DIGI-GRENT Project

IO Number: 4

Output name:

Transnational Co-Creation Pitchings (TCCP) for Digital and Responsible Entrepreneurship (DREP) Curriculum Co-Creation and Peer-Training Methodology

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Document Revision History

Version	Date	Comment	Author(s)
02	19/04/2019	Initial draft revised after the Milan meeting	ISTUD
03	06/06/2019	Preliminary contents integration in the light of the shared templates and materials	ISTUD
04	11/06/2019	Final version	ISTUD
05	01/10/2020	Inclusion of criteria for participants' selection	ISTUD
06	17/05/2021	Inclusion of feedbacks from TCCPs	ISTUD
07	31/05/2021	Inclusion of conceptual framework	ISTUD

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1 Introduction

This document provides an overview on the training schemes/schedules which have enabled the proper organization of the teaching and learning activities (and namely the transnational co-creation pitching – TCCP), in full alignment with the application requirements, while also encompassing the description of project meetings and afferent events. This scheme provides methodological considerations and has been used solely as a guide for the organization and management of the project operations and logistics.

2 TCCPs conceptual framework

Conceptually speaking, the implementation of TCCP sessions in the course of project's training activities can be regarded in the light of the growing need for co-creation, conceived, at EU level, as one of the main methodology for implementing and expanding open innovation, at both social and economic level. As a matter of fact, higher education institutions are increasingly exposed to the imperative to train independent, creative, entrepreneurial individuals who understand inter- and multidisciplinary challenges of the socio-economic environment, giving their contribution to open innovation in true convergence with technological growth and enterprise digitalization. EU's success in the global competition is, in itself, highly dependent on that, since co-creation can boost economic competitiveness, while internally contributing to shrink the inequalities among different regions, actively involving all the actors of the Quintuple Helix (see below) in a digitally-based contest.

TCCP methodology moves from this assumption to actively encompass digitally-driven co-creation in training processes, while recognizing it as a powerful instrument of open innovation practices within modern societies. To benefit from co-creation will be in particular academia which can infer from its implementation useful inputs which will eventually lead to more market-

oriented curriculum and better prepared graduates, capable to implement responsible entrepreneurship approaches (Chesbrough 2010; Chesbrough 2011).

In the frame of DIGIGRENT project, co-creation has been mainly implemented by the submission of "challenges" to all the participants, who have been required to digitally and creative work together on a specific business idea, reflecting project's criteria and assumptions in terms of digitalization and responsible entrepreneurship. Such an idea has been then developed making used of templates which had been previously developed by the members of the Consortium. A particular attention has been given to manage co-creation in a Quintuple Helix context (see IO2), moving from the definition of the Quintuple Helix model released by Etkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000) and Carayannis and Campbell (2009).

3 TCCPs schedule

Overall, TCCP sessions have included intensive training, allowing to fine-tune and finalize DREP curriculum, as well as to test the VLE which has been used during the training activities.

TCCP sessions have been scheduled as follows:

- C1- First short term joint staff training/mobility event (TCCP) for DREP curriculum co-creation and peer training (September/October 2019, Thessaloniki, SEERC)
- C2 - Second short term joint staff training/mobility event (TCCP) for DREP curriculum co-creation and peer training (January 2021, online)
- C3 -Third short term joint staff training/mobility event (TCCP) or DREP curriculum co-creation and peer training (April 2021, online)

4 TCCPs participants

Participants in the activities consisted in 5 people (staff and practitioners with an official engagement contract in the institution) from each partner institution. The 5 participants from

each partner have used the project teaching and learning budget for travel, accommodation & subsistence when needed.

The 5 participants had an employment/cooperation/service contract with the project partner and were covered by a specific insurance policy which was clearly mentioned in the engagement contract itself. This way the transferability of the practices and knowledge to the different institutions was facilitated.

The Project also intended to incorporate participants with fewer opportunities. Given that C2 and C3 took place online, we transformed this challenge into a a possibility by opening the participation to a broader audience. This way, we used our institution's network to expand the call to some communities who might also benefit from the training. This way, the number of participants was increased up to 43 in C2 and 46 in C3. Please note that only 35 of them were funded by the project.

Trainees brought their own laptops. No printed material was provided in compliance with the sustainability assumptions of the project. The organizer of each TCCP, tried to solve these obstacles when people with fewer opportunities were attending the sessions, providing them with any material needed that was not affordable for them.

All partner's leaders have made great efforts to reach participants with fewer opportunities, inviting them to participate in the project activities. In this sense, all partners have invited people with fewer opportunities, either with economic, geographical, cultural or social obstacles, using the needed dissemination channels to get them engaged in these learning and teaching activities. However, this characteristic has not been recorded to preserve their privacy and personal information. Additionally, although materials were already accessible to the general public and also for these people with fewer opportunities, their access became even easier due to the virtual sessions we had in the last two TCCP, not finding physical obstacles to attend the sessions and where materials were adapted to the new online environment.

5 Participants' selection process

The selection of participants was based on criteria of fairness and transparency. Participants were selected taking also into account their potential to impact and facilitate positive changes in their own institutions and foster the co-creation that took place during the TCCPs.

Although selection criteria were discussed and agreed by the whole consortium, the actual selection process has been developed by each partner. In particular, the following aspects have been taken into account:

- Relevance (Potential for impacting their organization).
- Motivation
- Availability
- Equality issues (gender and experience level balance)

In order to assess these criteria, potential participants were asked to submit via email to each partner leader the following documents:

- A declaration of interest to be involved in TCCPs, based on project contents and training methodology and their availability and expectations to participate.
- A summary of their profile highlighting their coherence and background on the training topics.

Each institution was in charge of disseminating the call for participants at their own institutions 3 months before each training activity. After receiving and evaluating the applications the selection was notified, asking the participant for their confirmation and whether they had any special requirements.

6 TCCPs training contents

TCCPs encompassed intensive training focused on testing the DREP curriculum and the VLE.

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Although this has been widely discussed on IO1 (DREP Curriculum Design), we briefly summarize here the contents, paying more attention to the organizational issues. All the TTCPs included sessions related to the 3 main building blocks:

- General entrepreneurial and managerial skills and competencies.
- Digital entrepreneurship skills and competencies.
- Sustainable/responsible/green entrepreneurship skills and competencies.

During the first TCCP (C1) in Thessaloniki, the only one which was held in presence, training sessions were focused on the following themes.

- T0 The basics of entrepreneurship.
- T1 Eco-friendly digital business models for startups.
- T2 Digital security and cybercrime for digital entrepreneurs.
- T3 Managing and understanding the quintuple helix towards fostering digital & responsible startups.

The two remaining TCCPs, which were held online because of the outbreak of the Covid -19 emergency, were focused on:

TCCP2 (C2) Organized by the University of Almería

- T0 Welcome session.
- T1 Startups, social awareness and the triple bottom line in the digital era.
- T2 Next-generation digital trends for digital entrepreneurs.
- T3 Pitching strategies for digital & responsible entrepreneurs.

TCCP3 (C3) Organized by the University of Lodz

- T0 Welcome session.
- T1 Bridging Investors, Business Angels and Digital & Responsible startups.
- T2 Digital policies.
- T3 Developing partnerships with responsible companies in the e-market.

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All the training activities were run following the co-creation pitching approach, which implies a group work under the coordination of a mentor, aimed at developing the initially shared business idea according to the principles of digital and responsible entrepreneurship.

In detail, participants have been requested to work on the following documents:

- Business model canvas (in this frame they had to identify: problem to be solved, solution, value proposition advantage, customers' segmentation, existing alternatives, metrics, channels, early adopters, cost structure and revenue stream)

- Business model (in groups). Specifically, based on the knowledge from the researched good practices as well as from T0, by working in groups, participants were requested to come up either with a new business idea (business concept) or to identify an issue in an existing enterprise. The solution to the problem (i.e. new product/service or new start-up/company) needed to be digital and responsible. All the proposals were captured in the business model report.

- Good practice report (meaning, an analysis of existing good practices/strategies utilized in digital & responsible start-ups or in enterprises tangent to the digital & responsible sector)

- PPT final presentation, fine-tuned by using the given template in order to pitch/present the proposed digital & responsible business model. There was no limit in terms of the number of slides, however the presentation had to last not longer than 15/20 minutes. The presentation was then assessed by a panel of mixed stakeholders and feedback were given to each group.
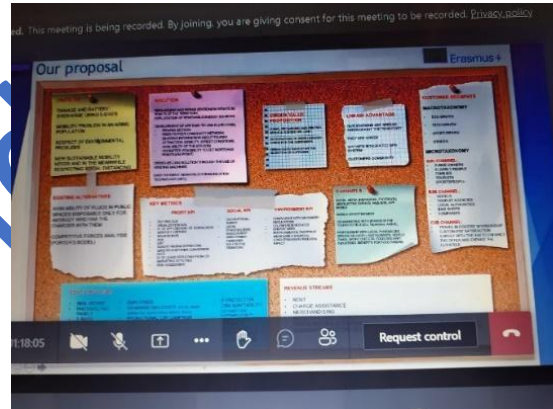
To this aim, participants had the opportunity to rely upon grids and materials that have been fine-tuned by the project consortium (see them as annex number 3). The final day was bound to the restitution of the above-mentioned materials that was given in plenary session.

As annex number 1, please find the matrix including the crossing between modules and training contents which were delivered during the training sessions. The elaboration and fine-tuning of training contents, including the slides sets for the delivery, were under the responsibility of all the project partners, depending on the breakdown of contents which has been agreed in the course the project activities.

Each partner had equally to provide and select the trainers who had the responsibility to provide the training contents during the TCCP sessions in accordance with a specific partners' agreement.

7 TCCPs training articulation (live and online)

The schedule of training contents during the TCCP sessions is presented in annex number 2. Generally speaking, training sessions were articulated in different ways, depending on the setting (live or online).

Before the outbreak of Covid-19 emergency, the project foresaw three live training events based on the interactive methodology of transnational co-creation pitching (TCCPs). The first one was successfully held in Thessaloniki in 2019 (September 30th - October 4th). Subsequently, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, made the delivery of face-to-face training sessions impossible, resulting in the review of project agenda and the reconfiguration of training activities.

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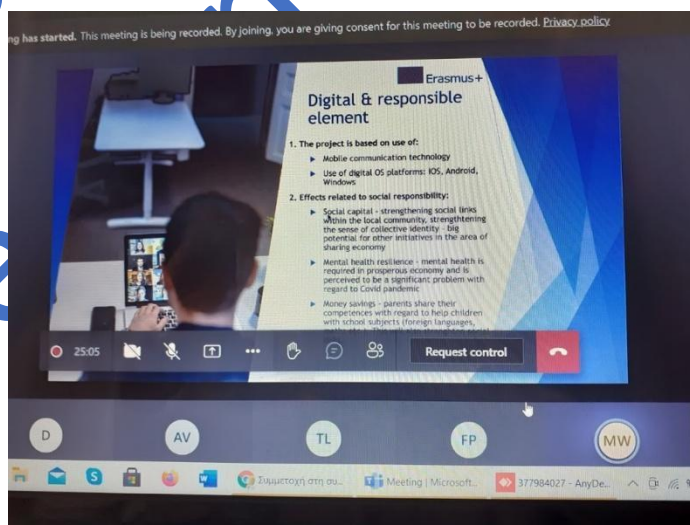
In accordance with the rising priorities set by the pandemic, training materials had to be adapted to be delivered online, exploiting an interactive approach, while at the same time allowing to co-create and pitch the ideas in an open-innovation manner. This approach relies on the incorporation of ICT resources, namely videos and instant pooling tools for setting the expectations and ensuring the highest possible degree of participation. In this sense, Zoom and Teams web-conference platforms were used to allow a proper interaction among participants and the creation of working and co-creation groups.

The virtual nature of this event allowed the organizers to configure the training with shorter theoretical sessions and more spread over time, which has been proven as a better option when virtual lessons are applied to attract and maintain participants' attention and compromise. In this sense, the five days of work were not placed in an intensive week with participants with full-time dedication to the project activities but spread in two weeks, giving participants time enough to work in groups and co-create business ideas with the team members, balancing their daily job commitments and the training activities.

Thus, in order to cope with such an unexpected situation, the articulation of the second and third TCCPs, originally foreseen in Almeria (ES) and Lodz (PL), which were held online was revised as follows:

- Theoretical online sessions: 3 days not in a row. Each day was delivered a 3 hours training on the originally identified topics.

- 1 day for a specific mentoring session (3 hours), although mentoring activities took place during the full length of the training period.

- 1 day for the restitution of final outputs in plenary session (3 ½ hours).

For what regards the first TCCP, held in Thessaloniki, the articulation corresponded to the application form provisions, namely:

1) 1,5 days training (DREP Modules + VLE testing). Participants had the option to attend trainings/presentations at the ETHAC 2019 conference, which was held in parallel. In this

particular setting, some workshops for validating the contents and analysis of the project were held with the participants, allowing for the final co-creation of the DigiGrent curriculum.

2) 2,5 days group work (trainees divided in national groups) for the case study analysis and modelling (business idea co-creation). Each group was assigned, during the pre-training phase, of a challenge to be addressed with the generation of a new business idea/model. The group work was assisted by mentors who provided feedback and support to the trainees where needed. On top of the mentor, local representatives provided unlimited guidance & support. There were rooms available in order to undertake this task, however participants were free to choose the preferred location.

3) 1 day for presenting the achieved results in front of a qualified Committee (business ideas pitching).

In the meantime, while the first day of the group work took place (day 3), project's partners were involved in the project coordination meeting.

According to the application form, each TCCP was followed by multiplier events (although not at the same time) with the Quintuple Helix Stakeholders which were held in Greece, Poland and Spain.

8 Pre-training activities

Participants who were involved in the TCCPs received a pre-training which was bound to provide general training in the following fields: Opportunity recognition, Business model, Business model canvas and Sustainability. This training was provided by each partner via webinar or class-based sessions, exploiting the internal faculty of each partner organization. The industrial partners participants were invited to participate from the training provided by the academic partners.

This training also served as a mechanism for explaining the functioning of the training activities, and help to socialize with the other members of the group, thus making smoother the functioning of the TCCPs and increasing further participation and motivation.

9 Evaluation & quality assurance

The assessment phase was coordinated by ISTUD which provided the assessment tools to perform the evaluation. The evaluation was focused on the following items:

- Increased knowledge perception, by means of ex-ante and ex-post questionnaires.

- Level of satisfaction, by means of a satisfaction questionnaire at the end of the TCCP training sessions.

- Skills improvement, by means of qualitative feedbacks collected from the members of the Committee in charge to assess the business idea pitching.

Questionnaires and check list for the Committee are enclosed as annex number 4.

10 Update the DREP curriculum and DREP Co-creation Toolkit based on the findings experience/findings from the TCCPs and VLE pilots

Although this has been widely discussed on IO2 (DREP Toolkit for managing Quintuple Helix co-creation), we briefly summarize here the contents, paying more attention to the organizational issues. The opportunity to be involved in the pilot phase was generally evaluated by participants as highly profitable, meeting their expectations at different levels. Among the other factors which have been pointed out as motivating and distinguishing, participants have in particular mentioned:

- The peer-to-peer cooperation resulting from the group work.

- The given opportunity to cope with new and challenging topics, aligned with the priorities of the future economic and social scenario.

- The friendly and fun environment in which the team work has been developed.

- The possibility to get out of individual comfort zones, confronting oneself with new contents.

- The development of transversal competencies.

- The support to individual creativity.

- The possibility of incorporating such contents and methodologies in their home institution.

Such feedbacks point out the added value represented by the emphasis given to interaction, both during the training and the group work sessions. Hence the particular attention given to this point in the DREP curriculum development. As a matter of fact, trainees engaged in vocational training have confirmed the growing need for a different approach to education, resulting from the growing wish to be actively involved not just in the group work, but also in the teaching sessions. These findings have been deeply investigated and examined by the Consortium members, leading them to adjust and fine-tune the final training materials.

Another point which has turned out to be crucial is the opportunity, for each trainee, to interact with an international environment moving beyond the individual comfort zones. Since education backgrounds were different and varied, this interaction has laid the groundwork for a fruitful and multidisciplinary contribution to the release of the final expected outputs.

Additionally, this was also possible given that all trainees had the opportunity of contacting, collaborating and co-creating with other quintuple helix stakeholders that were invited to each one of the training sessions. These stakeholders were different in each TCCP event since each organizer invited the stakeholders from its country of origin and were the event was held. In this sense, SEERC invited the following quintuple helix stakeholders for C1:

- Aristotle University

- University of Macedonia

- International Hellenic University

- OKThess (Startup incubator)

- Technolopolis (Startup incubator)

- YET (NGO)

- ERGANI (Woman/Gender NGO)

- Municipality of Thessaloniki

- Regional Authority of Central Macedonia

- Pfizer Digital Center Thessaloniki

- Delloite Thessaloniki

- Center for Digital Transformation of CISCO

For its part, UAL invited the followings to participate in C2:

- EmprendeUAL

- Vicerrectorado de Transformación Digital (UAL)

- Servicios de Tecnología de la Información y Comunicación (UAL)

- Centro de Investigación de Derecho, Economía Social y Cooperativa (CIDES)

- Asociación de Estudiantes Informáticos Almería (UNIA)

- Confederación Española de Empresas de Tecnologías de la Información, Comunicación y Electrónica (CONETIC)

- Agencia de Innovación y Desarrollo de Andalucía (IDEA)

- Centros Andaluces de Emprendimiento (CADE)

- Centro de Servicios Usuarios TIC (Junta de Andalucía)

- Asociación de Usuarios de Internet

- Fundación Telefónica España

- Asociación Ítaca para la promoción de la Juventud

Last, the following stakeholders were invited by UOL to attend C3:

- Technical University of Lodz

- University of Social Sciences

- The University of Humanities and Economics in Lodz

- Responsible Business Forum

- Art Inkubator

- Lodz Minicipality

- Business Service Centre

- PZU S.A.

- PGE S.A.

- Dachser Intelligent Logistics

- Santander Universidades

- PKO S.A.

- Infosys

- Marvel

- Delloite

- Velg Cloud Solutions

The unexpected challenge resulting from the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, forcing the Consortium to opt for online sessions after the I TCCP, has not threatened neither the quality of the interaction, nor the final results, otherwise revealing new and stimulating ways for approaching the given tasks. Online participation has been intense and qualified, forcing each of the participants to find out new and unusual manners to cope with the requested tasks.

In order to foster the continuous involvement of trainees, training materials have been enriched with concrete case studies, videos and instant pooling tools which have been adapted and improved after each TCCP, depending on the collected feedbacks.

11 Questionnaires results

In order to properly measure the degree of perceived improvement of knowledge, participants have been requested to fill in two different questionnaires: the former measuring the degree of perceived knowledge in the area reported hereafter in the box, the latter pointing out the1-5 perceived level of knowledge at the end of the training sessions. Hereafter, you will find the specific data for each identified area, highlighting a general improvement in all the investigated topics.

	Opportunity recognition	Networking	Interpersonal team work	Flexibility and adaptability	ICT management	Social marketing/digital	Business ethics	Corporate social responsibility	Social/environmental/economic
Pre-training	3,72	3,85	4.04	3,98	3,43	3,65	3,54	3,54	3,59
Post-training	4,28	4,28	4,53	4,42	4,21	4,30	4,21	4,33	4,28
Increase	15,1%	11,2%	12,2%	11,1%	22,5%	17,8%	18,8%	22,1%	19,3%

One further questionnaire has been equally delivered to test the general level of satisfaction regarding the items reported hereafter on a scale 1-5 (seminars contents, methodology, organization…). Here below you will find the final results, measured on a scale 1-5.

Evaluation of the participation	Evaluation of seminars	Evaluation of didactic materials	Evaluation of training methodology	Evaluation of seminar T0	Evaluation of seminar T1	Evaluation of seminar T2	Evaluation of seminar T3	Evaluation of trainers' contribution	Evaluation of the group work	Evaluation of the training contents	Evaluation of the didactic organization

4,34	4,05	4,02	3,83	4,20	4,02	4,10	3,98	4,22	4,44	4,02	4,20