

# ROLE OF BEST PRACTICES IN ENTREPRENORIAL INITIATION OF STUDENTS ILLUSTRATIVE CASE: WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMISOARA

**Abrudan Denisa Bogdana**  
*West University of Timisoara*  
*Faculty of Economics and Business Administration*

## *Abstract:*

*In a competitive and dynamic international context, investment in education and training must take into account the new demands of knowledge based society. Education institution is the organization which, "teaches and produces knowledge" and the role and responsibilities of education are fundamental. Rethinking the way of doing business, reinventing our own business that allows the exploitation of opportunities and constraints of the economic environment can not be achieved without entrepreneurial education, without adaptive and responsive approach to changes in economic environment and beyond.*

*This paper aims to present the role and impact of good practice in creating a culture and entrepreneurial education in Romanian higher education system.*

*Research is a descriptive and analytical one, the conclusions drawn are important as they constitute a starting point in identifying and implementing solutions to reconfigure higher education system so as to meet the challenges of today's economic environment.*

*Personal contribution lies in identifying the multiple ways of expressing entrepreneurship and business culture embodied in innovative projects initiated and implemented in the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration from West University of Timisoara.*

*Keywords: Educational reform, entrepreneurial education, partnership between academic and business environments, policy of best practices.*

*JEL Codes: I23, A20, J23, J24.*

## **1. Investment in education and training in a knowledge based society**

In a competitive and dynamic international context, investment in education and training must take into consideration the new requirements of the knowledge based society.

In present, EU seems to present some disparities compared to USA, disparities like the inability to attract and retain talents in Europe.

The disparity in productiveness between EU and US continue to widen. To reverse this trend, there are additional investments needed, not only in research and development and IT, but also in the education and training European system.

## **Challenges of higher education in the economy based on knowledge**

The unequal economic development with asymmetric consequences in world academic view had led to a social mobility, marked by variation and diversity, disparities between educational systems and for all these reasons the world *academic medium is challenged not only the answer the change but to initiate one of the changes*. Building an efficient system of higher education and universities of international level require a paradigm shift: *from uniformity and dispersion to differentiation and concentration*.

In the current era of globalization, redefining the university education is defined by new trends: internationalization, transnational education through mobility, lifelong learning and distance e-learning system, qualifications and international ranking systems, research- innovation-development, association between university- industry and the private sector, new approaches in management and academic freedom, brain drain, global flows of talent and many others. These

requirements represent a continue adjustment to different contexts of society that haven't been transformed without conflicts and oppositions. Each of these challenges lead to redefining how the University of the 21th century could serve the individual and the society. Regardless of the paradigms adopted (research, academic entrepreneurship, Open University, etc.) in present times universities have to redefine their mission so they will fulfill more roles with less resources. Moreover, specialists consider universities as real research and innovation incubators and training and development providers that offer skills and competences necessary for a bigger number of professions that require knowledge and complementary abilities.

The accreditation of the qualifications, quality assurance, public- private partnership, cross-border movement of students and curricula, multiculturalism and homogenization, recompose the university mission in the society based on knowledge.

The globalization process will focus on skills of graduates in the super-tech professions that require knowledge of foreign languages and also sensitivity to different cultures, which will enhance the internationalization.

In terms of diversity and flexibility of higher education level there are a number of priorities that assess with a direct impact on education quality such as: a larger number of public and private education providers, an increased international mobility (brain drain, brain gain, and brain train), an increased number of cross- border higher education, collaboration, communication between academic environment and business environment, an increased role of internships, etc.

## **2. Partnership between university environment and economic environment, a necessity**

The collocation society based on knowledge, is bringing into discussion the objectives and the content of educational system, the mode in which the educated acquire knowledge, abilities and competences that help them face new challenges related to research, innovation, knowledge evaluation with success, especially in the new economical, social, political and cultural context.

Education institution becomes an organization that "teaches" and "produces knowledge" and the role and the responsibilities of education are fundamental. Nowadays, in Romania the educational programs have big quality issues and are not relevant for knowledge economy. The reinventing of the education system based on entrepreneurial fundaments it's a must.

The biggest challenge is addressed to the reforms responsible in education and training, and to the experts and consists in exploring all the building and development possibilities of different types of public- private partnerships having the purpose to mobilize supplementary financial and human resources.

The triptych: academic institutions- business environment- governmental environment represents an exigency of the actual education reform that has as benefits economic growth on few bearings: at a corporation level, local, regional, national and international level.

In theory, the importance of the relationship between universities and entrepreneurial environment is emphasizes by a number of studies in this domain which sustain that "it is necessary for universities to collaborate with the regional or local business environment for developing new and innovative businesses.

Also, in a study conducted in 2005, by the National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania, that had in view the role of universities to provide students a professional training appropriate for the demand on the labor market, is sustained that universities must become open systems, capable of achieving a high level of integration in academic, administrative, political and non-profit environments, and meet the challenges of a society based on knowledge.

It becomes a necessity in this situation that before creating and providing services by universities, to be completely and correctly known the requirements and needs of the economic environment, and to correlate these needs with the programs offered to students.

It is needed to build and implement flexible curricula centered on competences, skills and abilities that are necessary in an economy based on knowledge.

### **3. Example of best practices in entrepreneurial initiation of the students. Illustrative case study: Carma- FEAA, UVT Timisoara**

Offering an important role to the entrepreneurship and business culture, promotion of innovative projects in educational field, the capacity of financing the acquisition of new technologies, higher level of professional training for an increased efficiency of emergent technologies, training and life learning programs are in the center of attention of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEAA) one of the faculties of West University from Timisoara.

Here, entrepreneurial education had found multiple expressing modalities, starting from adopting new attitudes beside knowledge, development, life until participating to different programs and initiative in solving real problems in a complex and dynamic economic context.

Problematical learning, learning by collaboration, simulation, role games, case studies, business plans and portfolio individual or team created, educational software usage by simulating a business can approach the process of teaching- learning- evaluation with the economic reality these are the ways trough which out students develop their capacity of rational approach of economic and social problems.

FEAA mission is to reach excellence in it`s activity, to obtain high performance, a strong motivation for success, responsibility and didactic creativity encouragement, commitment and implication in local, regional, national and international projects. FEAA is willing to take the role of entrepreneurial progressive institution for accomplishing it`s mission in an economy that has to create welfare and jobs.

As a natural consequence of this fact, is has been built in 2011 The Center for Entrepreneurship and Relations with Business Environment- CARMA- with it`s purpose to:

*Develop and attract entrepreneurial talent* which had become an important source of economic growth because this can simulate the innovative environment and can lead to development of innovative companies with a strong growth in the region;

*Increase entrepreneurial competences among young generation* by offering educational resources that have an inspirational impact over students and which allows these persons to cross the entire cycle of a successful business initiation;

*Improve the profile of the graduates* of West University of Timisoara, regarding applied skills, acquired during studies through practice stages and internships in partner companies;

*Organize university courses for improvements of the employees of partner companies* and attending management simulation;

*Organize events for the development of opportunities of the companies in the local business environment* (Business Arena, Business Wings, Best Business Plan, etc)

*The attending of business personalities from the social- economic environment as practice experts in the educational programs;*

*Building an educational program common with business administration* “Elite Business Administration” dedicated to employees from managerial medium from partner companies and the top students;

*Internationalization of the educational programs of UVT in English or French* trough diplomatic centers;

*Creating subjects of research in entrepreneurship* for PhD programs, and also implementing the result of the research in entrepreneurship and innovation in social- economic environment.

As an example we can mention a few activities developed between 2011 and 2012, activities of the Center but also of the faculty that represents best practice that contribute to building and developing competences and professional and personal skills of our students, for an increased percentage of graduates that find a job in a very short time from graduation.

The project: Young, successful Entrepreneurs, project co financed from European Social Fund trough Operational Program of Human Resources Development 2007- 2013, Invest in people!

This project is willing to: increase the entrepreneurial potential of student and graduates, entrepreneurial culture development, competitiveness improvements, potential entrepreneurs adaptability, increase the abilities of focus group to design and implement business ideas.

The persons that benefit of this project: 800 basic courses recipients, 320 advanced courses recipients, 40 business plans financed by the project. The project has as partners: MECTS, FEAA-UVT, JCI Romania- Young Entrepreneurs Federation, EXTREME TRAINING Company and UNSR- National Union of Romanian Students.

The conference: Discover the champion in you, an event that wanted to create a motivation for success, will to perform no matter in what field.

This project wanted to prove a simple fact: ideas gather people. Ideas are resources that can change everything, that make the difference. Enjoying a large number of attendants, over 180 students, at the event as speakers there were invited personalities from business and academic environment. From the themes we can mention: challenges in elite academy, the fulfillment of aspirations- personal development techniques, the manager- leader- entrepreneur, be pro- active!, how to discover the job that I like, from a survivor to a champion, , how do employers think.

Partners of this event: FEAA, UVT, CARMA, Lideea company, John Maxwell team Romania, HR Dimension Bucharest.

*The international program in human resources- Bringing Cultures Together-* an international program between Holland and Romania, in partnership with CHE from EDE Holland.

Starting with the idea of building an approach between these two different cultures: Holland culture (organizational culture) and Romanian culture (organizational culture), students involved in this project will be aware of the cultural differences and will have to accept, respect and approach them in an appropriate way. The project Bringing cultures together had developed in real time a transfer of know how regarding innovative practices in professional education.

This project has the following objectives: professional development of students regarding human resources management, to compare practices of human resources management from Romania and Holland, to offer Romanian students the opportunity to experience a multicultural environment.

As results of this project, we mention:

1. During these year of project 2004- 2011, over 140 Romanian and Dutch students had beneficiated of valuable opportunities of building career in a multicultural environment, both sites experienced the cultural differences in workshops, mix research teams, visits at companies, debates, through all these they had the possibility to acknowledge and compare practical aspects of human resources management applied in Dutch and Romanian companies.
2. Exchange of useful ideas, information and solutions in HRM;
3. Creating and developing professional relationships between teachers and project coordinators;
4. Building the cooperation platform between University of CHE from Ede, Holland and West University of Timisoara;
5. The attendants of every edition had received a diploma, since 2008 this diploma was officially certified by those two partner universities;
6. There is a website of the project: <http://topshare.che.nl/timisoara2011> that offers an efficient dissemination of the results and information related to the project, starting with the 2008 edition;
7. Over these years, for an easier interaction between students and the reality of Romanian economic environment there are a few companies that got involved in the project: Alcatel, Azur, Profi Foods, Lideea, Coca- Cola, Flextronic, Bega Group, Eta2U, Lead Human Resources, Hella Electronics , Cores , ConDoor East , ADR- Regional Development Agency, IT Incubator, Grafo Print, that offered studets the ocasion to debate, participate to lectures, debates and workshops as: Compensation& Benefits, Appraisal systems, Labour law for European migrants, Recruitment&Selection, Dismissal, Leadership & Coaching, Schooling & Training, Absenteism, sustained by HR specialists or HR departments representative, from the companies partners of the project.

From the basic arguments of the partner companies, we can mention: Positioning the company as a company interested in education and building future specialist in HR; Acces of inovative ideas, generated by multicultural environment, for solutioning real situations in HR; Acces to a database of young students with multicultural work experience.

The project LEARNING & ACTING TOGETHER, a videoconference that gathered 3 Universities, 2 from Romania and 1 from Moldova Republic: West University of Timisoara, Faculty of Economic and Business Administration, ASE Bucharest, Faculty of Management and ASE Mondova- Faculty of Business and Administration, Training Centre and Business Advisory. This event gathered students that presented valuable projects of research and proved the attendants (professors from academic environment, business personalities and students) that there are values in young people that worth beeing involved in the research process because they bring inovative ideas and significantly contribute to professional and scientific training and growing prosperity for knowledge creation.

*These are just a few examples from the numerous programs developend at the faculty and university level.*

#### **4. Instead of conclusions**

Rethinking the mode of doing business, reinventing our own business that allows opportunities fructification and operating constraints of the economic environment can not be achieved without entrepreneurship education, adaptive and reactive approach to the changes of the economic environment.

In a methaforic way, the purpose of education, of entrepreneurial education particulary is to build „an edifice” as solid and extended as possible, where initiatives can be identified and implemented, initiatives that sustain the obtaining and growth of organization performances.

In this context, a contemporan society challenge is the reinventing of school, formal education, with the nonformal and informal version.

The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the West University of Timisoara and the Entrepreneurship Center and business environment relationships had understood that investment in research and entrepreneurial education, the partnership between academic and economic environment represents the recepy for academic and professional performance at individual and organization level. In this matter, the raport ARACIS from 2011 assigns: „At the West University of Timisoara have been identified a series of best practices that can be extended to other universities or faculties in the country”. Here we can meet: „Developement of structurate partnerships, compelling formalized with the economic and social environment, that contribute to the aplicativ level of teaching process growth, to a good organization of specialized practic stage, to update the curriculum content, based on the current and future requirements of economy, science and culture, to increase the percentage of graduates who find a job in a short time after graduation, in the professional profile that were prepared in college”.

*Having an opening to implementation of educational programs adapted to the business environment, sustaining and developing colaborative projects between universities, public institutions, business organizations, promoting an entrepreneurial education and an colaborative business culture, FEAA of UVT manages to take with succes the role of evolving entrepreneurial institution for achiving it`s mission in an economy that needs to generate wealth and create jobs.*

#### **REFERENCES:**

- 1.Abrudan, Denisa. “Educatia antreprenoriala-premisa a dezvoltarii economice”, lucrare prezentata la Conferinta Internationala Iasi 20-22 octombrie 2011, *Economie si Cunoastere*
- 2.Hălăngescu, Constantin. Provocări și tendințe ale învățământului superior în contextul globalizării,[http://mpra.ub.unimuenchen.de/33269/1/Higher education's challenges and trends in the context of globalization.pdf](http://mpra.ub.unimuenchen.de/33269/1/Higher_education's_challenges_and_trends_in_the_context_of_globalization.pdf)

3. Mayor-Zaragoza, Federico, The university of the 21st century, political and social trends of globalization: Challenges for higher education, in *Higher Education in the World 3: New Challenges and Emerging Roles for Human and Social Development*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2010, pp. 20-27, disponibil online la <http://upcommons.upc.edu/revistes/bitstream/2099/8113/1/mayorzaragoza.pdf>
- 4.xxx.[http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:42010Y1201\(01\):RO:NOT](http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:42010Y1201(01):RO:NOT)
- 5.xxx.[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/education\\_training\\_youth/general\\_framework/c11066\\_ro.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/general_framework/c11066_ro.htm)
- 6.xxx. Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul Superior – ARACIS nr. 44 / 2011 pg 47-49
- 7.xxx. Financing of Education, Eurydice, 2002  
*„This work was supported by the project "Post-Doctoral Studies in Economics: training program for elite researchers - SPODE" co-funded from the European Social Fund through the Development of Human Resources Operațional Programme 2007-2013, contract no. POSDRU/89/1.5/S/61755".*