

Track 1: Innovation and Critical Learning in Education and Business

Labour mobility and migrant entrepreneurship in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR)

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The Best Practices presented here relate to the context of labour mobility in the BSR. In particular, they seek to identify how successful entrepreneurship among migrants can be achieved and sustained. The session will start with a comparative analysis of Trans-Baltic labour mobility and support to entrepreneurs in the different BSR countries.

Thereafter, three Best Practices for fostering entrepreneurship among migrants to Finland are presented. These examples demonstrate how ethnic minority entrepreneurship can be successfully implemented with an innovative combination of Research & Development, Education & Training, and Business Support:

1. Research & Development

This Best Practice case analyses existing attitudes towards immigrant entrepreneurship and presents a selection of successful ethnic minority businesses. Furthermore, it analyses migrant entrepreneurship as a career path for foreign students in Finland. The empirical findings suggest migrant entrepreneurs to keep a high-tech approach, fuse their cultural and academic background with the local opportunities and to enhance their Finnish language skills.

2. Education & Training

Developing entrepreneurial skills in cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary teams is the focus of this Best Practice case. It demonstrates how educational institutions have successfully joined their efforts in a dynamic network to support entrepreneurship among migrants. International students develop innovative business plans in multidisciplinary teams tutored by professors, experienced entrepreneurs as well as other experts from business life. The successful migrant teams will establish their own companies and take their learning experience back to new students and potential entrepreneurs.

3. Business Support

This Best Practice case presents a Business Development Unit (Economic and Planning Centre, City of Helsinki) that offers tailor made services to migrants to start-up and run their companies in the Helsinki metropolitan area. Three types of services are offered: Business Counseling, Courses in Entrepreneurship and Incubator Services. The Unit also assists entrepreneurs e.g. in preparing documentation when applying for a loan or a grant from a financial institution. Entrepreneurs in the incubator can rent office space with furniture at rates well below the market level.

Outcomes and critical success factors:

These three Best Practice examples demonstrated a need to support migrant entrepreneurship in the following ways:

- 1) Research on how ethnic minorities' have experienced entrepreneurship
- 2) Training of skills and competencies of individual entrepreneurs
- 3) Long-term socio-economic integration of migrant entrepreneurs
- 4) Increased financial resources to start-up entrepreneurs
- 5) Access to on-going business advisory and training support

Conclusions and implications for Higher Education:

We recommend HEIs to include detailed knowledge about the success factors above into their entrepreneurship courses. Preferable, these courses should be delivered in close cooperation with business life and organisations supporting ethnic minority entrepreneurs in the Baltic Sea Region.

Friday 23 April 11:00 – 12:30