



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

Entrepreneurship Unit

Annual report 2023

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“TSE for Sustainable Futures”

I am confident that Turku School of Economics is developing and moving ahead with the time. In 2023, the School revisited its research focus areas. Each discipline was asked to identify their current research focus areas and also set future research areas. In entrepreneurship, we have done research in entrepreneurship across different levels: individual, organisational and societal level.

This is also our ambition for the future but with a renewed lens. In the future we will focus more on critical entrepreneurship research to understand how entrepreneurship is not always something good but can have negative consequences. Relatedly we are interested in inclusive entrepreneurship research. At the individual level we will focus on developing new knowledge of entrepreneurship through the eyes of immigrants, ageing and disabled individuals, for example. This work is already ongoing in our ‘High-skilled internationals’ (www.hiwe.fi) research project investigating immigrants coming from different countries and via different paths to Finland.

At the organisational level, we share an interest in understanding sustainable value creation, where value is not only monetary value. Finally, we continue to do research on entrepreneurship policies at the societal level. It is interesting to understand how the different policies, like cultural policy on one hand and innovation policy on the other hand can work together for the benefit of the creative ecosystems, which is the interest in our ongoing “Sustainable and Innovative Creative Ecosystems” <https://sites.utu.fi/ecocrin/> -research project.

Based on the research focus areas identified by the disciplines, the School defined that its new areas of focus are 1) Green transition and sustainable planetary futures, 2) Geopolitics, security and global business, 3) AI, data and emerging technologies in business, 4) Expertise, well-being and agency in future organisations, 5) Business networks, platforms and engagement, 6) Economic policy and markets. I think this is a pretty exciting terrain also to rethink entrepreneurship research in the future.

The slogan for our School is ‘*TSE for Sustainable Futures*’. In entrepreneurship unit our ambition is to strive towards sustainable and socially responsible entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. As a concrete example, our unit was given the responsibility and mandate to develop a new International Bachelor program in Sustainable and Social Entrepreneurship. The first student cohort will be enrolled in 2025. This curriculum development is strongly supported by our ongoing “Transforming Enterprise Education” www.transformingee.eu -project. This project has the ambition of transforming entrepreneurship education towards hope, social and ecological justice and developing new learning approaches to support this transformation.

With these words, I wish to leave you with the hope for the better future that we can enact together!

Ulla Hytti

Professor

Head of the Entrepreneurship Unit



RESEARCH
WITH IMPACT

Research on entrepreneurship and new working modes

Entrepreneurship is one of the areas of strength at the Turku School of Economics. Research activities at the Entrepreneurship Unit focus on two themes in particular: entrepreneurship and new working modes in the digitalised economy; and entrepreneurial behaviour and business growth. These two main fields are connected through theoretical approaches in entrepreneurship and sociology, research methodology, science and technology studies, governance, and empirical studies. Research encompasses the processes of entrepreneurship and innovation as well as entrepreneurial behaviour from the point of view of business creation, growth, internationalisation, and renewal in different contexts in both private and public sector organisations. The Entrepreneurship Unit consists of about a dozen researchers with varied scientific backgrounds.



12

entrepreneurship
professionals



4

competitively funded
research projects



5

peer-reviewed
journal articles



9

presentations in
conferences



11

monographs,
reports and
book chapters

Multidisciplinary scholarly excellence and international cooperation

We work internationally and emphasise scholarly excellence and policy relevance based on solid scientific knowledge particularly in entrepreneurship. The cornerstones of our entrepreneurship research are well-established multidisciplinary research groups, high-profile international research initiatives and networks, such as the European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB), a strong track record in competitive research funding as well as close cooperation with policy makers.

JUFO publications 2011–2023

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
JUFO 1	9	1	3	5	9	9	6	10	5	9	10	4	3
JUFO 2	6	3	1	5	6	6	4	1	0	3	0	3	1
JUFO 3	0	0	0	3	1	8	1	0	1	0	2	0	1

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR RESEARCH PROJECTS IN 2023

High-skilled internationals: bottom-up insights into policy innovation for work and entrepreneurship in Finland (HIWE)

The need for high-skilled internationals is broadly recognised in Finland. HIWE is a collaborative research project between Turku School of Economics and the University of Eastern Finland which started in 2022. The research seeks an understanding of how to get more high-skilled internationals involved to Finnish working life, innovation, and entrepreneurship. HIWE research concentrates on gaining bottom-up knowledge on how these talents experience the Finnish labour market and entrepreneurial opportunities in the country. The central question is whether the existing innovation policy and practices can respond to the challenges that international experts consider important to them.

In 2023, we finalised the life-story interviews with 61 high-skilled internationals representing diverse backgrounds and paths to Finland and analysing the findings. Five composite stories were developed and published on the project website (www.hiwe.fi). We presented the findings in international research conferences and for the international advisory board as well as in research workshops, for example, when Professor Emerita Edwina Pio visited us in October 2023. In addition, we developed the ecosystem maps for selected regions representing the different organisations and services important for high-skilled internationals. Further, we aimed at identifying the key policies supporting high-skilled internationals and assessing how they respond to the challenges identified in the interviews. Through the findings and workshops the project aims to develop and test a new type of participatory model for the development of innovation policy. This cooperative model brings together international experts and key stakeholders to challenge traditional hierarchical decision-making in the society. In 2023, the project team also focused on developing the co-creation workshops and inviting the participants for them. Through these workshops in 2024 we aim to develop a model that supports the participation of international experts in the production of policy innovations. The project produces cooperatively written policy recommendations and a road map, which can be used to transfer the results of the project to policy actions and practice.

The research project will end in September 2024. The team leader in Turku is Professor Ulla Hytti (ulla.hytti@utu.fi), the research team in Turku includes also Project Researcher Satu Aaltonen (satu.aaltonen@utu.fi), Senior Researcher Tommi Pukkinen (tommi.pukkinen@utu.fi), Doctoral Researcher Anna Elkina (anna.s.elkina@utu.fi) and Research Assistant Oskar Aaltonen (oskar.aaltonen@utu.fi). Further information on the research consortium and on the project from the project website: www.hiwe.fi



Satu Aaltonen and Anna Elkina presenting HIWE at Talent Boost event.

Sustainable and innovative creative ecosystems: Ecological Approach to Policy Innovation for Creative Sectors in Finland (ECOCRIN)

ECOCRIN is a research project funded by Business Finland and conducted in collaboration with Turku School of Economics Entrepreneurship Unit, Finland Futures Research Centre and Turku School of Economics Pori Unit. The growth and innovation potential of creative sectors is acknowledged in Finland and globally, but scarcely realised. Such creative potential remains undiscovered and this may jeopardize the economic sustainability of the scattered creative sectors. ECOCRIN contributes to innovation policy and related research. First, ECOCRIN addresses how policies could support 'unleashing' the potential of creative sectors for growth and innovation. Second, the project experiments and suggests new ways of designing and implementing policies targeted at creative sectors. The systemic policy innovation of ECOCRIN is to integrate cultural and innovation policies to the needs. of creative ecosystems.



ECOCRIN identifies the needs. of creative ecosystems at the grassroots level and, together with local, regional and national actors and stakeholders, creates an ecological approach to innovation policy for creative sectors that respects the planetary boundaries. Accordingly, ECOCRIN co-creates a Roadmap to implement the co-created ecological approach to support growth, innovation and internationalisation of creative sectors. ECOCRIN aims to achieve policy synergies by engaging key stakeholders to the joint design of policy briefs and tools.

The research project will be conducted in 1.10.2023–30.9.2025. The research team in the Entrepreneurship Unit includes Professor Jarna Heinonen (jarna.heinonen@utu.fi), who is the Principal Investigator of the project, Senior Researcher Kaisa Hytönen (kaisa.hytonen@utu.fi), Senior Researcher Tommi Pukkinen (tommi.pukkinen@utu.fi) and Senior Research Fellow Pekka Stenholm (pekka.stenholm@utu.fi). More information on the project from the project website: <https://sites.utu.fi/ecocrin/>

Boosting business founding activity and growth!

Entrepreneurship Unit and VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland Ltd collaboratively conducted a study on business start-up activity for the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland. The objective of the research project was to capture a snapshot of the business start-up activity in Finland, along with the factors that influence it. This was achieved by utilizing data from the GEM survey, Statistics Finland, and other national and international reference data, research reports, scientific articles and project workshops.

The findings of the study portray a challenging picture of entrepreneurship in Finland: only few Finns launch new businesses, entrepreneurs' median earnings are modest and they rarely aspire growth. The examined benchmark countries, Latvia, Ireland, Netherlands and Norway, show that entrepreneurial activity could be promoted among e.g., young people, female and highly educated. Our findings illustrate how Finnish entrepreneurship policy has been successful in eliminating barriers to entrepreneurship and fostering a solid business environment. However, solely removing obstacles and reducing the thresholds – i.e., addressing the question, 'why do I not start a business?' – is insufficient. It is equally crucial to focus on those who do not view entrepreneurship as an attractive option – i.e., answering the question, 'why would I start a business?' – and to discover ways to encourage those individuals to entrepreneurship. Our study clearly demonstrates that Finnish entrepreneurship policy has failed to do so. The benchmark countries provide valuable examples of entrepreneurship policy initiatives to be considered for our Finnish context.

The study presents bold suggestions for Finnish entrepreneurship policy in order to boost business founding and growth. The final report (in Finnish) can be downloaded from the Harnessing Knowledge -site (tietokayttoon.fi) about the Government's analysis, assessment and research activities.

Report (in Finnish): [Vauhtia yritysten perustamisaktiivisuuteen ja kasvuun: Tilannekuva yrittäjyydestä ja uuden yritystoiminnan edistämisestä Suomessa](#)

Policy suggestions are also summarised in a blog (in Finnish) written by the researchers. [Kuinka saada kasvua ja yrittäjyyttä Suomeen?](#)

The statistics and core findings are further summarised in an interactive Power-BI dashboard (in Finnish): [Tilannekuva yrittäjyydestä ja uuden yritystoiminnan edistämisestä Suomessa](#)

The study has supported the implementation of the Entrepreneurship Strategy under the Government Programme. The project was finalised in spring 2023 and it was led by Professor Jarna Heinonen and the project team in Entrepreneurship unit included Senior Research Fellow Pekka Stenholm and Senior Researcher Fellow Tommi Pukkinen.

For more information: Professor Jarna Heinonen (jarna.heinonen@utu.fi) Senior Researcher Tommi Pukkinen (tommi.pukkinen@utu.fi) and Senior Research Fellow Pekka Stenholm (pekka.stenholm@utu.fi).



Transforming Entrepreneurship Education (TrEE)

The main aim of the Transforming Entrepreneurship Education (acronym: TrEE) project is to change direction and practice of entrepreneurship education in Europe. The TrEE project is about creating the resilience that is needed to deal with the major crises of our times, and the growing complexities of the societal challenges that come with them, both ecologically as well as socially. Entrepreneurship has the potential to contribute to solving as well as worsening some of such contemporary societal challenges. In this project, we propose to decouple EE from the creation of (high-growth) businesses, and instead put its (creative) potential to work to help enact more just futures, for 'people' as well as 'planet'. This entails shifting towards innovating without exhausting planetary resources, addressing social inequalities, and becoming more inclusive. In short, this entails a justice for all life; human and more-than-human. This means making changes in the way we currently enact EE, finding new pedagogical premises, and developing new course formats, materials, and assignments.

Concretely the project aims at elaborating new pedagogical approaches; developing & validating relevant course designs, materials, and teaching interventions and at organising training activities (educate-the-educator).

The TrEE project was launched in December 2022. During 2023, we organised three workshops (in Amsterdam in February, in Glasgow in June and in Turku in September). In Turku, the TrEE project benefited from local expertise – a talk on future consciousness by Dr Sanna Ahvenharju from Finland Futures Research Centre (<https://www.utu.fi/en/people/sanna-ahvenharju>) and a talk on biodiversity and leadership of Assistant Professor Anne Quarshie from Management and Organisation studies <https://www.utu.fi/en/people/anne-quarshie> together with Aliisa Wahlsten <https://www.utu.fi/en/people/aliisa-wahlsten> from the Biodiversity Unit of the university. The workshop in Turku was organised in parallel with the National Conference on Entrepreneurship Education and provided the project team to share their research findings with the Finnish entrepreneurship education scholars as well organise a workshop on transformative approaches in entrepreneurship education. The project is funded by Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership grant.

The consortium consists of representatives from six European higher education institutions: Professor Karin Berglund from Stockholm Business School at Stockholm University, Professor Sarah Dodd from the University of Strathclyde, Professor Ulla Hytti from the University of Turku, Professor Sarah Jack from Stockholm School of Economics, Serxia Lage Arias from the Instituto de Educación Secundaria Fernando Wirtz Suárez and Associate Professor Karen Verduijn from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

More information on the project from the project website: transformingee.eu and Professor Ulla Hytti (ulla.hytti@utu.fi). See also https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BV_dJNCpJg

Featured publication

Journal of Professional and Vocational Education (Ammattikasvatuksen aikakauskirja) Special Issue 4/2023 “Critical and reflective perspectives on Entrepreneurship Education”

The Special Issue 4/2023 titled “Critical and reflective perspectives on Entrepreneurship Education” welcomed contributions on critical and reflective perspectives on entrepreneurship education. The guest editors of this special issue were Dr. Sanna Ilonen (University of Turku), Dr. Kati Peltonen (LAB University of Applied Sciences), Dr. Lenita Hietanen (University of Lapland), and Dr. Hanna Laalo (University of Turku). Representing the Journal of Professional and Vocational Education, editor Dr. Kaisa Hytönen was also part of the team. Alongside the editorial, the special issue consists of two peer-reviewed articles, one commentary, and a lectio praecursoria.



In the editorial, Sanna Ilonen, Kati Peltonen, Hanna Laalo and Lenita Hietanen examine the current state of international and national critical entrepreneurship education research and create future research suggestions for critical entrepreneurship education research based on their findings. The aim was to find out to what extent and what kind of critical entrepreneurship education research has been published in national and international research journals during the years 2010–2023. The results show that the critical entrepreneurship education research published in the period under review can be situated at the levels of politics and discourses as well as pedagogic practices. In the research concerning politics and discourses, the subject of critical analysis are the different discourses of entrepreneurship education in public education policy documents. National research articles focus on the politics and discourses, while international research articles focus on the pedagogic practices.

Jaana Lepistö and Marja-Leena Rönkkö investigate teacher education students' views on entrepreneurship education in their article titled ‘Teacher Education Students’ Attitudes Toward Entrepreneurship Education: Insights or Clichés?’ The study addresses the question of what perspectives teacher education students express regarding entrepreneurship education. The results indicate that teacher education students generally have a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship education, considering the development of entrepreneurship and initiative as essential aspects of basic education. The research also highlights challenges related to implementation and integration into teaching. Students critique the neoliberal ideology associated with entrepreneurship education and its focus on shaping individuals to meet the needs of business and the economy. However, entrepreneurial pedagogy is seen as contributing to learner-centeredness and the realization of active teaching methods.

Minna Hämäläinen, Kati Peltonen, and Anu Raappana critically examine the manifestation of an entrepreneurial organisational culture in the context of a university of applied sciences. They explore this from both the perspective of teachers' actions and students' experiences. The study addressed questions such as how teachers evaluate their role as builders of an entrepreneurial organisational culture and how students assess the promotion of entrepreneurship within their higher education institution. The research results indicated that teachers generally have a positive

attitude toward students' entrepreneurship during their studies, although few teachers use simulation methods for teaching entrepreneurship. The results also showed that the entrepreneurial organisational culture in higher education institutions does not appear particularly strong or clear to students. Overall, the study highlights the need to examine and bring together different stakeholders' thoughts and experiences, reflecting on their similarities and differences.

In her commentary titled "Nurturing Entrepreneurial and Employable Higher Education Graduates: Achievers or Exhausted Performers?" Päivi Siivonen describes observations from the research project "Employability and Social Positioning of University Graduates in the Labor Market," conducted between 2018 and 2022. Siivonen explored how master's graduates, especially from commercial fields, strive to meet the ideals and requirements of employability. She also reflected on the consequences of shaping employability ideals for individuals themselves. According to the author, master's graduates seem to adopt individualistic ideals of entrepreneurship and employability without much criticism. They aim to present themselves in line with these ideals, demonstrating their competence to both themselves and others. Perceived shortcomings are compensated by emphasizing social skills, enthusiasm, and ambitious high performance. When faced with discrimination and belittlement, they try to overcome these challenges independently, as dissenting voices regarding the unequal structures within business organisations would not serve the purpose of showcasing their own abilities and expertise. However, presenting oneself as employable can also be emotionally draining.

Juha Ruuska's lectio praecursoria, titled "Learning Culture of Community Entrepreneurship: A Formative Ethnographic Study," is based on his doctoral dissertation published in 2023. The goal of his doctoral dissertation was to create an ethnographic, comprehensive study of the learning culture at Tiimiakatemia (Team Academy), a program that focuses on producing special communal entrepreneurship. In this research, learning culture refers to the specific cultural ways of thinking, meanings, and practices of the learners, which are described through ethnographic research. In his lectio praecursoria, Juha Ruuska presents the ILOAK model, which emerged as a formative ethnographic result. This model is designed to support the needs of six different learner personas and address the challenges and issues identified in the research by leveraging good practices. The key pillars of the ILOAK model are integrativity, creativity, learner-centeredness, openness, and collective learning.

See the issue: <https://journal.fi/akakk/issue/view/10751>

Featured publication

Entrepreneurial Masculinity: A Fatherhood Perspective

Hytti, U., Karhunen, P., & Radu-Lefebvre, M. (2024). Entrepreneurial masculinity: A fatherhood perspective. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 48(1), 246–273. (the paper was published online already in 2023)

It is more than common that in the media female entrepreneurs are asked about their experiences (or feelings) of being a woman involved in entrepreneurship. They may also be inquired specifically how entrepreneurship influences their motherhood or their family plans. Similarly, there is a strong tradition of research on women entrepreneurs - also specifically addressing questions of mothers in entrepreneurship, in certain cases defined as 'mompreneurs'. However, similar research interest or media debate has been lacking in case of men entrepreneurs and father entrepreneurs. We saw this as an important omission for theory development.

The paper draws from life-story interviews with founders of technology ventures in Finland. The life-story interviews included prompts asking the participants to talk about their childhood, families, and lives outside their ventures and entrepreneurship. We believe this was needed to have access to data where men entrepreneurs narrate their experiences in business together with their family and non-business lives.

We identify three entrepreneurial masculinities enacted by (prospective) father entrepreneurs to accommodate concurrent normative ideals of entrepreneurship and fatherhood.

- *Downplaying fatherhood to justify heroic entrepreneurial masculinity* normalizes the male privilege of prioritizing work over family life and the female spouse is naturally placed to take responsibility for the family.
- *Enacting ceremonial fatherhood to celebrate entrepreneurial breadwinner masculinity* experiences tensions but resolves them by relying on money to compensate on time spent in business and by engaging (in less time consuming) public parenting.
- *Claiming fatherhood as pivotal to rationalizing entrepreneurial caring masculinity* depicts prioritizing family (for a certain period) but involves framing caring activities as a passion or a hobby and carried out with male standards.

In terms of our findings, the biggest surprise was that when entrepreneurial masculinities intersect with fatherhood (or the prospect thereof) unequal gender relations are maintained within the household and at the business. Given the normative expectations of gender equality and involved fathering in the Nordic countries, where this study was conducted, we expected to find also positive masculinities that would be based on gender equality.

Our study is among the few studies so far that have adopted doing gender perspective when it comes to men entrepreneurs, specifically investigating entrepreneurial masculinities by (prospective) father entrepreneurs. The article makes men entrepreneurs visible as gendered subjects. By including men in different ages and in different life stages, we could identify the generational and situational scripts in these masculinities. Being conditioned by the heroic entrepreneurial masculinity, men entrepreneurs do not have the same opportunities for prioritizing their familial roles as other men in traditional employment.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND TEACHING COOPERATION

International cooperation has always been an important part of our work, and we have had international faculty both in research and teaching positions. In addition to international faculty, we consider researcher and teacher mobility to be very important and encourage our doctoral students, as well as postdoctoral researchers, to benefit from international visits.

Researchers visiting other universities

- University Teacher Sanna Ilonen, University of Adelaide, Australia (December 2023)

Researchers from other universities visiting us

- Senior Lecturer Alex Bignotti and Associate Professor Sonali Das, University of Pretoria, South Africa (August 2023)
- Doctoral Candidate Yunhan Pan, Zhejiang University, China (November 2023–October 2024)
- Professor Edwina Pio, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand (October 2023)
- Senior Lecturer Jonathan Scott, University of Waikato, New Zealand (March, June 2023)
- Doctoral Candidate Shihao Wei, Xi'an Jiaotong University, China (September 2022–September 2023)

Research collaborators

We collaborate actively with a number of other national and foreign universities, institutions and networks. In 2023, we have conducted joint research projects at least with the following partners:

Aalto University, Finland

Aston University, UK

Audencia Business School, France

Babson College, USA

De Paul University, USA

Durham University Business School, UK

EM Strasbourg Business School, France

ESCP Europe Paris, France

Grenoble Ecole de Management, France

IES Fernando Wirtz, Spain

King's College London, UK

Kingston University, UK

Lancaster University, UK

Lund University, Sweden

Nord University, Norway

Northumbria University, UK

NTNU, Norway

Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, Latvia

Stockholm University, Sweden

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

University of Eastern Finland

University of Oslo, Norway

University of Pretoria, South Africa

University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

University of Strathclyde, UK

University of Waikato, New Zealand

VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, Finland

VU Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Xi'an Jiaotong University, China

Åbo Akademi University, Finland

European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB)

We host the Secretariat of the European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB). The ECSB is a research-driven non-profit organisation whose main objective is to facilitate the creation and dissemination of new knowledge through research and the open exchange of ideas between academia, education, policy and practice. Professor Ulla Hytti was the President of the ECSB Board (2021–2023). Through the ECSB we reach a network of about 2000 entrepreneurship researchers and educators world-wide. <https://ecsb.org/>



Sanna Ilonen was visiting postdoctoral researcher at University of Adelaide

Professor and Center Director Paul Steffens invited Sanna Ilonen for a research visit to The Entrepreneurship, Commercialisation, and Innovation Centre (ECIC) at the University of Adelaide. The visit was scheduled for the period from December 5th to December 15th, 2023. ECIC is a globally renowned unit in the field of entrepreneurship and innovation, and their business incubation activities are closely linked to research and education. ECIC is located within the Faculty of Business at the University of Adelaide, which ranks among the top 5% of business faculties/schools worldwide. The University of Adelaide is a leading institution for entrepreneurship in Australia, and it holds ACEEU accreditation as recognition for its commitment to entrepreneurship and societal interaction. They offer an intriguing entrepreneurship program that Sanna was keen to explore further during her stay. Professor Paul Steffens, along with his research team, are leading researchers in growth-oriented early-stage entrepreneurship, which aligns Sanna's research focus. Currently, the University of Adelaide has become the primary hub for entrepreneurship research in Australia. The research visit provided a unique opportunity both from a research perspective and for the development of teaching.

During the research visit, Sanna conducted mainly research-related activities. She networked with the team's senior scholars and doctoral researchers by presenting both her own research and the activities of our unit and business school as well as commenting on ECIC team members' research. The research visit allowed her to focus on her ongoing research related to entrepreneurs' well-being and distress, as well as their interplay. Sanna worked on several research-related tasks, including creating a conference abstract for the upcoming NCSB, finalizing the editorial for the Journal of Professional and Vocational Education special issue, extending and submitting an abstract for the Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy Special Issue call, completing a book chapter on Entrepreneurial learning, writing an RR on practitioner integration within EE, and analysing qualitative data collected in the fall of 2023 on growth-oriented entrepreneurship. Sanna also worked on an article manuscript discussing the demands and resources of social media entrepreneurship and established networks for the future.

Research visit of Edwina Pio, Professor Emerita of Diversity from New Zealand

Edwina Pio – a professor emerita of diversity from New Zealand – visited Turku School of Economics between 23 and 26 October. Her areas of expertise are ethnicity, gender, migration, religion and their intersections, entrepreneurship and indigenous studies. During her visit, Edwina Pio gave a talk on the topic: Time to say 'Je suis diversity' with a focus on how diversity affects the practices of organisational and societal life. The seminar was organised by the entrepreneurship unit in a hybrid form, and researchers from University of Turku, Åbo Akademi and University of Eastern Finland took part in the discussion on the topic. Besides, Edwina Pio took an active part in the research seminar organised within HIWE project and gave valuable comments to the presenters. The researchers of the HIWE project from the entrepreneurship unit and from the University of Eastern Finland presented the project and shared preliminary research results on the topic of labour market integration and building belonging of highly skilled internationals in Finland.

Visiting scholars from University of Pretoria

The Entrepreneurship Unit received a grant from Erasmus+ in 2019 for staff mobility between the University of Turku and the University of Pretoria. The first mobility occurred in August 2023, when Professor Sonali Das and Associate Professor Alex Bignotti from the University of Pretoria visited the University of Turku. They both belonged to the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of Pretoria. They gave presentations at the Entrepreneurship Unit's research seminar during their visit. Associate Professor Bignotti discussed the role of social identity and experience in shaping social entrepreneurial intention among South Africa's youth. Professor Das shared her findings on how to use weather data for risk preparedness.

They also supervised PhD student Mohamed Farhoud, who was conducting his doctoral studies under a Cotutelle agreement between the two universities, along with Adjunct Professor Pekka Stenholm and Senior Research Fellow Seppo Poutanen from the University of Turku. Farhoud successfully defended his PhD thesis during this visit, which was one of the highlights of their stay.

Research and recreational days at Paimio Sanatorium

During the academic year there are regular research seminars for the entrepreneurship unit and all PhD researchers. For the past few years we have still considered it beneficial once a year to go somewhere else for two days to discuss in a more relaxed atmosphere and be able to learn from everybody what they are doing. In 2023 our excursion took us to the Paimio Sanatorium, Alvar and Aino Aalto's architectural masterpiece. Paimio Sanatorium is a key site of architecture, furniture design and innovation in Finland. It is also one of the most internationally renowned and significant Finnish buildings. The Sanatorium represents humane architecture of well-being, a philosophy that is most important for any work organisation today. Besides discussing on-going research and future plans, we also benefited from a guided tour of the premises as well as nice dinner. We were also lucky to Dr Alex Bignotti from University of Pretoria to join the event for one afternoon.





INSPIRING
LEARNING EXPERIENCES



3098

ECTS accomplished



Balance

between academia
and business life



14

bachelor and master
level courses



8

dissertations
in progress



Several

participative methods
employed in each course

In entrepreneurship, we offer education at all academic degree levels. In addition, our faculty is active in training programmes offered for example to executive education, TSE exe, and to the Open University and in increasing amount also in other faculties of the University of Turku. The strengths of entrepreneurship education are embedded in the faculty's close connection to research in entrepreneurship. We also collaborate closely with student associations and Boost Turku – an open student-based entrepreneurship society for new start-ups. Guest lecturers from business life and international faculty are also a regular part of courses. In 2020, we introduced the new Entrepreneurs-in-Residence scheme to develop the ongoing collaboration with entrepreneurs as part of our teaching.

In Entrepreneurship studies, we aim to advance students' skills and know-how to recognise, create and exploit new business opportunities in all sectors. In our teaching we believe that entrepreneurship is about how you create a successful organisation in a dynamic and constantly changing business environment; how to recruit innovative employees, how to coordinate their work and how to build a productive and entrepreneurial organisational culture. In addition, we offer students both individual and societal views of entrepreneurship, for example an understanding of what kind of career opportunities entrepreneurship offers and how entrepreneurship is promoted in society.

Entrepreneurship as a discipline is highly research-oriented with numerous international research projects and significant outcomes (e.g. publications, scientific and societal impact). Consequently, Entrepreneurship is a relatively small discipline at the Turku School of Economics in terms of the number of major students. It is however, a very popular minor subject and also single courses reach wider audiences. Furthermore, the faculty has contributed to guiding and supervising degree students across disciplines. In addition, according to the spirit of the Entrepreneurial University Strategy an increasing amount of entrepreneurship studies are being offered to other faculties based on their needs.

Development of Entrepreneurship studies in terms of study credits and degrees 2013–2023

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Study credits (ECTS)	2454	2590	2555	2598	3054	3209	2515	2428	3132	2968	3098,5
Graduated students (B.Sc.)	1	5	1	2	-	-	1	1	2	3	5
Graduated students (M.Sc.)	1	2	4	2	-	2	1	-	2	2	6
Graduated students (D.Sc.)	-	-	-	-	2	3	1	2	1	2	1

ENTREPRENEURSHIP STUDIES

Bachelor studies

Our aim at the bachelor level is to provide students with a theoretical and practical knowledge of entrepreneurship. Our bachelor studies focus on the entrepreneurial process and understanding the role of entrepreneurship at an individual and at a societal level. Entrepreneurship studies provide tools for students to work in a constantly changing, innovative business environment after graduation no matter their career choice. During entrepreneurship studies we emphasise active connections to business life e.g. through visiting lecturers and excursions.

Masters studies

Our master studies focus on enhancing research skills through courses related to theoretical perspectives, classics and current issues in entrepreneurship research and research methods. Master studies provide the opportunity to specialise in an interesting research area.

PhD studies

The primary purpose of PhD studies is the preparation of a piece of original entrepreneurship research. Our PhD studies are designed to train doctoral candidates as independent researchers, so that they can claim professional standing as academic staff or in a profession requiring skills in entrepreneurship research. PhD studies consist of a dissertation and PhD courses. The entrepreneurship research seminar series provides our doctoral candidates with excellent learning opportunities and also possibilities to discuss their PhD projects with peers and senior researchers and professors. In 2023, we benefited from the virtual research seminars and invited several guest speakers in addition to our own doctoral researchers. Additionally, international research visits and fellowships are encouraged as a part of the PhD process.

Dissertations in progress at the Entrepreneurship Unit

There are eight active doctoral researchers in Entrepreneurship. The following doctoral researchers were employed by the Entrepreneurship Unit in 2023:

Anna Elkina	<i>Entrepreneurial identity formation through entrepreneurial experience: an autoethnographic research</i>
Mohamed Farhoud	<i>A Resource dependence perspective on crowdfunded social enterprises (defended in August 2023)</i>
Qiujiu Yu	<i>Exploring Pivotal Elements and Challenges of Fostering Intrapreneurship in SMEs</i>

Course on Entrepreneurship and Innovation in health care/life sciences in close collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine and stakeholders

The course Entrepreneurship and Innovation in health care / life sciences is targeted to the student interested in health care and life sciences. Although some bachelor's or master's students at the TSE study programmes participate to the course, most of the students come from other disciplines, such as medicine, bio medical science, bio technology, chemistry, and even psychiatry. The course is, thus, an excellent opportunity to discuss and change experiences with students from other faculties and also from different educational levels, as the course raises interest among bachelor's, master's and doctoral students.

The course consists of academic readings on the selected themes, participation to lectures and reflection assignment at the end of the course. The course is run in a close collaboration with businesses and entrepreneurs in the field and the presenters/lecturers are chosen together with the Faculty of Medicine. The sessions include presentations of the company cases, interactive discussion based on the cases and reflection thereof based on the pre-readings on the topic. The course is run every second year and it has gradually become very popular due to highly motivated and experienced entrepreneurs /company representatives sharing their valuable insights on entrepreneurship and innovation in health care and life sciences. This year 24 students passed the course after having verified the lessons learnt.

Total of seven entrepreneurial cases or stories were presented during three sessions. The themes discussed included serial entrepreneurship (**Laura Strömberg**, PoP at the TSE and serial entrepreneur), IPR issues in science entrepreneurship (**Sebastian Soidinsalo**, Åbo Akademi), combining business and academic career (**Pekka Hänninen**, dean of the Faculty of Medicine), financing life-science spin-out (**Pekka Simula**, Innovestor Life Science), business growth (**Jarkko Karvinen**, Uniogen Oy), from innovation (**Juuso Blomster**, CardioSignal) and need (**Krista Rantanen**, BioGenium) to start-up. The discussions based on these entrepreneurial stories were vivid and students actively posed questions to the presenters. We are very grateful for all the presenters for their willingness to contribute to this practitioner-oriented course. We are positive that the course provides excellent possibilities for students to learn about entrepreneurship and innovation in health care and life sciences particularly. It also offers valuable insights about what it takes to start-up and run a business in this highly knowledge-intensive field.



The students were also encouraged to participate to in FLAMES CORPORATE CORNER which focused on the journey of turning science into business: <https://inflames.utu.fi/events/inflames-corporate-corner-the-journey-of-turning-science-into-business/>

The course is run by Professor Jarna Heinonen (jarna.heinonen@utu.fi).

Interview with Qiujin Yu

Qiujin Yu joined the Entrepreneurship Unit as a PhD student in August 2023. Her research focuses on Exploring Pivotal Elements and Challenges of Fostering Intrapreneurship in SMEs. Coming from China, Qiujin brings a unique perspective to the unit, enriching the academic environment with her diverse background.



What brought you to Finland?

My journey to Finland was inspired by the country's renowned reputation for academic excellence, innovation, and a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. Finland's commitment to fostering a conducive environment for research and entrepreneurship aligns with my academic and career aspirations.

How did you join the Entrepreneurship Unit at the UTU?

Upon researching potential avenues for my PhD studies, the Entrepreneurship Unit at UTU stood out for its outstanding faculty, cutting-edge research opportunities, and a supportive community. This, coupled with the unit's commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, made it a perfect fit for my research interests. I reached out to faculty coordinator and members, and after discussions about research alignment, I was thrilled to be accepted into the program.

What made you interested in studying entrepreneurship?

My interest in entrepreneurship stems from a fascination with the dynamic and transformative nature of business creation. Witnessing the impact of entrepreneurial ventures in driving innovation and societal change motivated me to delve deeper into understanding the intricacies of entrepreneurial processes.

How have you experienced Finland during the first few months of your stay?

Moving to Finland has been an enriching adventure, filled with new experiences and discoveries. I've embraced the opportunity to partake in local activities, whether it's enjoying the tranquility of a Finnish sauna or embarking on nature hikes amidst Finland's breathtaking landscapes. Furthermore, my time in Finland has allowed me to delve into its rich history and culture by visiting museums and cultural sites, gaining a deeper understanding of this fascinating country.

What has been your experience of working in the unit so far?

Working in the Entrepreneurship Unit has been intellectually stimulating and collaborative. The supportive atmosphere encourages innovative thinking and fosters a sense of community among researchers. Engaging with peers and mentors has significantly enriched my understanding of entrepreneurship, providing valuable insights into both theoretical and practical dimensions.

What differences have you noticed between the education systems in China and Finland?

Transitioning from the Chinese education system to Finland has been enlightening. Finland's education system places a strong emphasis on student-centric learning, encouraging critical thinking and creativity. The collaborative and egalitarian nature of Finnish classrooms fosters an open exchange of ideas, a departure from the more structured and hierarchical approach in China. This shift has broadened my perspective on pedagogy and influenced my approach to academic inquiry.

In summary, my journey to Finland has been a fulfilling pursuit of knowledge and a deeper understanding of entrepreneurship in a global context. The supportive academic environment and cultural immersion have shaped my research experience, providing a solid foundation for my contributions to the field. I look forward to continued growth and collaboration within the Entrepreneurship Unit at UTU.

Doctoral Defence in Entrepreneurship by Mohamed Farhoud



Mohamed Farhoud after a successful defence with Sanna Ilonen, Ulla Hytti and Jarna Heinonen (on right).

PhD Mohamed Farhoud defended his dissertation in Entrepreneurship entitled *"A Resource Dependence Perspective on Crowdfunded Social Enterprises"* at the University of Turku on 11.8.2023. Mohamed's thesis was jointly supervised according to the Cotutelle agreement by Adjunct Professor, Senior Research Fellow Pekka Stenholm and Senior Research Fellow Seppo Poutanen from the University of Turku and Senior Lecturer Alex Bignotti and Associate Professor Sonali Das from the University of Pretoria. Mohamed was honoured to have Professor Greg Fisher (Indiana University) and Professor Frank Janssen (Université catholique de Louvain) as the pre-examiners of the thesis. Professor Fisher acted also as an opponent in the defence.

Succeeding as a social enterprise is challenging because its performance, legitimacy, and autonomy emerge from the social-economic tensions inherent in its operation. Social enterprises tend to shield themselves from external demands and pressures if they fail to fulfil their dual mission, creating challenges in resource acquisitions. Accordingly, such challenges fundamentally change the relationship between social enterprises and resource providers. Therefore, social enterprises often struggle to acquire resources; thus, they need innovative forms of resource acquisition. By adapting resource dependence theory and data collected from social enterprises, Mohamed's thesis investigates the role of reward-based crowdfunding in social enterprises' performance and how the legitimacy and autonomy of social enterprises mediate such a relationship.

The findings show that reward-based crowdfunding does not directly or indirectly shape the performance of social enterprises. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that crowdfunding increases the legitimacy of social enterprises. Moreover, although crowdfunding does not appear to be related to the autonomy of social enterprises, autonomy itself supports the social and innovation performance of social enterprises. Thus, the study challenges the expected positive role of crowdfunding in social enterprises' performance but shows that crowdfunding continues to benefit social enterprises as it increases their legitimacy. Theoretically, the study suggests legitimacy can be an end in itself for social enterprises. These results support a characterisation of resource dependence theory as a sociological theory in which establishing social acceptability is important in its own right. However, the findings contradict the view of resource dependence theory as a theory of organisational performance. The missing link between resource acquisition, legitimacy, and performance suggests that resource dependence theory can explain organisational actions with societal acceptance rather than financial performance.

Moreover, the findings indicate that autonomy is an essential characteristic of social enterprises allowing organisations to pursue different goals, which can protect against potential mission drift. Correspondingly, the study contributes to practices by showing that reward-based crowdfunding is a practical utility that can solve managerial problems related to attaining legitimacy. Mohamed's study shows that crowdfunding is still a fledgling field for enabling social entrepreneurship; therefore, this study contributes to the current societal and governmental discussions on the financial inclusion of social enterprises within social economy policies.

The dissertation is available on <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-29-9334-5>

OTHER ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Entrepreneurship team members act as teachers in doctoral programmes and PhD courses also internationally. In 2023, Professors Jarna Heinonen and Ulla Hytti organised each one course for PhD students in the International Centre for Entrepreneurial Studies in Osijek, Croatia.

In addition, entrepreneurship has an important role in executive education programmes offered by TSE exe. Members of our staff work as teachers and experts in the programmes and also supervise EMBA and JOKO theses. Our entrepreneurship faculty contributes mainly to one of the four learning goals of the EMBA programmes, namely “the graduates have the ability to lead and contribute to business renewal”. The main themes of entrepreneurship discussed in the programme include for example an entrepreneurial twist and corporate entrepreneurship at work as well as new business opportunities and opportunity creation and lean start-ups. The EMBA students submit an assignment on “Entrepreneurial thinking and business models” to Senior Research Fellows Pekka Stenholm and Tommi Pukkinen based on their one-day entrepreneurial workshop. In addition, Professor Jarna Heinonen serves as Chair of the TSE exe Advisory Board the role of which is to support TSE exe in designing top-quality and responsive executive education in the changing society.

Unit's Education Export Activities in Nigeria and Pakistan

Entrepreneurship Unit has continued to be active in the University's education export activities. In 2023, two different training programmes were organised around entrepreneurship education.

Abuja, Nigeria

In March 2023, University Teacher Sanna Ilonen and University Lecturer Joachim Ramström in collaboration with education export unit organised the Innovation and Enterprise Development training program for 12 representatives from Nigerian universities. Among the 80 participants were teachers, deans, and other representatives of university management. The training was held in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, in collaboration with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

The aim of the training program organised was to help participants understand how entrepreneurship education can be concretely implemented and organised in universities. In addition, the goal was to clarify how entrepreneurship and innovation can be genuinely integrated into the activities and tasks of universities. Due to the dual objective, the training covered not only educational practices and pedagogical solutions but also internal support measures and strategies of universities.



Karachi, Pakistan

In November 2023, University Teacher Sanna Ilonen and University Lecturer Joachim Ramström trained the trainers on fostering entrepreneurial competencies, behaviours, and culture across academic departments. The aim was to discuss strategies and practices for developing and implementing entrepreneurship education within higher education. The workshop was organised at IBA Center for Entrepreneurial Development (CED).



INTERACTION
WITH SOCIETY

Our activities contribute significantly to the third mission of the university: societal impact and interaction. Our close links with the business community and policy makers demonstrate that our expertise in entrepreneurship research, education and development is relevant and valued by society in general and our clients in particular. Our faculty serve on the boards of various organisations and their expertise is continually sought in national and international expert assignments.

The research carried out in the Entrepreneurship Unit has a wide impact, as the results have contributed to societal policy and decision-making. For example, our research has been used in the design of legislation and in the reorganisation of the activities of specific public bodies supporting SMEs. Below are some examples of our activities in 2023.

Final seminar of the research project “Boosting business founding activity and growth!”

Final seminar of the project was organised by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in March, 2023. Seminar got together the researchers of the project, entrepreneurship policy makers from the Ministry and several stakeholders, including entrepreneurs.

Jaana Lappi, Ministerial Adviser, from the Ministry opened the seminar by linking the study to the current activities and principles of the Government in supporting entrepreneurship, productivity and future employment in Finland. Next, the researchers presented the main findings on the state-of-art of start-up activity and entrepreneurship in Finland, drawing comparisons with the selected benchmark countries, Norway, Latvia, Ireland and the Netherlands. Senior Researcher Mika Naumanen from the VTT further presented key findings concerning new firms, entrepreneurs, their incomes, and so called ‘light entrepreneurship’ in Finland. The researchers concluded with policy recommendations aimed at fostering an encouraging environment, and designing impactful means, for ambitious and renewing entrepreneurship in Finland. Commentary keynotes were given by stakeholders: economist Petri Malinen from Suomen Yrittäjät, Managing director Piia Malmberg from Finnish Enterprise Agencies as well as serial entrepreneur, a founder of Dagsmark Petfood Laura Strömberg, and a founder and CEO of the other danish guy, Tommi Lähde. The seminar and its lively discussions were facilitated by Risto Alatarvas, Senior Specialist from the Prime Minister’s Office.



Widening the Entrepreneurs in Residence -programme

Due to positive experiences and feedback we widened the Entrepreneurs in Residence (EiR) programme launched in 2020 at the Turku School of Economics. The EiR programme engages entrepreneurs in the activities of Turku School of Economics (TSE) in different ways in order to familiarize our students and faculty to everyday entrepreneurship of different kinds. Three new EiRs started in the fall 2023: Founder and CEO of Lyyti Oy **Petri Hollmén**, Co-Founder and CEO of OneMind Dogs Oy **Noora Keskievari**, and Founder and CEO of Åma Oy **Sari-Anne Poikkijoki**. They all are our alumni. As CM-trader **Hannu Aaltonen** and Founder and CEE of Zefort Ltd **Jussi Karttila** continue as EiRs we currently have a total of five EiRs sharing their entrepreneurial experiences and contributing to our teaching. Furthermore, one of the original EiRs – serial entrepreneur **Laura Strömberg** – started as a Professor of Practice (PoP) in entrepreneurship. In this role her involvement in our activities increases as she for example contributes by co-supervising our Master's students during their thesis work (see page 32).

In September as a part of YKTS Yrittäjyyskasvatuspäivät 2023 we organised a TalkShow around our EiRs to demonstrate the ways in which we integrate entrepreneurs to our entrepreneurship education at the TSE. The TalkShow was facilitated by Professor Jarna Heinonen and three EiRs – Hannu Aaltonen, Jukka Karttila and Sari-Anne Poikkijoki – as well as PoP Laura Strömberg opened up their expectations of collaborating with the TSE. Furthermore, they gave concrete examples of the ways in which they had already contributed as EiRs and related mostly rewarding experiences. Most importantly the entrepreneurs also shared their guiding principles in pursuing their entrepreneurial careers.

In all, the experiences of the programme were well received among the conference audience. It became obvious that it is useful to systemize the presence of entrepreneurs in entrepreneurship education. It is beneficial for the faculty and the students to connect with entrepreneurs on a regular basis. Most importantly it also makes it more reasonable and relevant for entrepreneurs themselves to contribute to university teaching as the collaboration does not take place only ad-hoc but can be planned in advance.



Laura Strömberg, Hannu Aaltonen, Jussi Karttila and Sari-Anne Poikkijoki at the TalkShow facilitated by Jarna Heinonen.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media and other channels are applied to communicate our research and activities to international and domestic stakeholders and networks in an accessible and open manner. Open engagement with society is a central component of our activity at the interface of scientific study and societal dynamics in themes of entrepreneurship, changing modes of work and the digital future. We communicate via our Unit's social media channels, mainly Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The unit's social media presence is coordinated at the unit level, but, more importantly, it is based on the activity of a number of faculty members taking part in important conversations across society.

Follow us on various channels:



Facebook / **@tseentrepreneurship** /
<https://www.facebook.com/tseentrepreneurship/>



X (former Twitter) / **@tseentre** /
<https://twitter.com/TSEentre>



Instagram / **@tseentrepreneurship** /
<https://www.instagram.com/tseentrepreneurship/>



LinkedIn / **TSE Entrepreneurship** /
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/tseentrepreneurship>



Website / www.utu.fi/entrepreneurship

APPENDICES

Professional and community relations

Community relations

Project Coordinator Elisa Akola

- European Council of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB), Executive Secretary

Doctoral Researcher Mohamed Farhoud

- The African Network for Social Entrepreneurship Scholars, co-founder and coordinator
- Africa Academy of Management, Member
- EMES International Research Network, Member
- Catalyst 2030, Member

Professor Jarna Heinonen

- OP osuuskunta / OP Ryhmä (OP co-operative / OP Group), Member and Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors
- TOP-säätiö (TOP Foundation), Board Member and Chair
- Finnish Cultural Foundation in South-West Finland, Member and Vice-Chair of the Board, Chair of the Group (social sciences and economics)
- Economic Policy Working Group, Turku Chamber of Commerce, Member
- The Research Committee of the Finnish Family Firm Association, Member
- European Council of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB), Member

Professor Ulla Hytti

- European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB), President
- Engage – Centre for Engaged Education through Entrepreneurship (a Norwegian Center of Excellence in Education), Advisory Board Member

Senior Researcher Kaisa Hytönen

- European Council of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB), Member

University Teacher Sanna Ilonen

- Scientific Association for Entrepreneurship Education, Board Member
- European Council of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB), Member

Senior Research Fellow Pekka Stenholm

- Academy of Management (AoM), Member
- European Council of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB), Country Vice-President
- Board of Directors of the Foundation of Turun Urheiluliitto, Member

University administration

Professor Jarna Heinonen

- Head of the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship
- Member of the Education Development Committee, School of Economics, University of Turku,
- Member and Chair of the EMBA Programme Committee/TSE ex-Advisory Board, School of Economics, University of Turku
- Member of TSE Council

Professor Ulla Hytti

- Member of the planning committee for Education within UTUGS (University of Turku Graduate School) University of Turku
- Member of the Steering Committee of the Doctoral Programme at the Turku School of Economics, University of Turku

- Member of the Steering Committee of Bachelor Programme of International Management and Entrepreneurship at the Turku School of Economics, University of Turku

Senior Researcher Kaisa Hytönen

- Member of a steering Group of Well-being and Competence Development, University of Turku
- Member of a steering group of TEVY Yrityselämään! Tulevaisuusajattelu, henkilökohtaiset valmiudet ja projektityö (Introduction to Business: Futures thinking and project work) -course

University Teacher Sanna Ilonen

- Member of the Steering Committee of Bachelor Programme of International Management and Entrepreneurship at the Turku School of Economics, University of Turku
- Member of TSE Council

Senior Research Fellow Pekka Stenholm

- Member of the Committee for Research and Doctoral Studies at the Turku School of Economics, University of Turku

Activities in the scientific community

Positions of trust

Doctoral Researcher Mohamed Farhoud

- Editorial board membership: Teaching cases on Social Entrepreneurship in Africa, Emerald

Professor Jarna Heinonen

- Editorial board memberships: International Small Business Journal; Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research
- Expert assignments: Chair of the review panel for social sciences at South-West Finland Cultural Foundation, Chair of the committee and individual evaluation statements for research grant proposals at TOP Foundation, Expert for the Icelandic Research Fund, External member of a preparatory appointment committee of Åbo Akademi University for professorship in Organisation and Management.

Professor Ulla Hytti

- Editorial board memberships: Entrepreneurship and Regional Development (Associate Editor), Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy (Research Editor), International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research, International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Expert assignments: Professional references for professorship at Åbo Akademi and University of Sussex; Professional reference for docentship at Umeå University; A member of a tenure track assessment committee at Aarhus University

Senior Researcher Kaisa Hytönen

- Editorial board membership: Ammattikasvatuksen Aikakauskirja (Journal of Professional and Vocational Education) Special Issue 4/2023 Critical and reflective perspectives on entrepreneurship education

University Teacher Sanna Ilonen

- Invited editor: Ammattikasvatuksen Aikakauskirja (Journal of Professional and Vocational Education)

Senior Research Fellow Pekka Stenholm

- Editorial review board memberships: Management Decision, Small Business Economics, International Small Business Journal
- Guest Co-editor: Small Business Economics Special Issue on the interplay of context and entrepreneurship: the new frontier for contextualization research

Ad hoc referee for journals

British Journal of Management
Critical Studies in Education
Entrepreneurship and Regional Development
Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice
European Journal of Higher Education
European Journal of Information Systems
Industry and Higher Education
International Journal of Entrepreneurial
Behaviour and Research
International Business Review

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and
Innovation
International Journal of Management Education
International Small Business Journal
Journal of Applied Research in Higher
Education
Journal of Business Venturing
Journal of Business Venturing Insights
Journal of Enterprising Communities: People
and Places in the Global Economy

Referee for conferences

- 3E Conference (ECSB Entrepreneurship Education Conference) 2023
- Academy of Management Annual Meeting 2023
- Babson 2024 Conference
- Diana International Research Conference 2023
- Finnish Entrepreneurship Education conference (Yrittäjyyskasvatuspäivät)
- RENT Research in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Conference

Awards, prizes or honours

University Teacher Sanna Ilonen and Professor Jarna Heinonen were awarded the José Maria Veciana Best Paper Award Nomination with their RENT 2023 Conference paper “The interplay of teachers’ epistemological frames in student learning in corporate entrepreneurship in higher education”.

University Teacher Sanna Ilonen, together with Joachim Ramström and Laura Helle (University of Turku) received the Best Scientific Paper Award at the YKTS2023 National Entrepreneurship Education Conference with their paper “Educator’s Perspective: Development of Employability Competences in Venture Creation.”

Laura Strömberg, Doctor of Science in Economics and Business Administration, was appointed as Professor of Practice at the University of Turku, School of Economics starting from 1 August 2023.

Serial entrepreneur Laura Strömberg has been appointed as Professor of Practice at Turku School of Economics

Serial entrepreneur Laura Strömberg, Doctor of Science in Economics and Business Administration, was appointed as Professor of Practice at the University of Turku, School of Economics starting from 1 August 2023. Laura has previously served as our Entrepreneur in Residence and the professorship will enable us to continue and intensify the good cooperation. As Professor of Practice, Laura will be involved in our teaching, e.g. by co-supervising students, as well as promoting entrepreneurship at the university and in society. With her expertise, Laura strengthens interdisciplinary entrepreneurship and innovation research by bringing practical perspectives on start-up entrepreneurship, business growth and scaling, growth finance and business collaboration more broadly.

Laura Strömberg is the founder and former CEO of Dagsmark Petfood Oyj, which under her leadership grew from zero to market leader, pioneering the domestic responsible pet food industry. The company was sold to Vafo Group in January 2024. Currently, Laura plays a variety of roles to support the growth of companies and entrepreneurs, including board member, advisor and angel investor.

Best Scientific Paper Award, YKTS2023

Joachim Ramström, Sanna Ilonen, and Laura Helle from the University of Turku were awarded the Best Scientific Paper the YKTS2023 National Entrepreneurship Education Conference. Their article is entitled the “Educator’s Perspective: Development of Employability Competences in Venture Creation.”

The article investigates how entrepreneurship education can help develop competences in learners that can enhance their employability and job performance. One key premise of the paper is that entrepreneurial and employability-related competences are closely intertwined.

The evaluation committee that granted the certificate acknowledges that employability-related competences are indeed developed as part of any subject’s teaching. However, discussions around employability skills are particularly relevant in the context of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education often aims to directly or indirectly build these competences as part of the curriculum. This is evident, for example, in the case of the “Year as an Entrepreneur” program, which is central to the article.

The evaluation committee also pointed out that it interesting that the article examines the topic from the perspective of educators. In entrepreneurship education research, the teacher’s viewpoint is currently less explored compared to the student perspective, making it deserving of attention.



Kirsi Peura (Scientific Association for Entrepreneurship Education), Joachim Ramström and Sanna Ilonen (University of Turku). Picture taken by YES network.

Activities in conferences, workshops and seminars

Project Coordinator Elisa Akola

- Organising committee member at 3E 2023 and 2024 Conferences

Project Researcher Satu Aaltonen

- Presentations at The Annual Conference of the Finnish Political Science Association (Politiikan tutkimuksen päivät 2023) and ISBE Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship Conference 2023

Doctoral Researcher Anna Elkina

- Presentations at 2nd Organizing Migration and Integration in Contemporary Societies Conference and YKTS2023 National Entrepreneurship Education Conference 2023

Professor Ulla Hytti

- Keynote speech at 16th Annual Scientific Baltic Business Management Conference
- Keynote speech at NORSI Research Conference 2023
- Invited lecture at the Open workshop hosted by SSE Riga
- Presentation at RENT 2023 Conference
- Scientific committee member at the Nordic Conference on Small Business Research

Senior Researcher Kaisa Hytönen

- Organising committee member at YKTS2023 National Entrepreneurship Education Conference
- Session chair at YKTS2023 National Entrepreneurship Education Conference
- Presentations at YKTS2023 National Entrepreneurship Education Conference and RENT 2023 Conference

University Teacher Sanna Ilonen

- Conference chair at YKTS2023 National Entrepreneurship Education Conference
- Presentations at YKTS2023 National Entrepreneurship Education Conference and RENT 2023 Conference

Senior Research Fellow Pekka Stenholm

- Scientific committee member at the Nordic Conference on Small Business Research
- Organiser of the 2nd Annual RENT Abstract Writing Workshop 18.4.2023 together with Verena Meyer, Renata Osowska and Jarmila Šebestová

EVENTS

YKTS2023 National Entrepreneurship Education Conference was organised in Turku, Finland on 27-28 September 2023. See next page.

22nd Nordic Conference on Small Business Research be organised in Turku, Finland in May 2024. More details are found online: <https://ncsbconference2024.org/>

YKTS2023 National Entrepreneurship Education Conference

"The purpose of this year's conference was to stimulate discussion around the prevailing positivity bias in entrepreneurship education, which emphasizes the benefits of entrepreneurship. However, it's essential to recognize that there are also darker aspects, and various perspectives need to be taken into account in entrepreneurship education."

YKTS National Entrepreneurship Education Conference warmly welcomed researchers, educators and actors of entrepreneurship education to a two-day conference at the University of Turku, School of Economics on September 27-28, 2023. The theme of the conference was "Critical and reflective perspectives on entrepreneurship education". The aim was to challenge the established views of entrepreneurship education and to discuss questions that have received less attention previously. 80 entrepreneurship education researchers and practitioners participated in the conference, of which about 15 percent were international conference participants. 34 abstract presentations were heard at the conference.



The conference was opened by the conference chair, Sanna Ilonen, and the dean of Turku School of Economics, Markus Granlund.

The keynote speakers of the conference were professor Andrew Corbett from Babson College (Boston, US) and associate professor Päivi Siivonen from the University of Turku. Professor Corbett's speech "A Critical Reflection on Emotion and the Teaching of an Entrepreneurial Mindset" created an overview of emotions and their importance as part of entrepreneurship education. In his speech, he emphasized the importance of not only positive emotions but also negative emotions in entrepreneurship education. Associate Professor Siivonen's speech "Educating entrepreneurial and employable university graduates: successful or exhausted finishers?" brought out the many aspects related to the idealization of entrepreneurial individuals, pointing out that although the ideals of entrepreneurship and employability have been adopted quite uncritically among university graduates.



The keynote speakers professor Andrew Corbett (Babson College) and associate professor Päivi Siivonen (University of Turku)

The program also included two talk shows. The first talk show discussed the Entrepreneurs in Residence model, which focuses on the interface of higher education and working life. Professor Jarna Heinonen hosted the talk show and the participants were Laura Strömberg, the newly appointed work-life professor at the Turku School of Economics, and entrepreneurs from the Entrepreneurs-in-Residence program, Hannu Aaltonen (CM Kupittaa), Jussi Karttila (Zefort Oy), and Sari-Anne Poikkijoki (Åma Oy). The participants shared their own experiences and views of the systemized cooperation organised through the Entrepreneurs in Residence model. The second talk show dealt with the role of an entrepreneurial ecosystem in entrepreneurship education and in entrepreneurship. The talk show was hosted by Lauri Koittola from BoostTurku and the participants included Päivi Siivonen (University of Turku), Tom Palenius (Turku Business Region), Johanna Vainio, Head of Education and Competence Affairs (Varsinais-Suomen Yrittäjät) and Emilia Nordquist (Mintti Siivous Oy).



The TalkShows included a wide range of speakers from different sectors, which made the discussion very lively and fruitful

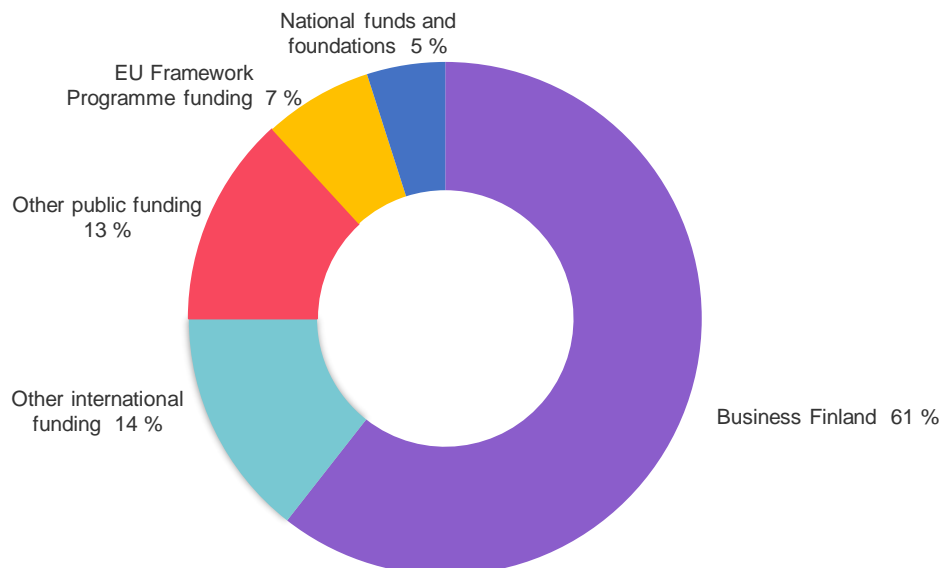
The University of Turku, School of Economics organised the conference in cooperation with Åbo Akademi, Turku AMK, Varsinais-Suomen Yrittäjät, the National YES network and the Scientific Association for Entrepreneurship Education. The conference was sponsored by the Foundation for Economic Education and Laitilan Wirvoitusjuomatehdas.



The key organising team of the conference

Main sources of external funding

In 2023, the unit's revenues from external funding were 212 000 EUR. The most important financier was Business Finland. The main sources of external funding in 2023 are represented below:



Publications

Journal articles and editorials

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