

# Chapter 13

## Empowering Hub

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### ABSTRACT

*Young people throughout their school careers have high aspirations and expectations regarding the value of all its educational degree's diplomas for employability. However due to the recent economic crisis, these factors were largely set aside. A lot of the Portuguese youth is living hard professional insertion processes and are suffering from low self-esteem and social exclusion. Youth unemployment leaves a "wage scar" that can hold on into middle age, developing a passive attitude and lack of social participation, which in the long run turns out to have negative implications for society. By being aware of this reality, this chapter presents a strategic plan focused on the School of Industrial Studies and Management (ESEIG), in Portugal, but with the potential to be applied elsewhere. The author wishes to contribute for the resolution of the economic crisis that the country is facing.*

### INTRODUCTION

Change is a buzzword and a reality in everyday's life, carrying economic, social and political challenges. Uncertainty makes the global economy even more unpredictable and increasing dynamics and complexity demand a new way of facing solutions. European countries, especially those of the Southern Europe, are facing a huge crisis which emphasizes the need for an economic growth. This growth should be sustained by high added value goods and services which is the only way to avoid competition on pricing strategy coming from emerging economies.

In this context, business incubators have an important role in stimulating entrepreneurship as well as creating and promoting companies. The kind of interactions between the main players are decisive, namely business incubators, industrial clusters (all producers, buyers, and suppliers), technological interface Institutions (universities, financial institutions, physical infrastructure and technological support) and policies that stimulate the learning processes between industrial clusters and institutions.

Working in the entrepreneurial area, Higher Education Institutions (HEI) need not only have good performance on its purposes and sustainability warranties but also on stakeholder's satisfaction and needs. Among others, important questions arise concerning desired skills and competences, focusing on

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-5115-7.ch013

answering to different styles and limitations of the students, professors, professionals, assets efficiency and market needs. In this context, the activities and shape of the services are an everyday challenge. The annual activity plan is just the beginning, a support where the technicians support their work. It is always a subject for continuous improvement and many of them may result from communication with other similar institutions or other technicians and users. Partnerships, collaboration and cooperation may help to build bridges to new possibilities, new knowledge, new activities or even small adjustments that add value to people, organizations and society.

This paper is focused on the answers offered to students, especially through the service offered on the Escola Superior de Estudos Industriais e de Gestão (Superior School of Industrial Studies and Management) - ESEIG, a Public Polytechnic Institute in the North of Portugal. ESEIG was founded in 1990, has 1,400 students and over 100 teaching staff, and aims the education of technical staff for managerial and technological areas, as well as at the creation of solid links with the social-economic surroundings while promoting the regional development. ESEIG is one of the seven Schools of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto (IPP), the largest Polytechnic institution in Portugal, emerging as first in the Polytechnic ranking. Along with other major universities, it is placed in the upper segment of the higher education national ranking. Within its network of schools (Education, Music and Performing Arts, Engineering, Accounting and Administration, Management and Industrial Studies, Management and Technology and Applied Health Technology) it has several specialties and covers a wide spectrum knowledge. IPP has nowadays more than 18,000 students.

The main goal of this work is to understand how an HEI can participate in the incubation value chain and optimize the relationship within the business world. Thus, the author will conduct a series of interviews and questionnaires.

However, the performance of organizations depends also on the broader context they are located. Concerns with sustainable development must always be present, having in mind that sustainable development is necessarily “people-centered and planet-sensitive” (WFUNA, 2013), guided by values of equal rights and social justice, enabled by proactive states and well-functioning institutions and shaped through the participation of empowered populations. Looking at sustainable development through a social lens moves beyond a concern with social issues and problems, to an understanding of the social factors that drive or sustain all development outcomes. It focuses attention on the importance of social structures, institutions and agency in determining social, economic, political and environmental outcomes. It also highlights the complex interactions among multiple determinants of development, the synergies among policies and programs in different domains, as well as the need for coherence and coordination across sectors among different actors and at local, national and global levels (Dugarova & Lavers, 2014).

Therefore, this paper aims to provide a possible solution to challenge and provide ESEIG’s ability to enable students with entrepreneurial and entrepreneurship skills needed for the development of any autonomously enterprise: Passion is at the kernel of the entrepreneurship along with other affective and emotional dimensions and can stimulate creativity and the recognition of new fundamental patterns information for the discovery and exploitation of promising opportunities.

In the following section, a comprehensive overview of the literature is included, concerning the role and answers delivered by entrepreneurship, innovation and university-industry collaboration. After a methodological section, we detailed the procedures for implementing data gathering from face-to-face interviews done to professional technicians and on-line survey done to ESEIG’s students. Finally, we underline the main results of the research and its applicability, its limitations and eventual futures studies about this theme.

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