

Summary and inspiration from Brandenburg Learning Camp

Tuesday, 27th September to Wednesday, 28th September 2016

On 27 October 40 representatives from 11 regions joined to meet, engage and learn about entrepreneurial competence and mindset activation at the Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences in Brandenburg an der Havel. **Key questions answered and shared were: what are the key competences for entrepreneurs and how can these be learned? Furthermore, how can entrepreneurial spirit be encouraged and competences nurtured?**



LEARNING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The first workshop was focused on the theme of Learning Entrepreneurship. With the brainstorming of 40 sharp minds from the participants, some of the main competencies were outlined such as **Perseverance, Ability to Change, Creativity and Innovation, Curiosity, Passion, Team work and Spirit, Networking, Global Focus, Leadership, Communication and Interpersonal Skills, Risk Taking, Flexibility.**

When it comes to how to nurture entrepreneurial skills of young and help them to learn these competencies, some of the examples of best practice were:

- **Aula emprende: Initiative from the University of Valencia**
 - Every year several professors and researchers are trained in entrepreneurial skills so they can motivate students during the academic course. Once a year the university celebrates the Motivem Awards, where the best Projects from students receive an economic prize.
- **Contamination Lab from the Università Politecnica delle Marche.**
 - A mixed group composed by university students (coming from different universities) and high school students work together in order to develop their ideas. At the end they receive some funding to start developing their projects.
- **IBL: Workshops**
 - Mentoring, workshops and orientation to entrepreneurs in Germany. They also have a program focused in entrepreneurs not fluent in German language.
- **Learn startup (Laurea, FI)**
 - The lean startup means that a startup idea is tested and validated in the early phase
 - Try and do it, improve it along the way.

- Learn startup mentality should be embedded in entrepreneurial or enterprising teaching
- **Hubhouses (Hauts de France, FR)**
 - The hubhouses support students to create or implement their project based on their business ideas
 - The hubhouses provide physical places for people to meet and services such as individual advisors and group workshop and training to support the students in their early entrepreneurial path.
- **The Value of Failure Programme (Poland)**
- **Bachelor on entrepreneurship (Contact, known by Brandenburg, DE)**
 - Real life projects for studying
 - See more details: <http://www.tiimiakatemia.fi/en/>

ACTIVATING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

The topic of the second workshop focused on **Activating the Entrepreneurial Mindset** and the discussion focused on what were the requirements for activating an entrepreneurial mindset.

Some of the ideas presented on what was needed to activate an entrepreneurial mindset included:

1. **Room for innovation:** a meeting place for people to meet up and gain peer support. Such as student entrepreneurial society
2. **Role models** that promoting a positive image, using testimonials to show that it is possible to succeed
3. **Funding**, good example mentioned: EXIST Programme (German/Brandenburg)
4. **Events** for different groups, Slush (Finland) was mentioned as one good example
5. **Good initiatives** for different groups, incentivise for the entrepreneurs wanna-be, incentives for the mentors and professors (universities)



Some of the best practices from regions which were presented in being effective in activating an entrepreneurial mindset were:

- 1) **EXIST programme** (German/Brandenburg)
- 2) **Training company** (Germany)
- 3) **Aalto Startup sauna** (Finland)
- 4) **Pitch and Beer** (Aalto)
- 5) **Slush (Helsinki)**

Some of the challenges in activation were identified as: Lack of competences, Fear of Failure, The economic and legal cost of failure, Lack of investment on early stage, Bureaucracy, Mindset, Lack of Idols/Rockstars in regions and Visibility of Support Services.

OVERALL CONCLUSION BY HANK KUNE, FACILITATOR, EDCUORE.



The Learning Camp in Brandenburg explored the theme of *entrepreneurial competence and mindset activation*. From participants, presentations, workshops and visits a number of issues and insights became clear.

If it is true, as presented at the beginning of the Learning Camp, that 37% of Europeans want to be self-employed, as opposed to 51% of people in the USA and China, then there is a big challenge for the European Union here. Entrepreneurial competence and mindset activation are competences we all need to learn and practice. However, as the discussions ensued, a clear insight emerged: far more important than 'starting a business' was 'being entrepreneurial'

– making use of an entrepreneurial spirit, which can be applied actively in addressing the diverse challenges we face in our work, in learning and in every aspect of life.

Taking into account that much of Europe's (entrepreneurial) education in the past does not prepare us for being entrepreneurial in this sense – witness remarks such as "education puts people in boxes", "education fosters conformity", "education prepares people for dealing with yesterday's issues" – there are also good example we can learn from:

- the e-Education Programme at the University of Potsdam, where the challenge is to help students think entrepreneurially (not be an entrepreneur); and
- the Contamination Lab at Università Politecnica delle Marche, where the emphasis is not on creating start-ups but on building an entrepreneurial mind-set.

The suggestion in one group that governments need to pay more attention to a so-called 'third mission of government' – inspired by the 3rd role of universities – to provide support for entrepreneurial or start-up ecosystems – and by extension, to supporting entrepreneurial spirit of society – is a valuable insight.

Furthermore, these entrepreneurial ecosystems – and the entrepreneurial education we provide – need to activate not only the potential creators of start-ups, but also our citizens – as potential buyers and users of new innovative products, services and policies. An entrepreneurial society requires activating the entrepreneurial mindset of stakeholders, end-users and the residents of our regions. Education should be geared to this.

One conclusion drawn in the Camp is that there is an emerging need to explore the notion of what entrepreneurship means in our culture – that is, in the different cultures of Europe.

We need to pay attention to what entrepreneurship means to people. Because being/becoming an entrepreneur should become a viable and acceptable option for all people, and the value of entrepreneurship (and starting a business) is growing in *all* age groups, we should refer to 'new' entrepreneurs rather than 'young' entrepreneurs.

Of course, the need to deal with risk and fear of failure or uncertainty is great, and the possibility of turning fear into an opportunity - and failure into lessons for success – need to be addressed.

We need full participation of all important actors: for example, in creating more 'beta-clients' – corporate clients giving 'problems' for students to address while still at school – and 'protected risks'.

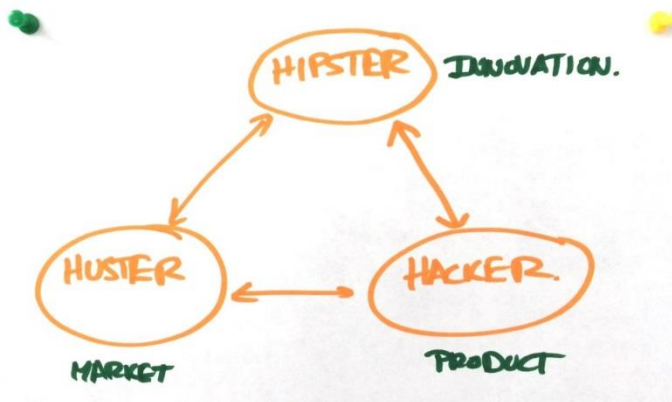
Attitude is always key: acting on opportunities means 'don't over-plan' but be alert to emerging insights and opportunities – exercising the entrepreneurial spirit. Agility means both fast and flexible reactions to emerging realities, as well as 'agility of mind'

There are clearly diverse activities supporting entrepreneurship in the Brandenburg Region, including interesting programmes for Entrepreneurship for Immigrants



How these are presented provided an interesting insight.

- The Government's EXIST programme was presented several times, but only really came to life during the last visit, when we met a young entrepreneur taking part in the programme, whose impassioned praise for how the EXIST helped him was far more compelling than all the details we heard before. His personal story was far more powerful than the factual presentations, and created a lasting impression. The lesson for me is: person and passion first, then our interest in the facts and details presented later will be greater.
- The promotion film of Potsdam City, using a series of compelling images and almost no words to create an attractive and enduring impression of what makes the city special, is an inspiring example of effective communication. A similar approach could be used for each of the iEER participating regions, for each of the thematic focus points of the iEER programme, and for the iEER project itself



Finally, I thought that the characterization of the successful entrepreneurial team as hacker – hipster – hustler was ingenious: the hacker who creates the product as concept hipster who drives innovation, the hustler who brings it into the market.

This kind of imagery will not 'speak' to everybody, but it *does* describe what good teams need, in a way can contribute to activating the entrepreneurial mind-set of relevant target groups in the population.