

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: CASE STUDIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE “UNIVERSITY-BUSINESS-PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME”

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Book-Review

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Introduction

This review is for the abridged book that reports nine case studies on university-business-partnership programme meant to support entrepreneurship education and development. The project was coordinated by Heike Heinen from DAAD, which is the sponsor and publisher of the research, while the report was translated to English by empirica / Universität Kassel.

Organization of the book

The preliminary pages of the book include a list of abbreviations and an executive summary. These are followed by chapter 1 titled Background and Objectives of the Study, and Chapter 2 captioned Case Studies, which presents the nine (9) case studies. It begins with section 2.1 which gives an overview of the research methods and the nine projects. This is followed by section 2.2 that covers the case studies reported under sub-sections 2.2.1–2.2.9. Each of the nine sub-sections has seven parts that include project description, an abstract and a case fact sheet stating project name, website, target countries, partner universities in Germany and abroad and key objectives of the project. Also state are project background that covers project profile(

goals and period covered) and partners' profile (given in table of exhibitions); and key characteristics of the project (approach, target group, design, setting and management of events and activities and a table containing an overview about the events and activities). The remaining parts are drivers and challenges connected with the project; and results which cover impacts, transferability, cooperation needs, potential synergies and lessons learned (presented in box). References that are related to each sub-section were also listed.

Chapter 3, which was dubbed Cross-Case Studies, provides a general analysis of the profiles of the nine case studies, their target groups, the challenges, impacts, cooperation and synergies. Chapter 4, titled Conclusion and Recommendations serves as the last chapter of the book. It states five recommendations; each recommendation is preceded by the challenges it is meant to address.

Contents of the Book

Chapter 1 shows that study spanned from November 2016 to September 2017 and was meant to identify common themes, challenges and potential syner-

gies between the nine projects and to derive recommendations for future funding.

The case studies were presented in Chapter 2 which begins with an overview of the research method and the projects. The research questions that guided the case studies reflect the perspectives of the universities, business partners and students participating in the projects. The areas addressed by the research questions included the participants' motivation to take part in the project, the drivers and challenges associated with the implementation of the projects. Others are the impacts of the projects and the synergies resulting from them. The report for each case study provides answers to these questions.

The case studies relied on secondary data analysis, interviews and workshop discussions. The research team consulted project managers and partner organizations while all project leaders were given a profile questionnaire before the interviews. The workshop discussion took place with the project managers at the German universities at the beginning and end of the study.

Examples of the findings that serve as answers to the research questions can be seen from the project captioned "Academia meets business (University of Leipzig)" which was aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education at two universities in Vietnam. The University of Leipzig views that the impact of the project includes changing the mindset of students with many of them starting their own businesses. On issues of co-operation needs and potential synergies, the project leader in Germany has welcomed more co-operation with other universities and development organizations in Germany to expand and strengthen entrepreneurship education support in developing countries.

Another example comes from the "German-African University Partnership Platform for the Development of Entrepreneurs and Small/Medium Enterprises" project. It is a partnership between the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences in Germany (BRSU), the University of Cape Coast in Ghana (UCC) and the University of Nairobi in Kenya (UoN). The project is meant to build capacities for practice-oriented teaching and research in the field of entrepreneurship and SME development in Ghana and Kenya. In Germany, it seeks to increase awareness for Africa's potentials as a market and a partner. The main driver for the project is that all groups involved at the universities are interested in entrepreneurship while the primary challenges for the project is that the African universities lack resources, in addition, there is bureaucracy and slow processes of doing things.

Examples of the several lessons learned can be taken from the project entitled "Applied Entrepreneurship Education Programme (Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences)" which ran from 2013 to 2016 with the main objective of developing the master programme for electrical engineers and train the lecturers in Ethiopia. For this project, some of the learned lessons are that "a good business idea needs also financial support to exist. No business start-up can be successful, if the money is missing. The financial institutions should also consider small profit but stable cash flow "(p.63).

Transferability is also one of the areas covered by the research questions. In this regard, findings related to the seventh project, Start-Up Factory Kumasi - Paderborn (University of Paderborn) whose objective is to develop technical products and services for regional markets in Africa are cited as examples. The belief of the operative project leader at University of Paderborn is that the project's

approach to run one-year cycles of concrete support to entrepreneurs in Africa through students in Germany and Africa “is valuable and in principle well transferrable to other universities. Diverging curricula between the countries involved, however, need to be addressed” (p.73).

Chapter 3 makes cross –case analysis of the projects. In relation to their impacts, it shows that all the project managers have indicated the positive impacts of the projects which fall under four categories: strengthened entrepreneurial thinking and acting among students; strengthened entrepreneurship education; strengthened networks and cooperation; and a strengthened economic environment. As for cooperation and synergies, the project managers have support for more co-operation between the projects and with economic organizations in Germany and abroad.

The last chapter concludes the book with statement of challenges, recommendations and policy implications. The recommendations cover five areas: project networking; investment in business start-ups; consolidation of entrepreneurship education competencies; project funding; and organizational support for projects. For the first area, the challenge is the “lack of opportunities for students and teachers from the target countries to exchange ideas about entrepreneurship projects and teachers with their peers, thereby increasing their competence” (p.97). The solution in the projects is that project leaders would welcome a stronger networking of the projects with each other and with other partners. In this regard, the implication is that DAAD and development cooperation bodies could support stronger internal and external networking of similar projects through regular workshops and conferences as well as an online platform or appropriate project proposals.

Conclusion

Partnership, unlike intervention or the provision of a loan by a strong entity to a weaker one, leads to the sharing of costs and benefits associated with a project or business. It is, therefore, not surprising to see the university-business-partnership programme benefiting all the partners. The partnership which the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences in Germany had with the University of Cape Coast in Ghana and the University of Nairobi in Kenya, for instance, was meant to build capacities for practice-oriented teaching and research in the field of entrepreneurship and SME development in Ghana and Kenya, while for Germany the benefits include increased awareness for Africa’s potentials as a market and a partner.

The book certainly is well organized. The use of tables and boxes to exhibit facts about the project partners and findings from the case studies further makes the understanding of the book easier to its readers. Reading the book would benefit and motivate universities, private organizations and governments interested in boosting entrepreneurship through public-private partnerships. For more details, the book is available at <https://www.daad.de/der-daad/unsere-aufgaben/entwicklungszusammenarbeit/foerderprogramme/hochschulen/infos/en/44507-university-business-partnerships-between-higher-education-institutions-and-business-partners-in-germany-and-in-developing-countries/>

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