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PIETE MAGAZINE

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Greetings from PIETE!

The PIETE consortium welcomes the 2020 academic year with a brand-new issue of the PIETE magazine, dedicated to exploring the concepts of entrepreneurship education for (aspiring and practicing) school teachers. Since our last publication, substantial progress has been made on the development of the project's outputs – please, check out articles about the new PIETE results and stay tuned for more updates!

In the meantime, open this issue and dive into the exploration about the pre-requisites of an entrepreneurial school and get a glimpse of the entrepreneurship education discussion in the context of initial teacher training as well as initiatives instilling entrepreneurial values among young learners around Europe. In the first section of the magazine, we invite you to get familiar with a selection of new PIETE resources – Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Framework Country Cases – Austria, Poland and Hungary and Entrepreneurship Education Capacity-Building (Sensitization) Collection. Further, we hear from MCI – the Entrepreneurial School as a role model to foster entrepreneurship education and learn about the certification to become an entrepreneurial school in Austria. We also offer you to discover an ample variety of articles on the development of entrepreneurial skills, such as a discussion whether there are

fewer possibilities for entrepreneurship education in a smaller town and how COVID-19 pandemic affects the entrepreneurship skills and initial teacher education. On top, we will offer you insightful cases on developing and honing entrepreneurial skills with the overview of the work of Jasło Business Association in Poland and an example from Digital Talent Accelerator in Germany.

We hope the insights you will get after reading the recent issue will not only ignite your interest but provide you with some inspiration to integrate entrepreneurial skills development in your (maybe future) classroom! Last but not least, we hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy in the pandemic times.

We wish you a pleasant reading!



PIETE Consortium



Achievements 2019

3rd Partner Meeting, Sziged
(16-17/05/2019)

PARTNERSHIP FOR INITIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP TEACHER EDUCATION

contributing to a new generation of entrepreneurial teachers in Europe

The PIETE Project (Partnership for Initial Entrepreneurship Teacher Education) is a 3 year Erasmus+ funded Initiative to bring Entrepreneurship Education experts and initial teacher education experts together to foster entrepreneurial skills development in initial teacher education programmes (ISCED level 3-4).

OUR OBJECTIVES



WE RAISE AWARENESS

about the benefits of entrepreneurship among initial teacher training staff at the university level



WE INVESTIGATE

the perception of entrepreneurship education among initial teacher educators



WE DEVELOP

teaching/ training materials to support entrepreneurial skills development in initial teacher education programmes



WE BUILD

long-lasting relationships between experts of initial teacher and entrepreneurship education programmes



New PIETE results

ITE Framework Country Cases – Austria, Poland and Hungary

This country report series reflects the reality of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) structures in Austria, Poland and Hungary and is generally based on the methodology of the general ITE framework report. The ITE framework is developed to better understand the functionality of Teacher Training Center (TTCs) in terms of institutional circumstances, curricular focus, and responsibilities of educators involved in ISCED 3-4 teacher development. The ITE framework attempts at coherent mapping of actors, artefacts, and practices involved in the ITE. Of course, due to the specificity of Austrian,

Polish and Hungarian systems of education and ITE organization, it is not possible to make it 100% coherent with the general framework which was designed in a broad form, to allow various countries for using it to map their systems. It is rather a case description. The country cases presented explain how the system of education in Austria, Poland and Hungary are organized. Furthermore, it shows how Initial Teacher Education is organized, who are ITE providers, and what models and standards of teacher education exist in these 3 countries. Finally, it endeavours to show the position of entrepreneurship education within the system.

All 3 country reports are available in English and the country initial languages (German, Polish and Hungarian). All reports are open-access and can be downloaded:

[Austria Case ITE Framework Report](#)

[Poland Case ITE Framework Report](#)

[Hungary Case ITE Framework Report](#)

Click [here](#) to download the reports in other languages.

Entrepreneurship Education Capacity-Building (Sensitization) Collection

Since the understanding of entrepreneurship competences varies from context to context, which we have also observed through our investigation in Poland, Austria and Hungary, there is commonly quite a low level of commitment to be expected from the ITE educators towards incorporating (and fostering) these competences in their own educational activity. Therefore, not only does the PIETE project attempts to build the capacity of initial teacher educators from the partner institutions to familiarise themselves with the EntreComp Framework and entrepreneurship education practices through tandem workshops, we also aim to document these learnings and transform our experiences into guidelines for other institutions to implement

similar workshops for their ITE staff.

Thus, PIETE Entrepreneurship Education Capacity-Building Collection seeks to provide practical guidance to initial teacher education institutions/faculties that wish to step on the path to embed the entrepreneurship education. The document comprises three main parts. In the first part, we present the EntreComp Framework, navigating through the diversity and broader understanding of entrepreneurship competences. The second part concerns the tandem interventions guidelines that can serve as a hands-on tools for organizing sensitization workshops for ITE colleagues aiming to raise their awareness and openness towards entrepreneurship education. The third part illustrates a few examples of workshops that were organized by the PIETE partners.

The Entrepreneurship Education Capacity-Building (Sensitization) Collection will be soon available on [our website](#). Stay tuned for the updates! ■



The EntreComp Wheel, European Commission 2018, EntreComp into Action: Get inspired make it happen

The Entrepreneurial School® as a Role Model to Foster Entrepreneurship Education in Initial Teacher Education

Even though education in general is seen as one of the major catalyser of regional entrepreneurial potential, entrepreneurship education is largely undertaken in the selected programs and institutions associated with management and business development. Many Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs in Europe, however, lack entrepreneurial competence development.

What if ITE decision-makers open up their minds, looking a little bit more outside the box, and start to transfer what has proven to be successful in other higher educational contexts? The MCI – The Entrepreneurial School® can serve as a prime example here. As the Entrepreneurial School®, MCI is the first point of contact for numerous entrepreneurs and company founders for all questions concerning entrepreneurship. MCI supports students, graduates, employees and partner organizations in their entrepreneurial activities and promotes the development of the skills required by successful entrepreneurs. Thereby it aims to provide comprehensive teaching of entrepreneurial skills.

At MCI, all study programs include a differentiated number of theoretical and practical courses in the field of entrepreneurship

in their curricula, with two Master's programs that are explicitly devoted to entrepreneurship. Curricula are supplemented with practical projects, international study trips, company excursions, symposia, workshops, and boot camps to foster entrepreneurship competence development.

Next to this, MCI offers extra-curricular education in the field of Entrepreneurship & Start-up. Within MCI's executive education, courses and seminars are offered to sharpen the entrepreneurial spirit regularly. Moreover, with the digital badge program, the MCI starts off as a pioneer by awarding digital badges in the field of Entrepreneurship and Start-up Management. Digital badges are digital certificates for skills acquired outside the regular studies. During this program, students go through a series of interesting seminars and learning experiences within one year (e.g. identification of hidden entrepreneurs, collecting practical experience in a start-up, participation in a business plan competition, pitch training, etc.).

Furthermore, MCI regularly organizes lecture and discussion events that facilitate entrepreneurship topics and sensitize students to specific entrepreneurial issues (e.g.

female entrepreneurship, etc.). Of particular relevance is the annual MCI Creativity Award, where students from all study programs (including incoming students) have the chance to demonstrate their entrepreneurial ideas. A jury of independent experts from various fields evaluates all ideas and the best ideas are awarded prizes.

Individual consulting and coaching sessions can be arranged with internal or external experts when students, employees, graduates but also partner organizations and companies need advice in entrepreneurship. Doing so, in cooperation with the major players in the Tyrolean entrepreneurship ecosystem, the MCI has successfully contributed to the establishment of numerous start-ups and spin-offs in recent years.

In the sense of a sustainable exchange of knowledge, research in the field of entrepreneurship is strongly promoted at the MCI and includes 1) [Entrepreneurship Education](#), 2) [Family Businesses Management](#), and 3) [Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Marketing](#).

Although the aim of ITE is not to develop company founders - entrepreneurial skills might be equally important for future teachers. While typical entrepreneurial founders develop new or enhanced products or services, prospective teachers are even challenged to develop educated humans. Let's be true, if that is not entrepreneurial, then what is?



Now the question is what can we learn from MCI's approach and what can be transferred to the initial teacher education (ITE) context?

First, higher education institutions that offer ITE programs should recognize the importance of entrepreneurial skills for future teachers. The embracement of an entrepreneurial mind-set at the school and institutional level is a first step in the right direction.

Second, instead of providing stand-alone and encapsulated courses in entrepreneurship a multi-disciplinary and cross-curricular approach should be the preferred way to foster entrepreneurial competence development. This can be done either by enriching existing courses and lectures with some entrepreneurial elements or by offering elective over-curricular courses to raise awareness about specific entrepreneurial issues.

Furthermore, ITE institutions should engage within the regional and national entrepreneurship ecosystem and build up a fruitful network for a steady exchange. Institutional and in particular cross-institutional events and workshops can be very efficient here. They can be organized to sensitize students for entrepreneurship education, helping them to overcome inhibitions and prejudices about the topic. Even a business plan competition might be great to do so. The business plan competition can easily be transformed into a curriculum competition (e.g. designing the best curriculum) or a didactics competition (e.g. best lecturer) for a better fit to the ITE context.

Thinking outside the box, spin-offs might also be an interesting option for institutions

in the ITE context. Spin-offs are not only limited to technological innovations, even more so they might path the way for innovative ideas and novel educational concepts! Also, research in the field of entrepreneurship education might help to expand horizons and enrich the quality of teaching and learning substantially, therefore it should not be neglected either.

Ultimately, however, it is not a matter of working through this list and implementing everything on bend and break. The aim is rather to provide food for thought and inspiration. If we want the next generation to have more entrepreneurial qualities, then educational institutions in particular should set a good example. And if they try just one thing on this list, they too have put their entrepreneurial potential to the test, leading by example. ■

Authored by: Desiree Wieser, MCI



Image Credit: MCI



Get certified!

How to Become an Entrepreneurial School in Austria

Since 2011 it is possible for schools in Austria to be certified as an Entrepreneurship School. What is the general idea behind it and how does the process work?

Based on the priorities set by the European Union, both the Austrian Ministry of Education and the Education Directorates see Entrepreneurship Education (EE) as a particularly important component of good school education. This priority is highlighted in a certificate, which aims to make the certified school more attractive, confirms its holistic approach of Entrepreneurship activities as well as their goal-oriented and long-term implementation in everyday school life. Currently 61 schools are certified, 23 schools are in the process of being certified.

The certification serves as a measure to ensure and increase the quality of EE, which is already anchored as a general educational goal in the curricula of all vocational schools. It confirms that in the school concerned, entrepreneurship activities are implemented systematically on all levels from students to teachers to parents to companies, from classroom management to school leadership. If EE is to be sustainable, it must be integrated in the school development process and be supported and lived by all those involved. Young people should be supported in becoming innovative, sustainable and critical entrepreneurs as well as intrapreneurs. Consequently, measures

to promote entrepreneurial thinking are as much an integral part of the everyday life of an Entrepreneurship School as the steady drive for personality development and education to become a responsible citizen.

Before a school decides on certification, a survey of the status quo (e.g. school culture, attitudes, authenticity) must be conducted. It is essential for a successful implementation and certification that the majority of the teachers and the school management are behind the certification. Appropriate training events should ensure that the teachers are familiarized with the principles of EE. Finally, the school formulates the goals of the certification, specifies concrete implementation measures and defines responsibilities. An entrepreneurship steering group will be set up, consisting of teachers from the various departments and actively involving the school management. The team must include a business teacher and a general educator.

The certification of an entire school usually takes a year or more and includes criteria from the following areas:

- A.** Activities at the school
- B.** Basics for teachers
- C.** Organizational framework
- D.** Additional freely selectable optional criteria



Mandatory criteria from area B – Basic level:

- Basic training on the topic of EE
- Attendance of relevant seminars on the subject of EE
- Program for directors
- Internal school cooperation of those responsible for EE

Mandatory criteria from area B – Advanced Level:

- Teamwork of teachers
- Advanced training on the topic of EE
- Working with entrepreneurs

Mandatory criteria from area A – Basic Level:

- Organization of an Entrepreneurship Day
- Exploration of a company or organization
- Participation in an external competition for business ideas
- Extracurricular study groups (initiated by teachers)
- Presentation of EE measures at the open-door day
- Training Firm/Junior Company
- Commitment to sustainability, based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Use of challenges from the YouthStart program (www.youthstart.eu)
- Working with digital tools

Mandatory criteria from area A – Advanced Level:

- Activities with reference to the Global Entrepreneurship Week (in November)
- Extracurricular study groups (initiated by students)
- Debating Club
- External additional qualifications of the students

Mandatory criteria from area C – Basic Level:

- School mission statement
- Website
- Documentation of entrepreneurship activities and successes
- Social media presence
- Involvement of student representatives

Mandatory criteria from area C – Advanced Level:

- Involvement of parents
- Public Relations
- Networking with graduates of the school

A complete list with detailed description of the criteria, their objectives and evidence is available from the responsible bodies (www.eesi-impulszentrum.at). ■

Authored by: Mario Vötsch, University College of Teacher Education Tyrol

Does a Person From a Smaller Town Have Fewer Opportunities to Develop Entrepreneurship Skills?

Entrepreneurship skills are undeniably very important for contemporary humans, especially for teachers who shape new generations of people and have great influence on their prospective career and quality of life. Although in Poland each year new entrepreneurship-related initiatives can be spotted, still not all teachers, teacher educators or students are lucky enough to participate in workshops or courses aiming at developing entrepreneurship-related skills. At a first glance one could think that such trainings are only for inhabitants of big cities and teacher educators from very big, recognisable universities who seem to be more aware of their importance. It is, however a misconception and an example of a case of entrepreneurial municipality is going to be presented below.

Wilamowice is a small municipality of an urban-rural character around the area of Bielsko-Biała, where people mainly are employed at local factories, make their living from farming or work at Bielsko-Biała or other Silesian cities. The municipality comprises the town Wilamowice and 5 villages: Piszczowice, Dankowice, Hecznarowice, Stara Wieś i Zasole Bielańskie. Local authorities and people organising the work of local teachers, thanks to European funds they skilfully apply for, create many opportunities for inhabitants of the municipality. Those opportunities revolve around the develop-

ment of students and teachers and making the life of local people easier. Few examples of those initiatives are, for instance, creation and participation in a project protecting people against digital exclusion thanks to which free Internet and hardware is delivered to some people. School in Hecznarowice, thanks to some teachers (including UBB graduates) and local authorities (especially the head of School and Kindergarten Management Association – Zakład Obsługi Szkół i Przedszkoli) created opportunities for kids from the municipality participating in municipal assemblies, workshops connected with effective communication and public speaking. The workshop was carried out by a UBB employee who is a PIETE partner and who made the participants aware of the importance of communication skills and other skills connected with Entrecomp. The young participants were very active during the workshop, they asked many questions with relation to public speaking issues and other competencies important to become successful in professional life and while speaking in public. It was visible that young people want to develop and if given a hand can be very determined and motivated to aim high and develop themselves. The meeting was fruitful enough to give rise to other plans connected with developing skills of the local people. In October 2020, a series of workshops for chosen teachers working in the area of the municipality will

be organised. Some of those workshops will again be carried out by UBB PIETE partner who will train the teachers with relation to public speaking, effective communication and stress management at work. At the same time the idea of the PIETE project will be presented and key entrepreneurship competences will be elaborated on. This way teachers will become more aware of the importance of an entrepreneurial mindset and teach better and make young generations of municipality students aware of competencies they need to develop.

As it can be seen, not only big cities and large universities can change the mindset of people and make their world better; also small villages, municipalities and smaller universities can inspire people to develop themselves and broaden their horizons of people involved are enthusiastic enough. Thanks to the combination of opportunities

created by local authorities, people working at HEIs and teachers and students willing to leave their comfort zone and plunge deep into lifelong learning the development is to be observed, no matter how big or small a given village, town or city is. So, answering the question asked in the title of the post, we must say that a person from a small town doesn't have fewer opportunities if people involved in their education are open-minded and willing to develop and if that person is motivated enough. With the help of a good, open-minded teacher who is aware of many important competencies that should be trained by young people, one can achieve much, no matter where they live.■

Authored by: Anna Wieczorek, University of Bielsko-Biała





How Does the COVID-19 Pandemic Situation Affect Entrepreneurial Skills and Initial Teacher Education?

The COVID-19 pandemic reaching Europe in the spring of 2020 has created new challenges for the population of developed democracies at various levels. None of the Western societies have an age group which have not been affected directly or indirectly by the pandemic. Looking back on the happenings in the spring and summer of 2020, we consider that one of the defining characteristics of the events is certainly manifested in a general sense of stress and high level of uncertainty.

How much stress does the COVID-19 pandemic entail and who can be the winners of the current situation?

Stress and uncertainty have always been an integral part of the existence of humanity,

what is more, during history the survivors of traumatising and demanding events have always been those who could quickly adjust to changing circumstances. The source of external stress and uncertainty affecting societies shows great diversity and variety (e.g. wars, threat, limited resources), and there are many among the older members of today's population in Europe who have experienced outstanding historical occurrences or experienced and survived traumatising events. However, the population of today's Europe does not include people who have direct experiential knowledge on the adequate management of a worldwide epidemic. In this respect, we can only rely on collective knowledge and historical experience, which definitely raises concerns.

We did not follow to what extent the pandemic dominated the media and mass communication channels in other countries during spring and summer, however, the messages communicated in the Hungarian media and the measurements implemented in spring (e.g. announcing the state of emergency, the television speeches of the Prime Minister, dedicated timeframes for shopping for the elderly, closure of borders, hospital visit ban, closure of kindergartens, schools and higher education institutions) clearly indicated for the citizens that times were difficult. We can establish without any exaggeration that in the spring period of 2020 the Hungarian mass communications and political discourse, deliberately or not, were strongly permeated by fear appeal.

At the same time, the degree of fear cannot be objectively assessed at an overall social level, as individuals are highly diverse; it is defined by habitus and stimulus threshold what a person considers as a source of stress. In the situation that has developed – today and in the near future – presumably the problem-solving strategies of the individuals who intend to be objective and

assess risks rationally can be efficient. The “winners” will probably be those who can tolerate stress and uncertainty and who can maximise the “really important few” and let go of the “unimportant many” among their everyday tasks. If we think about it, it is actually about the efficient mobilisation of the skills of entrepreneurship competence. In this situation, those who already have an entrepreneurial approach and consciously make use of the application of this approach can have a step forward, i.e. as the Chinese saying goes, “Victory comes from finding opportunities in problems”.

How have higher education and teacher education changed and can change during and after the pandemic?

The discontinuation of the education based on personal presence took the institutions of Hungarian public education (primary and secondary schools) by surprise and most of them were unprepared. The schools responded to the switch to so-called digital education in quite a heterogenous manner. The teachers of certain institutions kept contact with the students in an asynchronous way, with the help of an intermediary platform for teaching materials, where the students were forced to solve the assigned exercises offline relying on themselves (and the support of their parents) and “upload” them within a deadline. The teachers of other institutions held real-time lessons in a virtual classroom in the framework of synchronous education, mostly through applying Zoom or Jit.si.

Similar solutions were used in the Hungarian higher education, including initial teacher education. Besides exploiting the possibilities provided by ICT, much depended on the attitude of the educators. The teachers considering humane aspects recognised it from the beginning that the students could

not be expected to fulfil the requirements and tasks defined at the start of the university semester, while other teachers who were able to completely ignore the environmental effects argued that the students can actually be demanded more of because they did not have to concentrate on anything else but learning.

The above described examples are mostly extreme cases, in reality, actions are affected by a variety of external and internal factors (competences, personal values, beliefs), and the nature of the situation. Whichever approach educators and higher educational teachers apply in their work, we can claim that the pandemic considerably contributed to the enrichment and innovation of the methodological repertoire. It forced the teachers and educators less open to changes to make methodological modifications, while it enabled creative teachers and educators with an entrepreneurial approach to try new opportunities: the conscious application of this approach allowed solving unexpected situations more efficiently.

It can be concluded that COVID has posed new challenges for teachers and educators in teacher training. The challenges have emerged in an extremely complex way, which have entailed forming an unconventional way of life and applying new coping strategies. It can be generally established about the happenings of the past period that the individuals have tried to find a solution to the emerging situation alone or in professional communities. However, based on the interpretation of Bacigalupo et al. (2016), we know that an entrepreneurial approach means that the individual adapts to opportunities and transforms them to value for others as well, as it is easier to find good solutions to any kind problems collectively than individually. Presumably, the great challenge of the next period will be to prepare for that the virus will stay with us for an unpredictable period, thus professional communities, including the educators of teacher training, have to try to develop a new and safe framework for the (co)operation collectively. ■

Authored by: László Kinyó, Edit Tóth & Szabolcs Prónay, University of Szeged





Modern Entrepreneurship Education Initiatives for Youngsters in Poland – a Benchmark of Jasło Business Association

Nowadays, people become more and more aware of the importance of certain skills in their professional and private life, such as the ability to manage one's own time, communicate effectively, or have proactive life attitudes. It is not enough to merely teach young people about tangible topics, such as history, grammar of a given language, etc., but rather help them become proficient users of that language, reflect on history and come to certain conclusions for the future and many more. Entrepreneurship educa-

tion in its broad sense refers to many abilities and skills that are worth developing. There are some initiatives in the area, but still not enough; it is worth, however, to look at some good examples of entrepreneurship education aimed at youngsters in Poland.

Jasielskie Stowarzyszenie Przedsiębiorców (Jasło Business Association), thanks to European Funds and a grant they got, made it possible for secondary school students from

their area (School complex no 4 in Jasło) to get entrepreneurship-related skills. The initiative is a part of "Podkarpacki Ośrodek Wsparcia Ekonomii Społecznej" (The Podkarpacie Social Economy Support Association) which supports and coordinates a project with the same name. The objective of the project is to organize workshops for secondary school students in the following areas: planning skills (including professional planning software), setting up and managing one's own business, forms of business ownership in Poland, typical mistakes connected with sole entrepreneurship. Each one of 60 afore mentioned participants will undergo a 12-hour workshop in the areas mentioned. Eventually, Jasło Business Association will launch an offer of a complex workshop comprising three modules and will boost economisation in the region this way. The sum of project fund is only 9000 PLN (around 2 093 euro), but it gives chance for a better professional life for 60 young people. Project partners are Hetman Tarnowski Foundation and the Tarnobrzeg Academy of Regional development.

Jasło Business Association offered in previous years other interesting workshops devoted to social insurance, labour law, data processing and storing, free workshops concerning fund-getting skills, etc.

The Association, in cooperation with School complex no 4 in Jasło, also piloted Entrepreneurship Academy project aimed at creating a free, extracurricular educational offer connected with entrepreneurship education and vocational education among secondary school students at the threshold of life decisions concerning their future profession, establishing their own companies or looking for their first job. 100 secondary school students from school complex no 4 in Jasło participated in the project between January – June 2019. Local entrepreneurs and a professional trainer volunteered to carry out panel discussions revolving

around the following topics: sole entrepreneurship vs company, what sole entrepreneurship entails, is sole entrepreneurship better than being employed?, is it possible to combine sole entrepreneurship with being employed?, the potential of Jasło and its area for new entrepreneurs and employees, phases of establishing and developing companies, typical mistakes made by young entrepreneurs. There were also workshops organized as a part of the pilot study. During the workshops 3 areas were tackled: setting objectives and planning based on value matrix, SMART planning, planning based on Walt Disney.

The pilot study was very successful and the participants and their teachers were of the opinion that it was very developmental and necessary. For that reason Jasło Business Association applied for a grant to make it possible for students of other schools to develop their entrepreneurship skills and become ready to enter the job market. The work of Jasło Business Association and their partners is a good example of entrepreneurship-related initiative for young people in Poland and can be treated by other cities and their authorities and local entrepreneurs as a benchmark.

Authored by: Maciej Mitreğa, University of Economics in Katowice



Digital Talent Accelerator – A New Initiative for Digital Talents in Saxony-Anhalt, Germany

The future needs smart solutions- and who could develop them better than the generation of digital natives?! To support them during the implementation stage of their digital ideas, the Univations GmbH and Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg (MLU) jointly offer a new initiative, the “Digital Talent Accelerator” (DTA). The project was established in 2019 based on a call for new digital initiatives by the Ministry of Economics, Science and Digitalisation of the State of Saxony-Anhalt.

David Köhler, a studied cultural scientist and one of the three project officers that are responsible for DTA, has agreed to provide some insights into the initiative for this PI-ETE E-Zine:

“The main aim of the project is to raise awareness for the possibility of founding a digital start-up and to enable pupils to do so” David Köhler says. “Whether it is an app, a website, a VR application or a digital substitution plan for their own school, the participants are supported by coaches from the IT start-up scene in developing and working out their digital projects. They learn how to transform their ideas into a business plan



and what steps it takes to put it into practice” he continues. DTA curriculum consists of four different “sections”. Two of them focus on IT (web-coding and app-coding), the other two concentrate on business management (business/finances and marketing/design). The pupils are entirely free to choose the section which they want to pursue.

The project addresses pupils in schools of Saxony-Anhalt, who are in 8th to 12th grade (age: 14-19 years). To add, the DTA project schedule runs in parallel to the overall school year plan of the participating pupils. The main motivation for pupils to take part in DTA is the possibility to implement their own project from an idea to a fully working prototype. *“Also learning how to write a software program, to set up a marketing campaign or to create a corporate identity can be the motivation for a participation”* David Köhler adds.

In addition, the initiative offers a series of workshops for teachers: The main topics of these advanced trainings are digitization of education, the use of digital media, and the integration of digital topics and methods in

the classroom. Teachers are informed about the chances of the digitalization and related business topics, so they can discuss these with their pupils.

In November 2019, the project started with its first round, which is divided into three interconnected phases: First, interdisciplinary teams develop and substantiate their start-up ideas from the digital environment at a boot camp (Phase 1). However, pupils without a start-up idea are also motivated to participate. In fact, DTA facilitates the forming of new teams and enables them to jointly design and specify new ideas on the spot. Further, all teams receive support from coaches and founders from the IT scene. Once completed, the specific idea sketch of each team is submitted.

In the second phase, the submitted ideas are reviewed by mentors that prepare constructive feedback the teams may exploit to improve their concepts. Based on these evaluations an individual workshop program is designed for each team. Coaches and founders from the IT scene support the pupils in deepening their skills and competences, developing a prototype, and imparting the necessary knowledge.



The third phase is all about presenting the ideas, including prototypes, at the final pitch-event to an expert audience of representatives from regional IT and start-up companies. Finally, the best ideas are honoured and rewarded. In fact, the first full DTA round was successfully completed with such a closing pitch-event in July 2020. However, other than planned, the event had to be implemented virtually due to the COVID-19 crisis that evolved in the middle of the first DTA round.

When asked how the piloting of the project went during the times of COVID-19, David Köhler replied: *“The first year was a big challenge. The kick-off event was held in the planned way, but all workshops and the final pitch-event were held online. This was foreseen differently. Despite these sudden changes, we were very impressed and relieved, that the motivation of the pupils was not harmed. They worked hard, had a lot of questions to the mentors and developed very detailed and promising business concepts and products”*.

The mentors, who support the participants with detailed feedback on their ideas and (business) plans, are specialised in various fields. There are founders of local start-up companies (e.g. 3DQR GmbH and DIE FRI-SCHEMANUFAKTUR GmbH), IT specialists who carry out coding-workshops for girls (e.g. codegirls.de), founding consultants (e.g. MLU Transfer and Start-up service) as well as representatives from science (e.g. Institute of Computer Science of the MLU) and politics (Ministry of Economics, Science and Digitalisation of the State of Saxony-Anhalt).

A dedicated mentor network will also support participating pupils in the next DTA

round, from November 2020 until July 2021. *“At the moment we are organising the upcoming events and are very glad to bring in the experiences from the first period. The online workshops worked out well, so from now on we will implement both digital and analogue workshops. This will also simplify the participation of pupils from rural areas”* he says with anticipation.

The Digital Talent Accelerator is an initial step into the world of entrepreneurship. Participants, who subsequently want to start-up based on their DTA experience may seek direct service and consultation of established stakeholders in the region, such as the MLU Transfer- and Start-up-service. After piloting DTA in 2019-2020, it is expected to become an integral part of the extra-curricular learning opportunities landscape for Saxony-Anhalt pupils in each of the upcoming years.

Digital Talent Accelerator is carried out as part of the ego. Business start-up offensive of the State of Saxony-Anhalt and funded by the Ministry of Economics, Science and Digitalisation of the State of Saxony-Anhalt and the European Social Fund (ESF).

Want to know more about the project? Visit [Digital Talent Accelerator](#) or [get in touch with the DTA Team](#). ■

Authored by: Sandra Bier & Florian Bratzke, Univations

Image credits: Unrau Fotografie (page 22), Ulf Büschleb (page 23)

OUR GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

The Netherlands

University-Industry
Innovation Network

Austria

University College of
Teacher Education Tyrol

Austria

MCI – Management
Center Innsbruck

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