

Social sciences and humanities – a source of self-confident, successful entrepreneurship

October 2014 saw participants in an international symposium at Leipzig's Social Impact Lab take an in-depth look at the start-up culture in the social sciences and humanities.

Working with researchers from the University of Wrocław, the team, headed by Wojciech Roskiewicz from the Leipzig Fraunhofer Center, examined the similarities and differences between the start-up cultures of the social sciences and humanities in Germany and Poland. The one-year study was based on a review of the relevant literature and on comparative interviews with a range of sponsors, multipliers and start-up entrepreneurs in Germany and Poland.

The subsequent analysis showed several different approaches to start-ups. The study also identified factors that facilitate entrepreneurship within the humanities and social sciences. To conclude the one-year project, over 40 researchers and practitioners from sectors providing support to start-ups were invited to the Social Impact Lab in Leipzig to discuss the current situation with regard to the start-up culture in the social sciences and humanities fields.

"No specific application" - this ludicrous notion was dispelled in an address by Professor Peer Pasternack, Director of the Institute of Higher Education Research at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg. The political scientist illustrated the sig-

nificance of the humanities and social sciences to the economy, culture and regional policy. The subsequent panel discussion was primarily an opportunity to hear from start-up founders themselves, who reflected the same kind of self-confident, successful entrepreneurship as the start-up founders surveyed as part of the study had done. Why is entrepreneurship in the social sciences and humanities fields still seen as the exception? The discussion participants were all in agreement that university start-up funding programs need to focus more strongly on start-ups in the social sciences and humanities, and that the start-up entrepreneurs themselves have a duty to raise their profile as role models for students interested in founding start-ups.

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Oliver Mauroner has held the post of Junior Professor for Innovation and Creativity Management at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar since September 2013, researching ways for organizations to identify and exploit creative potential. He is involved in the university's neudeli start-up incubators and assists start-ups with putting together business plans and finding start-up funding.

The University of Wrocław and the German Polish Science Foundation joint project provides an overview of academic foundations and start up cultures in Poland and Germany. Not only German, but also Polish experts and Funding were interviewed as part of a country comparison analysis. The responses identified the main challenges, in particular with relation to the social sciences and humanities.

"The Leipzig symposium provided me with some great food for thought and some very interesting contacts for my work in the start-up workshop neudeli at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. There was some very frank discussion of the various challenges involved in supporting start-ups from the social sciences and humanities fields."

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