

The 6th University Business Forum

Brussels, 5-6 March 2015

http://ec.europa.eu/education/events/2015/2901-euro-uni-business-forum_en.htm

On the 4th and 5th March 2015, Fumi Kitagawa (University of Manchester), Carine Ternest and Michel Crispi (EIRMA) attended the 6th University Business Forum in Brussels.

The aim of the HEKATE team participation to the Forum was to spread the knowledge about HEKATE and to acquire state of the art knowledge on university business collaboration, and network with delegates from HEIs, business, and policy communities on behalf of the HEKATE project.. Below is a short summary of the main messages and some reflections for the HEKATE project and beyond.

This year's Forum addressed topics related to entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial university, change and impact, people and innovation, social entrepreneurship and other major trends in University-Business Cooperation.

The UBF focuses on the issues of **skills and growth agenda** and **how universities and business can work together to find solution and co-create value of broader collaboration**. Unemployment in young people is a global issue, not just in Europe. There is a growing recognition that linking education and innovation is vital, optimizing value of new modes of teaching and learning, especially, enterprise and entrepreneurship education.

In order to achieve skills, innovation and growth agenda, collaboration between academia and businesses is a vital pre-requisite. So far there are many fragmented approaches from both sides. In order to overcome barriers as well as to build on successful partnerships, it is important to ask a fundamental question - how to change the mind-sets and attitudes of both academia and business sectors.

What is needed is **a long term relationships and collaboration based on trust between academia and businesses**. Different subjects interact with businesses in different ways, and there is no "one size fits all" model of relevance of university to business. We need to go beyond short-term transaction model to long-term transformational approach.

For the university, changing the academic culture is imperative. Over the past decades, many universities have started to find new ways of working with businesses. However, it takes long term efforts, strong leadership and continued commitments and engagement at all levels. Academics needed to be incentivized - rewarded and recognized in their efforts to create relationships with

businesses and communities. Universities need institutional leaders who advance the collaborative agenda, but also all levels of engagement is required. In particular, including students' participation in the formation of the agenda, curricula and business development is vital for universities.

Industry is diverse and recognizing the complexity is important. . Universities have worked with large companies through R&D collaboration as well as staff skills development. However, there is a recognized challenge in collaborating with small and medium enterprises (SMEs). We need to find ways to unlock the potential of SMEs to achieve the growth agenda. There is a need to build mechanism to enhance regional SMEs to work with universities, by pooling resources together, or making the organizational structure simpler and more transparent, for example.

There is a recognized mismatch in the skills of graduates and the labour market. Issues include the mismatches between the students' skills and what companies are looking for. A better communication between universities and businesses are needed. Industry needs to be more proactive in their recruitment strategies and initiatives. Industry are also expected to be more proactive in creating new ways of working with universities – by tapping into heterogeneous and specific competences that universities can provide, not just for the skills needed today but also for tomorrow - industry need to start working now with a long term perspective.

When students are involved in the real problem solving and real business contexts, the learning experience is far more impactful. As educators, academics need to deliver more awareness to students about careers that can be established through the academic training and adopt more tangible skill based experiences into the curriculum. For example, universities may develop leadership, mentoring and coaching practices and look to address business needs for different career stages through their academic programming and fills the gaps in academia and businesses in a concrete way.

Universities are also very diverse – in Europe, there is a diverse range of higher education institutions with different autonomy and governance forms. Local environments are important prerequisite for the collaborative relationships.. Institutions need to be more creative, innovative and responsive to the need of the society and demand from companies. Knowledge Triangle and Knowledge Alliances, among others, are some of the mechanisms that exist to promote such processes by bringing education, research and innovation together.

Lessons learnt and questions for the HEKATE project and our relevance

Achievement so far

- HEKATE has provided a model of bringing education, research and innovation together at the doctoral and post-doctoral level of research training.
- By bringing real issues and real case studies into the workshop, the HEKATE workshop has built Problem based learning approach where students and researchers developed skills and capability to solve problems and work collaboratively in an interdisciplinary environment.
- HEKATE has enabled capacity development of staff involved in – by providing resources to build “tandem learning” relationships, communicating and sharing the agendas with industry of different sizes including the EIRMA member multinationals as well as locally based start-up companies and SMEs.

Questions to be considered

- **Including students?** Are we really asking our students and early career researchers and understanding their needs?
- **Communication with industry?** Are we communicating with our industry partners (e.g. EIRMA members) about their skills and knowledge needs both short term, long term?
- **Applicability?** Is the HEKATE model be applicable to the diverse institutional landscape in Europe? What kind of local tailoring would be required?
- **Evaluation?** How do we measure and evaluate the added value of collaboration and impacts of “Knowledge Alliances”?
- **Sustainability?** How do we take the experiences and lessons learnt into the next phase when the funding is over? How to institutionalize the personal relationships created by the project?

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Higher Education and Enterprises: Knowledge Alliances for the Training of Entrepreneurs A glimpse into the first two workshops delivered

The project

HEKATE is a project within the European framework of the University–Business Cooperation initiative. The project aims to form a structured, outcome-driven “Knowledge Alliance” between universities and companies, bridging the gap between the two sectors. HEKATE fosters entrepreneurship by encouraging senior R&D managers in research intensive industries to become more pro-actively engaged with universities.

Under the HEKATE partnership, **European Industrial Research Management Association (EIRMA)**, together with an industrial partner **Solvay**, has been teamed up with two HEIs to translate this collaborative relationship into entrepreneurship training activities for early career researchers and doctoral students. The academic partners are **Hamburg University of Technology (TUHH)** in Germany, and the **University of Manchester in the UK**. The partnership is coordinated and managed by **TuTech**, a knowledge transfer organisation attached to TUHH.

The HEKATE concept

Entrepreneurial training and learning are vital enablers for enterprise and innovation. Universities provide educational activities aiming to inspire students and build entrepreneurial skills and competences. There are a number of ways in which companies get involved in such learning processes. HEKATE has developed models of “learning in tandem” where university staff, students, companies and individual entrepreneurs are able to share their experiences and insights bringing together a variety of industry contexts. The HEKATE partners have tested these models in two different higher education environments.

The Workshops

The first two workshops were delivered in 2014 by the HEKATE teams in Manchester and Hamburg respectively. The two workshops were entitled –

- ***Enterprising Scientists: Generating Values and Opportunities***. University of Manchester, 28-29 October 2014
- ***Turning Ideas into Business Opportunities***, TUHH, 26-28 November, 2014

Each workshop had 20-25 early career graduates/researchers (PhD and post-doctoral researchers) across different science and technology disciplines. In both workshops, the EIRMA companies as well as individual entrepreneurs made direct contributions – by providing real industry case studies, and interacting with participants. HEKATE seeks to explore how these models can be further developed.

The Manchester workshop aimed to inspire early career researchers to be “enterprising scientists” – to identify career opportunities in industry, and generate business values from their research, including commercialising their research ideas, starting up a business and/or becoming an entrepreneurial academic.

The Hamburg workshop provided an innovative opportunity for university researchers and early career industry professionals to work together in tandem teams. Participants learn tools and strategies to pursue business ideas throughout different development stages. At the end of the workshop the paired up academic-industry tandem teams pitched their business ideas to the panel of industrialists.

The first two workshops have provided two emerging models of entrepreneurship training or “learning in tandem”. Currently, the second set of workshops in **Manchester (24 and 25 March 2015)** and **Hamburg (8 - 10 April 2015)** are being prepared in order to improve and consolidate these models. The lessons learnt from all four workshops will be disseminated through the EIRMA conferences and the final HEKATE conference to be held in September 2015.