

Recommendation Report / GROWTH4SMEs



Growth4SME has been in contact with more than 400 SMEs from Norway, Denmark and Belgium and asked them what kind of skills they need right now - Skill demand (growth4sme.eu) . Based on this new knowledge about the skills the project has developed an education set-up with different digital courses both for an international and regional audience - Knowledge (growth4sme.eu). The courses have for instance been used during nine case-competitions that have been carried out in Belgium, Norway, and Denmark where SMEs have presented challenges for the case-competition participants and the participants have come up with innovative solutions to their business problems - News (growth4sme.eu). Furthermore, the courses have been implemented as part of offers for adult learners at the UC Limburg, University of Oslo, UCLL – University of Applied Sciences and the City of Aarhus.

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1 The general aim of the project

The Growth4SME project aims to see how the soft skills of adult learners and unemployed graduates match the needs of SMEs.

We live in a rapidly changing society where it is essential that everyone has the capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, to work with others, to manage dynamic careers and shape the future. To achieve these goals we need people, teams, and organisations with an entrepreneurial and creative mindset.

HEIs traditionally have provided a strong theoretical education and significant promotion of knowledge. But nowadays, applicable knowledge, experience, and practical ability have become much more important and demanded by employers.

The focus of this project has been to provide adult learners with skills that are in demand in SMEs to create and help newly graduates to get a job faster and to SMEs with new valuable knowledge to help them innovate their businesses.

A driving force in the project has been entrepreneurship education, hence being a driving mechanism to move academic skills to applicable knowledge and developing future needed skills.

Entrepreneurial education is not only meant as the ability to start up an own business but also as the ability to be proactive and create something new and innovative in your own environment.

All adult learners and graduates, not only those who want to become entrepreneurs, must be provided with such skills and qualities that will be essential in their future careers.

What makes entrepreneurial education distinctive is its focus on generating ideas that have value for others. Educators recognize that fostering an entrepreneurial mindset is not only a question of preparing adult learners for the future within the complex economic environment. It is also a mean of fostering personal and social development so that students:

- gain skills in getting on with others
- express their creativity in suggesting solutions to problems
- learn to reflect on their own strengths, interests, and aspirations
- adopt a can-do attitude and drive to turn ideas into action
- show resilience in handling setbacks
- apply their financial literacy and numeracy skills in real-world contexts
- communicate their ideas to a wide range of audience
- contribute to the community as active, responsible citizens.

Within this project we focus on a specific technique to stimulate entrepreneurial and future skills, namely case competitions or hackathons. The experience of working with ‘real-life challenges’ increases adult learners’ motivation because they can see a connection between teaching and theory on the one hand and its application in practice, in the business world on the other hand.

In brief, the aim is both to support the adult learner’s academic skills as well as their future and entrepreneurial skills:

- build on learners’ natural curiosity and creativity,
- engage learners in challenging, real-world problems, enabling them to apply their learning beyond the classroom e.g., through community-based projects,
- equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need for the future, and which are in high demand e.g., problem-solving, flexible thinking and creativity,
- strengthen ties between the academic and business world, often enhancing adult learner’s employability prospects e.g., connecting community and business to what is learned in the classroom, involving potential employers in formative assessment, through apprenticeships, using entrepreneur-in-residence schemes or visits with entrepreneurial citizens to talk about their lives and work,
- Support adult learners and teachers with extra material collected on the platform Growth4SMEs.

1.1 What skills do SMEs need?

Soft skills relate to how you work. Soft skills include for instance interpersonal (people) skills, communication skills, listening skills, time management, empathy, ... They are among the top skills employers look for in the candidates they hire, because soft skills are important for about every job. Soft skills are so important that they are often the reason employers decide whether to keep or promote an employee. So, we must prepare adult learners on a successful transition from the academic to the job world.

B. Top 15 skills for 2025

1	Analytical thinking and innovation	9	Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
2	Active learning and learning strategies	10	Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation
3	Complex problem-solving	11	Emotional intelligence
4	Critical thinking and analysis	12	Troubleshooting and user experience
5	Creativity, originality and initiative	13	Service orientation
6	Leadership and social influence	14	Systems analysis and evaluation
7	Technology use, monitoring and control	15	Persuasion and negotiation
8	Technology design and programming		

[WEF Future of Jobs 2020.pdf \(weforum.org\)](#) page 35

1.2 First round survey SME's

To build up knowledge, SMEs from Norway, Denmark, and Belgium were asked to fill out questionnaires about what kind of skills companies in their respective countries need right now. In the first round 413 SMEs from Norway, Denmark, and Belgium have answered the questionnaires, and the data was collected in the spring and summer of 2021. Generally seen across all the three countries, independence, and adaptability – but also communication skills and problem solving – are the most important skills/competences to have – both as an experienced employee in a firm and as a recent graduate, who is seeking employment. You can find the complete report here:

https://growth4sme.eu/fileadmin/growth4sme/GROWTH4SMEs_questionnaires_analysis_DK_BE_NO_to_upload.pdf

1.3 The link between the survey and the website (growth4sme.eu)

Our desk research, and the data we analysed from our own universities on soft skills shows us that the top 3 needed skills are:

- *problem solving*: Employers highly value people who can resolve issues quickly and effectively. That may involve calling on industry knowledge to fix an issue at once as it occurs or taking time to research and consult with colleagues to find a scalable, long-term solution.
- *Teamwork*: Teamwork skills are the qualities and abilities that allow one to work well with others during conversations, projects, meetings, or other collaborations. Having teamwork skills is dependent on the ability to communicate well, actively listening and be responsible and honest.
- *Flexibility/adaptability*: Flexibility is an important skill to master, whether it means having the ability to overcome stress or simply to adjust to changes quickly. Having an important level of flexibility makes it easier to live a less stressful and hectic life.

Other important soft skills which we incorporate in our Growth4SME project are:

- *Creativity*: Seeing something new (opportunities or solutions to problems), finding something new, and doing or making something new. So, with that, creativity is more than a way of perceiving, thinking, or doing; it is a combination of all three. Creative thinking allows you to produce original solutions and innovative ways of working. You can stimulate creative thinking by using brainstorming methods
- *Pitching*: A pitch (or elevator pitch) is a short presentation, a quick synopsis of your idea, yourself, your background, and experience. The reason it is called an elevator pitch is that it should be short enough to present yourself or your idea during a brief elevator ride. This should be exactly the time you need to communicate and sell your 'product' (your idea or

yourself) to others. Pitching is about getting your message across in a short and straightforward way.

- *Collaboration*: You can read it in every job description: you must be a real 'team player' (and at the same time, be able to work independently). What exactly does that mean? And how can you yourself contribute to a successful team? How do you create a good and efficient working atmosphere for yourself and others?
- *Assertive communication*: It is not always easy to put into words exactly what you are thinking and feeling. Sometimes you prefer to remain silent so as not to hurt anyone's feelings, or you may be overwhelmed by the opinions of others and then shut up. Or the opposite: you may have said what you wanted to say, but still have a nagging feeling of guilt. Wasn't it just that little bit too direct?
- *Growth mindset*
People with a **growth mindset** are convinced that they can always become more intelligent and better at something and that they must try to achieve this. According to them, failure is a learning process, and they can learn from it to do things better in the future. They see those who do better than them as a source of inspiration. By observing their strategies and working methods, they can learn from these people and grow a bit themselves. People with a **fixed mindset**, on the other hand, view intelligence and learning differently. They are convinced that their intelligence and any other talents are unchangeable. According to them, trying is proof that they are not intelligent enough or that they do not have another talent. Failure is seen by them as a sign that they have little aptitude for a certain skill or that they are stupid.
- *Time management*: suitable time management, it lets you work smarter – not harder – so you get more done in less time. It requires an important shift in focus from activities to results being busy is different from being effective.

This learning platform has been open source. Even though, the interviewed companies found the MOOC 'content' useful and recognizable they still prefer to use their own sources for this kind of information instead.

1.4 The link between the survey and the hackathons/case-competitions

During the first hackathons, soft skills were integrated into the hackathon itself, but not explicitly enough. Of course, the adult learners were working on e.g., their collaboration and communication skills during the hackathon, but they were not aware of that and did not take time to reflect on their skills before & after the experience.

Therefore, we made a preparation program that participants had to go through before taking part in the hackathon. The example can be found below.

1.4.1 Preparation for Hackathons / Case competitions Growth4SME

We referred the adult learner to the website so they could be prepared to participate in the case-competitions.

Get to know yourself

On the website you can find several personality tests in the Personal Development section. Before taking part in the hackathon, you should fill in the DISC test. You then bring the results to the hackathon where you discuss your result with your group members.

[Personal development \(growth4sme.eu\)](#)

What kind of team player are you – do the test

According to Dr Meredith Belbin, there are nine team roles to be found. Knowing what role you, with your personality, can play in a team is essential. Do Belbin's team role test. Bring the results to the hackathon to discuss with your group members at the start.

[Collaboration \(growth4sme.eu\)](#)

Practice your presentation skills

During the hackathon you will regularly have to present your solutions to the business case. Make sure you know how to give a strong presentation.

[Presentation skills \(growth4sme.eu\)](#)

Do you know the basic requirements of a good pitch?

Richard Branson, billionaire entrepreneur and Virgin Group founder is an expert in delivering his ideas simply, concisely, and effectively. Branson offers leaders and entrepreneurs this advice: "It is vitally important to present a clear, concise plan that investors can easily understand and repeat to their own people. In the first meeting avoid overly complicated, numbers-laden presentations." Not only investment pitches, but all effective pitches should include five components. Get to know them on our website before participating in the hackathon.

[How to pitch \(growth4sme.eu\)](#)

And afterwards? Some time for reflection...

Did you solve the case? Well done! But it is even more important to see what you yourself have learned. Revisit your original DISC test and Belbin test and indicate what you have grown in and what your work points remain.

1.4.2 Future skills addressed during case competitions

In general:

- teamwork,
- time management,

- innovation,
- design thinking,
- pitching & presentation skills,
- communication.

Case competitions can also address specific skills such as:

- Sustainable thinking (hack the waste case March 2022 Belgium – case competition Oslo October 2022, case competition Belgium -November 2022 and March 2023)
- Digital skills (case competition in Oslo September 2021, Case competition in Aarhus April 2022)
- Tourism (case-competition Aarhus 2022 and case-competition Belgium March 2023)

2 How to organize a case competition

2.1 Case-competitions-formats

- Physical attendance – meeting in person
- Digital attendance – meeting online
- Hybrid attendance – some participants meet online, some in person

There are pros and cons of the different formats outlined above, and we will go into that in the form.

	Pro	Con
Physical attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social event • Feeling of occasion/meaningful event for participants • Easier to connect students into cohesive teams (communication, body language, networking, sense of team spirit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical locations will limit number of participants • Demanding coordination • Cost of event • Accessibility • International/non-local participation is costly
Digital attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility for students • Easy international/non-local participation • Large number of participants • The practical logistics/costs are easier/lower <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o No catering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High demand on digital competences • Sufficient web access for participants and organizers • Lower threshold for dropping out of the CC • Post-covid digital fatigue

	o No venue	
Hybrid attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible • Easy international/non-local participation • Substantial number of participants • Manage costs by getting meals/venue for fewer physical participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More demanding for the organizers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Technologically/digital presence o Practically/physical presence o Plan for merging the two in the execution of the event • Demanding for digital participants • Team communication can be challenging • Need for preparations for hybrid cooperation/presentations • Managing expectations

2.2 Preparations for a case competition

2.2.1 Why a case competition?

What is the **aim and purpose** of organizing a case competition? There may be more than one motivation:

- deliverable in a project,
- learning outcome in a course,
- connecting an adult learner group to a relevant industry,
- thematic event – based on relevant industries or UN sustainable development goals/other societal themes,
- interdisciplinary cooperation – learning project organization,
- request by company/industry/NGO/etc.,
- employability event – the universities' responsibility for organizing career events,
- answer to government demands for adult learner Active Learning,
- demonstrate competences and skills of students to a given industry or external stakeholder,
- maintain an active relationship with important external partners.

2.2.2 Who will take part in the Case competitions?

Once we define the aim and purpose, the target group/participants will become self-evident.

2.2.3 CC-format

It may be prudent to consider CC-format (physical/digital/hybrid) to decide the number of participants, which will have consequences for the budget, venue, technical ability etc.

2.2.4 Case holders

The most obvious **case holders** may not be the most interesting or challenging. It is worth considering the planned learning outcomes for the adult learners/participants. If the goal is for the participants to reflect on their own competences, a case from outside their academic comfort zone may allow for a more creative and challenging approach.

2.2.5 Timing

When will the event take place? The event's purpose will dictate the timing of the event. Example: the first CC (digital) in Norway in September 2021 was decided by the schedule of the project deliverables, in combination with other factors such as other events in the project, the return of adult learners to campus, the exam period at University of Oslo and covid-complications. Ideally, mid-term would be a suitable time for a CC. This would also allow for a CC to be a mandatory part in a course.

2.2.6 Focus

What will be the **focus** of the event kick-off? Is it an academic event or a more practical lead-in to working on the case? Is there a **theme**?

- Methodology (example: Design Thinking)
- Industry presentation
- Academic content
- Team building exercises
- Practical advice
- Expectations of the groups/participants/deliverables/results
- Reality check!
- External or internal speakers?

2.2.7 Judge

Who will **judge the results** of the competitions? Does case-holders want to be involved? Should we demand that case holders take part in the process? The jury may be composed of external and internal representatives; academic staff, administrative staff, a representative for the case holders, an industry representative, a city official, an adult learner representative, other thematically relevant people, example communication professionals. Example: the Oslo-juries

were composed of one/two academic staff and one/two representatives from the case holders, and the dean of studies.

2.2.8 Practical considerations

There are several **practical considerations** that will be affected by each other:

- Venue – must be decided by both budget and amount of participants/number of cases. The ideal time for a CC on campus may also be when there is the most demand for venues.
- Budget – will dictate the possibility of renting space for larger numbers of participants, catering, giveaways, external speakers, prices etc.
- Participation – how do we get students to take part? Again, budget is a factor in promotion, prices, catering. The professionalism of the event will dictate the status of the event.

2.2.9 Sponsorship

Are there **sponsors** available for the event? If there is, what will be their contribution: money, prices, venue, catering, speakers etc. Remember to check institutional rules.

2.2.10 How to prepare adult learners

Suggestions on how to prepare **adult learners** for case competitions, both the practical aspects and the educational content, is available at the GROWTH4SMEs' platform

<https://growth4sme.eu/case-competitions>

2.2.11 Do's and don'ts

Do's:

- Initial meeting with the companies before beginning working on the cases.
- Time efficient structure of pitches in parallel sessions
- Perfect match between competencies among the participating students and the business challenges
- Mixture of different academic backgrounds and nationalities in the groups
- Brilliant facilitator and excellent academic/professional inputs
- Organize space for students to work in groups, supply refreshments for long hours, 1-minute pitch on day two to test the format and have feedback.
- Include CC as an examination choice in a course to ensure participation.
- International groups work well and add a positive dimension to the CC

Don'ts

- Avoid having international students in a group of their own
- Try to avoid having too small groups because it can be vulnerable.
- Make sure that the challenges are not too difficult and complex to solve – simplicity is a keyword

- Do not hold CCs during the exam period – many no-shows!

2.3 Take aways from the case competitions

2.3.1 Denmark - Aarhus: Case competition - round 1 – September 2021



Number of participants: 17

Participating case-holders/partners/speakers:

- Lasse Chor, Happy42
- Improvento A/S
- PiCit A/S
- Dokkx
- Wawemaker
- Aarhus Kommune

Challenges

Improvento A/S:

Improvento is a software company based in Aarhus.

We develop the software inhouse and provide primarily the Danish hospitals with solutions. The solutions empower the hospitals to share guidelines, instructions, and other information regarding quality management.

Our ambition is to sell the Quality Management solution to all kinds of companies no matter whether they are public, private, or which size they are.

We assume all companies need a digital solution to share guidelines, instructions, or other information among their employees.

We would - in this case - like to focus on private smaller companies in Denmark (#employees 50 – 1000)

How do we reach out to those companies in the best way - which sales and promotion channels will work?

How do we communicate our solution and the kind of usage for those kinds of companies?

Picit A/S

PiCit A/S works with the development, implementation, support, and operation of information planning solutions for the transport, planning and offshore industries. Our SaaS solutions are used in terminals and depots, for warehouse management of goods and goods, management of

freight transport on the road and rail in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Germany, as well as handling customs documents in connection with export and import. Our customers include terminal operators, stevedores, shipping and forwarding companies, hauliers, rail operators, shipping companies and supply bases.

PICit is currently working on Vision, Mission and Values and we would like to explore which UNDP Sustainable Development GOALS that we could include in our business strategy.

We are a Danish software company with Scandinavian Customers, and it is important for us that working with the sustainable development add value to our business development and at the same time do also make sense for both employees and customers.

We would, if possible, prefer suggestions that do not include buying land or just writing out a check to someone in need.

Which UNDP SD goals do you think that PICit can successfully implement? Please specify with examples.

DokkX

DokkX is an innovative exhibition center for welfare technology and digital solutions. DokkX works to demystify welfare technology and therefore dialogue and practical testing are in focus. DokkX wants to promote curiosity and knowledge of technologies through presentations and demonstrations of various technological tools and aids. By feeling, touching, and playing with the technologies, citizens of all ages gain better skills to use welfare technologies in everyday life. Technology as an aid is an important part of many people's everyday lives, and DokkX is aimed at all age groups, including citizens without disabilities.

At DokkX, we are extremely interested in making a difference for the citizens of Aarhus. Therefore, we want to become more visible digitally and physically and spread the message that we are an offer for all citizens. We want to find out what value we have for the individual citizen and spread this to more stakeholders and ordinary citizens.

Mayor's department

The City of Aarhus is Jutland's largest workplace. Every day 28,000 professional and passionate colleagues work to make Aarhus a good city for everyone. The City of Aarhus makes visions a reality and creates development, communities, and well-being.

The City of Aarhus consists of 6 large municipal departments that work with different areas of the city and the service of citizens and companies. The departments are Culture and Citizen Service, Children and Young People, Social Affairs and Employment, Health and Care, Technical Services and Environment, and the Mayor's Department which works across the other departments.

Business and Sustainable Development is a strategic development team in the Mayor's Department which focuses on sustainable business development in the largest growth center outside the capital area. We are a committed and ambitious team working to develop and improve the business environment, including entrepreneurship, business development, urban development, mobility, and education.

Like most of the Danish municipalities the City of Aarhus struggles with small numbers of young people choosing and completing a vocational education (VET). This has the consequence that there are not enough educated skilled workers to cover the current and future needs of the labor market. If the current development continues, Denmark will lack up to 99,000 skilled workers in 2030. Taken into consideration the amount of skilled workforce required to carry out the green transition, Denmark will, according to figures from the Danish Trade Union Confederation and Danish Energy, lack twice as many skilled workers.

Therefore, the City of Aarhus has set local targets that 18.8% of young people who finish primary school after 9th or 10th grade will choose a vocational education in 2025 and 22.5% in 2030. In 2021, this number was 11.9 %.

In other words, there is a great need for the relevant stakeholders in the field to work closely together to intensify and strengthen the new and ongoing efforts. Therefore, the City of Aarhus has set up a steering group with representatives from the municipality's departments, the vocational schools, the business community, and employee organizations. Parallel to this, young people are also involved and heard in the work. The steering group has divided the intensified VET efforts into four tracks: I) strengthened cooperation between primary schools and vocational schools through vocational practice and school visits, II) strengthening the role of Aarhus' business community in vocational education through hiring a vocational playmaker focusing on vocational internships (primary school students) and company visits, III) campus development IV) visibility and representation of interests of VET's.

Skills addressed:

- Teamwork - [Working in teams - roles and responsibility \(growth4sme.eu\)](#)
- Project working - [Project management \(growth4sme.eu\)](#)
- Brainstorming and creativity - [Methods for brainstorming \(growth4sme.eu\)](#)
- Pitching - [How to pitch \(growth4sme.eu\)](#)

Do's and don'ts:

- Do's: First meeting with the companies before beginning working on the cases.
- Don'ts: Try to avoid having too small groups because it can be vulnerable.

Evaluation

- Overall positive reactions
- Good mixture of theoretical sessions and work sessions and pitches, following a strict agenda keeps the pace

2.3.2 Norway - University of Oslo: Case competition - round 1 – September 2021



The first case-competition ever at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo was a **digital CC**. Due to Covid-19 measures issued by the Norwegian health authorities, there was uncertainty about which rules and restrictions would apply on the actual dates for the competition. 110 adult learners (alumni) and students from the faculty signed up for the case-competition. The two case-holders were SMEs representing communication and media industries in Oslo.

Number of participants: 110 signed up >60 showed up >38 finished
8 teams working on case 1, 7 teams on case 2

Participating speakers:

- Gunn Enli, Dean of Studies, Faculty of Humanities
- Erlend Hovgaard, Partner and Strategic Advisor, at Reodor, an Oslo-based venture and innovation studio

Case holders:

- Corporate Communication A/S
- Manus A/S

Challenge 1 Corporate Communication:

A large Norwegian Oil and Gas Company sells gas to Germany. The company wants more information on how the outcome of the German election (autumn 2021) may affect the sale of Norwegian gas to Germany in the next 3-5 years.

The company has commissioned an analysis with three different scenarios: Negative - neutral - positive. The analysis will be used as a decision basis for communication activities, positioning and reputation building in Germany. It will be presented to the Communications Director of the company.

Challenge 2 Manus:

Manus' customers are small and large companies, all of which have in common that they need help with their communication, and primarily communication using digital channels. Many of these have challenges in using digital channels in an effective way, and they find it difficult to get enough benefit from channels such as Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest.

How can Manus, as a provider of communication services, make the value of visual digital channels visible in a good and obvious way to its customers?

Based on the statement above, bring out 1-2 creative examples of how Manus itself can combine language and visual elements in an innovative way in its digital business communication.

Skills addressed:

- [Basics of projects work \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu)
- [Working in teams - roles and responsibility \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu)

Do's and don'ts

- Do's: ensure sufficient communication with students ahead of the CC and test the digital set-up
- Don'ts: don't underestimate the importance of clear communication among the participating staff

[Evaluation report \(attachement/pdf\)](#)

2.3.3 Denmark - Aarhus: Case competition - round 2 – October 2021



Academic solution for Silkeborg companies

Five local companies from Silkeborg gained an international perspective on the challenges they faced during this Growth4SME case competition. Eight adult learners from the University of Oslo and UC Leuven-Limburg in Belgium came to Denmark and took together with additional 120 participants part in the case-competition on October 11th and 12th of October 2021.

The case-competition connected graduates with small and medium-sized enterprises and the participants used their academic expertise to find practical solutions for the business community in Silkeborg.

The participants were introduced to the Design Thinking method and worked in groups of 4-5 participants to solve the challenges presented by local companies. The selection of the winning groups was carried out in two rounds. In the first round, the groups pitched their ideas to the representative from the participating company and an academic from Aarhus University and decided on the second-round finalist. The winning groups from each company did a pitch in front of all participants and the panel of judges decided on the winners in three categories: First Price, WTF-Award and Audience Award.

Number of participants: 130

Participating case-holders/partners/speakers:

- Lasse Chor, Happy42
- Silkeborg Municipality
- SWECO
- SIF / Silkeborg IF Fodbold
- Handel Silkeborg
- Museum Jorn
- Outdoor Institute
- Silkeborg Business

Challenges

SWECO

In 2018, Årstiderne Arkitekter was acquired by Sweco. This means that, at Sweco, we can now offer integrated consultancy with both architectural and engineering services to our partners. It also means that we have become a much larger company. In fact, measured by the number of square metres built, we are now Denmark's largest design studio.

Relatively soon after the acquisition, the world was put into hibernation by Covid-19, and, as a company, we had to get to know each other without being able to interact in person – it goes without saying that this was an organisational challenge.

We would like to hear your suggestions for how we could solve this organisational challenge. Many new colleagues have joined the team – both just before but also during Corona. How

could we bring together old and new employees, and how could we strengthen and enhance the feeling of being one unified 'family' and company?

SIF / Silkeborg IF Fodbold

Silkeborg IF is a homegrown football club founded in 1917 with a proud past and an exciting future. We focus on our own talents, and it is quite common to see "the boy next door" playing for our first team.

We are currently working with schools, partner clubs and fan groups – and of course also with sponsors, media and other stakeholders.

One of our tasks is to ensure that more people come to the JYSK Park Stadium to watch our matches – this improves the experience for spectators and helps to improve the chances of achieving better results.

Our stadium is completely new and renovated.

At the JYSK Park Stadium in Silkeborg, we have a spectator average (before Covid-19) of 3,500. Our facilities are excellent, and our results are good – so how can we get more people in Silkeborg to come to our stadium and watch our matches?

Museum Jorn

Museum Jorn aims to combine nature and art through the project [Jump on a bike - and explore art and nature around Silkeborg \(museumjorn.dk\)](#)

As part of this project, the museum rents out electric bikes. However, it has been more difficult than originally thought to launch the project and to get it noticed.

It is necessary to perform a target group analysis to find potential target groups for the project and good, marketable ideas to boost the business around the project.

Outdoor Institute

Outdoor Institute is a non-profit organisation that was set up in connection with Silkeborg being made the Outdoor Capital of Denmark.

We view ourselves as a development and knowledge-sharing centre which supports the values of the outdoor life within a range of health and welfare-related areas, and which creates a best framework for knowledge sharing and anchoring, so that the outdoor life can have a lasting effect on society.

We are therefore involved in several types of initiatives framed by the outdoors and aimed at improving health, quality of life, welfare, or growth.

Read more here: www.outdoorinstitute.dk

Gear bank

A gear bank is a depot that stores a range of outdoor equipment, such as kayaks, swim vests, tents, and fishing rods. The main idea behind these gear banks is that institutions such as kindergartens, after-school programmes and clubs can access lots of different equipment cheaply. In practice, this works by the individual institution being able to access a website where they can order the desired equipment, which they subsequently collect. The gear bank is therefore a good initiative, among other reasons because it helps children and young people

increase their knowledge of nature and because it resonates with the current focus on developing a sharing economy and reducing resource wastage.

In Silkeborg, we do not have a gear bank, but, considering our growing focus on the outdoors, we think it is an idea worth exploring.

We have the following two questions.

1. Usually, the municipality – for example, a school – is responsible for the running of a gear bank. But if the municipality is not willing to take on this task (at least, not on its own), what could a solution/business model look like?

2. When you develop new initiatives to promote health or prevent illness, it can be difficult to reach the groups for whom they are most relevant. For example, setting up a new gear bank would mean that Valdemar – who already runs marathons – can now also kayak, because he can access a gear bank. This is great, but it does not significantly improve public health.

What type of initiatives could be launched (concerning the type of equipment, the organisation of the gear bank and communication, etc.) with a view to ensuring that the gear bank (also/particularly) caters for users who are not the classic ‘outdoors type’?

Silkeborg Business

Handel Silkeborg’s vision is to ensure an active and vibrant business environment in Silkeborg, where the city’s natural areas and surroundings can help to brand Silkeborg as a unique, eventful, and hospitable business city. We will do this in close collaboration with our members, the municipality and other stakeholders who share our commitment to making Silkeborg even more attractive for inhabitants and visitors.

Both the city and the experiences it offers are growing – which helps to make a city more attractive. Several businesses in Silkeborg are producing good initiatives, and there is often a lot of competition for a good, central location.

Looking for solutions that will move the existing market traders to a new location in the city and to set up an exciting, vibrant Saturday market (Torvehandel 3.0), which would attract new local traders with original ideas.

Skills addressed with this case competition:

- Teamworking - [Working in teams - roles and responsibility \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://www.growth4sme.eu/working-in-teams-roles-and-responsibility)
- Project management - [Project management \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://www.growth4sme.eu/project-management)
- Creativity and brainstorming - [Methods for brainstorming \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://www.growth4sme.eu/methods-for-brainstorming)
- Pitching - [How to pitch \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://www.growth4sme.eu/how-to-pitch)

Do’s and don’ts

Do’s:

- Time efficient structure of pitches in parallel sessions

- Perfect match between competencies among the participating students and the business challenges

Don'ts

- Avoid having international students in a group of their own

Evaluation:

- Positive reactions
- Good mixture of theoretical sessions and work sessions and pitches, following a strict agenda keeps the pace

2.3.4 Belgium – UCLL: Case Competition round 1 – March 2022



On March 24-25, 2022, the Hack the waste case competition was held in the city of Leuven, Belgium, and organized by UC Leuven-Limburg.

Number of participants: 136 students from 10 different countries took part, among others: Belgium, The Netherlands, South Africa, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Latvia, Norway, Denmark, and Brazil took part in this international, transdisciplinary and hybrid competition.

Participating students from these partner institutions:

Aarhus University Denmark (via ERA project Growth4SMEs) - BA School of Business and Finance (Latvia) - Belgium Campus ITiversity (South Africa) - DOBA university (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia) - Eka University of Applied Sciences (Latvia) - Fontys ICT University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands) - Heriot Watt (UK) - Integrado University (Brasil) - IUT Quimper (France) - UCLL University of Applied Sciences (Belgium) - University of Nis (Serbia) University of Oslo (Norway) and Aarhus university (Denmark)

Case holders

- City of Riga
- Expertise centrum Sustainable resources UCLL – Team Appeal

Challenge 1 ‘City of Riga’

The City of Riga offers a bulk waste challenge. Citizens are dumping bulky waste, like old sofa's in courtyards or illegally next to waste containers, leaving the problem to get rid of it to others. The capital city, home to 600,000 inhabitants, is left with 46.000 m³ of bulky waste.

How can the city best create a system for revision and reuse of bulky waste, collected by waste management companies, encourage people to donate their waste for reuse and involve charities, entrepreneurs and refurbishes in the reuse and resale of used furniture?

Challenge ‘team Appeal’ (UCLL)

Apples are the most-grown fruit in Flanders, and unfortunately there is also waste. So, what if you turned apples into a leather? But the next step is how to bring this to market. The challenge for our students: How can we make our products more interactive and make them tell a story? That is the challenge posed by Jan Van Dierdonck from UCLL Research & Expertise. The challenge for our students: How can we make our products more interactive and make them tell a story? There is a lot of data available to say more about the product, but also: what should the product be like? There is much to think about.

Evaluation:

- Overall, incredibly positive reactions
- Good mixture of theoretical sessions and work sessions and pitches, following a strict agenda keeps the pace
- Forming interdisciplinary and international groups in advance is a struggle, esp. in hybrid situations
- Going on for 24h is hard, even for students
- Working hybrid is a challenge – not the same dynamics in the live as in the digital environment
- Spend enough time on getting acquainted with team members

Skills addressed with this case competition:

- Teamwork - [Working in teams - roles and responsibility \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu/working-in-teams-roles-and-responsibility)
- Project management - [Project management \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu/project-management)
- Brainstorming and creativity - [Methods for brainstorming \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu/methods-for-brainstorming)
- Pitching - [How to pitch \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu/how-to-pitch)
- Communication - [Communication in the workplace](https://growth4sme.eu/communication-in-the-workplace) -Independence -movie no.6 (growth4sme.eu)
- Sustainability - [Sustainability \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu/sustainability)

"It is a very good experience for all those who want to improve their organizational, communication and other skills, as well as to learn how to work in a modern environment."

Complete evaluation report:

<https://aarhusuniversitet.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/ARTSGROWTH4SMEs02/Delte%20dokumenter/General/Case%20competition%20Belgium/evaluation/Survey%20results-graphs.docx?d=w3978ddad0ba64f65a4966e6d174e8363&csf=1&web=1&e=yo5IO6>

2.3.5 Denmark - Aarhus: Case competition - round 3 – April 2022



New solutions to realize the potential of tourism

From the 26th-27th of April 2022 adult learners and graduates from Belgium, Norway and Denmark gave entrepreneurial suggestions on how to create start-ups companies developing cultural experiences and/or digital solutions for the cultural sector. The participants worked in international groups of three participants. The participants were presented for the challenges in the Danish city and coastal tourism by Jarle Kondrup from Innovation Lab and to the method Design Thinking. For two days they were working intensively on their challenge in 'The Kitchen', a new entrepreneurial innovation hub situated at Aarhus Universitet. The winner of the case-competition was awarded 10 hours of professional guidance to further develop the entrepreneurial idea. The winning team suggested a game where it would be possible to choose themes such as "period of second world war" or "nature" and the digital solution would then suggest a path and cultural experiences to visit through the city.

Number of participants: 16

Participating case-holders/partners/speakers:

- Museum Skanderborg
- Museum Ovaraci
- Fregatten Jylland
- Aarhus Søfarts Museum
- Dansk Kyst og Naturturisme og Dansk Storbyturisme
- Happy 42
- Innovation Lab

Challenge:

Ringkøbing-Skjern Museum

Description of the business:

Ringkøbing-Skjern Museum is not just one museum. We have several museums and venues around Ringkøbing Fjord, and with more than 220,000 guests a year, we are among Destination Vesterhavet's (the North Sea) biggest tourist attractions.

Ringkøbing-Skjern Museum is a non-profit, state-subsidised museum of cultural history. The museum is a self-governing institution and collaborates closely with Ringkøbing-Skjern Municipality. The museum receives approx. one-third of its revenue through public subsidies and approx. two-thirds through ticket sales, other sales and projects, including archaeological excavations.

For tourists:

The museum's primary guests are tourists who are on holiday in the area. Therefore, the development of the museum is important so that we can continue to be an attractive option and contribute to creating a meaningful holiday with lots of cultural experiences to choose from in addition to sunny or windy days on the wide, sandy beaches and large dunes, heaths, and plantations in the Realm of Nature.

We make history come alive through talented communicators, Vikings and people who master old artisanry – and we focus on gripping narratives and strong personal stories at our museums.

We take pride in offering an important level of service and constantly improving all the parameters that are of fundamental importance to our guests: historical knowledge, nice museum shops, food and drinks and clean toilets.

The museum also sees itself as an important cultural institution for the citizens of the municipality. We provide schoolchildren with knowledge that makes them want to move back home to Western Jutland at some point. We attach immense importance to creating good museums which are a source of local pride – together with lots of volunteers, including the members of the museum associations, practical helpers, and dedicated Vikings whose ‘second home’ is the museum’s reconstructed environments.

Digitisation of the museum’s back end

The museum is analysing the internal procedures with a view to finding the right back-end solution for the entire organisation, which may include online ticket sales with time slots, newsletters, data collection/BI, economic management system and bookkeeping, invoicing, and inventory management.

How can we streamline and optimise our operations?

Communication

There is a lack of simple communication solutions produced in Denmark. The available solutions, e.g., audio guidance, are often too smart/complicated, and this affects functionality and reliability. This means that they do not improve guest experience.

The market is characterised by foreign suppliers with expensive solutions which can be rented. There are very few Danish suppliers on the market, and they often focus more on development than scaling and are therefore quite expensive.

How can we communicate digitally with our guests in a user-friendly way?

Sustainable tourism

RKSK Museum wants to be a sustainable business but finds it hard to find the right solutions. It is difficult, complex, and expensive to choose the optimal solution, which means that you sometimes must make compromises in a busy working day.

Is there a solution that makes it easy to find the most sustainable product/supplier of cleaning agents?

Museum shop

The sale of site-specific and sustainable products in the museum shops contributes to improving guest experience and increases the museum’s revenue. Therefore, there is a strong focus on finding the right products for the museum’s many shops and sales outlets, but it can be difficult to figure out what to include in the range of products and to purchase suitable quantities.

How do we ensure a local and sustainable range of products?

Frigate Jutland

The Frigate Jutland was primarily intended as a war ship, which characterised life on board to a significant extent. There was a lot of instruction in the use of hand weapons and cannons. Life

on board was also characterised by monotonous work routines and training. On the other hand, the conscripts often got an excellent education on board.

In 1908, “Jylland” was withdrawn from the navy, which at once sold the frigate for scrap at a German shipyard. At the last minute, the committee for the preservation of the Frigate Jylland succeeded in raising enough money to buy it back.

After many years of struggle to raise money for the preservation of the frigate, the A.P. Moller Foundation assumed the cost of an extensive restoration in January 1989. This was the beginning of an adventurous voyage and a unique effort by the craftsmen, back then and today, working to restore and preserve the frigate.

Today, the Frigate Jylland is a popular museum in Ebeltoft.

1. Digital and sustainable development of cultural tourism a. How can we provide our guests with digital information about what our attraction has to offer in a way that is visible and relieves the pressure on our shop staff?
 - i. We need to move the flow of guests from the reception to the museum.
 - ii. We currently provide our guests with too much information. They forget it. So, we need to know what is important for our guests to know when they arrive, and how we can present the information to our guests in a clear, uncomplicated way to ensure that they remember it.
- b. How can we share information across the organisation in such a way that everyone receives the same information, rather than depending on emails and delivering information face-to-face.
 - i. How do we ensure the internal communication across the organisation, where we are divided in terms of distance, profession, and background?
- c. Development of minimalist digital solutions that incorporate both the analogue and the digital, thereby targeting several generations.
 - i. Which makes the guests come back, either physically or digitally, or make it possible to experience the museum from a distance and take the experience home with them.

Museum Qvartaci

Museum Qvartaci is known and recognised as the leading museum and research centre when it comes to the human mind and psychological vulnerability – locally, nationally, and internationally. Museum Qvartaci is an attraction and a collaboration partner that works with and sheds light on social and health issues through art, cultural history, and practical creative work. The museum’s work and collection are based on Louis Marcussen’s works which he created during his 56 years as a patient at the psychiatric hospital in Risskov.

The museum was also founded at this hospital in 1921, where it continued to be found until 2018, when the hospital moved to Skejby. So, the hospital supplied the framework for the museum for many years, and the museum building was therefore part of the story of Qvartaci’s life and the history of psychiatry.

In connection with the relocation of the psychiatric hospital in 2018, the museum was forced to find new premises and temporarily moved to the former home for apprentices (lærlingehjem) at Katrinebjergvej in the northern part of Aarhus. In 2022, the museum moved to its new, permanent premises in Kulturhus Bunkeren at Olof Palmes Allé in Skejby. In the past, the area in which the new Kulturhus Bunkeren is found was an industrial area with large companies, but in the last couple of years, a few new apartments have been built in the area. The vision is to

transform it into an attractive residential and cultural area. The relocation from the beautiful, tranquil surroundings by the water in Risskov to a new industrial and residential area in the northern part of Aarhus places the collection related to the history of psychiatry and the art from Museum Ovaraci in a new context. Unlike cultural institutions such as ARoS, Kunsthall Aarhus and KØN, Museum Ovaraci is not found in the centre of Aarhus with a visible presence. By being hidden away and having a new location, it is difficult to attract the attention of new tourists in Aarhus and convince them to visit the museum in Skejby. The museum's new location is approx. 10 minutes from the centre of Aarhus by the light rail and is therefore close to the centre, but due to the area's history as an industrial area, people do not immediately consider it part of the city.

For tourists:

Permanent exhibition, special exhibitions, guided tours, café, museum shop, active environment at Kulturhuset Bunkeren, where many other events are organised.

How can the museum, through new digital solutions, increase its visibility and attract tourists in Aarhus to Skejby?

We are looking for a way to make the mental distance between the city centre and Museum Ovaraci shorter, since it is not as far as people think. 12 minutes from Dokk1 to Museum Ovaraci by the light rail and 4 km to the University Park.

Inspiration

- An underground tunnel from the centre of Aarhus to Museum Ovaraci, in which Ovaraci's work is shown on the walls of the tunnel all the way. There are bicycles in both ends which you can use to go there and back (Ovaraci loved to cycle back and forth between the hospital and the city centre).
- An interactive user interface at Museum Ovaraci. When interacting with it, you get feedback from a light or sound installation in the centre of Aarhus. See Plant a Light by Kollision and CAVI for inspiration. The feedback relates to input in Plant a Light, but not directly due to the distance between Museum Ovaraci and the city centre. There must be – a dialogical connection – so that it is not just one-way communication like Plant a Light.
- The rearmost carriage of the light rail is the Ovaraci carriage, where an audio track plays stories about incidents in Ovaraci's life, so that the trip to the museum also becomes part of the museum experience.

Museum Skanderborg

Museum Skanderborg's new main department is called Perron1 and is located at Skanderborg railway station.

Perron1 is going to be a special museum that uses its location to bring people together – a waiting room which is also a museum and an archive. We are rethinking the classic museum by moving it closer to people. It will be incredibly easy to visit the museum, because it is on the way. There will be stories and activities for commuters who pass through the station every day, for the citizens of Skanderborg and for tourists.

FRAMEWORK

It is quite unique to place a museum and an archive on a platform at a railway station.

There is no similar place in Denmark. The relocation of Museum Skanderborg to larger facilities in the closed-down post office building at the railway station will undoubtedly strengthen the museum's presence in the municipality.

The transformation combines the reuse of the existing buildings from 1983 and a new extension as well as the possibility to rethink what a town museum means to the local community. The location provides the opportunity to develop Perron1 as a catalyst for creating urban and social cohesion in a scattered municipality.

Skanderborg railway station is currently a transport hub with railway lines to the north, south and west, busses connecting the entire region and busses going to Billund Airport, a car park for commuters and the main road to Aarhus. It is estimated that more than 40,000 people pass through the station daily. This also means that the location is both sustainable and climate-friendly in relation to infrastructure and public transport.

TARGET GROUPS

The goal is a building which many people – of all ages – enter and exit every day. The museum's arrival area VENTESALEN (the waiting room) is also the heart of the museum. This is a place for activities that involve the audience – either by participating actively or by looking over the researchers' shoulders in the open workshops.

The waiting room should also make commuters want to have a look inside – repeatedly – and get new input or "history-to-go."

Skanderborg is a centre for many upper secondary education programmes that attract young people from the surrounding area. The location at the railway station makes it easy for young people to use the facilities in their spare time on their way to and from school – as a study café or as a place with various activities which are targeted at them, where they can spend time together with friends.

Focus is still on involving the main users, who belong to the older segment. Both the waiting room and the reading room are meant to invite socialising, preferably across generations and social groups. There will be events such as genealogy, creative workshops, salons, and lectures. A waiting room which is also a museum and an archive. We are rethinking the classic museum by moving it closer to people. It will be incredibly easy to visit the museum because it is on the way. There will be stories and activities for commuters who pass through the station daily, for the citizens of Skanderborg and for tourists.

As part of opening the museum to a wider audience, an informal meeting place will be created, "Ventesalen." A place that should function as a hybrid of a café, an information point, and an exhibition.

A place where people can have a look inside, spend time and gain knowledge about the area. The waiting room is also an opportunity to breathe life into the museum during the day. A place that is open to the elderly, mothers' groups, and young people.

The location at a railway station gives Perron1 a unique opportunity to develop "to-go" concepts. It could be a kind of archival collections or podcasts that you can delve into while in transit. It

could be reprints of historical newspapers. It could also be small publications that can be read in approx. two hours.

We would like suggestions for the content and format of the “to-go” concepts.

Aarhus Maritime Museum

Description of the business: Aarhus Maritime Museum is a non-profit museum located in 15 containers on Pier 3. Due to urban renewal, the museum has drawn up a new strategy which is to lead to a new museum in the next 3-5 years.

For tourists: Now, the museum offers guided tours for groups. In addition, it is open every Tuesday at 13.00-16.00. In connection with major sailing events, we sometimes create temporary exhibitions in a portable container.

The challenge is the location and limited financial resources – read more in the attached strategy.

Do's and don'ts:

Do's:

- Mixture of different academic backgrounds and nationalities in the groups
- Brilliant facilitator and excellent academic/professional inputs

Don'ts

- Make sure that the challenges are not too difficult and complex to solve – simplicity is a keyword

Evaluation:

- Positive reactions
- Good keynote speaks, mixture of theoretical sessions and work sessions and pitches, following a strict agenda keeps the pace
- Nice to be part of a smaller case-competition

2.3.6 Norway - University of Oslo: Case competition - round 2 – June 2022



The second case competition at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo, was originally planned for mid-March 2022. But since Covid restrictions were still in place in Norway in February and we wanted to be sure we could try out a **physical case competition** we decided to postpone the event till 7-9 June. Not an ideal time due to a busy exam period.

Number of participants: 38 signed up > 19 showed up > 19 finished (5 Belgian, 10 Danish)

3 teams working on each case.

Participating speakers:

- Arnt Maasø, lecturer and conference speaker
- Per Røhnebæk, FoodCapture AS
- Frida Almquist, Halogen
- Eirik Welo, lecturer and jury member

Case holders:

- FoodCapture AS
- Halogen

Challenge 1 FoodCapture AS

FoodCapture AS is a Norwegian MedTech startup addressing undernutrition.

Disease-related malnutrition is a global problem which impairs the quality of life of many people. Undernourished patients also cost the public health service more than three times as much as well-nourished patients due to longer recovery time, worse response to treatment and more re-admissions. In the general population, the risk of undernutrition is 30%, while for the elderly the risk is 40%, increasing with age >65 years.

How can disease related undernutrition be reduced by systematically involving a patient's family/next of-kin - either face-to face or from distance - in the follow-up in a home care situation to ensure 1) right nutrition 2) supportive eating and 3) good routines for the patients/elderly?

In solving the challenge, think of human factors, available technology, community, mixed patient groups, and the fact that resources and local public budgets are limited.

A solution can be a strategy, a system (combining products, services, and users), a concrete suggestion on training/communication (please select one), a digital solution/ecosystem.

Challenge 2 Halogen

Halogen is a cross-disciplinary design and innovation agency. We develop products, services, systems and processes for many industries and sectors. We strive to design solutions that are relevant for today and geared for tomorrow. We design for impact and work across many different sectors, and our projects range from the defense industry to digital services and policy development. We work towards a better and greener society and want our projects to contribute positive change. To do this well, we need help to understand the impact and footprint we leave behind in each project.

How can we measure the impact and footprint of our design projects?

We need a tool or a resource or something else to help us talk about positive and negative impact, make decisions about future projects, and measure impact over time.

Directions to explore existing solutions used by other agencies, research-based measurements for social and environmental impact, systemic perspectives on sustainability, as well as ethical and economic considerations that you may find relevant.

Do's and Don'ts

- Do's: Organize space for students to work in groups, provide refreshments for long hours, 1-minute pitch on day two to test the format and have feedback.
- Don'ts: Do not hold CCs during the exam period – many no-shows!

Skills addressed:

- [Working in teams - roles and responsibility \(growth4sme.eu\)](http://growth4sme.eu)
- [Basics of projects work \(growth4sme.eu\)](http://growth4sme.eu)
- [Brainstorming and creativity \(growth4sme.eu\)](http://growth4sme.eu)
- [Communication in the workplace](http://growth4sme.eu) -Independence -movie no.6 (growth4sme.eu)
- [How to pitch \(growth4sme.eu\)](http://growth4sme.eu)

[Evaluation Report \(attachment/pdf\)](#)

2.3.7 Norway - University of Oslo: Case competition - round 3 – October 2022



On 25-26 October Case competition round 3 was held at the University of Oslo, campus Blindern. The theme for the case competition was 'sustainability' and the students could choose between solving a task where they had to figure out how they could make the battery manufacturer's strategy sustainable, or one deciding whether it was best to reuse or recycle batteries for electric cars.

For this case competition, we had only one case holder. This made the organization of the CC easier, especially the jury considerations. The inclusion of a CC as an examination option for the course *MEVIT2615 Framing the environment in media and communication studies* ensured several very motivated participants, which was an additional advantage in this case competition.

Number of participants: 40 signed up > 38 showed up > 38 finished.

Participants: 5 students from Belgium, 5 Danish graduates and 28 students from the Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo. The participants were divided into 8 teams. All teams, except for one, had a mixture of Belgian, Danish, and Norwegian participants.

Participating speakers:

- Arnt Maasø, lecturer and conference speaker
- Andreas Forfang, Vianode
- Eirik Welo, lecturer and jury member

Case holder:

Vianode

Challenge 1 Vianode:

Draft Vianodes *sustainability strategy*, including:

- The most relevant UN sustainable development goals
- Which investments to prioritize
- Which customers to target
- How to adapt circularity
- A climate footprint roadmap
- A set of sustainability key performance indicators (KPIs)

Challenge 2 Vianode:

Is it more sustainable to reuse or recycle electric vehicle batteries? Electric vehicle batteries last longer than their cars and can typically have a “second life” of about five years in an application with lower safety requirements, such as energy stationary storage. A second life prolongs the positive climate impact from batteries in the use-phase.

Alternatively, batteries can be recycled after the first life. The recycling itself has a footprint but allows the extraction of materials that are necessary for electric vehicle batteries, such as cobalt and nickel, while batteries for energy stationary storage can rely on alternative chemistries.

Analyze what is more sustainable to reuse a battery for second life or to recycle a battery after first life, considering;

- A bird’s eye view on how best to reach global climate goals
- Net cradle-to-grave climate impact of various battery applications, such as electric vehicles and energy stationary storage
- The supply-chain limitations of the battery industry
- Challenges with scaling up new industries for reuse and recycling

Do’s and don’ts

- Do’s: include CC as an examination option in a course to ensure participation. International groups work well and add a positive dimension to the CC
- Don’ts: we could have had two or more case holders for this CC but waited too late to see the number of participants per case. However, we feel that the take-away for the case holder is more valuable when there is real competition in presenting results.

Skills addressed with the case competition:

General competence:

- acquire teamwork skills

- be able to plan and carry out academic assignments and complete them within the defined time
- be able to debate and exchange opinions and arguments with others and present ideas orally be able to write effectively about complex subject matter
- develop critical reading skills and media literacy skills
- gain competence in working with industry professionals and external institutions
- be able to find, evaluate and refer to relevant knowledge and present it in a scholarly manner

[Evaluation report \(attachment/pdf\)](#)

2.3.8 Belgium - UCLL: Case competition round 2 - 8 & 9 November 2022



On November 8 & 9 2022 the second Belgian case competition was held at the campus of UC Limburg in Diepenbeek. Program: <https://research-expertise.ucll.be/nl/case-competition-sustainability-smes>

Number of participants: 44 adult learners participated: 3 Danish graduates, 5 Norwegian, 20 Belgian marketing students and 16 Belgian students SME management. They worked together in multidisciplinary and international teams.

Challenges:

Case from city Hasselt ‘Sustainable clothing’:

After food, housing and transportation, clothing has the greatest impact on the climate. To push companies towards more sustainable fashion and textiles, the European Commission launched a European Textile Strategy. With the new measures, the EU wants to put an end to so-called "fast fashion," clothing that is mass-produced cheaply and of mediocre quality, and which is often thrown away too quickly due to its low price. There will be guidelines for the entire chain, from production to purchase. Clothing must last longer, recycling must be increased, and repair must be given a more key role. For example, textiles must consist of a

certain proportion of recycled materials. The use of sustainability labels will also be more strictly regulated.

In its EU strategy for sustainable and circular textiles, the Commission states that by 2030, all textile products placed on the EU market should be: sustainable, repairable, and recyclable; made from recycled fibers; free of hazardous substances; produced with respect for social rights. Furthermore, the Commission wants that by 2030: fast fashion is "out of fashion" as consumers can benefit from high-quality textiles for longer; profitable reuse and repair services are widely available; producers in a competitive, resilient and innovative textile sector take responsibility for their products throughout the value chain; circular rather than throw-away clothing has become the norm, with sufficient capacity for recycling and minimal incineration and landfill.

The students could choose between 2 perspectives within this challenge:

The challenge from point of view fashion entrepreneurs:

Finding a revenue model - How do we make it profitable? The organization of repair activities (cooperate with a repair shop, organize it themselves, start brands with repair points ,...examples from other countries? What are the customers' needs and is there any demand from consumers? The planning.

The challenge from point of view of the city and its citizens:

How to sensitize? Inform about possibilities including clothing repair shops, repair cafes (textile is still almost never repaired there, there is little demand from visitors of repair cafés to repair textile, repair of electro)

How high is the motivation among citizens, how can they be stimulated? How to increase self-reliance (learning to repair yourself) What are the barriers to textile repair?

Challenge 'Froep' by InZ vzw:

In-Z en Host vzw are companies within the social economy, they work with people that have a distance from the normal job market. With the concept of Froep (Soup and Fruit at schools), they prepare soups and fruit snacks in their kitchens and distribute it to schools. They work for and with schools in order that every child can have a decent meal, for free. Their mission:

- No food waste (they receive overstocks and vegetable which did not get sold at the auction)
- Innovation in social employment
- Circular & sustainable
- For & with schools
- Inclusive child poverty policy

Currently local government is paying for the schools who want to take part in this concept. Unfortunately, Froep is not profitable, they have high workload e.g., in coordination and uncertain residual flows of vegetables, so not enough supply. They challenged the students to produce a workable business model.

Skills addressed with this case competition:

- Working in teams - roles and responsibility- [Working in teams - roles and responsibility \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu)
- Time management
- Business understanding - [Business understanding \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu)
- Brainstorming and creativity - [Methods for brainstorming \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu)
- Problem solving and adaptability - [Project management \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu)
- Communication in the workplace - [Communication in the workplace](https://growth4sme.eu) -Independence -movie no.6 [\(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu)
- How to pitch/present a case - [How to pitch \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu)
- Sustainable thinking - [Sustainability \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://growth4sme.eu)

Evaluation:

- Overall, less positive reactions
- Enough time to work on the cases
- International teamwork is found exciting
- The students from UC Limburg (marketing & SME management) have done several case competitions, every year. For them this is not new, and we think that is also an explanation why this one was not challenging enough for the Belgian students
- The cases were not too difficult, not technical. It should have given students the time to dig deeper into the issue, but unfortunately it did not. They went too quickly to solutions, should have taken more time to brainstorm on innovative ideas.
- We think to do so they need more coaching and guidance. Referring to the growth4SME platform to find information on how to brainstorm, how to pitch, is not motivating enough. They need more explanation from the coach to work more in depth.!
- The fact that taking part in the case competition for the Belgian students was obligatory made that they were not very motivated to put much effort in it
- Some Belgian participants also had to attend obligatory courses from other teachers in between. This is not good for the focus and the team spirit. Students should only work on the cases together with their group the whole time, no distractions from other courses.
- Spend more time on getting acquainted with team members

The responses to the evaluation (30 resp)

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeuBN0FmijLB522wwZCme6yGjkW_HGgv4wBluSj8K71htkGPQ/viewform?usp=sharing

The excel file with the results:

<https://aarhusuniversitet.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/sites/ARTSGROWTH4SMES02/Delte%20dokumenter/General/Case%20competition%20Belgium/Case%20competition%20sustainability%20november%202022/Evaluation%20of%20Growth4SME%27s%20Case%20Competition%20and%20online%20courses.csv?d=wec9d24ed820d4a9fa6d18b7066fd2aa0&csf=1&web=1&e=Ak2oVo>

In the news:

<https://www.truiensnieuws.be/activiteiten/ucll-studenten-komen-met-straffe-ideeen-rond-gezonde-voeding-op-school-en-rond-duurzaamheid-in-de-kledingsector/?fbclid=IwAR38ct-zNyFRLqZHC9sLGIKrqCHov5c1YRQfGM9y3McTZNk3BwUVGBEhGfM>

2.3.9 Belgium – UCLL: Case competition round 3 - March 14 – 15 – 16 2023

On March 14 – 15 – 16 2023 the third Belgian case competition was held at the campus of UC Limburg in Diepenbeek.

Number of participants: 39 students participated: 4 Danish graduates, 6 Norwegian master students, 18 Belgian bachelor students' technology, 5 bachelor students from the education department and 6 bachelors management. They worked together in 9 multidisciplinary and international teams.

Skills addressed with this case competition:

- Working in teams - roles and responsibility- [Working in teams - roles and responsibility \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://www.growth4sme.eu/working-in-teams-roles-and-responsibility)
- Business understanding - [Business understanding \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://www.growth4sme.eu/business-understanding)
- Brainstorming and creativity - [Methods for brainstorming \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://www.growth4sme.eu/methods-for-brainstorming)
- Problem solving and adaptability - [Project management \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://www.growth4sme.eu/project-management)
- Communication in the workplace - [Communication in the workplace](https://www.growth4sme.eu/communication-in-the-workplace) -Independence -movie no.6 [\(growth4sme.eu\)](https://www.growth4sme.eu)
- Sustainable thinking - [Sustainability \(growth4sme.eu\)](https://www.growth4sme.eu/sustainability)

Case: Renewable Energy 4 Sustainable Tourism

This time we only chose 1 challenge so all the groups could work and be evaluated on the same case. Our colleagues from the research dept 'sustainable resources' are working on finding solutions for their off-grid mobile energy unit and they were looking for new, innovative solutions. They presented their case to the students and afterwards, were available to answer questions (also via mail).

During the first day we invited people from Vlajo (a Flemish agency specialized in stimulating entrepreneurial education), they have a lot of experience in moderating case competition and were an immense help. It gave us some space to spend more time coaching the individual teams. They are also very experienced in teambuilding activities – this time we have spent much more time on 'building' a team, getting to know each other, ... Also, the workshop on soft skills on day 1 (using improvisation theatre exercises) contributed to an optimal group ambiance, which in turn has positive impact on the brainstorming, working efficiently, time keeping, dividing roles within the group, ...



Autonomous service station for (e-)bikes

Autonomous functioning energy station, generating and storing energy.

- Strategically placed in the landscape using sustainable materials.
- Charging point for electric bikes and smartphones, tire inflation, etc.
- Permanent or temporary installation: possibilities in the province of Limburg?
- Online monitoring + information screens.
- What about funding?



Some considerations

Use of materials

- Sustainable
- Natural appearance
 - Wood
 - Tree trunks
- Visible technology (optional)
 - Infotainmentfactor
- Furniture/decoration
- Terrain
 - Blend in with nature



Program

Tuesday March 14

14.00-15.00: Guided tour @ Corda Campus, the largest technology and innovation campus in Europe

15.00-17.00: Workshop Soft skills

In this workshop, we train the attitude behind important soft skills, for example: connecting, deep listening, creative thinking, risk-taking, teamwork, empathy, accepting and building on others' ideas, etc. Using improvisation theatre methods, we dive into the mindset that can help us grow those skills. We use basic exercises that are beginner's level, aiming to stimulate flow and growth for every participant in a comfortable way. All that's expected from participants is an open mindset.

Wednesday March 15

- 9.00-9.10: Welcome
- 9.10-9.30: Agenda & meet your team
- 9.30-10.10: Ice-breaking session
- 10.10-10.45: Presentation of the challenges by the challenge owner(s)
- 10.45-11.30: Desk research
- 11.30-12.00: Creativity & brainstorming tips
- 12.00-13.00: Lunch & relax!
- 13.00-14.30: Brainstorming session
- 14.30-15.00: feedback session
- 15.00-15.30: Business concept introduction
- 15.30-17.00...: Business concept working time

Thursday March 16

- 9.00-9.30: 1' Pitches
- 9.30-10.45: Group work – refine your business concept
- 10:45-11:00: How to pitch
- 11.00-12.00: Start preparing your pitch - Creative presentation of your idea
- 12.00–13.00: Lunch
- 13.15-14:30: The official Pitches
- 14:30-14:50: Announcement of winner
- 14:50: Kiss & goodbye

Evaluation:

- Overall, positive reactions
- We had a structured program, dividing the days into blocks. Every block started with a short presentation or 'learning snack', e.g., 'how to brainstorm', 'how to use a business model,' 'how to pitch'. After that, the students could work on this part of the case competition for a set time. This structure made that the adult learners stayed focused all the time and were challenged to finish that part in time to start with the next exercise
- International teamwork is found extremely exciting
- For the technology students from UC Limburg this was their first experience of a case competition. It is the first time they will have a course on soft skills and case competitions might be integrated into this course, starting next year. So, for them it was completely 'out of their comfort zone'. But we think they have done an excellent job! (marketing & SME management) have done several case competitions, every year.
- The case which was presented was not challenging enough. It was presented in a detailed way; a lot of examples and ideas were already given by the challenge owner. This might have led to students stuck to these ideas and did not looking for completely other and more innovative solutions.
- It was a good thing to divide the days into shorter blocks, it made students stick to e.g., the brainstorming phase and dig deeper. If we hadn't done this, they might have jumped to conclusions even faster. Certainly, with bachelor adult learners, it is necessary to take them more by hand and divide the program into little pieces, making sure that enough time is spent to thoroughly explore every phase. We noticed the difference between the master students and adult learners, they were able to work independently for 2 days, where our bachelor students need more guidance and motivation.
- At the end of day 1 we asked each group to sit with a coach to present one, two, max 3 first ideas they were working on. In that way we could give them some extra tips and stress the importance of some parts of their business case. We think it is an effective way to put students back on the right track, it also motivates them to produce some qualitative material at the end of their brainstorm phase.
- Using the ability of an external partner gave us more time to guide the groups and coach them.

- This time all students took part in a voluntary way, which was clearly visible in team ambiance and motivation.
- Using the pitch canvas was incredibly positive – the result was that each group had a clear pitch, giving all the essential information. The jury nominated one winning team after the pitches, these team members all received a prize (a power bank)

3 Perspectives on international learning across cultures

In March 2020, students and staff became “simultaneously ‘mobile’ and ‘immobile’ and had to balance being ‘on’ and ‘off’ line, operating, not by choice, in a digital space” (Aguri, 2021). It is with this backdrop that the Growth4SMEs project has taken place, within the constant changing travel restrictions, and with truly little of the traditional student mobility taking place. This has, however, given the project a rare opportunity to compare international collaboration and knowledge sharing through case competitions happening either completely *online*, *hybrid* (with some meeting physically and others online) – or completely ‘offline’ in a common site. The project group has used this as an opportunity to reflect about the strengths and weaknesses of each of these circumstances, and to experience and learn from how to best run an ‘online’ or hybrid case competitions. Our key take aways are three-fold:

- **Brainstorming and simultaneous collaboration is much easier when participants are co-present in the same location – but possible even in online and hybrid events.** The central skills found in our surveys and through the study of *21st Century skills* in the research literature (see for instance, Laar et al, 2020), indicate that *communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills* are key. However, brain storming activity and collaboration are among the most *difficult* to master in online and hybrid situations, when participants do not know each other, come from different academic cultures and fields, depend on online video tools with high latency / time delay, when students have varying internet connections and hardware, and sometimes participate from different time zones and across great geographical distances. While participants have impressed us with their ability to collaborate within these boundaries and under difficult circumstances, the events, when adult learners are sent to the same place, have worked much better. Online and hybrid events need stricter ‘rules’ for participation, communication, collaboration, and turn taking. Some of these ‘rules or conventions are still in the making and should be developed further with regards to a future (likely) involving more online learning, collaboration, and exchange.
- **Short events (2-3 days) such as in our case competitions have a much lower threshold for participation and learning across cultures, than the more traditional ‘one or two semesters’ exchanges.** Students who have traveled abroad for our short events have gained surprisingly much from this, and adult learners developed international networks and friendships that continue online. We believe this kind of ‘low level exchange’ could become more important in the future if adult learners are hesitant of spending a long time abroad (as is at least the case in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic) and could be a concrete

model to meet several of the challenges regarding international learning and collaboration facing higher education institutions today (cf. Aguri, 2021).

- **Collaborating in the project group / staff across counties has run easy and smooth**, with weekly online meetings and document sharing in a Microsoft Team (hosted at Aarhus). We have all become skilled in online meetings and collaboration through the pandemic and have (compared to the adult learners in the case competition) had the benefit of a clear meeting structure, turn-taking, and leadership. In addition, we have gotten to know each other well through both online and physical meetings over time, and hence learned much about the academic cultures and education systems involved in the project. We have all used this to develop our local case competitions and other courses.

3.1.1 References

I.Laar, E. van, Deursen, A. J. A. M. van, Dijk, J. A. G. M. van & Haan, J. de. Determinants of 21st-Century Skills and 21st-Century Digital Skills for Workers: A Systematic Literature Review. *Sage Open* 10, 2158244019900176 (2020).

Angouri, J. (2021). *Reimagining Research-led Education in a Digital Age* (The Guild Insight Paper No. 3). The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities and Bem Open Publishing. DOI: 10.48350/156297

4 Interviews with participating small and medium sized companies

Summary of interviews with SMEs (see appendix 3 for full version of interviews)

During the project, we surveyed quite a lot of SMEs in Belgium, Denmark and Norway about the importance of soft skills. Through in-depth interviews with some companies, we can add the following conclusions.

In the three partner countries and at all companies, there is a lack of soft skills among graduate employees. Important here is the fact that there are certain soft skills that are specific to a certain work context, and others that are more common. Moreover, the lack of soft skills is often a reason for making someone redundant. The following soft skills are most often mentioned as problematic: being flexible, keeping drive in the job, effort, commitment, dedication, being proactive, wanting to see work, problem solving, communicating with team members, being collegial, being empathic, collaboration.

A lot of companies say that the current zeitgeist is also reflected in the mentality of young employees. On the one hand, there are those who have a 9-to-5 mentality and focus too much on work-life balance. Many young employees already expect a helpful position from day 1 and that they can quickly get promoted in the job. On the other hand, there are also the entry-level employees who go for it 120%, ...

Some surveys indicate that it is a spoilt generation entering the labour market, which has remarkably grand expectations. There is clearly a gap in expectations between young workers

and employers. It is also the generation that reacts instantaneously to everything and sometimes experiences problems when work needs to be structured.

When we ask companies for recommendations in which education can prepare young people to develop soft skills, we get quite different answers:

- You cannot really teach it; it is part of someone's personality
- Education should give as many perspectives as possible
- More group work with group members who are as diverse as possible
- Education is partly decisive for having soft skills, you should not only look at the school context
- More training in real work contexts, role plays
- Especially important in education at an early age, then you can still make real changes, not in higher education
- Introduce more internships during education

Summarizing, we could mention two informants with (strong) views on the role of education. They both think there should be more sustained practice with cross-disciplinary teamwork; all stress increased cooperation with businesses outside Academia, and both would like more teaching of 'business-understanding' and how to set 'measurable goals' and to 'prioritize'. The concept of case-competitions is an excellent method for developing soft skills and training teamwork. Higher education institutions should work more with the business community and companies in problem solving and working on challenges." Also, students "should be drilled more in measuring and setting goals for what you are going to achieve." and being able to set "quantifiable goals".

When we ask how committed companies are to developing soft skills, we get different answers. Some companies indicate that they provide courses or try to do so. Some companies have a very wide range, while other SMEs cannot commit to this at all due to lack of time. From the limited survey, we can deduce that Scandinavian companies are slightly more committed to this than those in Belgium, although it is also certainly sector specific.

In the meantime, we hope that young people will follow the companies' tips: Stay interested in growing in soft skills, dare to ask questions, dare to take responsibility, take every opportunity to grow, practice, get outside and no longer focus on your social media.

5 Conclusions

In the project Growth4SMEs, the partners have gained valuable insight into the need for soft skills in over 400 small and medium-sized companies. This new knowledge has been used to create a wide range of extra material that both teaching staff, adult learners unemployed, and students can access easily. Within the project, we have developed material - a so-called

education set-up - about: Brainstorming and creativity, Business understanding, Communication, and collaboration, GDPR, Personal Development, Soft Skills, Sustainability, what is an SME?, How to apply for a job?, Project management and Anthropological methods.

We have worked with partners from municipality, university and university colleges and it has given us a broad experience. This variety of approaches brought to the project via different partners have created impressive results and experiences for both professional staff, student/unemployed/business participants.

Furthermore, the project has given the participating educational institutions the opportunity to consider innovative ways of teaching that help equip students and unemployed graduates with the most relevant competencies in relation to creating value in the labour market (see annex 4 interview with teaching staff).

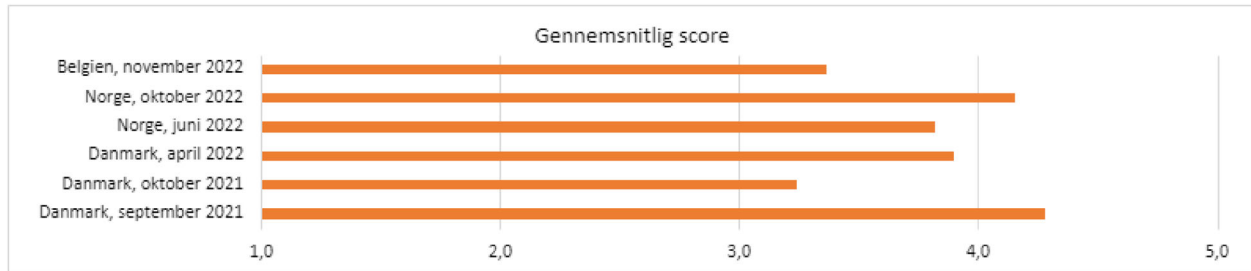
Small and medium sized companies are looking for graduates with a strong subject specific knowledge but at the same time they are also looking for students/graduates with experience and practical ability. Harvesting data from the digital platform showed that the most important skills the SMEs were looking for: Contextualization, Communication skills/presentation, Use of digital systems, Creativity and creation of ideas, Problem solving/Analysis of data, Adaptability, Ability to work independently and Business understanding.

With this new knowledge we held nine case-competitions, three in each country and with more than 500 participants. Both participating business and adult learners were mostly satisfied with the case-competitions. Planning and hosting these case-competitions were an interesting learning-platform and it is clear in the descriptions of the specific case-competitions that the learning curve was steep and the last hosted case-competitions in each country was far better than the first one.

Hosting these case-competitions and inviting colleagues at both universities and university colleges helped to broaden the knowledge about the demands for skills at both national and international level.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Evaluation students



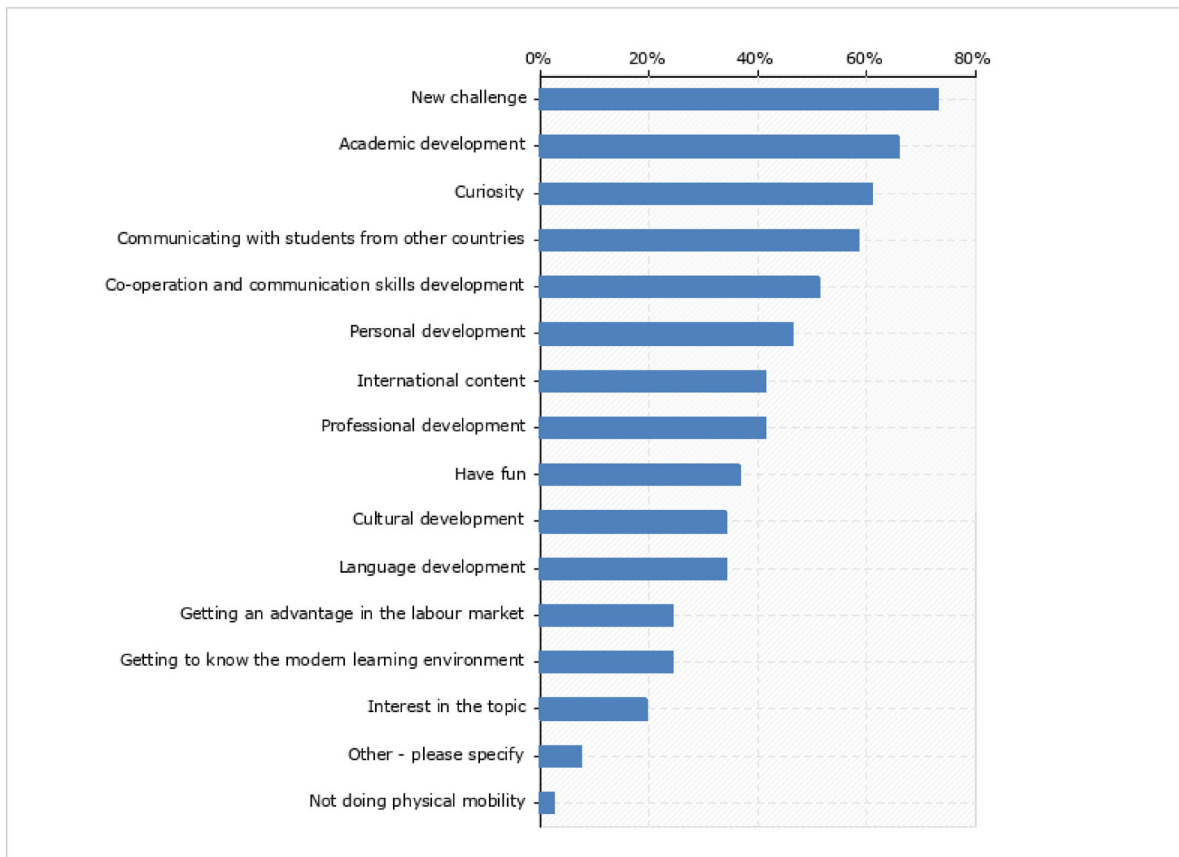
Below you can see the evaluation of the two case-competitions in Belgium not being a part of the figure.

Analysis - graphs

Belgium March 2022

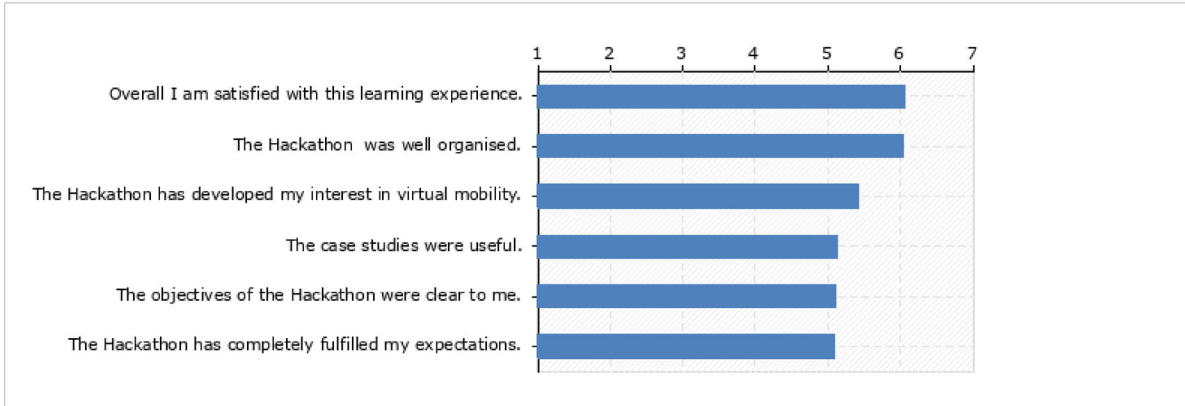
What reasons did you have to participate in the Hackathon? (Please mark all that apply.) (n = 41)

Možnih je več odgovorov

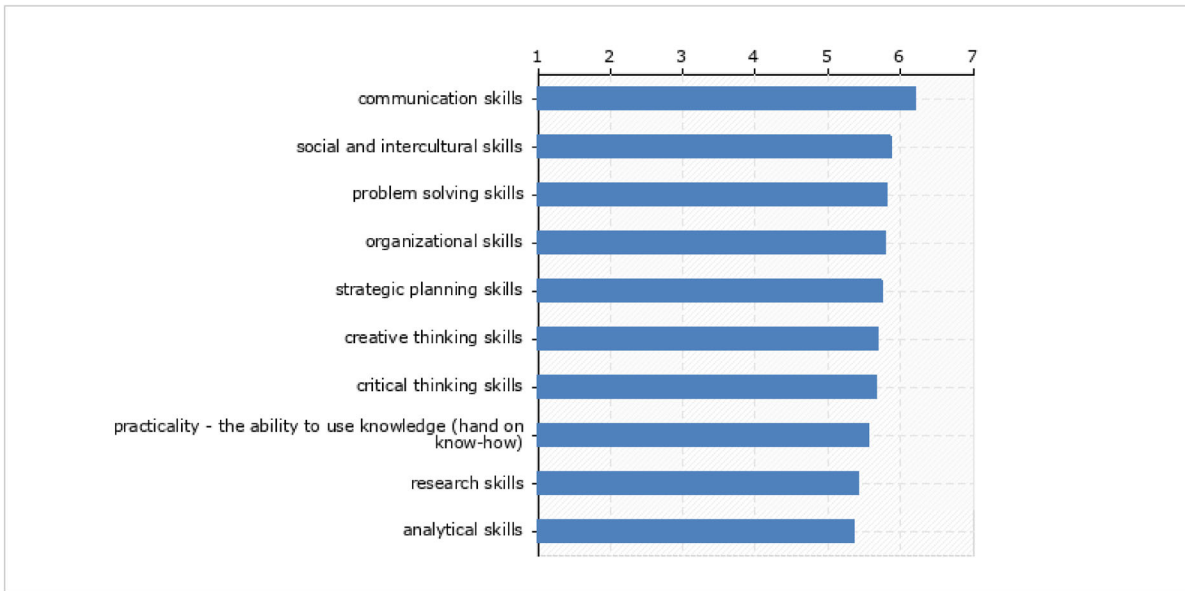


Odgovori	Frekvencia
improve programming skills	
time challenge 24h	
lock down is getting verrry boring!	

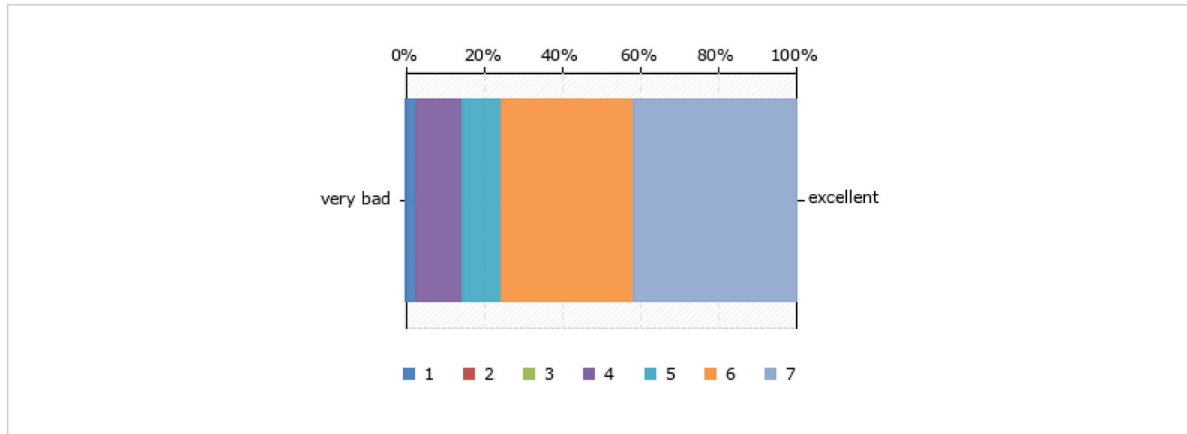
Please evaluate the Hackathon. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements (scale: 1 = I strongly disagree, 7 = I strongly agree) (n = 41)



Please evaluate if your participation in Hackathon improved your following competencies. (scale: 1 = I strongly disagree, 7 = I strongly agree) (n = 41)



Please evaluate your teamwork (n = 41)



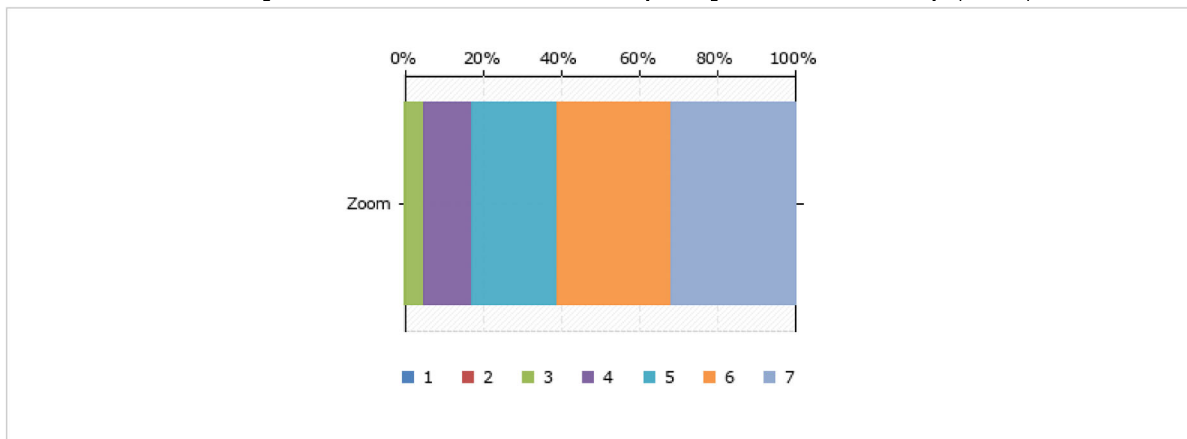
Please describe dynamics, communication, synergy and satisfaction in your team.

we had some technical difficulties in communication. but overall it was a good communication and dynamic
we had downs and ups, but our dynamic thinking help us to break through this hackathone.
it was very good and smooth. but when we were coming to conclusion it seems that someone gets more stressed out and we have some problems with conversations. overall it was amazing team experience and i love my team mates. hope to cooperate and meet they one day.
we were so lucky to be in the same team, we were never arguing, just brief discussion and positive atmosphere. we are happy about our work, not sleeping affected us in the way that we became less productive and slower, but that doesnt stop our overall spirit.
a+
good dynamic
friendly, helpfull, fun
sometimes bumpy but overall good
the team members from the eastem europe were very helpful, motivated and really used the communication channel. but the south african student were really absent in the hackaton in general and also on whatsapp which led to frustrations with some team members.
very dynamic and strenuous
perfecy team mates
our team was collection of hard-working and energetic students
very good
it was ok.
amazing
our ideas were constantly changing because of the different opinions the mentors had. communication was bad midway but we pulled through.
used microsoft teams as a communication tool and whatsapp
i really had a lot of fun with them, will miss them

it was great!
overall really good
sufficient, but lacking in certain areas
communication and way of thinking of our group were quite in sync. we made decisions easilly and had a lot of fun during the challenge
all team members were continuously engaged and contributed fairly to the assigned work load
due to some of the notso active team members, therest of the team make a great job and i am happy that i was having the opportunity to be able to work with them. we did not sleep all the night and we were having constant communication. we were developing our project until morning and we are really proof of that.
from 8 people, 4 were working without stopping, with jokes and in general good communication. the rest disappeared in the first h of the event.
fan-fricken-tasric
it was a pleasure to work with them. very strong team.
amazing synergy, but a shame that there is a difference between a group and a team. there was a huge difference in initiative taking team members
satisfying
j

30 / 40

How do you evaluate the use of ZOOM? (1 very bad - 7 excellent) (n = 41)

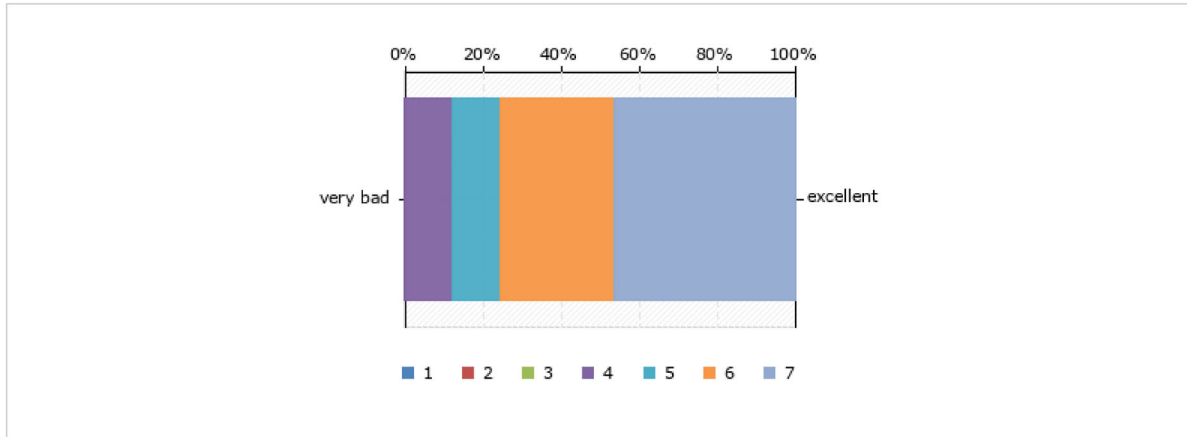


Please describe your experience and usefulness of ZOOM.

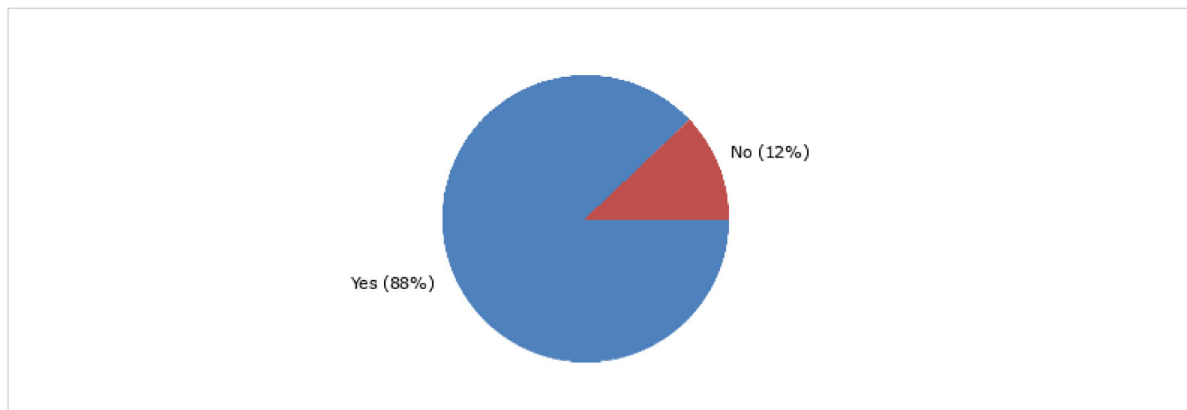
i experience some small issues
easy to use

not so useful i prefer teams
very good tool, i like it
breakout rooms were useful
good enough, breakout rooms are handy
it is just great and easy.
zoom itself is well made and user friendly
it was great, i really liked breakout room, but i hope that in future there will be breakout rooms from breakout rooms.
zoom was a good program to usebut theuseof it for thisevent wasnt a proper solution. the connections broke often and thus we had to rejoin chats often to understand what was said.
it was good that all the mentors were present when we needed them.
effective
it was okay. an extra breakout room inside the breakout room would have been nice for breaking up into groups
very high tech and useful
i learnd to use breakout rooms and other hacks at zoom.
first experience with zoom, all positive opinions
it was ok
love it
highly effective - especially given the breakout room functionality and ask for help
i use zoom also for online lectures. so there wasnt anything new for me. i really love zoom platform.
it's an expensive platform
ive had better zoom experiences
personally, as its student, i would use discord with the main selling point that discord is more robust than zoom
very like it - the best of all online meeting solutions! :)
it was usefull and practical
lacks some standard functions like global mute, no need to reassign teams. but overall, quite useful.
practical but flawed
good, but sometimes were problems with sound
ok
easy to use and handy for communication

How do you assess the moderation organizers / mentors? (n = 41)



Would you participate in educational programs like this Hachathon again? Please mark one. (n = 41)

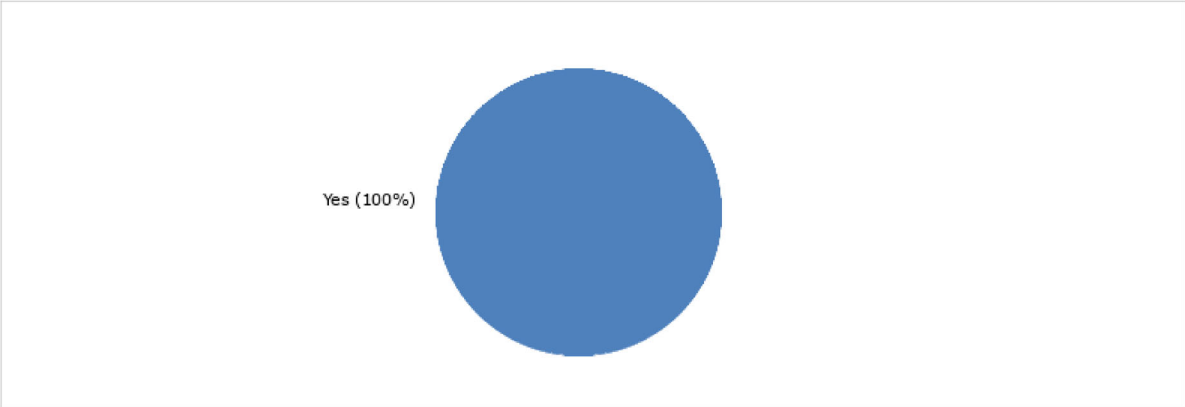


Why wouldn't you participate in a Hackathon again?

24 hours is too long
it is exhausting not to sleep all night
hard to stay awake and give and be in it 100%

not yes or no. it really depends on the subjectof the hackaton.
1. it doesnt make sense to work, when you want to sleep. 2. i dont like to work with people who have no sense of responsibility.

Would you recommend this Hackathon to a friend? (n = 36)



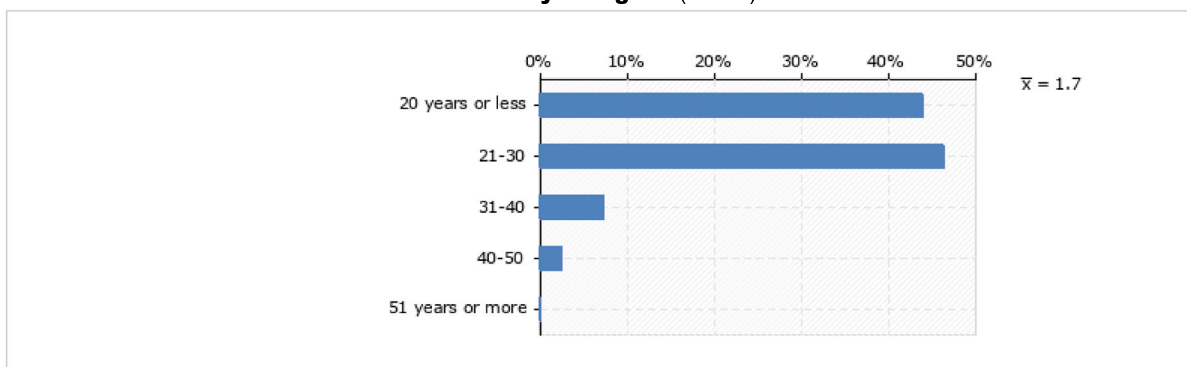
Why would/would you not recommend this Hackathon to a friend? (Please specify)

x
i would recommend because its great oppurtunity to improve communication and organisation skills.
if you have serious health problems, and you need to sleep - well, hackathon is not for you, sorry. otherwise - offcourse do it!!!
it is a nice experience
it's fun and educational
if he has wife and 3 kids, because if he will be in one room 24 h, wife will not be happy
for working independently and in a team
ive done it twice and it's really an experience you can get no were else
experiance and challenge
working for 24h in virtual teams.
to challenge themselves, because it is not easy, but it is good four your personal development.

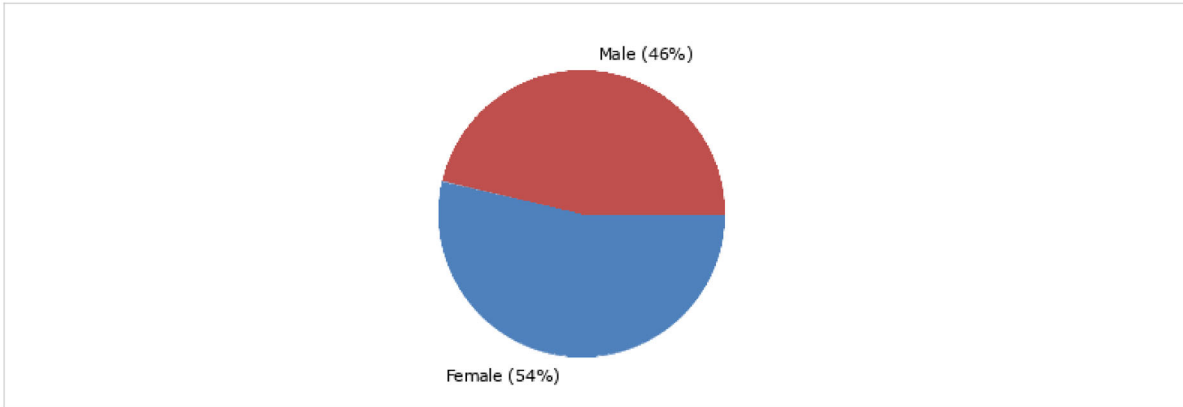
time
because it is unique experiance, everyone would need to try out.
it is just a fun learning experience and a great experience to meet awesome people
i would recommend it because it is fun, you get to meet new people and see how your skills can be used in real life
i would
24 hours is too long
you get to develop yourself as an individual, as a team member and otherwise
because it's a unique experience unlike conventional developing that challenges you to think outside the box but into a timeframe.
it develops one's knowledge.
experience and competition
it's a lot of fun!
if you have passed this hackathon, then you have won yourself.
it's a fun challenge with interesting cases to study and find a solution for
because it is useful
the general expericience was good
good: diverse teammembers (education, nationality,)
great learning experience
i would recommend it to everyone because of all the things i have marked on first question
it is a great opportunity to develop professional experience.

30 / 41

What is your age? (n = 41)



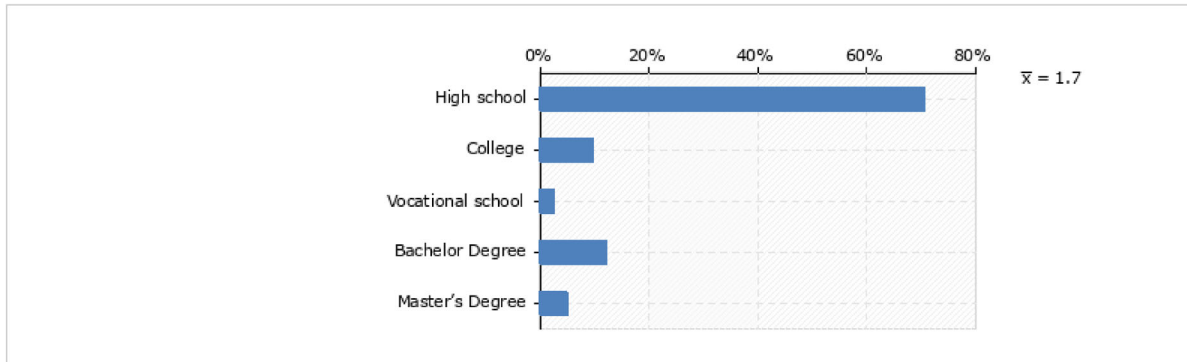
What is your gender? (n = 41)



What is your nationality? (Please specify)

slovenia
latvian
dutch
the netherlands
croat
african
belgium
south-african
south african
belgian
uzbekistan
belg
south africa
slovenian
netherlands
croatia
croatian

What is the highest level of education you have completed? (n = 41)

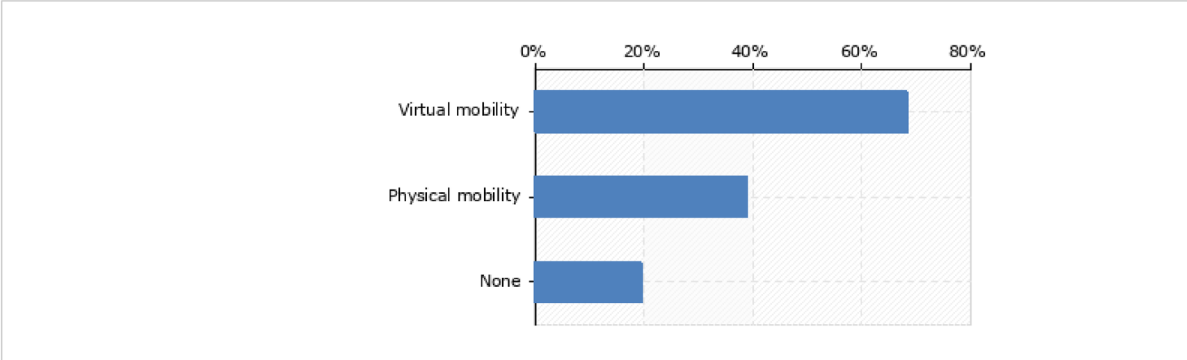


What university/college is your home university/college? (Please specify)

fontys ict
doba faculty
ba school of business and finance
belgium campus
ucll
belgium campus (sa)
ba school of business and finance, latvia
belgium campus itversity
doba fakultet
ucll proximus haasrode
avans university of applied sciences
ucll leuven
doba, slovenia
uc leuven limburg
belgium campus itversity (pretoria north)
doba

fontys tilburg
uc limburg

What kind of experience with cross-border mobility do you have? Please mark all that apply. (n = 41)
 Možnih je več odgovorov



What was the best thing/experience for you?

people
the friendly staff, the feedback sessions
-communication with all kind profile of people
the teammembers and teamwork
getting to know new people
the people
just working together and motivating each other, of course playing together scrable online as a rest of working.
meeting new people
that i have the ability to work in a time frame and that i am good and changeless. also, i am improving my english and meetin g new people and their ways of thinking.
communication with people from different countries
communicating with the team
working with the different people and learning about them.
1. the dj-coach comming into our breakout room, he really got us out of a low point because some team members were even thinking about quitting. he gave us new hope and our final idea. so big thanks to him 2. the validation from the other team members on my work with the website

brainstorming and sharing of ideas,
j
team meetings where things take shape radically fast.
everything
be awake all night and dont panic about failures.
meeting new people from all over the globe
the challenge to stay up and keep working
meeting new people and working with them
interacting with people from different fields
making new friends and working with people of different nationalities, disciplines and skill levels.
all the time talk and work with english language.
being up for 24 hours and interacting with international students
work in diverse cultural surroundings
communicating with students from other countrys. getting the support when it's needed to improve tasks and skills.
the best thing about this hackathon was that we had to create a solution for a current problem in the real world, not an imaginary something that isnt possible to be implemented.
new acquaintances and various study fields collaborating
i loved teamwork with people from all over the world. and the innovative process.

30 / 40

What would you recommend for future Hackathons?

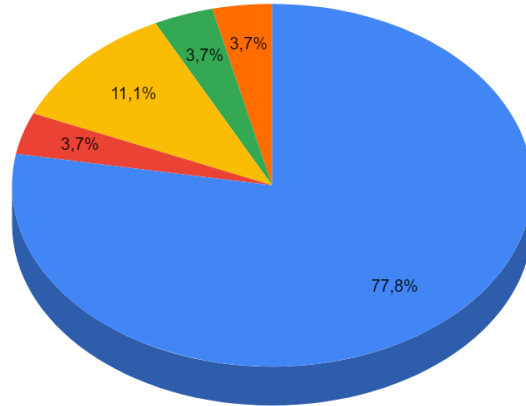
maybe try to put more similar comands together; with similar interests. keep your energy and spirit :)
enough coffee
keep the same enthusiasm! excelent!
you have to try it to believe it!
sleep before
give the students more freedom in their subject or let them select a project. freedom in the selection of project gives more interesting results. free coffee? :)
check the stability of the networking platform a bit more before trying to use one for this many students and teachers.
perhaps include more topics to choose from
i would recommend some lunch or coffee breaks, when everyone is taking a break.
keep good work!
do them 12 hours instead of 24
sleep well before hackathon. :)

the same but longer. i would change it to 36 hours with a mandatory 8hrs resting period. 8 in the morning until 8 the next evening.
strickter time regulations
polishing details. last year it was good. this year it was much better! maybe the teams could be smaller - 8 people are just manageable in that kind of communication if you ask me...
maybe not a 24 hour but over a span of 2 days with 12-hour intervals.
to atleast not leave out other team members opinions
for virtual i dont know. but for physical ones, is to get comfortable chairs that you are able to work on for long hours
to implement some kind of a system that does not allow people to disappear or at least provide them with some kind of punishment.
maybe not so much pitching. or private pitching so we dont have to wait for another group
detailed prehand communication as to how this works and whats expected. this was my first experience and too much time was spent on trying to understand things that i feel should have been communicated from the onset
sometimes maybe a bit clearer on the schedule
think carefully about which students are allowed to participate and really make sure they know what theyre getting into. cause i had the feeling some of the students on my team didnt know what they were getting into
i wanted to drop out because it didnt seem really it related and more business which i really dont like. maybe advertise more that it's not a hackathon but more of a project building.
yes of course!
the fact that the creativity workshop was (or at least felt) longer than the time we were assigned to brainstorm really drags down the overall flow of the hackathon. i understand there were time constraints but it's a shame there was no prioritization.
a lot off motivation
to keep on learning
maybe not as long, because it is exhausting, i dont really know how i will be able to go to work tomorrow. :)

Belgium March 2023

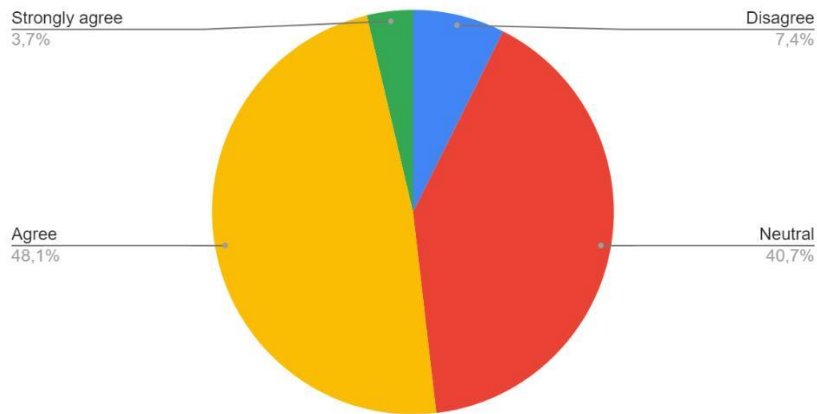
Growth4SME case competition 3 Belgium 14 – 15 – 16 March

What is your educational background?

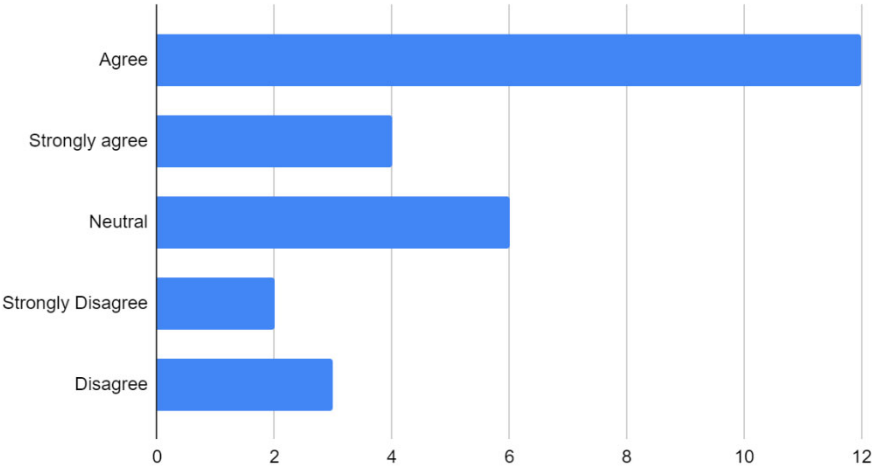


- Bachelor student
- Master student, Already graduated and looking for a job
- Master student
- Bachelor student, Master student
- Already graduated and looking for a job

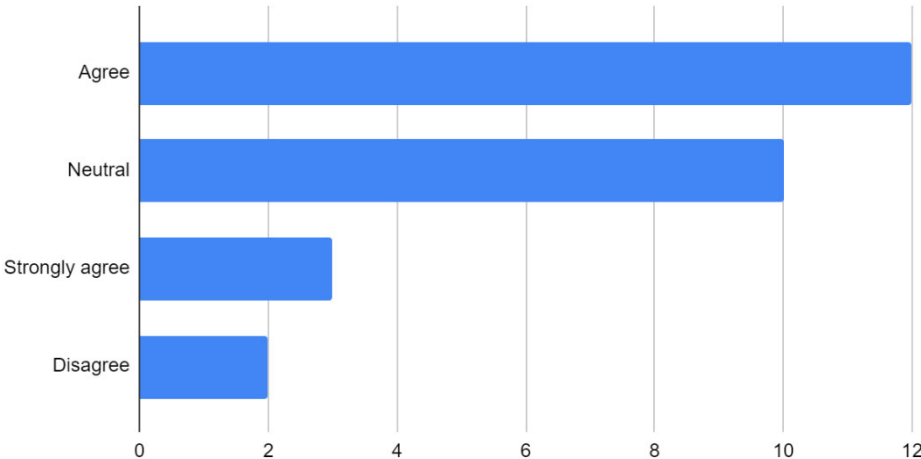
Totaal van I can use the skills and techniques learned during the Case Competition in my future education



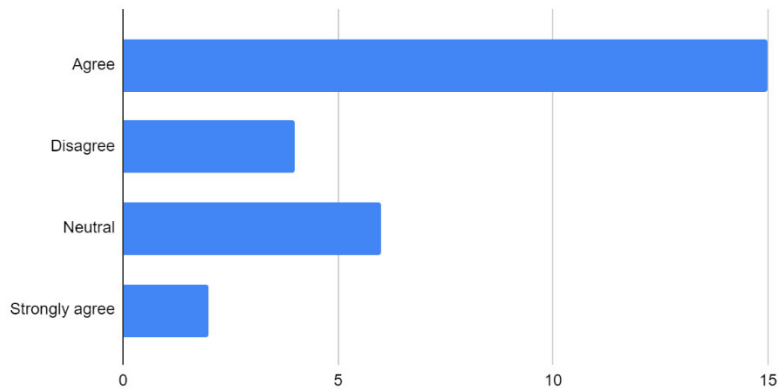
The amount of time given to solve the case was appropriate.



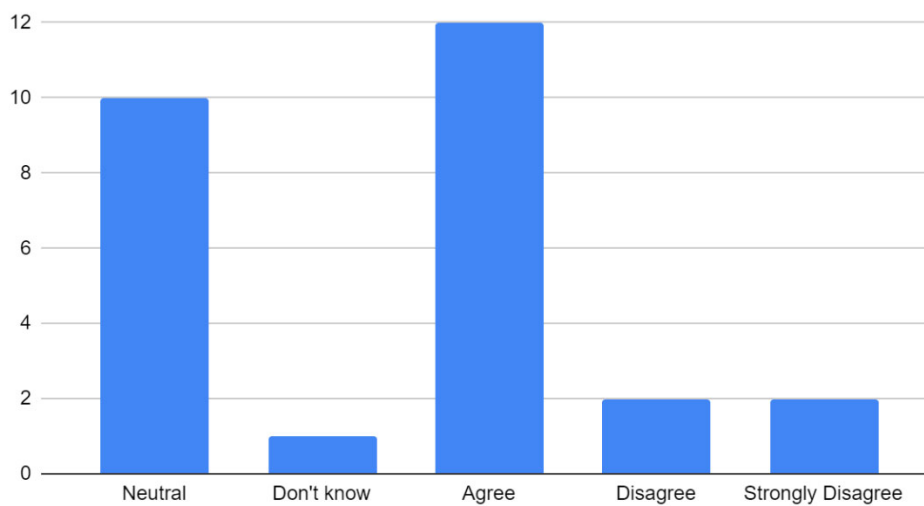
Taking part in the Case Competition has given me a better understanding of what I am good at



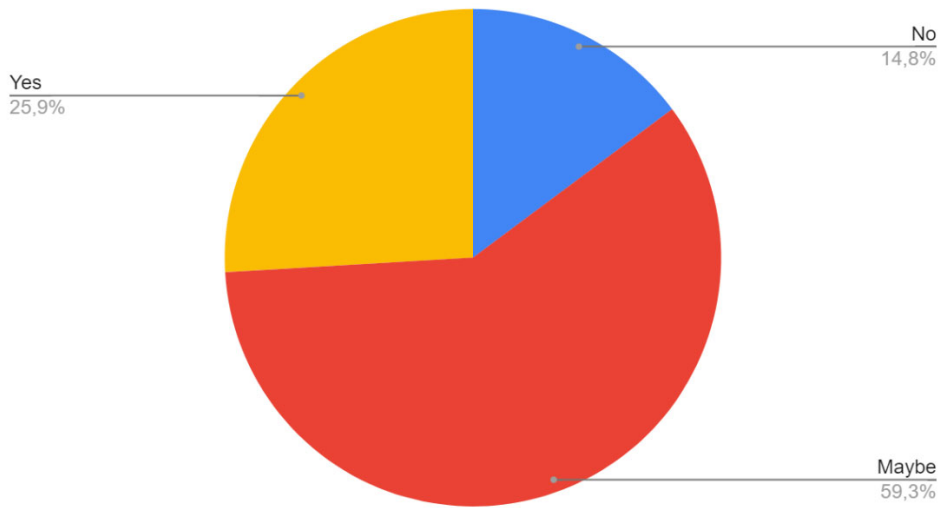
I could use the competences I have acquired during my studies while solving the case



Taking part in the Case Competition has given me a better understanding of which type of skills companies and organizations are looking for with employees



I would like to take part in another Case Competition event



Which particular aspects in the Case Competition did you like the most?

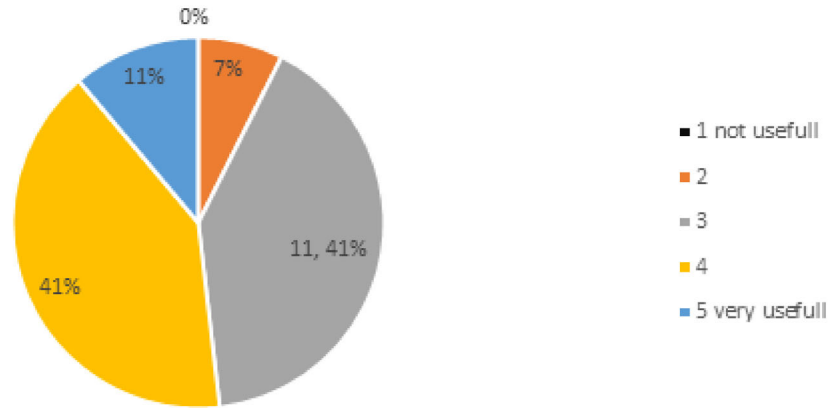
Teambuilding and working with people of other countries
The brainstorming lessons
Teamwork
The international part
Problem solving
Technical
Brainstorming
De internationale studenten
Teamwork
The pitch
Pitch
The end
After 5 o'clock
The theme of green transport
Differences in group
Meeting with different specialist

Meeting new people Working with people with different educational background
Thinking about your own idea in group
That you could work with people with other backgrounds
The workshop about soft skills (it was amazing), the lunch offered in the UCLL canteen, the balanced way of splitting people into groups, the free time given for networking and socializing
The first part with the riddles and puzzles
Team building
Meeting people from around the world

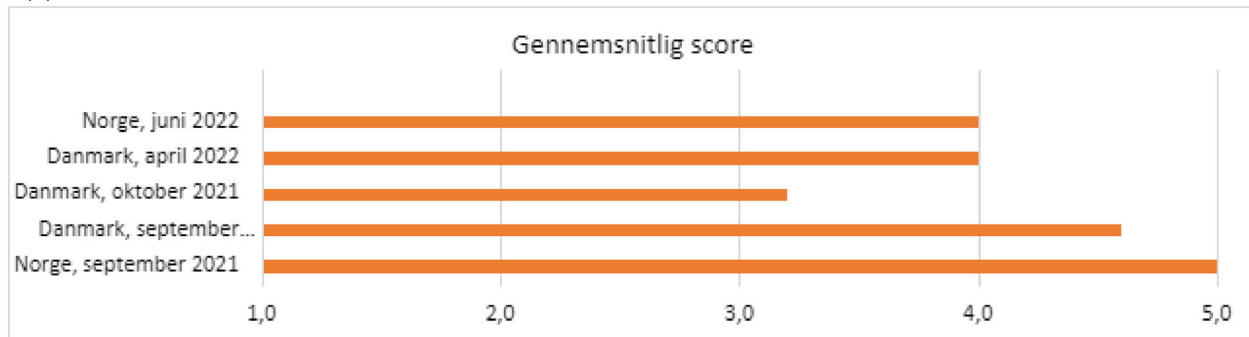
Do you have any suggestions for further improvements of future Case Competitions?

2 cases
Meer tijd
More efficient
Focus more on the hard skills and give some more background information, so you do not need to spend time on googling simple information.
Give more time
More time for case resolution Better clarification of the case requirements & better presentation of companies
Brief speech/feedback could be provided by the SME in the end of the competition. This time, they just left without saying anything like that. Also, I do not know if they will credit the ideas they may implement in the company. One more suggestion: the directions towards the campus/other locations could be better explained: for example, attaching photos in the PDFs.
Als er nog eens een workshop softskills komt, leg dat even uit wat het is. Persoonlijk vond ik dit veel te lang, als warm up was het prima geweest, niet 2uur lang.

What general score would you give this Case competition from 1 to 5 (1 is not useful at all, waste of time – 5 very useful, I would definitely recommend others to attend this.



Appendix 2 – Evaluation SMEs



Appendix 3 - Qualitative interviews SMEs

Denmark: Aalund Nordic (Consultancy Company)

Question:	Answer:
1: We start from a completed survey and then ask again which softskills they consider important today	Skills in sales and merchantmanship.
2: Suppose you were to hire a new employee today, what would you look for most? * Diploma * Experience * Soft skills	First of all, candidates with a cand.merc diploma and afterwards the soft skills.

* Other	
3: Which softskills are most lacking among starting employees? Can you give some examples? Is there a visible evolution?	Sales and merchantmanship. .
4:) If you fire people, for what reason is that usually? * Lack of knowledge * Missing soft skills * Lack of experience * Other:	Missing soft skills as ability to evolve and not being flexible.
5: How do you think education can better prepare young people in terms of Softskills?	Not sure that it can, as it depends on the personality of the young person and what the individual company needs.
6: Do you provide training in the company itself in the area of soft skills development?	The company tries.
7: Could you use the Growth4SME website within your company? Do you have any feedback for us on the structure and content of the website?	Would not reject, but as the specific branch of the company is quite small in terms of employees, they do not see a large need for it.
8: Can you give some concrete tips for young people in the field of soft skills?	To interest themselves in improving soft skills, because a focus on this makes them a great candidate for SMEs.

Denmark: Aarhus Havn (Aarhus Harbour)

Question:	Answer:
1: We start from a completed survey and then ask again which softskills they consider important today	Cooperation, positive approach to thinking differently and new, ready for change, open, reliable and flexible.
2: Suppose you were to hire a new employee today, what would you look for most? * Diploma * Experience * Soft skills * Other	Depends on the position. In a technical position it is most likely based on educational merits. In a strategical or leadership role the soft skills and personality is higher prioritized. It really depends on the position.
3: Which soft skills are most lacking among starting employees? Can you give some examples? Is there a visible evolution?	To maintain the drive and challenge themselves.
4: If you fire people, for what reason is that usually? * Lack of knowledge * Missing soft skills * Lack of experience * Other:	Missing the soft skills to "play by the common rules".
5: How do you think education can better prepare young people in terms of Softskills?	Education provides the young people with more perspectives. The more perspectives you have, the more open you are to other people, new ideas and the world around you.
6: Do you provide training in the company itself in the area of soft skills development?	The company uses DiSC (a personal development tool). They also arrange mini-lectures and use other events to ensure personal development, challenge the employees in the way they see the world and their set of values.
7: Could you use the Growth4SME website within your company? Do you have any feedback for us on the structure and content of the website?	Would not reject.
8: Can you give some concrete tips for young people in the field of soft skills?	To approach your work with open arms, to dare ask questions, to being yourself and to dare to seek out the group. Often there is an insecurity about having everything figured

	out before starting a job. Trust that you will figure it out by cooperation. Do not be afraid to go for it and ask for help if needed.
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Belgium: Narviflex Belgium (company specialising in conveyor belts)

Question:	Answer:
1: We start from a completed survey and then ask again which softskills they consider important today	<p>adaptability problem solving ability to work independently creativity communication skills</p>
2: Suppose you were to hire a new employee today, what would you look for most? * Diploma * Experience * Soft skills * Other	<p>Effort, commitment and flexibility are important in the department where I work. We always start from an interim contract and then you quickly see who has the capabilities. Since we are in an industry that is not taught anywhere, a degree has less importance than the commitment they have. Experience is not always a plus as competitors often work in a different, sometimes wrong way and some things are hard to unlearn. Softskills emerge mainly when they show commitment and interest. People who show that are important to the company</p>
3: Which softskills are most lacking among starting employees? Can you give some examples? Is there a visible evolution?	<p>In the department at my work where I provide training, people have had no higher education and will not have been told much about soft skills, which does not exclude the fact that some do possess them. They show this mostly through the engagement, the questions they ask, how they manifest themselves when I give them a task as a team and then their skills emerge.</p>
4:) If you fire people, for what reason is that usually? * Lack of knowledge * missing soft skills * lack of experience * other:	<p>When people are fired, it is usually because they do not show that commitment, flexibility and dedication. That's where it starts. The opportunities listed have everything to do with each other, if you don't have soft skills and commitment, you're not going to accumulate knowledge, so you're never going to get experience and then we have to make the decision to fire these people. There has to be progression.</p>

5: How do you think education can better prepare young people in terms of Softskills?	Give the youngsters more group work, but follow it up well, not just looking at the result often obtained by a few people in the group.
6: Do you provide training in the company itself in the area of soft skills development?	This does not happen or happens too little.
7: Could you use the Growth4SME website within your company? Do you have any feedback for us on the structure and content of the website?	
8: Can you give some concrete tips for young people in the field of soft skills?	Find a field of study that really suits and interests you, then those soft skills will come naturally. Something you enjoy doing will also make you good at it and those skills will come naturally.
9: Can you give any examples recording the gap of expectations between you and young workers in your company?	The company I work for has a very wide variety of works. In the beginning, I regularly go with them to carry out simple works at our customers' premises, letting them do a lot on their own, which gives them self-confidence and allows me to see how far they have come. Then they are already allowed to do something simple on their own, which gives them confidence, and that's how we build up. It's a big job until you master everything, but you get that chance and these people enjoy all my support to achieve the expectations we have, they are our future.

Belgium: Lase Belgium (automation projects around the automotive industry)

Question:	Answer:
1: We start from a completed survey and then ask again which softskills they consider important today	Almost everything from the list except cultural competences, e-commerce, sustainability
2: Suppose you were to hire a new employee today, what would you look for most? * diploma * experience * softskills * other	For workers: understanding of work, a degree is less important For white-collar workers: a diploma is important

3: Which softskills are most lacking among starting employees? Can you give some examples? Is there a visible evolution?	Internal communication Adaptability, e.g. suddenly going abroad for an assignment after all Flexibility, young people in particular attach great importance to the balance between private and professional life, which makes them much less flexible than in the past Punctuality and getting to work on time is really a problem these days
4:) If you fire people, for what reason is that usually? * Lack of knowledge * missing soft skills * lack of experience * other:	workers: if there is still no evidence of knowledge, experience and understanding of the work after a while
5: How do you think education can better prepare young people in terms of Softskills?	It is often personal more focus on soft skills in training
6: Do you provide training in the company itself in the area of soft skills development?	No, mainly due to lack of time. We often let problems in this area run their course. Sometimes the problems resolve themselves, but sometimes the situation also "explodes"
7: Could you use the Growth4SME website within your company? Do you have any feedback for us on the structure and content of the website?	
8: Can you give some concrete tips for young people in the field of soft skills?	Punctuality, do not measure everything, take on extra unforeseen tasks, indicate in a polite way if something does not work out, be more tactful
9: Can you give any examples recording the gap of expectations between you and young workers in your company?	They take too little responsibility Responsibility is often passed on to other colleagues Nowadays, people prefer to create problems rather than seek solutions

Belgium: BNP Paribas Fortis (Financial sector)

Question:	Answer:
1: We start from a completed survey and then ask again which softskills they consider important today	Working at a bank requires specific skills, very important is e.g. active listening to customers. Other skills : pro-activity, solution-

	oriented thinking, result-oriented – commercial skills.
2: Suppose you were to hire a new employee today, what would you look for most? * Diploma * Experience * Soft skills * Other	Diploma is not in the first place for me. Experience and human skills are decisive. Of course, diploma is for us a proof that they obtain a certain level, but a specific financial diploma is no necessity, can also be in another orientation
3: Which softskills are most lacking among starting employees? Can you give some examples? Is there a visible evolution?	Most lacking skill is according to me the pro-activity, seeing work and opportunities and acting upon it. Also work ethics, young people nowadays have a 9 to 5 mentality.
4:) If you fire people, for what reason is that usually? * Lack of knowledge * missing soft skills * lack of experience * other:	I never had to fire people, we have a very good selection interview 😊 at the initial interview I immediately feel if it's the right person for the job.
5: How do you think education can better prepare young people in terms of Softskills?	Not only training, also how someone is raised has an influence on their softskills. In education, it is important that get to know the term 'Softskills' and what it means. After assignments, let them reflect in which way they have grown in their softskills, what skills they have worked on during their group work, ... In that way they can give examples during a job interview. Sometimes applicants mention 'flexibility' as one of their stronger skills, but they can not give an example to prove that.
6: Do you provide training in the company itself in the area of soft skills development?	No, that is something we still miss. The bank mostly provides technical trainings about product knowledge, role playing around customer conversations, ... specific commercial and technical training but not on soft skills.

7: Could you use the Growth4SME website within your company? Do you have any feedback for us on the structure and content of the website?	I don't see how we could integrate this in our business
8: Can you give some concrete tips for young people in the field of soft skills?	Continue to develop, lifelong learning is very important. Learning doesn't stop when you graduate. There is also a gap of expectations – newly hired employees, especially the ones 'fresh' from school expect a very good salary with a lot of extra benefits, a car, ... They are not that realistic in their demands – even in a bank sector you start at the customer desk.

Belgium: Real estate agency

Question:	Answer:
1: We start from a completed survey and then ask again which softskills they consider important today	Preferably both diploma and experience as well as soft skills! for some professions such as real estate agents, a diploma is mandatory. If we have to train internally, we are 3 years in the making, has already happened in the past, and then they leave. So it doesn't pay off. Soft skills are becoming increasingly important, especially communication skills are very important in our sector.
2: Suppose you were to hire a new employee today, what would you look for most? * diploma * experience * softskills * other	Depends on the position. For some positions such as reception employee, diploma is not required, there softskills prevail.
3: Which softskills are most lacking among starting employees? Can you give some examples? Is there a visible evolution?	perseverance. Young people are complacent, everything you ask for is soon too much. You notice that it is a spoiled generation, which is very self-centered. In the past, we thought a career was very important and we were really committed to it. Nowadays, much more value is attached to life-work balance and extra efforts are often avoided.
4:) If you fire people, for what reason is that usually?	missing soft skills, mainly because of communication skills. Also not fitting into a

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of knowledge * missing soft skills * lack of experience * other: 	<p>team, not being collegial, not being able to work together.</p> <p>Lack of knowledge is not such a problem in itself, can be taught more easily if they are eager to learn. Soft skills are much harder to learn</p>
5: How do you think education can better prepare young people in terms of Softskills?	<p>more attention to communication and training on real-life cases, e.g. with role plays. Preparing for job interviews is certainly possible from secondary education</p>
6: Do you provide training in the company itself in the area of soft skills development?	<p>yes, communication training, sales conversations, role plays, non-verbal communication We work together with a communication agency for this. 2-day training courses and workshops are also organized and we regularly get sales coaching.</p>
7: Could you use the Growth4SME website within your company? Do you have any feedback for us on the structure and content of the website?	<p>Platform content less relevant to us</p>
8: Can you give some concrete tips for young people in the field of soft skills?	<p>practice, grab every opportunity to learn. Be empathic, less selfcentered. Being able to collaborate with others = key</p>

Belgium: Aarixa (ICT)

1: We start from a completed survey and then ask again which softskills they consider important today	<p>adaptability, contextualisation, problem solving, working independently, creativity, communication skills, sustainability, digital systems, gdpr</p> <p>Most important are communication skills</p>
2: Suppose you were to hire a new employee today, what would you look for most? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * diploma * experience * softskills * other 	<p>1: experience</p> <p>2: softskills</p> <p>3: diploma</p> <p>Very good people without degrees are certainly also an option. Sometimes masters also offer themselves who can't do it anyway. Diploma only important for a first idea. Sometimes it is even detrimental.</p>

	<p>Even the difference between a bachelor's and master's is not important. Sometimes the school they came from already gave a signal. Has nothing to do with the person, but with the school environment and the way education is offered. .</p> <p>Only in the situation where they have no experience, a degree does matter more.</p>
<p>3: Which softskills are most lacking among starting employees? Can you give some examples? Is there a visible evolution?</p>	<p>Decent EQ, often lacking empathy. Being empathetic to customers and to other employees is very important. In the IT world, there are sometimes very good programmers, but they lack the empathy. The days of the ICT developer in a dark corner no longer exist.</p>
<p>4:) If you fire people, for what reason is that usually?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of knowledge * missing soft skills * lack of experience * other: 	<p>Lack of knowledge</p> <p>Experience will come, but if they are not intelligent enough, they will not succeed. At some point, knowledge does come, especially learning it.</p> <p>Lack of Softskills is not really a reason for dismissal, sometimes they do send employees to assertiveness training. Softskills are important during job applications, though.</p>
<p>5: How do you think education can better prepare young people in terms of Softskills?</p>	<p>Not a case for a higher education institution. Is too late in his opinion. In colleges and universities, it should no longer happen. Hard to form. Should happen in primary and secondary education</p>
<p>6: Do you provide training in the company itself in the area of soft skills development?</p>	<p>Team building to get people together, small events, having a drink together. Always a loner somewhere, important to get the "quiet ones" to come along, but those are also the ones who often don't come to staff meetings. Involve in activities, push a bit</p>
<p>7: Could you use the Growth4SME website within your company? Do you have any feedback for us on the structure and content of the website?</p>	

8: Can you give some concrete tips for young people in the field of soft skills?	Get outside, not just focus on mobile phone Filling in soft skills can't be done on social media, you really need to do that with face-to-face contacts. Above all, see for yourself that the lack of soft skills is a problem
9: Can you give any examples recording the gap of expectations between you and young workers in your company?	It's not always about young and old Biggest problem on job application: 9 to 5 mentality They want sliding hours, But if you ask some extra effort, they immediately ask what's in return Work-life balance is important, but it goes too much to the other side now. Attitude about this needs to change

Interviews Norway

Claus Dahl Andersen, CEO Wawemaker (Media Bureau)

Jette Radich, Purchasing Director Dansk Supermarket

Jens Andersen CEO, Dania tech (an engineering company).

They are primarily looking for candidates in communication, cand. Merc. and Engineers.

What personal skills do you look for when hiring a candidate?

Claus: In my industry, **personal skills are really, really important**. They are actually almost the most important. I usually turn it around and say: the personality is the most important thing, and then the ability to make things happen, and then the professionalism comes last. It is important to be able to behave among other people. There is a difference between whether it is an entry-level position or an experienced position. For both of them, **it is really important that you fit in with the company you are going to join**. You can learn a lot of professionalism - of course it sounds a bit pompous, because we naturally expect a basic knowledge. So this is the knowledge we build on.

Jette: It is important to **be a team player**. You must have the feeling that you are employed in a large organization, **you must be able to collaborate and look beyond your own area**. You must **be able to understand your stakeholders** and be able to see beyond your own area. **Understanding the full value chain** and how things fit together is absolutely essential. **Self-management**. It is important that they can manage themselves and take responsibility for their own development. **Drive**. They must have a drive, be aware that success at work also depends a lot on their own efforts. They must be able to make plans for their own development and work for it to succeed. **Curiosity**. They must be curious about other people's fields and have more focus on the method than on the subject. They must be able to solve problems. **Be able to see a constructive solution to a challenge**. Working life is full of challenges. It must not knock them out. On the contrary, they must go into it constructively, seeing it as an opportunity to think new and differently and thus take up the challenge in a positive way.

Jens: I look a lot to see if people have played elite sports. **It is important to be able to set a goal and work towards achieving it**. I also look a lot at the 1st hand impression. **Drive**. They must be

passionate about it and find the tasks exciting. **Being able to structure a full working day and in the home working day. Curiosity.** That you have taken the trouble to research what the company does and that you show up prepared for the interview. **It is important to be able to take an initiative.**

Imagine that you had to hire an employee today. What personal skills do you think some of the new graduates lack? Can you give some examples of something you think could be focused on?

Claus: I find that the candidates are very talented, but they do not have experience of being in a real workplace and they often do not have patience with what they are sitting with. And they also do not understand that there are many other things that must be taken into account than themselves. Somehow, we have to have them ripened when they land with us.

Can you elaborate a bit more?

After all, we have interns and it is a good way to get them matured in relation to our workplace. They must be able to accept assignments from both us and our customers. Here we can feel when some do not have a lot of work experience. When I look over time, I actually think it has gotten a little bit worse. It is as if the curling generation is used to something else when they come out to the workplace. When I finished my studies and entered the labor market, I was used to the fact that you had to work your way up a little more and have a little longer with the bad luck before you worked to get better.

This leads me to ask you about different kinds of expectations - are you saying that many graduates expect that they will have a good position from day one and be able to advance quickly?

Yes completely. It is very typical. I have even experienced interns being offended that they cannot participate in our management group meetings because they think they should have access to everything. In one way or another, it's very fresh that they have that fantastic belief in themselves and that the whole world is arranged according to them. When they have done something for ½ year, this applies to almost all of them, they think they have risen to the next level. They see themselves rising rapidly both in titles and in responsibilities and in salary. And there are many of them who break their necks.

If you have to fire people, what is the most common reason for it, is it a lack of knowledge, is it because you lack some personal skills, is it a lack of experience or are there other reasons?

They are a lack of personal competence, it is an inability to enter into the context in which they are. You are so busy on the education side to fill up with tool subjects and every time you retrain people, it is a tool subject. **I think the educational system lack focus on the ability to work together with others people who don't look like yourself and the ability to have patience and the ability to have humility in the tasks you are sitting with.** You can easily do courses in that. That is why our permanent positions come from our interns. When we have an intern team, we take the best of them and employ them as student assistants, and then they typically become permanent employees when they finish their thesis. It is because we have shaped them along the way. You should be able to do something that challenges young people to work together with those who are very different from themselves and have other points of view and have a little more humility in relation to the fact that things take some time. We do profile tests to ensure that people are

aware of each other's differences. And they are typically not like that when they come to study, so they have a lot of focus just on themselves.

Do you think it would be an advantage if, as a student, you were given a profile test based on the consideration that the more you know about yourself, the better you can behave?

I myself have been on a leadership course in France recently and 80% of the course was role play. And that is because, even those of us with many years of experience, must be able to act in relation to different types of people and different situations and be good at it. When they sit at the universities, they are often in study groups that they have chosen themselves? At Roskilde University and in Aalborg, you work more in project groups, but they are not properly challenged either.

How do you think the programs could better equip young people in terms of personal competences? You mention processes around collaboration and a profile test. Can you think of other things?

I think practice/internship is the most important tool. A great many of our hires come from interns. It's the best way we as a company can get them in properly, it's free, we can shape them and when they are to be employed permanently and have a salary, they already perform well.

Does your company offer training in the area of personal skills?

Claus: Yes, we actually do. We have a fairly large course catalogue, many of which are of course tool subjects specific to our industry, but we also have a course on how to be a good customer advisor. After all, it's about reading people and how to act in different situations, where we also have clients inside and talk about what it's like to have an agency. And it is a way of building their soft skills. Have you seen the website - and would you like to be able to use it as a company?

Jette: Yes, we have a lot of courses.

Do you have feedback in relation to the structure and content on the Erasmus website?

Jette: The STAKEHOLDER concept is missing, or it needs to be unfolded, the underlying value chain – the market part, social economy and how much it affects the market.

Personal development: self-management, responsibility – you are part of a team and colleagues depend on you.

Being able to prioritize one's time. It is important to know methods rather than the study background. Project Management.

Can you give any concrete tips to young people in relation to personal skills?

In relation to young people, it is the one with.... To make them be a little more patient. And to be a little more spacious compared to others. I usually tell them that this is not a computer game where you have to quickly reach the next level. And then we have many, especially The grade 12 girls (the very best), who think that everything must be done 120% and eagerly want the titles and the salary immediately, and then they just burn out because they are, in terms of experience, not skilled enough to accommodate everyone those things. And then they go down with stress. They conflict with the expectations of themselves and then things go completely wrong. We have several where we have to throw them into deep water because they are simply so busy. We put them out in deep water

and then they can hardly reach the bottom and then we can pick them up again. It's going too fast for them.

So, to sum it up, do you think they should learn to be more patient and accommodating and not always strive to do things 120%?

Yes, exactly, and then also think about the fact that they must have a long working life. They have only just started working life.

Is there anything else you would like to mention?

Claus: I have made another consideration. We have this young generation like, the "12 grade girls" and those who want to do things 120% and then there is another part... just as soon as they receive an email from a customer or a colleague, they will respond immediately. I have thought about it a bit and I think a lot comes from this "always on return". They are used to when they get a snap or are on Instagram and they get a message, they reply to each other immediately. So everything is instant, always here and now, and it goes completely wrong for them when there are many tasks and when you are in a company where there is a lot of work with different things.

So we actually help them structure their time and prioritize what they have to respond to. When you start with us, you go through a 2-hour course, where someone tells you how you can become good at structuring your time. So just coming from school and working, having a job 8 hours a day and making it play, that's also a fixed point.

Jens: It's a spoiled generation that expects to get the latest iPhone, etc., I want, I want...but maybe it is just how it is these days...

Claus, Jette and Jens: **Internship is a great tool.**

Answers from Norwegian informants (translated and paraphrased w/ direct quotes)

Three anonymous informants from SMEs. Two are from SMEs that have been involved in case competitions. Seven take-aways from the interviews:

- 'Problem solving', 'Communication' and 'Collaboration' are all held as most important skills (cf. 21C skills).
- 'Grit', 'stamina' or 'persistence' to stay with a problem is stressed as a key character quality (cf. 21C skills), sometimes missing with fresh candidates.
- 'Curiosity' and 'Creativity' are also mentioned as important, but creativity is also seen (by informant 2) as 'icing on the cake', in need of being anchored to insight and data, and to measurable goals.
- Not all have experience with firing, but one informant highlights 'attitude' (and 'lack of grit') as no. 1 cause.
- The two informants with (strong) views on the role of education both think there should be more sustained practice with cross-disciplinary teamwork; all stress increased cooperation with businesses outside Academia, and both would like more teaching of 'business-understanding' and how to set 'measurable goals' and to 'prioritize'.
- None of the informants would use the MOOC as is but find the 'content' and terminology useful and recognizable.

Both informants with experience from Case Competitions thought very highly of the format, as an excellent method for developing soft skills and training teamwork. The third informant wishes to be part of future Case competition, as she finds that it to answers exactly what she finds missing in some of higher education skills-teaching, and lack of cooperation with the business world.

Interview guide	<p><i>Informant 1 has an education from both Norway and UK in social sciences and humanities (MA and MBA), has worked several years as a business consultant, +15 years in middle- and senior management in two of the largest companies in Norway, and is now CEO of a SME and startup. The interview ran 80 minutes, with a +30 min session and in-depth discussion on the MOOC.</i></p> <p><i>Informant 2 is working in a design and consultant company in Oslo, where she is the Director of organization and development. The interview ran 43 minutes, was auto-transcribed and auto-translated to English, then manually edited for brevity and clarity).</i></p> <p><i>Informant 3 is educated in economy from London and Norway, is Head of sustainability in a battery startup. Han has participated in case competition as a case owner and is involved in hiring many people with different degrees of formal competence. The interview ran 50 minutes.</i></p> <p>Interviews are auto-transcribed and auto-translated from Norwegian and edited for brevity and clarity.</p>
Which softskills do you consider important today?	<p>I#1 “The most important skills are ability to understand and define a problem, empathy, contextualization. The ability to reflect on your own situation and ‘self-awareness’”. (The informant uses Daniel Kahneman’s book ‘Thinking, fast and slow’ to exemplify different modes of thought and communication, and the importance of understanding different actors’ ability to understand a case, open for the possibility of being wrong, and how different people have biases, have different perspectives)</p> <p>I#2: “balance is important to us” ... ability to extract the <i>essence</i> of a task, and their ability to focus on what's relevant.”. “Teamwork” and “collaboration across disciplines” ... “<i>curiosity</i>” and <i>ability to solve problems</i>” ... “ability to <i>challenge</i> a bit, and to <i>dig deep</i> to understand a problem” ...</p> <p>I#3: flexibility, curiosity, problem solving.</p>
Suppose you were to hire a new employee today, what would you look for most? (cf. prompts)	<p>I#1 First, a candidate needs ‘hard skills’, a diploma, and competence in a particular field. “Then, I look for people with ‘grit’, people who are stayers, and that show an <i>attitude</i> to learn, and to keep focused on learning.”</p> <p>Einstein said that if he had an hour to save the world, he would spend 59 minutes on understanding and defining the problem, and one minute on the solution. “So, I am hiring people who show <i>patience</i> and <i>dedication</i> and <i>grit</i> to ‘stay with a problem’ long enough to understand the complexity of the problem, to provide a good solution. What I’m hiring is a <i>problem-understanding</i> and <i>problem-solving machines</i>” ... “Spending time</p>

	<p>on thinking and defining a problem is cheap – but it is <i>very</i> expensive for companies to develop and implement solutions”.</p> <p>I#2: “”grit or stamina, and to be curious”. “<i>creativity</i> important, but like like the ‘icing on the cake’”. the “key point is that we need to solve problems based on <i>insight</i> and <i>data</i>. “Creativity must be driven by insight”.</p> <p>I#3: “It doesn't matter much what kind of CV you have, but more how much you love learning how curious you are, and how flexible you are.”... It is a ‘trap’ hiring based on hard skills “and resume more than the soft skills, then we've experiences hiring the wrong people”. He also stresses that he looks for a “personal drive” in candidates.</p>
<p>Which softskills are most lacking among starting employees? Can you give some examples? Is there a visible evolution?</p>	<p>I#1 “I think a ‘growth mindset’ – that you are willing to grow, change, develop, learn new things again and again, is underestimated. This is, however, perhaps more a ‘mindset’ and an <i>attitude</i> than a <i>skill</i>, and something you must <i>show</i> when you start working. I have many examples of starting employees that lack this, but it’s something I’m looking for and that the successful ones with ‘grit’, that I mentioned earlier, has”.</p> <p>“Inter-cultural competence” is also of great importance, and something humanities students and many others often have, but are “not sufficiently aware of the role and the importance in working life”. What is often missing as well “insight into the <i>value chain</i> of a company”, and how companies and decision processes work, to <i>understand</i> and define a problem from the perspective of a customer or ‘problem owner’, and how you can contribute to solving issues of importance for customers. Understanding <i>processes</i>, is super important. And, for instance the “Double Diamond design thinking model” – a visual framework that represents stages in the design thinking process – is a framework and soft skills that more students should know.</p> <p>I#2: Some lack a bit of ‘toughness’, or stamina. Most candidates they hire have good teamwork skills, but not all are used to <i>link</i> creativity and problem solving to <i>insight</i> and <i>data</i>, and to <i>quantifiable goals</i>.</p> <p>I#3: His company hire a very broad range of people – from high school through PhD. So he finds it difficult to generalize. So it is easier to express what he is looking for (e.g., personal drive, curiosity), than what is missing.</p>
<p>If you fire people, for what reason is that usually?</p>	<p>I#1 He has fired people and uses one word to describe the most common reason: “Attitude!” “And the lack of ‘grit’ and patience (in exploring a problem).”</p> <p>I#2: Pivots and does not talk about firing, but “helping people ‘explore their remote careers’, so to speak.” and coaching them towards other assignments. Also, they try to “look for opportunities for each employee to learn more and develop” and helps them “develop competence ... based on individual needs.”</p>

	<p>I#3: Has not fired anyone at his current (young) company, and also acknowledges he has an 'idealistic' attitude to this: "I believe that one can find motivation to coach people in the right direction", rather than firing.</p>
<p>How do you think education can better prepare young people in terms of Softskills?</p>	<p>I#1 The informant thinks the social sciences and humanities already provide a lot of useful soft skills but could be better in making the connection to real cases and working life. "Universities need to teach more <i>business-understanding</i>, how to balance minimum effort to achieve maximum effect, and to train more on <i>prioritizing</i>, and tools to do this". "Teaching 'teamwork' could be better". Also, higher education in Norway should teach "design thinking" more explicitly. "Problem solving and a deep <i>understanding</i> of problems is a <i>super skill</i> for companies!". In addition, "story-telling principles" and "practical communication skills" are extremely important and could be prioritized. The informant stresses how "consulting companies [such as Ernst & Young, Boston consulting, Deloitte, McKinsey etc. where the informant worked after finishing his higher education] have developed a lot of good 'tools and tricks' to address and communicate with difficult clients and customers", that higher education could learn from.</p> <p>I#2 Has many suggestions and is passionate about this. Stresses the need to "get more practice working in a lot in teams" and the need to work with people you "do not know" already, and with "other disciplines" than your core studies. "Higher education institutions should work more with the business community and companies in problem solving and working on challenges." Also, students "should be drilled more in measuring and setting goals for what you are going to achieve." and being able to set "quantifiable goals". She "would focus more on problem solutions and facilitating education towards this. Also training students in going outside of their comfort zone. <i>Less comfort</i> or security, more training in solving novel cases and working with people you do not already know."</p> <p>I#3: Does not have any particular suggestions, but generally finds that "It takes a long time to build soft skills, and it requires a personal drive". Collaborating with others is important when building soft skills, so generally he supports team work and case work to help students build soft-skills.</p>
<p>Do you provide training in the company itself in the area of soft skills development?</p>	<p>I#1: Yes, but "more on-the-job-training under supervision, than in courses". Except, in the larger companies I've worked.</p> <p>I#2 Both. We "set aside 20%" for skills development, to "be spent on courses and conferences and certifications". Don't have a 'one size fits all' track for all, but "based on the individual's motivation, skills and competences". Also, a lot of supervision and mentoring 'in house' in teams.</p> <p>I#3 A combination of inhouse "competence center" based on "philosophy based on Toyota's Lean Production system". Also, external consultants.</p>

	They also encourage re-skilling and up-skilling by taking outside courses and certifications.
Could you use the Growth4SME website within your company? Do you have any feedback for us on the structure and content of the website?	<p>I#1 The informant is skeptical to the design and implementation of the website, and to the (lack of) structure, should it be used as a MOOC or course. He thinks the <i>content</i> is fairly good and relevant but he misses more 'core business skills', and the usability for companies. And he shows me many other concrete resources on the internet that are more professionally designed and provide similar content. Several of these, however, are not free, but have a free tier with basic info, and then premium tier for more depth. One example he shows me is "The personal MBA" (by Josh Kaufman). He also shows sites and resources that some of the consulting companies mentioned have made, resources by Harvard business school, Porter's value chain, and other that are more easily adaptable for SMEs and companies.</p> <p>I#2: "Typically, we share such content in a channel on Slack, which we use as a chat tool... people here are collecting tips from many sources and use many platforms, and rarely follow <i>one</i> course, or a complete or comprehensive MOOC. But I recognize [on the Growth4SME site] a lot of the same type of content I have mentioned. Such as <i>business understanding</i>, value propositions, business model canvas and understanding the 'customer journey'. This is kind of the same things and terms that we use and find important."</p> <p>I#3: "we would probably not use it. Today we spend millions of kroner on consultants who tell us such things" (but he recognizes and approves of the concepts and content on in the MOOC).</p>

Appendix 4 - Qualitative interviews with Teaching Staff
Belgium

Annelies Schrooten, teacher & researcher UC Limburg

1. Absolutely. By bringing students together from different disciplines you get a nice interaction and students learn in a different way. Technology students often do not have the marketing insights and vice versa. By working together on challenges, they strengthen each other's thinking and come up with better solutions. Also, working with real life challenges and providing some structure to the approach works for students to make them more innovative in their search for solutions. Pitching the solutions also taught them how to do so creatively and bring in storytelling.

2. Working with real life cases is interesting for the students and for me as a teacher.

Showing students where to find information and offering them the structure is something I take away from this case competition and plan to apply in the future.

3. For sure! I am convinced that young people learn a great deal from such active forms of learning. First and foremost, working with young people from different disciplines and from different countries gives them a broader view of the challenge they face.

Then, through a design thinking method, they learn to be more creative and are taught a certain way of thinking that they might not learn through a traditional way of teaching. And by doing it, young people are more likely to demonstrate their own creativity and learn easily and not forget this experience easily.

Julie Vanstraelen, coordinator of Vlajo, an organisation which boosts entrepreneurial competences with students

- Vlajo regularly works with cases. Participation in this project was a confirmation that this is a valuable way of working, both for students and teachers.
- The changes are rather limited. Participation does confirm that this is a valuable working method. We want to focus more on this in the future.
- As indicated above, this practice will certainly be used in the future. We also find it valuable to have students from different disciplines working together.

Petra Van Gansen, teacher English & communication skills at UC Limburg

For the soft skills course, my goal is to have the students work in smaller teams (4-5 people) on an assignment/project in order to teach skills such as teamwork, creativity, meeting, brainstorming, presenting and pitching in an interdisciplinary way.

This international case competition was a perfect example of this, with the great added value that the students worked in an international and multidisciplinary team. It gave new inspiration, both to possible 'cases' or 'challenges', and to how this could be organized. To the extent that it is organizationally possible, I would like to integrate similar initiatives in my future classes.

Ilse Fraussen, teacher & researcher at UC Limburg

We learned a lot taking part in the case competition, we learned from the less positive points in former case competitions and ameliorated our approach and program every time. We now have a very good view on what to do when having a case competition and can adapt the program according to the participating students. There is a big difference in approach between master and bachelor students.

We have already changed quite a lot. One of the biggest challenges for us as a teacher is to learn to 'let go'. With case competitions, there is no right or wrong answer and the outcome is

unpredictable. As a teacher you move to a facilitator, coaching the students in their learning path without telling them exactly what to do and what the outcome should be.

Case competitions will definitely become more important in the future. We already have several projects where students work together in multidisciplinary teams. This is a reflection of the real world, and a school is also some kind of organization where people from all origin and background have to work together and benefit from each other's strengths. The hardest issue is to convince all teachers of the importance of this new kind of teaching, to become facilitators and not merely be a transmitter of knowledge. And also practical issues, like e.g. emptying the agenda of students for 2 full days, rescheduling classes and courses, ... Ideally case competitions should be planned in advance as part of a course, not as something 'on top'.

Jan Elsen & Thomas Vanhove, teachers technology department & case owners in last case competition:

Did your participation in the case-competition give you new inspiration?

- One of the student teams charmed us with an the idea combining their solution with an art exposition to promote local artist.
- One on the teams used AI generated images, we never used that before but we are triggered to explore that technology

Have you changed or are you planning to change something in the ways you are teaching based on the experience you have acquired?

The case competition has given us new insights on the added benefits of multidisciplinary and international teams. We will be looking into the possibilities of incorporating more of this in our projectbased courses.

Do you think that case-competition could be a future student active learning opportunity in your department?

It was the first time we were involved in a challenge like this, we now see the opportunities to involve our technology students in international multidisciplinary teams

Dominique Gunia – student Teacher Education

1) I think it is particularly interesting to focus on soft skills (taking each other's body language into account, looking at each other, ...) in order to draw attention to the fact that there are no bad ideas and that everyone can and dares say their opinion in an open classroom climate.

2) When working on project-based learning content, it is important to provide structures. Let them brainstorm first, then filter ideas and let them work concretely from there. For example, they can then do research, make calculations and then integrate these into a

presentation. But always by giving them structures and tools for how to get started. In this way, we also focus on self-management. If you do an exercise like this the first time, you will have to steer very much but if they do it more often then you can let go of it more to encourage the students in their independence.

Karolien Vlayen teacher Economics and transdisciplinary project diversity – UC Limburg

- 1) The start-up session around Soft Skills created a lot of momentum among the participants who did not yet know each other. I think it would be useful to spend enough time in the future to get to know the group members in this interactive way, where a lot of soft skills were explored.
- 2) I teach a course where the focus is on transdisciplinary collaboration. There, we always start with a very theoretical basis, but it might also make sense to engage much more with creativity and brainstorming. The models that Vlajo used to structure the thinking process could certainly come in handy for that.
- 3) I have long hoped that more attention could be paid to this kind of project within teacher education, but the pressure on the curriculum there remains an issue that keeps coming up.

Norway

Denmark

Evaluation Teaching staff

- Did your participation in the case-competition give you new inspiration ?
- Have you changed or are you planning to change something in the ways you are teaching based on the experience you have acquired?
- Do you think that case-competiton could be a future student active learning opportunity in your department?

Teaching staff 1:

Have you changed or are you planning to change something in the ways you are teaching based on the experience you have acquired?

Participation in developing learning material for the Growth4SME project has motivated me to change my approach to selecting guest speakers in future courses (fx. On creative industries), where I will now prioritise speakers from local SMEs over those from global brands. I am also

planning to integrate learning material from Growth4SMEs in my upcoming teaching and supervision of students on internships, particularly regarding creativity, business understanding and communication.

Teaching staff 2:

Did your participation in the case-competition give you new inspiration ?

Yes

Have you changed or are you planning to change something in the ways you are teaching based on the experience you have acquired?

No. But I am changing the way we're going to prepare for the case competition – primarily expectation management

Do you think that case-competiton could be a future student active learning opportunity in your department?

Yes and no. Depends on the course

Teaching staff 3:

Did your participation in the case-competition give you new inspiration? Definitely. It made me very aware that working with cases and engaging with real life challenges made the students put their different theoretical perspectives into play in creative and new ways – ways that the everyday teaching cannot allow to the same extent. The school already had a focus on application-oriented initiatives before and the case-competition very much confirmed the need and positive outcome in doing so.

Have you changed or are you planning to change something in the ways you are teaching based on the experience you have acquired? Yes, to elaborate on the answer before: We are trying to encourage our teachers to work application-oriented in their teaching. Being an (administrative) teaching consultant at school level it made me both want to encourage the teachers and to make sure that the structures enable a more process- and application-oriented way of teaching.

Do you think that case-competiton could be a future student active learning opportunity in your department? For sure. The students had a high learning outcome based on the case-competition both theoretically and application-oriented when using their theory in practice.

Teaching staff 4:

Did your participation in the case-competition give you new inspiration ?

Not as such. It was inspiring to see collaboration between students from different nationalities, though.

Have you changed or are you planning to change something in the ways you are teaching based on the experience you have acquired?

I am planning to think broader and gather experience from other countries approaches to university education in my work today and in the future.

Do you think that case-competiton could be a future student active learning opportunity in your department?

Yes. Collaboration between students and professionals of different nationalities is an essential part of becoming world citizens.

Teaching staff 5:

Did your participation in the case-competition give you new inspiration ?

Yes, it always bring new knowledge and perspective to experience students working with real life cases.

Have you changed or are you planning to change something in the ways you are teaching based on the experience you have acquired?

No. We are already doing small groups teaching/guidance

Teaching staff 6:

Do you think that case-competiton could be a future student active learning opportunity in your department?

Yes and no. The competition aspect is somehow not the most appealing to our students. But there is some real life perspective in the format. It is important to have the most focus on the learning aspect of it.

Did your participation in the case-competition give you new inspiration ?

Yes it did. It made me think of the importance of creativity in sustainable thinking in terms of company, community, and societal becomings and endurance.

Have you changed or are you planning to change something in the ways you are teaching based on the experience you have acquired?

Yes it has. I have incorporated 'corporate strategy' into a few lectures in order to establish a clear connection.

Do you think that case-competiton could be a future student active learning opportunity in your department?

Absolutely. It has already made a difference in terms of teaching attending students to think more broadly about how different outcomes of corporate decision making affect the object that a company or an institution is ultimately trying to achieve.

Teaching staff 7:

I have been the teacher at a course for international students in food culture

We have participated four times in the Stay Relevant Case Competition arranged by Arts-AU

The participation has been a great inspiration for both students and teachers providing practice in applying some of the theoretical terms of the course to concrete cases

One outcome of the participation is the pitch character of student presentations in class, simulating addressing a stakeholder in an imagined case, and not addressing the teacher

I can well recommend case competition in courses at any academic level at Arts

Teaching staff 8:

Did your participation in the case-competition give you new inspiration ?

Yes it did. Most of all to experience the students form different subjects work together on the same case – and also to see how important it is when the companies involved themselves in guidance throughout the competition. I also find the students' feedback interesting when they emphasize that it doesn't have to be a competition (I haven't seen it in an survey, but just heard it as feedback from students I've been talking to).

Have you changed or are you planning to change something in the ways you are teaching based on the experience you have acquired?

No plans yet

Do you think that case-competiton could be a future student active learning opportunity in your department?

Hopefully – but maybe rethinking the competition element. The most important here is the meeting between the students and the companies and how both sides experience how the students' competences are both relevant and useful for solving companies' challenges.