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**When Innovative Potential Meets Experience: The Enterprise+ Project**

*Parallel Session 2*

*"Innovation support services: inspiring examples (1)"*

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## When Innovative Potential Meets Experience The Enterprise+ Project

### **Executive Summary**

This paper discusses how an interactive approach introduced by the ENTERPRISE+ project allows entrepreneurial learning and education to be progressively revealed in different European milieus. Inspired by the losleger methodology developed by the University of Duisburg-Essen (DE), our approach moves forward by analysing how the dynamic process of entrepreneurial learning can be applied across different contexts. We have developed an analytical framework which studies empirically how the principles of the ENTERPRISE+ approach were introduced in a pilot basis to promote entrepreneurial learning into five European countries: Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania and Spain. By examining diverse place-based practices conducted in each country, we identify a set of localised elements which can form a local knowledge learning paradigm in which other similar policy initiatives can be accommodated.

### **Key words:**

*Entrepreneurial learning, business mentoring, talent scouting, losleger*

### **Introduction**

Youth entrepreneurship and business start-ups are two interrelated concepts which have received considerable attention in the innovation literature over the last years. Several empirical studies have acknowledged the importance of the introduction of a set of tailor-made programs and policy initiatives geared to support the entrepreneurial activity and creation of business start-ups both at a national and supranational level<sup>68</sup>. How business plans and marketing plans are developed, how timelines can be kept effectively, how to be part of an effective entrepreneurial network, and how to get access to funding are some of the most commonly found services offered in such initiatives. Without doubt, all these services are crucial and seem to condition the success of an entrepreneurial venture significantly. Next to these programs what is also crucial is the development of mentoring and coaching services which appeared to have a key role in facilitating the process of creating new businesses<sup>69</sup>. The formation of effective mentoring relationships is seen as an important tool when business planning is being developed, while coaching is regarded as a crucial mechanism when attempting entrepreneurial ventures which require constant processes.

Reflecting on the current trends of creating business start-up, we have developed an cross-national approach to combine both patterns of action and include both techniques and mechanisms. We get one step back, prior to the development of a business plan, and attempt to identify potential entrepreneurs (we call them Loslegers) through a sophisticated approach where individual competences and professional skills are captured and examined thoroughly. What happens in practice is that we follow an interactive approach to support young professionals to start their own business and create new jobs not only for themselves but also for other individuals. Interestingly, through our processes which are supported and financed by the ENTERPRISE+ project (ERASMUS+

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<sup>68</sup> BURNS, P. 2016. *Entrepreneurship and Small Business: Start-up, Growth and Maturity*, WHITE, R. 2014. *The Entrepreneur's Manual: Business Start-Ups, Spin-Offs, and Innovative Management*, Echo Point Books and Media, WALSH, J. P. & HUANG, H. 2014. Local context, academic entrepreneurship and open science: Publication secrecy and commercial activity among Japanese and US scientists. *Research Policy*, 43, 245-260.

<sup>69</sup> LANE, G. & CLUTTERBUCK, D. 2016. *The Situational Mentor: An International Review of Competences and Capabilities in Mentoring*, Taylor & Francis.

Programme), we target and support young adults between 15 and 37 years of age in five different countries: **Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania** and **Spain**. For this purpose, we have identified and selected a number of high-level scientists with diverse expertise and professional background to take an active role through the establishment of mutual collaborations with schools and job centers in all these five countries. These experts are individuals and take part in the process on a voluntary basis, free of charge.

A number of experienced executives nurture the entrepreneurial spirit of young adolescents by encouraging entrepreneurial competences and providing actual feedback at an early stage. For the analysis of their competences the "losleger" methodology, which was developed and initially elaborated by the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany<sup>70</sup>, is further developed and used. Such an approach gives to trained scouts the opportunity to recognise a set of inherent capacities and strengths of the participating students. This process is far away from simple and requires a dynamic approach to be followed by well trained experts. For this reason, various self-learning modules have been developed and provided for further training and application. Additionally, ENTERPRISE+ runs the student enterprise/founder workshop method, which the University of Bochum is in charge of. Experienced high-level current and past executives (we use the Network of Mentors as a pool) are at hand to provide useful assistance at any level and advice productively the young potential entrepreneurs who participate in the "ENTERPRISE+" project. In practice, they share their experience and their professional knowledge with the young professionals, and such a dynamic process is helping them importantly recognising and developing their own entrepreneurial strengths and skills.

After participation and effective completion, young professionals receive an official certificate which documents their performance in detail. This means that participants are now advised and encouraged to use our networks for fundraising, normally looking for seed capital instead of big amounts of money. A potential company founder therefore can apply directly for seed capital to banks, business angels, venture-capital funds or public funding institutions. The process of funding is supported by us in any stage of its execution.

The methodology and the finalised results from the implementation of the project in all five countries will be analysed and presented thoroughly in the paper. The outcome of this project is expected to have both an academic and policymaking contribution. From a policy perspective our contribution relies on the fact that such a new entrepreneurial project, which is based on diverse place-based options, can be regarded as an important source of policy learning for European Union (EU) regions and countries which represent high level of heterogeneity. From the other side, the academic approach developed during the design and implementation stages will provide a better understanding of how educational and training programs could be designed better in environments with diverse traits and habits.

### ***Theoretical Framework: Economic and Entrepreneurial education***

Economic education is seen as a part of general education and, no matter in what practical approach, as an integral part of school education in almost all school forms and levels of the educational system. Arguably, the lack of economic education usually leads to important barriers for developing entrepreneurial activities. However, a core assignment of the economic education is to contribute to the entrepreneurial education<sup>71</sup>. Entrepreneurial thinking and acting is no longer a

<sup>70</sup> RETZMANN, T., KRZATALA, K., PIOTROWSKI, L. & HAUSMANN, V. 2015. Handreichung für Losleger - der Profilcheck für unternehmerisches Talent. *the University of Duisburg-Essen*.

<sup>71</sup> "Entrepreneurship Education" is the commonly used term. We prefer the term "entrepreneurial education" because it seems wider and therefore suitable, since the primary aim is to open up new perspectives of

competency, which is only a requirement of self-employed persons, founders, and non-self-employed managers or entrepreneurs. At present, it is more or less a basic asset that an employee should have and constantly develop. Modern employers are likely to demand these abilities increasingly from their employees. As the creation of new companies has a big effect on the national economies, it appears reasonable to reinforce efforts in the direction of entrepreneurial education. As a part of entrepreneurial education, pupils and students get the opportunity to try out and learn what entrepreneurial thinking and acting actually means by taking part in specific teaching-learning arrangements. In this context, the Potential Analysis “losleger - Assessment of Entrepreneurial Talent” is embedded.

#### *Motivation to create the losleger methodology*

Many young people have difficulties to orient themselves in career terms. One reason is the lack of knowledge about specific job requirements and possibilities for development, as well as, the ambiguity regarding their skills and potential. The offers regarding occupational orientation made by schools and labour administration are helpful, but they focus only on employed terms. In practice, the perspective of entrepreneurial self-employment is rarely considered. This means that one important option of personal and occupational development remains unobserved and subsequently existing potentials of young people are unutilised. To reveal entrepreneurial talents of pupils and students, a set of appropriate methods is needed. Assistance-Assessment-Centers are one helpful and established approach to show pupils their individual assets and work targeted on their potentials. Regarding all these aspects, the University Duisburg-Essen has developed the potential analysis losleger in Germany from October 2012 to May 2015. The project aim was the development, realisation and evaluation of an analysis of potential for assessing pupils entrepreneurial competences and potentials as the fundament of individual advancement.<sup>72</sup>

#### *Methodological approach of losleger potential analysis*

Pupils in the secondary school system are supported to take over responsibility for their personal and professional career. During an Entrepreneurship Summer School they gain the opportunity to determine and foster their potentials regarding entrepreneurial thinking and acting. By means of an analysis of potential, available skills and dispositions are identified to put targeted measures of individual encouragement directly in action. Therefore, the profile check for entrepreneurial talent has a set of approved methods, which focus on the cognitive dimension and simultaneously include the disposition to take over an entrepreneurial persona. This analysis of entrepreneurial potential benefits all pupils, also those who decide not to take the step towards self-employment because in today's working life the ability and willingness for entrepreneurial thinking and acting is a common requirement for employees as well.

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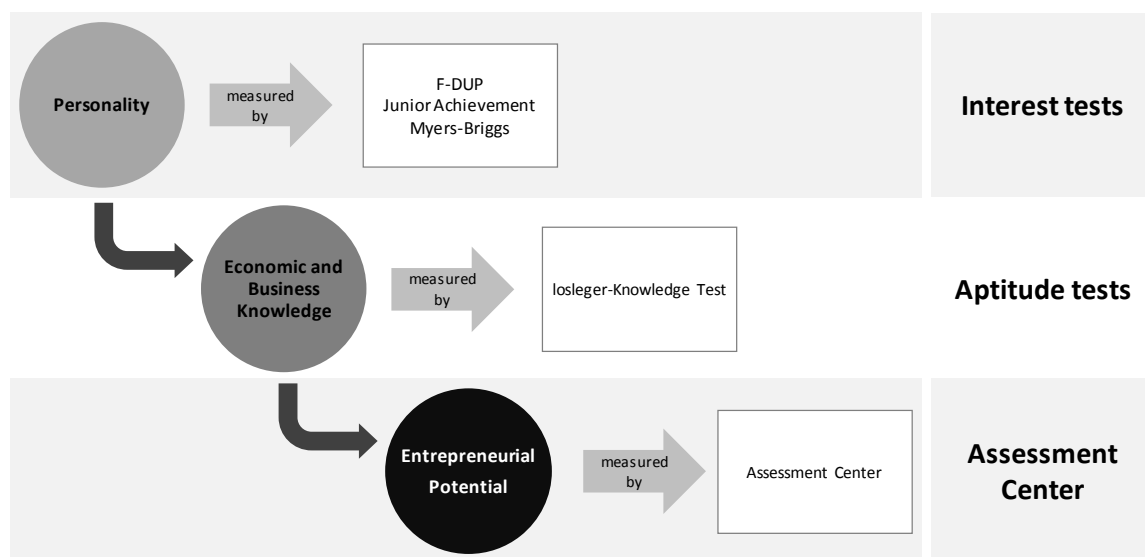
occupational orientation for young people as potential entrepreneurs and not necessarily educate every young people as entrepreneurs.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. <https://www.joachim-herz-stiftung.de/was-wir-tun/wirtschaft-verstehen-gestalten/teach-economy/losleger/>, last retrieved on 21 April 2017

The process of the losleger-Potential Analysis aims to provide pupil and students:

- A mind-broadening experience (make them thinking and reflecting on self-employment / entrepreneurship as a career opportunity).
- The possibility to take responsibility for the own individual and career development.
- A systematic framework for diagnosing and supporting potentials in order to develop entrepreneurial ways of thinking and acting.

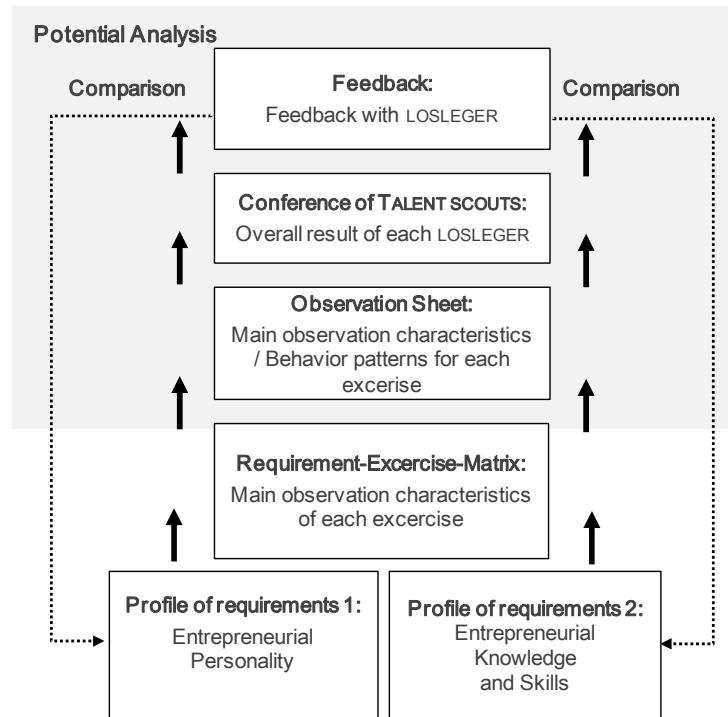
**Figure 1: Losleger-Potential Analysis – Approach**



(Source: Retzmann et al., 2015)

As every potential analysis method, so the losleger-Potential Analysis consists of two elementary successive phases, namely diagnosis and encouragement and support. After the application of standardised tests (Interest & Aptitude Tests) pupil/students participate in an assessment center that simulates the real situation of starting up a company. The participants (the **"Loslegers"**) are under observation in various situations, over a long period of time, by qualified and trained observers (**"talent scouts"**). The validity of the results is given by the correlation between the assessed competencies and future requirements. After completing the competence assessment procedures, the results obtained are systematically evaluated in the conference of talent scouts.

The individual feedback discussion with each Losleger is the interface between diagnosis and support. The participated Losleger receive a professional feedback on their diagnosed competencies and observed behaviors. The feedback focuses on observed strengths (NOT weaknesses) and in the context of the discussion between observer/talent scout and Losleger further steps for the personal development are agreed that sensitizes the Losleger to deploy a high grade of self-responsibility for the personal career planning. However, potential analyses are always a snapshot and are, therefore, at the beginning of a promotion process. Thus, the result one year after the diagnosis can already look different. Especially when individual support was provided.

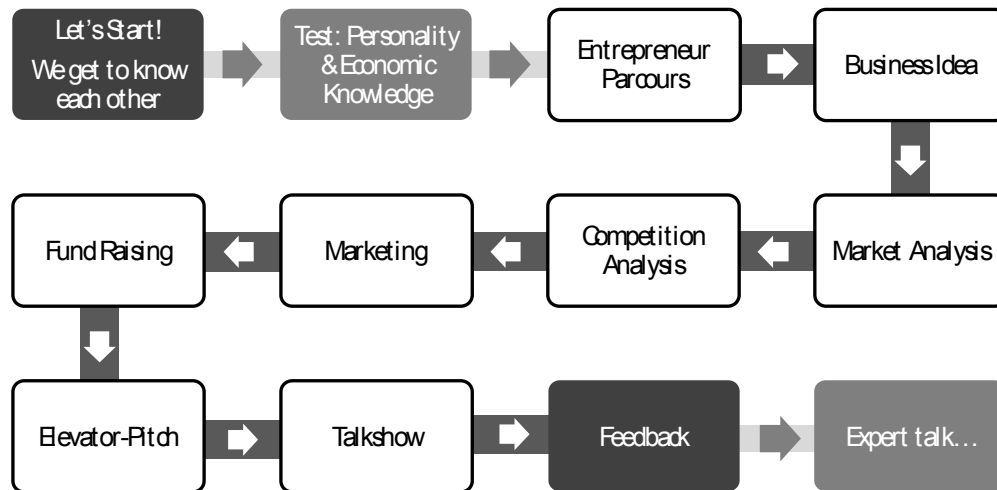
**Figure 2: Process of Diagnostic – Observation Procedure**

(Source: Retzmann et al., 2015)

### *Practical implementation of losleger potential analysis*

The losleger-potential analysis targets young people (pupils/students) from an age of 16 to 25 years<sup>73</sup>, that want to explore their entrepreneurial capabilities. The time needed for the whole process is between at least 3 days and maximum 5 days. Typical variations for the realisation are “Event out of school”, “Full-time event in the school”, “Half-day event in the school”. During the realization losleger-potential analysis the participating pupils/students, after answering standardized questionnaires regarding economic knowledge and personality characteristics, go through different tasks that simulate the aspects of building-up an enterprise. The following figure shows the typical steps of the implementation of a losleger-potential analysis event.

<sup>73</sup> The original design of the methodology addresses pupil in the secondary education. However, in the frame of the ENTERPRISE+ project the methodology has been successfully implemented with various types of attendees as Losleger, as described in this paper.

**Figure 3: Losleger tasks**

(Source: Retzmann et al., 2015)

The minimum requirements for a successful implementation regarding the needed human resources in the different roles are:

- twelve to eighteen pupils/students that will work under observation in (two or three) teams of six Loslegers (participants),
- a moderator, who moderates the realization, acts as facilitator, gives professional input in advance, and is the contact person for all persons involved
- four to six trained observers/talent scouts, that observe participants while they are working on tasks, document their observations, give feedback to the Loslegers
- a stand-by person, who is trained as moderator and observer and can take these roles in the case needed

As moderators and/or observers a wide range of professionals can be considered, i.e. teachers, teaching staff, psychologists, (postgraduate) students, group leaders, human resource managers, trainers, instructors, etc. In any case, they must have attended a respective training course in the methodology, which covers all aspects for an effective implementation of the losleger-Potential Analysis, i.e. introduction to the documents, practicing the observation, theoretical input: perception & assessment of behavior, evaluating the results and feedback process, do's and don'ts for talent scouts, role of the moderator.

**Putting ENTERPRISE+ methodology in context***Supranational cooperation and implementation*

The ENTERPRISE+ methodology has been implemented and tested at a pilot basis in diverse European milieus, characterised by notable heterogeneity in macro-environmental factors, including Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania and Spain. The selected target group in each country covers a wide age range, and, in fact, it constitutes **high-school and university students, unemployed individuals** and **students from vocational schools**. Due to the given heterogeneity, each partner was responsible to identify and focus on the most meaningful target groups considering several key attributes of the local entrepreneurship (e.g. entrepreneurial habits and structures, academic/innovative entrepreneurship), the type of unemployment/unemployment (e.g. youth employment, unemployment status and duration, factors determining individual unemployment) and other critical practical aspects closely linked with the availability, time and effectiveness of each partner to fulfil the task successfully. The following table illustrates the selected target group per country.

**Table 1: Type and characteristics of ENTERPRISE+ methodology in each country**

Country	Target group	Duration of workshop (days)	No. of Participants
Bulgaria	vocational students	4	24
Greece	university students	3	17
Hungary	secondary school	3	30
Lithuania	college, technical college	3	20
Spain	unemployed individuals	3	11

Methodologically, the Losleger approach was introduced and later adapted by each country according to its own characteristics and potential, introducing the ENTERPRISE+ approach. In line with the view that '*one-size-fits-all*' does not work anymore within the European Union (EU) context<sup>74</sup>, our model was addressed and implemented with slight differences across countries. In this respect, we have argued that by simply replicating losleger learning to diverse territories without making place-based modifications is no applicable due to their given structural and spatial distinctiveness. This suggests that the implementation of the losleger methodology as a learning procedure is *path-dependent* and, therefore, it should be reassessed and redesigned accordingly, when implementation is to take place at a supranational level. This progression may trigger various practical modifications initiated by place-based particularities and, in this sense, it should be seen as a critical success factor for the effective realisation of the learning process. Previously, from a policy-learning perspective, a number of authors have stressed the difficulty to copy spatial learning and merely replicate it elsewhere, since learning, and particularly cumulative learning is embedded in

<sup>74</sup> TÖDTLING, F. & TRIPPL, M. 2005. One size fits all? *Research Policy*, 34, 1203-1219, ISAKSEN, A. 2001. Building regional innovation systems: is endogenous industrial development possible in the global economy? *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*, 1, 101-120, COOKE, P. N., BOEKHOLT, P. & TÖDTLING, F. 2000. *The governance of innovation in Europe: regional perspectives on global competitiveness*, Pinter.



local cultures and possesses high levels of tacitness<sup>75</sup>. The inherent complexity to follow a universal approach for the development of Losleger model has led to place-based practices conducted by each country to support the realisation of Losleger in diverse territories. We argue that each approach promotes cross-national policy learning and puts the basis for the development of other similar learning initiatives. We present them below with a particular focus on Greece.

#### *ENTERPRISE+ practices conducted in each country*

##### Bulgaria

The practices conducted in Bulgaria included a 4-day workshop (29 March – 02 April 2016), targeting 24 students (in the age of 16-22) from the Vocational School of Tourism of Gabrovo (economic school) and Secondary Vocational School of Sevlievo (technical school). The whole process was run by 8 talent scouts who were responsible to supervise a mix of secondary school and college students. Despite a number of practical barriers (e.g. advanced requirements in human resources and technical preparation), overall, the pilot implementation in Bulgaria was considered successful, initiated a continuous implementation of the Losleger principles through the Ministry of Education in Gabrovo.

##### Hungary

In Hungary the target group consisted of secondary school students from the Secondary school of Pecs and the Szent Mór Catholic Gymnasium. A 3-day workshop was organised in the beginning of December 2015, targeting 30 students in the age group 16-19. Under the supervision of 11 talent scout with long experience and professional background, the pilot implementation of the program provided a number of practical learning opportunities, focusing on individuals' motivating, encouragement, and building of teamwork competences and skills.

##### Lithuania

The implementation phase in Lithuania started in the middle of March 2016 and lasted for 3 days. The beneficiaries of the project contained 20 heterogeneous group of students between 17 and 22 years old from the Vilnius College, the Vilnius Technical College and the Vilnius College of Social Sciences. Interestingly, 10 professionals from different areas of expertise were allocated to act as talent scouts whose main objective was to run an interactive process where knowledge and personality tests were introduced and conducted for the aim of the losleger pilot implementation.

##### Spain

A total number of 11 individuals and 7 talent scouts attended a 4-day workshop (25 – 28 April 2016). In fact, a wide age range of unemployed individuals was covered (21-37 years old). To facilitate the process, there was a formal collaboration with the Unemployment Agency. The main aim of the Spanish practices was to support unemployed people build appropriate professional development skills with the objective to introduce new entrepreneurial ventures.

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<sup>75</sup> STORPER, M. 1997. *The Regional World: Territorial Development in a Global Economy*, Guilford Press, MASKELL, P. & MALMBERG, A. 1999. Localised learning and industrial competitiveness. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 23, 167-185.

Greece

In the case of Greece, the pilot implementation of the ENTERPRISE+ methodology took place in the city of Heraklion in the region of Crete. The role of Loslegers was taken by university students (TEI of Crete) from different faculties and schools. The whole process started in June 2016 and lasted for almost 9 months, following an 8-step learning-by-doing approach<sup>76</sup>. Moreover, the **first step** was to introduce the Losleger methodology to the local community of Crete. An inclusive communication strategy was designed to deliver Losleger objectives to academia and local school community. In this initial phase, the communication process geared also to exploring the possibility of participation of different groups of students in the Losleger initiative (e.g. pupils, high-school students, university students, vocational school students etc). In the Greek context, two place-based limitations have been identified during the exploratory process, which, in fact, weakened and fragmented the selection process. The first limitation relies on the constrained time frame of the high-school and vocational students as opposed to the university students. On the contrary, we identified that time, availability and flexibility were more likely for the university students. The second one derived from the relatively higher entrepreneurial capability of the university students and their self-efficacy around business skills and innovation which, in fact, constituted an essential criterion for the loslger selection.

Once university students were selected as a target group for the pilot implementation of ENTERPRISE+ methodology, the second step was to identify *talent scouts*, *mentors* and *coaches* appropriate to run the pilot implementation and meet its methodological expectations effectively. To do so, open calls were published targeting local *academics*, *school teachers* and *private entrepreneurs*. Each of these three groups was asked to take a particular ongoing role in the process. Talent scouts were responsible to follow a specific approach for an early recognition of students with entrepreneurial talents and traits, while the role of mentors and coaches was to support students turning their business ideas into practice<sup>77</sup>. The provision of targeted training to the practitioners according to the ENTERPRISE+ methodology was the next step (third step), followed by the creation of a pool of approximately 20 practitioners available to take part in the process. During this process, practitioners have been trained thoroughly to ensure that ENTERPRISE+ objectives were effectively delivered and communicated. The **fourth step** was to identify a large number of university students who potentially could take the role of Losleger talents. To facilitate the process, an institutional collaboration between the Career Office of the Technological Educational Institute of Crete (TEI Crete) and the project partners (Science and Technology Park of Crete and Eniochos Consulting) was carried out. Through this collaborative initiative a number of students-potential entrepreneurs (the Loslegers) was created consisting of approximately 50 individuals.

Once students were selected as potential Loslegers, an intensive training/exercise was organised (**fifth stage**) to (a) provide them with a basic understanding of how a business plan is being developed, and (b) to allow talent scouts recognise potential talents through observational learning. From the learning perspective, our evaluation allows us to underpin that the ENTERPRISE+ methodology did work well in the Greek context, enabling interactive learning. In practice, the talent scouts had the opportunity to identify Loslegers for the methodological pilot action through a 3-day talent diagnosis workshop for the assessment of entrepreneurial talents taking place in October 2016. The following two steps refer to the creation and finalisation of 3 Losleger working teams

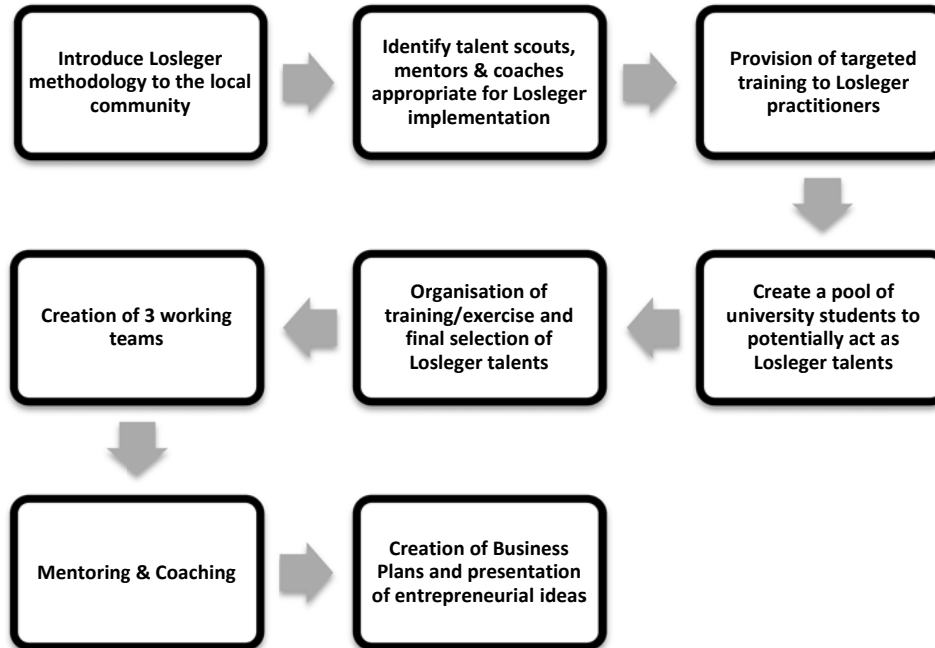
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<sup>76</sup> HULL, C. E. & COVIN, J. G. 2010. Learning Capability, Technological Parity, and Innovation Mode Use\*. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 27, 97-114.

<sup>77</sup> PAPAMICHAIL, G., ZAROTIADOU, M. & SAITAKIS, A. 2017. Module for Business Mentors. *Work published for Enterprise Plus Innovative Potential Meets Experience" Project, Erasmus Plus, European Commission.*

(**sixth step**) and cover the period where mentoring and coaching take place (**seventh step**) to facilitate the creation of the business plans. The **eighth step** marks the end of the process and contains the official presentation of the business ideas with the objective to raise funding and ensure sustainability.

**Figure 4: The 8-step process for leading entrepreneurial education in Greece**



#### **Model limitations during pilot testing**

Our pilot implementation at the supranational level is embedded into a framework of some methodological limitations which should be considered when formulating inferences. A set of obstacles and limitations have been grouped and presented below:

- *Heterogeneity of target groups*

The selected target groups of the cross-national areas of implementation were not the same for all countries to allow generating sound comparisons. We consider this aspect as a limitation in our methodology, acknowledging the disadvantages raised when analysing heterogeneous groups<sup>78</sup>. In this respect, it would be interesting to test the functionality of our pilot implementation by examining whether our findings would be the same in case ENTERPRISE+ target groups were heterogeneous (for instance if all countries focus on university students or vocational schools). This would assist not only scholars but also policymakers should wish to explore further the possibilities of implementing supranational education and learning around entrepreneurship (e.g. cooperative learning processes on how to translate entrepreneurial knowledge into business ventures and innovation).

<sup>78</sup> FLICK, U. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, SAGE Publications.

- *Variations on empirical observations*

Empirical observations for the identification of the talent scouts have been conducted by different performers raising perhaps some uncertainty on the way this process has been conducted. While training has been provided by the Losleger founder to all talent scouts, we cannot neglect the likelihood that at the national level, empirical observation may vary notably across countries, presumably due to different individual perspectives and the utilisation of mentoring knowledge. Under the lens of a more micro approach, this view is closely linked with previous work which studies the limitations of research projects from a geographic, cultural and linguistical perspective<sup>79</sup>. Additionally, we need to mention the risk of raising Hawthorne effects, in which individuals' behaviour changes when they realise they are being observed<sup>80,81</sup>, which may lead to under- or over-estimation of individuals' skills and personal competencies.

- *Technical and temporal limitations*

Technically, there were some time limitations for the implementation of the Losleger methodology as the availability of the Losleger participants was importantly bounded. This has limited the time frame in which pilot testing occurred. In this regard, time (in the sense of duration) and timing seemed to be two critical factors for the effective implementation of our model.

### ***Findings and further discussion***

Inspired by the principles of the losleger methodology developed by the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany, this paper discusses a new entrepreneurial learning approach introduced by the ENTERPRISE+ project methodology. Moving beyond the national and sub-national boundaries, it provides an analytical framework which studies how the principles of the ENTERPRISE+ approach were executed in a pilot basis to promote entrepreneurial learning into five European countries: Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania and Spain. By examining diverse place-based practices conducted in each country, the authors identify a set of localised elements, typically structural and institutional in nature, which can form a local knowledge learning paradigm in which other similar policy initiatives can be accommodated. The main findings are presented below:

First, from a policymaking perspective, the ENTERPRISE+ project introduced a new methodological approach for the promotion of education and entrepreneurial learning, which can target different groups of students simultaneously and supports its pilot implementation at a cross-national level. Despite the limitations discussed above, we argue that the ENTERPRISE+ methodology could be adopted as a baseline for re-designing and introducing new learning mechanisms at different European milieus no matter of their local particularities. A number of essential place-based factors to reflect before and during the implementation stage are closely associated with the type of target groups and the entrepreneurial attitude of each of them, the actual availability of the people engaged in the process and their understanding around entrepreneurship, as well as the intensive technical preparation which might be required in advance. For instance, we have seen that while the interest to participate in the ENTERPRISE+ processes was relatively high at most of the education levels (e.g. primary schools, high schools, vocational training schools and academic institutions), the actual availability of school pupils was limited due to workload, as opposed to the university students who seemed to be more flexible. Similarly, we noticed that university students possessed a better

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<sup>79</sup> GIVEN, L. M. 2015. *100 Questions (and Answers) About Qualitative Research*, SAGE Publications.

<sup>80</sup> COHEN, L., MANION, L. & MORRISON, K. 2004. *A Guide to Teaching Practice*, RoutledgeFalmer.

<sup>81</sup> EVANS, A. N. 2013. *Using Basic Statistics in the Behavioral and Social Sciences*, SAGE Publications.

understanding of entrepreneurship and knowledge around business creation, and therefore it was easier to create homogeneous university students' groups to work with.

Second, through the interactive practices of ENTERPRISE+, a new contemporary network of mentors, coaches and talent scouts has been created for each country. Moreover, the network consists of academics, education experts/consultants and entrepreneurs with a leading role in urging entrepreneurial and educational learning in a regional context. In this respect, each network can be seen as a growing opportunity for setting a permanent tool for supporting and boosting school and university entrepreneurship. The main characteristic of this network is that its members cover a wide range of expertise, they have been trained to follow a particular methodological approach to address the complex nature of mentoring and confront various practical challenges during its process. In this view, the network could become an important tool for the support of training and early stage youth entrepreneurship in each region.

As a third finding we refer to the emerging need of designing and introducing a tailor-made mechanism to support different types of youth entrepreneurship. While there are plenty of empirical studies highlighting the importance of developing youth entrepreneurship policies, see for example OECD studies<sup>82</sup>, we still lack a permanent mechanism which could productively facilitate youth entrepreneurship. In line with this view, the ENTERPRISE+ approach did not attempt to introduce such a mechanisms. It rather seek to investigate and explain part of the complexity inherently embedded in the process of developing cross-national models of entrepreneurial education and learning.

### **Acknowledgements**

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<sup>82</sup> OECD 2014. Supporting Youth in Entrepreneurship. *Summary report of a policy development seminar organised by the OECD and the European Commission, Brussels, 22nd-23rd September 2014.*