
FROM RESEARCH TO MARKET – SUPPORT TO KNOWLEDGE BASED ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Abstract

European Universities-Enterprises Cooperation is aimed to bring together these two worlds in order to promote entrepreneurship, creative thinking and innovative approaches as part of the curriculum for students and as a skill for teachers /researchers and to reinforce the link between studies and employment needs. Teachers play a crucial role in supporting the learning experience of young people and adult learners. They are key players in how education systems evolve and in the implementation of the reforms which can make the European Union the highest performing knowledge-driven economy in the world by 2010. To promote entrepreneurship between EU countries there was intended project „From Research to Market - Support to Knowledge-based Entrepreneurship“ - ReMark (www.remark.lt).

From Research to Market

Knowledge-based entrepreneurship that turns research results into marketable products or services is highly valued and supported in the policies of EU countries as it adds to the competitiveness of any economy and is essential for achieving the Lisbon goals. However, intellectual entrepreneurship in Europe is still underdeveloped. Numerous studies show that lack of entrepreneurial spirit and knowledge are among the main constraints hindering researchers to pursue starting up their businesses. The main aim of the ReMark is to adapt an entrepreneurship e-learning package to the needs of potential knowledge-based entrepreneurs – mainly researchers, but also students and young graduates with technological/scientific knowledge, and test and disseminate it in Lithuania, Cyprus, Slovakia and Finland. Project objectives include analysis of the current e-learning package and its adaptation to the needs of the target groups and participating countries; e-learning package transfer to Lithuania, Slovakia and Cyprus by translating it and placing in the project partners' websites; testing and evaluation of the e-learning package by the target groups; implementation of the valorisation strategy. Researchers, young graduates and students with outstanding scientific knowledge will gain additional skills that will allow them to turn their knowledge into commercial benefit by developing successful business. The project will contribute to the efforts to develop knowledge-based entrepreneurship in project partners' and other European countries.

Support to Knowledge-based Entrepreneurship

There are numerous European and country-specific documents confirming the need to support knowledge-based entrepreneurship and provide adequate training for this purpose. The Communication from the European Commission (COM(2006) 208 final) states that “most universities will need external support to (...) build up entrepreneurial attitudes” and “development of entrepreneurial, management and innovation skills should become an integral part of graduate education, research training and lifelong learning strategies for university staff“. The main target group is researchers that have potential to commercialise their research results but lack knowledge, information and encouragement in order to start their own business or get otherwise involved in entrepreneurial activities. Many valuable research results do not get turned into innovations and successful business because of this lack of entrepreneurial spirit and competences. The researchers need a comprehensive and easily accessible training/learning package in order to understand the benefits and learn the principles and processes of knowledge-based business.

Teacher's role as an entrepreneurship educator

Teachers also have a key role in preparing learners for their role as EU citizens. As such, they need to be able to recognise and respect different cultures. First-hand experience gained in other European countries supports teachers in responding to this challenge. Priority should, therefore, be given to the development of mutual trust and recognition of the competences and qualifications of teachers. Although teachers play a critical role in society, they cannot act alone. Their own high quality education needs to be supported by the institutions where they are employed, within the context of coherent national or regional policies that are appropriately resourced. The teacher's role as an entrepreneurship educator and present teachers' views of entrepreneurship education, the key question here is to concentrate on teachers' learning processes, which are the essential element in the development of education. In entrepreneurship education the teaching methods should be directed towards entrepreneurship, student activation, emphasis on social interaction and student oriented. Problem oriented learning, experiences and different co-operation with business life are important in entrepreneurship education.