

This is an electronic reprint of the original article.
This reprint *may differ* from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

Author(s): Törmälä, Ulla-Maija

Title: CULTA Winter Camp for developing cultural products as cross-border co-operation

Year: 2021

Version: Publisher's PDF

Please cite the original version:

Törmälä, U-M. (2021). CULTA Winter Camp for developing cultural products as cross-border cooperation. In K. Klemola, D. Pyzhikov, S. Suntola & O. Konopleva (Eds.) *Enabling positive change: Finnish-Russian endeavours for culture and co-creation* (pp. 106-111). Petroskoi : Petropress.

CULTA Winter Camp for developing cultural products as cross-border cooperation

Author: Ulla-Maija Törmälä (MScOT, Psychotherapist). Ulla-Maija has been working over 20 years as a lecturer in HEIs in different countries. For the last 8 years has been designing and enabling interdisciplinary courses to develop new innovations and businesses. She believes that education should prepare experts, who know how to have a positive impact on society. Before working as a Senior Lecturer and Project Manager at OAMK, Finland, Ulla-Maija used to work as occupational therapist and psychotherapist in mental health.

In March 2020, just before everything stopped because of COVID-19, an interdisciplinary group of students from Finland and Russia gathered together to learn how to develop new cultural products as cross border cooperation. These students were working together for four days in Oulu, Finland. This article describes the development process that was designed for this specific group. The aim of the workshop was to provide new tools for creating products as cross border teamwork.

In this four days workshop the participating students were coming from Petrozavodsk (Russia) and from Oulu (Finland), more specifically students from Russia were from Petrozavodsk State University, Karelian College of Culture and Arts, College of Technology and Entrepreneurship and Finns from Oulu University of Applied Sciences. There were altogether 33 students from the fields of art, dance, business, computer science, social culture management, tourism, education and graphical design joining the Winter Camp; 21 for the innovation challenge, eleven students of dance (5 from Russia and 6 from Finland) and three media students from Finland making the video about this event. The video can be found from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vhl-Ovg8HeE>

When joining the innovation challenge, the students were welcome to bring an already existing idea of their own or come without any specific idea, just with the mindset of being ready to explore and work as an international and interdisciplinary team. For the students from Russia their own universities organized a competition and the best candidates were invited to come and join this innovation challenge. Some of the students even already had their existing companies, most of them were still dreaming that to happen. Besides having the support from CULTA project, the course had support from the project of Oulu2026, to make Oulu as the cultural capital of Europe in 2026.



The participants were actively mapping their ideas. Teacher trying to say something in between

PHASE 1. MAPPING AND EVALUATING THE IDEAS

The first day started with the practicalities and getting to know each other. Really fast students were already mapping ideas - earlier developed and creating new ones - by using Lean canvas. According to Maurya (2012) a lean business model is a business strategy that strives to eliminate waste in product and processes while satisfying customer wants. Based on these analyses, groups of students did evaluation of what might be the real needs, developed and pitched their understanding of the situation by using a template called how might we. How might we is a method for reframing the insights gained (Ideo-org). Before the day was over Henri Turunen from Oulu2026 presented the idea and needs of the city of Oulu from the competition for the European cultural capital 2026. Lastly on that day students formed teams of 3-4 students to continue the next day with their concepts of cross border products.

PHASE 2. MAKING AND TESTING THE PROTOTYPES

Day 2 started with a presentation of the support from Oamk for student teams when developing new businesses. This was just to prepare students for what would be discussed more on the fourth day of the innovation challenge. After that students learned about prototyping.



The day 2 started by making prototypes of new product and service ideas.

A prototype is a simple experimental version of the product or part of it. The idea with the prototype is to learn more about the behaviour of the possible users and/or the product itself. Prototypes are done in order to learn, easily get



Intensive working of the students.

rid of the things not needed or features not wanted. In other hand they are also done to find out what is wanted, needed and for whom the product would fit the best. Prototypes take different kinds of forms and it does not need to be primitive versions of the product itself, but they need to be tangible forms of the ideas of the designers. (Friis Dam & Yu Siang 2020.)

Already before lunch student teams had three different prototypes for their product and straight after lunch they head to the city center of Oulu to test their cultural product prototypes with random people, potential users of their future product. Later in the afternoon, student teams were presenting their testing results as a public presentation in the café of the cultural center Valve (<https://www.kulttuurivalve.fi/en/>). To test the concept as well as presenting their findings were something new and never before experienced for most of the students.

PHASE 3. TRAINING FOR PITCHING THE IDEA

On day 3 the teams were invited to work with several issues during that day. First teams were working on their pitching later the same day. For that they gain feedback about their concepts from expert teachers. Then the student teams made their first pitches of the day. Panel formed by external experts selected two teams to pitch their ideas on the Cultural Climate Change Competition organized by City of Oulu and CULTA project <https://www.ouka.fi/etusivu>.

During the afternoon teams were working on doing product/service analysis and more pitching preparations. Later in the evening everyone joined the Culture Climate Change Competition to support the two teams and to enjoy the dance performance created by the ten dance students. Out of the eight selected teams, one of the Wintercamp teams -Vernissage experience; Combining art with sustainable transportation - won the competition and the reward of 2026€.

PHASE 4. APPLYING PROOF OF CONCEPT FUNDING

The fourth day of the innovation challenge started with great enthusiasm because of two reasons: the winning team from the previous day demonstrated that it is possible to develop something unique only in a few days and secondly because students were introduced to applying the Proof of Concept funding.



Judges giving important feedback for the student teams

But before learning more about the funding possibilities Ksenia Kuzmina from St.Petersburg gave a much needed expert keynote about consumer behaviour. The rest of the day was to learn how to make applications for the funding and then for the Russian participants travel as fast as possible to the border, because it was going to be closed because of COVID <https://yle.fi>

FEEDBACK AND EXPERIENCE

For participating students these were intensive four days. At the end students were asked to tell what they would say if other students would ask about this experience. One of the students from Karelian College of culture and arts summarized the experience as following:

“Listen, friend, this is a cool project.

You will get the most positive emotions.

A cozy and warm atmosphere, because everyone who is in this project is open and friendly to you.

You will spend time productively and profitably.

This is the case when combining business with pleasure.

*You do not want to leave this atmosphere, just as I did not want to do this.
You should definitely visit this project!!!”*

SOURCES:

Friis Dam,R & Yu Siang, T. 2020. Design Thinking: Get Started with Prototyping. <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/design-thinking-get-started-with-prototyping>. Read 16.6.2021.

Ideo-org. Design Kit. How might we. <https://www.designkit.org/> Read 16.6.2021

Maurya, A. 2012. Running LEAN. Iterate from plan A to Plan That Works. O’Reilly. [oulu/english/news-archive/-/asset_publisher/dXe7/content/cultural-climate-change-pitching/17753201](https://www.oreil.ly/2012/05/17/running-lean-iterate-from-plan-a-to-plan-that-works/).