

3.1 Work and entrepreneurship in Alta 2009-2012

Tor Helge Reinsnes Moen and Trond Einar Persen

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7557/5.3205>

Summary

This project represents a **unique joint effort** to strengthen the entrepreneurial culture in Alta, Norway. We are not aware that it has been completed through similar initiatives in communities around the country to strengthen the entrepreneurial culture and the basis for the establishment of new companies.

In this project, businesses, schools, and the municipality found areas where they can work together and simultaneously strengthen each other's efforts. The ambition is that more should have – and realize – the desire to start their own business rather than being employed. It is an ambition that there should be greater employment growth in the private sector than in the public sector when the project is finished.

Many of the attitudes and values that are important in entrepreneurship are also important for society as a whole. Initiative, enthusiasm, and creativity are important to encourage young people and adults in both the private and public sector to see new opportunities in the future. Therefore, this project is not just an isolated focus on entrepreneurship, but a broad effort to strengthen local communities.

The programs that “Young Enterprise” offers (student business and youth enterprise) are conducted at all schools. These programs are incorporated in the project and collaboration in the project will, in our opinion, strengthen the foundation for their educational programs to succeed. There will also be increased awareness of the programs in the entire local community.



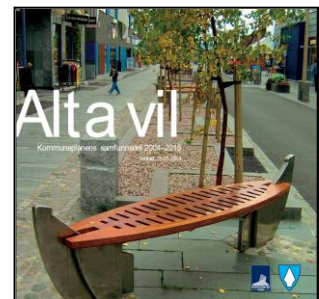
History

The idea of a larger effort to increase entrepreneurship came in connection with the municipal plan “Alta vil”. A brainstorming session was held to specify the challenges and possible solutions. The conclusion was that there was a need for an initiative that included the entire community. The municipal plan was ambitious, and it pointed out six priority areas that were considered particularly important to ensure continued development and growth. “Work and Entrepreneurship” was defined as one of these key areas with the following objectives:

- Alta will have a business life and the knowledge that is characterized by innovation and development.
- Alta will have a strong entrepreneurial culture in schools, workplaces, and the local community.

Background

The main project was the result of an extensive process in which many actors in the Alta community participated. The ideas were developed in connection with the municipal plan “Alta vil” and it was implemented through a pilot project with participation from various stakeholders to develop a master project.



The project consists of pilot projects and initiatives that together will provide a stronger entrepreneurial culture in Alta. Some of the measures already exist, but by putting those into context reinforced the measures significantly. We have prioritized **two pilot projects** that ran throughout the project period.

Vision

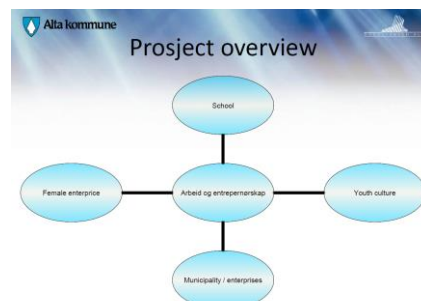
We want the Alta community to be a leader in entrepreneurship and innovation, and that this should permeate every part of society.



Goal and targets

Goal 1: Several business start-ups in Alta.

- a. There should be more business establishments in 2012 than in 2008.
- b. There shall be a larger growth in employment in private companies than in the public sector in the municipality of Alta in 2012 than in 2008.



Goal 2: Increased knowledge about entrepreneurship and business creation among the population in Alta, with particular emphasis on youth and women.

- a. Students in elementary school in Alta receive information on business creation and the private sectors role in the local community, as well as initial skills in business administration.
- b. Students in the secondary school in Alta are encouraged towards business creation and entrepreneurship, and gain increased skills through practical experience with youth enterprise (YE) as a pedagogical method.
- c. Students at Finnmark University College are encouraged towards business creation and entrepreneurship. In addition, students will be offered practical training in business creation through the student enterprise (SE) as a pedagogical method and they will receive guidance and assistance in business creation.
- d. Entrepreneurship skills shall be offered to potential entrepreneurs who are not students.

Goal 3: Better conditions for entrepreneurship.

- a. It should be easier to establish your own companies.
- b. Business Cases should be prioritized in the public proceedings.
- c. Workshops will help develop closer cooperation between stakeholders so they can work toward common goals.
- d. Business incubator services in Alta will be strengthened and further developed.
- e. Innovation will be encouraged to ensure that local ideas are connected to relevant expertise and capital.

- f. There will be an increased motivation for the establishment of businesses in the population, particularly among youth and women.

Audiences

The project has the entire community as a target group, since the ambition is to develop positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship and that it should be allowed to have success. But there are some groups that will be specifically focused on:

- Young people who can establish their own business at some point in life.
- Women and young girls who can develop their own jobs.
- Immigrants with ambitions to start their own business.
- Persons in the workforce who can develop their own ideas into businesses.
- Companies that can focus on innovation or establish new companies.
- Persons without work who can start their own business as an alternative to seeking employment.
- Public enterprises, to support local innovation, support staff, who will start their own business and assess the establishment of new companies based on their own business.
- Educational institutions, which have a very important role in awareness-raising efforts in addition to offering expertise in business development and industry.

Pilot projects

The project included two pilot projects that went throughout the project period of three years:

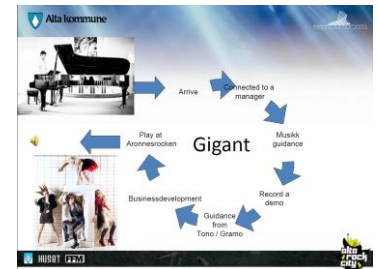
- One pilot project was to strengthen the foundation of entrepreneurship based on youth culture. This is a national pilot project which we believe could be ground-breaking for other similar environments.
- The second pilot project was to strengthen cooperation between schools and businesses, particularly at the secondary level. We see this as an important local pilot project.



Pilot project “Youth culture and entrepreneurship”

Background

The market for music and other forms of cultural expression is growing rapidly and has national and international potential. Therefore, we want to facilitate the development of local actors and companies that are competitive. At the same time we must retain the creative and resilient youth community, and it is this combined challenge that we want to solve through the pilot project.



“Huset” (The youth house) is a cultural activity centre that is owned and operated by Alta. It has been an innovative environment supporting over 200 young adults. “Huset” has given young people the motivation to create their own expression and belief in their own abilities. “Huset” has recently provided high-quality results in rhythmic music, dance, and drama. The challenge is to ensure that the young talent does not leave the municipality and the region. Therefore, the focus was on further artist development and commercialization through measures related to “Huset” and Finnmark University College, and the establishment of commercial support.

One of the most important measures in the pilot project was to support people with ambitions and potential, either as artists or in support. There was cooperation with Innovation Norway to develop specific offers to those of young people who would like to develop their own businesses. It may be necessary to carry out all or part of the “Profitable culture of youth” or offers based on the experience of these measures.

Objectives

- Develop commercial support that can lift the artists and events to higher level.
- Establish at least two companies per year during the project period.
- Create a trend-setting environment within youth culture by bringing in other creative expressions (film, design, drama, etc.) in addition to international cooperation.



- Finnmark University College will develop and start up a three-year course for young people who want to work with rhythmic music. The program will qualify students to the music and event industry, and include economics, music, and other creative expressions.
- Offer entrepreneurial training for youth who want to establish their own business based on their (or others) talent.

Activities

Huset

- Summer School where youngsters will carry out a production.
- Workshops with a focus on collaboration between creative expressions.
- International cooperation in which at least three local bands/artists participate every year.
- Development of support for artist development.



Finnmark University College

- Develop three-year courses in youth culture, innovation, and entrepreneurship with a link to Business Administration.

Commercialization of support

- Develop and adapt commercial support for artists and their development.

Development program

- Expertise offered for the (potential) entrepreneurs based on the experience of "Profitable Culture of Youth" and similar measures.

Pilot project “Entrepreneurship in the middle school”

Background

Pupils in the youth school are an important target group to strengthen entrepreneurial culture. Whatever educational and career choices they want to take forward, it will be important to have knowledge of the business life and focus on attitudes that initiative, creativity, and drive.

School projects

- Our communities 9 years old
- Zig zag Europe 11 years old
- Pupils enterprise 13 years old
- Young enterprise 16-17 years old
- HIFM - Educate Rock`n Roll
Entrepreneurs

Objective

The objective of the pilot project is that all students in the Municipality of Alta shall carry out educational activities aimed at entrepreneurship.

Content

Pupils will have the opportunity to practice entrepreneurship by implementing one of these options:

- Student businesses in line with the concept of Young Entrepreneurs.
- A locally developed concept for students to try entrepreneurship in existing firms with a high degree of market orientation.

The initiative means that all students in juvenile stage will be working with entrepreneurship in the youth school.

Activities

Aimed at the students

- Equity at 500 NOK to all companies that the students organize.
- Establishment of a fund of 30,000 NOK to the supplemental funding.
- Motivation measures in the form of annual kick-off and distribution of image effects to the students.



- Arrangements for internships where it may be desirable.

Aimed at the teachers

- The development of teachers as promoters.
- Provision of one-year training in entrepreneurship for up to 10 teachers per year.
- Participation in courses run by Young Entrepreneurship or others.
- Implemented measures to inspire and motivate teachers to emphasize entrepreneurship in their educational activities. This will include developing a collection of examples of how business entrepreneurship can operate.

Aimed at business life

- Information to at least 200 possible practice firms in Alta municipality.
- All parents of pupils in school will get information about the project and how they can contribute.
- Establishment of three-year partnership agreements between at least 50 companies and Alta Municipality.

Dynamic project development

This project plan is based on input and ideas from the pilot project. The process has been creative, because it constantly encountered new ideas and opportunities in the community and between the parties.

The plan described the first year of the main project in some detail. There was less detail in project years two and three because experiences from the pilot projects showed that new information and new ideas are coming to the project and that it is very important that a project of this type has room to choose what measures are important and correct accordingly. The pilot projects and some of the measures continued throughout the project period of three years.

The detailed plan for the project's second year was designed in the autumn of 2009, when the funding is available. The scope was almost the same level as Year 1, so that we ensured that the project was ambitious, innovative, and targeted. By choosing a dynamic approach to project development, it created a better basis for influence and commitment among the participating



actors. It is an independent point that a project of this type allow for creativity and innovation when it comes to measures and instruments of implementation.

Already in the project's first year there were measures that go beyond the dynamic development. This is done to ensure the freedom to grasp and perpetuate ideas and suggestions that come up during the first year.

It was a goal that the measures that provided the results be part of the normal operation of the various participants after the project period. Some of the measures will, already during the project period, be integrated into the operation. These will then be financed from the regular budgets of the players. In this way the project served as a venue to test out the measures those participants in the community agreed on.

Evaluation

At the end of the project a tender for project evaluation was announced. We did an internal evaluation during the project, but we saw that we were not able to capture all aspects that the project affected. To get a broader evaluation and simultaneously refine the mission, it was focused on youth, women, and project partners. To collect data, 33 representatives from the partners were invited to a process called the "six thinking hats". A total of 363 random women in Alta were interviewed, and 425 youth between 13 and 18 answered a survey. The evaluation report shows some interesting results. We will not be able to describe them all in this document. We will only give some examples of positive results.

Effect 1-women

The goal was to give women increased knowledge in entrepreneurship. The interviews shows that 16.89% had more knowledge as a result of the project. And about 14% had increased their knowledge and motivation to establish a company. We are pleased to see that the project created a positive effect in the municipality. However, motivation is not the same as action. We have not been able to follow up if the motivation has resulted in real companies.



Effect 2 – Youth

The project had many goals with regard to the youth. The survey shows that the youth know a lot about the project. When we look at knowledge and motivation to establish a company, about 18% of the youth are more positive to go into business because of the project. The most positive result is that 42.15% says that it's necessary to have a business plan to start their own company. This shows that we have had a great impact on the youth during the project.

Effect 3 – New Bachelor program of study at the University

When the project was established, we saw there were many youngsters in Alta who wanted to start their own business, and many of them did. A lot of them had courage to start their company, but there was a lack of support and competence. To meet the need of competence we have developed a new bachelor program of study, which provides "hands on" small business experience. This bachelor program supports micro companies with competence on how to develop and succeed.

Effect 4 – "Connecting young Barents"

We have established a new project between Russia, Finland, and Norway to increase the number of stages for youth cultural entrepreneurs. The new project is called "Connecting young Barents" and has an overall objective to make contributions to the building a collective identity of the people living in the northern regions via culture. The specific objective is to create a network among young people and among youth workers to stimulate the identity between people interested in youth sub-cultures and self-



realisation in the Barents region. The main actions in the project are to show young people that everything is possible in the north, and give them the motivation to stay and develop their own region instead of moving to the big cities further south. This project goes until 2015.

Tor Helge Reinsnes Moen
Alta Municipality, Norway
and
Trond Einar Persen
Alta Municipality, Norway

