

Imagination of Entrepreneurship

1. A broad concept of entrepreneurship is a better ground for effective entrepreneurship promotion than a narrow one.

Worldwide, one will find endless numbers of definitions and concepts of entrepreneurship. Actually entrepreneurship is a various and broad phenomenon of applied creativity, problem-solving, innovation and interaction, beyond business start ups. It is also a concept for personal growth and learning. If we are to promote business start ups and to develop entrepreneurship as a whole concept we shall broaden our own imagination of entrepreneurship, demystify the concept, and make it attractive for many.

Towards Entrepreneurial Regions

2. A region can grow in entrepreneurship if values, structures and activities for entrepreneurship are widely appreciated and supported.

Entrepreneurship and innovation start with curiosity and the entrepreneurial spirit of people, prior to business plans, money or office space. Within local and regional environments, values and orientation towards entrepreneurship are fundamentals. Ideas need freedom for initiative, experiment and development, and possibilities to access supportive resources to put them into practice.

3. An entrepreneurial region calls for the integration of the entrepreneurial focus into many other policy fields beyond the promotion of high-tech innovation and start-ups.

Regions are complex ecosystems, and entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon. In order to facilitate entrepreneurship on a broader regional scale with sustainable effects a systems approach is required. This is considered also in European initiatives like the 'Lisbon Strategy', the 'Green Paper on Entrepreneurship in Europe' and the corresponding 'Opinion of the Committee of the Regions'. Still too many regional policy-approaches neglect the complexity by means of using superficial, short-term or isolated concepts. The entrepreneurship rationale demands a holistic approach.

4. A starting point towards entrepreneurial regions is the development of learning, education and culture for entrepreneurship.

An education system is a mirror of dominant values of a certain region and society. If entrepreneurship shall be important for a region, education is therefore a vital starting point. The regional promotion of entrepreneurial spirit and competence within education is a grass-root approach to promote the entrepreneurial learning of individuals, social settings and organizations.

Entrepreneurship Education and Training

5. Entrepreneurship education shall be based on a concept for personal growth.

Entrepreneurship is interaction and does not exist in a vacuum. As an entrepreneur one would integrate others' expectations and outside developments into one's own ideas and activities. Thus, reflection and interaction are core dimensions of entrepreneurial competence. Learning which aims at improving reflection and interaction contributes to personal growth. If we base entrepreneurship training and education on the learning goal of personal growth we enable entrepreneurship pedagogy, and can support entrepreneurial activity.

6. Methods in entrepreneurship education need to support initiative and creativity, the acquisition of structured experience within learning, and provide laboratory conditions.

Entrepreneurship education and training must incorporate methods which support experiments, creativity, alertness, critical thinking, interaction and similar activity. Teaching methods should turn away from traditional lecture-style teaching. Entrepreneurial teaching and learning methods already imply entrepreneurial competence and talent which one aims to strengthen. We call this 'action learning approach'.

7. The development of curricula for entrepreneurship goes beyond business studies.

Entrepreneurship addresses competences which can be utilized in all fields of work and life. Curricula should not be limited to business studies. They shall provide the opportunity to develop projects, business models or related sustainable concepts to be exposed, tested and developed on markets or under similar conditions of competition.

8. Entrepreneurship education and promotion will be more successful if facilitators and teachers can make use of adequate training programmes (Training of Trainers).

Opportunities to professionalize will have a positive impact on entrepreneurship training and promotion. Training of trainers (ToT) can offer such opportunity for teachers, lecturers, consultants, incubator managers and even advanced students. It should be also open for entrepreneurship promoters in politics and administration. The BEPART approach is the development of an international ToT programme based on a broad concept of entrepreneurship and on an 'action learning approach'. Its aims are to learn from and with each other, as well as to support international exchange and dialogue in the field of entrepreneurship education and promotion.

Towards the Entrepreneurial University

9. Universities as catalyst for entrepreneurship need to develop and embrace their own concepts of entrepreneurship.

An entrepreneurial university aims at being competitive in its academic and service fields, and encourages entrepreneurship initiative and competence building throughout research and teaching. An entrepreneurial university creates space and conditions for the unknown, and links teaching to research. From the BEPART perspective commitment to regional entrepreneurship promotion and its regional impact belongs to the concept of entrepreneurial universities. Part of the concept are activities towards building regional innovation systems together with business and government.

Intensifying Triple Helix Interaction

10. In order to build regional systems for entrepreneurship and innovation we need to learn new modes of triple helix interaction of university - business - government.

Organizing regional systems and environments for dynamic entrepreneurship and innovation is a knowledge-intensive and complex challenge. The so called "triple helix" model addresses interaction between university, business and government. The model recognizes that universities and academia can and shall play an important role in regional innovation processes. It emphasizes the need for a collaborative and hybrid modus of cooperation, and concedes that control cannot be stable and synchronized beforehand but is dynamic by nature. BEPART regards this as a learning process which can only progress by cooperative work towards building such systems.