

Peer-to-peer exchange visit from Crédal (Belgium) to PSYBT (UK, Scotland)

7-10 October 2012

Context:

Crédal is currently exploring ways of better helping young entrepreneurs to start a business. The observation that young people face specific obstacles when they want to become self-employed is emerging more and more. The most common difficulties young people find themselves confronted with when starting a business are their lack of experience and problems to access finance. It is therefore becoming increasingly obvious that young entrepreneurs would greatly benefit from the design of a specific micro-loan programme aimed at this particular public.

Objectives of the visit:

The objectives of the visit were to share knowledge and learn from PSYBT's experience with young people in order to:

1. Understand their specific needs and expectations when starting a business
2. Find out what products were developed by PSYBT in order to adapt to this specific group and respond to their needs
3. Understand how PSYBT recruits clients in this market

Main expertise of PSYBT:

- Experience in communicating with young people about entrepreneurship and how to start a business
- Experience in accompanying young people in the process of starting a business.
- Experience in granting microcredits to young people.
- Experience in supporting young people to sustain and grow their business
- Experience in utilising EU funds
- Experience in working with volunteer mentors

Programme of the visit:

First day:

- field visit Ayrshire Regional Office :
 - o Opportunity to observe a panel meeting where young people present their business idea and a panel of volunteers decide on their application for funding.
 - o Overview of Regional operations and PSYBT partnership with Business Gateway
- Series of short meetings with key staff who provided an informal presentation of the Youth Business Scotland operations. Opportunity to compare with Crédal model.

Second day:

- Breakfast seminar hosted by the Royal Bank of Scotland. During the presentation, we were given an outlook of the Scottish economy and a highlight of key risks and uncertainties. We also had the opportunity to meet 1 of PSYBT's Regional Managers.
- Series of short meetings with key staff:
 - o Evelyn McDonald from the Growth and Innovation Funds.
 - o Geraldine O'Connor gave us an overview of the Prince's Trust activities (other than the loan programmes)

Third day (half-day):

- Visit reflection and next steps with Martin Ferry

Key success factors of PSYBT:

- From the start, PSYBT has been focusing on young people aged from 18 to 25 years old and has a clear and strong communication.
- PSYBT has a strong local presence: 18 regional managers implicated in local life and networking with partners who work in the sector of youth entrepreneurship.
- PSYBT has a unique partner to help young people with the creation of independent activity: Business Gateway, prescriptor of 75% of PSYBT's young clients and host to PSYBT's regional offices.
- Throughout the years, the organisation has gathered a pool of 800 volunteer mentors, with various specialties in link with business creation and management.
- Backoffice staff, based in Glasgow, supports efficiently operational local offices.
- Since 2007, a performant IT system has been set up, which increases the programme's effectiveness.

- PSYBT helps young entrepreneurs to network by organising various events and talks to which they invite young entrepreneurs they have supported previously.
- The organization also supports young entrepreneurs to whom they have granted a loan to compete in national award competitions.
- PSYBT exists since 25 years and has established a strong credibility in Scotland. The organisation benefits from strong awareness amongst the Scottish population.