



“...Bridging the Gap project will transfer and adapt an innovative methodology of training and developing entrepreneurs...”



Lifelong Learning Programme

What is going on?

The pilot phase is successfully over, on all Partners sites, and it revealed the positive impact the Bridge Model (TBM) had on different national settings and



Figure 1: The Bridge Model, example of journey 1

contexts, fulfilling the aspirations of actually creating jobs. Emphasis is now placed on the finalization of the product (methodology, handbook and step-by-step guide on how to deliver the entrepreneur development with practical advice from successful learners) using the feedback from the pilot, as well as on dissemination and exploitation activities.

What happened?

The preliminary evaluation of the pilot and the comparison of results from Partners sites, took place at the 3rd TNM in Athens, during 21-23rd of November (2014). The location was inspirational!



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Piloting and Testing of the Model

Each Partner organized a pilot to test whether the Bridge Model meet the needs of the learners from various groups and from different socio-cultural settings. The model was tested in 5 countries, in urban and rural areas, on a wide range of learners:

- women and men,
- young and older,
- disadvantaged groups,
- unemployed,
- existing entrepreneurs.

In total, thirty-two learners participated in the Pilot with a diversity of businesses ranging from fashion design and wedding planning to game development, hotel expansion, scap trading, and a theatre company which works with prisoners and young offenders, to name but a few.

Examples of success stories from the Pilot

In Spain, Berta and Silvia have created a company which offers a selection of cloths new and vintage, from renowned Spanish designers and rising stars for buying or renting.



Through personal coaching session using TBM methodology they have decided to set up a line with few clothes designed by themselves expanding their business.

In similar way, in Bulgaria, Oktay, a young entrepreneur with an internet site for guitar playing e-lessons and e-trading, decided to launch a new dynamic web-site and enriched his business activities by developing events for guitar players, thus growing his business.

In Greece, Roxane, developed an online transport platform connecting businesses with cargo carriers. TBM seminars directed her through the startup process and she is currently handling her first orders.



In Netherlands, Ruben, a young man that had set up his own business at the incubator, has now his own office in the building specializing in the creation of movie clips and animations.

Piloting evaluation

The overall evaluation showed that the use of the model had been positive, productive, practical and successful. By the end of the 30-35 hours piloting, which was spread over two months, new businesses had already been created and some of these had become incorporated as formal businesses. Some of the businesses had also earned their first income and all have made significant steps towards trading.

Learners believed that the Bridge Model was straightforward to understand and follow and they remained engaged and positive throughout the piloting.

The feedback from the 25 trainers included very favorable comments on the flexibility and adaptability of the Bridge Model and how, as an educational tool, the focus was very firmly on the learner and a truly individual pathway through the journey of creating a new business. The comprehensive and structured steps of the Bridge Model methodology provided a framework for delivering entrepreneurial education tailored to the respective needs of every learner, allowing him or her to have control over pace, focus and depth. The fact that TBM was delivered by entrepreneurs, serving as mentors, and vocational trainers, provided the necessary blend of practical experience and insight with theoretical groundings.

In summary, the Bridge model proposes a many-sided approach combining an all-inclusive theoretical methodology with practical experience, which is more in congruence with the versatile subject of entrepreneurship, while at the same time

enables learners to experiment following their own developmental potential and needs.

What's next?

A promotional DVD, presenting the successful experiences of learners and coaches using the Bridge Model, will be produced aimed to help business/enterprise incubators, employability centers and VETs at a local, regional, national and European level understand the value of the proposed methodology.

The next partnership meeting will take place in Amsterdam, on the 28th and 29th of May, 2015. See you there?

The Partners :

	<p>BTF is an incubator for social enterprises and SMEs. It offers all the necessary support to individuals or groups who wish to start a business or a social enterprise, or a community project. It delivers training to many different groups and has coached disadvantaged people extensively, in order to cut dependency and develop their aspirations and abilities so they may create/find employment.</p> 
	<p>MEH is an established VCS infrastructure organization, working in the field of social inclusion on Merseyside. It is a key stakeholder and influential support body in the VCS and has an excellent track record of delivering innovative and successful programmes through partnership, including projects supporting disadvantaged individuals into training and self-employment.</p> 
	<p>Academy of Entrepreneurship (AKEP) is a non-for-profit organization recognized Greek training structure. It acts in collaboration with the Federation of Hellenic Associations of Young Entrepreneurs aiming to contribute to the creation of a healthy business environment for the development of entrepreneurship in Greece and in Europe, as well as the proper conditions for entrepreneurship to support young entrepreneurs in their business goals and plans in the long run.</p> 
	<p>The Business Incubator-Gotse Delchev Entrepreneurship Promotion Centre (BI-GD) works towards encouraging local economic and human resources development. Its main objective is to support start-ups and SMEs within the Gotse Delchev region by providing them with high quality business services: information, consultancy, trainings and support in micro-financing.</p> 
 <p>attitude makes the difference</p>	<p>Everis is a multinational consulting company, focused on offering comprehensive business solutions to its clients, meeting all points of view in the value chain, from business strategy to system roll-out. It identifies start-ups, supports the entrepreneurs and accelerates their growth. As a part of its ongoing work, Everis is in contact with enterprises in every industry, and within the public sector.</p> 
	<p>Business Development Friesland (BDF) develops and executes projects focused on the growth of the SMEs, as well as the increase and sharing of knowledge. It participates in key start-up programs and has fostered a regional network to become a specialist on start-ups in the Province of Friesland. BDF supports the starting companies to establish their business and to help them maximize their growth over a maximum period of three years. This includes coaching, business training, guidance and a 'connecting-the-dots' networking role.</p> 

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