

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurship curriculum development in conflict affected environments?

SPARK has been working in conflict affected environments since 1994, to support young ambitious people to lead their post-conflict societies into prosperity. SPARK has developed a number of solutions designed to specifically support institutions of higher education that either intended to start with developing or introducing entrepreneurship curricula or improve their already existing programmes focused on entrepreneurship. During the past 20 years 7,500 students attended summer and winter university and Master programmes in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Palestine, Serbia, Turkey/Syria, Libya and Mali. This earned them a combined estimated of 400 study credit years. More than 250 newly designed higher educational modules have been developed.

Why entrepreneurship curriculum development?

Development of entrepreneurial curricula should address some of the existing deficiencies of the existing education systems in post conflict countries. Although challenges are different depending on the context of each of the countries we work in, several challenges are often present. The most obvious is that existing curricula rarely tailor sufficiently to the needs of the private sector or ambitions of individual students.

Entrepreneurship isn't just an academic discipline; it is a way of life. The development of entrepreneurial skills in the education system may increase the supply of future entrepreneurs in the country. Whilst it is open for discussion if entrepreneurship can really develop a good entrepreneur, our experience shows that the introduction of entrepreneurship education does help to identify future entrepreneurs. On a more systematic level, entrepreneurship education assists the development of new SMEs and builds a better pool for future employees.



How we engage in entrepreneurship curriculum development?

Typically, on request of local partners, we do extensive research, into the existing socio-economic context to better understand what entrepreneurial skills are required by the domestic private sector and what sectors offer opportunities for start ups.

Based on the outcomes of the research, the local partners that have initially requested the support (most often local private sector associations, businesses, ministry of education and/or universities and vocational schools) are brought together in workshops to design a joined programme with milestones to engage in a reform effort.



I generation of students at MA in Entrepreneurship at Novi Sad University in Serbia, 2010

SPARK curriculum development experience

Since 1994 SPARK participated in development of educational entrepreneurship programmes in many post conflict environments, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Palestine, Libya, Macedonia and Mali.

Examples of some interventions that were designed to assist the development of entrepreneurship education are: 28 intensive summer or winter universities, of two to four weeks have been organized in partnership with local universities. Through co-design and delivery of the courses by local and international teachers in entrepreneurship education, these have been used as a tool to either introduce new entrepreneurship oriented modules at the universities or update existing ones. For example during the summer 2014 the 8th edition of Mitrovica Summer University has been held. 100 local and international students participated in two week long courses covering the topics of entrepreneurship, EU integrations, environment protection and web design. Most of the international faculty has taught pro-bono in these events with professors from a wide range of European and North American universities contributing time. This included Universities ranging from Harvard, Yale, Amsterdam, Sorbonne and the LSE.

SPARK has also assisted in the introduction of a fully fledged BA and MA programmes in entrepreneurship. For example, SPARK and the University of Novi Sad, designed and rolled out an MA Programme as well as an optional Bachelor Course in Entrepreneurship. The syllabus development process was moderated by the international expert from the Nyenrode University. The programmes received official recognition from the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Serbia.

SPARK has led the establishment and start-up of the not-for-profit International Business College Mitrovica (IBCM). This higher vocational business school offers internationally accredited (Denmark and Germany) AP degrees and Bachelor diploma's in Entrepreneurship related topics. Up to 300 students are now enrolled full time and 199 have graduated with either an AP or Bachelor degree. The school is located in the ethnically divided city of Mitrovica and inclusively caters to members of all the communities. The importance of this type of education can be seen from cases including:

IBCM student Ms. Miranda Rugovaj started her own strawberry farm in 2011, which she developed drawing on the skills obtained at IBCM. She believes that: "IBCM courses were often challenging. But I succeeded. And I now feel optimally prepared for developing my new company". In 2012 she won a Kosovo wide business competition financed by USAID and has since graduated from IBCM with a Bachelor's degree in 2014. She currently works as a Communication Officer at the Kosovo Banking Association and continues to run her seasonal strawberry farm.

A group of IBCM students decided to implement theory into practice and start something that would benefit their own society and environment. In December 2014, they established a non-profit organization concerning youth empowerment and environmental protection, called Wake Up Center and EnviroYouth. This started as a student social club between students from both sides of the divided city of Mitrovica and eventually evolved into an independent entity.

More details at www.ibcmitrovica.eu

Libya, BISU



DONORS:

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SPARK is committed to meet the highest standards of organisational practice and ethics. We are proud to hold the following certifications:

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- Algemeen Nut Beogende Instellingen (ANBI), are recognised charitable not-for-profit organisations by The Dutch Tax and Customs Administration. Donations to these are tax deductible.
- Centraal Bureau Fondsenwerving (CBF) is an independent foundation that monitors fundraising by charities and certifies them with the goal to promote trustworthy fundraising and expenditure.
- International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is a multi-stakeholder initiative that seeks to improve the transparency of aid in order to increase its effectiveness in tackling poverty. Certified organisations provide open data and information on how they spend their funds.

