

Title: Supporting Graduate Entrepreneurship in the Creative Sector [SHADOWS]

Project type: Erasmus+ / KA2 – Strategic Partnerships for VET
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Promoter /Coordinator: Municipio de Lousada, Portugal

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Total grant for the University of Pitesti: 23.001 Euro

Local coordinator for the University of Pitesti: Dr. Georgeta CHIRLEȘAN

Summary:

Factory floors are progressively being replaced by creative communities whose raw material is their ability to imagine, create and innovate. In this new digital economy, immaterial value increasingly determines material value, as consumers are looking for new and enriching

"experiences". It is widely accepted that there is a profound shortage of coherent entrepreneurship training programmes throughout Europe with even fewer initiatives addressing the needs in sectors like the creative industry sector which has a number of sector-specific characteristics that require special consideration. While there is a broad range of vocational education and training programmes that address the development of creative skills there is no evidence that the essential entrepreneurship training is being integrated into non-business graduate education in any of the EU Member States. Supporting people to develop their creative skills without developing the business acumen is an on-going disconnect in education and training that cannot be allowed to continue.

The creative industry sector comprises highly innovative companies and is one of Europe's most dynamic sectors, contributing around 2.6 % to EU GDP, with a high growth potential and providing quality jobs to over 5 million people across EU-27. Creative businesses often contribute to boosting local economies in decline, contributing to the emergence of new economic activities, creating new and sustainable jobs and enhancing the attractiveness of European regions and cities. EU cohesion policy has recognised the multifaceted contribution of culture and creativity to its strategic objectives of convergence, competitiveness and employment.

For most creative individuals developing a new product or idea, the focus and priority is firmly placed on what it can do; how it can be used; what makes it different. While these are all essential pre-requisite to any future potential business of equal importance are questions like:

- who are the management team behind the business?

- what is the the business model proposed?

- how will intellectual property be protected?

- does the product or idea have scalable potential?

So while having the right idea might get you half the way to success, it will only get you half the way as core business management skills are also required. While individual capacities like creativity, motivation and powers of persuasion are often considered to be key attributes that drive new business ventures among young graduates marrying those skills to business acumen brings success. Providing bespoke entrepreneurship training that is specifically designed to address issues that are unique and particular to graduates in the creative industry sector can help to harness the potential of this sector as a hotbed for graduate entrepreneurship throughout Europe and provide a sustainable pathway to self-employment, economic independence and social cohesion.

It is now widely recognised that creative industries will make a significant contribution in building the post-crisis economic landscape in Europe. The “European Competitiveness Report 2010”, referred to the “transforming role” of the creative industries for the future of the EU economy. While entrepreneurship curricula are not in themselves innovative or new there is a need to provide bespoke learning resources that address the specific needs of different target groups and the **SHADOWS** project will develop Europe's first bespoke, targeted entrepreneurship curriculum for graduates embarking on a career in the creative industry sector.

Aim and objectives:

The SHADOWS project has a number of key objectives but primarily the project is focused on increasing the labour market relevance of VET by providing bespoke pedagogic resources that will improve the attainment levels of high-level basic and transversal competences. The cultural and creative industry sector has been singled out for its growth potential as Europe recovers from the depths of the recent economic crisis. Developing bespoke curriculum resources that specifically address potential for graduate entrepreneurs in this important sector and supporting

new entrepreneurs in a robust mentoring framework represents a significant connection between VET provision and micro-enterprise owners and an increased responsiveness within VET provision to market demands.

The cultural and creative industry sector is particularly relevant for today's emerging graduates who have grown up in a digital world with technology embedded in their consciousness. Digital literacy skills among young graduates are at a standard that should help them to engage in media-rich learning content on a variety of technology based learning environments. The cultural and creative sector spans a wide range of business areas from technology based products and services to fashion design; from music and video production to computer gaming. Providing a bespoke curriculum to support entrepreneurship in this sector makes perfect sense as the cost of establishing a cultural and creative sector business can be quite small and the requirement for minimal capital outlay makes it particularly appealing and relevant for today's young graduates emerging from college.

It is an accepted fact that the quality of teaching is the key deciding factor in the achievement of educational outputs and the SHADOWS project recognises the key role to be played by VET professionals and wants to ensure that they can benefit from the provision of essential in-service training.

Outcomes:

- Summary Research Report to:

(1) identify modules to be developed in the new cultural and creative industry sector

entrepreneurship curriculum;

(2) highlight topics to be addressed in the in-service training programme for VET professionals;

(3) inform the design of the induction to pedagogy programme to ensure that quality assurance standards are respected where the provision of mentoring supports is concerned;

(4) inform the design of the curriculum modules to ensure that high-quality standards are achieved in content production.

- In-service Training Programme for VET Staff
- Induction to Pedagogy for Micro-enterprise Owners. The proposed business immersion model, where up-and-coming graduate entrepreneurs can develop their business ideas in a real working environment, is potentially challenging and rewarding.

- Cultural and Creative Industry Sector Entrepreneurship Curriculum that specifically addresses the development of entrepreneurial skills for the cultural and creative industry sector.

- On-line Observatory of Cultural and Creative Businesses & E-learning Portal
- Policy Paper “Unlocking the Potential of the Cultural and Creative Industry Sector”

Partnership:

1. Municipio de Lousada, Portugal (coordinator)

2. Universitaet Paderborn, Germany

3. Creative Exchange UK Limited, United Kingdom

4. Meath Community Rural and Social Development Partnership Limited, Ireland

5. Universitatea din Pitesti, Romania

6. Future In Perspective Limited, Ireland

7. INNEO - Studio Twórczego Rozwoju, Poland

8. Innoventum Oy, Finland

9. European University Cyprus, Cyprus