

SUMMARY REPORT

APEC WORKSHOP ON EMBEDDING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM

The APEC Workshop on Embedding Entrepreneurship in University Curriculum was held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 22-23 July 2008 under HRD 11/2008A Project, which was approved by BMC in 2008. The Training course was participated by representatives from China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Chile, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and Viet Nam and speakers from Australia, Singapore, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

The Workshop was divided into the following 4 sessions:

- Session 1: The role of Higher Education and Entrepreneurship
Training in the promotion of successful new firms starts and
small business management and current status in member
economies
- Session 2: Challenges encountered to embed entrepreneurship in
University Curriculum
- Session 3: Practical example of APEC member economies
- Session 4: How to deliver entrepreneurship education in higher
education institutions/Real lessons and cases

Hereby are key discussion points of the Workshop:

Entrepreneurship role and challenges

Participants shared views that entrepreneurship has become more and more popular in the age of globalization and knowledge-based global economy. Entrepreneurship is increasingly being recognized as key components of education and practice today and every learner should be given the opportunity to acquire the skills required to make an innovative and creative contribution within their working practices. In a world of intensified economic integration, which opens up new business opportunities for everybody, education – on the one hand- plays an important role in cultivating a new generation of “business mind”, innovation and creativeness. On the other hand, through young enterprises, a foundation is laid for future entrepreneurship, innovation and productive work in each national economy.

Although entrepreneurship education has been widely recognized and a number of universities want to embed it in their curricula, there are still a number of key challenges for applicators. Some outstanding challenges among them include lack of awareness of the society to change from “culture of employee-ship” into a “culture of self-employment, or entrepreneurship”, the wide notion of the “idea” of an entrepreneurial university across universities, outdated formal and classical teaching methodology in some developing economies, the need to keep the curriculum responsive to business sensitivity in a world of uncertainty, complexity and new opportunities. Last but not least, sustained funding from governments and stakeholders, including business community is very important to help develop and maintain entrepreneurship program at universities.

Economies' experiences

APEC members economies shared experiences on encouraging entrepreneurship education in their institutions.

In Viet Nam, the Hanoi School of Business is a leading business institute in Viet Nam. The School takes entrepreneurship as core subject in their business program. It selects young people with business talents and spirit in the course enrolment. It has good connection with business community, thus can invite CEOs to come and deliver some courses, organize company visit and industrial studies. About 20% of students set up their own business during the study in areas such as services, consulting, on-line businesses. The Ha Noi Foreign Trade University has launched a competition program and the winners are encouraged to bring their business plans into practices. However, not all the winners want to apply for sponsorship despite receiving invitation for help by some big companies. This might be due to the fact that students join the competition just to get the awards and credits for a specific subject in university not because of real wish to do business.

In China, researches on entrepreneurship education started since 1997. China launched the national contest for students on University Student of Entrepreneurship in 1999 and in 2002, nine were designated as national pilot universities of entrepreneurship education. However, universities adopt entrepreneurship in their own ways. The percentage of students who have started business after graduation was very modest: 1% and only about 2% of those students succeeded in their businesses. What China has learnt from that

process is there is a need to change teaching ideology in order to cultivate entrepreneurial spirit for students and to change students viewpoint that they can not only look for jobs elsewhere, but also explore the possibility of being self-employed.

Indonesian participants also shared the same view that students need to think they are job creators, not job seekers. In addition, entrepreneurship means not only buying and selling, but trading.

From the viewpoint of Professor Chris Hall from the Macquarie School of Management, Australia, students should be taught with how to nurture ideas and also how to deliver and implement their ideas. They need to learn that most businesses don't succeed, not because of "bad" ideas or financial shortage but because of improper markets. He showed an example that most businesses do not exist after 7 years. Communication skill is also very important for students. They should be encouraged to network, talk and meet with strange people in every event they have chances to participate in.

Mrs. Rosemary O' Connor, Innovation Manager of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), Australia presented two practical programs on enhancing entrepreneurship in university. The program aims to develop positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, which should be ethical, honest and law-obeying. Don't be afraid of failure and we do learn from it to start again. A lot of workshop have been held for student to meet with entrepreneurs and other students of the same spirit. Annual competition is organized, in which students draw business plans to be assessed by different judges. Those who win can apply for mentor funding. RMIT has also published a Manual on How to Start and Run Business Competition, which provides students with valuable advices on how to be selected by judges and how to get sponsorship.

Professor Tan Wee Liang from Singapore Management University shared a very interesting experience on Incubator fund raising in Singapore. With every single US dollar donated to the Incubator Fund by SMEs and banks under the leadership of any university, that university can get 3 US dollar from the government for their saving account.

Lessons and recommendations

On the last day, the Workshop was broken into different groups to produce lessons and recommendations. Recommendations can be summarized as follows:

1. The need to involve political decision making

To change the attitude of a whole education system is not easy, especially in economies, where old rigid teaching methodology is still applied. This do need to win the support of education policy makers, so that the process of embedding entrepreneurship in university curriculum can run smoothly.

2. More on the spot and practical training for students

In the world of change which have major affects on the way of doing business, students need more practical education, which includes field trip to successful enterprises, incubator centers, science and technology parks etc...

The other way is to invite entrepreneurs and CEOs as guest speakers to present their experiences to students as learning on experiences is much more effective than from theory. Case studies should be brought into the lecture to help students learn from real experiences.

3. Setting up business at the campus

Showing students models on way of doing business is a good advice. Some universities in APEC do encourage students to open and run a small business at the campus, such as cafeteria, bookstore etc...Other students can come and learn from what their fellows are doing.

4. Lecturers and students exchange programs at Universities

As APEC comprises of developed economies like the Unites States, Australia, Canada, Japan etc.. where entrepreneurship has long been shaped into their education system, lecturers and students exchange programs amongst APEC universities and educational institutions will be very useful.

5. APEC to introduce Business Plan Competition

APEC can make meaningful contribution to the process of encouraging and delivering of entrepreneurship education in university curriculum. The launch of an APEC Business Plan Competition will be a good push for that process as it can enhance awareness raising on the said issue and foster cooperation amongst APEC universities. However, the question here is who will take the leadership in launching that Competition? There should be an economy who has good experiences in the process to lead that process. More importantly, funding is needed to keep the Competition alive and sustained. This is an open question for the Education Network in the APEC Human Resource Working Group (HRDWG).
