

ENTER INTERNATIONAL STUDY WEEK IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA

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Abstract. ENTER is European network of learning and teaching in agriculture and rural development. During the Enter study week in Vienna in the period of 6-13 March we took a part in a course “Entrepreneurship in land – based education” at the University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy. The program for the week included lectures in entrepreneurship and innovations in agro-based business. We visited two organic farms – dairy farm and vegetable farm. We worked in groups and learned new teaching methods to improve students’ education like “thinking out of the box”. At the end of the training course we developed a business model in the field of bio-production. We established new contacts with colleagues from Austria, Netherlands and Switzerland. We gain a new competences and skills which are very useful in our work with students.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, study, organic farming, teaching methods

During one week of intensive entrepreneurship training, participants learned the business fundamentals necessary to succeed at any entrepreneurial venture. The main objectives of the training were:

- to develop a vision on entrepreneurship;
- to spot innovations in agro-based business;
- to connect innovation and sustainability;
- to describe new business models;
- to design didactical methods on the basis of existing materials and tools in the field of entrepreneurship.

The most important question in agro-based business is: Why do farmers need to become entrepreneurs? Farmer-entrepreneurs see their farms as a business. They see their farms as a means of earning profits. They are passionate about their farm business and are willing to take calculated risks to make their farms profitable and their businesses grow. Farmer-entrepreneurs operate in a complex and dynamic environment. They are part of a larger collection of people including other farmers, suppliers, traders, transporters, processors and many others. Each of these has a role to play in producing products and moving them through to the market – through



the value chain. Each one needs to be an entrepreneur. They also need to respect each other and work together to make the whole system work better and be more profitable (Kirner, 2016).

What is an entrepreneur? An entrepreneur is someone who produces for the market. An entrepreneur is a determined and creative leader, always looking for opportunities to improve and expand his business. An entrepreneur likes to take calculated risks, and assumes responsibility for both profits and losses. An entrepreneur is passionate about growing his business and is constantly looking for new opportunities (Kahan, 2012).

The entrepreneurs need of many competences: Creativity, Strategic thinking, Management skills, Marketing and sales, Concept for work-life balance. Entrepreneurs need support from family and friends for themselves and others. By the way: Sustainability is an idea of good living! (Linder, 2016).

Sustainability needs entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs have a responsibility to their investors and shareholders but also to nature, society and future generations. Entrepreneurs of the future will have to develop a much greater sense of responsibility (Linder, 2016a).

Sustainability is unthinkable without innovation. Entrepreneurs are also innovators. They always look for better and more efficient and profitable ways to do things. Being innovative is an important quality for a farmer-entrepreneur, especially when the business faces strong competition or operates in a rapidly changing environment. The farmer-entrepreneur produces a clear picture in his mind of what is possible and the future he wants. He knows that what is possible

is determined by the market. The farmer-entrepreneur is always looking for new opportunities. He knows that new opportunities are found in the market. The farmer-entrepreneur wants to make profits. He knows that profits are made in the market. An entrepreneurial farmer has the initiative, drive, capacity and ability to take advantage of opportunities.

The most important step is strategic Management: How to develop a strategy? Successful entrepreneurial farmers are strategic in their planning and implementation. They look at their farm businesses from a broad and long-time view. They make sure the major aspects of their farm businesses support the goals and objectives they have set. They look at ways to strengthen the competitiveness of the farm business through satisfying buyers, achieving performance targets and staying focused on realising the long-term goals of the business. Strategic management is necessary in order for farmers to position their farms for the future. It is 'big picture' thinking. Having a strategy helps a farmer make good choices among alternative courses of action in the uncertain world within which they operate. It helps a farmer to make short-term decisions that are consistent with his long-term goals. It requires farmers to keep watching and asking the questions: What do I need to do to compete, progress and meet my goals? How does the decision I am about to make contribute to my goals?

We need to look at our business often as if it belongs to someone else. Be critical. What could we do that would raise our profit? What do we do well? Where do we



need to improve? What could we do to attract more customers? Do people like to do business with us? Do we run it in a business- like way? We need to do a SWOT analysis every three or four months, to see if we can improve our profits. A SWOT analysis (S = Strengths W = Weaknesses O = Opportunities T = Threats) lets you look at your business on a regular basis and work to improve your weaknesses and make the most of your opportunities (Wagner, 2016).

The role of woman as an entrepreneur was discussed. Women own about 31 to 38% of SMEs in emerging markets. Great potential for spurring economic opportunities and job creation in developing countries. Men and women working together and thinking together. The pressure to conform is higher in male-only groups. Women tend to show more their individualities-they also feel connected to some members due to these individual traits or skills. Men tend to think more according to functions, women to other individual people.

Research seems certain that mixed teams achieve better results. Diversity is a very important. Research of T-Groups proves that the disadvantages of single gender groups are reduced. Male groups show great peer pressure and thinking outside the „group“ box is not tolerated. Female only group find it very hard to remain on the content-level. As a conclusion: Mixed (balanced) groups work better because the different qualities complement themselves (Kralicek, 2016).

The entrepreneur must be creative and must think “out of the box”. Somebody unknown was said: “Don’t think outside the box...Think like there is no box!” There are five basic skills to be creative: Creative perception; Suspend judgement; Flexible associate; Diverge; Develop imagination (Noom, 2016).

The last two days of the course was workshops on business models – step by step plan for develop innovative business model and preparation of presentation.

We presented a business model in the field of bio-production of bread called: “Bread made with love!”.

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