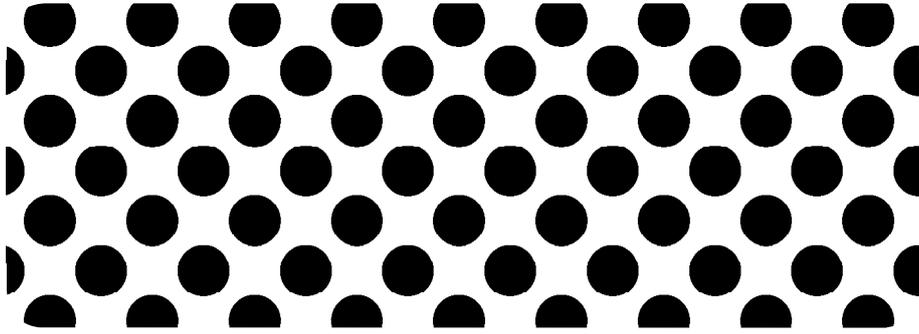


**Ideas  
for  
open innovation  
and  
co-creation!**



European Union  
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Leverage from  
the EU  
2014–2020



Helsinki-Uusimaa  
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CoINNO

 Metropolia



Haaga-Helia

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## Ideas for open innovation and co-creation!

What new could co-creating offer companies? How could students start networking and gain confidence for entrepreneurship? In this publication, we have gathered examples of how Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences support businesses on their path to growth.

We offer ideas for co-creation with businesses and universities and for possibilities for open innovation.

We challenge entrepreneurs and students to move out of their comfort zone and try something new.

We inspire to think outside of the box.

We give concrete tips for starting co-creating with us.

Our examples show that an open culture of experimentation and multi-disciplinary co-operation can create something truly new. Let's bring companies and education closer. Let's up the tempo and awaken visions.

Let's dare to co-create!

Salla Mikkonen

Project Manager / CoINNO project (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences)

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### How make the most of this publication:

The chapters are short examples of experiences and ways to co-create between higher education institutions.

They give a general picture of the latest developments in co-creation.

To find out more, please visit

[metropolia.fi/coinno](http://metropolia.fi/coinno)

### Did you become interested in co-creation?

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# 1. Start developing your business' products or services with us!

## The innovation project in a nutshell

### SALLA MIKKONEN

Universities of Applied Sciences have a long history of creating learning methods that connect work life and teaching. This is a way of improving students' working life skills and offering education that is current and connected to society.

Emphasis on innovation and multidisciplinary co-creation has been added to education. As students' move toward today's working life that is in constant change, these skills are considered vital, regardless of field of study.

Innovating with businesses replaces traditional classroom teaching in the innovation project:

1. The project starts with a business partner's genuine challenge – a need, a question or a problem that the business has.
2. The students work on solutions to the challenges in groups that consist of students from many different disciplines or fields. Innovation lecturers coach the groups. The starting point is to gain an understanding of the business' needs and then answering those needs.
3. The goal is to create a genuine, ready-to-use innova-

tion. Co-creation is the key in this process. The business is not a passive client, but participates by sparring, developing and evolving. The process creates added value for all participants; education, learning and the business.

The outcome of the process is not only to develop a new product or service or to improve on the existing ones, but also to develop innovation competencies for both businesses and students.

See more information about CoINNO project:

[www.metropolia.fi/coinno](http://www.metropolia.fi/coinno)

## 2. Could my business give an innovation challenge? A short note list for those thinking of taking part in an innovation project

LAURA-MAIJA HERO

### How will the innovation project benefit the business the most?

The client business is meant to truly benefit from the innovation project: creating real, new usable solutions is the goal of the student team. The client business should understand and accept that when innovating the end result can't be predicted.

Students participating in the innovation project get to choose among the business challenges the one that speaks to their own interests. For businesses, it is worth enticing students and showing that they are valued. Many students are already experts in their own field, they may even be employed, or already have their own business. Still, many students are on uncharted territory when it comes to the innovation project, and the nature of innovation is to sometimes fail.

It takes space for students to develop creative and practical proactivity. There is no defined task or somebody to lead a safe and guided process. The students need to develop a creative solution, take responsibility for organi-

zing and to complete the project. The innovation lecturer is there for support.

### What is a good challenge?

A good challenge from a business is:

- 1) a genuine and open-ended problem or possibility,
- 2) requires a multi-disciplinary team or significantly benefits from one,
- 3) something where several different outcomes or solutions could tentatively be predicted.

The starting point is often similar: "We need more clients", "The problem is the low funds available for marketing" or "We are not making enough sales". A marketing campaign or other specific end-goal does not leave enough room for innovation.

The most exciting challenges are very concrete, but leave space for many different possibilities. The challenge should be interesting and in the intersection of different disciplines, so that students of different fields become interested. Sparring with the innovation lecturer before-

## In a multi-disciplinary innovation project

### The business gets:

- An innovative solution to their challenge and numerous ideas for possible solution models
- The knowledge, skills, experiences, information and trends of a young target group
- A low-cost (or free) project implementation
- The innovation lecturers' high-level project guidance
- A new type of network
- New contacts to universities, lecturers and students
- To meet new potential employees
- User rights to the end-result

### The business commits to:

- Give an open challenge
- Comment on ideas
- Sparring with the team
- Arranging an introduction visit as needed
- Sharing the information needed for the project
- Eventual costs, if agreed on
- Payment for the project, if agreed on beforehand

### The business does NOT commit to:

- To pay the university without an agreement
- Paying the students a salary without an agreement
- Anything without at least an oral agreement

hand about the challenge is recommended. This way the challenge can be formulated into something that inspires and makes innovation possible.

**Examples of good challenges:**

"Our business has two sailboats like this, but our costs are high and business clients are disappearing. What do you think of that?" "We have these robots, but have only introduced them at engineering conventions, do you have any ideas?" or "Research says 13-14 year-old girls don't recognise the risks of STDs, how could that be better?" "This shopping centre has ad billboards with an internet connection. We would love clients to stay here longer. What do you think?" "Every room in the Children's Hospital will have a game console. How could it be used for recovering and rehabilitation?"

**What does the process require in practise?**

Students need enough background information, documents and materials and a possibility to dig thoroughly into the matter in a short space of time and a possibility to easily ask more questions. Introduction visits are motivating and committing, it is important to get excited!

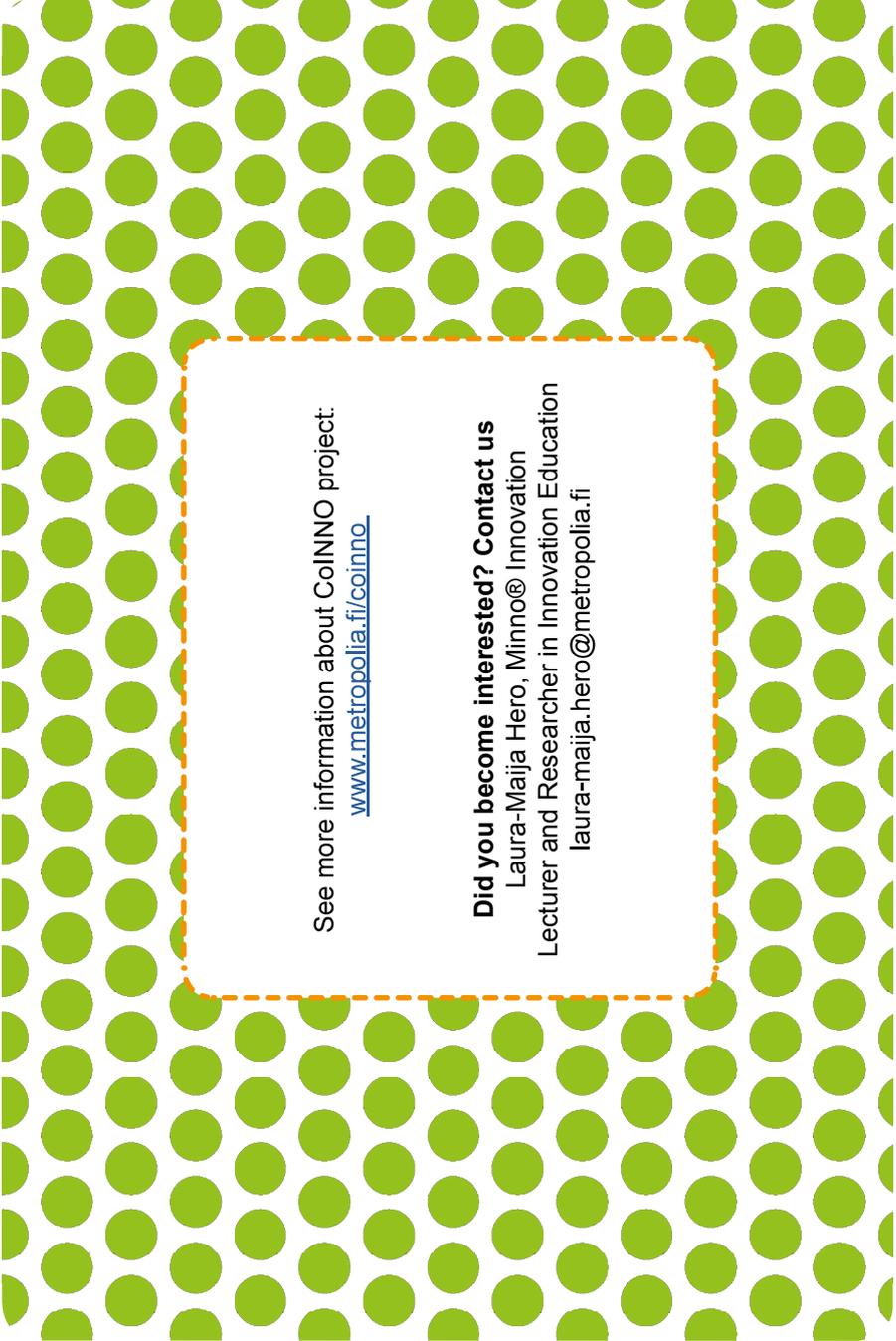
Every student team has their own innovation lecturer on behalf of the school. The business commits to comment on and guide the students work based on a scale that is tentatively assessed and agreed upon.

The concrete end-result, after the creative phases, is a project plan and when necessary a contract for user rights between the university, the business and the student team. Often the concepts and end-products are then pitched to the client business and documented in detail in a report.

**Rights to the end-results**

The rights to the end-results are agreed upon when the students have decided what to do in their project i.e. what innovation is the goal. The makers retain copyright but user rights are divided between the business and university according to agreements and applicability.

It needs to be noted that the end-result is not always a concrete product, but for example, a new service process description and test reports. User rights to these documents can be divided by contract. Spoken ideas are not enough to be under contract, but specific and described in detail end-results are. For example, the above mentioned process description and test report user rights are subjects of contract. The contract is written on a template provided by the school.



See more information about CoINNO project:  
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### 3. Co-creating! Students' experiences of innovation projects

SALLA MIKKONEN

We collected thoughts about taking part in the innovation project from students of many different disciplines. The experiences below can give you an idea of what to expect and how to prepare for the innovation project as a student, lecturer or business.

#### Motivation for working together

Students felt it was a very good and motivating starting point to be able to choose which business challenge they wanted to take. This ensures the student is motivated to work with precisely the business in question. The positive atmosphere and motivation are contagious: students' excitement feeds into co-creating and the business' motivation. The business' motivation feeds the student's motivation to reach the end-goal. From positive starting points, the innovation project will be a win-win situation for all.

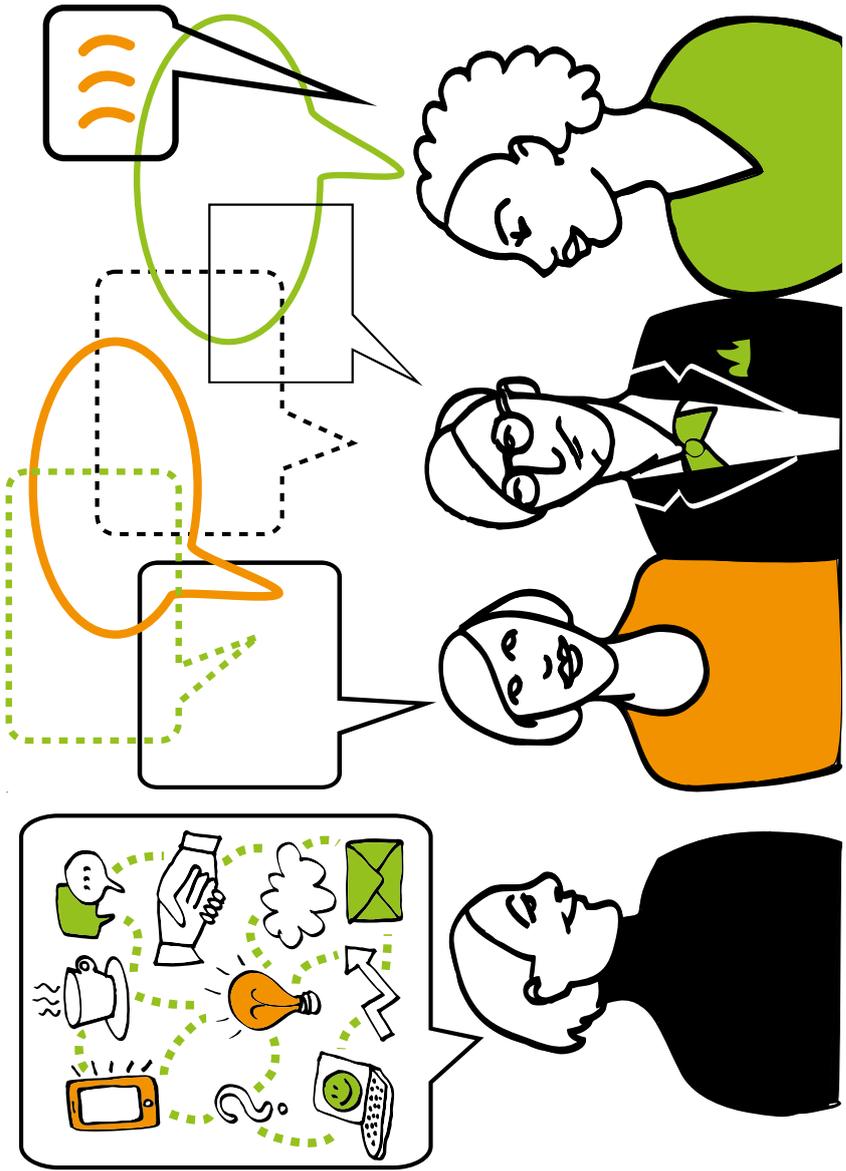
Based on experiences we recommend talking about the innovation project and its goals openly between business partners and students already before starting a project. This ensures that the innovation project is truly something the business needs at this time. Soon after the project

start, it is a good idea to give the students an opportunity to visit to familiarise themselves with the business and to talk about common goals. The further the first meet-up is pushed, the further the ideas start to drift apart between the business and the students. Motivation and commitment is key in co-creation!

It is worth noting that the business' attitude and way of communicating with students is either a motivating factor or a discouraging factor. If students receive timely and regular constructive criticism, which is also encouraging, motivation soars. If the business shows little interest in the student team's work, often the team's interest in the project falls flat.

#### Showing trust and value

Everybody wants a good end-result. Students are excited to be working with real-life business challenges. They feel challenged and are doing 'real work'. If the students start feeling during the process that they are innovating something that will never see daylight, without any real possibility to implement the innovation, they will value the



process less. Work experienced as useless is never rewarding for anyone. That is why we want to pilot the innovations developed during the process.

In the innovation project, the trust required for innovating is created from scratch, which is why building trust is worth working on. Trust is built when the business values the students as equal co-creator partners and trusts them with an ambitious challenge to solve. An ambitious enough challenge from the business gives the message to students that they can trust the business' assessment on the area where innovation is needed.

### **Communication and sharing information**

Students look at the business with new eyes. At the beginning, this may cause challenges in finding a common language. Especially in the beginning of the process, it is important to articulate self-evident matters and dare to share tacit knowledge. When the business meets students face to face and reserves time for communication, you can experience mutual respect for skills and ideas.

When a basis for communication has been created in the beginning, it is easier to give frequent feedback. The feedback is also more honest on both sides. Frequent feedback matters to the students' experience of development happening in genuine co-operation with the business.

At its best, the cooperation can be very fruitful and mutually beneficial. Feedback is given freely and there is courage to ask hard questions without it being perceived as discouraging. Talking about trouble points has often brought us closer to more innovative results than staying silent about them.

### **Freedom and doing what inspires you**

From a student's point of view, the innovation project includes the freedom to find new potential in themselves and gain an understanding of strengths. At the same time, this freedom test a student's tolerance for uncertainty and the group's strength as a team.

The business is also facing something new: how do you co-operate with students without having to compromise too much on your own established systems of organizing work? Especially many small businesses have been born as a means walking your own path and a desire to do what inspires you. The entrepreneurs and businesses they work with often inspire students. However, there also needs to be space for the entrepreneur or business to be inspired by the students and still be able to keep walking their own path. That is why it is good to think of the innovation project as a learning process for all – and to ensure that the process is not too far dictated by anyone but still the freedom and space to innovate remains.



See more information about CoINNO project:

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## 4. Experts at your service: This is how lecturers help to create new

### MARIA ALANKO

Our lecturers are not only lecturers, but also experts on co-creation and the innovation project. They could best be described as coaches whose expertise is at the core of support, brainstorming and problem solution processes.

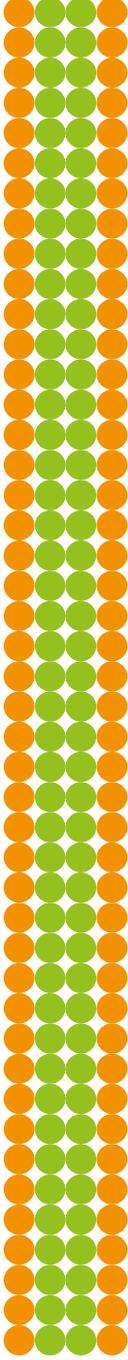
A well-tested option is to get the expert lecturer to coach the organisation's and students' common innovation project, examples and experiences of which can be found in this publication. The end-result of the innovation project can be an idea that has been found to be functional, a new type of service or a proto-type for a product.

In practice, the expert innovation lecturer supports the co-creation of new products and services during the different stages of the co-creation process. The coaches also help to give insight into the practices and stages of co-creation, so that students and businesses continue to

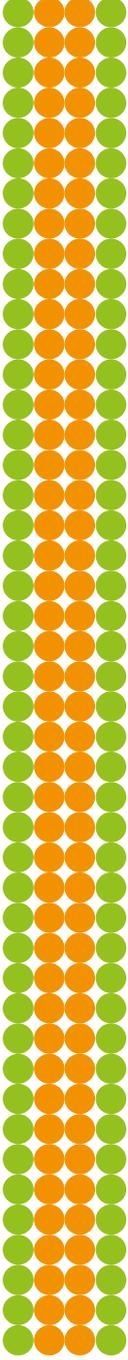
gain value in the future. Afterwards, the business can adapt what they have learned about development to growing their business. With our experts, it is easy to take the first step in creating something new.

In addition to the innovation project, our expert coaches have a wide range of options and forms of co-operation for the needs of businesses in their extensive toolkits. We tailor the best possible service package, a way of co-operating, to respond to each business' unique needs. It could involve sparring within co-creation, taking thoughts, implementing them in practice in development projects, workshops, and coaching.

The creative energy of students often helps in finding new, work life based solutions for businesses. Come develop something new with us!



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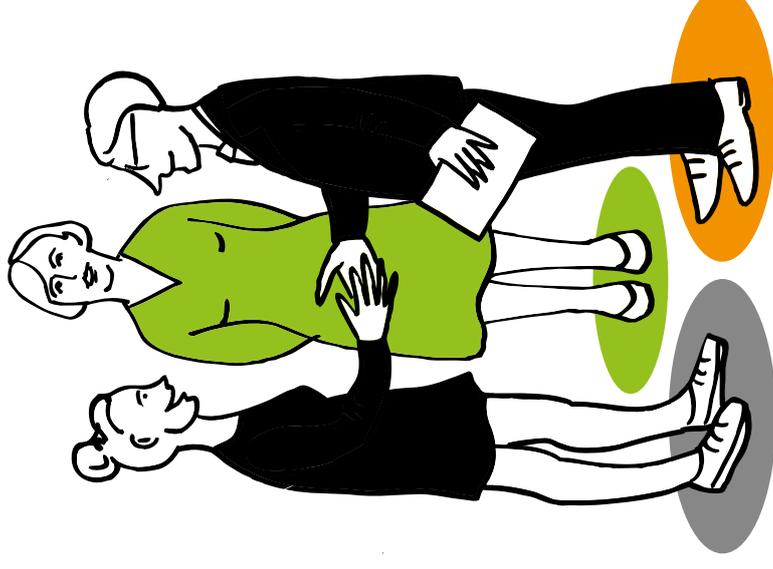
## 5. Take advantage of our networks! What can a business gain from existing services?

### HEIKKI RANNIKKO

"The Finnish paradox" is a situation, where despite high level innovation activity, new growing and employing businesses are not born. Is there something blocking new ideas and inventions to evolve into businesses? Among others, a business ecosystem point of view is appropriate for pondering this question.

A business ecosystem can be divided into three parts:

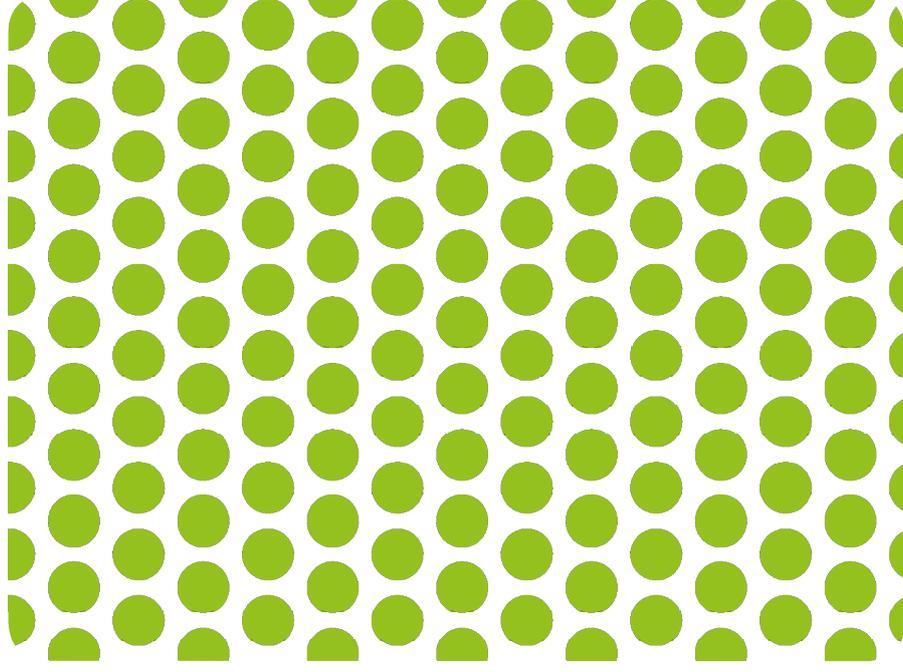
- 1) **The "Start-up" -system** refers to mechanisms that support and encourage starting a business at the early stages. Examples are cultural norms, education and encouraging entrepreneurialism.
- 2) **The "Stand-up" -system** refers to supportive actions to start a business. These include grants (e.g. a startup grant), spin-out mechanisms or advising services for starting businesses.
- 3) **The "Scale-up" -system** includes mechanisms that aim at supporting the growth of businesses. This includes capital investments and private and public Enterprise Accelerators.



Examining business ecosystems highlights that innovation alone is not enough. Starting new businesses needs an individual (an entrepreneur) willing to take a risk in commercialising an innovation. In addition, there needs to be favourable conditions for such risk taking.

The CoINNO project explored what the ecosystem of the creative and cultural fields is made of and to what extent it targets the entrepreneurial ecosystem's different parts (start-up, stand-up, scale-up). In addition, the project explored the possible roles of the Universities of Applied Sciences in this ecosystem in the future. As a case example, Metropolia UAS's role and future in the ecosystem of creative and culture disciplines was explored.

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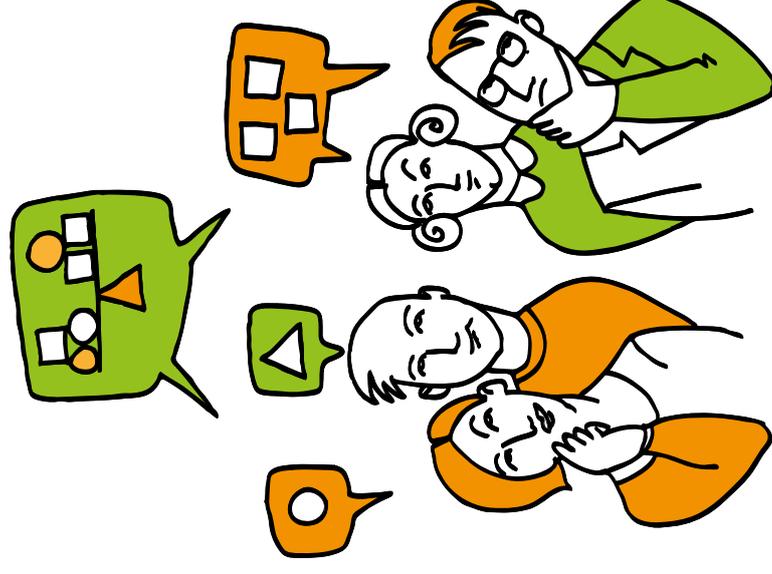


## 6. Invite your clients as co-creating partners! What is made possible by co-creating?

### KATRI HALONEN

Are your clients an unused resource in your business? In the CoINNO's challenges businesses, students and lecturers solved the development challenges given by businesses. Often the journey towards the solution was the most important part of the process, because especially younger generations are not satisfied as only customers or consumers. They want to influence the product in the development stage and adapt it. In that way clients are seen as central partners in co-creation.

There are many different shades and forms in co-creation partnerships. In the culture sector, co-productions have become common, where ideas, production tasks and communication have been given to a crowd interested in a common theme. There is a new active crew of agents, whose vocabulary includes crowdsourcing and collective intelligence, co-creation and "do-it-yourself"-culture. The development process of the product or service may be the most exciting stage of product development, where in a multi-discipline and multi-generational co-operation interesting opportunities for learning are present for all.





It takes a lot of skill to entice a client to be a co-creation partner. A business that wants volunteering clients to be development partners to grow their business need new tools. There must be ways to create an inspiring and exciting atmosphere and especially to maintain it. Simultaneously the needs of the business must be adapted to different roles, that are meaningful from an individual viewpoint, and to recognise the motivating factors of the individuals in the environment,

The activity of the client is important, but an artist cannot give a paintbrush to every potential client accompanied by a request to paint. In the CoINNO project forms for co-creation processes were created between the local artist network in Arabianranta and clients were inspired to take part in the process.

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## 7. Growth in your own local area! Could your neighbourhood have its own local currency?



KATRI HALONEN

### **If euros aren't enough – let's print our own money!**

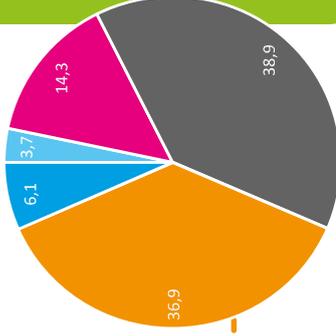
Could the leisure sector's service network located in brick and mortar stores take off with their own currency? 80-90% of money used in a local chain store flows out of the neighbourhood – often into the pockets of the chain and global businesses. What if you could make money circulate on a local level from one service to another? There has already been developed a solution: thousands of complementary currencies complementing the official currency.

During the past five years, complementary currencies have proven their power in many different countries. A local currency can support the vitality and turnover of small businesses in the neighbourhood as consumers aim their purchases to local businesses. Simultaneously, and even more importantly, it has strengthened the local community and their pride of their local services and products. Every local currency reflects their own community and the long communal development process behind it.

Local spending is also ecological and offers and alternative with a local flair to chain stores and globalisation. What if we created a local currency in Helsinki Arabianranta? Arabianranta is a locally strong community with many inspiring local leisure-sector services whose growth could be supported with a local currency. As it is the place of birth of Helsinki as a city, there would be a wide range of options for the design of the currency starting from Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden.

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## Case Brixton Pound

Brixton Pound B£ is south-London's Brixton's own local currency, which can be used as payment in over 300 local businesses. Of these leisure-sector services are offered by three quarters. The revenue and growth have been quite modest; chain stores are not going anywhere. Nevertheless, the significance of B£ for the cohesion of the local community is great. It echoes pride in the local area, brings in tourists and the desirability of Brixton as a place to live is rising steeply.

- Beauty and hairdressing services
- Welfare services
- Cafés and restaurants
- Cultural and arts services
- Others

PICTURE 1. The leisure-sector's businesses accepting the Brixton Pound.

## Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the innovation lecturers of Haaga-Helia UAS and Metropolia UAS, who boldly took part in co-creation experiments.

We also want to thank the operators in the Arabianranta area, especially the artist network ART, for enthusiastically taking part in city development.

Finally, a special thank you to Helsingin Yrittäjät Vanhakaupunki ry and Harry Mälkki, who made many encounters possible and enabled ideas during the entire two-year project.





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