

Rural innovation unlocks economic development

— Case Study

The local government of Aragon, Spain wanted to create a program to support rural entrepreneurs from the region in order to boost the local economy and drive down unemployment. They sought to support entrepreneurs from towns with less than 5,000 inhabitants and offer training and advice to those who wanted to remain in their villages. Their broader, long-term goal was to also diversify the business sectors of these rural areas.

 Multi-Sector

 2017 & 2018

 Spain

 Type: Impact

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Challenge

Creating jobs in rural areas through entrepreneurship

Aragon's Development Institute wanted to focus on quality over quantity when it came to projects, so rather than seeking out as many entrepreneurs as possible, they focused on nurturing those that had the potential to generate jobs for the foreseeable future. They had clear objectives in building an entrepreneurship program, but the challenges were just as clear. Limited access to resources, mobility across long distances, varying education levels, and access to the best mentors possible are just some of the difficulties they faced in trying to support innovation in rural areas. Mainly though, they needed to find a solution to one big problem: how to create a program that was inclusive for individuals from very remote areas and allowed them to participate easily.



Solution

A customized 6-month incubation program with Bridge for Billions

Bridge for Billions' online incubation program made it easy for them to connect with entrepreneurs in the most remote areas of Aragon. We provided the tools needed to facilitate learning and a proven entrepreneurship methodology that ultimately helped the selected entrepreneurs structure their business ideas and build a business plan. When it came to mentors for this project, ESNEPI (Pyreneese Business School - Escuela de Negocios del Pirineo), an experienced leader and business school in the region, offered the entrepreneurs in person mentoring sessions and online support.

The government of Aragon used our wealth of experience working with individuals from varying socioeconomic backgrounds and locations to build a customized 6 month incubation program. They coupled our online program with additional in-person training sessions, which was the perfect combination for a local government to tap into economic potential and drive innovation in their region.



Maria Oria

Incubation Manager

"Unlike other mentoring programs, Bridge for Billions is very structured and intuitive which allows you to contribute more in less time."



Pedro A. Pardo

Director of Entrepreneurship Unit, IAF

(Instituto Aragones de Fomento)

Managing Director, Aragon Entrepreneurship Foundation

"The Bridge for Billions platform allows entrepreneurs to develop their business step by step, within different phases and deadlines. Having a mentor is of great help to the entrepreneurs to rely on a team that is able to offer up its extensive experience."

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Result

This partnership celebrated its first successful edition in 2017 by incubating 25 projects from four Pyreneese regions (Sobrarbe, Ribagorza, Alto Gallego, and Jacetania). The selected projects were primarily focused on livestock, agriculture, culture, and sports, and so far 10 of the entrepreneur teams have gone on to launch their businesses. At the end of 2018 they initiated a second edition of the program with 23 new projects.

The program was designed with an in-person and an online component with Bridge for Billions. Training sessions on business fundamentals and the newest digital marketing tools were held at venues throughout the Graus and Sabiñánigo and continuous support was provided through the online platform. No matter what phase of the program participants were in, they could always count on the support of their mentors via Bridge.



48
Projects



61
Entrepreneurs



48
Mentors



60%
Women founders



About the Client

Aragon is an autonomous region in the north of Spain that is composed primarily of rural municipalities, each of which is home to less than 5,000 inhabitants. The Aragonian Development Institute (El Instituto Aragonés de Fomento), the arm of the government tasked with promoting the socioeconomic development of the region and boosting employment, sought a way to drive local entrepreneurship, which in turn would help further economic development in those communities.

In order to make this program as impactful as possible, we partnered with ESNEPI (Pyreneese Business School - Escuela de Negocios del Pirineo), the leading organization for business formation in the region that brings training, classes, and support to people in rural and mountain areas to create their own businesses and receive special business training. ESNEPI allowed us to develop a blended mentoring program for this partnership by offering online and in person mentorship support to the participants.



Do you want to build a bridge with us?

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