



Cross Border Virtual Entrepreneurship



Entrepreneurship: Education and Training by Flexible Modality

External Stakeholder Seminar
Proceedings Report

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Preface

In face of enormous socio-economic and demographic challenges, Europe requires new activities within Higher Education (HE) which better contribute to innovation, competitiveness and growth. *Entrepreneurship* is one such (key) activity, and a major contributor to overall employment. Not surprisingly, the European Commission invited all Member States of the Union, to strengthen activities in the area of entrepreneurship, in perspective of lifelong learning requirements.

As an activity co-funded under the LLL Programme, Erasmus 'Cooperation between Universities and Enterprises', the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) convened a special *seminar* in Leuven (BE), to address the important issue of entrepreneurship, and the associated stakeholder requirements for flexible entrepreneurship education.

The entrepreneurship seminar convened local/national/European authorities, SME/employer representation, HE associations, and the European Commission (EACEA). The seminar offered a platform for the exchange of experiences & practices in the common field of interest: entrepreneurship.

EADTU has appreciated the attendance of the many stakeholders and looks forward to new and/or additional practices on entrepreneurship which may add to our understanding of generating successful entrepreneurs; be it emerging, good or best practices.

Please find included the Seminar Proceedings Report.

19 May 2009

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Entrepreneurship: Education and Training by Flexible Modality

1. Introduction

On 8 May 2009, the Cross Border Virtual Entrepreneurship (CBVE) seminar, co-funded by the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) and the European Commission (EACEA) under the Erasmus strand within the Lifelong Learning Programme, registered some 23 countries/regions with an interest in entrepreneurship. During this seminar, European partners were given the opportunity to present their activities in a coherent manner, as regards their entrepreneurship research and education. Primary presentations focused on four key issues:

- Development and delivery of pedagogically-rich education materials for flexible and independent learning i.e., masterclass entrepreneurship;
- Pilot models for virtual (entrepreneurship) business planning;
- The use of Web 2.0 technologies for entrepreneurial training & digital students' education and synergy with other ongoing European projects;
- University, country and region specificities of entrepreneurship and associated localisation needs.

The audience comprised of a mix of countries including different continents, providing individual or plenary feedback on projects and initiatives of entrepreneurship. Most entrepreneurship promotion seems funded university-internally, regionally or nationally, or funded by the European Commission (EACEA) under such lifelong learning strands as Leonardo da Vinci, Tempus and/or Erasmus (Directorate General Education and Culture). Also, the Directorate General Enterprise and Industry is responsible for awarding grants in the field, in particular in the field of mentoring starter-entrepreneurs. Several synergies between projects have been explicated more clearly during the seminar and will be used to valorise activities in the future. It is apparent that entrepreneurship and policy-making on entrepreneurship differ among the countries and regions. Policy determinants may be different for many regions/countries. Priority will likely be given to issues of prime concern to the region/country itself. In turn this explains why universities, countries and regions each have their specificities as regards entrepreneurship education and training, and accordingly makes a clear case for associated localisation of (existing) practices.

2. Feedback on individual presentations

Questions on interactivity of the masterclass

The masterclass contains entrepreneurship education for flexible and autonomous learning, resembling 2 ECTS of study load per lingual masterclass; this may be exceeded depending on the localisation and/or or added support materials by individual universities. Video professors have provided their best knowledge in multimedia by studio recordings in Rome (IT). Off-campus students can easily tap into the video lectures and *interact* with accompanying support presentations, articles, literature references, and other materials. The synchrony of the masterclass video lecture(s) is seemingly connected to the synchrony of the offered support materials. At any point of time, the narration of the video lecture can be paused and associated educational materials pertaining to the

Question(s) on involvement of external stakeholders in business planning education

UNED performed a business planning pilot, which (also) included the testing of the developed masterclass materials. UNED falls in the category of Open and Distance Teaching Universities (ODTU). UNED is serving more than 20,000 students. For the CBVE pilot programme, UNED made a selection of (distance) students to be included into Spanish virtual business planning. Herein UNED deploys a model for the involvement of external stakeholders, which is restricted to the final phase of the entrepreneurship programme. Only the business plans that are actually regarded as viable by the professional university staff (i.e., experienced in the field), are considered eligible for (further) interaction with additional external stakeholders. The model prevents potentially insignificant proposals to reach external stakeholders.

The University of Miskolc performed a business planning pilot, which (also) included the testing of the developed masterclass materials. The University of Miskolc is a traditional university. For the CBVE pilot programme, it deploys a blended model of entrepreneurship business planning, constituting a mix of traditional on campus students as well as off campus students i.e., young adults. The University of Miskolc provides for small business development and traditional cooperation with regional enterprises, chambers of commerce and alumni. The University of Miskolc includes participation of regional stakeholders in the execution of its local pilot groups. Miskolc additionally assesses the multi-cultural aspects of entrepreneurship through deployment of international pilot groups.

As to what approach would be favourable to adopt in general, is difficult to make out. Pilot configurations are evidently subject to the specificities each type of university. In this sense, we must take into account the historical advantage of research-based universities which have traditionally been able to proficiently exploit (regional) third party cooperation, whereas ODTU's have traditionally been built upon an (mass) education-delivery model.



Miscellaneous questions on masterclass and business planning pilots

- As to the question why the Hungarian pilot was different: this is due to the differences in type of universities (as explained previously): traditional and ODTU. The University of Miskolc is not able to maintain a dedicated and/or proprietary platform as an ODTU does, instead the University of Miskolc has catered for a Moodle platform, accompanied by a wide variety of Open Source tools.
- As to the question how long the specific pilots of the partners lasted: pilots were held with students which were regularly enrolled, and which followed the normal curriculum. The pilots were embedded. Students were enrolled in the business administration programme, and as far as the UNED was concerned, the only requirement was for students to have their own (initial) business idea.
- As to the question whether students obtain credits, it follows also from the previous information that students do obtain their normal credits. How do the different countries manage the ECTS credits: this depends on the conducted pilot. The students obtain credits in their own country in accordance with their own university programme. The masterclass itself is approximately 2 ECTS, but (if and) how it is embedded in a total course of certain ECTS points, is up to the (local) university. Moreover, the course is comprised of different (re)usable components, which provides for an additional flexibility.
- As regards the development of the masterclasses and both the technical and the studio production, compliments are brought over by the audience to the developers, as for an impressive job done. A lot of work needed to be done before making the video lessons: preparation of the materials and instructing and training the professors. For each lesson, approximately a tenfold of the time must be invested in all the related preparations.
- A question was raised with respect to the masterclass, as being mostly transfer of knowledge, whereas entrepreneurship also requires skills. The answer to this was that the masterclass should not only be used as a stand-alone source of knowledge, but is best configured with business planning pilots of students, which has (also) been realised inside the CBVE project.
- Another question was related to the OECD study concerning the Entrepreneurship Indicator programme (EIP), as to why companies in the countries did not survive, and whether this knowledge was incorporated per country, as a lesson learned in the masterclass. The answer is no. The OECD study on company births/death contains mainly statistical information, making causal inferences on entrepreneurship difficult, for being non-linear and multifaceted.
- In the end, some countries such as Croatia, provided information on their own university initiatives regarding entrepreneurship. One delegate from Crete (Greece) explained that they had a similar project idea on promoting entrepreneurship. An incubator accommodates and encourages students to take a training course, something their government highly encourages: to have universities integrate entrepreneurship into the curricula. Delegates from Anadolu (Turkey) explained that their university also has entrepreneurship courses

included in the curricula: management, economics, engineering, et cetera. And moreover, free of charge courses. For more information on the (related) project and initiatives of entrepreneurship by the different countries, please refer to section 3 of this proceedings report.

3. Stock taking of (related) project and initiatives on entrepreneurship

As a response to individual presentations and/or as part of the final plenary discussion, several participants coined (their) projects and initiatives. Discussions and associated project materials, reveals that there is wide variety of activities, spread across the spectrum/chain of entrepreneurship. Different issues within this spectrum/chain of entrepreneurship have been observed:



- (1) Stimulating business ideas by stimulating student creativity;
- (2) Creating education for building entrepreneurship skills and competences;
- (3) Transversal implementation of entrepreneurship across programmes;
- (4) Use of (open) Web 2.0 technologies for entrepreneurial training & digital students' education;
- (5) Flexible internships for enhancing students' (self) employability and intra-preneurship;
- (6) Student entrepreneurship incubation, prosperous business plans, and support in going 'live';
- (7) Support for the mentoring of new entrepreneurs by coaches from experienced SMEs;
- (8) Improving (regional) cooperation with business and social partner dialogue;
- (9) Identifying emerging, good and best practices, and the cross-linking of these experiences;

Supplementary information and references on these points can be obtained from Appendix A.

4. Conclusions

A prime aim of organising the entrepreneurship seminar was to enable the CBVE partnership to have the development and delivery of pedagogically-rich education materials for flexible and independent learning (i.e., the masterclass entrepreneurship), evaluated and ranked by external stakeholders. This proved a successful invitation. The entrepreneurship seminar drew the attention of quite a number of stakeholders, including those from countries outside Europe.

The masterclass and the associated virtual business planning pilots were constructively assessed during the seminar. Advancements on the masterclass and virtual business planning configuration can still be made, in particular whereas it concerns the (local) implementation of interaction with external stakeholders and perhaps even in successive stages: the extended coaching and/or

incubation of successfully reviewed business plans¹. From the seminar responses, a general observation can be made. Universities seem to be working in different phases of the 'university-entrepreneurship' competence cycle.

Some universities still stand at the beginning of commencing a dialogue on whether promotion of entrepreneurship should be done. Others don't ask that question any more, but are rather concerned about what (policy) issues to focus on, as regards the embedding of entrepreneurship in their regional situation. Even others have pulled-through and have actually started to roll-out entrepreneurship education as a transversal competence across the university curricula. And finally, some universities have come quite far: starting with an emerging practice, they have upgraded their performance to enter good and best practices, going beyond plain educational delivery to fully incubating student entrepreneurs and recording actual numbers of successful kick-offs.

Appendix A. Supplementary information and references on projects and initiatives

Ad 1. Case example(s):

The Business Creativity Module (BCM), which is meant to introduce an innovative instrument in the new venture creation process combining entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation. BCM has been jointly designed and implemented by a network of 6 European Universities in Germany (Mainz), Scotland (Aberdeen), Portugal (Lisbon), France (Dijon), Poland (Wroclaw) and the Czech Republic (Prague) and presents one of the learning opportunities that the network developed since its establishment in 2004. It is now an innovative course integrated in the regular curricula and jointly taught by the partner universities.

Reference: www.coeur-module.eu

Ad 2. Case example(s):

The FoSentHE project is lead by the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics and Business, Croatia, funded by the Tempus programme of the European Commission. FoSentHE stimulates the internationalisation of curricula by launching new online courses on entrepreneurship – the process of designing detailed content and structure of the study programme, the compilation of core stakeholder groups and networks representing and linking the key entrepreneurship promotion actors. The underlying idea of FoSentHE is to stimulate students' entrepreneurial activity by: Entrepreneurial mindset, e-Learning, Excellence Entrepreneurship centres, and European network.

Reference: www.efzg.hr/tempus

The CBVE project by EADTU, is a European Multilateral project under the Lifelong Learning Programme, Sub programme Erasmus – Cooperation between Universities and Enterprises. Its objective is to enhance the professional skills of students by lifelong, open and flexible, didactically-innovative and pedagogically-rich learning approaches, with a specific focus on the development, extension and expansion of entrepreneurial skills. CBVE is to pilot entrepreneurship in a novel way,

¹ though this falls outside the scope of the current CBVE project.

as prospective part of the curriculum for students not (longer) part of traditional cohorts so reaching to students outside traditional cohorts.

Reference: www.eadtu.nl/cbve/

Ad 3. Case example(s):

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) is one of the frontrunners of the new model of online education of the knowledge society. The educational model of the UOC facilitates access to learning resources from any place and at any time, in a way that permits education to be integrated in people's lives. The UOC has been working for many years in different initiatives on the field of entrepreneurship. At present UOC is working on a new initiative which will consist of the introduction of entrepreneurship as core item in curricula of all areas of knowledge, as of September 2009. UOC will gain experience with new initiative and will be able to report on its experiences in the near future, after having testing it thoroughly. UOC's Economics and Business Studies department is on top of this initiative.

Reference: www.uoc.edu/

Ad 4. Case example(s):

The ViCaDiS (Virtual Campus for Digital Students) is a Lifelong Learning project under Erasmus Virtual Campus, and supports the development of an innovative virtual campus for digital students. ViCaDiS synergises with entrepreneurship inside curricula, in as far as it provides for the usage of Web 2.0 technologies for entrepreneurial education and training. ViCaDiS aims at providing an innovative multilingual ICT-based environment unique in Europe (as an international virtual campus). It will incorporate several open educational resources (library, glossary, external links, student projects, course activities), open educational tools (wiki, blog, forum, calendar, podcasting, instant messaging communication, audio-video conferencing over IP, RSS, mobile text messaging, mobile accessibility to ViCaDiS) and will promote social networking as an instructional method.

Reference: <http://www.vicadis.net/>

Ad 5. Case example(s):

The project 'Cross Sector Virtual Mobility: Stimulating European Employability through Cross Sector Virtual Mobility', has successfully experimented with flexible modality internships for enhancing students' employability. The main aims of the project were to sensitise (distance) higher education to the contribution of e-internships, provide distance higher education systems with increased business connectivity, stimulate employability, and accommodate for the training of skills & competences in a flexible manner. CSVSM was supported by - New tools and interactive technologies, Remote matchmaking platform, and Cooperation with enterprises, local/regional bodies.

Reference: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/119388567/abstract>

Ad 6. Case example(s):

Support for student entrepreneurship, progressing prosperous business plans, and the support in successfully going 'live' is supported by business incubation, and goes one step further than plain entrepreneurship education. Incubator tenants are provided facilities, business management support and other services, such as interactions with agents of the financial sector, universities, associations, trade unions and firms of different sectors. The Technical University of Crete (TUC) works towards creating a favorable environment for entrepreneurship. It conducts innovation promotion, technology transfer, and business start-up training. TUC works to establish an academic student environment conducive to entrepreneurship and innovation in the region of Crete.

Reference: <http://www.seerc.org/iceird2009/programme.html>

Ad 7. Case example(s):

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is an action initiated by the EU (DG Enterprise and Industry). It aims at helping new entrepreneurs to acquire relevant skills for managing a small or medium-sized enterprise by spending time in an enterprise in another EU country. It contributes to improving their know-how and fosters cross-border transfers of knowledge and experience between entrepreneurs. Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs comes under the Small Business Act for Europe which considers this action a key contribution "to create an environment within which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded". The action is of interest to new entrepreneurs who might want to go abroad to learn from experienced entrepreneurs, experienced entrepreneurs who might want to host new entrepreneurs, and providers of business-related services who support entrepreneurs and the development of entrepreneurship. The overall objective of the action is to enhance the entrepreneurship, internationalisation and competitiveness of potential start-up entrepreneurs and newly established micro and small enterprises in the EU.

Reference:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/erasmus/feasibility.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=2941&lang=en

Ad 8. Case example(s):

Improving (regional) cooperation between universities, businesses and social partners is an important matter. Examples of successful co-operation between the sides exist throughout Europe. However, the level of co-operation remains very unequal across countries, universities and academic disciplines and the extent to which it has influenced governance and organisational cultures in both business and higher education so far, is limited. The commission has established the University-Business Forum. It involves higher education institutions, companies, business associations, intermediaries and public authorities. It enables and stimulates parties to exchange good practice, discuss common problems and work together on possible solutions.

Reference: http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc1261_en.htm

Ad 9. (Best practice) example(s):

Identifying and utilising emerging, good and best practices, and cross-linking these experiences remains vital to obtaining more proficiency on the local level with regard to entrepreneurship. A report by the European Commission on helping to create an entrepreneurial culture (a guide on good practices in promoting entrepreneurial attitudes and skills through education), provides some helpful insights. In the publication 21 examples of good practice are proposed. It describes entrepreneurial attitudes and good examples of educational systems and how these can help to promote the spirit of enterprise in young people, thus contributing to create a more entrepreneurial culture in our society. Also, the survey of entrepreneurship in higher education by NIRAS Consultants, FORA, ECON Pöyry is very useful to consult. It contains interview reports of good practice examples with some 46 higher education institutions in Europe.

Reference:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/training_education/doc/entrepreneurial_culture_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/training_education/highedsurvey_b.pdf