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**The potential role of the entrepreneurship education of universities  
in the promotion of entrepreneurship**

Theses of doctoral dissertation

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# 1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on the issue of the promotion of entrepreneurship. Intellectuals swarming out from university are the key of future businesses on such dynamically developing and innovative fields as information technology or biotechnology. In fact, successful universities in the USA lay emphasis on the important role of educational institutions as “catalysts” of high-tech start-up companies: a remarkably graphic example is if four thousand companies established by MIT graduates and staff formed an independent nation, these companies would make this “nation” the 24<sup>th</sup> largest economy of the world (Lüthje-Franke 2002). The role of universities is also continuously transforming, adapting to the changed environment and tasks (Barakonyi 2004), as well as to the changes occurring in the management, financing and training system of universities (Inzelt 2010). The competitiveness of higher education is also being increasingly revalued in economic competitiveness (Barakonyi 2010).

The idea of the service provider university has also been brought into prominence (Schwartz 2006), where one of the potential services is entrepreneurship education. One of the greatest challenges for universities is to move from the “ivory tower” status towards “entrepreneurial university” status. Even for business schools it is a real threat that fetishizing theory and methodology drifts them farther from actual business practice (Barakonyi 2009). The European Union also pays particular attention to entrepreneurship education, which is proven by that the “Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan” has been developed, which is built on three main pillars: entrepreneurial education and training, creating entrepreneurial environment and supporting the problematic groups of society (care for new entrepreneurial generations).

In the past decades, the role of enterprises in local economic development has been considerably revalued (Wennekers – Thurik 1999, Vilmányi–Kovács 2008), and in general the various forms of university-industry relationships (Vilmányi 2011). Furthermore, special attention is paid to spin-off enterprises producing high value-added products and services (Imreh-Tóth et al. 2013). Consequently, an increasing emphasis has been laid on entrepreneurship education, emerging as a tool of creating successful enterprises. According to the European Commission (2013), Europe needs even more enterprises in order to return to the growth path in the current economic situation and to achieve a higher level of employment. Expanding entrepreneurial competencies

may also have a role in the personal prosperity of young people leaving higher education, since employees with a higher education degree cannot find work corresponding to their qualifications (Kotsis 2013). A potential alternative for this can be entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship education is approached from several directions, besides, several names are used in relation to the subject. The term “entrepreneurship education” is generally used in the USA and Canada, but it is less widespread in Europe.

The preferred term in the United Kingdom and Ireland was “enterprise education”, but by the end of the 1990s the concept of “enterprise” was gradually integrated into the concept of entrepreneurship. As a result, several definitions have been created regarding the subject, but including all differentiations (and attempts to differentiate), an ultimate objective of enterprise, business and entrepreneurship education activities equally is promoting the creation and more successful operation of independent enterprises (Imreh-Tóth et al. 2012).

The primary objective of entrepreneurship education is supporting the successful establishment of new enterprises. It is important to emphasise here that the success of entrepreneurship education programmes cannot be measured merely by the number of graduate students, but much rather by the socioeconomic effect of the enterprises they create. Such questions as the number of created enterprises, the number of created jobs, the types of established companies and the growth of the companies’ performance are essential in terms of economic growth (Sternberg-Wennekers 2005; Wong et al., 2005).

The research sponsored by the Kauffman Foundation has established that in the current economic situation business start-ups are key elements in the renewal and restructuring of the economy (Lourenco 2013), which is supported by that according to the study, over half of the companies featured in the American Fortune 500 were set up during a period of economic decline.

Many studies deal with whether entrepreneurship can be taught (Vesper-Gartner 1997, Klofsten 2000, Kuratko 2003, Todorovic 2004, Henry 2005, Klein-Bullock 2006). The researchers who argue that it cannot be taught start out from that certain people are born with entrepreneurial traits (the so-called “trait theory”) (Todorovic 2004). According to another approach, entrepreneurial role is often acquired in a cultural or practical way. The latter supports the view that “entrepreneurship” can be also influenced through education and training. Szerb and Márkus

(2007a) analysed the relationship between entrepreneurship and higher educational environment. It has turned out from their research that higher educational training and choosing an entrepreneurial profession show a positive correlation. The authors carried out several examinations in the topic (Szerb-Márkus 2007a, 2007b), during which they found that there is a positive effect between those who take entrepreneurial courses and those who choose an entrepreneurial career. Similarly, Gubik's (2013) research also supports the effect of training on business start-up; a particularly graphic example is that taking a further entrepreneurial course increases the chance by 13% for a student to plan a business start-up. The recent increase and development of curricula and programmes devoted to promoting entrepreneurship and starting new ventures is remarkable.

It is becoming increasingly accepted that “entrepreneurship”, or at least its certain aspects are learnable. Business educators and professionals have gone beyond the myth that entrepreneurs are born and not developed (Kuratko 2003). Within the framework of the well-known GUESSS research, it has been established in many cases that universities can contribute to students' entrepreneurship and the future success of enterprises primarily by providing entrepreneurial courses (Szerb-Lukovszki 2013). That is, university education may have an effect not only on business start-ups but also on the long-term survival of enterprises. I agree with these ideas, consequently in my paper I analyse American and Western European examples that can serve as best practice for developing efficient entrepreneurship education.

## **2. Objectives of the research**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the concepts of creativity, innovation and enterprise have become the key factors of modern economic development. Both small and medium enterprises play an important role in increasing the competitiveness of the European Union, in economic development and in self-fulfilment.

In the past years, entrepreneurship, its promotion, as well as entrepreneurship education have been given particularly great attention in developed countries. All this can be traced back to several reasons: the role of knowledge-intensive small and medium enterprises in economic development, the increasingly “trendy” start-ups and the development of the related “ecosystem”, re-evaluation of entrepreneurial lifestyle in personal vision, etc.

One of the forms of entrepreneurial lifestyle is the multitude of companies spinning off from various universities and research institutes. Within the framework of the present research, the concepts of companies spinning off from research institutes are interpreted in the broadest possible sense. It includes both the so-called student enterprises established by students involved in higher education and classical spin-off companies set up by researchers.

As a result of the above, the question how higher educational institutions – in line with their increasingly intensifying third mission – could show a more active involvement in this field is becoming increasingly pronounced. International tendencies explicitly demonstrate the revaluation of the field in the past 20 years; practically countless different forms of universities' involvement in enterprise support have emerged.

In recent years, my interest has been directed towards the potential “breeding ground” of the trio of creativity-innovation-enterprise, the university, it becoming an entrepreneur university and the role it plays (can play) in business start-up. Despite the fact that in the past decades in the United States of America and in Western Europe the promotion of entrepreneurship has been continuously developing within the framework of newer and newer programmes and courses, such a pronounced shift has not yet started in the University of Szeged (SZTE), apart from some island initiatives. Therefore I devote my dissertation to enterprise development and entrepreneurship education realisable in the University of Szeged.

*The objective of the research is to elaborate the framework of the enterprise development and entrepreneurship education model of the University of Szeged using the methods adaptable from American and Western European best practices and results from primary research.*

In order to achieve the research objective, first I review the relevant literature, more specifically I cover three main fields. On the one hand, I examine the main characteristics of universities' changing role, touching upon the triple helix model and the possibilities of its further development. On the other hand, I analyse the question – dividing the profession – whether “entrepreneurship” can be learnt and taught. Following that I review the concept and objectives of entrepreneurship education in order to set a kind of limit, within which I continue the examination. Finally – with the purpose of founding the subsequent framework – I present entrepreneurship education models.

In the course of my secondary research, from the “market leaders”, i.e. the institutions having a leading role in the field of entrepreneurship education, I examine the American institutions heading the Princeton Review’s ranking and the leading Western European institutions selected based on the MBA50.com Premiership 2013. In my opinion, the elaboration of the framework of the enterprise development and entrepreneurship education model of the University of Szeged requires both the review of theoretical models and the analysis of practical examples. Therefore, I attempt to collect the methods adaptable from theoretical models and best practices, and I offer a proposal for the adaptation of these methods in Szeged.

Obviously, due to socioeconomic and cultural differences, the “best practice” cannot be “copied” – because, among others, it does not even exist. Depending on in what environment, according to what rules a given institution operates, numberless effect influence the creation and development of its own method. Besides, the diversity of entrepreneurial lifestyles is present in the diversity of entrepreneurship education. Apparently, there are common (and necessary) aspects (e.g. business start-up, choosing an accountant), but beyond these aspects each enterprise is different, since the entrepreneurs themselves are unique in every case, which entails the necessity of the diversity of entrepreneurship education.

Finally, in the sixth chapter of my paper, I present the most important results of my empirical studies, the questionnaire research and the expert interviews. Furthermore – based on the findings of literature and empirical research – I formulate proposals at three levels for the framework of the enterprise development and entrepreneurship education model of the University of Szeged.

I conducted the literature and empirical research considering the following questions:

- Examining the role of universities: how does the role of university change and how does it become entrepreneurial?
- To what extent can entrepreneurial skills be taught? To what extent can education facilitate entrepreneurship?
- Using what methods can university entrepreneurship education achieve real and efficient results?
- What methods and experiences regarding entrepreneurship education can be adapted from institutions with a long history in the United States of America for the University of Szeged?

- What common methods/guidelines can be adapted from European institutions, which show larger similarities in cultural-social terms?
- Which points can be the corner stones of the enterprise development and entrepreneurship education model of the SZTE based on the expert interviews?

### **3. Structure of the dissertation and research methods**

In my opinion, the elaboration of the framework of the enterprise development and entrepreneurship education model of the University of Szeged requires both the review of theoretical models and the analysis of practical examples. Therefore, I attempted to collect and synthesise the methods adaptable from theoretical models and American and Western European practices, as well as to map the adaptation possibilities of best practices occurring most frequently. For this, I selected the European and American universities with the best entrepreneurial trainings based on various rankings, then I made a detailed analysis on the entrepreneurship education practice of 10 European and 9 American leading universities based on an predetermined system of aspects.

After reviewing the international examples and the adaptable factors, the examination focuses on the factors of the framework of the enterprise development and entrepreneurship education model that can be implemented in the University of Szeged. For the examination of the services to be provided by the SZTE and its related institutions (GVK) and the tasks to be performed, I think it is essential to know about the opinion of local actors. Therefore, I conducted primary research, which can be divided into three parts. First of all, in the course of my questionnaire research, I asked 400 knowledge-intensive enterprises with headquarters in the counties of the Southern Great Plain region (Békés, Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád) about what factors contributed to starting the business, in addition, what role they think university has in business creation and the importance the respondents attach to particular courses.

Secondly, I made expert interviews with specialists and entrepreneurs who can be major contributors to the success of the enterprise development and entrepreneurship education model of the SZTE. Thirdly, further narrowing the scope, I aimed to provide a proper basis for the enterprise development and entrepreneurship education model of the SZTE with in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs who started their business as a student.

In what follows, I present my theses that can be formulated based on the literature review, my secondary research and my primary research. These theses, on the one hand, summarize the reviewed information and, on the other hand, serve as a basis for the framework of my enterprise development and entrepreneurship education model of the SZTE.

### **My theses formulated based on the literature and my secondary research**

*Thesis 1: Despite the fact that entrepreneurial attitude is based partly on innate characteristics and partly on childhood socialisation, it can be developed, moreover, strengthened with entrepreneurship education, even in the framework of higher education.*

In my research, I gave a detailed analysis on the several factors that can influence the development of entrepreneurial attitude and becoming an entrepreneur (whether the entrepreneur is in a direct environment, innate traits, when does the entrepreneurial attitude start to develop, etc.), but one of the most determining factor is precisely education. I attempted to prove that entrepreneurship education can be considered as a proper tool to increase the survival and success rate of new business start-ups. Higher education can basically contribute to the development and reinforcement of entrepreneurial attitude in two ways: on the one hand, transferring business knowledge (theoretical foundation), on the other hand, developing entrepreneurial skills (practical approach).

*Thesis 2: Methodologically founded business administration and management knowledge has great significance in business start-up and particularly in the successful operation of an enterprise, therefore it is a necessary but not sufficient condition of entrepreneurship.*

The literature emphasises that entrepreneurial knowledge and management knowledge are not identical, nonetheless, they are closely related and both are necessary for implementing successful entrepreneurship education. Despite the fact that acquiring business and business administration knowledge is not identical with the development of entrepreneurial competencies, my research convinced me that in general there is scope for improvement even in the education of such knowledge, because higher educational practice often cannot respond even to these challenges. Presenting know-what of this kind could be an initial step of transferring knowledge required for entrepreneurship.

*Thesis 3: A part of entrepreneurial competencies can be learnt and developed with educational activity. Therefore, in higher education, for efficient entrepreneurship education it is essential to consciously develop entrepreneurial skills, competencies.*

Despite the fact that within the framework of entrepreneurship education educators cannot “create” entrepreneurs, as they cannot create the recipe of entrepreneurial success, I pointed out that they can indeed teach the knowledge required for new business start-up and operation. However, it necessitates – with applying proper methodology – the development of students’ entrepreneurial competencies, which can be formed through methods such as workshops, action-based learning, problem-based activities, situation exercises, or even participating in the establishment of a real business. Depending on whether the objective is to transfer knowledge or to develop skills, different methodology has to be used in entrepreneurship education.

*Thesis 4: In the development of entrepreneurial competencies, it is crucial to create the proper ratio of knowledge transfer and skill development. Besides the general practical predominance, it is important to pay sufficient attention to classroom educational solutions.*

The four basic objectives of entrepreneurship education are to create entrepreneurial attitude, provide knowledge required for new business start-up and operation and develop entrepreneurial skills, competencies. In entrepreneurship education, attention has to be paid to both the aspects of new business start-up (reviewing typical problems in the early stages) and business knowledge (management, business plan, venture capital raising), which are fairly important in the subsequent stages of growth.

Entrepreneurship education can be implemented basically in three forms, which are logically built on each other: form of classroom education, simulated entrepreneurial activities and real business start-up.

Classroom educational form (e.g. pl. lecture by teacher, guest lecturers) focuses on transferring knowledge, it is not really suitable to develop entrepreneurial skills; however, it can provide a proper basis for them through transferring the necessary theoretical background. In addition, the presented case examples and the introduction to entrepreneurial lifestyles play an important role in developing entrepreneurial attitude. In the case of the simulated enterprise, we can talk about the development of entrepreneurial competencies and skills, since in this case students can learn

about entrepreneurial life in practice, without accounting for real risks. Finally, in the course of real business start-up, entrepreneurial lifestyle becomes “tangible”, since students can experience what it is like to be an entrepreneur. One of the fundamental pillars of successful entrepreneurship education is the consequent use of modern educational methods.

*Thesis 5: Within the framework of higher education, the promotion of entrepreneurship requires organisational units with proper organisational competencies and elaborated enterprise development and entrepreneurship education strategy.*

The triple mission of the entrepreneurial university (education-research-enterprise), and the national and EU objectives (entrepreneurial education and training, creating entrepreneurial environment and supporting the problematic groups of society) also support that universities can have a determining role in the development of entrepreneurship. The successful higher educational institutional models and examples clearly highlight that it is necessary to have organisational units with proper organisational competencies and elaborated enterprise development and entrepreneurship education strategy. My research pointed out that in a major part of the cases, successful institutions have several centres (specialised on a certain field), which offer various services: mentoring, consultancy, trainings, events forming entrepreneurial attitude.

### **My theses formulated based on my primary research**

*Thesis 6: The role of local universities is not properly strong yet to promote entrepreneurship.*

The results of the research studying 400 enterprises highlighted that there are different expectations on the recipient side regarding the role of university as well. In the Southern Great Plain region, entrepreneurs simply do not consider the university as an institution providing help in business start-up and operation. For the time being, the university plays a determining role merely in establishing relationships based on the feedbacks.

*Thesis 7: One of the most important risk factors of successful entrepreneurship education activity is precisely the vision students imagine.*

My research conducted among the (ex) students of the SZTE ensured me that entrepreneurship is not a real vision for a considerable proportion of the present students.

The majority of the students imagine themselves in an employee position after graduation, and a small proportion considers establishing an enterprise. In the long term, this picture slightly changes but there are still serious fallbacks in this field. This is precisely why the activity forming entrepreneurial attitude has a particular importance, which can be regarded as “step zero” of entrepreneurship. It is no use developing educational systems that are methodologically founded and aiming for professional perfection if there is no demand for that from the students’ side.

*Thesis 8: Within the University of Szeged – based on the literature and international experience – it is necessary to have a single separate organizational unit that coordinates the available limited resources and the enterprise development and entrepreneurship education activities of faculties.*

It turns out from the fifth thesis that it is necessary to have organisational units separate from the university for enterprise development and entrepreneurship education activities, however, in the case of the SZTE, it is sufficient to establish a single separate organisational unit within the SZTE. This unit has to engage in a fairly diverse activity, the services related to the development and reinforcement of entrepreneurial attitude and the services related to business start-up and operation can be separated. In line with the principle of organic development, I consider targeting students as the priority task in the first step of defining target groups.

*Thesis 9: Successful entrepreneurship education activity itself is simply not enough. Economic development and enterprise development cannot be separated from each other, they are linked to each other in several points.*

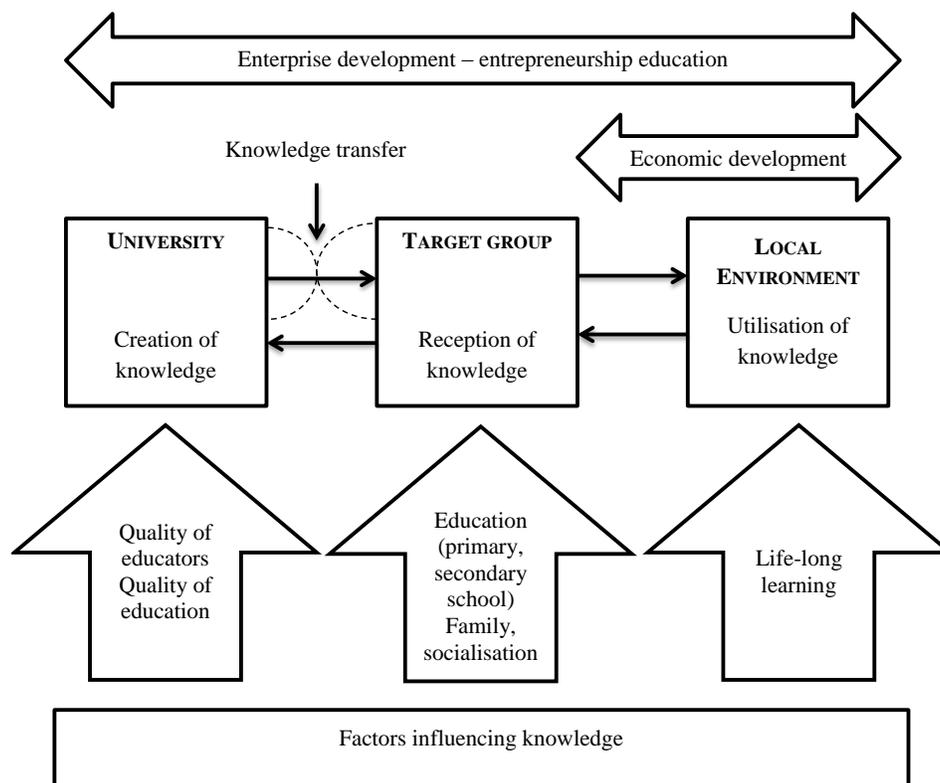
In order for such activity of the university to actually contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the given region, a simultaneous and conscious economic development activity is essential. To ensure that new graduates prepared within the framework of university education (thus entrepreneurship education) stay in the region and establish local enterprises, proper local business environment and networks have to be created for entrepreneurs, however, this all clearly necessitate conscious economic development interventions.

## 4. The main results of the dissertation

As a conclusion of my research, I attempt to formulate proposals in relation with the framework of the enterprise development and entrepreneurship education model of the SZTE based on the findings of the literature review, the known best practices and the most important messages of the expert interviews.

Before the actual proposals, I would like to start by highlighting the neuralgic points of the model, several risk factors emerge in the case of an activity of this kind (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Critical points of enterprise development – entrepreneurship education



Source: own edition

If we examine university in terms of “knowledge”, the first problematic area can be the content, quantity and quality of the concrete knowledge to be transferred (knowledge related to trainings and entrepreneurial knowledge). It is a necessary condition that a **substantive knowledge base is available**. To create high quality knowledge it is essential to have a faculty base of high quality.

Experience shows that efficient entrepreneurship education activity requires credible personalities with substantive entrepreneurial competencies.

In terms of entrepreneurship education it means that such educators are (also) needed who are practicing entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial experience and competencies.

The next neuralgic point is how to transfer knowledge, i.e. the best possible methodological background. It was confirmed that the availability of knowledge is only a necessary but not sufficient condition of successful entrepreneurship education. It is closely related to the next condition: **the recipient side being active in the transfer process**. It is no use having proper methodological tools if the recipient side is not a partner in their application (dashed line in the figure), in addition, continuous feedbacks are necessary for the university to assess the needs of target groups (students, researchers, entrepreneurs, primary and secondary school teachers) and the quality and adequacy of education. The emphasis has to be laid not only on what a university offers or can offer, but also on what “service packages” are expected by the students attending the university from higher education. Therefore, the general motivation of the recipient side has to be examined; if they do not need the expansion of such competencies, it is practically irrelevant what knowledge we aim to transfer through what methodology. In this case, two questions have to be examined: whether **entrepreneurial knowledge is needed, and** whether the target group **is able to receive** this knowledge. Regarding entrepreneurship education, several factors can influence the processes of both knowledge transfer and knowledge reception, such as entrepreneurial attitude forming (or its lack) in previous (primary and secondary school) education, entrepreneurial models in direct environment (family, friends), and socialisation.

Finally, the last issue is the **utilisation of knowledge**, since the creation, transfer and reception of knowledge is successful only if it is properly utilised in the end. In the case of entrepreneurship education, the acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge and the development of competencies have a substantive economic development effect only if the target groups stay in the region and the establish enterprises there (and do not take the knowledge abroad). Otherwise, “brain drain” may occur, when the trained workforce leaves the region (Lengyel 2010). However, it clearly necessitates a proper business environment, infrastructure, networks (business, university, R&D), support for local enterprises, and all this require conscious economic development interventions.

The first logical unit of the proposals is the proposals related to the creation and operation of a successful organisational background, which I formulated at the level of “principles”. The second logical unit is overall the set of proposals regarding the enhancement of entrepreneurial attitude. Besides general establishments, concrete possibilities and actions are described here. The third logical unit is overall the set of proposals concerning the concrete enterprise development, particularly entrepreneurship education services offered by the organisation.

### **Organisational proposals**

The first level of the proposals is the organisational proposals, which systematises my ideas regarding the organisation of the Centre according to the following principles:

- The principle of a separate organisational unit.
- The principle of organic development.
- The principle of managing the “entrepreneurship knowledge assets” of the university.
- The principle of internal partnership.
- The principle of external partnership.

#### *The principle of a separate organisational unit*

The international best practices and the reviewed examples of universities clearly highlighted that a separate, relatively independently operating enterprise development centre has to be established in the university, which offers services for both the entire university and external stakeholders. Obviously, the operation and maintenance of such an organisational unit is necessary only if it is managed to be filled with substantive content. In line with this, the financing of the organisation is a particularly interesting issue. For interventions of this kind, a financing scale realised at three levels seems to be a relatively viable option, which creates the minimally required background.

- **Start-up financing.** This is the task of the University as the general rule. It should be considered how much the potential services to be offered inward by the Centre to the University and the possibility of the profit generating capacity that can occasionally be realised later “are worth”. By definition, this is the financing of the actual start-up phase within a certain period of time.
- **Revenue generation from application resources.** If the minimally required human and material infrastructure is available, it is an obvious resource generating option. Having

reviewed the ideas related to the next programming period, “entrepreneurship” is one of the priority focuses of developments. It is practically impossible that – if there is indeed a common will in the university – certain activities of the Centre could not be fit into the tenders of various H2020 or national operative programmes and even the Centre could not submit own applications. This initiative is currently running from application resource.

- **Own service revenue.** The successful international examples clearly pointed out that an enterprise development centre with a high-quality service portfolio can have substantive profit generating capacity. This has to be interpreted in the broadest possible sense, it can include everything ranging from direct revenue realisable from various trainings and consultancy to the share of the centre from the future revenue of mentored enterprises – which in the case of this organisation can be regarded as the revenue of its own “business” activity.

In connection with this I want to note that the issue of financing is important but clearly not a primary issue. Based on both my personal opinion and the expert interviews it can be stated that will (at the level of both university management and the staff of the Centre), commitment and motivation are considerably more important than the problems of financing. Moreover – if substantive results could be managed – I am convinced that the required financing background would be created from the side of both university and enterprise.

On the other hand, it is completely a real expectation from an Enterprise Development Centre in the long term that it ensures its maintenance, i.e. achieving functional self-maintenance is a basic requirement. I am convinced that application and business revenues – beside an operation of a proper standard – can ensure the survival and required growth of the Centre in the short term.

### *The principle of organic development*

Generally speaking, a major part of the interviewees agreed that the Centre has to go through an “organic development”, in terms of both the target groups and the offered services. As a starting point, it is useful to consider the basic question that for precisely what target group and what services have to be offered (I deal with this issue in the concrete activities in detail). As a general rule, first target groups within the university (students, researchers) could be offered attitude forming events and partnership buildings, and provided with simpler services (in particular

entrepreneurial trainings). As the interviews also highlighted, each organisation has to build up gradually, thus the Centre needs to target students and researchers in the first step partly because they are easily accessible, and partly because a kind of trust already exists between the actors. Then in parallel with the learning and strengthening of the organisation, both the target group and the scope of offered services should be expanded. For any target groups, it is very important to assess the needs of each group and to create demand.

#### *The principle of managing the “entrepreneurship knowledge asset” of the university*

A particularly important (priority) task for such a Centre could be the management of “entrepreneurship knowledge asset”. Currently there are not any overall summaries about the enterprise supporting projects that were/are in progress in the SZTE, the related experiences and best practices are not summarised. Several successful and less successful initiatives have been in the past few years, substantive foundational studies have been created, and actual primary research has been conducted. One of the basic tasks of the Centre would be to update and synthesise this common knowledge and set of experience, which could be completed with sharing this knowledge in the long term, first within the university and later even outside the university. The implementation of this task could represent a stable basis for mapping potential development possibilities and continuing further coordinated entrepreneurship research. In addition, a substantively maintained knowledge asset in this field can mean tangible advantages in several fields, ranging from entrepreneurial attitude forming events to founding the applications to be submitted in the future.

#### *The principle of internal partnership*

The cooperation within the SZTE (Innovation Directory + Faculty of Economics + Centre), collective thinking would considerably increase the success of initiatives and programmes. In the knowledge-intensive economy, innovation and enterprise are closely related concepts. Therefore, the cooperation of the proper institutions is essential to achieve successful and efficient operation.

In the case of any activities, close cooperation with faculties is a key success factor. Several interviewees pointed out that one of the most important tasks of the Centre can be coordination and the support of the enthusiastic people’s work in the Faculties. However, it requires a close partner relationship.

Besides formalised relationships between the institutions within the SZTE, it is very important to cultivate alumni relationships. Involving successful entrepreneurs graduated from the SZTE in education and informal events, or requesting them to – professionally, financially – support various competitions are also areas to improve.

### *The principle of external partnership*

In accordance with the experience of American and European examples, the establishment of the following should be considered:

- Network of local and global strategic partners
- Establishing a “Business lab”

Within local and global strategic partners, the following networks would be needed for efficient entrepreneurship education and enterprise development:

- Collecting small and medium enterprises which provide mentors for students, and considerably contribute to increasing the efficiency of entrepreneurship education through their integration into university courses. Involving small and medium entrepreneurs in trainings and the students can learn about this lifestyle through their own examples.
- Network of American and European universities, which ensures student mobility and student exchange, which represent a major part of entrepreneurship education according to international examples.
- Strengthening international relationships in the region: open towards Serbia and Romania. We are one step further in the field of entrepreneurship education, the possibilities it entails have to be utilised.

The “Business lab” creates a space and opportunity for students where they can share their ideas, they can get support regarding business start-up, and it forms a kind of collecting place for those sharing the same intention and motivation.

### **Proposals regarding the enhancement of entrepreneurial attitude**

Currently, entrepreneurship is still not a real vision, although as start-ups have been brought into prominence, many think about starting a business even as students. Students generally do not

have the entrepreneurial attitude that urges them to start a business. It can be traced back to that in secondary school they do not encounter entrepreneurial attitude forming classes and lectures, thus in those who do not meet entrepreneurs in their family, the entrepreneurial attitude does not, moreover cannot develop. This spills over at the university, where students reach the point in the second or third year where entrepreneurial attitude can start to be formed by the university faculty, which is nearly already late. Therefore, opportunities facilitating attitude forming – informal framework as well – are necessary.

In what follows, I formulate some concrete actions, which can be implemented with a relatively small expenditure in the near future:

- Organising club-style, informal events, where entrepreneurs and students can talk about entrepreneurial lifestyle and experience in an informal way.
- Organising workshops for increasing entrepreneurial success.
- Organising various competitions (business plan, start-up, etc.).
- Extending the students internship programme “More usable knowledge – more useful workforce!”, currently in progress in the SZTE, to more clusters, and creating more internship places would considerably contribute to acquiring real practical experience and knowledge.

### **Proposals related to concrete enterprise development, in particular entrepreneurship education services**

To define concrete services, first it is necessary to choose proper target groups. The first target groups to be targeted would be the students, because the SZTE can access them the most easily and most efficiently. Furthermore, the Centre needs to get experience to operate successfully and to “get the hang of” the processes. Later this scope can be expanded to potential entrepreneurs, existing entrepreneurs etc. Accordingly, services would also improve and expand through understanding the needs of the particular target groups and acquiring the required experience.

If we look at the students, based on the American, Western European and expert interviews, we need to investigate according to the following points: small-group practical education, involving entrepreneurs in education, and formal events, forums.

### **Small-group practical education**

Both the international practice and expert interviews unambiguously support that one of the most important, if not the most important entrepreneurship education service is small-group practical education. Within practical education, the development of the following competencies should be given major focus: problem solving, communication, negotiation technique, presentation, cooperation. For this the following courses could be efficient in the development of required competencies, and during practical education students can acquire knowledge that will be beneficial for them in the entrepreneurial life (team work).

### **Involving entrepreneurs in education**

Involving entrepreneurs in education is possible in many ways. On the one hand, as guest lecturers they can bring several life experiences and case studies regarding entrepreneurial lifestyle. This can mainly be interesting on BA level, as entrepreneurial attitude forming. On the other hand – which is considerably more efficient in terms of the success of entrepreneurship education – the certain entrepreneurs can bring concrete, real problems to the courses, which students have to elaborate in small groups and find solutions. The “reward” in this case can be grade, prize money etc., which can depend on the entrepreneur, the problem, but overall its substantive effect is not shown by this. From the aspect of the entrepreneurs, participating in education can also be beneficial, since it creates opportunity to cooperate with and get to know their potential future employees.

### **Formal clubs, events**

Besides informal clubs, formal student-entrepreneur meetings are also necessary. In this case interactivity is a very important factor. The entrepreneur should not only tell “his/her own story”, but encourage students to think and cooperate through discussing a certain problem, difficulty, typical pitfalls, etc.

I hope that my dissertation managed to contribute to the theoretical foundation of national entrepreneurship education on the one hand, because during my research work I observed that this field is quite a tangentially discussed issue compared to its importance. On the other hand, I hope that the proposals I have formulated can contribute to the improvement of entrepreneurship

education practice of the university to some extent, and thereby to the promotion of entrepreneurship.

Finally, I present some subjective observations which I have formulated during the examinations of the past few years.

During my research I faced an extremely interesting duality. Despite the fact that practically every EU and national document regards the enhancement and promotion of entrepreneurship, as well as entrepreneurship education as a key issue, nothing has happened almost for years. Theory and practice are extremely far from each other in this area too.

In my examinations, I also attempted to review the national higher educational practice as a secondary issue. Of course my lack of information can also play a role in the formulation of my opinion, but based on my own examinations, the read publications and the experts' opinion it can be stated that, on the one hand, we incredibly lag behind both the European and the American practice. On the other hand, the national activities are very isolated and modest: apart from Szeged, as I am aware, substantive and more complex enterprise supporting activity in the narrow sense is in progress in the Corvinus University of Budapest, in the Budapest University of Technology and Economics and in the University of Pécs.

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