the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Addressing regional disparities requires targeted investment and policy interventions aimed at fostering entrepreneurship in rural and underserved areas.
- **Policy Implementation:** While Portugal has implemented various policies and initiatives to support entrepreneurship, challenges remain in effectively implementing and scaling these programs. Bureaucratic hurdles, lack of coordination between stakeholders, and limited resources hinder the impact and reach of entrepreneurship support initiatives. Streamlining processes, enhancing coordination among stakeholders, and allocating adequate resources are critical for overcoming these implementation challenges.
- **Curricula Development:** For undergraduate students in Portugal, a transversal curriculum could be designed to integrate entrepreneurship education across disciplines, offering foundational knowledge and practical skills essential for entrepreneurial success. This curriculum would include core courses focused on entrepreneurial mindset development, business fundamentals, innovation management, and venture creation, complemented by interdisciplinary electives tailored to students' interests and career goals. Emphasizing experiential learning through real-world projects, internships, and entrepreneurial ventures, this curriculum would foster creativity, problem-solving abilities, and risk-taking attitudes among undergraduate students, preparing them to navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape and pursue entrepreneurial endeavours with confidence and competence.
For master's students in Portugal, a specialized and comprehensive curriculum could be developed to deepen their understanding of entrepreneurship and innovation while honing their leadership and strategic management skills. Building on foundational knowledge acquired at the undergraduate level, this curriculum would offer advanced courses in areas such as entrepreneurial finance, technology commercialization, market analysis, and venture scaling, providing master's students with the expertise and insights needed to drive innovation and growth in dynamic business environments. Additionally, this curriculum would integrate experiential learning opportunities, such as consulting projects, incubator programs, and international immersions, enabling master's students to apply theoretical concepts to real-world challenges and develop practical solutions. By equipping master's students with a blend of theoretical insights, practical skills, and hands-on experience, this specialized curriculum would empower

them to lead entrepreneurial ventures, drive organizational change, and create value in diverse industries and contexts.

Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from government, industry, academia, and civil society to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship in Portugal. By tackling gender disparities, supporting youth entrepreneurship, addressing skills mismatches, bridging regional divides, closing the digital divide, and improving policy implementation, Portugal can unlock the full potential of its self-entrepreneurship ecosystem and drive sustainable economic growth and innovation.

Conclusions

Based on findings, this report provides a list of lessons learned and recommendations that are of relevance both for readers and SELF future implementation.

In the post-pandemic era, the landscape of entrepreneurship and higher education has undergone significant shifts globally and in Portugal. The pandemic has accelerated the digitalization of education, leading to an increased emphasis on digital business skills among young aspiring solo-entrepreneurs. However, it has also exposed multiple levels of inequalities, such as differential access to knowledge and research outputs, imbalances in global research collaboration models, and a failure to meet basic requirements for digitalized higher education (Meyer et al., 2021).

The comprehensive analysis of the solo-entrepreneurship landscape in Portugal offers valuable insights into the opportunities, challenges and dynamics shaping the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country. Through an examination of quantitative and qualitative indicators, as well as policy initiatives and demographic trends, several key conclusions emerge:

- **Resilience and Adaptability:** *Portugal has demonstrated resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic, the country has witnessed significant growth in solo self-employment, driven by factors such as digital transformation and evolving consumer behaviours.*
- **Role of Higher Education:** *HEIs play a crucial role in shaping the solo-entrepreneurship ecosystem in Portugal. By providing the necessary skills, knowledge, and support, higher education institutions empower individuals to pursue entrepreneurial ventures and contribute to economic growth and innovation.*
- **Untapped Potential:** *Despite progress in promoting entrepreneurship, significant untapped potential remains within certain demographic segments, including women, youth, seniors, immigrants, and people with disabilities. Addressing barriers to entry and creating a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem are essential for unlocking this untapped potential and fostering economic inclusion.*
- **Policy Implications:** *Effective policy interventions are crucial for supporting and nurturing entrepreneurship in Portugal. Tailored policies that address the specific needs and challenges faced by different demographic groups, as well as initiatives aimed at closing skills gaps, bridging regional divides, and promoting digital readiness, are essential for creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurship.*
- **Collaborative Approach:** *Addressing the complex challenges facing the solo-entrepreneurship landscape in Portugal requires a collaborative approach involving government, industry, academia, and civil society. By working together to implement targeted initiatives, streamline processes, and allocate resources effectively, stakeholders can create an ecosystem that fosters innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic growth.*

In conclusion, the findings of this report underscore the importance of understanding and addressing the opportunities and challenges within the solo-entrepreneurship landscape in Portugal. By leveraging its strengths, addressing its weaknesses, and adopting a collaborative and inclusive approach, Portugal can realize its full potential as a hub for innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship in Europe.

We believe that understanding these trends and characteristics, in particular the role of higher education in promoting solo-entrepreneurship, is crucial for developing skills and shaping strategies that can foster a vibrant and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem in Portugal, thereby contributing to the country's economic recovery and future growth.

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