



# ELIE

employability: learning through  
international entrepreneurship

# NEWSletter

Issue 4

[www.elie-project.eu](http://www.elie-project.eu)

## ELIE Final dissemination event

The final ELIE dissemination event took place in Thessaloniki, Greece, on Tuesday October 9th, at the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Several participants, including regional policy makers' representatives, SMEs entrepreneurs, as well as students and academics attended the conference to hear the results of the ELIE project.

During the event project partners from the UK, Finland, Poland and Greece put together presentations, which explored: the project's implications for students, SMEs and policy makers; the ELIE learning materials; and the feedback received from the participants of the focus groups and workshops.



Photo: ELIE Final Dissemination Event

There was an especially strong focus on the ELIE learning materials and the practical path that someone could follow in order to benefit from the experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs, 200 of who were interviewed during the project. Visit our website to read their inspiring stories in a series of 40 case studies.

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## Developing Learning Materials Together

The ELIE project worked closely with students from the outset to make sure the materials produced were relevant to their needs. *“Cooperation with students and entrepreneurs whilst working on the learning materials was very exciting. The students and SME representatives around Europe jointly determined the topics to be covered and the structure of the learning materials. We couldn't have accomplished all this without them!”* said Satu Aaltonen, University of Turku. The team wanted to be certain that we were developing resources that covered the main benefits, practicalities and issues in international entrepreneurship for students in an engaging and accessible way.



## ELIE Outcomes for Students

The ELIE team could not have produced its resources without the enthusiastic help of students from all around the world. They took part in workshops, tried out various versions of materials and completed evaluation forms; student support was absolutely crucial to the success of the project.

**Students and the ELIE Case Studies:** Many students are making use of the ELIE project case studies in very varied circumstances. Lauriane who is a student from France studying for a Bachelor's degree in Entrepreneurship at a UK university said *"these case studies are so inspiring, I am going to use these for my dissertation next year"*.

International students on the MSc in Management at a leading UK management school, are learning from the research methods used in the ELIE project with lectures and workshops based on the ELIE project in their Qualitative Research Methods Module.

**ELIE Inspiring Students into Entrepreneurship:** Many students have found that ELIE resources encouraged them to consider entrepreneurship as an option after finishing their studies for the first time. A female student from Greece, studying psychology said; *"I never realized that employability and entrepreneurship were relevant concepts for non-business students. Through the workshop I attended I saw that even psychology students can be engaged in entrepreneurship, and frankly, they can offer a lot of services to people beyond therapy"*. Another male business administration student from Kosovo commented; *"I had previous experience with business as a trainee. I had worked in environmental monitoring and sustainability projects in the past, and this is what I want to do as soon as I finish my Bachelor studies. The workshops and the learning materials provided the kick start to think about expanding my business ideas for environmental sustainability to other countries. It really helps to know of the stories of other immigrant entrepreneurs"*. Already we know of six cases where students who have accessed the materials have started their own business, including a boarding kennels for dogs needing daycare while their owners work and an innovative form of knitted garment manufacture, which a UK student has moved to Japan to establish. Other business start-ups inspired by ELIE include an electric bike hire scheme for students, an urban allotment and food production co-operative and a Manga Art and Video Gaming Design Company.

**ELIE Helping Students Learn:** Our learning materials include links to further reading, other resources and external sites as well as to the ELIE Case Studies. Students in Poland commented that *"The most helpful part of the materials was the work developing entrepreneurial skills and the part about funding new business where pros and cons of each way were presented. The additional links in each module are very valuable and helpful"*. One MSc student, Alisa, from China, who found out about ELIE through her research methods module said; *"what I like about this is that we can see how research really works and how it can help make a difference"*. Other students particularly liked the way the material has been organised *"Not only pure theory is presented, but also we can read some practical advice. Everything is presented in a clear way ensuring great transparency. The content is easy to read and the way it is presented makes reading it pleasant"* was one of the many positive comments on this aspect of the ELIE learning materials (Students from the University of Lodz).



Photo: Students taking part in an ELIE workshop: cakes and fun provided

The ELIE learning materials was also popular with continuing education students who have been introduced to them as part of a Diploma in International Business at the University of Salford; Kevin, a SME owner taking the diploma to help him in internationalising his business said; *“I found the topics clearly presented and helpful. I will be going back to the website often as I can learn a lot from it”.*

## ELIE Outcomes for SMEs

Many SMEs helped the ELIE project team. Apart from the 200 International Entrepreneurs who agreed to be interviewed, many more took part in workshops and events and helped with the development of our learning resources. Students have been able to network with ELIE project entrepreneurs and they in turn have maintained links with students through offering live projects and through coming into universities as Guest Lecturers, inspiring students even further.



In Greater Manchester the learning resources that have been created by the ELIE project have already been of great value to the young entrepreneurs who are not students but who work with The Business Group. They have also been used by numerous people who have been involved in the University of Salford's graduate incubation space, Origin. *“As part of our Community Enterprise in Broughton project we have been able to use some of the resources to help community organisations and people who want to start their own business to improve their knowledge and skills and help them to start or grow their own businesses or community organisations”* (Jon Monk, The Business Group Salford).

*“Greek SMEs’ evaluation of the ELIE project was very positive. Greek entrepreneurs considered that they gained useful information through the project’s learning materials about expanding their business in a foreign country as well as building networks. Some of them are going to educate their employees using the learning materials”.* (Georgia Molioti, TCCI).

*“In Finland many immigrants were initially reluctant to take the first step into entrepreneurship even though they recognised that new business opportunities in Finland for immigrants were significant. Now more immigrant entrepreneurs are inspired by the ELIE project and able to use the ELIE learning materials to help them in making an effort in order to better fit to their clients’ demands and ethics”* (Arcady Khotin, Ardin Software).

## ELIE for Policy Makers

The significance of ELIE project findings for policy makers has also been noted by partners; *“ELIE can add to the existing policy frameworks of the EU for business venturing. Improving access to knowledge, shifting the paradigm, and reshaping language education, appear as the three most important policy implications of ELIE”* (Professor Panagiotis Ketikidis, SEERC).

Our findings have been developed into a brochure for policy makers, to inform them of the needs of SMEs and potential entrepreneurs when working in a new country. This will be mailed out and electronically distributed at regional, national and European Union level.

## 4th Partner’s Meeting in Thessaloniki

Our last Partners' Meeting took place on October 8-9, 2012 at the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI). All partners expressed their gratitude for the opportunity of working with the team and participating in this inspiring project.

*“We were positively surprised by the smoothness of our collaboration in the partnership. Every partner worked with a great deal of commitment, creativity and punctuality”* partners from the University of Turku noted.

## ELIE Outcomes for Project Partners

Taking part in the ELIE project has also been significant for the academics and SMEs that were directly engaged in the initial planning of the project and the subsequent work over the last two years developing and delivering the learning materials. Elisa Akola of the University of Turku in Finland noted that *“The true experiences of 200 immigrant entrepreneurs in Europe form the basis for the ELIE learning materials. Interviewing 50 immigrant entrepreneurs in each partner country was a challenging but extremely rewarding process. We heard so many fascinating stories the participants had gone through when starting up a business in a new country. These real experiences were invaluable for us when developing the learning materials. I believe that the interviews were also important as a channel to have the interviewees' stories heard and hopefully being used as a way to help others in similar situations”*. Many of them were glad of the chance to share their stories and know that others in a similar position would be able to learn from their experiences. This knowledge in turn inspired the ELIE team to strive to produce the very best outcomes possible.

Dr Bartosz Kalinowski from the University of Lodz in Poland is delighted that the ELIE project external evaluators have found this to be a well-planned and well organised initiative. The learning material was evaluated as highly useful by SMEs and students alike and filled the gaps that existed in their knowledge.

## ELIE for the Future

Working on the ELIE projects was a fascinating and inspiring experience for all partners. Elena Vasilieva the Project Manager at the University of Salford said; *“We all very much enjoyed not only working together as a team and also interacting with diverse group of entrepreneurs and students who were extremely inspirational to many of us. The results of the project have encouraged partners to think more deeply about barriers to entrepreneurship and what can be done to help entrepreneurs.”*

We found that the ELIE results on barriers to entrepreneurship meant that a lot more work was needed and a new project, ELIEMENTAL will build on the work of ELIE over the next two years.

## ELIE via Social Networks

Our LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook pages are up-and-running and attracting new followers to ELIE :

[http://www.linkedin.com/groups/ELIE-employability-learning-through-international-4450374?gid=4450374&trk=hb\\_side\\_g](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/ELIE-employability-learning-through-international-4450374?gid=4450374&trk=hb_side_g)

<http://twitter.com/#!/Elieproject>

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/ELIE-Employability-Learning-Through-International-Entrepreneurship/188190561207094>

