

Yabda Entrepreneurship Centre Model

Projet ERASMUS+ Yabda (يبدأ)

“Strengthening of relations between higher education and the wider economic and social environment”

586418-EPP-1-2017-1-MA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

WP 1	Preparation
Task 1	Think big for excellence
Deliverable	Yabda Entrepreneurship centre Model M7 (July 2018)
Status of the document	Draft
Document version	V1
Date	23/07/2018
Author	AUEB

Yabda Entrepreneurship Centre Model

Projet ERASMUS+ Yabda

586418-EPP-1-2017-1-MA-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

Introduction

The current document presents a proposition of the Yabda Entrepreneurship Centre Model. It is intended to set the general goals and standards for the Entrepreneurship Centres that will be developed in the project partner's universities, which will be adjusted, refined and modulated according to the specific contexts and specific expectations of each university.

The Yabda entrepreneurship Centre Model is developed in the frame of WP1, which also foresees a guide of best practices, a gap analysis, the specifications of the Yabda learning virtual environment, the train the trainers workshops and strategic planning. The project's partners have agreed upon the general standards of the model in a design meeting that took place during the second project's meeting in Tunis, July 2018, after reviewing and discussing both international best practices and the partners best practices for innovation and entrepreneurship.

The adjustment of the standards of the entrepreneurship centre model to the specificities of each partner university will be concretized through the drafting of the strategic plan (activity 1.5 of WP1), which will highlight the concrete objectives pursued by each institution and the action plan that each institution will put in place to achieve these goals.

1. Aim of the Yabda Entrepreneurship Centre Model

In the context of encouraging innovative thinking and fostering entrepreneurial spirit, the entrepreneurship centre aims to support members of the University communities as well as the wider public in understanding requirements and organizing new innovative business endeavours. The centre is oriented in (a) the provision of educational training in entrepreneurship, (b) creating awareness regarding entrepreneurship and fostering entrepreneurial culture, (c) the support of innovative business ideas deriving from the members of the university communities, (d) the development of sustainable business ventures, (e) the exploitation of the results of research for new venture creation. At the same time, the centre will organize activities that are part of the wider synergy plan between the centre and the market in specific productive sectors.

2. Target audience

The entrepreneurship centre will provide a number of services and activities for the community of the university, matching the project's orientation towards the promotion of spin-off entrepreneurship and the strengthening of relations between higher education and the wider economic and social environment. In particular, the services designed are targeted to:

- Undergraduate and graduate students
- Graduates
- PhD Students
- PhD holders
- Professors / Faculty members
- Researchers
- Administrative staff

3. Objectives

The objectives of the entrepreneurship centre model align to the full to the Yabda project objectives. Specifically the centre will accompany all the stages of the target audience entrepreneurial journey as it is presented in the following:

Educational Training

Core among the operational purposes of the entrepreneurship centre is the provision of educational services in entrepreneurship to members of the community, in order to encourage them towards taking business actions.

Through a series of both general and specialized educational actions and the development of relevant and appropriate educational material, this training aims to deliver to beneficiaries the knowledge and skills needed to efficiently set up and run a successful business start-up.

Educational training is based on a carefully designed mixture of lectures, workshops, case studies, and "active learning". Specialized experts and academic staff will provide the service, offering valuable insights from their professional experience in business, banking, research centres and entrepreneurship in the country and abroad.

Sensibilization - Awareness

Informative and awareness activities are important means of fostering entrepreneurial spirit in all interested parties of the community, highlighting entrepreneurship as a career choice, and disseminating the results of the progress made by the involved universities, both internally and externally.

The aim is twofold:

- Firstly, to inform about progress in research and practice of entrepreneurship, to develop awareness, to foster entrepreneurship and to promote it as a career choice.
- Secondly, to inform the community as well as other entities of the university about the actions developed by the centre and, eventually act as a central platform for communication and promotion. In this vein, the centre needs to select the appropriate means to maximize visibility of the activities it develops so that the beneficiaries as well as the wider environment can learn and exploit the services provided. In this context, the centre should:
 - develop and update its web presence through a portal,
 - maintain a regular presence in social media,
 - organize open days, events and seminars,

- seek synergies to jointly promote actions and disseminate its results with other beneficial actions for students,
- participate in events and activities that are developed in its environment and are related to the services it provides.

Reaching the market - Incubation

The objective of incubation is to help business teams develop their entrepreneurial efforts; and eventually, move from the initial stage of business idea creation to the stage of business implementation, while increasing the chances of success through continuous interaction with the market.

This process of growth and maturation involves every new business concept for a product or service and indicates that each business group needs a different approach to education, guidance, support services and networking activities. The approach to provide the above support activities is based on multiple levels with respect to the process of developing and maturing business models. Based on the lean startup methodology, the following basic steps are proposed:

- Developing the business idea / model
- Impression of the concept and first feedback from market
- Development of the concept and next feedback from market
- Final preparation for exit to the market
- Start-up and development

Strengthening relations with the socio-economic sector

One of the main objectives of the entrepreneurship centre is to further help in the connection of the academic community with the external environment. The latter includes:

- the environment of start-ups and/or established enterprises; with aim to enhance experiential knowledge on business issues
- other university communities through which synergies and complementarity can emerge,
- youth entrepreneurship organizations and centres.

Highlighting the extroversion of the centre can yield positive results both to the efficiency of its operation and, to the penetration of culture of entrepreneurship into the wider socio-economic field. Indicatively, results may include:

- improving the absorption of graduates in the working environment,
- exploiting research and linking it to the working environment with respect to adopting a more pragmatic educational perspective,
- facilitating the flow of know-how between the academic community and the working environment.

4. Activities

The entrepreneurship centre will offer a range of complementary services that will scale up - alongside community activation- from awareness and capacity building up to the incubation services for new entrepreneurial ideas. All activities are designed to serve the centre's main goals, as they were described previously.

Sensitization

This series of activities aim to stimulate interest on entrepreneurship for all involved target groups. It shall include:

- *Awareness campaigns.* These campaigns shall include a series of talks on contemporary entrepreneurship-related topics. Proposed subjects include: innovative entrepreneurial ideas, start-up success stories and alternative sources of financing new ideas.
- *Idea storm days.* This activity suggests the creation of an event addressed to working groups, organised in two parts. Firstly, it shall incorporate the designing of an interactive workshop that aims to stimulate creativity and novel ideas via the guidance of a trainer. Secondly, after the formation of entrepreneurial ideas, the next part shall include the learning of pitching techniques in theory and practice.
- *Failure day.* This event aims to help change perception of fear associated with failure. It is oriented to the introduction of the culture of learning through failure events.
- *Invited speakers.* This activity refers to the invitation of successful start-uppers within the entrepreneurship courses of each school. These brief talks incorporated in the

relative courses shall serve as a method to further enhance awareness in the subject through a more pragmatic view.

- *Open coffee.* These events further serve as a connection of the entrepreneurship centre with the real business environment. They aim to organize casual meetings of students with entrepreneurs, in order to support learning from experience.
- *Implementation of a 3-stage business idea competition.* This competition is referred to audiences that have already been introduced to the basics of the culture of entrepreneurship and wish to follow a 3-stage procedure in order to develop, present and be evaluated for their business idea. There will be an evaluation after each of the 3 stages, resulting in 3 winners at the end of the competition. The stages include: (a) submission of a brief description of the business idea, (b) Specialised seminars/workshops and submission of a full-length business plan, (c) presentation of the business model to business experts and final evaluation.

Education

A range of different activities, both of theoretical and practical interest is proposed to be included in the main entrepreneurship courses of the schools.

- *Introduction of courses on entrepreneurship* at both under-graduate and post-graduate programs. The suggested courses shall include educational areas such as entrepreneurship and innovation, digital entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship.
- *Business games.* Business games constitute a contemporary experiential learning method that enhance entrepreneurial and decision making skills. They include the setting up of new business and real-time market competition in a virtual environment. It is suggested the programs be incorporated within the main entrepreneurship courses of the schools.
- *Experiential learning workshops.* This series of workshops aims to both stimulate interest and educate, with respect to the first stages of a new venture creation. It shall include an interactive method of learning basics, such as the creation of a business model canvas, market research analysis, identification of the market competition, and the creation of product prototypes.

Incubation – Acceleration

Incubation-acceleration service aims to provide a number of activities that range from the coaching of the teams with a business idea up to the support of new developmental novel ventures. A 2-day entrepreneurship bootcamp as a prerequisite to enter the program is highly suggested. The bootcamps shall result in a number of 10-15 qualified teams after the final evaluation. The program shall include lectures and workshops by mentors to help further develop business models of the teams.

It is proposed that the incubation service incorporate *regular-basis support to business teams, ad-hoc acceleration seminars* as well as *networking*.

Regarding the first and, based on global educational practices, it is suggested:

- A 6 to 12 month cycle support for every team member that includes a 72-hour programme. Proposed educational content includes lectures and real-life case studies in the start-up development field.
- A two-hour mentoring service by business experts every 3 weeks
- Every day coaching by the entrepreneurship centre's regular staff

Suggested *ad-hoc seminars* shall be based on action learning and instructed by specialized experts and professors. Indicative subjects to be delivered include:

- Innovation and creativity techniques
- Business plan creation
- Design and prototype
- Market research, marketing, digital promotion
- Branding
- Development of managerial skills
- Institutional issues

Networking will consist of

- the creation of a business mentors network to aid, consult and guide business teams throughout the proposed 6-12 month incubation period.
- the development of partnerships with enterprises and institutions
- the connection with investors, business angels and strategic partners
- the participation in exhibitions and promotion events of the centre

5. Structure

It is proposed that the entrepreneurship centre be organised within a simple and flexible organisational structure, consisted of three main governing bodies, to which shall refer three to five staff members/ executives of the centre (depending on the centre's range of activities adopted.)

- *The Management Committee of the entrepreneurship centre.* The Management Committee shall be composed of 3-5 academic staff members. It will be responsible for the administrative and financial management of the structure, the coordination of the actions, the drafting of the operational and organizational chart, the annual action plan and the annual activity report, the preparation of the annual budget and the assignment of tasks. Also, the Management Committee will be responsible for approving the submission of proposals for funding to public and private entities, which are implemented by the centre. Similarly, the Management Committee will approve proposals from public and private entities towards the centre with aim to receive services related to the activities of the centre. The Management Committee will designate the scientific coordinator of the centre.
- *The Chairman of the Management Committee.* The Chairman of the Management Committee will have the overall supervision of the centre. He/she appoints and directs the Management Committee of the structure, monitors and supervises the implementation of the annual action program and cooperates with the Scientific Coordinator of the centre on issues of their competence.
- *The Scientific Coordinator of the entrepreneurship centre.* The Scientific Coordinator performs the duties assigned to him by the Chairman of the Management Committee and is responsible for the control and coordination of the Centre on the basis of the annual programming and budgeting. In particular, the Scientific Coordinator:
 - (a) is responsible for implementing the operational planning of the centre, monitoring and coordinating the individual actions based on the annual programming, and budgeting activities

- (b) cooperates with the Chairman of the Management Committee and the Scientific Coordinators of other centres inside and outside the community, on issues of competence
- (c) is responsible for certifying the physical implementation of the project in-house; and, the performance of the services provided by third parties in order to make payments.
- (d) is responsible for all IT systems as well as the web presence of the centre.
- (e) substitutes the Chairman of the Management Committee if the latter is not present or absent.

- *Staff member/ Executive 1: Coordinator of activities.*

Indicative responsibilities of the executive include:

- The support of business teams in developing their business ideas (mentoring, counseling on entrepreneurship and innovation, overseeing team development).
- Creating a network with the academic community (lecturers, students).
- The development and dissemination of new educational activities and new educational material.
- The development strategic partnerships with other entrepreneurship support organizations.
- The submission of proposals for European or national co-funded projects.
- Reporting on innovation and entrepreneurship issues and reporting on the evaluation indicators.
- Planning and implementation of acceleration seminars, mentoring sessions, pitching sessions.

- *Staff member/ Executive 2: Head of educational actions.*

Indicative responsibilities of the executive include:

- Coordination of all training programs
- Implementation of educational actions for the development of knowledge and skills in entrepreneurship within the academic courses
- Finding and collaborating with business experts and speakers
- Development and dissemination of new educational activities and new educational material.

- Supporting the counseling service on business teams (developing ideas and business models)
- Support networking activities (finding firms for collaboration)
- Event support

• *Staff member/ Executive 3: Conduct manager and events manager.*

Indicative responsibilities for the executive include:

- Publicity, promotion, dissemination of results (on-line media management such as site, social media)
- Planning and organization of events / meetings
- Development and management of network of collaborators
- Evaluation of the actions of the centre (creation / updating of evaluation forms, statistical processing of the results).
- Display actions

• *Staff member 4: Administrative and Secretarial Support.*

Indicative responsibilities:

- Communicating with participants, mentors, interested groups
- Web and social network management
- Manament of the documentation centre
- Support for the planning and organization of educational workshops
- Organization of specialized meetings of mentors with business groups
- Secretarial support for the activities
- Helpdesk

6. Documentation Centre

The documentation centre can be an effective means of providing information to all interested parties. In particular, it may be composed of several tools that provide content to faculty members and students. For instance, the YABDA Guide; a flexible and personalized guide that will provide users with practical information for building their own enterprise. Also, the YABDA virtual platform may be used for the on-line provision of: educational material related to the centre's activities, company or mentoring presentations, surveys and any kind of

entrepreneurship-related documents that serve as educational material, towards all interested users.

Further, the documentation centre can efficiently act in favor of the entrepreneurship centre's promotion; thus, further enhancing its penetration into the target population. To this end, it will develop and provide promotional material (brochures, banners, newsletters) of the events and activities of the entrepreneurship centre in printed and online form.

7. Institutionalization

The operation of the entrepreneurship centre is highly suggested to be incorporated into the organizational structure of the university and to be recognized as such, by the university authorities.

The institutionalization of the centre will result in its effective communication with the other structures, and the more direct emergence of synergies within university; also, it will better serve the financing of the centre's needs. Funds will be needed in terms of financing yearly fixed costs (staff members, office supplies, operating costs, publicity and marketing expenses) as well as the installation and equipment expenses (office equipment, computers, infrastructure development).

Financial Resources

Possible sources for the financing of the operating and administrative expenses of the centre shall be found through public and private entities in terms of: sponsorships, development projects, provision of services within the scope of the centre's competencies, and, in addition, through the use of resources (human, financial, etc.) of the university involved.

In particular, in order to increase funding, the entrepreneurship centre may:

- participate in relevant research program invitations or support the participation of the University to other invitations with content related to the centre's activities.
- receive sponsorships from public and private entities for the fulfillment of its purposes.
- cooperate with research laboratories of the university for the execution of research and development projects related to the subject of the centre.

- offer specialized services according to its objectives addressed to public and private entities.

8. Infrastructure – Equipment

Towards the effective operation of the entrepreneurship centre, it is vital to set up proper workplaces at the universities. In particular, it is necessary to create separate workplaces: (a) office space for the employees of the centre, (b) an open workplace that can accommodate working groups, (c) two meeting rooms, and (d) a designated venue for events. Depending on the extent of the activities that each center will adopt, a different need for investment in equipment is expected.

For the first area and, depending on the number of employees in the centre, it is expected that 3-5 workstations with the same number of computers, the corresponding office supplies as well as other furniture for archiving documents will be needed at minimum.

For the workplace hosting space, 15-20 (depending on the size of the centre) workstations and related office supplies are required.

It is recommended to use two rooms for meetings, each equipped at minimum with a computer, a projector, a note board, furniture and office equipment.

Finally, the event venue can be used to hold small events (of 30-50 guests) within the center. A computer, projector, microphone system, note board, chairs, podium are the minimum requirements.

Other facilities may include a space for lunch break, wi-fi/ telecommunication service and air conditioning for all areas.

9. Supporting the creation and management of the Entrepreneurship Centre.

As part of the methodology for developing and managing the business center, tools have been put in place to ensure the desired outcome. In particular, the following are used:

- *Best Practice Guide*. In the context of developing the model for the center, best practices used in entrepreneurship centres from around the world have been gathered. In particular, the practices describe best ways of creating the center's structure,

activities and infrastructure as well as best practices in managing human and other resources throughout its operation.

- *Gap analysis.* After having identified the excellent levels of establishment and operation of an entrepreneurship centre, it is then vital to record the existing situation in universities through the conduct of primary and secondary research. For this purpose, questionnaires are addressed to teaching and administrative staff of the university as well as to students. In addition, focus groups are being carried out at all the universities involved, in order to reflect the views of postgraduate and doctoral students. Therefore, gap analysis reporting reveals the gap between the existing situation and the excellent performance of best global practices.
- *Training the trainers.* Training workshops for administrative and teaching staff will be delivered after the entrepreneurship centres have been established. The aim of the workshops is to transfer the knowledge gained on entrepreneurship building in Universities, adapted to specific University needs and in accordance with each University strategy. The training aims to familiarize all involved parties with entrepreneurship principles, teaching and support, present the university strategy for YABDA and shape participant's involvement. By the end of the training participants will be able to: (a) include entrepreneurial principles in their teaching (for academic staff), (b) guide aspiring entrepreneurs on their first steps (c) engage in the Yabda strategy through their participation in one or more Yabda intra-university networks: Yabda Community, Hub, Innovate, Student and Law Units.
- *Networking.* For the efficient provision of the center's services, it is necessary to create a strong network of partners from the outset, such as public, non-profit or private entities, and other national or international actors from the labor market. For this purpose, a register of co-operating bodies can be created, which will then be enriched further, with aim to include firms operating in different sectors. At the same time, it is necessary to set up a register of experts to act as mentors to the working groups or to provide ad-hoc advisory services.
- *Facebook platform.* The Yabda community, which acts as a facebook community, will serve as a powerful information tool for all actors. Facebook is widely used in partner universities as the main tool of communication between academic staff and students and, university and students. Therefore, it is expected that it will reach more audience,

easily and without cost. Followers will be encouraged to participate in the Yabda Community available via the Yabda site.

10. Indicators of progress

Based on the logical framework matrix, there is a number of indicators that measures results related to the entrepreneurship centres. Below, indicators are presented with respect to the specific objectives of the project.

Project Objectives	Indicators	Measurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to create an entrepreneurial infrastructure and culture that responds to and builds on the regional context to address entrepreneurial and innovation challenges, especially in the areas where partner countries display competitive advantage: ie. green technology, energy and sustainable development to build a high calibre network of future entrepreneurs and thinkers that connects with the local/regional and international market ecosystem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality and effectiveness of the institutional strategies quality of services of the 8 Yabda Entrepreneurship Centres 500 persons supported by the 8 Yabda Entrepreneurship Centres 100% satisfaction from the 3 Yabda trainings of WP1, WP2 and WP3 100 users of the 9 Yabda Hubs intensity of top-down and bottom-up support of project objectives in the 10 Yabda partner universities 200 participants in the Yabda teams and units in the 10 partner universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EACEA reports and comments Project interim and final reports Project biannual quality and evaluation reports Project exploitation report Data will be collected through meetings (with the focus groups), questionnaires and feedback forms (online for the Yabda site and MOOC and paper for trainees, focus groups, target groups), trainees assessment rubrics, participant lists (in trainings, infodays, conferences), contact lists

- intensity of cooperation with social and economic actors
- minimum 10 innovative ideas coached during the WP3 trainings
- minimum 6 innovative ideas in the areas of green technology, energy and sustainable development
- 3 spinn-offs or start-ups formed

(for target group beneficiaries, entrepreneurs, policy makers, public administrators, youth/student representatives interested in Yabda), no of meetings/contacts with economy/society representatives, statistics on Universities' technology transfer and commercialization