



EMN

Covid-19

*Technical
Assistance*

Training, e-learning, mentoring: the story of Oportunitas

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted MFIs and their clients in many ways. True to its mission as the voice of the sector, EMN launched in June 2020 a tailored assistance programme, with the support of J.P. Morgan. The purpose of this project was to deliver Technical Assistance (TA) to a selection of MFIs to build their capacity to ensure continuous, efficient, and adapted support to entrepreneurs in the Covid era. Project beneficiaries are a selection of six MFIs operating on three continents: Adie (France), Credisol (Brazil), Fundación Oportunitas (Spain), PerMicro (Italy), Pro Mujer (Argentina), and SEF (South Africa).

In this paper series, you will discover some highlights of what the six beneficiaries developed and implemented through the consultancies of this project.





Organisational and programme overview

Oportunitas is a social microfinance institution based in Spain that creates opportunities by granting social microloans to entrepreneurs at risk of social and/or financial exclusion. In addition, Oportunitas offers training, mentoring, and advisory services to vulnerable entrepreneurs to support their personal and professional development. It does so thanks to a volunteering scheme that currently comprises 150 volunteer mentors with expertise in the main areas related to entrepreneurship: business management, finance, marketing, law, sales, etc.

Oportunitas provided financial services to around 100 micro-businesses and has served over 1,800 entrepreneurs, giving them access to training tools, e-learning courses, and mentoring programmes.

Oportunitas Non-Financial Services

Oportunitas offers a broad range of non-financial business development services, which currently comprises:

- Tailored mentoring programmes based on a one-to-one relationship between mentor and mentee. The objective is to define or redefine the business project, focusing on specific areas identified according to the needs of each entrepreneur (financial and business management, marketing, business strategy, etc.).
- E-learning course “How to write a business plan.”
- “Oportunitas Accelerator”: interactive workshops to speed up the validation of the business idea, test sales potential, reduce commercial risk, and streamline operations. Business and financial plan templates

Consultancy project

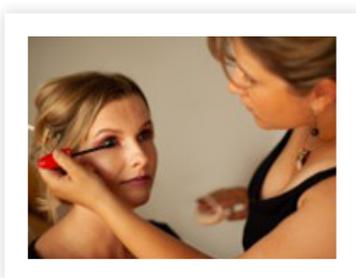
The objective of the consultancy project was to set up a digital module to allow the organisation to efficiently manage and scale up its volunteer mentors programme, thereby enhancing its social impact.

Oportunitas built upon the strengths and weaknesses of the software it had been using to identify the desired features and functionalities to be implemented in the new module. More importantly, Oportunitas could count on the expertise of Qredits, which recently built a similar module for small-scale MFIs, and Singlify, which has experience in offering digital solutions for MFI management.

Using the Scrum method, it was possible to implement the project in three sprints in which the three parties worked together remotely from Spain, Kenia, and The Netherlands.

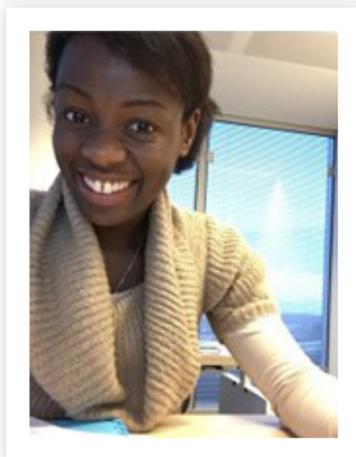
The new mentoring module allows an efficient intake and selection process for volunteer mentors and entrepreneurs. Moreover, it makes it easier for the mentoring programme coordinators to identify the mentor with the best-suited skills and expertise for each entrepreneur's needs.

Finally, mentors can use the platform to organise their work plan with the assigned entrepreneur and report on its progress, which further enhances Oportunitas' ability to manage and monitor the impact of the mentoring programmes.



Íngrid Cardias

Íngrid is a professional make-up artist and was a beauty salon manager in her country, Brazil. However, after moving to Barcelona, she struggled to continue doing what she liked the most. So, he decided to find her make-up and styling business for weddings and social events. She was supported by a mentor in business, commercial strategy, and planning that helped her improve her knowledge of the local market and develop an adequate communication and marketing strategy to stand out among her competitors.



Noemí Bueichekú

Noemí supports entrepreneurs in defining business objectives, financial planning, client acquisition channels, and SWOT analysis.



Alberto Almar

Alberto and Roger are our volunteer coordinators of the mentoring programmes. They are in charge of accompanying the 150 volunteer mentors of Oportunitas, who are mainly from the regions of Catalonia, Madrid, and Valencia. They support them and monitor all the mentor-mentee matches that are created.



Roger Ruiz