

Academics without Borders

USF-AWB

Universitaires sans Frontières

Quarterly newsletter, 15, September 2014.

Usefulness of entrepreneurship training in higher education institutions



USF-AWB aims at supporting countries in the development of systems and institutions for higher education to better training locally the elites that will govern their development. These countries can be mainly categorized as emerging or developing.

Why is it interesting to develop locally rather than to favor the international mobility of students from these countries?

Because all experiments show that when those students go to be educated in our universities and schools, many (if not most) of the graduates do not return in their country to take on the role that the country is entitled to expect from them. The output is a net loss to the country of origin, but also for the host country as students often benefit high-level scholarships.

Why do graduates remain in the country of their studies?

Because the economic structures of their own countries are often insufficient to absorb all of the outgoing flow of graduates.

Why has high level training difficulties to develop locally?

Because the surrounding socio-economic environment must be able to offer very good tutored internships that allow the student to familiarize with their future professional life. We must therefore be able to ensure and strengthen the important relations between the training institution and potential employers. But in the concerned countries, it happens very often that this medium is too little developed to ensure this mission completely.

Starting from those observations, but also from the fact that future graduates will be the elite of their nation in a not very distant future after leaving universities, it is important to raise awareness of entrepreneurship. Thus it is hoped that instead of being passive vis-à-vis employment, they will become active and will be involved in **creating companies** because the act to undertake will make learning entrepreneurship less daunting. By doing so, they will participate in the socio-economic development of their countries.

Different educational models have been proposed, from classic courses until immersion in the experience of creating companies which can effectively be achieved. This last formula is widely used at secondary schools because it can cause the

entrepreneurial brain wave for all students even for bachelor or master levels.

There are multiple advantages in taking drama out of the act of undertaking, because they allow the student to:

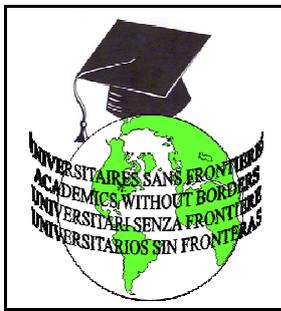
- Remove his/her inhibition vis-à-vis the creation of a company (or association or new activity in an institution...) and discover that it is not reserved for 'specialists' families or adventurers;
- Perform his project management learning because all executives will have to defend, and then launch and manage projects during his professional career;
- Learn and master the fundamentals of business management and better understanding of the environment in which they will be immersed in the rest of their lives;
- To build a strategic vision of his future company and the action to be taken;
- Validate an idea by comparing it to its intended users in order to minimize the risks of the future business;
- Evaluate the risks inherent in any action, entrepreneurial or other; In France, as in similar countries, the conclusion is the same because it appears that job creation is more due to the small emergent structures than large groups. In these circumstances, the major part of engineering schools have included this domain in their programs, more or less pushed to entrepreneurship awareness-training modules;
- Dare to take and bear these risks if he feels able to do;
- Learn to defend an idea or a dossier to convince potential partners.

In short, the scope is learning to behave like a responsible framework and player in the development of his country.

However, in all development's program in the countries in which we operate, the lack of industries, for engineers and technicians, or medical or paramedical institutions for health professionals, or even administration... is a recurring problem for the institutions we support. The latter have the greatest difficulties to find places for practical internships that studies should today include in their curriculum. It appears therefore of the first importance, to give the means to future graduates to create companies because it will be those persons who will create the jobs and internships of tomorrow.

Such a provision may actually work only if the entire academic staff (teachers, researchers, administrative...) considers that the student is a creator-of employer-to-be.

It is a small revolution in people's minds, at least for graduated engineers who are often supposed to find positions in existing businesses.



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What about the researcher who however is often able to find, during his research, products, devices or services that he could operate himself as it is often done in the USA? As network of consultants of higher education institutions, USF-AWB needs to ensure not to copy our French model, but to adapt our proposals to the local conditions.

We have seen that students, regardless of the country, are very aware of the needs of the populations and can bring original ideas. Indeed during this type of exercise at bachelor level, students can offer very inventive solutions to needs they have detected. A few years later, it is not uncommon that companies are created on these ideas, but our students were not at the origin because they pursue their studies and for them, this project of entrepreneurship was only a simple exercise.

In fact, everything happens as if the students could be considered as future-sensitive sensors and as if the proposed exercise with the freedom that it gives in the expression of their creativity, has allowed them to materialize these sensations. When the creation of companies on the same theme, everyone knows that the same idea is everywhere at once and that only a privileged group is able to transform the idea into successful product roughly simultaneously. For example, I would mention a team of students who had thought about the problem of fast charging of battery for electric cars by immediately exchanging rented batteries in gas stations. This project which first seemed utopian, was raised recently by the French manufacturer Renault.

The experiences that we conducted in Mexico shows that it is possible to implement awareness training exercises for entrepreneurship quite effective. They are all based on immersion in a project based on an idea proposed by a student. The action is accompanied by some theoretical support as the progress of the project. There are two types of training:

- The first takes place during an academic year in which students work part-time on their project with theoretical courses to enable them to structure their project's progress;
- The second focuses on the last semester of studies in which students are full time on their projects. There are also substantial theoretical contributions throughout the progress of the project. In addition, they have a powerful tutoring by specialists or company creators.

This last organization has enabled the creation of viable and prosperous enterprises by young graduates who would have

never dared to, without taking drama out of the act to undertake the creation of an enterprise. It is quite reasonable to think that it is possible, and even essential to adapt it everywhere where the need to create jobs is striking. USF-AWB is able to accompany all the higher education institutions which are willing to move in that direction. ■

Dr. Alain Jouandeau, Member of the USF-AWB board.

USF-AWB is desperately seeking:

Guinea (Conakry)

We have just signed a partnership agreement with the French-speaking private multidisciplinary Kofi Annan University of Guinea (Conakry, 9700 students). It will focus on the following positions:

- Dean for an engineering school,
- General secretary for administrative affairs.

University professors in pension are welcome to apply.

For more information, please contact immediately:
Dr. Paul ROUSSET, Vice-president of USF-AWB,
Email : paulrousset@neuf.fr.

Bhutan and Indonesia

Our Canadian sister association informs us that it searches on behalf of the Royal University of Bhutan, a Professor of Civil Engineering, surveying, geodesy, GPS, photogrammetry, remote sensing and cartography. A second position is open for a person able to teach either Structural mechanics, Soil mechanics, health engineering or land-use planning. Year-based contracts from February 2015.

Canadians are also seeking a volunteer for the State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga (UIN Suka) to assist the Director to set up a Centre for Disability Studies and Services in conjunction with the United Nations for a minimum of 4 months. This Centre will provide leadership in promoting inclusivity at other universities and in networking with other governmental and non-governmental organizations who are involved in implementing the UN convention.

For more information, about all those positions, please contact:

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