

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENT-BUSINESS COLLABORATION

Good practice collection of support services for challenge-based student-business collaboration in sustainable entrepreneurship

Good Practice Profile: Almi East Sweden & Linköping University



ALMI EAST SWEDEN & LIU



Plantit, the student team who won best pitch award in the autumn 2022 course. © Almi East Sweden AB

Intermediary Support Services & Activities

GENERAL SUPPORT

- ✘ Design and delivery of the four-month inGenious course and its innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainability contents by LiU.
- ✘ Coordination of the partner recruitment process by Almi East Sweden AB, using its extensive network to scout for and contact potential challenge providers.

TEACHER- AND STUDENT-SPECIFIC SUPPORT

- ✘ Matching of students with challenge projects, coordinated by Almi East Sweden AB.
- ✘ Joint provision of support and mentoring to students throughout the course, for example in idea development and pitch training and guiding the group process.
- ✘ Joint organisation of course events such as the public final graduation event which features student pitches and alumni presentations.
- ✘ Provision of continued support for InGenious participants who would like to receive more training after the course or continue to develop their solution.

COMPANY-SPECIFIC SUPPORT

Challenge partners receive support from Almi East Sweden AB in:

- ✘ formulating their challenge briefs to adequately convey their specific problems and necessary information to students.
- ✘ communicating and engaging with students throughout the course, e.g. in meetings.

Curricular Integration

The InGenious course runs in both the spring and autumn semesters and is awarded 8 ECTS credit points. The course is examined through hand-in group assignments, including a project plan and final report, active participation in seminars and pitches, as well as an individual reflection. Participation is open to students from all fields of study at LiU and requires students to have completed a minimum of 90 ECTS from undergraduate studies. The course is organised by the division of Project Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the Faculty of Science and Engineering at LiU and linked to and determined by LiU's Faculty of Arts and Sciences' Course and Programme Syllabus Board.

International & Virtual Collaboration

- ✖ The course takes place in an international environment and is carried out in English to enable participation of exchange and international students.
- ✖ The LiU International Office is involved in enabling the periodic integration of the InGenious course as a challenge offer at the Challenge platform of ECIU University (see good practice ECIU University). This means that student groups may be hybrid if one or more ECIU University students are part of the group. In this case, certain course elements are adapted for online implementation, such as integrating online pitches at the final course event and live broadcasting to other universities of the ECIU University.
- ✖ The course contains on-site course events at the university and as well as off-site course events at innovative business environments.



Student group visiting challenge provider Siemens Energy in Finspång. © Almi East Sweden AB

Impact

VISION & MISSION STATEMENT

Almi East Sweden AB and Linköping University use the **UN SDGs** as the overarching framework for designing and delivering the InGenious course. Their mission is to support the development of sustainable solutions, while encouraging student work across different disciplines and perspectives.



A student team pitches their business idea at the InGenious final graduation event.
© Almi East Sweden AB

RESULTS

- × Since 2016, more than 300 students have participated in more than 70 challenge projects.
- × Students own their solutions and may sell them to challenge providers, usually for around EUR 500-5000. On average, challenge providers buy around two challenges per semester. Students may also develop their ideas further with support from Student Innovation by LiU. Several ideas developed in the InGenious course have been built upon, for instance the company Signostium (automatic and sustainable stairwell information in all apartment buildings) was created from a challenge provided by Desquare.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND ENABLING CONDITIONS

- × Almi East Sweden AB and LiU have benefited from synergies in their strategic partnership, complementing each others resources and strengths to achieve impact in the educational system as well as the Östergötland region. While Almi East Sweden AB has used its large network to act as a bridge between LiU, the public sector and industry in the Östergötland region in Southern Sweden, LiU has been an invaluable partner for fostering sustainable innovations in the region.
- × The membership and long-term involvement of LiU in the European-wide ECIU network has enabled cooperations such as the integration of the InGenious course into the ECIU University platform offer. In this case, ECIU University provided an environment for experimentation. As a result, the innovative course can be accessed by more students on a European scale and has also benefitted from continuous course improvements inspired by the professional exchange with the ECIU University network members.

☆ Exemplary Challenge Format: InGenious – Cross-Disciplinary Project (Autumn 2022 Edition)

Running from 31 August to 13 December 2022, 40 students with different study backgrounds, e.g., Industrial Engineering and Management, Cognitive Science, Business & Economics, and Graphic Design, worked on six challenges provided by challenge providers from the region. Next to lectures in entrepreneurship and innovation, the course delivered workshops such as “shitty prototyping” in which, together with their challenge providers, students visualised their challenges and built prototypes made of “shitty” material. This helped to create a common understanding around the challenge and was conducive for team building.

The educational content was supplemented with site visits in the region. For instance, the company representative of the challenge provider Siemens Energy offered his student team a study visit of the office and production site, conveying an increased understanding of the complexity of the business in terms of material and knowledge flows. Pitches of the student ideas using the value creation forum (VCF)-method to provide constructive peer feedback were carried out mid-term. The course culminated in the final graduation event which featured student pitches, judged by a jury consisting of representatives from Almi Företagspartner, Linköping Science Park, and Lead, the LiU business incubator.

RESULTS

- × Challenge providers bought four student projects, for between 400 to 2000 EUR.
- × Two students were offered job positions at their respective challenge provider.



PUBLIC CONTACT DETAILS

Malin Karlsson

CEO, Almi East Sweden AB
Course Facilitator, InGenious,
Linköping University
malin.karlsson@liu.se

INFORMATION SOURCES

[Almi East Sweden AB & Linköping University \(2023\). InGenious – Official Website.](#)

[Linköping University \(2023\). Education: InGenious - Cross Disciplinary Project.](#)

[Linköping University \(2023\). Student Innovation by LiU.](#)

[Linköping Science Park \(2023\). Smart signs by Signostium. News, 10.7.2023.](#)

[ScaleUp4Sustainability \(2022\). “University staff learn how to switch between the roles of teacher, coach and organiser”: Prof Dr Charlotte Norrman, Linköping University. Interview, Sustainable Venturing Challenges Platform.](#)

[Midner, K. \(2022\). Professional project pitchers. News, Linköping University.](#)

[Hesser, A. \(2021\). Sustainable innovations in the InGenious course. News, Linköping University.](#)

[Westman Svenselius, M. \(2020\). First prize for smart waste sorting. News, Linköping University.](#)



Students during the “shitty prototyping workshop”.
© Almi East Sweden AB