

Netherlands: “IkStartSmart” Gelderland

Description: The programme *IkStartSmart* (“I Start Smart”) is an integrated support programme for people in the province of Gelderland who wish to start a business or develop an existing business that is less than 5 years old.

Problem addressed: This programme aims to increase business creation in Gelderland and to support young businesses in their development. Businesses in this province have lower than average survival rates and there are few policy instruments that aim to support start-ups.

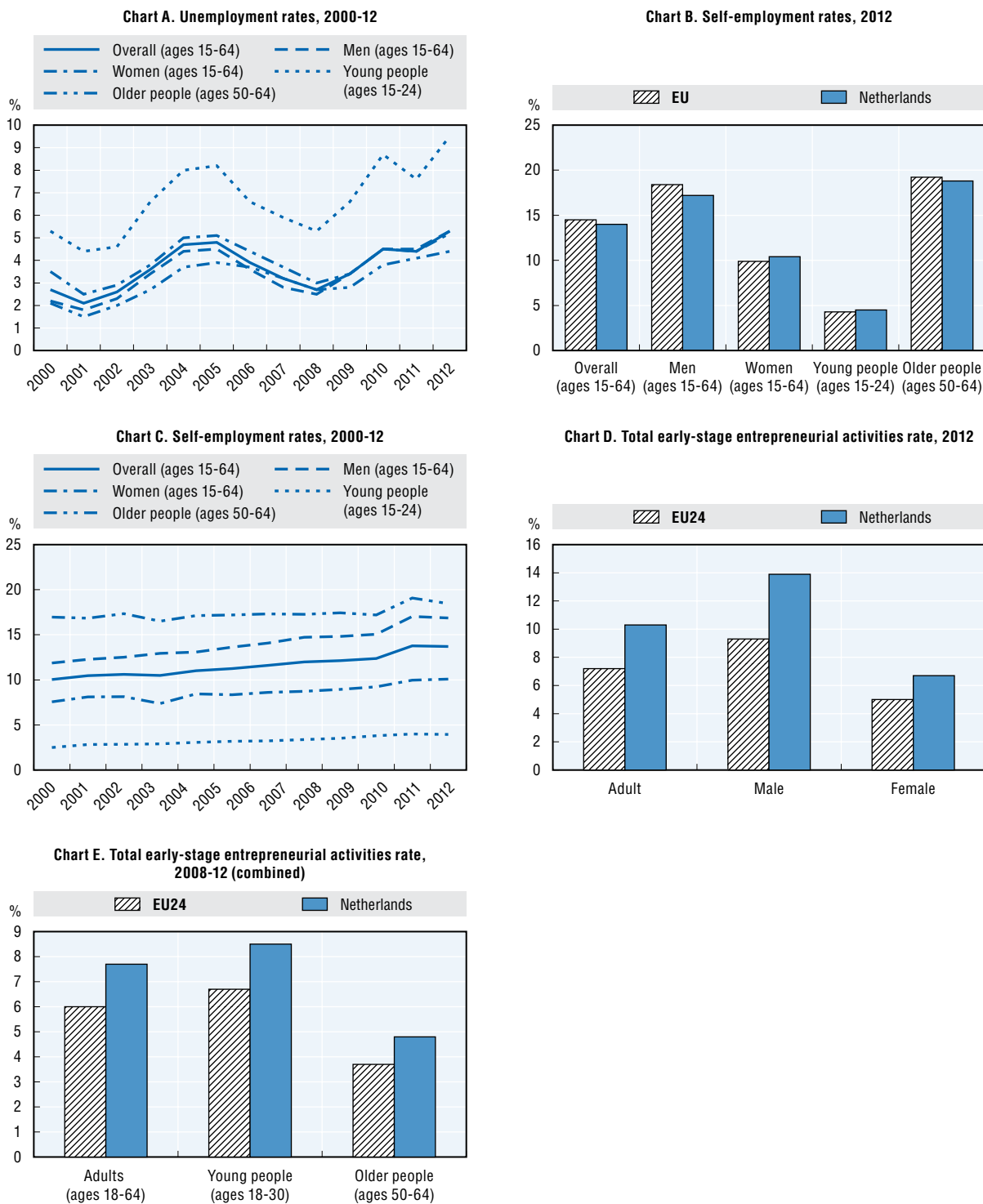
Approach: The *IkStartSmart* (ISS) initiative uses an 8-step scheme to train and support new business owners. First, potential participants attend information meetings that screen their interest and suitability for the support. Following this, participants take a test (*ondernemerstest*) to identify their strengths and weaknesses and the results are discussed with a business advisor from the chamber of commerce (*dianosegesprek*). In this meeting the advisor designs a personal training plan. Coaches are then assigned and their role is defined in collaboration with the participant. The aim of the coach is to support the personal development of the entrepreneur. The business advice stage provides access to more specialised business support experts to provide more technical support than the coaches. This is complemented with training according to the personal plan and networking workshops. The final stage supports access to microcredit, either *Microkrediet* or *Qcredit* which are offered by partner organisations. Participants pay a small fee of EUR 250 for this support.

Impact: A formal evaluation shows that the ISS programme achieved all of its stated objectives (Panteia/EIM, 2011). Though the programme has wide eligibility criteria, namely all those individuals who have had their own company for a maximum of 5 years, regardless of gender, age or background, a significant proportion of entrepreneurs were women and immigrants. The female participation rate is almost double the national rate of women entrepreneurship under this programme, demonstrating that the programme is successful at reaching this particular group.

Conditions for success: An inclusive approach is preferable when developing integrated support programmes, since the main needs of different groups coincide. Moreover, the contacts between them prove useful in shaping a successful business, rather than keeping them separate, which could create stereotypes (e.g. concerning women and immigrants) and delay the inclusion of these groups in the society and in the professional networks.

Key inclusive entrepreneurship data

Figure 30.1. Entrepreneurship and self-employment data for Netherlands



Sources: Chart A. Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, 2000-12; Chart B. Eurostat, Labour Force Survey 2012 ; Chart C. Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, 2000-12 ; Chart D. Special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor adult population survey, 2012; Chart E. Special tabulations of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor adult population survey, 2008-12.



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