

THINKING GLOBALLY, ACTING LOCALLY

Creating International Network for Team
Entrepreneurs®

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Business Administration
Proakatemia

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
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Proakatemia

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Ajattele globaalisti, toimi paikallisesti
Tiimiyritysten kansainvälisen verkoston luominen

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Tämä opinnäyte on suunnattu tiimiyritysten kansainväliselle verkostolle. Verkosto koostuu eri maissa sijaitsevien korkeakoulujen yrittäjyyden opiskelijoista, joille yhteistä on tiimioppimismalli ja tekemällä oppiminen. Nämä menetelmät pohjautuvat Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulun Tiimiakatemia oppimismenetelmiin ja ovat kovaa vauhtia leviämässä ympäri maailmaa. Opinnäytteen tarkoituksena oli tutkia kansainvälisen verkoston luomisprosessia ja kartoittaa siihen tarvittavia tekijöitä, jotta kulttuurienvälinen yhteistyö lisääntyisi.

Opinnäytteen tavoitteena oli löytää keinoja tiimiyritysten aktiivisen kansainvälisen verkoston luomiseen sekä tutkia, kuinka verkostossa tulisi viestiä ja kuinka sitä tulisi johtaa, jotta kansainväliset projektit ja asiakkuudet olisivat mahdollisia. Lisäksi tavoitteena oli löytää verkostolle uusia ideoita ja käytännöllisiä toimintaehdotuksia.

Tutkimusta varten haastattelin tiimiyritysten kansainvälisessä verkostossa toimivia henkilöitä ja havainnoin kansainvälisen tiimin toimintaa. Opinnäytteen teoreettisia näkökulmia olivat verkostojen luominen, virtuaaliset ja hajautetut työympäristöt, kulttuurienvälinen viestintä, virtuaalinen vuorovaikutus sekä johtaminen kansainvälisessä ja hajautetussa organisaatiossa.

Opinnäytteen tuloksena syntyi tiimiyritysten kansainväliselle verkostolle suunnattu toimintasuunnitelma, jota voi soveltaa myös muiden verkostojen käyttöön. Opinnäyte ja toimintasuunnitelma sisältävät käytännöllisiä työkaluja ja uusia ideoita verkoston synnyttämiseen, sen ylläpitoon, johtamiseen sekä viestintään.

Tulosten avulla haluan rohkaista lukijaa tarttumaan verkoston mahdollistamiin kansainvälisiin haasteisiin ja ottamaan verkoston tarjoamista hyödyistä kaiken irti. Yhteistyö tekee meistä vahvempia, nostaa arvoamme ja sen avulla voimme saavuttaa suurempia tavoitteita.

Asiasanat: kansainvälisen verkoston luominen, kansainvälisen verkoston johtaminen, viestintä monikulttuurisessa ympäristössä, hajautettu organisaatio, globaali tiimiyrityttäjä

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Business Administration
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MARIA RUOKONEN:
Thinking Globally, Acting Locally
Creating International Network for Team Entrepreneurs®

Bachelor's thesis 58 pages, appendices 3 pages
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This thesis is created for the international network of team entrepreneurs. The international network consists of entrepreneurial students that use team learning methods that are based on the methods used in Tiimiakatemia in University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä. The purpose of this thesis was to study the process of creating an international network and survey the factors that are needed in order to increase international cooperation.

The objective of this thesis was to find means to create an active international network and study what are the means for communication and leadership in order to create international projects and customer ships. Also the objective was to find new ideas and concrete suggestions for action.

The data for this study were collected from people who are acting in the international network of team entrepreneurs and also by observing an international team. The theoretical aspects consisted of network building, virtual and decentralized working environment, multicultural communication, virtual interaction as well as leadership in international and decentralized organization.

As a result, was created an action plan for developing team entrepreneurs' international network. The action plan can be applied also to other networks. The thesis and the action plan contain new ideas and practical tools in order to create and maintain a functional international network, with good communication and leadership. The results can be used all over the network either in their entirety or implementing its parts in suitable situations.

With the findings of this thesis I want to encourage people to take the challenges that are available in the network and use the benefits that the network offers. Working together makes us stronger and bigger goals are achievable. The international network gives us energy, pushes towards new challenges and gives inspiration as well as new friends and colleagues. International business is much easier to start with familiar people that share same kind of culture of doing things and similar values.

Key words: creating international network, leadership in international network, multicultural communication, decentralized organisation, global team entrepreneurship

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	5
2	THE RESEARCH PROCESS	9
3	CURRENT SITUATION	12
	3.1 Tiimiakatemia	12
	3.2 Teampreneurship®	13
	3.3 Leadership Revolution Program	14
	3.4 Tiimiakatemia Learning Network.....	15
	3.5 International Team Academy System.....	15
	3.6 LEINN International	16
4	NETWORK BUILDING.....	18
	4.1 The basis for a base.....	18
	4.2 Virtual working environment.....	20
5	WHY TO INTERNATIONALISE?.....	22
	5.1 Cultural intelligence.....	23
	5.2 Get ready for surprises!.....	24
6	HOW TO COMMUNICATE?	27
	6.1 Challenges in multicultural communication	27
	6.2 Tools for communication.....	28
	6.3 A platform for launching	31
7	HOW TO ACTIVATE PEOPLE TO JOIN?.....	34
	7.1 Let them see the benefit	34
	7.2 The power of stories	36
8	WHAT ABOUT LEADERSHIP?	37
	8.1 Requirements for a global leader	38
	8.2 Decentralized organisation and virtual leadership.....	39
9	WHAT DID WE LEARN?.....	42
	9.1 The steps towards success.....	43
	9.2 Evaluating the process	47
	9.3 From now on.....	50
	REFERENCES.....	52
	APPENDICES	56
	Appendix 1. Development plan for team entrepreneurs’ international network	56

1 INTRODUCTION

The background for this thesis

We are living in global world which is getting smaller and smaller all the time. Multiple ways of electrical communication and people's ability to move easily from one place to another enable people to act globally. Current business life requires multicultural communication and working skills, and for current students, it is more than likely to work in multicultural environment in the near future.

As a student of Proacademy, the entrepreneurial unit of Tampere University of Applied Sciences, I am using team learning and friend leadership methods which are based on the learning methods that are used in Tiimiakatemia in University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä. The methods are spreading all over the world, and the new units, which use these methods, have been and are born in several places around Europe and also in other continents. That leads us to be part of a global network which share similar learning methods and values.

The vision of Proacademy is to be an internationally recognized entrepreneurial unit, and also other units, which use team learning methods, value internationality. It is more like a norm than an exception that teams and individuals in the teams are reaching for ability to make international business and acquire global customer ships. At the moment, some initiatives for international cooperation exist but there is not proper knowledge about what is happening and where, do these initiatives have an effect on the international cooperation and network, and if they do, what are the next steps in order to develop the network.

So we have the international network, but the problem is, we don't know how to use it effectively. In January 2013, when talking to Ms. Waldén, a Senior Team Coach and Managing Director of Tiimiakatemia Learning Network (TALN), it was pointed out that there is a need for a research in order to find out, how the international network of team entrepreneurs would take action, what are the means for building that network, how should it be lead and how the communication would keep up.

During this research it came out that also from the team entrepreneurs' point of view there is a need for a study considering the international network. "Something has to be done fast, because Team Academy is growing a lot and I think that – – it is really good idea to do a thesis about that." (Guzman 2013.) That is why I started to work on this subject and with this thesis I am searching for answers to following questions: How to build an active and international network of team entrepreneurs, how to communicate in the network and how to lead the network effectively so that multicultural projects and customer ships are achievable in the future.

Objectives

The goal for this thesis is to find answers to the questions said, and to give practical and understandable tools for networking so that steps for developing the network can be created. After finding the answers, the goal is, to step by step, start developing the network and cooperating globally in multicultural teams in order to achieve international customer ships in the global business world of today.

The objective for this thesis is that the results can be put into practise immediately and that they can be used in other networks as well. Being global and internationally active is almost a norm in current business life. That is why I want to show how good chances and possibilities the team entrepreneurs within the international Team Academy network have at the moment in order to make international business and expand their network. The teamsters of today are future leaders and experts so I want to show what value the international network brings to them already during their studies.

The results of this research are valuable for the whole global network and that is why team entrepreneurs and team coaches around the world are waiting for the results in order to start working towards functioning and beneficial global network. The results are valuable also for future researches that are studied about themes related to this. In addition, the results can be used when establishing new units in order to benefit the network as early phase as possible.

Why I chose this subject?

The team learning model, started 20 years ago by Tiimiakatemia in University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä, is spreading fast all over the world and that is a big opportunity for teampreneurs to cooperate and start doing international business globally. In

the world of today internationality and multiculturalism are in a big role in business life and being international is a value that Team Academies and teampreneurs treasure. (Tiimiakatemia 2013.)

My input to this subject is to find ways to develop the action within the network so that common international projects could be easier to achieve in the future and we could use the full potential of the global network. For the global network it would be essential to find ways to make it permanent and polish the communication so that international relations would include to teampreneur's everyday life. Also that kind of large global network needs leadership so effective tools for that are essential too.

My personal interest in this subject comes, first of all, from the fact that I am studying myself in Proacademy which uses Tiimiakatemia based team learning models. During my studies I have taken part to different kinds of international network activities which have affected to my interest in this subject. Secondly, when finding challenges in the network and talking with different people in the network, it has been seen that development and new inputs are needed.

In 2012 I took part in Leadership Revolution Program (LRP) which was a pilot program for team entrepreneurs around Europe to learn leadership skills and expand their network. In LRP sessions, during summer and autumn 2012, we started to build a new kind of network between the teampreneurs who are studying in universities which use the Tiimiakatemia based learning models. We named the network ITAS (International Team Academy System).

In the turn of the year, we created a Facebook-group for the network and chose leaders from eight different units from five different countries whose tasks were to expand the network in their own unit and share knowledge about the network. The leaders had regular Skype-meetings approximately twice a month in which they shared knowledge about the current situation of each unit and for example information about events and gatherings. But because of many other projects and the lack of an action plan, the communication between the leaders faded towards the spring 2013. In order to continue and develop, the network needs now a proper action plan and concrete steps to make the community functional and known within the teampreneur network all over the world.

The study methods and theory

I will study theory and look for references about global networks, how they function and how communication and leadership are arranged in them. Also, I want to point out why it is important to have an international network in the current world. I will search for theory about motivating people to join because that is a thing we need in order to create a functional network.

Within the network, I will interview internationally active people and focus groups which can give valuable opinions to this subject. In the interviews I am using qualitative study method and semi-structured theme interviews so that deeper reasons and targets for the development can be found. The interviews are made face to face in Finland, in the Netherlands and in the Basque Country and via Skype in Hungary.

Also I will execute a study expedition to Team Academy Netherlands where LEINN International, the first multicultural team, is working. I will observe if multiculturalism has an influence on team's way of working and learning, how does it actually impact and how they use internationality in their business. I will observe their daily functions during six days and join their training sessions and project meetings. During the expedition, I will also join in the gathering of Tiimiakatemia Learning Network in the Basque Country. There I will observe if there are some methods in Tiimiakatemia Learning Network that can be put into practise also in the international network of team entrepreneurs.

Through the research interviews and observations, my aim is to find methods and knowledge that can be used within the whole international network. All in all, the aim for this research is to find ideas and concrete suggestions for action in order to create a functional international network, with good communication and leadership.

2 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

For this research, qualitative research method was chosen because deeper understanding, what is happening in the network and why is it happening, is wanted. Talking to people and asking questions is the only way to find out what they are thinking and for this subject that is essential. Qualitative method is also the best way to use when there are not much previous researches published on the topic, which is the case in this study. (Myers 2009, 5–6, 9.)

To collect primary data for this study, semi-structured theme interviews for focus groups were chosen. This method was selected because semi-structured interview allows the emerging of new questions during the dialogue and thus new insights and aspects, that can be productive for this subject, can emerge. A list of pre-formulated, open-ended questions was made for mapping the current situation of the international network of teampreneurs and ways to develop it. The interviews started each time with similar questions so that there was some structure, and depending on the group of interviewees, some improvisation was allowed to add insights that arose during the interview. (Myers 2009, 124–125.)

Focus group interview was chosen as a technique because certain group of people with common interest can give collective point of views on the topic (Myers 2009, 125). In focus group interviews the dynamics in the group can take the case in question on a new level and members can react on others' opinions. Focus group interviews often give truthful view of the subject because interviewer's guidance is not so intense but the group takes the conversation forward and can speak quite informal way. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti, 2009, 42, 100.)

The focus groups for this subject consisted of internationally active teampreneurs and coaches within the Team Academy network in Finland, the Netherlands and the Basque Country. Most of the interviews were made face to face, except one interview with Hungarian coach was made via Skype. All the face to face interviews were recorded on video. The purpose for the personal contact in the interviews was to avoid misunderstandings and to get more personal connection between the interviewer and the interviewees so that it is possible to go deeper in the subject. All of the interviews, apart from the one done in Finland, were executed in English.

Another technique used during the research process was observation. By observation it is possible to get information how people behave and what happens in the natural operational environment (Ojasalo et al. 2009, 103). During the expedition trip to Team Academy Netherlands, observation for a multicultural team, Fetch International was made during six days. Observation was made in order to find out if multiculturalism has an influence on team's working and learning and how does it actually impact. Also it was observed, how they use internationality in their business.

Another observed occasion was a gathering of Tiimiakatemia Learning Network. Observation was made in order to benchmark Tiimiakatemia Learning Network's organisation, communication and knowledge sharing and to find out if there are some tools that could be taking into account when creating international network for team entrepreneurs. That observation was carried out during the expedition trip to the Basque Country.

The interviews were made between May and June 2013 in the local premises of the interviewees. The interviewees were internationally active teampreneurs from different stages of their studies and also three coaches were interviewed in order to get their point of views as well. There were six face to face interviews with altogether 17 interviewees and one individual interview via Skype. All of the interviewees have international experience; they have spent at least one part of their studies in another country. Nine interviewees have taken part in Leadership Revolution Program.

The first interview was made in Tiimiakatemia in University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä, where three internationally active teampreneurs and one coach were interviewed. Two of the teampreneurs had taken part in Leadership Revolution Program and

the coach was coaching that program. The second interview and also the observation were made in Team Academy Netherlands in Haarlem. The interviewees there were four team entrepreneurs who had taken part in Leadership Revolution Program. Also face to face discussions were made with teamsters from a team called Fetch International and with one Dutch boy who spent half a year in Tiimiakatemia in University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä as an exchange student.

The rest of the interviews were made in the Basque Country, in Bilbao, Donostia (San Sebastian) and Oñati. In Bilbao the interviewees were two graduated teamsters from Team Academy Euskadi and one Finn from Tiimiakatemia in University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä who has started coaching in Mondragon Team Academy's new campus in Bilbao. The interviewees in Donostia were two teamsters from Mondragon Team Academy's (MTA) campus in Irún, and the last face to face interview in Oñati was with four teampreneurs from the local MTA campus. The only interview made via Skype was with a coach from Team Academy Debrecen, Hungary.

3 CURRENT SITUATION

In order to start creating a functional international network for team entrepreneurs, it is essential to study the elements that currently form the basis for the network or act as initiatives for international communication and networking. It is important to know what is the background behind the network and what kind of an effect does it have on the international network building. At the moment of the study, there are six factors that are important to take into account when defining the current situation of the international network of team entrepreneurs.

3.1 Tiimiakatemia

Tiimiakatemia is an acknowledged and awarded special entrepreneurial unit of the University of Applied Sciences in Jyväskylä, Finland. It was founded by Johannes Partanen in 1993. Tiimiakatemia students start their own team cooperatives and do business with real customers during the studies which last three and half years. In the end of the studies the students graduate as Bachelors of Business and after graduation they will go to a trip around the world with the money they have gathered during the studies. (Tiimiakatemia 2013.)

In Tiimiakatemia, instead of teachers there are coaches. Team learning and learning by doing are the methods in use and studied theory can be applied straight into practice in form of projects. As a learning tool teams use dialogue and they are reflecting their learning all the time. Working life experiences already during the studies enable students to continue their businesses after graduation or start their own individual companies. (Tiimiakatemia 2013.)

Tiimiakatemia learning methods have spread and are continuously spreading around the world. At the moment there are at least five universities in Finland using the similar learning methods and at least six other countries have one or more units where they are using Tiimiakatemia methods. There is communication and gatherings within the Tiimiakatemia Learning Network which is a global cooperative for team coaches (Tiimiakatemia Learning Network 2013). The challenge is to build a functional network also

for the students within the global Tiimiakatemia network because, at the moment, there is a need and an urge to cooperate globally but no clear vision how to start collaborating.

3.2 Teampreneurship®

Teampreneurship® is a registered trademark and a meaning for learning and working in cooperative-based teams using Tiimiakatemia methods. The people using these methods are called Team Entrepreneurs® or teampreneurs in short. Teampreneurs create their own jobs with their team members that are also called teamsters. Teampreneurs can cope in changing situations of life because they are open, courageous and resilient. They have wide network and skills for leadership and marketing, among others. (Partanen 2012.)

Because Teampreneurship® has spread around the world there are multiple chances for teamsters to cooperate internationally. The units value internationality. For example the vision of Proacademy is to become internationally recognized educational unit for entrepreneurs (Proacademy 2013) and also other units appreciate international approach.

We are studying to create businesses focusing on internationality, which supposed to be one of our values. We can take a lot of advantage of having contacts and developing projects with other countries because locally everything is so exploited and everything is done. (Guzman 2013.)

The interviews made for this research show that the international atmosphere between the units is more open than ever and it has become better during the recent years. Still the interviewees feel that there is lack of knowledge about other units as well as teamsters in other countries and not enough communication between each other.

I see that there is a problem in the communication between different Team Academies because we do not really know how many Team Academies there are how they are managing the projects they do, we do not have clear information. We can see the lack of communication also here in Basque Country because we do not have constant contact with Oñati [other campus] even and we know almost nobody from Team Academy Euskadi so there is a huge problem of communication locally and also internationally. (Guzman 2013.)

Though there are visits and exchanges between these units, there could be more co-creation and sharing even locally, not to mention globally. According to the interviews, a common platform, where to share things, is needed.

3.3 Leadership Revolution Program

Leadership Revolution Program (LRP) was an initiative to gather teamsters from different Team Academy units to learn leadership skills together. LRP was arranged between May 2012 and January 2013 and it consisted of four sessions which took place in Finland, Hungary and the Basque Country. (Palacio & Fernandez 2012.) In the program there were 22 participants from five different countries and seven Team Academy units (Eskelinen 2012).

LRP increased cooperation between the units, because during the sessions, participants created revolutionary model that unites all the units and teampreneurs in them. The model was named International Team Academy System (ITAS). Also other initiatives to enhance global communication were created during the sessions; in those included International Team Academy Magazine (ITAM). (Leadership Revolution 2012.)

According to the research interviews, the magazine was seen an effective information channel. Also according to Hiltunen (2011, 166) printed magazine is seen as iconic and efficient tool for spreading an idea. Unfortunately the magazine was released only once or twice because the editor in chief left Tiimiakatemia. Maybe this initiative could be recreated in the future.

The interviewees saw that all in all, LRP played a big role in uniting teampreneurs globally. There is a need for having this kind of programs in the future too, and more frequently. “Maybe that is the point, that there are not many options to go abroad or to have a reason to go abroad. Maybe there should be more programs like LRP.” (Berenzen 2013.) The participants pointed out that LRP made them realise that there are units in many countries and helped them start communicating with each other. “In my first year there was only communication with Finland and Spain but now also with Hungary and France because of LRP” (Berenzen 2013). Also LRP enabled participants form personal relationships with each other and build trust within the group.

3.4 Tiimiakatemia Learning Network

Tiimiakatemia Learning Network (TALN) is an international boundless cooperative and network for team coaches around the world. TALN is a juridical organisation and acts also as a platform for sharing ideas, co-creating and offering support for its members. At the moment in TALN, there are approximately 25 member organisations from different parts of the world so that kind of a network could act as a role model for the international network of teampreneurs. (Tiimiakatemia Learning Network 2013.) According to Törmänen (2013):

There should be something similar or some organised actions between the teampreneurs. In TALN the coaches are communicating together creating plans or strategies for the following years, so maybe something similar with the teamsters. (Törmänen 2013.)

TALN organises meetings and gatherings in different places in the world. Last gathering was in June in the Basque Country. Over 30 international participants gathered to collaborate, develop and co-create together on the following topics; the structure, communication and knowledge sharing in the organisation as well as how to motivate teampreneurs for international projects. (Tiimiakatemia Learning Network 2013.) Regarding to this, there is likely to be similarities when comparing TALN to the international network of teampreneurs.

3.5 International Team Academy System

International Team Academy System (ITAS) started to form during the LRP sessions to enable global communication, cooperation and cultural knowledge between teamsters in different Team Academy units. One international leader from eight units was chosen and the leaders formed local teams around them. A Facebook-group was created for communication and sharing and the leaders had regular video meetings via Skype approximately twice in a month. In the Skype-meetings the leaders shared important information about happenings in the international network. The aim was to build a website that would connect all Team Academies and teampreneurs. (Eskelinen 2012.)

In the end, the vision of the website did not come to reality because of the lack of leadership and resources. However, according to the research interviews a common website is needed. A Facebook-group is not enough for sharing things because nowadays there are so many social media groups so that information gets easily lost in the jungle of Internet. The network needs a common place to share for example contact information, frequently asked questions, book essays and information about projects and interests to enable business possibilities and cooperation in the future.

3.6 LEINN International

The Degree in Entrepreneurial Leadership and Innovation (LEINN) is a Bachelor degree based on Tiimiakatemia learning methods. LEINN International is part of Mondragon Team Academy (MTA) which is located in the Basque Country but LEINN International's home campus is located in Team Academy Netherlands, Haarlem. It is an international program which lasts four years and includes at least four international travels. In the first academic year the students will spend three months at MTA in the Basque Country and one and half months in Finland at campuses that use Tiimiakatemia based methods. On the second year they will have a learning journey to USA and on the third year to an emerging country. (HBO / Bachelor: Entrepreneurship, Leadership & Innovation 2013.)

Fetch International is a team that is studying on the degree of LEINN International. It is formed by 15 young people from the Netherlands, Spain, the Basque Country and Israel. (Fetch International 2013.) Observation and personal discussions during the research expedition show that because of their multiculturalism the team has more possibilities in international business and it is able to do customer projects in foreign countries already during their first year.

During the observation, it came out that having dialogue in foreign language, English in this case, does not prevent the team to go deep in the subject. Everybody in the team can express themselves in English even though not all have equally good language skills. During the dialogue they can talk honestly about their emotions, difficult subjects that a team can encounter and also give and receive feedback. The team feels that the more nationalities within the team, the better.

Requirements for this kind of studying are, according to Fetch International, motivation, ambition, interest in other cultures and open-mindedness. The teamsters feel that benefits of being part of an international team are network that covers many countries and wider opportunities in the future, for example working abroad. Also they feel that the team building process is faster because they travel and live together in foreign countries. Therefore, after a year, they might be more advanced and efficient as a team than an average team that consist only members from one nationality.

On the other hand, there are some challenges that an international team encounters. Differences in cultural behaviour as well as language can sometimes cause misunderstandings. Also, according to Fetch International, moving from country to another can be challenging though it is also seen as a benefit. Once they get to know the business culture of the current country, it is time to move on to another country. One developmental idea, which came out, is that the team would spend the first half a year in one place and then move on so that the start would be more stable.

According to Passila (2009), there are some factors that enhance multicultural team's chances to succeed: members' appreciation towards each other's experiences and different and variant opinions as well as willingness to share their own knowledge. In addition, members in successful multicultural team value the chance to learn about other cultures, are patient in uncertain situations and try to overcome inefficiency which can be followed when people with different cultural backgrounds are working together. (Passila 2009, 25.)

The results from the interviews point out that the international team model is seen desirable in the future. Interviewees who have observed the actions of Fetch International say that in every team the working language should be English because that would make communication with the units of other countries more natural and approachable and in that way enable cooperation and common projects. Also it was pointed out that one alternative for current system would be that international teams would spend one year in one country instead of shorter periods. In that way the teams would be global but would act locally in one place at the time.

4 NETWORK BUILDING

A network is a process in which its members have different talents, know-how, products and services. The purpose for a network is to integrate these resources so that they bring value for each operator and for possible customers. A network consists of formal and informal relationships and there are constant dynamics concerning cooperation, competition and the roles of different operators. (Hakonen et al. 2009, 90, 100, 102.)

As in LRP, the most intimate and productive cooperation takes place in interactions between two or three persons. When those small groups network with surrounding people, are wider networks formed. In practice, cooperation comes true in interactive relationships and in groups that are formed between people. Cooperation requires inputs from each side. It does not matter if cooperation happens face to face or with some communication tool, the requirement is interaction. This means that physical closeness is not necessary. (Aira 2012, 129-130.)

4.1 The basis for a base

The basis for a network building is common vision and an agenda for developing. On that basis operation modes and rules are created. On the other hand, in the global environment, it is important that the network is not based on stable and static organisations and operation modes because the environment is differing and changing constantly. That is why the approach for network building should be based on the needs of the current situation as well as flexibility and multifacetedness. (Valkokari et al. 2009, 29, 223.)

In the beginning of creating cooperation in the network, it is essential to create atmosphere of trust. If not, it is typical that the sides start to avoid interaction, and instead of cooperating, they start to work alone. Also the lack of trust can lead to building stereotypical assumptions which are based on narrow amount of information of others. Frequent interaction enables the forming of deeper and long-lasting trust. Disagreements and troubled situations can reduce trust but, on the other hand, solving problems successfully seems to intensify trust. Also short term goals, evaluating the achievements and dealing with fair decisions seem to increase trust between the sides. (Guirdham 2011, 356; Aira 2012, 132.)

The research results point out that to create a functional network, more interaction between the teamsters and the units is needed. To increase interaction, an idea of supportive peer teams was brought out by one teamster:

Maybe it would be interesting to have brother teams. For example, my brother team in Finland is Tuuma from Tampere, and if it is my brother team, I have to know more of them so we are in contact and know more about each other. (Asensio 2013.)

Also personal commitment and responsibility were mentioned within the interviews. Forming long-lasting multicultural relationships and networks cannot be taken for granted. Networking, communicating and interaction need efforts from all the sides who are taking part. The sides need to see the value of the cooperation, prioritise and check their attitude towards the collaboration (Aira 2012, 146).

According to Jarvis (2009), one challenge in forming successful networks is to help already existing organisations to improve their operations: to make them improve on what they are doing. That is what Zuckerberg did with Facebook for Harvard's social networks; organised them so that the needs of the networks were met. (Jarvis 2009, 48–49.) So, maybe there is a need for a new innovation within the international teampreneurs' network, when Facebook is not enough.

4.2 Virtual working environment

Nowadays, technology enables interaction and working in social media communities, or e-tribes, in which the members share common purpose and interest. Social media tools foster relationships that are productive because the online network allows rapid sharing of passions, ideas, content, knowledge and feedback. (Adams & Smith 2008, 17; Greenberg, McKone-Sweet & Wilson 2011, 204–215.) Communities that are online are not space or time limited so working with people from all over the world at any time is possible (Adams & Smith 2008, 45; Kraut & Resnick 2012, 2).

In practise, it is been shown that critical mass is needed before social media starts to live and enlarge onwards. The purpose of social media is not to act as a discussion area for just a few people. Therefore new information is needed frequently in order to keep social media active among the critical mass. That is why it is essential to have a sufficiently big group of people who are producing the information. (Ojala & Pöysti 2008, 24.)

On the other hand, it can be seen that there is a limited amount of relationships that people can form. It has been studied that 150 is a number that a network can have members in order to be effective. If a group of people has more than 150 members, the connection between its members starts to loosen and subgroups begin to form. (Bennett 2013.) The international network of teampreneurs is enlarging constantly, so regarding to that, it can be worth considering the effectiveness of its size.

In virtual working environment, people have different kinds of roles. Persons in charge are needed for example for maintenance, tools, appearance and different topics. The users can create, edit and use data with the access rights that have been given to them. If everyone in the network can update the data and have the same access rights then rapid information sharing and problem solving are possible. (Ojala & Pöysti 2008, 38, 61.) Similar need is seen also from the interviewees' point of view. "It is better to do that [webpage] in themes than projects because projects are changing all the time. In the profile you have your motivations, your passions and you can update it." (Palacio 2013.)

According to Ojala and Pöysti (2008) it is important to define a clear signification for the usage of social media. There has to be a real need and meaning for putting social media to use. If there is no clear reason to start using social media it is easily seen as time-waster and leads to lack of interest. Also, if social media is put to use, it is important to reserve resources for using it. Time and money is needed in order to use social media effectively. In addition to defining the meaning, it is good to think about what kind of social media tools are needed, what is the subject, what are the main goals and what are the indicators in order to measure the effectiveness of social media. (Ojala & Pöysti 2008, 90, 95.)

Working in virtual environment is mainly producing information and remarking, evaluating, reading and watching information that other users have produced. Motivation and a relevant reason are needed in order to start sharing information and that is not necessarily natural for everyone. Being motivated is based on willingness to show one's knowledge to colleagues and seeing that as an opportunity to become acknowledged within community. If some sort of game or competition is connected to information producing, motivation is often increased. The challenge in the process is to keep social media alive and make its users addicted. Also, social media community needs to draw new users to join and stay active. Beneficial experience is crucial in order to keep the users interested, so good influencing skills are needed. Suitable ways to use images, audio, facts, emotions, values and visions are essential while communicating in social media, especially when the message is aimed to communities that are formed by various cultures and backgrounds. (Ojala & Pöysti 2008, 124–125, 136, 155.)

The benefits that can be found when an organisation puts social media to use are the fast ways to find information, increased amount of shared knowledge, new ideas which can emerge from all over the organisation and more open atmosphere with low hierarchy (Guirdham 2011, 351). The international network of teampreneurs is already using social media and other virtual tools but to make the tools effective it is essential to create a clear strategy for social media and virtual working environment.

5 WHY TO INTERNATIONALISE?

Cultural diversity is an increasing trend among working places around the world. The importance of international skills is growing because of globalisation, virtual communication without borders and people's ability to move easily from country to country. (Guirdham 2011, 17.) That trend is seen also in the research results of this thesis. According to the focus group, youth among the network value the experience that internationality brings during their studies. They feel that everything in the world of today is becoming international so it is important to think bigger than inside the borders of one's home country. The interviewees appreciate the chance to build the personal international network before graduation. Therefore, the Team Academy network acts as a stepping stone for the future because it offers environment where the teamsters can practice their international skills.

And identify opportunities also, to do things there or to take things from there to here and implement them here, and having contacts in every place of the world. If you need to develop something there or if you need some help from them you know that they are going to be able to help you. (Fernandez 2013.)

According to the interviewees, working together makes the members of the network stronger; network gives energy, pushes forward and gives inspiration. Also bigger goals can be achieved. International business is much easier to start with familiar people than with complete strangers. The network has shared values and same kind of culture of doing things so starting cooperation should be quite easy, for example importing and exporting, because in the network there are people who know about the culture and laws of each country.

What comes out of the research results is that like business in general, also international business is based on relationships between people. In that case, personal connections enable easier and quicker network building. International contact list and working experience already during the studies makes the students look more competent in the eyes of the customers and possible future employers. The interviewees feel that the relationships that are formed within the network tend to last long time. People will stay in touch with each other, follow each other's actions and are not afraid to ask help in the future if needed.

According to Passila (2009), cooperation with foreign partners gives both sides a possibility to learn about the culture of each other, and in long-term, collaboration can lead establishing one's own unit to the other country. Additional benefits are international know-how and relationships, access to the international markets of products, labour and finance as well as international resources and technology. The local side can offer help and knowledge for example in local bureaucracy, taxation, services and distribution network. (Passila 2009, 284–285.)

5.1 Cultural intelligence

According to the interviewees, it is valuable to learn about other cultures and see other ways to work. Studying and working abroad and/or with representatives from other cultures gives perspective, cultural understanding, language skills, personal relationships and skills to manage in foreign country and culture. At the same time, while learning about others' way of living and working, one can seek for alternative perspectives on one's way of living and acting.

For me it was very difficult to communicate in English so I have developed a lot. Going to Finland for one month was my first trip to abroad, so I see it as a huge change. It is important to learn how to behave in different culture. And in the end I think we are not so different. (Cifuentes 2013.)

When working internationally, it is important to be aware how one's own cultural background affects behaviour. Something that is normal in one culture can be considered abnormal in some other culture. So, in intercultural situations, it is advisable to avoid closed mind-set that easily leads to prefer one's own way of acting and expecting others to act in the same way. Learning about cultures, their variations and their effects on behaviour helps to gain cultural intelligence which means flexibility, mindfulness and skilled cross-cultural behaviour among intercultural circumstances. Cultural intelligence can be developed so that one can choose suitable behaviour for various intercultural circumstances. (Thomas & Inkson 2009, 12–17; Guirdham 2011, 265, 284.)

A good example of cultural ignorance, the opposite of cultural intelligence, is considering other culture's habits strange and not conforming to them. When in Rome, do as the Romans do and do not try to change others' way of behaving. It can even be very insult-

ing and lead to end the emerging cooperation when one acts an inappropriate way. Getting knowledge and experience as well as examining one's attitude are ways to improve intercultural know-how. That will enlarge one's worldview too. (An Idiot Abroad 2010.)

Passila (2009) lists things that are good to learn when familiarising with foreign culture; values that matter in the culture in question and how the values are seen in everyday life, how historical, political and economic consequences effect on culture and how to live and work effectively in foreign culture. In addition, language skills are important. It is good to know polite ways to open a conversation and also the manners and language in business. (Passila 2009, 330.) The knowledge of the foreign culture can easily be gained on books, articles, films and TV programs or by observing and talking with the people from the foreign culture or with people who have good experience of the particular culture (Guirdham 2011, 284).

5.2 Get ready for surprises!

Working and communicating with people from different cultural environment can feel similar like Alice's adventures in Wonderland. Then it is rather a rule than an exception that surprises and curious occasions will come up in everyday life. In those circumstances cheeky behaviour will only lead to misunderstandings and troubles. That is why it is better just to adjust than be too amazed by something that is done differently than in one's own culture. "Alice thought the whole thing very absurd, but they all looked so grave that she did not dare to laugh; and, as she could not think of anything to say, she simply bowed, and took the thimble, looking as solemn as she could." (Carroll 2000, 36). Being open to other cultures and not having negative expectations about them, influences positively in the ability to cope with intercultural encounters. It means that unlearning is needed in order to get rid of past expectations, prejudices and stereotypes and, in that way, embrace new kind of thinking and attitudes. (Guirdham 2011, 239, 242.)

A person who is going to spend a longer period in some foreign culture needs to be highly motivated to adapt and emotionally mature in order to cope with uncertainty and stress. Other qualities are good problem solving skills, flexibility and willingness to learn and conform to changes as well as good communication skills and ability to integrate to a new community. Proper preparation in advance is advisable. (Passila 2009, 307, 324; Guirdham 2011, 289, 293.)

What came out from the research results is that better preparation is needed when for example an exchange student is going to a foreign team. First of all, it would be good to know well in advance who is coming and what skills he/she has and what kind of skills and customers the receiving team has. Two weeks before is not enough time to prepare for either sides, as it was the case in the team in question. When having the knowledge early enough, the exchange student and the receiving team can make an action plan in advance and set common goals so that it is clear for both sides what the desirable achievements are. “Also the one, who is coming, has to do pre-work: create common goal with the receiving team. If we start the communication earlier and know more about each other, then it would be easier to start common project too.” (Giralt 2013.) The more people know about each other in advance, the more possibilities they have in order to start working together.

Also, according to the founder of Tiimiakatemia, Johannes Partanen (2010), while traveling and spending time in a foreign culture, there will be unpredictable occurrences and discomfort. But this is only a benefit because in this kind of environment it is likely that fresh ideas spring, and seeing oneself from new perspective is possible. (Partanen 2010, 8.) In fact, cross-fertilization, such as colliding with different people in different places and challenging oneself and the way of thinking, is requirement for creativity and innovations. For example, that is what happened in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s when people, later called Surrealists, from different fields and various countries came together: they started to co-create a movement, Surrealism. People have to go and explore as well as learn and reflect in order to get something new to put in practise. (Jager 2006, 177–178.) In addition, good communication is essential because that is what is needed in order to create a movement (Duarte 2010, 204).

Perhaps a new kind of movement is waiting to be co-created in the international teampreneurs' network. Although traveling and being away from one's familiar environment often is challenging and obstacles can occur, all the hard work will pay off in the future because that kind of experiences teach, enlighten and always bring up something new. In the end, one has to go far to see near.

6 HOW TO COMMUNICATE?

In today's world, multicultural organisations and working environments are more and more common. In many organisations people with different cultural backgrounds and language skills are working together, because diverse groups tend to bring more new ideas and approaches to the organisation. Also multicultural customers and cooperation partners are coming more common in the business life of today. (Lewis 2008, 1.)

Same phenomenon can be seen in teampreneurs' international network. Having units in several countries with teampreneurs from diverse backgrounds, this network can be seen as a multicultural organisation. In teampreneurs' international network there is an urge to co-create common projects and increase international cooperation and mobility but lack of communication is one of the challenges.

6.1 Challenges in multicultural communication

In order to work across borders, good multicultural communication skills are needed. Even in culturally homogenous working environments communication can be a challenge so in multicultural environment, communication skills become even more important (Lewis 2008, 2; Guirdham 2011, 332). Before starting to work with people from different cultural backgrounds, it is essential to learn about other culture's manners and ways of working in order to get knowledge and avoid misunderstandings. Since communication is not only words but socially connecting with other people, it is important to understand non-verbal communication as well.

According to Lewis (2008, 7–8), non-verbal communication can be divided in four components: movement, distance, intonation and time. In addition, Chaney and Martin (2011) find an extended division of obstacles that limit communication. In those include social, religious and ethnic differences as well as linguistic, emotional, experiential, motivational and perceptual barriers. (Chaney & Martin 2011, 13.) One example of non-verbal components is that Finnish people like to have more physical distance while talking to each other whereas Basque and Dutch people seem to come closer.

Also the sense of time varies among different cultures, which can provoke frustration when not recognized. For example, interviews made for this research were settled with the Finnish people at least two weeks in advance whereas with the Basque people, in most cases, just few hours before the interview. These examples show that it is very important to study differences between cultures in order to learn how to communicate effectively, tolerate uncertainty and avoid misunderstandings.

6.2 Tools for communication

According to the research results, there is a need for effective communication in the multicultural network of teampreneurs. Current social media channels, such as multiple Facebook-groups that have formed between certain groups of teamsters, are not working effectively because in those various groups information gets lost or does not get desirable attention. “I am participating a lot of Facebook-groups but I do not know what is the purpose or goal in those” (Prass 2013). On the other hand, Facebook is seen as a good channel for stirring up conversation because there it is easy to make comments.

Humala (2007) emphasises the two main missions of communication. Those are interaction and offering information. Information has to be up-to-date and flowing from everyone to everyone while interaction enables dialogue, involvement, co-creating, decision making, problem solving, encouraging and creating relationships. Nowadays, the most effective information channels are electronic and written whereas interaction needs spoken words. (Humala 2007, 93–94.)

Skype-meetings are seen functional method when people are committed to join. It is important that there is trust between the participants, that people are online on the appointed time and that meetings can be regular. It has been seen challenging, though, to fit several people’s timetables together to arrange a video meeting. That is why this system needs prioritising and a meaning that is supported and valued. To this challenge Sibbet (2012) offers a solution. According to him, common web-based electronic calendar helps to plan common meetings and will save time and energy when fitting in schedules of several people from different places. (Sibbet 2012, 208.)

The interviewees value face to face meetings because in those the personal relationships and trust are built and those are the basis for network building on a larger scale. Also according to Humala (2007, 41, 53), at least the first meeting with a newly formed team should be a face to face meeting because social dynamics, personal relations and trust are created more easily face to face than via electronic tools. One development idea related to this is to encourage teams to travel more. One goal for teams could be to make at least one trip per year to another country's unit. Regular community encounters for teampreneurs are needed, for instance, once or twice a year. The encounters could be events with relevant and interesting program, workshops and camps and so on. "The events should be more focused on developing skills of teampreneurs." (Cifuentes 2013.)

In fact, there was an initiative coming from Team Academy Debrecen: International Team Academy Camp. The objective of this initiative was to create a tradition, bring together teampreneurs and team coaches globally, learn and develop the network. (International Team Academy Camp 2013.) Unfortunately, the camp did not actualise because, according to the research interviews, though the idea was considered to be good, it was lacking business point of view and the timing (August 2013) was not the best because of holidays.

At the moment, there is a new initiative in order to start creating International Team Academy Camp again. The objective is to arrange the camp every year in April in each country at time. The goal is to have international training sessions and birth giving (memorable presentation) competition between international teams. There would be a prize from a client to whom the birth givings would be aimed. The camp would also include company visits, sharing knowledge and exploring other cultures. The initiative needs now a board that would carry on planning the camp. The board would consist of representatives from each country. Also what needs to be done is to create a schedule for the host countries, start marketing and communication about the camp and apply funding from European Union from a programme called "Youth in Action". (Katonáné Kovács 2013.)

The international camp is one option to increase the global communication. At local level, developmental solutions for helping communication and international awareness could be an event calendar in a visible place at campuses, where important information about upcoming international events and visitors would be shared. Also one suggestion

could be well-equipped video meeting rooms at campuses with good technical support. If the virtual interaction tools are user friendly and appropriate, can international and decentralised dialogue sessions be organised. Those kind of sessions are needed because in those people can share their interests and ideas which can lead international cooperation. Taking part in those sessions does not require lot of international knowhow so teamsters with less experience can join without fear. In fact, to motivate people to join in intercultural interactions, it is important to arrange events that are easy to attend, attractive and valuable.

According to Aira (2012), effort, activity and paying attention to the interaction methods are required, especially when decentralized working is new to the team members. Every team creates its own interaction methods according to its needs. It is good to agree when, with what tools, how, how often the interaction takes places and how quickly the messages should be answered. It seems to be critical that the members understand the value and importance of interaction. If not, communication can become overshadowed by other duties that seem more urgent. (Aira 2012, 139.) That is what happened in interaction within ITAS. Other projects seemed more urgent and that was why common time for Skype-meetings was challenging to find. Common goal for the interaction was lacking. In order to create active and functional interaction are mutual goals essential (Aira 2012, 143).

Cooperation needs willingness. The communication technology enables interaction but it does not guarantee functional cooperation. If people do not use the communication tools for mutual interaction, the cooperation does not happen. If the interaction does not work, the network becomes just an administrative constitution formed by separated organisations which does not profit or offer benefits. It is worthwhile to invest in building good interaction relationships and teams in order to create close-knit cooperation within the network. (Aira 2012, 143–144.)

It is good to remember that technology based interaction does not replace interaction face to face. There should be reasonably planned place for both methods so that they support each other. Face to face meetings are especially beneficial in the early phase of cooperation in order to speed up team building and forming interaction relationships as well as trust. (Aira 2012, 145.)

Sibbet (2012) suggests the following guidelines for effective communication within the network. First of all, it is important, when posting messages, that they have an apparent focus. Secondly, defining how often the posts will be sent helps members to get tuned in the right frequency. Thirdly, be concise with the posts so that they are appropriate for the situation. Fourthly, use links to point useful information that can help and guide the community. Fifthly, post relevant and useful messages. Think what issues need to be intensified. Lastly, positive recognition to the matters that are functioning at a high level will create positive buzz in the network. (Sibbet 2012, 217.)

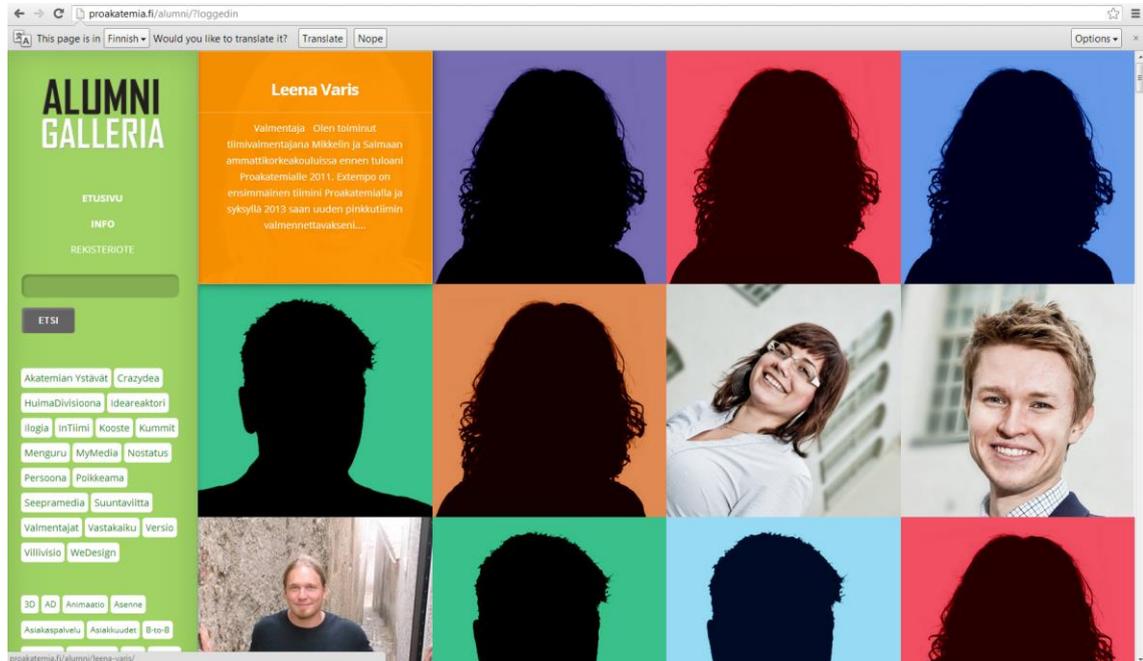
6.3 A platform for launching

An open and cooperative platform allows users to co-create and bring value to the network (Jarvis 2009, 32). Kawasaki (2006) adds that to build a community, in the web-based platform there should be a forum where the members could share opinions and ideas and co-create together. Also in the interviews it is pointed out several times that a common platform or database is needed in order to communicate and share information.

To have a database is really important because we do not know here who is now studying in Finland or who is doing something in other places. We do not know names; we do not know absolutely anything. It would be interesting to have that also in the local level, in the Basque Country. So one huge database with everything you need. (Guzman 2013.)

One solution for this problem would be a database similar to Proacademy's Alumni Gallery (picture 1). This gallery has been created in order to collect information about alumni in one place. The gallery is a tool and a source of information for teamsters in Proacademy as well as for the alumni of Proacademy. The objective for the database is to connect current teamsters with alumni so that they both could learn and benefit of the network. In addition, the goal is to gather information about the know-how that alumni in the network have. The purpose for the database is to be user friendly and nice looking platform. In the database, every alumnus has their own profile and in the side bar there is a link for every graduated team. Also different kinds of skills are divided into separate themes so when clicking a skill, the page will show all the alumni with that particular skill. (TAMK Proakatemia, Luntta & Vuento 2013.) This kind of a database could be an answer for an existing need in the international network of teampreneurs.

To the webpage, one section to share passions and dreams. Build things together. Maybe in my case it is visual thinking. If I could find someone who is doing this in Finland or in Hungary so I could see how they are doing and interact with them and share all the things. (Fernandez 2013.)

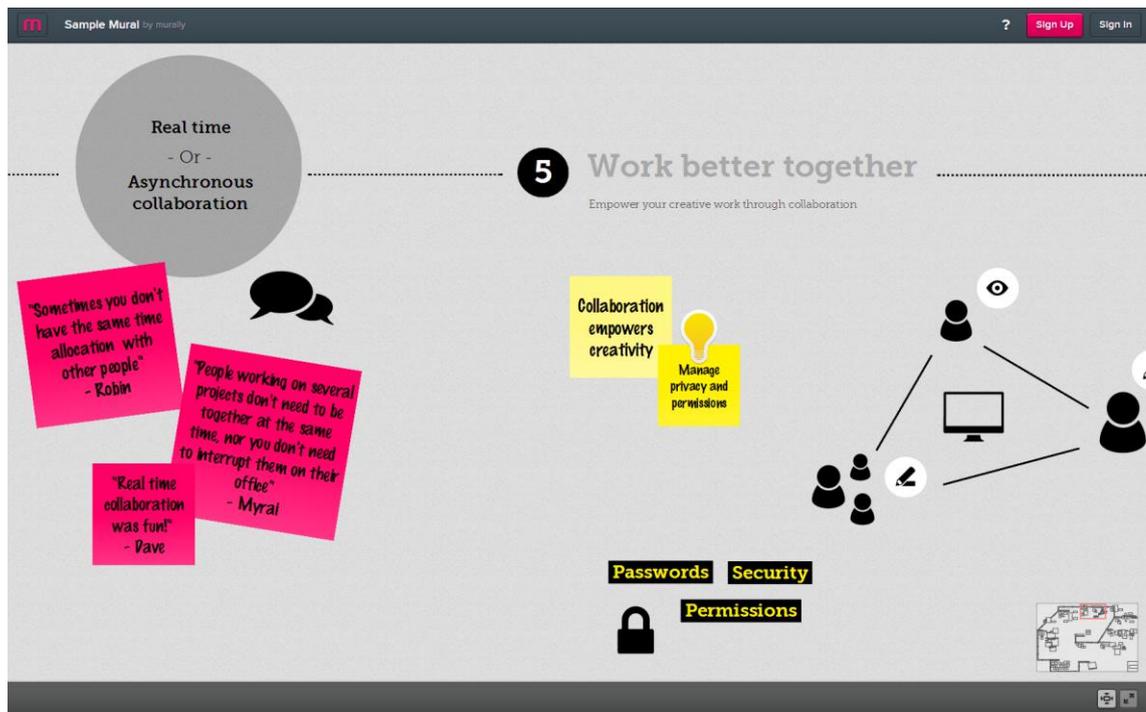


PICTURE 1. Proacademy's Alumni Gallery (TAMK Proakatemia, Luntta & Vuento 2013)

A database similar to this would also commit people to continue in the network after graduation because then the real value of the network often comes out. When not being a student anymore, the relationships with the surrounding people and their know-how are needed. Also a database in question would help teamsters from different generations to get to know each other and find common interests and complementary skills.

It is putting together people from different years, all the years. Others could learn from the earlier generations. That could be a good way to activate people because penguins [freshers] would like to work with the more experienced people and they can learn a lot. (Guzman 2013.)

One useful tool for co-creating and sharing ideas could be an electrical wall like Mural.ly (picture 2). That is a real time collaboration platform which enables thinking and discussing together wherever and whenever. With that kind of a tool documents, images, links, presentations, videos can be shared globally. (Mural.ly 2013.)



PICTURE 2. Real time collaboration platform Mural.ly (Tactivos Inc. 2013)

7 HOW TO ACTIVATE PEOPLE TO JOIN?

When building a network, it is essential to think why anyone would join, how to get people in and what the tools are in order to maintain the discussion in the group. To get people involved and contribute in the network, there has to be some sort of promise or a goal that gives the meaning for the network. Also there has to be benefits for the members. (Shirky 2008, 260–261.)

7.1 Let them see the benefit

According to the research results, the focus group thinks that to motivate other teamsters to join and act in the international network, clear references and success stories are needed. It is important to show, what the benefit that the network can give is.

You have to feel it. If you do not have the motivation it does not make sense because in our case, one of the low points was the communication with the community. If we do not see the value of communicating with the community, we are not going to do it. (Asensio 2013.)

The chance to travel and to learn about other cultures and ways of working motivates some people and that is why some of the interviewees think that the possibility to travel and to have a visit abroad could be a reward after achieving some goal. However, traveling does not motivate everyone so the possibilities that this experience in international networking can provide, have to be shown in some other way. For example, the benefit can be the experience of learning.

For me it was really good to meet the team leaders of Tiimiakatemia and Mondragon Team Academy in Finland because we learned a lot and we shared our problems. For me it was the fourth month that I was a team leader and it was very hard and I did not know what to do so they helped me. (Asensio 2013.)

The interviewees list that presentations, workshops and videos could work as channels to share the knowledge and experiences. All it needs is to be visible and show the value of having international network. It is important to make others to see what is happening in the international field, for example in which international companies graduated teampreneurs are working and what opportunities internationality has given to them.

Some of the interviewees think that the best way to make people see the value is letting them experience it themselves. Those of the focus group who attended in LRP see that the program was a turning point for them. After the LRP sessions they were so full of energy that they could transmit that energy to their teams so that they could give new inputs for the team, go to a new level and encourage others to go outside and experience new things too. They think that in every team there should be at least one who could experience the benefits of internationality so that he/she could transmit the experience to others. There are also some points that can be improved in order to increase motivating. “One problem was that the LRP sessions were always outside Team Academies, in countryside or so, so other students did not meet us or see our working and birth givings [presentations]. If they could come to see or listen, they could be motivated.” (Prass 2013.)

One factor to make someone motivated, according to the interviews, is to give them a feeling that they are needed. That promotes the thought of having an international core team and in addition local support teams with divided responsibilities. Usually in the beginning of their studies, some teamsters are uncertain about their language skills and are afraid of speaking English and hosting international guests that come to visit. To motivate these people to start joining international events and cooperating, is to encourage them to start first with something small. For example, one can go together with somebody more experienced to meet foreign guests or first go just to listen. In addition, exchange students in the team can help to start use English as a working language.

Like learning in general, also learning internationality is a process. It is like taking one step at time and gathering more and more experience. One of the interviewees shared her experiences which tell that in her first dialogue session she said that she does not want to speak English during her studying time. However, two years after that she has taken part in LRP, spent seven weeks in Brazil and is now the international leader of Tiimiakatemia. (Eskelinen 2013.)

7.2 The power of stories

The story mentioned is one example of a story that could motivate others to start acting in the network. In the end, “I think that this situation needs few success stories about making international business or some other ways having benefit from the international network“ (Törmänen 2013). According to Duarte (2010), it is important first to create desire in the target group and then show how, in this case joining in the network, will fill the desire. Stories bring forth an experience which will support creating the desire. (Duarte 2010, 27.) According to Humala (2007, 109), an effective way to transmit information via web is describing examples by storytelling or visualisation. Denning (2011, 27) adds that an effective story is a true story with a hero in which the target group can relate to and with an ending that makes a positive difference.

To help building an effective story, McKee and Fryer (2011) list sections which are perceptible in a story. Firstly, the hero in the story has desire that needs to be satisfied. Secondly, the storyteller has to ask, what the obstacle is that is stopping the hero from reaching the desire. Thirdly, how does the hero act to face the obstacles and to achieve the goal. In the end, the storyteller has to take a look at the story and critically evaluate its credibility. The story has to be honest in order to really affect.

A story is a way to engage target group’s emotions and that way motivate them to achieve goals. In other words, that is mostly what a leader has as his/her mission; to create future scenarios. Conventional presentations do not move people because they do not touch people’s feelings. Instead, to inspire in action, are immersive stories needed. The objective of a powerful story is to affect target group’s emotions. It is not easy to tell a memorable story that will move the target group but creativity and storytelling skills are needed. (McKee & Fryer 2011.)

8 WHAT ABOUT LEADERSHIP?

Leadership in networks is indirect and is, most of all, collecting data, influencing members, managing social and structural bonds and leading matters (Valkokari et al. 2009, 155). On the other hand, leadership means interaction between people. That can be quite complex in environment where global economy is mixed with national traditions. It means that cultural sensitivity is needed in addition to skills to get people committed to goals and methods also during uncertain periods of time. That is why new innovations related to leadership are needed in the global economy. (Tienari & Meriläinen 2009, 141, 150, 169.)

According to Ojala and Pöysti (2008), leadership in networks, especially in virtual ones, is more about leading thinking and co-creation processes as well as opening themes of discussion, giving initiatives and crystalizing different opinions into common vision. Close-knit interaction with the members of the network is essential. The leaders moderate the communication, monitor the level and amount of interaction and guide the group to work together for a common goal. (Ojala & Pöysti 2008, 130, 152–153.) According to Humala (2007, 57), creating common objectives and values increase the feeling of trust which is important in the beginning of newly established teams.

Choosing right people for right roles is crucial when building leadership roles for a network. Especially, when the network is online are persons in charge needed in order to keep the tools working and useful. Practically this means sharing responsibilities and benefits and supplying needs with right skills. Cooperation in the network has to be open and continual and, in addition, it has to enable the development of members' skills and know-how. (Ojala & Pöysti 2008, 106; Valkokari et al. 2009, 131.)

Everybody is willing to put in effort to do the dirty work but there needs to be people who are going to stand up and say: "Okay, I am going to build this international thing." And then get everybody around, the right people in the right place and then we can go. (Prass 2013.)

8.1 Requirements for a global leader

In the world today, leadership is facing perhaps greater challenges than ever before. Globalisation, networking and virtual working environment will strongly show the way for new leadership models. A leader of a global network has to react on changing environment quickly enough and at the right moment. That is why it is important for a leader to be aware what is happening in the world. A leader has to recognise his or her strengths and develop those skills constantly. In addition, it is important to know how to manage one's time and resources. (Heinonen 2010, 43–46.)

Also according to Passila (2009), an international leader has to adapt to current conditions and adjust them to his or her own experiences. Furthermore, multicultural leadership skills include good communication ability because in international environment, it is easy to get misunderstood. (Passila 2009, 23.) Nowadays, when the rapidity of communication is high and situations are changing all the time, the long term plans made for the future have to be updated constantly (Passila 2009, 176). With his/her actions the leader shows example, especially regarding the ways of communication (Guirdham 2011, 337).

According to Fournier (2011), characteristic for an international leader is to be open-minded towards people, interested in their culture and respect their point of view. Successful international leader appreciates other cultures and can manage cultural versatility. (Fournier, 2011, 4.) In addition, a leader has to take a holistic view which takes along all members within the community (Linden 2010, 34). A good global leader does not only respect cultural diversity but builds on it, in order to create successful community (Fredberg & Norrgren, 2012). That kind of cultural sensitivity a leader in multicultural environment has to have in order to effectively bring the best performance out of the team (Soo 2012).

The research results show that leadership in the team entrepreneurs' international network is seen nothing but easy. Leadership is needed in order to enable effective interaction between the units and the network needs organised actions. The interviewees think that the best solution would be a core team which would be formed by one leader from each campus. Locally, there could be a team in charge in each unit and the core team would have shared responsibilities.

The leaders' task is seen so important that some of the interviewees think that it is too time-consuming for teamsters who are constantly working with other projects. So the question is, how to organise the leadership. Would it be a task for somebody who gets salary from some umbrella organisation or perhaps a long-term project for a teamster? In any case, that is a job that cannot be taken for granted but needs dedication. On the other hand, without testing it is impossible to know what way would work the best so agile experiments are needed. One solution could be organising the leadership in a way that the responsibility rotates from unit to unit. In that case, one unit at a time takes turns in leading the network. Then there would be yearly hiring for a leader.

8.2 Decentralized organisation and virtual leadership

Decentralized organisations are seen as an answer for the challenge of globalisation because information and communication technology makes decentralized functions and global coordinating possible. Today, it is more and more common that people are working decentralized and virtually so that they are physically in different places, like a network. Global networks are central channels for transmitting know-how and social capital. In those, people can connect technologically, professionally and socially which means more possibilities for creativity. In this case, leadership faces new challenges and new tools are needed. How decentralized work can be organised and lead as effectively as possible? (Humala, 2007, 5, 7; Valkokari et al. 2009, 26.)

According to Humala (2007), the biggest difference between conventional and virtual leadership is that virtual leadership takes place in environment where co-workers meet face to face seldom or not at all and communication happens with the help of electronic tools. The leaders of today are expected to know how to lead in this global web which crosses time zones, national frontiers and cultures. One of the challenges is to get the best out of the different talents at the same time as trying to keep the disadvantages minimal. At best, virtual leadership can be an innovation that utilises knowledge and know-how in new ways societally. (Humala 2007, 15, 23, 26.)

However, like in leadership in general, the most important mission, also for a leader of a virtual network, is to be a visionary and point the way. The challenge is to create a team with mutual respect and common vision, mission and strategy. With leader's example

the team is working to achieve a common goal and is able to effectively deal with obstacles. When working in virtual network, people are lead by mental images which spring from common vision. When pointing the way, the leader can utilise also stories and dreams. (Humala 2007, 33–34.)

We all want to grow and be bigger, better and stronger but there is no plan. So we do not know where we are growing to. There is no vision. We need a roadmap from now till 2020, and then we know. If I do this, then in 2020 we have the best international school of entrepreneurship, for example. Then we have a plan, a vision and then we have commitment. (Prass 2013.)

In the beginning of building a decentralized organisation, close-knit planning together and setting a common intermediate goal enhances cooperation. Actually, that is the basis for starting to build interaction. Leadership in decentralized organisation needs active interaction and presence. If the leader is a passive communicator, he/she is easily seen absent and not committed. Instead, the leader has to be reachable and communicate actively. That means quick reacting on messages, giving feedback, looking for solutions in problematic situations, organising possibilities for also face to face interaction when needed and encouraging team to reflect and develop its operations. Good team leader keeps in touch with team members both individually and on the whole. (Humala 2007, 20; Aira 2012, 140, 148–150.)

Passivity is seen as the most typical challenge in organisations that interact via technical channels. It takes time, proactive planning and monitoring to activate all the members of the network. To activate passive members the leader can appoint with the team members what tools are used for communications and how the tools are going to be used. Also work distribution and other operation modes are to be appointed. Recommended tools are carefully considered and tested so that they are ready to use with little effort. The leader shows an example and together with the team creates regular, frequent and constructive interaction methods. Patronising the passive members should be avoided because that leads nowhere. Instead, encouraging and enabling action could work better. (Humala 2007, 21; Aira 2012, 150-151.)

Activating teamsters to collaborate internationally is one task when talking about leader's responsibilities in the teampreneurs' global network. There should be transparency in the network so that everybody knows what is happening and where. The leader

should be in charge of making that transparency true and enhancing openness in the network. According to Jarvis (2009, 97), transparency enhances trust within the community and involves everybody in the process, and, in that way, creates new chances. Humala (2007, 144) adds that one of the most important tasks of a leader of multicultural and virtual organisation is to create and maintain cooperative atmosphere where learning together can take place.

9 WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Like a mixed salad, a network has different kinds of separate ingredients with their own special and individual flavours and advantages (picture 3). When mixed together in a same bowl the ingredients will have a shared goal and together they are more valuable and can reach more users (picture 4). According to DeLorenzo (2000), the original Salad Bowl Theory describes the immigration in the United States of America, but during the process of this thesis, I found it useful also for defining networks. Also, the theory fits for describing the whole process of this thesis. The process was similar like its topic: scattered and multifaceted and forming little by little of small parts, like a network. In the last part of this thesis, I will put all the ingredients in the same bowl and show what kind of value the whole mixture has.



PICTURE 3. Salad ingredients separately



PICTURE 4. The mixed salad in a bowl

9.1 The steps towards success

The objective for this thesis was to find out how to build an active and international network of team entrepreneurs, how to communicate in the network and how to lead the network effectively so that multicultural projects and customer ships are achievable in the future. As a result, the aim was to give practical and understandable tools for networking so that steps for developing the network can be created immediately. Also the objective was that the results can be used in other networks as well. To sum up, the goal was to find ideas for development and set tangible steps for action in order to create a functional international network, with good communication and leadership.

An action plan

As a result, I created an action plan for developing team entrepreneurs' international network (appendix 1). It is designed especially for this network but it can be applied in other networks as well. To summarise, the starting process for network creation can be seen in a flowchart (figure 1).

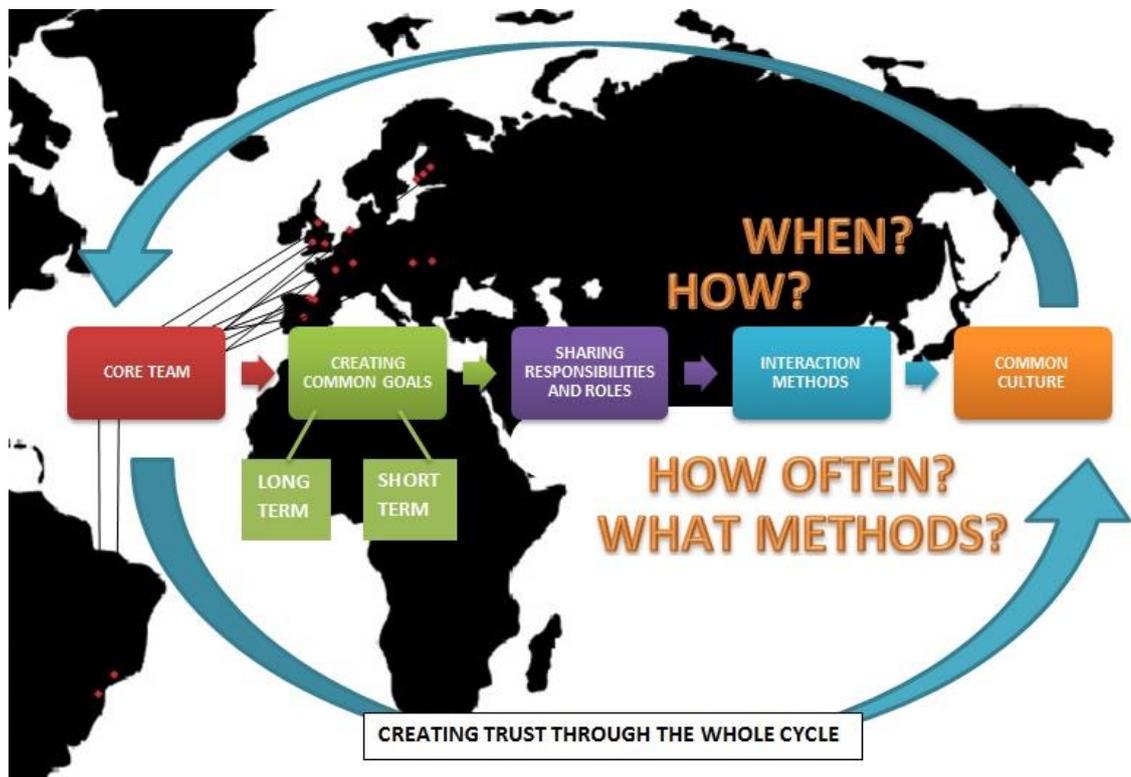


FIGURE 1. The starting process for network creation

The starting phase

First of all, the core team for leading the network is formed by one person from each unit because in that way the network will have a representative in each place and each country will be equally part of the network. These people may already exist within the network or one person can stand out and start gathering the team. It is important that the members of this core team are motivated, have desire to improve the network and are open-minded and willing to work in multicultural environment. Those are the characteristics that arose during the research process from the point of view of the interviewees as well as from the theory base that I studied about leading the networks.

After finding the right people for the core team, they will have a kick off meeting where they clarify the needs of the network, create common vision, strategy, action plan, long and short term goals and a roadmap for example for the year 2020. It was pointed out in the interviews and in the studied theory that those kind of leading thoughts are needed in order to create a solid base for network building and to guide it in the right direction.

In the kick off meeting the core team chooses a leader and shares other responsibilities and roles as well. Leader's task is to point the way, inspire others and keep the big picture in mind. It is important to have the right people in the right roles so that the feel of need is supplied, because, according to this research, the feel of need is something that motivates people. The position of a leader can be one year hiring and it can be rotating from a unit to another, so that each unit at a time can be in a leading role. Also the other roles in the core team can rotate annually, as long as there are motivated and skilled people in the roles.

In the kick off meeting, the core team chooses communication and interaction methods. The team needs to consider, when, with what tools, how and how often the interaction between the members takes place so that communication would be effective. For example, they can have video meetings twice a month and face to face meetings twice a year. Also, the core team creates strategy for social media and other virtual communication tools that are going to be used within the whole network. It is important to remember that communication means interaction, as well as offering information. It has to be active and regular and the team members have to be fully committed. According to this study, frequent interaction enables to form deep and long-lasting trust which is needed when creating a network.

After finding suitable tools for communication, the core team creates common rules and norms which help monitoring the development of the network and evaluating the achievements. The results can be summarised in an annual report which is achievable for all the members of the network. Also, to measure the learnings, the core team can create regular motorolas (reflections of the learnings). According to this study, those actions help keeping the working environment transparent and enhancing trust within the network.

Communication and spreading the word

When the core team has clear thoughts, it is time to spread the word. The members of the core team can organise a roadshow as tool for promoting and spreading the word about the network. The roadshow takes place in each unit and its goal is to get new people to join the network. The core team promotes the network with inspirational real life success stories, presentations, videos and visualisations in order to show the value of the network and internationalisation. In addition to activate new members to join, the aim for the roadshow is also to encourage teamsters to work in English, join international events and travel to other units to meet new people and enlarge their personal network. According to this study, it is important to show others what opportunities internationality can give and storytelling, as well as visualisation, were seen effective ways of telling that.

When new members have joined in the network the communication has to be already on a solid ground so that the network can keep on working. The communication tools that can be used for sharing global information, and that were brought up in this study, are for example e-newsletters delivered to all members in the network once a month or every two months. The newsletter would include actual news from the international point of view and information about what is happening and where, for example events, gatherings, achievements, trips and new customer projects.

One important part of the communication is to create a common platform which can be a website or a database. That is a need what each of the interviewees pointed out, and also in the theory I studied, it was said that a platform allows users to co-create and bring value to the network. The Alumni Gallery of Proacademy, which was brought out in this thesis, could work as a layout because it has similar goal as a data collector and medium. Whatever will be the design, the aim for the database is to connect teamsters

so that they can learn and benefit of the network, get to know each other and find common interests and complementary skills so that they can communicate, co-create and in the end start to find international customer projects together.

Let's get together!

Organising events and get-togethers will be also on core team's to-do list. Once or twice a year they can organise a big community event which has business point of view, for example, a common customer challenge. In that kind of events are personal connections and relationships made and trust, which is important for maintaining the relationships and interaction, starts to create. Also, few times a year, the core team can organise business camps, trips and other occasions where people can meet and co-create. It is advisable for every team to have at least one trip to another unit per year because, according to this study, that increases multicultural cooperation and awareness about different cultures.

In addition to face to face meetings, the core team can organise global virtual learning sessions for example four times a year. It was pointed out in this study that cooperation requires interaction and it is important for the teampreneurs that there are possibilities to learn, meet people and co-create business internationally. As one of the interviewees is dreaming, "we would have community events all over the Team Academies, international programs. Two teams from different countries could mix and develop project together or go to different Team Academies to develop." (Giralt 2013.) She was not the only one with that kind of dream so there is a huge need for international cooperation.

Sharing and caring

One new development idea that came up during the research process is to form peer and mentor teams so that international communication and co-creation between the teams can start and problems as well as learnings can be shared. In this system, peer teams are teams that are in the same phase of their studies and mentor teams are created of the teams that are in the beginning and in the last phase of their studies. This supportive system could be valuable for teams in each phase and would emphasise the learning together and sharing knowledge internationally.

In addition to peer and mentor teams, the existing exchange system should be developed so that the receiving team and the exchange student would create common goals togeth-

er and prepare the exchange period well in advantage so that co-creating international customer projects would be more achievable. Also there could be exchanges for the whole team so that more international and multicultural team work would come about.

For example, one team – – would go all together in different countries and stay there a half a year doing projects and really seeing the culture. Also in the network could be a bigger project that different teams from different generations would do so that it would be a long-term project and would continue. (Törmänen 2013.)

Acting locally

Along with the global mind-set come local actions. Each person from the global core team gathers a local team around themselves from their own units. Like the multinational core team, the local team also shares responsibilities and roles that are needed in order to increase international action and communication in each unit. Local teams would be responsible of international issues of each unit, such as hosting international guests, spreading information about upcoming international events and gathering data for the common platform. In each unit there could be a physical and also a virtual bulletin board with up-to-date information about what is happening and where. The local team would be responsible for that and update the information. According to this research, at the moment the communication in the local level is not very good either so while developing the global communication it is important to pay attention to the local level also.

9.2 Evaluating the process

It was about one year ago when I decided that I will do my thesis research about the international teampreneurs' network. I chose that topic because, at that moment, it was pointed out from several channels that there was a need for a research and development of the network. For the first following months I pondered about the topic and the context of the thesis and discussed about the needs with people who had knowledge about the current situation of the network. I was also actively involved with the network because I was attending in Leadership Revolution Program, had the position of the international leader of Proacademy and hosted Basque teamsters in Tampere during six

weeks. In the end, it was not until mid-April when I had the plan ready for the research and a draft about the body of the thesis.

After that, I started to look for literature about the theory base and plan questions for the interviews. I ended up using theories about network building, virtual working environment, multicultural communication and tools concerning that, storytelling and leadership in global and virtual environment. When I look back, I could have started the reading phase much earlier. I looked for additional theories still when the writing process was in full swing. It was a little hard to stop reading and studying and just concentrate on writing.

The interviews were made in May and June in Finland, in the Netherlands and in the Basque Country. The interviewees were teampreneurs from different generations and their coaches, all of them more or less actively part of the network and interested in international issues. All of the interviewees had opinions and development ideas and the viewpoints came from seven different units. The interview questions surveyed widely the situation of the international network, the needs of the teampreneurs and focused on finding developing ideas. Regarding to these facts, I would say that the research was valid.

Semi-structured interviews allowed the emerging of new questions during the dialogue and that brought out new insights and aspects that were valuable for this subject. The questions were pre-formulated, open-ended questions, and depending on the group of interviewees, some improvisation was allowed to add insights that arose during the interview. The results were relatively homogenous so that general view of the situation and the matters that needed development was quite easy to find. That makes the research reliable.

Afterwards, I was thinking that in order to gain more new ideas and viewpoints, it could have been valuable to interview also people outside of this network and people who could have some knowledge about other networks. All in all, the interview phase went well and I think that it was good to have focus group interviews because in those the atmosphere was informal and there was dialogue and discussion in the interviews.

After completing the interviews I spend one week transcribing the interviews and another week analyzing them. In July, summer projects disturbed the progress of the thesis and it was already August when I started the writing and reporting. The original plan was to have the thesis ready in the end of August but other projects did not allow full concentration on the thesis. The writing and reporting process took much more time than I had assumed and then I had to leave the work for six weeks because of our teams' trip around the world. A break in the process was good, though, because I was able to get some perspective to the work. All in all, even though the whole process of this thesis was quite long, it was rewarding and I got a chance to learn a lot, meet new people, join different situations and improve my language skills.

I see that I managed to get that kind of results from the interviews that were supported by the theory I studied. Sure there were some obvious results, at least for them, who already are familiar with the situation of the network, but also new development ideas arose and it was interesting to combine them with the theory base. I was able to compile the results to a form of a concrete action plan which was one of the goals for the thesis. The action plan is easy to put in practice right away and it helps to develop the network and also the work of the people who are working for the network. One development idea for the action plan is that I could have made it more visual so that it would be more inspirational but that is something that can be made also afterwards.

During the process of this thesis I thought a lot about the role of leadership regarding to the process of creating a network. Leader's role in the process is the most important because if there is no leading, the process can stop. That is at least my experience so far. I thought about the structure of the report and in which section I would introduce leadership. I ended up discussing about it in the last part but that does not decrease its value. Instead, being last but not least, it can stay longer in the mind of a reader. Also, when drawing up the action plan, I considered does it make a difference if the core team chooses the leader or is it more likely that first the person with motivation and leadership skills stands out and starts to gather the core team. Either way, the most important thing is that there is a committed and motivated leader or leaders' team that keep the network alive.

During the process of this thesis, there already have been initiatives in order to develop the network. For example, recently a global innovation challenge was organised via Google+ Hangout. The event was part of Global Entrepreneurship Week and it was open for all the teampreneurs around the world. There were participants from six different countries during two days. The participants got a common challenge and they had limited time to find innovative solution for the challenge. Everyone worked with the challenge at the same time so that virtual cooperation was possible. (TA's Global Innovation Challenge 2013.)

9.3 From now on

The event mentioned, is a good example and start for cooperating globally in the network. With the results of this thesis I want to encourage people in the network to make new initiatives and start to use the ideas and the action plan in order to create valuable and active network of teampreneurs. The results can be used all over the network either in their entirety or implementing its parts in suitable situations. Also the ideas and the action plan are useful for any other network that is in the beginning of its creation process.

In the action plan I already mentioned some development suggestions for the network but there is still one more important development point that needs to be brought up in order to increase international actions within the network. International business and interacting in the network should become part of the team entrepreneurs' curriculum. Becoming visible and part of the goals would show that the teamsters are encouraged to internationalise. That is something that was pointed out by most of the teampreneurs that I interviewed for this thesis.

During the process of this thesis, some additional topics arouse from this theme regarding to possible further researches in the future. One of them could be a study of international teams and how multiculturalism affects team's forming, working and business efficiency. Other interesting topic would be about creating company culture for multicultural organisation. Regarding friend leadership which is the prevalent leadership model within Team Academies, it would be interesting to study friend leadership in multicultural teams and also in a network. Is there a difference in friend leadership be-

tween culturally homogenous and multicultural teams? Also exchange students' effect on team companies could be a topic worth studying more deeply.

Working together makes us stronger. The international network gives us energy, pushes towards new challenges and gives inspiration as well as new friends and colleagues. International business is much easier to start with familiar people that share same kind of culture of doing things and similar values. And when working together, bigger goals are achievable.

I feel that this thesis process taught me a lot about network building, leadership, communication and working in multicultural environment. Those issues are important for me because I want to continue working in international field as an entrepreneur after my graduation. The goal is to combine my research with my team mate's research about friend leadership and co-create new findings from that basis. Together we can start developing something new which can be valuable for the future of ourselves and the global society. So let's start already today thinking globally, acting locally and using the network fully.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Development plan for team entrepreneurs' international network

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ACTION PLAN FOR DEVELOPING TEAM ENTREPRENEURS' INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

GLOBALLY

1. Forming a core team: one person/unit

- motivated and have desire to improve the network
- open-minded and willing to work in multicultural environment
- these motivated people already exist and/or one person can stand out and start gathering the team

2. Kick off meeting for the core team

- clarify the needs of the network
- create common vision, strategy, action plan, long and short term goals and a roadmap for the year 2020
- choose a leader for the core team and share other responsibilities and roles
 - feel of need
 - leader points the way
 - leadership is one year hiring
- choose communication and interaction methods
 - when, with what tools, how and how often the interaction takes place
 - for example, video meetings twice a month and face to face meetings twice a year
 - communication has to be active, regular and the team members have to be committed
 - create strategy for social media
 - **Communication = interaction and offering information!**
- create common rules and norms

3. When the core team has clear thoughts, it's time to spread the word!

- organise a roadshow
 - a tool to promote and spread the word about the network
 - takes place in each unit
 - the goal: getting new people to join the network
 - promotes the network with inspirational real life success stories, presentations, videos and visualisations to show the value of the network and internationalisation
 - encourages to work in English
 - encourages to join camps and travel to other units

- communication
 - e-newsletter once a month or every two months delivered to all members in the network
 - create website/platform/database
 - local teams collect the data from each unit
 - The Alumni Gallery of Proacademy as a reference
 - information about teamsters in one place
 - connects teamsters so that they can learn and benefit of the network
 - gathers information about teamsters' know-how
 - user friendly and nice looking
 - every teamster has their own profile and in the side bar there is a link for every team
 - different kinds of skills are divided into separate themes so when clicking a skill, the page will show all the people with that particular skill
 - helps teamsters from different generations to get to know each other and find common interests and complementary skills

4. Organising events and get-togethers

- big community event
 - once or twice a year with business point of view
 - for example, a common customer challenge
 - personal connections and relationships are made -> trust is created
- camps, trips and other occasions where people can meet
 - at least one trip per year per team
- global virtual training sessions for example four times a year

5. Peer/ mentor teams

- two teams from different units start to communicate and co-create
- peer teams are teams in the same phase
- mentor teams are first and last year teams
- communication between the teams can start with the help of the global core team or during a trip/event
- sharing problems and learnings

6. Exchanges

- good preparation well in advantage
- common goals for the receiving team and the exchange student
- co-creating international customer projects

7. Monitoring the development and evaluating the achievements

- annual report
- regular motorolas to measure the learnings

LOCALLY

- 1. Each person from the global core team gathers a team around themselves from their own units**
- 2. Local team shares responsibilities and roles**
- 3. Local team in each unit is responsible of**
 - international issues
 - hosting international guests
 - communication and spreading information
 - physical and virtual bulletin board in each campus with up-to-date information about what's happening and where