

THE LABS RESULTS IN:

SLASKIE, PL

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START-UPS IN IT SECTOR

	N. SESSIONS	N. PARTICIPANTS	AIMS	ACHIEVEMENTS
Labs for 2 nd tier facilitators	5	16 (Animators of academic entrepreneurship, employees of the 6 most important universities of the region)	To prepare staff to the launch and implementation of pan-regional academic entrepreneurship promotion & coaching programme co-financed by the ESF	Integration of the animators, supporting sound co-operation for future actions within the pan-regional academic entrepreneurship promotion & coaching programme Sharing the spirit of facilitator's role Deep understanding of the applied tools and ability to use them with regard to academic start-ups Reflection upon relevance of the applied tools to various business cases Improved communication and moderation skills
Labs for SMEs	3	5 (academic start-ups in IT sector)	To prepare for improvement of networking capability and market expansion by individual and joint strategic actions	Enhancing entrepreneurs' perception of their own business objectives, strategies and strategic interactions with other businesses and customers Improving networking between participants, allowing future actions towards new customers and markets Applying tools and messages elaborated within SME ACTor to real business issues and transferring related skills to entrepreneurs.

TOOLS AND METHODS	LABS FOR 2ND TIER FACILITATORS	LABS FOR SMES
Main tools used	Contract with myself To-do form The five satisfactions (stakeholder analysis) Customer and supplier needs analysis and planning Case studies Drawing up flow charts, GANNTs and PERTs Moderating group processes Problem solving tools Case studies SMART five basic rules of planning a feasible project Brain writing and similar techniques Six thinking hats Other points of view Playing with words and metaphors How can one...? Decision-making matrix Moderation Visualisation	Contract with myself To-do form The five satisfactions (stakeholder analysis) Customer and supplier needs analysis and planning Training needs analysis and planning Moderating group processes Problem solving tools Brain writing and similar techniques Tailored combinations of the other tools elaborated within SME ACTor

Overall evaluation on Labs for 2nd tier facilitators:

The track of learnshops proved to be well-planned

easily followed the scheme of learnshops and understood how the applied tools fit into various situations and how to combine them in order to obtain holistic approach to facilitating the process

Selected tools and messages were exercised, reflections upon pro's and con's as well as ideas for tailoring them were raised

The learnshops were focused not only on methodologies but on communication and visualisation skills as well, which was truly appreciated by the participants

The learnshops were highly relevant to the scope of professional activities of the participants

All facilitators practiced a lot on creating a friendly atmosphere while working with a group (communication, organisation, venue, facilities and materials, food and drinks, etc.)

Narration

“Open and friendly atmosphere leads to good ideas and their implementation. The more friendly the atmosphere, the more efficiently people work.”

“Facilitator is as strong, as the real knowledge of and perception of his/her environment. It means - he is an active part of the environment.”

“Facilitating people by means of moderation, visualisation and using AL methods is a very innovative way of working with SMEs. It definitely expands imagination and attracts new ideas.”

“Facilitator should not only be a person able to guide people on how to find ideas/challenges/opportunities and solutions but also allow thinking and learning on their implementation.”

“If you work with a group, you can easily make use of best practices learned and illustrate cases with failures.”

“Changing roles with your client/partner may result in better communication and finding common benefits.”

“It is important to allow your partner/client, whom you facilitate, to be able to recognise mistakes and draw conclusions out of them.”

“Pictures can talk. Using visualisation is a very useful tool to attract people to dialog and discussion.”

“The methods and the workshop resulted in better understanding of my (individual) perception of necessary tasks when dealing with facilitating SMEs.”

“We managed to discover that facilitating SMEs is a listening task first and talking task secondly.”

“Using time for systematic planning of activities brings positive results and allows easier cooperation with client/partner. Simply, you feel more confident as you planned what you want to achieve.”

“The method called ‘Playing with words and metaphors’ is a nice way to engage SMEs and build friendly atmosphere in a working team. It is fairly easy to use and to repeat in several networks.”

“It is absolutely important to constantly learn on the basis of examples and every meeting can be a learning experience.”

“If you feel that you have a problem with helping the SME, you should help yourself by defining what expert might be needed and trying to find a proper person/institution.”

“Non-conventional ideas result in brave and innovative solutions.”

“As a facilitator, sometimes the most valuable advice from you is just helping to systematize ones’ information and knowledge. Six thinking hats will help you here.”

“Facilitator needs to be an objective (disinterested) person capable of delivering professionally the facts that he/she captured in a dialogue with his/her partner/client.”

“Each case is individual and different. We should really think of every person that we facilitate as a new challenge. We should never judge anyone; we should listen to him/her and think of his/her idea/problem and arguments.”

“Ishikawa diagram allows looking for and dealing with reasons of problems instead of results of problems.”

Overall evaluation on the Labs for SMEs:

The track of learnshops proved to be well-planned, even though some tools had to be tailored during the meetings to match: the audience, points of interest, time, etc.

Methodology remained the background issue during the learnshops, as priority was given to solving business problems not to exercising the method

Thanks to an in-depth needs analysis done while planning the learnshops, they were highly relevant to the current needs of participating SMEs; therefore the participants were truly involved in the process

The participants enjoyed the methods of work (tools and messages applied) and appreciated the results obtained (new ideas, fields of improvement, lists of further steps, etc.)

Narration

“A session with firms is only as valuable to the managers as it can provide something they don’t know. Thus, a constant navigating over the recognising of particular details regarding firms needs’ and serving syntheses/keywords or talking of various possibilities/ opportunities is a chance to get managers acceptance/trust. Drawing simple images or matrices, talking of what you hear and constant listening to what the managers say is the only way to guarantee success in facilitating or at least collect interest in a second learnshop attendance.”

“The most important thing during the learnshop is to let the firms act and talk when they want it and carefully listen to what they say. They must feel you are with them and you understand what they say.”

“If you plan something and the situation leads you to a conclusion the next learning exercise should look in a different way, you should be flexible and you should change it to the degree it helps participants be active. A break sometimes can help as well.”

“A session was very mind-opening for using AL methods in solving business problems”