

Workshop, Suomi 23.01.- 25.1.2013

Pyramid-hanke

” “Co-operatives as a tool of Entrepreneurial Education”

Wednesday **23/01/2013**

We have met our visitors Ivan Diego, the Entrepreneurship education project coordinator from Ciudad Industrial del Valle del Nalón, Spain; Dirk D’Hulster, Managing Director of Sociale Economie Oostende Belgium; and Bie Bijmens, Director of Training of VEB, Belgium at their hotel.

We have started our workshop at 09:15 at Törnävänsalli meeting room. After brief introductions of the participants and their organizations; Özerk Göker had presented the Pyramid project and the aims of the workshop.

According to the time table preapproved by the funder and the attendees, we have begun to disseminate some of the results we already have achieved with our ESF funded project. First turn was giving to Etelä-Pohjanmaan pajoilta urille, ESR project, Tero Perälä business coach had offered brief summary of his project but more detail was given to the good practices and practical applications of his project.

He had outlined the targets of his project as to prevent social alienation of the youth, improve youths ‘work application skills, to create new learning environments to vocational schools and workshops in region plus to improve cooperation between local youth workshops.

He has explained how the youth workshops and cooperatives have been organized and how they have been working in Sedu. He has described especially that Youth Workshops is not as widely known in Finland and his project has been arranging marketing events and expos. He has explained how cooperatives have been used in Sedu as an educational tool to give students from different departments to gain entrepreneurial attitude and real life experience running their own small scale business. In these cooperatives that Etelä-Pohjanmaan pajoilta urille has been establishing students face real life challenges such as customer service, face to face communication with customers, cost decisions and scheduling. Through the guidance of a career counselor, the project had given a chance to the students to maximize their educational experience inside the cooperatives.

Our guests were impressed and shared their experiences with cooperatives. Ivan Diego has explained that Spain, and specifically his region which is located in Northern Spain have been using cooperatives as an entrepreneurial and socially inclusive tool since mid-90s. They cover a whole spam of life from education to provide people to open their own businesses. He has commented that during the economic troubles in last couple of years the model has proven to be more resilient in surviving and creating employment opportunities than classical entrepreneurial models.

Tero Perälä has mentioned that cooperatives has a long history in Finland as business model and educational organizations such as Sedu has been working to improve the system by using pedagogical inventions.

Our Belgian colleagues asked more details from our exports about this and was shown real life examples in our visit to OpenLakeus educational expo Thursday.

Next presentation was done by Heli Kaunisto, the project coordinator of Yrittämällä eteenpäin, ESF project. She has mentioned that “In Entrepreneurship – a Way Forward” project they believed that entrepreneurship education is a tool for upholding enthusiastic attitude for life. The aim of the project was to reinforce entrepreneurial learning culture in general and vocational education in Southern Ostrobothnia region.

The focus was to create models of entrepreneurship education for local needs. The process of creating local models included: discussions and descriptions of the goals and methods of entrepreneurship education, workshops where teachers, principals and entrepreneurs cooperated and education and training sessions of what entrepreneurship education is all about.

According to the project’s indication the learning environment in entrepreneurship education gives responsibility to learners, encourages them to do things themselves, also guides them towards recognizing opportunities and seizing them, further more bolsters insightful and inventive learning, reinforces learners’ confidence in their own capabilities , gives scope for risk-taking and guides towards goal-oriented collaboration with others.

The need to develop learning environments and pedagogical solutions to support entrepreneurship education was well recognized and acknowledged in Vocational Education Centre Sedu. There were a lot of good practices concerning entrepreneurship. The next step was to share and extend those practices and enhance entrepreneurial learning culture. Therefore, entrepreneurship was chosen for the theme of the year. The idea of “entrepreneurial pathways” arose in a group meeting where we discussed the goals and methods of entrepreneurship education in this particular institute.

Heli Kaunisto further explained that they have established a multidisciplinary work group that included teachers, education managers and project staff. Teachers and education managers represented 11 different vocational qualifications. The task was to create models of entrepreneurship education considering the needs and opportunities of each qualification.

The emphasis was on developing teaching methods that guide learners towards entrepreneurial operation – learning by doing, team work, cooperation with entrepreneurs etc. There was a clear promise to be creative and try new solutions by the management. The teachers were not left alone to themselves. Education managers involved in the process and supported the task. Group meetings made it possible to share good practices and learn from others. There were monetary resources allocated for planning by the ESF project.

She has presented the educational department that has participated in the project.

Heli commented that to understand the good practices and results of her project we have to also be familiar with OmaPolku ESF project “My Learning Pathway” and introduced us to Anne Kaisa Alatalo project coordinator, who explained that in her project entrepreneurial learning has had an effect on students’ independent role in studying, students’ taking greater responsibility, decreasing the teacher-led pedagogy, boosting teachers’ enthusiasm and encouraging attitude, professional approach, entrepreneurial spirit, efficiency of learning and last by not the least versatility of the learning environment. Maybe more importantly the students agreed on that all the activities were fun and made learning nicer!

Our partners were interested in peer to peer education that has been encouraged in “In Entrepreneurship – a Way Forward” and “My Learning Pathway”. Dirk D’Hulster explained that their trainers in his organization are specialists with practical know-how but in most cases lack pedagogical experience so this method seemed a practical way to get around this issue.

Heli Kaunisto pointed that every model does not fit in every competence and local models are needed. They had to tailor made some of their approaches.

The last presentation, of the morning was made by Tiina Jokela-Lyly, project head of EP YES-Center, ESF project. She has presented that YES is an entrepreneurship education service for teachers. It provides training in entrepreneurship education and services for developing entrepreneurship in schools and establishing school-business networks. YES organizes events, seminars, and training programs both regionally and nationwide, and participates in the development of teaching plans and strategies. YES is also responsible for JA-YE Finland’s regional services.

She has given examples of good practices such as JA 12H camp and 24h camp. She has briefed the attendees that YES have five functions: Training for teachers, Education content development, Materials for entrepreneurship education, school-business cooperation and JA-YE entrepreneurship. Tiina also mentioned the concept “Kumiyritys”. It was a new and innovative way according to our Spanish visitor and he asked details about the topic.

After concluding our presentations we had our lunch in Sedu’s the teaching restaurant.

When we returned from lunch our Belgian partners presented their organizations. Dirk D’Hulster, Managing Director, Sociale Economie Oostende has briefed us about their organization and their mission. It is a non-profit organization, established in 1996. Their main aim is to create sustainable employment for people unemployed for more than 3 years. He has given us details of many projects that his organization organized in order to create inclusion and opportunity for unemployed people. One of their projects called “Activity Cooperative” was discussed in detail. It consist a business incubator for unemployed people. During which they can still receive unemployment benefit for 18 months, while learning how to operate their own business.

After Dirk’s presentation Bie Bijnens, Director of Training of VEB, Belgium has demonstrated her organization. WEB addresses to unemployed people and employees from the Kempen area that need intensive guidance during their search for a permanent job. They organize education and training and offer work experience or employment. Employers can get help from WEB for the education and guidance of their executive employees. They also help employers develop a customized HRM-policy. Web was founded in 1992, its actions focused on high unemployment with a local context, in a deprived area. When it was founded their main focus was high risk groups (at that time): women but this group’s situation in the work life has improved their focus has been changed towards other groups with risk of marginalization.

By the conclusion of the presentations we have left for Inspiring Entrepreneurship seminar organized by EP YES-Center, ESF project. Ivan Diego gave a speech with the topic of “The Changing Face of Entrepreneurship: Is Education Keeping Pace?”

In the seminar one of the events included an open workshop where we have presented our projects to a wider audience and created a lively discussion about cooperative and entrepreneurial education among our colleagues from different parts of Europe.

As an evening activity we have shown our visitors Seinäjoki Aalto Center and new library. Then we have attended to an event organized by YES-Keskus as a part of the seminar. That gave us a chance to introduce our guests and our project to a wider group.

Thursday 24.01.2013

We have picked up our foreign partners from their hotels and meet with the rest of the group in same location as the day before. We had a learning-café event organized that has attended besides by Ivan Diego, Dirk D'Hulster, Bie Bijmens, Özerk Göker, Tero Perälä, Heli Kaunisto, Yrjö Uurtimo; also Päivi Märtilä Lämpinen and Satu Kosola who are teachers that work with cooperatives. Marko Laukas from Jupiter youth workshop Vaasa, Seija Sampo from Kaksi Kättä youth workshop have attended our workshop as well.

Besides talking about the information we had received the day before, we had discussed in groups the potential of spreading the good practices we have performed in cooperatives and entrepreneurial education as a result of our ESF funded projects. We have discussed the differences between countries and the way ESF funds have been allocated towards education. They have seen great potential using the ESF funds for social economy projects and social inclusion tools' development.

Ivan Diego has presented his organization and their activities regarding entrepreneurship education. He has impressed us with their widely international projects in implementing entrepreneurial attitude.

Bie Bijmens has commented positively about the importance given to the feedback from students. They have been encouraged by the project to give open and functional feedback, and in many cases they have impressed their teachers with their input.

After eating lunch in the teaching restaurant in a different location, we have attended the Opinlakeus Education Expo and visited students in JA-YE Company Programme (young entrepreneurs) and other related groups at their stands. Dirk D'Hulster had enquired about the micro-companies and compared them with the ones they are using in Belgium. The concept was similar. In the guidance of Tero Perälä and Yrjö Uurtimo, we have observed the activities of the youth workshops and experienced the educational efforts done in this field.

When we have concluded our tour in the expo we have returned the meeting room and started to analyze the different methods and practices between the partners and how each country and organization can benefit from their experiences from their project work. The head of international affairs in Sedu has attended this portion of the

workshop and brainstorm with us on building a stronger partnership between our organizations. Our colleagues from Belgium has expressed that in comparison with our activities they have a shortage in-service training for new employees. They were happy they had familiarize themselves during our workshop to our “work coach” training that has started in Finland in 2012 and learned that there might be some possible input for their own in-service training. They were also interested in the methods we use for supporting the self-esteem and motivation of the clients/students.

We have impressed that our Belgian partners have more know-how concerning the business orientation of workshops. (Good practices for example in recycling of clothes, designing products, importing of recycled design, products, and sustainable development such as energy saving schemes and actions and their branding efforts for their products.)

We have concluded the workday and met with partners from Passion for Enterprise. The evening event has been organized by the tourism students from Sedu. The visitors have been treated to an impressive traditional Finnish experience in a log house. The evening entertainment included boot throwing to lake, sauna, Finnish food and appetizers. It was an excellent opportunity for networking and continuing our topics in a more relaxed atmosphere. Other international visitors who had heard our discussion were also interested in cooperatives as a tool of entrepreneurial education.

Friday **25.01.2013**

After picking up our visitors from their hotels we had met with Yrjö Uurtimo and Tero Perälä. Our first stop was to the cooperative founded by the surface treatment students at Sedu’s Kirkkokatu campus. The cooperative has been working under the guidance of Pajoilta Urille project. We had an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences with students and staff. Their teacher and students explained the workings of the cooperative in detail such as their marketing effort, supply purchasing deals, customer service experiences and the roles of the students and tutors. After visiting their workshop and study room; some of the representatives from the cooperative escorted us to one of their ongoing project and give us a demonstration of their activity.

Our visitors were very impressed by the mature and motivated attitude taken by our students and commented again their delight on peer to peer teaching technique.

Our next visit was to Kaksi Kättä workshop that works with unemployed people and gives them opportunity to participate in workforce and train them in different professions. Their recycling activities and store front functions were similar to Dirk D’Hulster’s organizations and he has observed closely the similarities and differences between the organizations.

During the lunch we have met Sedu's Assistant Director Hellevi Lassila and Development manager Aila Ylihärtilä. They have inquired about our activities in the workshop and get our partner's observations and feedback regarding our organization and our projects particularly our good practices that achieved by these projects.

We have concluded our workshop with further discussions of the topics that has been discussed during the workshop and evaluation of the event. This session has been attended by Ivan Diego, Dirk D'Hulster, Aila Ylihärtilä, Tero Perälä, Yrjö Uurtimo and Özerk Göker.

Conclusion:

The workshop gave us an opportunity to present our projects; Etelä-Pohjanmaan pajoilta urille, Yrittämällä eteenpäin, Osaamisen oma polku and EP YES-Center. We had disseminated most of the results we have achieved in these projects and on the other hand we have learned more on these topics from our international partners. We have exchanged the good practices as well as main differences.

Our partners had a chance to listen to our presentations, attend our seminar, have networking opportunity and interactively discussed about our projects.

By disseminating our projects in such a way we have created a complete understanding between partners and exchanged ideas and practices. The discussions about the methods, pedagogical and practical approaches, challenges and opportunities generated an effective atmosphere to work on future collaboration.