Niina Sallinen, Taina Salakka-Kontunen
& Pasi Juvonen (eds.)

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Contents

About the authors

Olga Bogdanova, MBA, works at LAB University of Applied Sciences as a project manager of EDUCRO and SLEM projects.

Olesya Ilchenko is an intern at the EDUCRO project and studies Tourism and Event Management at LAB University of Applied Sciences.

Pasi Juvonen, D.Sc. (Tech.), is RDI Director of Innovation Commercialization focus area at LAB University of Applied Sciences.

Heidi Myyryläinen is an RDI specialist at LAB University of Applied Sciences' Business Unit. She is a project manager in the iSEE and SEinHE projects.

Liubov Sidorova is an intern at the EDUCRO project and studies Tourism and Event Management at LAB University of Applied Sciences.

Lasse Torkkeli is Principal Lecturer of Digital Business at LAB University of Applied Sciences.

Foreword

Pasi Juvonen

Promoting innovation in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic

You have decided to get acquainted with the LAB Innovations Annual Review 2022. This review provides a comprehensive overview of the activities, results and lessons learned in LAB University of Applied Sciences' projects of the Commercialisation of Innovations focus area.

The last two and half years have brought us several unpredictable changes and uncertainty. We have been forced to adapt to changes in our ordinary work and other routines. In the times of uncertainty, there are factors that usually help to sustain focus on solution-oriented thinking and actions. This annual review presents the results that LAB's employees have deployed in with our stakeholder groups during previous year. The topics covered include self-leadership, resilience skills, enrichening face-to-face communication, and social entrepreneurship education. The articles also highlight what has been learned and how the learning outcomes will be utilized in the upcoming cooperation.

Based on the articles, it can be seen that human beings can adapt to many different circumstances. We can work remotely when it is needed, but at the same time we miss communal learning and reflection. Furthermore, it has been widely noticed that brainstorming and other activities requiring creativity require enriched face-to-face communication. During challenging times, it seems that delivering good also increases. This glimpse of altruism can be found in this annual review. I hope you will enjoy reading the articles.

Heartfelt thanks to all the authors of the articles who made this publication possible. I would like to thank RDI Specialists Niina Sallinen and Taina Salakka-Kontunen for the editorial work and LUT Academic Library Information Specialist Riikka Sinisalo for the technical review of the publication. I wish you all rewarding reading experiences with the LAB Innovations Annual Review.

Pasi Juvonen
RDI Director, Commercialization of Innovations focus area

10 October 2022

Olga Bogdanova

The SLEM Training Programme - Resilience and creativity with self-leadership and mindfulness skills

SLEM - ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-LEADERSHIP EDUCATION THROUGH VIRTUAL TRAINING		
Project period	**01.09.2020–31.08.2023**	
Funding	**Erasmus 2014–2020**	SLEM ACADEMY
LAB's role	**Partner**	

Cognitive strategies for improved well-being and performance

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative influence on the mental health of people around the world. Enforced remote work and studies, which are likely to remain after the pandemic, endangered psychological safety and the meaningfulness of work, causing anxiety, depression and stress. People felt isolated, lonely, and experienced distractions caused by sharing their working space with family members (Galanti et al. 2021). Younger people, especially singles, suffered more than adults who had families (Conversano et al. 2020). It is therefore crucial for students and employees to learn how to cope with post-pandemic stress and develop resilience for future challenges. Cognitive strategies and protective abilities, such as self-leadership and mindfulness, play an important role in helping to overcome stressful situations (Conversano et al. 2020).

Self-leadership strategies involve a variety of practices which help people in developing motivation and achieving goals. Some practices involve the development of self-awareness, understanding and changing behavior, which creates desired outcomes. Another set of practices focuses on creating positive

thinking and working with limiting beliefs. Finally, some practices are related to concentrating on the positive aspects of activities and directing attention away from negative sides. Sjöblom et al. (2022) surveyed about 2500 higher education employees in Finland and found that people who used goal-oriented and well-being-related self-leadership strategies were better at coping with the negative sides of remote work. They could feel the meaningfulness of work and prevent burnouts. Examples of goal-oriented strategies include setting meaningful and realistic goals and monitoring progress by planning and scheduling tasks. Well-being-related self-leadership strategies include developing good habits such as resting enough, eating healthy food, and exercising.

Mindfulness is a widely used but ambiguous term. It means being aware of what is happening in the present moment and being aware of thinking patterns by observing thoughts as they come and go without attachment. There are multiple mindfulness techniques, such as breath awareness, body scanning, loving kindness and walking meditation, but they all have a main concept in common – anchoring our attention to the present moment. Practicing mindfulness exercises regularly causes structural changes in our brains, develops an important skill, emotional regulation (Behan 2020), and helps to reduce anxiety, depression and stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Yeun and Kim 2022). Companies that organized mindfulness practices as part of employee care at the workplace were more efficient at mitigating the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This, in turn, may affect long-term employee productivity, engagement and loyalty (Zheng et al. 2020).

While self-leadership strategies have an emphasis on performance and goals, and mindfulness is about emotional regulation, they have many things in common. Both mindfulness and self-leadership practices enhance self-awareness, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and stress relief. The combination of self-leadership and mindfulness practices improves academic performance and reduces the stress and anxiety of academic students (Sampl et al. 2017).

Even though COVID-19 is loosening its grip, we still can remember the lessons learnt from it and employ cognitive strategies for further improving our well-being and performance at work. For example, it was found that self-leadership skills and individual creativity results in innovation in activities at work (Kalyar 2011). Innovations and creativity are especially important for entrepreneurship. In addition to creativity, self-leadership practices can increase confidence and improve other entrepreneurial skills such as risk taking, proactiveness, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness (Neck et al. 1999). The importance of the development of soft skills for resilience and employability in young people has been in addressed in regional strategies and has been a topic of calls for action. Educational institutions have a significant role in adapting curricula to enhance the development of these skills. In this article, we will further explore how this can be realized.

SLEM project: building etrepreneurial self-leadership and mindfulness skills

The Erasmus+ funded SLEM project - Entrepreneurial Self-Leadership Education through Virtual Training was initiated by educational institutions from Liechtenstein, Croatia, Finland and Albania. The main goal of the project is to develop and test a training program which would improve the entrepreneurial mindset of university and high school students. To achieve this, the project integrates self-leadership, mindfulness and creativity exercises. They include methods of raising self-awareness and self-reflection, and strategies of goal setting, motivating yourself and others to achieve these goals. The training program also includes well-being strategies to achieve the best work-life balance. As a result, the students gain such skills as self-awareness, self-efficacy and self-confidence, which are important prerequisites for exploring entrepreneurial opportunities. The entrepreneurial mindset is not only important for starting new companies but also for career and personal goals. Many exercises are related to creating and evaluating personal life visions.

During the first year of the project, the project team from LAB, University of Liechtenstein, University of Dubrovnik and 2 private schools in Liechtenstein and Albania created the course curricula, including the training content. The course manual is built by logically combining the self-leadership and entrepreneurship domains' exercises with the support of mindfulness training. The first module of the Manual helps participants to explore their values, strengths, and motivation, which results in building self-awareness, a major steppingstone to identifying personal and entrepreneurial goals. The goal setting and planning implementation, as well as addressing the psychological barriers, are covered in the second and third modules of the Manual. Module 4 is focused on the implementation of goals, reflection on the progress and revision of goals and plans. Finally, module 5 equips the participants with the tools to connect with other people and jointly work towards goals. As a result of the training, participants develop a greater understanding about themselves, their dreams, goals and motivation. Most importantly, they become equipped with the tools to make progress towards their goals and get support from other people (Bogdanova et al. 2022).

Image 1. SLEM project meeting in Finland in June 2022. (Photo: Kaisa Liukko)

TABLE 1. STRUCTURE OF THE MANUAL			
MODULES	**SELF-LEADERSHIP**	**ENTREPRENEURSHIP**	**MINDFULNESS**
Module 1: Inspiration & Self-Awareness	**Self-Awareness**		**Mindfulness block supports continuous progress in the development of mindfulness skills without specific separate themes.**
Module 2: Idea Generation	**Identifying Dreams**	**Idea Incubation**	
Module 3: Design & Planning	**Employing Constructive Thought Patterns**	**Concept Development**	
Module 4: Implementation & Revision	**Creating Impact**	**Business Model**	
Module 5: Final Check & Pitch	**Influencing**	**Designing & Testing**	

Source: Bogdanova et al. (2022, 54)

During the second year of the project, the project team piloted the Manual content with their students. In Finland, a group of 8 students took part in the pilot during September 2021 – March 2022. During the monthly half-a-day contact sessions, the students completed the selected exercises in a group and between the sessions, students completed selected individual exercises. The students were asked to provide short feedback for each completed exercise, write a learning diary and take part in an after-course interview.

According to student feedback, the course helped them to develop self-awareness: they learned something new about themselves, their feelings, thoughts, and values. In addi-tion, exercises in the course helped them to cope with negative thinking and feelings in a peaceful way – as one of the participants said, they gained the power to change them. This in turn helped to create a positive mindset and confidence when facing challenges and changes. Students also learned how to create goals according to their values – how to set up the goals and make concrete steps towards them and succeed.

The students mostly valued the face-to-face sessions, where they could work in groups and help each other by pointing out blind spots. During one of the training sessions, students and teachers also practiced a pitch about themselves in a playful manner. There were

also learning points from the students' feedback: the number of exercises in the Manual was considered excessive. After the pilot, the project team in Finland analyzed the feedback of the students and selected the best exercises for the online courses.

SLEM Training Courses

The SLEM project team from Finland incorporated the results of the first pilot and the lessons learnt from other partners. The second pilot in Finland will be implemented online in the form of two courses: "The Art of Being Present" (2 ECTS) and "The Art of Leading Yourself" (3 ECTS). The first course will focus on developing mindfulness skills during September 2022, and the second course continues with building self-leadership in October – December 2022. The course content and activities will be provided in Moodle and during the Zoom sessions, students will learn about the background of the topics, discuss experiences, and complete exercises together.

In the course "The Art of Being Present", students will start by making a habit of regular mindfulness practices, from starting to eat or drink with attention on the smell and taste. It is very important to develop a life-long habit of dedicating some time to daily psychological well-being. Once a habit is developed, the students will learn how to keep their attention on experiences in the present moment and what makes the attention wander. Being equipped with the necessary skills, students will then analyze their emotions from the standpoint of sensations and feelings and learn how to observe them in a balanced way. Finally, students will learn a practice aiming at creating positive feelings and connections to others. As a result, students will learn how to direct their attention, become aware of their emotions and feelings and will become more balanced.

In the course "The Art of Leading Yourself", the students will continue exploring themselves. At the beginning of the course, they will learn

Image 2. "The Art of Being Present" and "The Art of Leading Yourself" course flyers. (Image: Olga Bogdanova)

what their values, strengths, challenges, and motivations are – what they like doing. After that, students will set up personal and business goals and develop a plan to reach them. The next step will be getting this done and reviewing progress. At the same time, they will learn about themselves again: what were the best strategies to achieve their goals, and what hindered progress? They will also become equipped with strategies for working with limiting beliefs and creating confidence, and in the end, they will celebrate successes and failures. Failures are an inevitable part of growth and development, and it is important to accept them too. Finally, the students will learn how to connect with others, to get help from like-minded people or provide help themselves.

After the second pilot, the courses will be adapted and the plan is that they will remain in LAB curricula and will be offered via Campus Online. The lessons learnt from the second pilot will also contribute to developing the online course on the SLEM project website, which will be open to everyone interested. The content of SLEM project will also be integrated in entrepreneurship-related courses and training programmes in LAB.

Summary

The COVID-19 became a challenge for many people but at the same time, it revealed the need for developing resilience and coping mechanisms for stress. The SLEM project has been initiated and implemented at the right time. As a result, the students will learn skills to manage their emotional well-being and to follow their dreams. The number of students enrolled is over 30 for each course at the time of writing this article. The project team hopes, and will work to make possible, that the courses will stay in curricula after the project ends and be opened to a wider audience.

Erasmus+

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**Olga Bogdanova, Olesya Ilchenko
& Liubov Sidorova**

Lessons Learnt from COVID-19: New Skills for Sustainable Value Creation in the Culture and Tourism Sectors

EDU-CREATING NEW CUSTOMER VALUE THROUGH CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION		
Project period	**01.10.2019–31.12.2022**	
Funding	**South-East Finland-Russia CBC**	
LAB's role	**Lead Partner**	

Introduction

COVID-19 had a tremendous negative impact on the culture and tourism sectors: over 80% of UNESCO sites were closed during lockdown and culture and tourism professionals were left without work. At the same time, COVID-19 opened new opportunities. The demand for digital cultural services and events grew dramatically and reached new heights. New collaboration opportunities emerged that would allow for the reinvention and diversification of culture and tourism products and attract new audiences. These opportunities require different skills to be developed to support change and resilience (UNWTO 2022).

The World Tourism Organization prepared a set of guidelines for immediate response and recovery in collaboration with culture and tourism professionals. First, the digitalization of culture and tourism sectors became necessary to enable access to online cultural experiences. Collaboration with tech companies facilitates development and marketing new digital services to audiences, as well as building digital platforms for cross-sectoral collaboration. This collaboration may also continue after the pandemic to attract new audiences and inspire more sustainable tourism. Moreover, the culture and tourism sectors also need to consider that some audiences will require diversified and customized culture and tour-

ism products after the pandemic. In addition, collaboration with local communities is required to boost local tourism activities. To enable these actions, culture and tourism professionals need new skills and competencies (UNWTO 2022).

The call for action for skill development and collaboration on cross-sectoral and international levels has also been on the agenda of many projects and organizations before COVID-19. The pandemic simply revealed hidden issues in the current business models. One of the platforms promoting cooperation between cultural organizations in Finland and Russia has been the Finnish-Russian Cultural Forum, organized annually since the year 2000 by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. The EDUCRO project has been initiated by partners as a result of participation in the Forum.

The partners of the project identified two components required for new sustainable value creation in the culture and tourism sectors. First, creating a cross-border alliance that would support cross-border cooperation, and second, enabling the development of the work-life relevant skills of the SMEs and future workforce through training, exchange of ideas and experimentation. The project was implemented at the end of 2019 and is being finalized at the end of 2022 and has been influenced by COVID-19, like other projects. Therefore, the activities aimed at building cross-border cooperation and skill development have been transferred to mainly online. In addition to COVID-19, the project also faced consequences from the Ukrainian war. Nevertheless, there were also positive moments and results. This article summarizes the good practices and lessons learnt by the EDUCRO project from COVID-19

Image 1. The opening seminar of the EDUCRO project. (Photo: Olga Bogdanova)

Online cross-border cooperation and skill development: testing the waters

The project cross-border event was all set for the end of March 2020 to jump start the co-operation when the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded. All previous plans no longer existed, and new plans were ambiguous; all that was certain was uncertainty itself. The main questions that the team faced were: how long it will take the pandemic to subside? Shall we postpone activities or organize them online? How do we organize them online, especially networking and cooperation? The project team was trying to answer these questions by exploring and benchmarking ideas.

First, the team turned to their own good practices. The online incubator for cultural entrepreneurs Creve at Humak had experience with developing entrepreneurial and business skills online. This experience laid out a foundation for the structure of the future EDUCRO Online training programme.

At the same time, in April 2020, international organizations like the OECD initiated online discussions where culture and tourism professionals and policy makers discussed the same questions that the EDUCRO project team and participants had faced. What is the impact of COVID-19 on culture and tourism? What can be done on organizational, national and international levels to alleviate the impact? (OECD 2020) Inspired by these talks, the EDUCRO project team, together with other culture- and tourism-related projects, organized a panel discussion: Culture and Tourism: Life in "The New Normal," on 29 May 2022. Over 90 people

Image 2. Online session in Zoom. (Photo: Olga Bogdanova)

participated in the event where participants of the EDUCRO project shared their best practices (EDUCRO 2021). The event gathered people from Finland, Russia and other countries and created a feeling of hope and some ideas how to adapt the business models to the new reality and what skills are needed.

These and other benchmarked insights alongside the assessment of expectations of the EDUCRO project participants were translated into the online EDUCRO training programme. The programme of 6 educational modules included webinars, online workshops and individual mentoring sessions for companies. The modules' themes included event management, future trends, customer experience, service design, fundraising, marketing and networking (for details, see Bogdanova 2021). A networking component was included in the training programme which was initiated during an online networking session in October 2020 and further supported by group assignments in Zoom.

In November 2020, it became clear that after the boost of online activities in Spring, participants were tired of online events and hoped for live meetings. According to feedback from the project participants, the online events were missing the natural setting for networking: coffee breaks and evening dinners. Another important finding was that the companies preferred individual workshops aimed towards their specific needs. However, for many participants, online educational events became more convenient, especially because it was possible to record and rewatch. The online format also allowed the project to attract international-level speakers. Many interesting cases of fundraising, digitalization and internationalization were nonetheless presented by the cooperating companies and organizations from Finland and Russia during the whole year of the training programme.

Based on the feedback collected via interviews, the team decided to rearrange the activities to better match expectations (for more details, see Bogdanova et al. 2021b). The online webinars organized in Spring 2021 became open for everyone interested and a series of Service Design and Customer Experience workshops were offered to companies. In addition, separate monthly networking sessions without agendas were organized to allow for free communication on the Remo platform. The series of workshops and networking sessions resulted the business models being updated according to customer needs and better understanding of the audience (for more details, see Bogdanova et al. 2021b).

Unfortunately, the online format of networking sessions didn't allow the building of strong connections that would allow for cross-border cooperation projects. Only a couple of companies started to plan joint services, however, other companies were hoping for the possibility to meet face-to-face. The most remarkable case from the EDUCRO project was the creating of a chat-bot guided city museum quest in St. Petersburg run by the Museum Experience Center. The companies which were developing new products and services mentioned that the service design workshops were very helpful.

New skills in culture and tourism: from crisis management to change management

While there were significant COVID-19 restrictions in Finland, Russia was not so strict. The Institute for Cultural Programs managed to organize a series of face-to-face seminars blended with webinars and study visits in September 2020, May 2021 and October 2021. The speakers from Finland participated in the series of seminars online. This allowed for free communication between the project participants in Russia and provided insight into the themes relevant for the cultural managers. The Russian partner also conducted a massive study of the skills necessary in the changing environment. Interestingly, when the results of the study were compared with Finnish data, there were many similarities. The most important skills for the managers in culture and tourism were related to digitalization, change management, sustainable business development and resilience (for more details, see Bogdanova et al. 2022). To enable value creation during the crisis, professionals should use an adaptive project management style, such as agile, and learn how to introduce changes in their organizations to better reflect the increased digitalization, communicate with their customers and become environmentally friendly.

Image 3. Series of Seminars in St. Petersburg. (Photo: Institute for Cultural Programs)

The results and the findings, driven by the lessons learnt from the project in the COVID-19 period, will be utilized further by developing an online course. By benchmarking existing courses for culture and tourism management, the project team found that some topics outlined by professionals are not fully incorporated in the curricula of universities of applied sciences. These topics include sustainable value creation, digitalization and change management, and future platforms and future trends for culture and tourism products. The project team in Finland created the course outline which was tested during the EDUCRO Summer Camp held in LAB Lappeenranta Campus on 6-10 June 2022. During the intensive week, materials for the future online course were recorded and the exercises were collected from the invited speakers.

The Summer Camp was organized in collaboration with students from the Tourism and Event Management programme. In the process of preparation from December 2021 to March 2022, the concept and format changed several times. COVID-19 vaccination and pandemic restrictions easing painted an optimistic outlook, so the Summer Camp's initial task was to come up with activities to bring participants from Russia and Finland closer at a joint live event in Lappeenranta. Since the outbreak of hostilities in Ukraine in late February, after the initial shock passed, the goal changed to connecting students and professionals from the tourism and culture field based in Finland.

The Summer Camp was planned for students as an element of the life learning trajectory, a career component, and a form of leisure organization. The Summer Camp contributed to the acquisition of new knowledge, skills, and competencies, and helped in the development of interdisciplinary areas. The program included lectures by guest lecturers, seminars, and workshops. The group of participants turned out to be surprisingly versatile; attendees were able to appreciate the value of DEI - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - from first-hand experience.

One of the key topics of the Summer Camp was related to rapid digitalization caused by COVID-19 and its ethical concerns. During discussions, students expressed their opinions on the possibility of using and storing images of travellers in airports. Some were concerned about privacy and possible reputational risks or about the accuracy of the organizations that take the images. Other students justified the view that digitalization improves safety by allowing the police to respond more quickly and efficiently and simplifying the process of registering new arrivals.

Image 4. EDUCRO Summer Camp, day 1. (Photo: Olga Bogdanova)

The EDUCRO Summer Camp involved students in research work and taught practical skills. Camp events had a positive impact on the development of corporate culture and created an environment for interaction between colleagues, teachers, and students in various forms of learning and communication. In the process of personal communication, a special academic environment was created.

The educational tasks of the EDUCRO Summer Camp included students obtaining various skills, competencies, and new knowledge, increasing their motivation, and testing new learning technologies. This allowed students to expand their competencies in their main, or another, speciality, which contributes to the formation of interdisciplinary areas of work.

On summing up the Summer Camp, participants noted how much students had learned and how their view of the development of modern society had changed. Environmental problems, global climate change, and social and gender inequality are just some of the systemic crises and global challenges faced by countries, corporations, and people. This clash has led to a revision of the global view of the world and awareness of the importance of sustainable development.

Students talked a lot about diversity as part of the larger concept of DEI, which assumes that everyone participates equally in society, and none of us, regardless of gender, age, appearance, condition health, etc., feel excluded. It is important, at the same time, that D

Image 5. EDUCRO Summer Camp, day 5. (Photo: Olli Tähtinen)

(diversity) works only if there is I (inclusion, involvement). Sometimes it is believed that the topic of "diversity and inclusion" concerns some special groups of people and is not relevant to the majority, but each of us is unique in some way. Students all agreed that people and companies need to invest in intangible assets such as innovation, social action, and inclusive culture, which determine long-term sustainability today.

The Summer Camp program presented a wide range of cases reflecting the practical experience of using lifelong learning based on various types of literacy, including health literacy, futures literacy, media literacy, technological and technical, financial, legal, environmental, and digital literacy. Through the ecosystem perspective of sustainable development, openness and diversity, students have been able to see new ways of acquiring skills and competencies that ensure quality of life.

Conclusion

COVID-19 influenced many people and organizations, and the culture and tourism sectors were among the most vulnerable. At the same time, the pandemic created drive for change, when new opportunities to develop skills were available online. Besides that, COVID-19 taught us to value moments of personal communication, and also to respond flexibly to changes; that the set goals are not always the only possible ones and such unexpected situations can enrich our experience. It is certainly easier to be flexible with a good theoretical base, develop professionally, and use modern technology.

CBC 2014-2020
SOUTH-EAST FINLAND - RUSSIA

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Heidi Myyryläinen and Lasse Torkkeli

Project journey of developing social entrepreneurship education

SEINHE – DEVELOPING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION		
Project period	**2020–2022**	
Funding	**Erasmus+**	
LAB's role	**Partner**	

The SEinHE – Developing Social Entrepreneurial Skills in Higher Education project started in the spring of 2020. The project received funding from the Erasmus+ programme and aimed to develop an understanding of what kind of competencies are needed in social entrepreneurship, and how they should be included in higher education. In this article, we describe three project phases: developing an understanding of competencies related to social entrepreneurship in four countries, organizing a train-the-trainer programme, and, lastly, organizing an international intensive week for higher education students.

Collecting data and creating a joint understanding of social entrepreneurship

The first phase of the project aimed at collecting an understanding of social enterprises and social entrepreneurship as a phenomenon in each project partner country, which were Lithuania, Belgium, Finland, Latvia, and Cyprus. Each project partner collected some country data about social enterprises in their country. One major source for country data were the European country or synthesis reports on social entrepreneurship. Some main definitions for social enterprises or social entrepreneurship were also identified. In education, it is important to introduce many definitions for learners (Myyryläinen et al. 2022b).

To understand how the key stakeholders (teachers, higher education students, business incubators, social entrepreneurs, and social enterprise organizations) apply the concept of social enterprise or social entrepreneurship or related topics in their work

or studies, the project partners also interviewed them. The interviews of social entrepreneurs and organizations, working closely with social entrepreneurs, shed light on their understanding of the social entrepreneurship competencies. Scholars have suggested that social entrepreneurs need both business competencies and the corresponding skills for leading their hybrid organizations with a social mission and different operational logic. The findings from the interviews emphasized diversity of views on competencies as well. Yong et al. (2016) have metaphorically described the variety and complexity of social enterprises with the term "zoo". They explain that the zoo of social enterprises has a variety of enterprise types, and as animals live in different environments, also the socio-economic contexts for social enterprises matter (Yong et al. 2016).

Framework for developing social entrepreneurship competences

Considering this variety of competences and competence needs in social enterprises, we wanted to build a framework for developing social entrepreneurship competences that acknowledge the variety of social enterprises and their contexts. After all, the concept of competences in practice cannot be separated from the context where they are used. The European Commission initiative introduced the competence framework for entrepreneurial competences that were suitable for both the aims of the project as well as for practical education development at higher education institutions, such as LAB University of Applied Sciences. The European competence framework for entrepreneurial competences (EntreComp) is built on the idea of entrepreneurship as a transversal competence in all spheres of life, where individuals and groups create ideas and spot opportunities, mobilize resources, make initiatives, and learn from them. Entrepreneurship as a competence refers to personal development as well as behaviours when starting up and managing a venture. EntreComp also defines entrepreneurship broadly: ventures can produce cultural, social or/and commercial value. (Bacigalup et al. 2016)

A key aim of the project was to develop a framework for developing social entrepreneurship competences in higher education across European countries. By higher education, we refer to individual learners in higher education in any discipline as well as the institutional level. The latter is important to develop the necessary institutional capacity and processes that can support developing social entrepreneurship competences that are applicable in teaching across courses, programmes and universities. We also broadened our framework to propose learning in a very connected and co-creative setting, by developing communities of practice that support social flows, connections, and learning opportunities (Myyryläinen et al. 2022a, 85).

Train-the-trainer programme

In spring 2022, the project organized a train-the-trainer course for educators. The intensive week was organized in Belgium and hosted by project partner Thomas More University of Applied Sciences. Teachers from five countries participated in three days of training to learn about social entrepreneurship,

social impact, and ways of how to apply entrepreneurial competence framework in their teaching. The EntreComp model can be utilized in many ways, also when designing programmes and learning events. Educators – or learners in any informal learning setting as well – can focus on some competence area, and competence, or systematically address different competence areas. After all, entrepreneurial competences are systematic and interrelated.

Teaching social entrepreneurship entails planning learning objectives, contents, methods, and evaluation methods, and the train-

Image 1. Teachers from five higher education institutions participated in train the training programme in Antwerpen. (Photo: Unknown)

the-trainer event was a unique opportunity to reflect on this process with other educators.

Organizing an international intensive week for students

One of the major milestones in the project was to organize an intensive week for students from each partner country as well. Each project partner institution had a chance to select five students to participate in an international intensive week. The week was organized in eastern Latvia in the town of Rezekne. The programme for the week was planned by the coordinator of the project, the Kaunas University of Applied Sciences team, and hosted by Rezekne Academy of Technologies, and each project partner had teaching roles during the week. The week started with getting to know each other. Students also had a chance to get know to their international teams. Overall, there were five student teams that organizers had determined beforehand. The first two days offered an introduction to societal challenges, social enterprises, combining social mission and business activities, developing business models, innovation in social enterprises as well as communication and pitching. There were lectures as well as group discussions and interactive practices. On the third day, a local social entrepreneur came and introduced her business to students. She also gave an assignment to students: groups were to ideate how she could develop her social business in practice. Students had a chance to work on the assignment for two days. Finally, the day after giving the assignment, groups presented their proposals and got feedback from the social entrepreneur who had given the assignment.

Image 2. Teachers from five higher education institutions participated in train the training programme in Antwerpen. (Photo: Unknown)

Our learning take-away: a sense of place in learning matters

One of the unique characteristics of our project was that we had to implement it mainly remotely, due to the COVID-19 travelling restrictions that coincided with the execution of the project. Working remotely was successful in that we were still able to collect data and to develop a joint understanding when starting with the first phase of the project. Still, having the chance to organize project events face to face was a meaningful experience for participants, and enabled utilizing collaborative learning processes during the week. Furthermore, a physical joint place brings a new dimension: a sense of place supported by shared development and learning processes.

For example, an intensive week would have been very different had it been organized in location other than Rezekne, a small town in the Eastern part of Latvia and economically one of the poorest areas in Europe. Studying entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship should be done in different contexts, as social entrepreneurship can solve some social problems while serving communities in which commercially oriented actors do not have an interest operating. For instance, in the course, a social entrepreneur, who introduced her business and gave the challenge to solve for student groups, described she wants to have a social impact in Latvia. Her aim was to help Latvian children. The student groups created proposals suggesting that she could grow her business to other market areas that could be more profitable. This example illustrates the strategic choices that entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs make, and this time a social entrepreneur aimed to create social impact in a certain geographi-

cal area, though other markets could possibly be more profitable.

Another important lesson we learned in the project is the importance of giving feedback, not just about learning, but also on the key things that learners value. For this purpose, we collected feedback from the students on their experiences of the course. We analysed the feedback for further development of the teaching. Overall, the student experiences were positive. The students endorsed the learning, appreciating the chances to co-create together in international teams, and felt that the topics were interesting and learning methods were motivating. Working in teams can have many challenges that require significant pedagogical planning and guidance from the teachers. Based on our experience, we posit that while teachers mainly focus on learning as a process, the students instead placed a high priority on the outcomes that they created in the course. While these may have been more instrumental parts of learning to teachers, students emphasized them and weighted these, and they also highlighted the meaning of the feedback to outputs that they had created themselves. They are motivated to invest more time and in gaining more attention for their creative outcomes.

In summary, projects are learning journeys for all participants, and this project sparks many new journeys for the future. International projects, such as the SEinHE project, provide unique opportunities and active developer roles for students, as well. The topic of social entrepreneurship is worth exploring in future projects, not least because it offers multiple perspectives for different learners.

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Heidi Myyryläinen

Lessons from the pandemic in planning social entrepreneurship education

ISEE INNOVATING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION	
Project period	**2020–2022**
Funding	**Central Baltic-program**
LAB's role	**Coordinator**

In the iSEE-project, 2022 has been a year of planning learning objectives, launching new learning materials, discussing method choices, and planning how, in practice, we provide aligned courses within four higher education institutions. The development process will culminate in organizing an aligned intensive course in Tartu with participating students from partner institutions.

In this reflection, I look back to the themes in the iSEE – Innovating Social Entrepreneurship project from some perspectives of what the pandemic has taught us. First, I review some viewpoints on what the pandemic looked like for social enterprises. Then, I approach the topic of what kind of competences are needed to be prepared for unexpected crises and use the viewpoint of entrepreneurial competences. Finally, I discuss the lessons learned for planning education in practice, and how social entrepreneurship education can also support individuals who want to create a better tomorrow.

What did the pandemic look like from the point of view of social enterprises?

A study collecting data in the first year of the pandemic from social enterprises in Europe, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa showed that the pandemic had affected business operations and that most of the respondents had adapted their operations (British Council 2020, 8). The respond-

ents represented 20 different sectors and different sized social enterprises. They had also been asked how their social mission relates to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 58% of the respondents addressed SDG 8, decent work, and economic growth. 50% of the respondents connected their mission to SDG 3, good health, and well-being. 49% of the respondents named SDG 4, as the quality of education, and 36% of the respondents gave the SDG no poverty. In addition, other SDGs were given with smaller percentages. (British Council 2020, 6-7)

2% of the social entrepreneur respondents in Europe had shut down due to the COVID-19 regional breakdown and 2% of social entrepreneurs were expecting to close. In Europe, 5% of the social enterprises had temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 regional breakdown. For 40% of European social enterprise respondents, the future was insecure. 19% of the European respondents expected their staff and turnover to increase within the next half a year. (British Council 2020, 11-20)

Of the social entrepreneur respondents in Europe, 57% provided more products or services online and 43% offered new products or services compared to pre-COVID. On the other hand, 38% had reduced products and services. One third of European social entrepreneur respondents provided new or additional support directly targeted to those in need due to COVID-19. (British Council 2020, 11-20)

40% of the social enterprises in all regions experienced that the demand for their products had decreased, whereas 20% reported that the demand for their products or services had increased. The biggest concerns were due to social distancing. In 57% of the social enterprises, social distancing limited product or service delivery, in 56%, travel restrictions limited their operations, and only 4% had no direct effect from the COVID-19 crisis. (British Council 2020, 12)

There are no similar surveys available from Finland, Latvia, Sweden or Estonia, but the results also indicate the effect of pandemic for social enterprises in these countries. For example, in Finland, most social enterprises operate in social- and health care industries (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2020, 21). These sectors were naturally critical during COVID-19 and the pandemic seemed to redefine this sector significantly, showing, or leading to, vulnerabilities in health care systems. While in many healthcare areas the pressure on healthcare services grew, the healthcare providers struggled with challenges of personnel shortage and recruiting (THL 2022).

Ultimately, the crisis may change the consumers' or clients' priorities and the drivers of growth. Enterprises may be in a situation where they must reframe their strategy and restructure operations. In some sectors, the demand has grown during COVID-19, such as retail and ICT, while some sectors have been hit hard, such as hospitality, transport, and arts and culture sectors (SVT 2021). The effects of COVID were the most extensive in the first year of the crisis, but several studies (ILO 2022) show the pandemic continues to influence enterprises at the time of writing.

It has also affected the public economy, increasing the shortfall of most public economies, and in the long-term, this will also affect enterprises.

As of now, new societies and businesses have already encountered new dramatic crises that affect the global economy on a wide scale, too, such as the the Russian attack on Ukraine and rising inflation.

What kind of competencies are needed to face the challenges of the future – looking from the view of social entrepreneurship

The question of what kind of competencies are needed to face the challenges of the future is complex. The question is not new either. For example, philosopher Hannah Arendt (1961) viewed education in society as a fundamental and responsible mission. Her view is that education stands for freedom and plurality, and education supports learners to be prepared to renew our common world. With competence, I refer to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and behaviors that lead to achieving goals in a social context (Williams Middleton & Donnellon 2014) – the goal could be creating new survival strategies or working for the well-being of some community or the environment. Social entrepreneurs prioritize creating value for others while they also do business and operate in the market (Westhead et. al. 2011). I reflect on the question from the iSEE-project perspective, what kind of competencies of the future can be acknowledged and supported in social entrepreneurship education in light of COVID-19?

Social entrepreneurship education can be positioned as part of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education has different meanings and different contexts and, in practice, is implemented with different aims and methods (Fayolle 2013). For example, van Gelderen's (2010, 710) view is that the ultimate aim of entrepreneurship education is to support the development of autonomy – "the sense that one's actions emanate from oneself and are one's own".

In the iSEE-project, our aim is pragmatic. On one hand, we want to provide knowledge about the multitude of social enterprises, social entrepreneurship, and social innovations. On the other hand, we also want to support the development of entrepreneurial competences, such as self-awareness and self-efficacy, valuing ideas, ethical and sustainable thinking, taking initiatives, and coping with uncertainty and risks (Bacigalupo et al. 2016). During crisis situations, creativity, ethical and sustainable thinking, coping with uncertainty, and mobilizing resources for creating something that is valued by others, in an economic, environmental, or cultural sense, are important.

Of note, it is not purely individual competencies that count, but societal and communal interactions also matter. For example, EU countries, and many other countries, provided policy responses to enterprises due to the economic consequences of the pandemic and created national recovery programs. Enterprises could renew their practices and, for example, invest in digital delivery systems.

Overall, social entrepreneurship-related competences are worth developing for all of us – who would not want to develop skills to create a better, resilient world and a better, responsible business? That is a never-ending journey but can be a meaningful experience for anyone.

Lessons for planning social entrepreneurship education in the iSEE-project

In the iSEE-project, the main output of the project is four aligned modules that are accessible to students studying a specific business or engineering degree in all four partner institutions. In addition, we conceptualize content for entrepreneurs as well.

In this reflection, I focus on the project´s perspective of what COVID-19 taught us for planning education in the sense of the intended learning objectives and the e-learning environments and methods.

First, e-learning became a necessity in the early days of the pandemic. The partner institutions in the iSEE-project followed national, regional, and institutional safety plans. During the pandemic, it was important to stop the spread of the virus and we shifted to online education. Digital learning environments have some practical advantages such as saving time and traveling costs for participants and organizers. On the other hand, designing e-learning environments that are suitable for intended learning objectives challenges educators. As learning goals and needs are diverse, there are needs for different kinds of e-learning solutions as well.

As the iSEE-project is developing international modules, digital learning provides opportunities. In the iSEE-project, these opportunities were realized by producing both synchronous and asynchronous learning events. In the project, each partner has created modules that create a study entity together but students can study individual modules. In the module that we created at LAB, we emphasize synchronous learning, which is real-time learning in live online sessions. We encourage the participation and joint reflection of students. The bachelor-level business students' learning objectives entail spotting opportunities, envisioning the future, and using imagination, as well as assessing ethical and sustainable aspects and social impact on various levels. The course has theoretical dimensions but the focus is on developing personal and group competences for investigating, applying knowledge, and creating. Asynchronous learning refers to settings where learners get access to materials and learn regardless of time, studying at their own pace. In the project, each partner created two practical case descriptions of a social enterprise.

Secondly, the crisis situations shed light on the learning objectives as well. At a time of many pressing challenges, education has the chance to be the point of preparing learners for an unknown future. Entrepreneurial competencies and social entrepreneurship are topical skills in times when society needs resilience and the strategic capabilities to be responsive in a systemic way.

The time and its challenges, such as the pandemic, call for entrepreneurial competen-

cies. According to Bird (1995), entrepreneurial competencies are knowledge, motives, traits, social roles, self-images, and skills that culminate in venture birth, survival, and possible growth. Learners also benefit from entrepreneurial competencies, no matter their position in society – whether they are entrepreneurs or not. Entrepreneurial competencies also refer to the competencies of acting upon opportunities and ideas and transforming them into value for others in any setting (Bacigalupo et al. 2016, 10).

For bachelor's degree students, we also aim to support the relational side of learning in e-environments by supporting communication opportunities, for example, pair or group discussions and group work and being an opponent of others´ work. The learning objectives in the courses address some entrepreneurial competencies, such as spotting opportunities, envisioning the future, and using imagination. The learners will also focus on assessing ethical and sustainable aspects and social impact on different levels. The methods aim to promote learning at the personal level but also co-creating, teaming up, collaborating, and networking. These elements aim to facilitate the sharing of knowledge in a group and between groups, but also opportunities for applying and constructing knowledge. On the other hand, they also enable reflexivity in attitudes and skills.

We also aim to support the relational side of learning when planning learning sessions for entrepreneurs or managers. They have experience of enterprising in practice and the learning entrepreneur communities can also share perspectives and learn together. On the other hand, they have some specific knowledge needs, too. However, reflexivity is a central element in the learning concepts that the iSEE-project aims to facilitate in different learning environments when possible.

Fook (1999) defines reflexivity as the ability to recognize the influence we have on what we create and understand how we create it. In their study, Schippers et al. (2015) noted that team reflexivity is an essential skill when demands are high. Reflexivity is one of the essential skills in managing crisis situations and creating solutions, in the future, too.

The pandemic may not have been the lesson we wanted but it made us rethink many practices and lead us to foster elements that are most needed in business life as well as learning environments. Shared reflexivity is important for recognizing what matters the most to us – learners, clients, service users, entrepreneurs, or anyone else.

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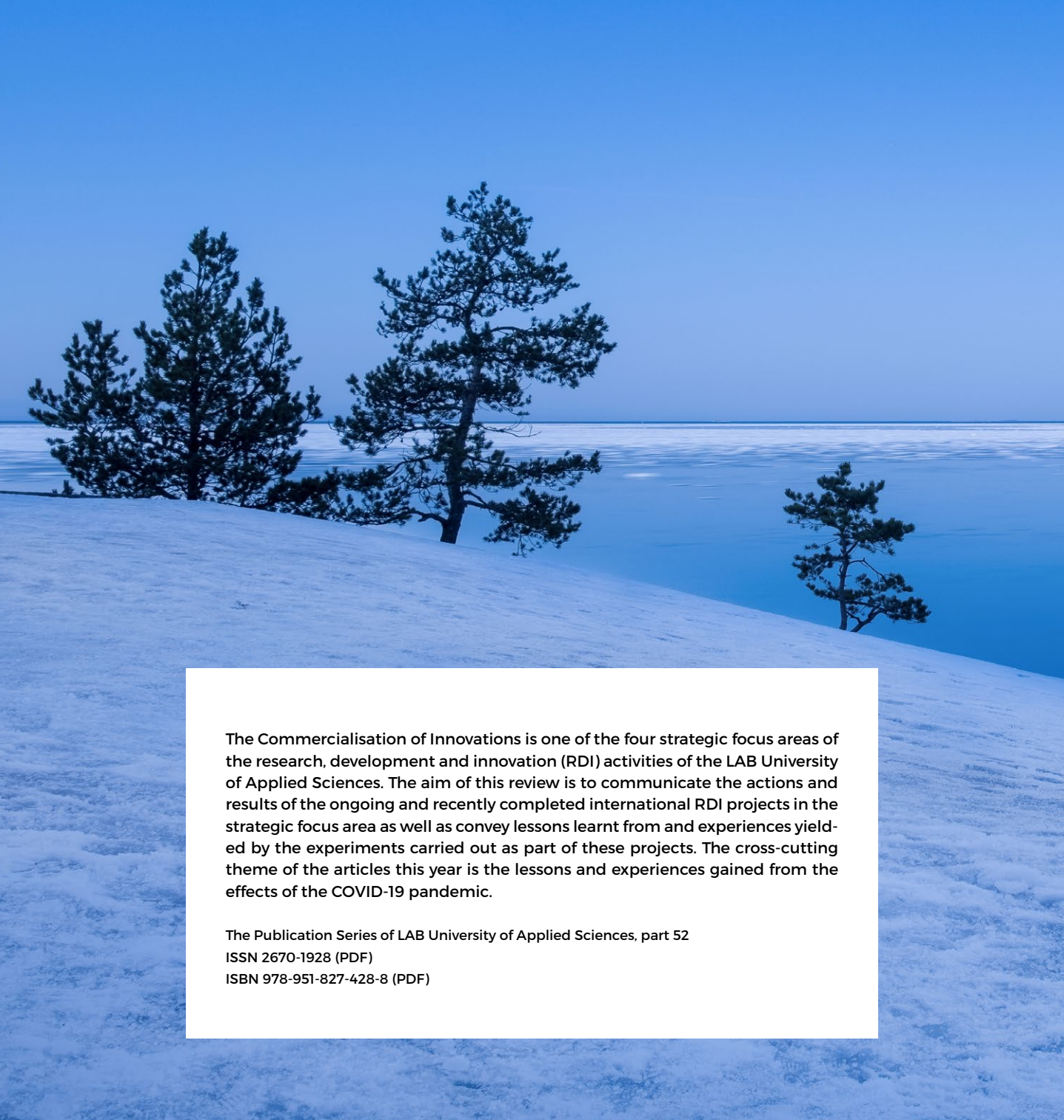
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The Commercialisation of Innovations is one of the four strategic focus areas of the research, development and innovation (RDI) activities of the LAB University of Applied Sciences. The aim of this review is to communicate the actions and results of the ongoing and recently completed international RDI projects in the strategic focus area as well as convey lessons learnt from and experiences yielded by the experiments carried out as part of these projects. The cross-cutting theme of the articles this year is the lessons and experiences gained from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.