



STARTUP PASSION

– An opportunity of a lifetime

Antti Leppilampi & Sabine Suorsa (eds)



Kaakkois-Suomen
ammattikorkeakoulu



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XAMK INSPIRATION 15

SOUTH-EASTERN FINLAND UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
KOUVOLA 2019



South-Eastern Finland
University of Applied Sciences



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund



TALLINN UNIVERSITY



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Layout and printing: Grano Oy

ISBN: 978-952-344-177-4

ISBN: 978-952-344-178-1 (PDF)

ISSN: 2489-2475

ISSN 2489-6764 (PDF)

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1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO THE STARTUP PASSION JOURNEY

A CLEAR DEFINITION WITH A DEEP MESSAGE WHICH GOES BEYOND

In this publication our team including participants of the trainings program, will share their experiences, inspirations and achievements during the project duration.

STARTUP PASSION IN BALTIC SEA REGION the project, aimed at raising awareness, getting university students interested in entrepreneurship and helping them to build international teams around their business ideas. The project attracted new entrepreneurial talent into the Central Baltic region, as well as introduced a model for supporting the creation of student-based international companies. The project combined competences from versatile higher education programs, student bodies and enterprise development agencies to encourage the best students to take up international entrepreneurship.



StartUp Passion started officially in 2015, and now 3,5 years later we all can say we achieved the impossible. This may sound pretentious after all, still we believe we achieved our goals and inspired our students to seek for their own potential.

In the beginning of the project in 2015 I assigned the role of the project manager, I was worried whether I would fulfill all the expectations in the project and in me, but I was fortunate with an outstanding team. Each of them professionals in their fields and real team players, all of them understood the goals we had ahead of us and believed in the potential and talented students we have in our organization as well as in our partner organizations. If you are in the position to have a strong team behind you, goals, tasks and co-operations seem to be seamlessly working. It is naive to say there were no obstacles, beginnings are always challenging and finding the right communication seams in the beginning close to impossible.

Now after 3,5 year our project came to an end, and according to our infographic, you all can see lot of things happened in these past years. From the project management point of view, as mention I was fortunated with a team of experts, which are like minded, open and willing to achieve the impossible. We all worked together, and as our Lead partner from Cursor Ltd. (<https://www.cursor.fi/>) Heidi Sjögren said "This was one of the easiest international projects".

For me personally, I need to say, lot of things changed, I learnt, achieved and experienced a lot. Each day in this project I was inspired by our students and their willingness to work hard on their own entrepreneurial journey, thankful to be part of a project which made me, who I am now, and grateful for having a team behind me, which needed no explanations and guidance.

Be true to yourself and "DO WHAT YOU LOVE"

Sabine Suorsa
Project Manager





MAKE YOUR IDEAS HAPPEN!

StartUp Passion Journey

ONLY 6 STEPS TO SUCCESS!



2. THE PROGRAM

2.1 SIX STEPS TO SUCCESS

Each year started with finding students who had a business idea. Startup Passion offered a team for students and tools for polishing skills to become a successful entrepreneur. The program for this was called “Six steps to success”. For each year the program went like this:

• HACKATHON

Now this is a challenge! Come up with a killer business idea in just 24hrs; and maybe, just maybe you'll get lucky and have a future unicorn* on your hands! Creative, talented and motivated people from 3 different countries will come together to form truly international teams. People like you with a range of experiences, from many different fields of study and with various interesting backgrounds. You'll put your creative minds together, you'll explore and develop new solutions; all from that one brilliant idea. *A unicorn is a company with a value over one billion dollars!

• KICK OFF

Kick your idea to the next level of entrepreneurship with this three day training session. Master ideation and innovation, learn about business modelling,

storytelling and a whole lot more! This comprehensive workshop will give you the tools you need to ideate, create opportunities from your ideas and give these ideas substance; you will then further develop and discuss them with your teams as you really begin to get started.

● PIT STOP

This 1-day online workshop will focus on finding the perfect market fit for your product or service. Through customer discovery and market validation you will get the skills to build products that really solve customer needs. As well as great tips and guidelines for developing your fantastic ideas further, you will work on refining your customer insight based Business Model Canvas. How about that then!

● BOOTCAMP

AT-TEN-TION! It's Boot Camp! A 5-day, super intensive, hands-on business experience. Learn by actually doing, get your hands dirty, get your idea ready for the public! You'll learn to focus on the customer, learning how to develop your business with the customer firmly in mind. You'll learn the valuable lesson of how to create the perfect pitch as well as the basics of startup funding. At the end of the week you'll put all that work into practice, as you pitch to earn one of the 10 places at the final.

● COMPETITION

This is it, the final pitch! 10 fantastic teams, 10 fantastic ideas, fighting it out for the grand prize. A prize invaluable to any new startup. Judged by a panel of international specialists and mentors, they will be handing out valuable feedback to both the winners and runners up. Golden nuggets of expertise from our professionals will help you focus; work harder, work smarter and take that great idea to market.

● FROM BUSINESS TO SUCCESS

Now this sizzle gets real! Focusing on the most advanced teams from the development programme and idea pitching competition, this phase offers intensive coaching, cross team training and the participation in networking events. The aim is to get that first seed investment! You will also apply for accelerator programmes, funding programmes and strengthen relationships with existing and/or potential future investors.

© Text taken from <http://startuppasion.eu/site/>

2.2 COMMENTS FROM STUDENTS

● **JANNE RAUVOLA** – Here we Go! Bootcamp in Kotka (Designer student)

It was a large package about entrepreneurship since the beginning. Not only presentations, but the mentors put us to do exercises, which kept the program interesting.

At first they made very clear that the speaking language would be English. Each of us were dragged out of our comfort zone by putting us to perform in front of the group since the first day. I found all this very positive.

Good facilities brought a memorable atmosphere for the whole summer, where we could see each other being pushed to work harder and harder, but that's a part of the hobby. Overall the summer was relaxing and comfortable and I could recommend it to any entrepreneurially minded youngster.

● **JONI HAKASALO** – Learnings from Startup Passion (Product and Service Designer student)

I got my first sights from the entrepreneur world while sitting at the train station, where one friend of mine was pitching an idea that we could start developing together. Our friend group consisted of people with many kinds of -skillsets, so it was easy to start working. The project developed at theory level very quickly until after few months it was time for the project to go for an early retirement. We realized that knowing about financing wasn't our biggest strength.

This experience was still important for me and the learnings I got came back during the summer of 2018 when I was thinking should I go and apply for an intern job at Startup Summer Camp? I decided to go and didn't have to regret it. The summer gave me lots of new friends and networks, which led me to be a part of Startup Passion project. There I got to do awesome exercises. We got one video documentary made there, which is mentioned in another article at the end of this publication.

Why should we prefer projects based on entrepreneurship? At first, they offer a route to self developing outside your comfort zone. Secondly, you get to be a part of a great team which helps you to get inspiration for your own work! While being a part of these projects, I've noticed that entrepreneurship isn't an unknown way of life anymore for me, but instead a way filled with possibilities that I'm truly thinking of using after I graduate. The learnings and the tools I got during the year made me realize that building the future might not be as hard as I thought.



● **DARIA CHEKALSKAIA** – Learning from different roles (Environmental Engineering student)

My journey in startup passion was truly nice. From being a participant to becoming a camp facilitator, each step was full of challenges and experienced people (and that's what I wanted).

I have never thought that I can come up with an idea and even dare to implement it. Startup passion showed me that I am my only obstacle in becoming an entrepreneur.

I tried different roles on my startup journey starting as a participant and continuing as a startup summer camp facilitator. That's why I'm pretty sure everyone can find their own place and fulfill themselves here, just by being a bit more initiative and motivated

● **ALISA KIVIRIAN** – Like minded people together (Business Management student)

StartUp Passion is a unique happening which brings like minded people together: creative, open and adventurous enough people, who are ready to develop an idea from a clean slate. No matter what's going on the way, no matter if you win or lose, you get unforgettable experiences on belonging in a team of international people overcoming challenges together. At the end of the day, all you can think of after all the work is how grateful you are for a chance to travel, work, and make friends. And partying! If you work like a rockstar, you also party like a rockstar, right? An inevitable and still brilliant part of spending time in the project, which made me personally the happiest person ever.



● **ANNA RYNDINA** – Crossborder teams (International Business & Marketing student)

In the beginning I would like to say that for me participation in StartUp Passion project was a life-changing moment. I saw a big poster about this project on the 2nd floor at XAMK and immediately realized that it was an opportunity that I have been looking for.

I did not have any particular idea and I was not very familiar with the concepts of these kinds of contests but **Sabine Suorsa** and **Kirsi Rouhiainen** gave me a chance anyway and I am still very grateful for them.

My own idea was very simple: I wanted to combine clothes/accessories and solar batteries but in fact it was not very innovative. That is why I joined team **“Gazeetaa”** with **Marat, John** and **Aleksander**. The idea was in producing pencils from old recycled newspapers. Working with these guys is still one of the most unforgettable and challenging experience of my life! Undoubtedly, without the support and very useful advices from **Antti Leppilampi** and **Teijo Javanainen** we could not make it to the semi-finals.

I think my favourite moment was in one of the sunny days in Riga when we all were on our way to the Stockholm School of Economics of Riga - our next location. Despite the fact we all were from different countries and representing different teams I was feeling the connection with all these people because after all we were unit. Thank you for this amazing adventure!



- **MARAT** – About being a leader of a team (International Business & Marketing student)

I think, that it was quite challenging for me to find an idea, because nowadays Finnish economy doesn't rely on consumer goods, but rather services. When I had a session with Antti and Teijo, they told me that storytelling is the best way to market my product to juries and I think they were right. I was a leader of my team. Not a very successful one, but I got hands-on experience in leadership.

- **SHARA** – Don't lose passion (International Business student)

Have you found your passion? I strongly believe everyone has passion but does not know how to make use of it. I am one of those who at first thought it is hard and impossible until I joined Startup Passion. Then everything changed from impossible to possible. Startup Passion gave me energy, motivation and knowledge to let me fly with my startup idea. Don't lose passion, let it shine through yourself!





● **HASSIB & RONNY** – Lightcap Startup (Cyber Security students)

Startup Passion Bootcamp was the first step of getting familiar with startup ecosystem for us. It was interesting and inspiring, and we learned a lot about the startup world through it. After the bootcamp we started to develop our idea and concentrated on the *ship Startup Festival. *ship is a two-day international startup event that offers mentoring and clinics for startups to polish their ideas, improve their pitching skills and finding connection for building their ideas. We reached the Top-10 final competition in *ship.

Startup Passion competition was a longer journey that had several rounds of competition and lasted for a few months. It also provided very useful mentoring and workshops. Startup Passion was very joyful and exciting because it organized each round of competition in different countries. We also reached the Top-5 final competition in Startup Passion.

Most importantly, we have met many amazing and inspiring people through these startup events. We have learned a lot got experience and connections for the future. On the other hand startup competitions prepare young startups for being competitive in the business world.

The idea of Light Cap to secure normal people's connection to the internet especially when connecting through wireless local lan came from the massive amount of unsecure connections. These connections can be monitored by anyone. With rather simple understanding of how to connect securely normal users can avoid the biggest risks in connecting insecurely. The problem that we try to solve is the educational part of the equation.

● **ANTTI LÄÄPERI** – Kaakau Citybikes Startup (Service Designer student)

We are KaaKau and we provide micromobility solutions, our core service being bikesharing for cities. We took part in StartUp Passion during our prototype season 2018 and the program gave us some valuable insights in how to build our young company. Prototype season was successful and for season 2019 we are expanding our operations from Kouvola and Kotka to multiple other destinations with multi-year contracts. We'd recommend anybody who has even the slightest interest in entrepreneurship and startup-scene to boldly take part in programs like SUP because they're safe playgrounds in which to test your wild ideas and who knows they might become real. Ride on, Antti Lääperi co-founder KaaKau Oy

● **CHRISTOS** – ProLocalis Startup (Sea Captain student)

ProLocalis is a new platform and mobile app for local consumers and tourists to find locally produced food and beverage, artisanal goods, services and authentic experiences and connect with the hearts and minds behind them. We did a podcast talk with the CEO – Christos Granqvist who shared his thoughts about his Startup Passion-journey.



He heard about Startup Passion MOOC at first and he applied there, where he was told that his idea was already at a stage that he could join the Startup Passion - 6 steps to success program. He called the program manager Sabine Suorsa, who said according to Christos: "Thank you for calling. You will be coming with us to Riga in 2 weeks. Before that, you need to do an advertisement video and a business model canvas."

"At that time, I didn't even know what the word Startup meant". Christos says. But he quickly absorbed the process, learned new tools and important experiences. After Startup Passion where ProLocalis reached the finals, they were scouted into the LevelUp Accelerator, where their network continued to grow and the growth has evolved since that. In the end of the podcast conversation Christos gave some advice for students thinking about forming a startup and entering the entrepreneurial world.

- Keep your heart with you all the time. A good idea is not enough. When doing this, I have gotten to focus on my personal passion.
- Be ready to work "32 hours a day" and remind yourself, why and how you are doing what you do.
- Surround yourself with smarter people and remember the importance of networking.
- Forget the narcissist inside you, who can't take criticism. Be thankful for anybody who's ready to rip your idea in pieces.
- Nothing in this world is ready.





3. MENTORING AT STARTUP PASSION (Will Cardwell, Courage Ventures)

The thing that fascinates me about mentoring young potential entrepreneurs, is the fact that you just never know what that person is going to turn into. An entrepreneur right out of school? Maybe. But almost always, the first attempts at entrepreneurship fail, and the founders end up in more traditional sectors and roles for some period of time, before eventually attempting to start a company again.

Keeping this in mind, our mentoring at Startup Passion is oriented to this idea. Everything that we expose the budding entrepreneurs to should be broadly applicable as they take their next steps in life – the tools they get should not be only useful to a startup.

This is the key to why we focus so much on business modeling, customer development, and pitching – because all 3 of these issues apply regardless of profession and size of organization. All companies need to introduce new products and services at some point, and our Startup Passion participants will be able to bring the Business Model Canvas to that discussion in any context. They will also be able to build and execute a plan to interview current and potential customers and adapt to their preferences. Finally, they will be able to create a pitch and communications strategy that is geared to winning customers, partners and funders.

The most interesting thing I notice when comparing the young entrepreneurs in Startup Passion to the more mature participants in my business school executive classes is that speed and fearlessness they have in executing the customer development process, and how well they adapt it to their messaging, both written and spoken. In my mind the formula to a winning team is diversity – age, gender, and culture – Startup Passion is a great way to get the ball rolling for not only the next generation of entrepreneur, but also for building highly skilled entry level employees to larger organizations.

4. TEACHERS POINT OF VIEW

(Kirsi Rouhiainen, XAMK)

TEACHING AND COORDINATING STARTUP PASSION – A CHALLENGING BUT HAPPY JOURNEY IT WAS

Looking back at my 3,5 years with Startup Passion in the Baltic Sea Region (SUP) project I must admit this surely was a learning trip. Startup Passion journey was not a journey made alone. As a coordinator of the training program I learned and achieved a lot with and because of all my wonderful colleagues from our partners at Courage Ventures and in Estonia and Latvia. Let me shortly describe you the three major learning outcomes from the program coordinator's perspective.

1) CROSS-BORDER TEAMS TAKE TIME AND PATIENCE

We started from scratch and built the 4-unit program to fit the needs of the students from three different universities and countries. Coordinating a cross-border project was sometimes a challenge: in the beginning we (coaches and project staff) spent hours of discussing and just getting on the same page. I clearly remember the first meeting with Laura and Povilas (Courage Ventures) as we designed the program framework and came up with the titles for our four events: 1) Hackathon 2) Kickoff 3) Pit Stop and 4) Bootcamp. It all seemed so clear and easy. That was in October 2015. Within a couple of weeks I found out about the real challenges of cross-border teamwork. At the same time it was highly motivating and rewarding to work with the best startup professionals in the Baltic states.

Organizing a team meeting was not the easiest job. Getting people to gather from all around the world and spend at least a half an hour together first seemed like a mission impossible. Skype let us down a few times and we faced all the general hassle around a team working remotely. But these essential experiences and learnings as a cross-border team helped us also understand what kind of challenges the student teams were facing. Practicing what you preach isn't always easy but that's the way to stay humble and compassionate.

2) CRUCIAL FUTURE SKILLS CAN BE LEARNED IN FUN, NON-FORMAL AND MOTIVATING WAYS

The universities fiercely aim at building the future skillset of their students by offering them various courses and learning possibilities within their curricula. The intensive and very much out-of-classroom type of execution of SUP training program was able to increase student's knowledge and develop skills in the following crucial and more advanced skill areas:

- Entrepreneurship and initiative-taking
- Creativity

- Project management
- Complex information processing, interpretation and problem solving
- Critical thinking and decision making
- Advanced communication and negotiation skills
- Interpersonal skills and empathy
- Service orientation
- Cognitive flexibility
- Adaptability and continuous learning
- Leadership and managing others
- IT- and digital skills

These skills were learned in fun, non-formal and highly motivating ways, mixing business and pleasure, with the lead and help of real-life entrepreneurs and highly experienced international startup professionals. At the same time students were able to network internationally and learn about the startup culture and actors in various countries. Seeds for success stories were planted and some participants took their ideas to the next levels already during the program or after a year or two after it. There is a tremendous power in bringing people together and letting them meet, communicate and create together.



3) THERE IS NO FAST TRACK FOR BUILDING ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM AND CULTURE

During its existence Startup Passion in Baltic Sea Region project paved the way and built startup culture in Kymenlaakso area. It was a joint effort of various startup actors within and outside the region. The results are visible: there is a clear rise in interest in entrepreneurial activities among Xamk students. They are not only more aware of entrepreneurial possibilities within and outside the university but they also grab these kind of extra-curricular opportunities more eagerly. The stories told and shared by their fellow students and Xamk staff inspire them to step up with their ideas, to find ways to make their dreams happen and most of all to participate in the future entrepreneurial activities either during their studies or afterwards. Changing the culture and mindsets of people is not a success story happening overnight. Making a long-lasting impact into an entrepreneurial ecosystem takes years - we are on our way and determined to make even greater things happen.

3. WHAT WE LEARNED IN 3,5 YEARS – WHAT WE ACHIEVED (Sabine Suorsa, XAMK)

In the beginning of a project, what comes to each project manager and project team members mind:

uncertainty, high expectations, something completely new, anxieties, maybe a bit scared, and amazing workload and how to share it equally, very ambitious goals, and questions like:

How will we achieve all these goals in just 3.5 years?

How will be the cooperation with all the project partners?

What will happen if we will not succeed?

Am I the right person for the task?

How will I plan and share all the tasks equally and make my team efficient?

During the last 3.5 years each of us learnt many different and new things, some of us found their own strength and weaknesses, some of us found their path of what will happen in the future and which direction it will lead each of us.

In my opinion with our project we achieved a so-called BOOM, the term 'startup' got a new dimension, it cannot be anymore defined of becoming and full-time entrepreneur, it is the gate of something greater, which we call the entrepreneurial mindset.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF

STARTUP PASSION



According to Krommenhoek B. (2018, Medium.com) *“Over 90% of startups will fail. The reasons why are simple to explain, too much focus on the building and not on the customers, lack of general focus, being a one-person-team and finally unrealistic and premature scaling.”*

StartUp Passion gave students the opportunity of a lifetime, to explore their ideas and turn them into business ventures, but most of all we teach them to have faith and trust in themselves and in their ability, that with some hard work you will find solutions which leads to greater adventures. An open-mind-set and the courage to stand in front of an audience and panel to represent your startup idea and most of all, represent yourselves and your team, that is even of greater achievement.

We all had our very memorable moments during our journey, some to mention:

Shara: A young student from Vietnam, who worked during the whole StartUp Passion project and Startup Summercamp on her own, and at the time of the *ship- startup festival, she stood alone on stage and made a perfect pitch!

A guy we all called Jesus ☺ who had during the 1st year of StartUp Passion journey, at least 4 different ideas and all of them social entrepreneurship related, but unfortunately he never could really made it clear, so it took each of us almost six month to really understand what he wants to achieve.

Arta Citko – came up with the ideas of creating so-called “Playbooks” (<https://www.artacitko.com/>) a young student entrepreneur, with the greatest talent in graphic design. Her own personal style is so unique and special, you only can be astonished by such talent.

Those are just couple of talented and students we met during our StartUp Passion journey, and we had close to 300 students during these 3.5 years, basically all of them unique and talented, in their own ways. We achieved to influence all of them by spreading the words and wisdom of entrepreneurship. We strongly believe universities should have more project, which including training programs for student entrepreneurship development. This is giving students the possibility to put their knowledge into action, by the term ‘learning-by-doing’. In that sense internationalization and entrepreneurship are coming together, cross border opportunities will arise and relations build.

StartUp Passion build up a great network in the Baltic Sea Region during the last 3.5. years, over 34 different keynote speakers and stakeholder’s, we met during the time. Some of them still available for startup teams to mentor/coach, and others are working closely together on different projects, and even others are now involved in different project developments.

The learning curve for all of us was tremendous, our ability to seek for opportunities and to even mentor and coach teams, is just one outcome. We all found our path in certain ways, and we all will be somehow working together,

in different projects but still in similar terms. With proudness we can say, we have a great university with so many extremely talented students, we just need to tickle them out of their shells and let them explore their possibilities.

By Sabine Suorsa (Project Manager)

<https://medium.com/swlh/why-90-of-startups-fail-and-what-to-do-about-it-b0af17b65059>

6. CROSS BORDER COACHING APPROACH

(Ari Lindeman, XAMK)

From teams to startups – Coaching across borders

1. SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE CROSS-BORDER STARTUP COACHING APPROACH

Startup Passion project initiated and developed not only student-based startup teams but also cross-border startup coaching approach. The key elements of the approach are outlined in this article. The article aims to improve understanding about formation and facilitation of student-based startup teams in a cross-border context.

The views presented here are based on team level surveys from all three rounds of Startup Passion Training Programme 2016, 2017, and 2018. Altogether 36 teams took part in the survey. The survey data is supplemented by interviews with four key coaches involved in the Training Programme in all rounds. The interviewed coaches come from different countries.

The cross-border startup coaching approach was constructed from three perspectives. First the nature of teams; how cross-border they are and how committed they are to the development of the team and their business idea. Second the phase of the startup together with strengths and challenges regarding teams' progress was looked at. Third perspective covers nature and role of coaching teams received during the programme. These three perspectives are supplemented by coaches' reflections about what to keep in mind when coaching student-based cross-border startup teams.



2. FROM TEAMS T30 STARTUPS IN 2016-2018

The average number of nationalities in a team varied in different training rounds between 1,6 to 2,2. In the first two training rounds the kick-off hackathon and the early sessions of the programme played a bigger role in networking the team members across border than in the last round. Most of the teams had been established already at the time of registration to the programme. The organisers preferred pre-formed teams for the last round in order to get onboard better committed teams and more developed ideas from the start. However, from the cross-border point of view this meant, as one team commented, that we already have a team and we are not seeking new team members across the border. This resulted in lowering the cross-border nature of teams for the last round after peaking in the second round. In order to enhance the cross-border nature of teams, online means of networking should be facilitated prior to registration, minimum requirements for cross-border outlook per team are set for the registration, and cross-border networking is emphasized in the kick-off hackathon and other early parts of the training programme. It should be noted that participants of the training programme valued networking opportunities across border although they didn't involve great cultural mix in their own team.

The teams' commitment to continuing until the incorporation reveals something about the viability of cross-border teams in the longer run. More than half of the teams indicated that they have more than 50/50 intention to continue until the incorporation within or after the training programme. This was a surprisingly positive estimate. It would be interesting to know how many teams/ventures have been incorporated in one form or another in the end. From the startup life-cycle perspective Startup Passion's student-based startup teams were in their early stages. On the scale pre-startup - startup - growth 31 teams were in the pre-startup phase and five teams in the startup phase. In the second round of the training programme all teams were in the pre-startup phase. Sub-phases ideation and conceptualisation dominated among the teams in the pre-startup phase. Few teams estimated that they were in the commitment sub-phase and 1-2 teams in validating their products/services.

3. COACHING ACROSS BORDERS

Coaching plays an important role in developing cross-border startup teams. Within the Baltic States and Finland, the working culture is surprisingly similar if looked from the global perspective. The real issue is not to build cross-border teams between people from different Baltic region countries but to facilitate the contribution of people outside the region to the regional startup teams. Another common aspect related to the Baltic region is that the size of the local markets is very small and therefore the team members from the region tend to think small. In this kind of environment cross-border startup coaching approach must encourage to think big.

The successful coaching interventions focus on developing leadership in cross-border startup teams as the early stage teams drift easily as a consequence of managing cross-cultural contributions. Coaching benefits from slowing down, having compassion and “terribly large ears”. Interventions need to be timely with respect to the readiness and phase of the team. Once trust has been established the cross-border teams expect to be challenged, too. Therefore the coach must be able to ask good probing questions.

In the complex web of several cross-border teams, as in the startup Training Programme in the Startup Passion in the Baltic Sea Region project, coaches cannot and should not have clear answers. Rather, they should impact the attitude and act as a connector between teams and between teams and the outer world. It is through networks that cross-border startup teams find the solutions how to move forward along their startup journey. Networking and meeting the needs of culturally and competence wise heterogeneous group of startup teams requires team of coaches coming from equally diverse background as the teams.

4. CONCLUSION

Student based cross-border startup teams are not easy to build and hackathons, networking events, and training programmes are needed to show the young people possibilities of teaming up across borders. The journey from teams to startups is long and winding. Early stage ventures need sustained commitment from the team members, openness to changes in team constellation and development path, and intelligent cross-border startup coaching to reach investors and customers. Coaching across border is helped if the teams of coaches is passionate about learning themselves while facilitating build up of cross-border startup teams. The diversity of the teams needs to be matched with the diversity of the coaching team. Eventually, the joy of incompleteness – an integral part of learning the startup way – leads to the taste of success by some teams and enriching learning experiences for many.

7. JUMP FROM STARTUP PASSION TO LEVELUP ACCELERATOR

(Heidi Sjögren, Cursor)

Jump from Startup Passion program to Levelup Startup Accelerator

During the over three years journey in Startup Passion we met hundreds of great, brave and passionate students with innovative business ideas. After hard work, testing and developing the ideas in Startup Passion program we picked up the most promising teams straight to the Levelup Startup Accelerator program. Startup journey and a path from the idea to successful business got a smooth continuation from this opportunity. Levelup offers 15-week accelerator program twice in a year. So most often teams jumped to the Levelup spring batch after our business idea competition phase which usually ended in November.

Altogether five Finnish teams decided that they really want to put all in to business development and see, if they really could attract investors, piloting partners or even customers for their company. One of the greatest examples of Startup Passion teams is ProLocalis. Christos Garnqvist was studying in XAMK and had an idea of developing a mobile app which could help people to find local producers and local services from ProLocalis app. Christos joined to Startup Passion project in a half way of the accelerator program but he still made it to the second place in our business idea competition. We noticed immediately the passion and a hardworking attitude in Christos. He was ready to learn everything from the startup scene which was a totally new world to navy officer and farmer with no experience from any kind of



startups. His ProLocalis application helps hyper-local producers modernize their marketing and sales operations to gain access to new markets through the mobile app. During the Levelup accelerator program Christos got a lot of support and knowledge of business development, new contacts to enlarge his team and even contact which helped him to get an access to US markets. He also found his first investor through our network and rest is already history. In general the Levelup Accelerator program offers customized training program with world class mentors and global networks for participants and therefore works as a springboard for any company who is ready to develop their business to the next level. Read more from www.prolocalis.com

8. TO MOOC OR NOT TO MOOC? (Ksenia Sharapova, XAMK)

Answering this dilemma, in addition to other inspiring activities, Startup Passion project developed an interactive massive open online course on idea generation, innovation and entrepreneurship. The idea of the developers was to make participants taste, sense and enhance passion about entrepreneurship and to encourage international cooperative activities of the learners in the context of new idea development. For this purpose our team tried to provide a wide range of material to enhance independent studying that received a positive feedback from the students for being diverse, different in formats, appealing and encouraging.

The five-credit pilot course was held in autumn 2018 for eight intensive weeks of studying. The course was built around six I's - Inspiration, Ideation, Innovation, Incubation, Illustration and Implementation - that took the learners through action learning experiences starting with idea search and concluding with future reflections.



Table 1. Course Overview: Timing and Tasks for Evaluation

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Tasks & Deadlines
Sprint 6								Implementation	Evaluations, Future plans Dec 21, 2018
Sprint 5							Illustration		Pitch Dec 16, 2018
Sprint 4					Incubation				Business model Dec 9, 2018
Sprint 3			Innovation						Innovation Nov 25, 2018
Sprint 2	Ideation								Ideation & group building Nov 11, 2018
Sprint 1	Inspiration								Warm-up discussion Nov 4, 2018
	Introduction information								Course starts Oct 29, 2018

In Table 1, it is possible to see how the main tasks of the course were scheduled around the topics. In addition to the main tasks, learning diary was used as a tool of reflection for students to understand why the specific material and tasks are offered. On the other hand, for the course instructor it was a tool of assessment and a possibility to see how well the material of the course was studied, and to which level the students acquired and absorbed “knowledge part” in order to be able to apply it in the “skills part”, implementing the bigger assignments of each sprint.

The new product that the course developers together with IT staff can be proud of was Idea Wall - the interactive platform for idea generation, idea sharing, idea development. The Platform allows people situated in places removed from one another to find best possible team members and to cooperatively work on the common idea. If you are interested, you can have some more insights by watching the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL-WDB3oIDUE> .

What impressions a course instructor might have from a MOOC like that? Mixed feelings, I would say...Constraints...Interest...Questioning...Wow-effect...Surprises...All in all, a palette of feelings when you face something new and constantly changing, as it was the environment our MOOC was creating: you cannot predict the outcomes because they are participants-driven.

We had about 80 students enrolled for the course, but only 60 made it to the platform of the course that Eliademy hosts. Unfortunately, only eight par-

ticipants completed the course. If to look on a general trend in MOOCs that about 5-15 % (Harvard University 2019, Ahearn 2018) of the initially enrolled for the course make it to the end, then we are fine. However, if we look at this as developers of entrepreneurial education that should be sustainable and should create value, then we might start questioning what is has been done wrong.

Still, Ahearn (2018) states that one should stop evaluating MOOCs based on the numbers of participants who completed the course, because it is not a traditional learning environment, it is a social content, it is a participant-driven content, and MOOCs should be treated as other digital entities.

What I would like to bring forward are some challenging experiences that me, as a course instructor, and students, as course participants, faced during the eight weeks of work. My thoughts can be found in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Co-learners' challenges

Based on those experiences, I would suggest some changes for implementation:

- Not that hectic run of the course (may be even placing the course in the summer curriculum)
- Not entirely automated course: having online-sessions in order to guarantee
 - Better comprehension of the assignments
 - Creativity and development always run through frustration phases and this is where the students need the presence of the mentor not only through email/message correspondence but through conversations
- Turning learning diaries into "Blogs" or "Forums" (Mak et al. 2010) to make the assignments more catchy for students
- Allowing only teamwork for major assignments, because the course is a combination of individual and teamwork.
- The end date of the course is the latest deadline, after that no task submissions allowed

SOURCES:

Ahearn, A. 2018. Stop Asking About Completion Rates: Better Questions to Ask About MOOCs in 2019. Available online: <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-11-28-stop-asking-about-completion-rates-better-questions-to-ask-about-moocs-in-2019>

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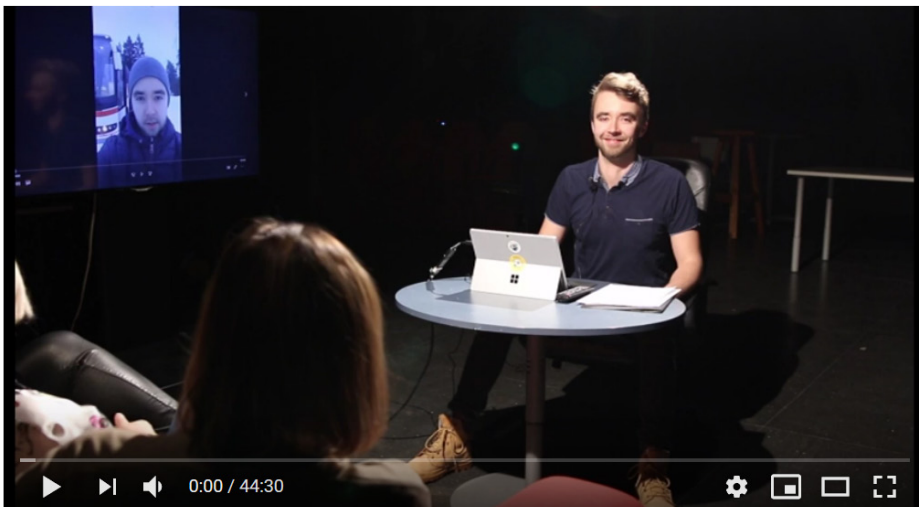
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9. THE CREATIVE PROCESS BEHIND MAKING THE “STARTUP PASSION 2018 – DOCUMENTARY OF THE YEAR”

(Antti Leppilampi, XAMK)

When the year 2018 started, I joined Startup Passion staff members and I could immediately see what an influential journey Startup Passion can be. Students from around the world gather together to innovate and think about ideas that could even change the world. There was a fantastic international group of mentors helping students with their ideas on how to sell the idea, how to pitch, perform and at last how to build a Startup business. All the lessons, exercises and fun activities students had to do were so inspiring to watch. I started to wish I was a student again and could experience the same as they did.

We decided from the first day on that all this should be put online to social media so that other students and teachers could also see all this and participate in their own way. On each trip we filmed clips where students were doing assignments, interviewing them and trying to get all those feelings from the participants to share them through Facebook and Instagram. One thing I especially enjoyed was the goofy atmosphere which was around that



Startup Passion 2018 - Documentary of the year

89 views

👍 4 💬 0 ➦ SHARE 📌 SAVE ⋮

made students to realize that even though they had to work, they could have fun, which is one key for creativity.

Time went by and we started thinking, there are so many funny and interesting clips that we could actually make a documentary from all these clips. Maybe it was the creative atmosphere that gave us this idea so we started planning it more during the summer. We didn't have a written script ready, but we thought about starting to catch up, what do we have and began thinking, could we really make a story out of all this?

We put lots of clips together trying to make a timeline, but we didn't see the story yet. Many clips were first used, but then we cut them off. At one point, where a Startup Passion student Joni Hakasalo joined ideating the documentary we decided not to try to reach out too high, let's just tell about the year as easily as possible. Then the creative freedom came back and we started thinking how there was a couple of spots beneath the clips which didn't make sense in the journey story. First we came up with dividing the documentary into 3 seasons (winter, summer and autumn) and beneath each time of the year we would interview 3 mentors reflecting with them, what happened during those seasons. Then we noticed a couple of points which needed more storytelling and we decided to use Joni's great acting skills so that he could tell the story with a stereotypical news reader voice. After that we continued building the dialogue that I would be the more official narrator building a dialogue with Joni's voice.

We spent many hours editing all the clips and learning to use Adobe softwares on the fly, getting lots of important help from lecturer Sauli Simola, when we were lost. Now we have a 44 minute documentary, which can be seen in Youtube "Startup Passion 2018 – Documentary of the year". Now it is there in a full version, but can be later seen in smaller clips. Then students and teachers can use our material in lessons for example trying to get ideas on how startup life looks, how to practice selling ideas and in a longer run - hopefully get thoughts on how to change the world.



10. STARTUP PASSION INFLUENCE ON THE STARTUP ECOSYSTEM IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

According to startupcommons (2018) *‘A startup ecosystem is formed by people, startups in their various stages and various types of organizations in a location, interacting as a system to create new startup companies.’*

Organizations can be divided into different sections, such as universities, funding organizations, support organizations (incubators, accelerators and co-working spaces), RDI and local and international organizations. All those institutions/organizations support the idea of:

- Innovation
- Inventions
- Entrepreneurs
- Advisors
- Mentors
- Startup team members
- People form similar organizations
- Entrepreneurial minded people

StartUp Passion influenced people and universities and their mindset. With the example of the training program, we stepped outside of the cluster and made an example of, how things could look like in the future, when integrating programs to the curriculum. This is of course still future perspectives, but in our organization the curriculum shows strong Entrepreneurial education, and from the RDI side, project such as StartUp Passion or Startup Connect are the possibility to let students explore them opportunities.

The project connected many different stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region and made an impact on the ecosystem. Student startup teams in some cases may not rise, but there is still the possibility to find experience in different startups and to work for them. The startup ecosystem is a strong network with key players, but mostly everybody knows each other somehow from somewhere. The ecosystem is also characterized by its easy handling and common language – English. There are many different startup events in the Baltics such as **Latitude59, Startup Day** in Tartu and of course the biggest event of all in Finland **SLUSH**, those events are bringing together the ecosystem key players and gives them a platform for networking. Young future entrepreneurs are more as welcome to use those platforms and events to test their ideas and most of all get valuable feedback. During the project we have our participants to join such events and get their first experience, we gave them task, such as speak and test your ideas to potential customers and see what you will gain. This experience was always very valuable, as they also



introduced themselves into the working community, and seek for job opportunities. <https://www.startupcommons.org/what-is-startup-ecosystem.html>

StartUp Passion won the title **“best entrepreneurial project with a global twist”** from The Federation of Finnish Enterprises (Yrittäjät.fi)

The idea to participate in one of these competitions was already present during the year 2017, senior lecturer Marianne Roslund, made us aware of those opportunities. We participated in the year 2017, but we came on place 11, which was not very satisfying.

We spoke in our team meetings maybe to give it another try in the following year, soon the whole idea was forgotten, because of the busy schedule of our trainings program, and recruitment of new students for the upcoming year.

Once again **Marianne Roslund** remind us to participate and this time with a topic which fitted better to our project. To be mentioned, we did not be very convinced to participate, and we left it until the last day of the application time. I clearly remember two hours before the final deadline, I received a call from Marianne, in which she asked me if I did the application already, so I needed to hurry up extremely to finish it and to be honest to even start. I was reading the application requirements and two hours later I was done and pressed send.

We did not have any expectations to win or even to be chosen for a better place as last time, approx. Two weeks later I got an email from **Joonas Mikkilä** (Head of Digital and Educational Affairs at Federation of Finnish Entrepreneurs) which I opened during the evening: *Congratulations you won the 1st Prize of Federation of Finnish Entrepreneurs for your project StartUp Passion in the Baltic Sea Region.*

With the note, not yet to publish it, cause first they need to do it after that we have free hand. I was clearly speechless and did not really realized that something amazing happened, I forwarded the email to my former research director **Valdemar Kallunki** and to **Ari Lindeman** (Research Manager) with the message, *"I guess we won something"* .

This was the journey how we won the title, a simple application, which changed so much, it acknowledged the startup topic strongly into our university and brought the entrepreneurial education new opportunities. The title showed all the universities of applied sciences that a 6-step to success trainings program can make it happen!

In that sense I would like to say THANK YOU to my whole team of making it happen! We achieved an amazing goal and delivered a great project, we learnt so much from each other and we had an opportunity of a lifetime. Each of you did a great job and it was a pleasure to work with each and everybody of you!

Thank you StartUp Passion Team!!!

By Sabine Suorsa (Project Manager)

11. ENDING WORDS

(Marja-Liisa Neuvonen-Rauhala, XAMK)

THE STARTUP PASSION FROM JOURNEY TO PROCESS

To me it was interesting to read how the StartUp Passion journey developed to a process that ends up with entrepreneurship activities. Some might start a company or several in forthcoming years, I guess. Firstly, the most important lesson in this publication is that the process is the most important issue in developing new and creative entrepreneurial basis for the future. Students seem to having achieved courage and insight for possibilities of an entrepreneur – even in a cross-border context. Now they trust and enjoy that they could start a business, and they learned this with joy. Probably we will see them as entrepreneurs, investors, business developers, etc., if we would have a chance to follow their careers.

The second element of the StartUp Passion process is that it created also new ways of supporting the cross-border entrepreneurship activities. In this publication there are important hints for coaches, teachers and project managers: build on experiences, lessons learnt and trust in processes and cooperation. And finally the third as important message is to universities: there is always room for international processes that create new initiatives and ways of boosting entrepreneurship for the better future.

