

Guidelines on Peer-Learning

Universität Innsbruck

## GUIDELINE ON PEER-LEARNING INBOUND ACTIVITY

### Universität Innsbruck (UIBK)

#### **BeyondScale - Developing the Organisational Capacity of Higher Education Institutions using the HEInnovate platform to facilitate peer-learning and a pan-European community of practice**

##### **Take-aways from peer-learning experiences**

Peer-learning is a way for partners to learn from each other effectively. At a time when the university resources are limited and demands upon the staff are increasing, it can be beneficial internal as well as external stakeholders of an HEI to learn from each other.

For peer-learning to take place it is important to know who the “peers or buddies” are. For peer-learning to be achieved within the BeyondScale project a buddy system was created. The buddy system included internal HEI partners for the inbound projects, external for the outbound projects, and a system that involved project partners, associate partners as well as mentors. The internal partners were university management, heads of departments, heads of degree programs, experts in service units, and selected lecturers. On the other side external partners were public sector/policy-oriented organisations along with enterprise support organizations/incubators/start-ups, micro firms and relevant actors in the industry.

The internal HEI partners in the activities – the project team, administrative, academic, and other staff as well as students - benefited from the documentation of the activities of BeyondScale, the capacity building seminars and webinars organized at the higher education institutions. External stakeholders also benefited from the augmented capacity at the higher education institutions they collaborate with.

While COVID-19 made things more complicated, the design of the system allowed all partners to interact on multiple levels and with a variety of partners from the inside and the outside of their network. The result was the co-design and the implementation of inbound and outbound activities.

The following roadmap provides an overview of the peer-learning activities developed during the BeyondScale project. Further information is available at [www.beyondscale.eu](http://www.beyondscale.eu) or you can contact us at: [office@wpz-research.com](mailto:office@wpz-research.com)

The BeyondScale roadmap on peer-learning included the following steps:

1. Think about what contribution you expect or what you want to learn
2. Think about your own contribution and whether your partner can use this contribution
3. Define together the goals of the exchange
4. Agree on the way of communication
5. Define future meetings or possibilities of exchange
6. Reflect on the value of the exchange
7. Think about further joint activities

## An example of a peer-learning activity.

### HEInnovate dimension: *Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning*

**Description of the activity:** The main goal of the UIBK inbound activity within BeyondScale was to develop offerings for Entrepreneurial Learning, which are tailored for the specific desires of the disciplines SSHA (Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts). The inbound workshop served to collect the necessary information for this purpose in the forefront by interviewing people from these disciplines SSHA: students, alumni, lecturers and other “connoisseurs”.

### Our participants represented:

- University Management
- Head of our start-up-centre “*InnCubator*” & Researcher at the Institute for Strategic Management
- CEO of UIBK-spin-off “*Innsbruck University innovations GmbH*”
- Co-CEO of external firm of business consultants
- Three select lecturers & scientific staff of SSHA faculties
- Select graduates & students of SSHA

### Involvement, contributions and future benefits of the partners

Internal Buddies	Involved in:	Contribution	Future Benefit
<b>National Expert for the European Higher Education Area</b>	Workshop interview series Co-speaker in the UIBK webinar “Piloting the Universities of the future”	Valuable insights concerning the implementation of non-formal and formal learning opportunities in the UIBK curricula	Will be at our disposal for future developments of specific learning offerings
<b>Co-CEO of a firm of business consultants</b>	Workshop interview series	Valuable impulses concerning the appropriate wording of “entrepreneurial” contents for SSHA	Will be at our disposal for future collaboration
<b>CEO of renowned Swiss Market Research Company</b>	Workshop interview	Detailed insights concerning the employment market chances of SSHA graduates	Will be at our disposal for future developments of specific learning offerings

### Why was peer-learning important for your activity?

- The UIBK project team does not have a SSHA-background. Therefore, the input of “connoisseurs” of the disciplines SSHA was of tremendous value for our goals in our inbound activity.

**What have you learnt during the peer-learning process of your inbound activity?**

- Better understanding of the “psychology”, motivations, value schemes etc. of graduates and students of the disciplines SSHA.
- Better understanding of the “culture” and “lingo” of these disciplines.

**Would you recommend the peer-learning buddy system to another HEI and why? What could other HEIs learn from it?**

- Yes, because in our times with their exponentially increasing innovation tempo nobody can be an overarching expert – even not in his/her special discipline. Therefore, the dialogue and exchange with other experts/specialists (i.e. Peer-learning) is a *sine qua non*.

**What were the common objectives?**

- To enhance the entrepreneurial mindset and improve the entrepreneurial skills especially for UIBK research and teaching staff and for students in the disciplines Humanities, and Social Sciences & Arts (SSHA) at UIBK and to attract more SSHA students to entrepreneurship topics at UIBK.
- Specifically, as a starting point already within Beyond Scale: Development of a (non-formal) entrepreneurial course/workshop, which is tailored for the specific desires of the disciplines SSHA.

**What were the outcomes?**

- Attractive focus topics for this specific SSHA workshop could be identified.
- The wording for this specific SSHA workshop was refined: a more appropriate terminology to address entrepreneurship topics to SSHA students was proposed by our buddies/peers.

**What were the possible barriers and challenges?**

- The semantic field “entrepreneurship” widely connotes negatively within SSHA disciplines
- Consequently, we detected a lack of entrepreneurial awareness amongst the SSHA teaching staff and students
- Concerning “entrepreneurship topics for SSHA”, there is a “clash of discipline cultures & lingo”
- The already existing (non-formal) learning offerings are sparsely visible within SSHA
- The wording of the existing offerings is not really appropriate for SSHA
- Both teachers and learners articulated a lack of time besides their daily duties and core tasks

**What were the possible opportunities?**

- Starting of the development process to implement entrepreneurial topics within SSHA better at UIBK.
- Establishment of reliable axes with new partners/buddies for this longer-term process.

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