



Finland Tampere DEMOLA!

Multi-disciplinary creativity for tangible innovation projects



Alessandro Di Nicolo (left), Ville Kairamo and Sanna Heiskanen organize the Demola open innovation environment in Tampere.

The global economy is unwell. In Tampere, the prescription to ward off recession is open innovation. Among those administering this remedy is Demola.

The Demola open innovation environment was established in autumn 2008 to link creative potential with concrete innovation projects. ICT and media companies can bring in project ideas for which they don't have the internal resources to take further. The ideas are picked up and refined by groups of students from different disciplines and educational institutions. The companies are expected to provide sparring and mentoring for the advancement of the project. They will obtain licences to use functioning demos, as well contacts to the best talent. The students gain access to multidisciplinary teams, top-level guidance from the business world and genuine projects – as well as study credits. The aim is to integrate Demola activity into the curriculum.

"The new operating model has really taken off," notes Director of Demola and Vice President of Technology Centre Hermia, Petri Räsänen.

IPR stays with the student groups

Demola's key mission is to foster entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial spirit.

"The student groups will keep the intellectual property rights to the projects brought into Demola. With the IPR, the students have an opportunity to start their

own businesses. There's a clear contractual procedure with the companies: they can obtain parallel rights of use or additional opportunities to become shareholders in the businesses established," Räsänen explains.

Project Coordinator Ville Kairamo points out that a change in culture is underway.

"The company providing the idea is a team member, not so much a traditional client. Even though the idea originates from a company, the group works with it as if it were its own."

The spirit of openness

In the beginning of 2009, ten projects were underway in Demola, with some 80 students in the teams.

"There's a good attitude towards getting the job done in Demola. And the activity is highly international because a large proportion of the team members are foreigners studying in Tampere," Kairamo says.

The developing of innovations isn't the only aspect of learning in Demola. "Foreign students are enthusiastic about our creative working culture. The equal and open way of working is familiar to Finns, but it's not a matter of course elsewhere," say Räsänen and Kairamo.

One of the ways in which openness is visible, is that the project subjects and processes are on public display on the project website.

Demola

- Backing from Technology Centre Hermia, the TAMK and PIRAMK universities of applied sciences, The University of Tampere, Tampere University of Technology, and ICT companies.
- Part of the Creative Tampere business development policy programme by the City of Tampere and the Digitampere Centre of Expertise
- Main funder the Employment and Economic Development Centre for Pirkanmaa; initiated as a two-year EU project

www.demola.fi

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