ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM IN ASEAN UNIVERSITIES BASED ON COBLAS PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to research on the impact and effect of entrepreneurship ecosystem as a result of the implementation of “Consulting Based Learning for ASEAN SMEs” (COBLAS) program in the targeted universities in ASEAN countries.

Comparative analysis is done to create the entrepreneurship ecosystem for the target ASEAN universities in order to understand the correlations and interdependencies amongst the core components, such as the university, the students and the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) within the ecosystem; to identify the key initiatives and programs involved, as well as to derive the expanding model and strategy for entrepreneurship development in the region. Through the study of entrepreneurship ecosystem in the universities, entrepreneurial drivers and stakeholders can identify and strengthen their roles and competitive advantages, as well as achieve their goals for collective growth and sustainability for the fulfillment of education and human resource development needs in the region.

INTRODUCTION

Conceptualization and research on entrepreneurship education is yet to be fully explored. In addition, entrepreneurship education is expected to be a driver in enhancing trainees’ entrepreneurial intentions and SMEs incubation. However, to date, few empirical studies examine entrepreneurship education which emphasizes consulting-based learning. Conventional entrepreneurship education emphasizing theory understanding and class room setting is a widely used approach. With regards to the research and development in entrepreneurship education and SMEs development, a more practical approach is encouraged that leads to the introduction of consulting-based learning approach. The examination of this relative new approach is important because resources are usually limited. The priority resource allocation in improving potential education programs is dependent on its significant impact on students’ performance and education outcomes. Therefore, this paper explains the development of entrepreneurship ecosystem in ASEAN
Universities as a result of the implementation of Consulting Based Learning for ASEAN SMEs (COBLAS) program (Ohe, 2009). It serves as a way of addressing the topic of “Education in the Information Age” and the goal of “Human Resource Development” through improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of individuals, educational institutions as well as the SMEs in the ASEAN region.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

“Consulting Based Learning For ASEAN SMEs” (COBLAS) program was developed to fulfill the gap and to provide platform for integration amongst Japan and the ASEAN universities. COBLAS program aims to bring benefits to the immediate stakeholders, namely the university, the student and the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with the following purposes:

- To make the academics (universities) as the center of excellence as well as a platform for human resources development.
- To empower students with skills in entrepreneurship and provide them with opportunities to practice as consulting apprentice to make real business proposal for the industry needs.
- To collaborate with the local SMEs, which are defined as micro businesses with less than 10 employees, who seek for capability building and consultancy for growth and interaction through the cross-sector partnership.

To develop the “entrepreneurship ecosystem” towards the outcome of a regional development through the application of “Learning By Helping” spirit and COBLAS partnership amongst the universities, students and the SMEs.

RELEVANCE

World leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration in September 2000 (United Nations General Assembly, 2000), setting the goals to eradicate poverty and hunger as number one priority, followed by development of basic education. In most of the developing ASEAN countries, the overall human resource development rate was still ranked behind other regions based on the Human Development Index by UNDP in 2006 (United Nations General Assembly, 2006).

In academic setting, entrepreneurial activity is regarded as an effective leveraging engine to drive economic activity, and entrepreneurship education contributes extensively towards the expansion of entrepreneurial industry. Thus, by creating an entrepreneurship education for...
regional development program customized for the ASEAN region, it will help to stimulate the development of ASEAN entrepreneurs through universities’ collaboration with local businesses who create jobs in rural areas. With the increasing of ASEAN entrepreneurs, local businesses can be improved, more jobs can be created and poverty may be gradually eliminated in the region.

Furthermore, the creation of a “localized” ASEAN entrepreneurship education is necessary as the region should be differentiated from US market, European market and rest of the market in the world. In terms of the advancement of entrepreneurship education in ASEAN region, most of the universities are only at the introductory or growth stage of developing the curriculum and teaching methodology, such as having only or two entrepreneurship programs. They are mainly conducted within restricted classroom environment and rely heavily on US and European textbooks. Thus, it is necessary to create curriculum with localized teaching resources, conduct entrepreneurship education which is relevant to ASEAN context, and make more practical in order to realize a more entrepreneurial business degree program in the near future.

TARGET AUDIENCE

A total of nine universities were target for the research. Out of which, six of the visited universities have conducted the COBLAS pilot program in the past, namely National University of Laos (Laos), National University of Management (Cambodia), University of Puthisastra (Cambodia), Cambodian Mekong University (Cambodia), National University of Malaysia (Malaysia), Brawijaya University (Indonesia) and Waseda University (Japan). Three of the visited universities have not conducted the COBLAS pilot program but have been active in entrepreneurship education, namely Singapore Management University (Singapore), Hanoi Institute of Technology (Vietnam), and Thammasat University (Thailand).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study consisted of field trips (refer to Fig. 1 for Field Trip Route Map, and Table 1 for Field Trip Schedule) by visiting ASEAN universities, wherein the COBLAS programs were conducted before as well as the major ASEAN universities which did not experience the COBLAS programs, but implemented their own entrepreneurship education programs. The secondary information on these universities was collected through websites and other publications.
Research Methodology

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*Source: Ohe, T & Goi, H.C (2010), COBLAS Program for Entrepreneurship Education in ASEAN Universities
Table 1. Field Trip Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Research survey and visitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-22 Feb</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>• Singapore Management University&lt;br&gt;• Government agencies&lt;br&gt;• Local SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25 Feb</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Hanoi</td>
<td>• Hanoi Technological University&lt;br&gt;• Local SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-28 Feb</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Vientiane</td>
<td>• National University of Laos&lt;br&gt;• Government agencies&lt;br&gt;• Local SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Feb-4 Mar</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Phnom Phen</td>
<td>• University of Management&lt;br&gt;• Cambodia Mekong University&lt;br&gt;• Puthisastra University&lt;br&gt;• Cambodia International Education Support Foundation&lt;br&gt;• Government agencies&lt;br&gt;• Local SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8 Mar</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Chiang Mai</td>
<td>• Local SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12 Mar</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>• Thammasat University&lt;br&gt;• Local SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14 Mar</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>• Consolidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-17 Mar</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur</td>
<td>• National University of Malaysia&lt;br&gt;• Government agencies&lt;br&gt;• Local SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-20 Mar</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Malang</td>
<td>• Brawijaya University&lt;br&gt;• Local SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25 Mar</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>• Consolidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Mar</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>• Back to Tokyo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ohe, T & Goi, H.C. (2010), COBLAS Program for Entrepreneurship Education in ASEAN Universities*

**CONCEPT OF COBLAS**

COBLAS program is developed based on the “Consulting Based Learning” (CBL) concept, (Fig. 2) developed by Prof. Takeru Ohe of Waseda University, Japan. This practical entrepreneurship education gives the lessons in the actual business. It is different from the traditional business administration theory, which emphasizes only on the research of the past business models or analysis of them. CBL is a new type of educational approach through proposing the tentative strategy based on their business foresight, implementing it and adjusting the suggested strategy along with the mistakes they made in the process.
METHODOLOGY OF COBLAS PROGRAM

The COBLAS model is illustrated by a triangular approach that links three different parties as shown in Figure 3, the triangulation approach refers to education-training-practical relationships between (a) academics (university education), (b) the local SMEs and (c) students as the consulting apprentice. The model emphasizes the important role played by the university as the centre of excellence and works as a platform for human resources development for local business promotion. The linkages between these three parties are important in helping the students to understand the necessary skills required both for working in small firms and encouraging them to start their own enterprises on leaving full-time education. This education model provides graduates with the crucial experience in real business activities. Simultaneously, the local SMEs involved in the program would benefit from consultancy-like assistance provided by the students and experts from university. Eventually, it forms the basis of an entrepreneurship ecosystem for growth and expansion of the entrepreneurship education in the university.

Figure 2: Effectiveness of Learning

(Reference: modified from Duke University, Medical Center)
DEVELOPMENT OF COBLAS

The Consulting Based Learning concept was developed through the following experiences. The MBA and MOT students consulted the enterprises under the comprehensive alliance which was made between Waseda University and Sumida district of Tokyo Metropolitan. They targeted at Hamano Products Co., Ltd, a metal processing company in Yahiro district, which has left a down-town atmosphere in 2003, and students in Prof. Ohe’s entrepreneurship class worked on the consultancy with the company for 3 months. Hamano Products Co., Ltd lost the whole factory due to a fire accident in the next building in 2000. The president tried to reconstruct the business by introducing the recent model of trial machines. But the company barely made the commercial profit and the business did not work out well. The students in Prof. Ohe’s class formed up a team to focus on improving the business administration, finance, human resources and IT aspects of the business, and they worked very hard even on weekends. They emphasized on the promotion of operation efficiency through shortening the time to set up the metallic molding, simplifying the logistics of order placement, improving the delivery efficiency of materials, which eventually led to a decrease in the labor charges. Consequently, the project made a great success and the company started to earn 10-12% of commercial profit. It was an achievement compared to the previous situation of making almost no profit.

The key element of this success is that Hamano Products Co., Ltd totally accepted all the recommendations made by the student team. Besides, the objectives and the targets set by both the company and students were very clear. The company succeeded to increase the profit, whereas the students gained the...
practical experience to work for the existing company in the actual business settings.

IMPLEMENTATION OF COBLAS PROGRAM

COBLAS was introduced and implemented in ASEAN region when Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (hereafter referred as METI) implemented both “Study on Proposed Entrepreneurship Education Program for Local Business Promotion in Mae Fah Luang University in Thailand” in 2003 and “Study on Entrepreneurship Education for Traditional Local Business Promotion in Cambodia” in National University of Management, Cambodia in 2004, and the Feasibility Study on Experimental Management in National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) in 2005, sponsored by Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry (RIETI), Japan. These projects were based on the statement of “Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Partnership” initiated by Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi during his visitation to ASEAN countries in January 2002.

A significant event with the signing of a memorandum of understanding, named “Brawijaya Entrepreneurship Declaration” amongst 7 universities from 5 countries, including Japan and ASEAN was done on 11 January 2007 (Ohe, 2009) (as per Fig 4). It serves as the goal amongst the regional COBLAS team to implement the “Pilot Study for Development of an Educational Program for Entrepreneurship Facilitators” program, sponsored by Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) in 2007, and disseminate the teaching methodology and materials to other ASEAN countries upon its successful implementation. Consequently, the concept of COBLAS program and its methodology was highlighted for presentation to the ASEAN leaders and experts by Professor Takeru Ohe at Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), “One Village One Product” Seminar held on 24 October 2007.
Thereafter, Entrepreneur Instructors’ training program by Association for Overseas Technical Scholarship (AOTS) was implemented in Vietnam and Myanmar in 2008. In 2009, the piloted COBLAS program was implemented with University of Puthisastra, Cambodian Mekong University, National University of Management, Cambodia, through a joint collaboration and sponsorship from Cambodia International Education Support Fund (CIESF), initiated by Japanese entrepreneur, Mr Hideo Ohkubo, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Forval Corporation. A second row out of COBLAS program with the expansion of a nationwide competition in Cambodia is expected to be organized in 2011.

Below is a summary of the chronological implementation of COBLAS with the various universities in ASEAN countries (Ohe, 2010) (refer to Table 2). Throughout the process, Asia Science and Education for Economic Development (ASIASEED) has been the appointed intermediary agencies for the coordination and support of the program.
Based on the past achievements, it is expected that ASEAN Common Curriculum for Entrepreneurship Project will commence in the near future by Waseda University and Asia SEED sponsored by ASEAN Secretariat. In this project, common curriculum of entrepreneurship education in ASEAN will be developed through the scheme of educational program (COBLAS) in Vietnam, the Philippines, and Myanmar, and also annual seminar to disseminate the outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Universities/ Highlights</th>
<th>Sponsoring Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Mae Fah Luang University</td>
<td>RIETI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>National University of Management, Cambodia</td>
<td>AOTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>National University of LAOS</td>
<td>JBIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>National University of Malaysia</td>
<td>RIETI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>University of Brawijaya</td>
<td>JBIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Japan, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia</td>
<td>“Brawijaya Entrepreneurship Declaration” amongst 7 universities from 5 countries</td>
<td>JBIC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2008   | Vietnam, Myanmar | Hanoi Foreign Trade University  
Yangon Institute of Economics                                    | AOTS                |
| 2009/2010/2011 | Cambodia | University of Putisastra  
Cambodian Mekong University  
National University of Management, Cambodia | CIESF               |

* Source: Ohe, T. (July-Sept, 2009),
ASEAN Common Curriculum Consulting Based Learning for ASEAN SMEs Report

**Table 2. Implementation of COBLAS in ASEAN**

**Concept of Ecosystem**

The concept of ecosystem is derived from the idea that living organisms interact with every other element in their natural and physical environment. Eugene Odum, a founder of ecology, stated: “Any unit that includes all of the organisms (or the “community”) in a given area interacting with the physical environment so that a flow of energy leads to clearly defined tropic structure, biotic diversity, and material cycles within the system is an ecosystem.”
The linkage of ecological system with social, educational or even economical system will be useful for understanding and resolving difficult problems. The theory presents an emerging integrative and innovative approach to manage sustainability or even development in entrepreneurship education.

A typical ecosystem is said to be formed by large, loosely connected by “ecosystem components” and “ecosystem elements” to form an integrated network. The presence of each “component” represents a member or stakeholder in the ecosystem. On the other hand, the “elements” will present the various initiatives or projects that have evolved or development as a result of the interaction between the components. Linking the “components” and “elements” form the “networks”, which collectively makeup the entire ecosystem.

In the research paper, the concept of entrepreneurship ecosystem has been applied to analyze the interrelationship and interdependency of the entrepreneurship network, as well as the development of every key initiatives and programs within the internal and external environment of the university. Through the appreciation of the respective heterogeneous structures under each environment, every university may be able to develop its own unique and sustainable strategic model for the entrepreneurship education in line with its individual goals and the regional needs. The study and comparison of entrepreneurship networks and initiatives via ecosystem suggests that biological networks can be applied to entrepreneurial networks and be used as sustainable model for the development of entrepreneurship education.

FORMATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM

CORE COMPONENTS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM

“Core components” are referred to as the key stakeholders that exist in the entrepreneurship education industry. They are capable of impacting the ecosystem once their point of optimization has been realized, based on the study of their “biological” ecosystem. The absence of these components will have direct influence on the other components, or even disrupt the entire dynamism that may cause the collapse or extinction of the ecosystem.

In the case of the entrepreneurship ecosystem formed under the COBLAS program, the core components are identified as (a) academics (university education), (b) the local SMEs (private), and (c) students (people) (as depicted in Figure 5).

- Academics (universities) act as the “leading activist” for the role as a center of excellence as well as a platform for human resources development for the expansion of the
ecosystem.

- **Students possess the skills and knowledge** to be the “beneficiary” as a learner in education as well as the “contributor” as a consulting apprentice in the ecosystem.

- **Corporation/SMEs** serve as the “external stimulus” for the motivation and innovation of the “spin in” and “spin out” model in the development of ecosystem. The alliances of the core components through the tripartite partnership under COBLAS system give rise to the system thinking beyond a non-linear relationship, and the evolvement of keystone strategies for innovation of entrepreneurship ecosystem. The ultimate goal is achieved through the long term sustainability of the system and coexistence of components.

**Figure 5:** 3 primary “Core Components” of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem for COBLAS Program

*Source: Ohe, T. (2008), Teaching syllabus for COBLAS Cambodia*

**CORRELATIONS AMONGST THE CORE COMPONENTS**

The mutual correlations amongst the respective core components are present in a conventional entrepreneurship ecosystem (refer to Figure. 6). Between the university and students, university normally acts as the education provider while the students serve as a learner to conduct their academic research in a classroom basis to acquire the knowledge and skills. Between the university and company, university professor is often engaged as professional researcher or academic consultant for the needs of the commercial sector, while the company provides business opportunities, more often on a profit making nature, to serve as the main motivation for the interaction with the academics. As for the relationship between company and student, student is often at the receiver end, either be receiving internship or training by the companies. On the other hand, company, as usual, plays the more domineering role in giving
the consultation or advisory to them in the relationship.

However, through the COBLAS program challenges and transforms the form of interaction and relationship through the “Consulting Based Learning” methodology, which enables the creation of new models and strategies that will accelerate the growth and expansion of the ecosystem.

**Figure 6: A Typical Correlation amongst the Core Components of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem**

*Source: Ohe, T. (2008), Teaching syllabus for COBLAS Cambodia*

**BOUNDARY AND SCALE OF ECOSYSTEM**

“Boundary” and “Scale” of ecosystem define the capacity and limitation in which the ecosystem can grow and expand. In this research, it is defined as the natural environment, which includes the “local” and “global” environment, in which components can interact with one another (refer to Fig 7). Extend of engagement with “local environment” reflects the dynamism of interaction amongst the network members within the country’s boundary, whereas the expansion into “global environment” reflects the extension of the entrepreneurial spirit in engaging and leveraging on the resources of external entrepreneurship ecosystem. This is essential for the case of COBLAS, as the ultimate objective is to focus on the development and impact on the local entrepreneurship as well as the regional integration in the ASEAN region.
IMPACT ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM

“SPIN OFF” INITIATIVES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM

With reference to the study of the correlation and interdependency between the three core components in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, the field research for this paper has been conducted to track and analyze the new ecosystem elements, or so call the “spin off” initiatives as a result of the implementation of the COBLAS program in the respective universities. A typical cross section of an entrepreneurship ecosystem (refer to Figure 8) depicts the correlation of the core components and the entrepreneur- ship initiatives, which may directly or indirectly “spin off” as a result of the implementation of COBLAS program.

Subsequently, all the respective entrepreneurship ecosystem diagrams of the targeted universities have been overlaid to further study the entrepreneurship initiatives that may be identified as essential element for the design on entrepreneurship education and development of entrepreneurship ecosystem amongst the ASEAN universities (refer to Figure 9).
Ultimately, the elements were identified as the “natural” or “essential” entrepreneurship initiatives that may spin off directly or indirectly due to the introduction of “consulting based learning” methodology (Fig. 10 and Table 3).

* Source: Ohe, T. & Goi, H.C. (2010), COBLAS Program for Entrepreneurship Education in ASEAN Universities
The identification of the “spin off” initiatives will be necessary for the design of new ecosystem value chains within the entrepreneurship ecosystem of the each university. They also serve as key indicators or “target points” in which new model or strategies can be designed and created for a more holistic development of the entrepreneurship education.

### IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM ARISING FROM COBLAS PROGRAM

Through the field research in the respective ASEAN universities, new models and strategies in the development of entrepreneurship education has been created, through direct or indirect effects due to the implementation of COBLAS by the universities.

Out of which, the entrepreneurship ecosystem of 2 below universities are drawn out for further analysis.

i) “Consulting Based Learning” Model as Keystone Advantage Strategy (National University of Malaysia-UKM)

The National University of Malaysia has developed its own unique entrepreneurship education

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**Table 3.** Listing of the correlations amongst the key components and the “spin off” entrepreneurship initiatives amongst COBLAS universities due to COBLAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction of Core Components</th>
<th>University and Students</th>
<th>Students and SMEs</th>
<th>University and SMEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spin Off Initiatives within Ecosystem</td>
<td>• Entrepreneurship Innovation Research Team</td>
<td>• Students Business Enterprise</td>
<td>• Cross Teaching Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Junior Entrepreneurship Program</td>
<td>• Students’ Entrepreneurship Activities and Infrastructure</td>
<td>• University Social Enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inter Universities Business Debates</td>
<td>• Entrepreneur Speaker’s Series</td>
<td>• University Business Advisory and Consultancy Centre for Corporate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Train the trainer program</td>
<td>• Entrepreneurship Study Mission Trip</td>
<td>• Corporate Social Responsibility Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Standardized Entrepreneurship Textbook</td>
<td>• Student Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Business Plan Competition</td>
<td>• City Town Council Planning and Consultancy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Students Internship Program</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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over the past few years, deriving for itself a “Consulting Based Learning” model as a keystone advantage strategy. Their intensive entrepreneurship ecosystem is a reflection of this effort and commitment in achieving the goals that they have set for as a leading entrepreneurship university in Malaysia (as depicted in Figure. 11).

The “brain” of the centre will come from the Entrepreneurship Innovation and Research Team, which is largely made up of professors from the Faculty of Economic and Business and Graduate of Business. Since their involvement and active participation in COBLAS in 2005, the team has great leverage on the model consulting based learning to roll out 2 more COBLAS course, making it the university with the greatest number of “graduates” under the COBLAS project. It has accumulated rich experience and resources for it to take on the responsibility to create the entrepreneurship syllabus, teaching materials, and to integrate them into the curriculum of the other faculties in the entire university in the next few years.

The ecosystem can be tracked through the successful results of the COBLAS cases. One of the collaboration was between a Malaysian SME, “Chef Bakery” and the student team from National University of Malaysia (refer to Figure. 12). “Chef Bakery” was set since 2009 as a modern confectionery shop with less than 10 employees in the town of Bangi, Malaysia. The owner is a local Malaysian entrepreneur who used to work in a 5-star hotel in Malaysia with specialization in making bread and pastry. The objective of the project is to make recommendations to resolve the low sales and poor management in terms of administration and finance.

Under the COBLAS program, the student team studied the problem and make recommendation on the promotion strategy, such as design of attractive pamphlet and introduction of discount coupon. Secondly, the stores also provide space for tables and chairs for the customers instead of the fully “take away” system. Thirdly, a user friendly database management system for better accounting of inventories and sales has been designed and implemented. Lastly, there is an expansion on the distribution channels into restaurants, which helps to boost sales and income.

The outcome achieved is that within the next 6 months, the sales have successfully doubled and the owner has also diligently implemented the recommendation and found new distributors for his products. In addition, the shop owner continues to seek advice from the COBLAS teachers and students after the COBLAS project. A long term sustainable relationship for business as well as friendship has been fostered.

The collective effect of the successful cases and experience created by COBLAS program have further strengthened the keystone
advantage of UKM as a “consulting based learning” university and “simulated” the development of new ecosystem chain with the following “spin off” initiatives:

- **Centre for Entrepreneurship in Small and Medium Enterprise Development (CESMED)**
  
  The University has proposed for the set up of the above centre as a one stop for the university to coordinate the entire entrepreneurship education and curriculum within the university. The CESMED will integrate the entrepreneurship teaching into the curriculum across all faculties, as well as undertake to coordinate the various projects to build UKM into an entrepreneurial university. Furthermore, it will also be the one stop contact point for all the external stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Higher Learning, SME Cooperation, SME Banks, domestic and overseas partners.

- **Junior Entrepreneurship Project**
  
  Junior entrepreneurship workshops were conducted outside the university targeting at the elementary kids. The kids were taught basic theories of entrepreneurship and had to create their own products for sale. The course has received overwhelming participation from the students.

- **COBLAS for Kuala Lumpur Town Council Planning and Consultation**
  
  The university will provide advice and consultation on the SMEs’ activities based on 2 projects as per invitation by the Kuala Lumpur Town Council. The first project will target at the SMEs, who did not perform well and require “consultancy” on their business model. The second category will be the district consultation, in which students will study the traffic flow, customer type, etc, to determine the town business planning.

![Figure 11: “Consulting Based Learning” Keystone Advantage Strategy as depicted in the Entrepreneurship ecosystem of National University of Malaysia](image-url)
Figure 12: “Business Proposal Strategy on Confectionery Business

- Chef Bakery, the participating SME in COBLAS
- Meeting the entrepreneur, who expressed his gratitude for the improvement in sales revenue due to efforts of COBLAS
- Improvement on the packaging and display of the confectionery in the shop
- Interview with entrepreneur of Chef Bakery
- Improvements made to the SME, such as the set up of dining tables and chairs for walk in customers as well as the internal decorations
- Students and facilitators who were involved in the COLBAS project

* Source: Ohe, T. & Goi, H.C. (2010), COBLAS Program for Entrepreneurship Education in ASEAN Universities

ii) “Technological Seed Spin In” Model for New Business Development Strategy (by Waseda University)

Instead of the conventional technological transfer approach from university to corporation, Professor Takeru Ohe from Waseda University has collaborated with Northeastern University to utilize the “Technological Seed Spin In” model (Zavracky, 2009) for creating innovative new Business Development Strategy (Izumi, 2009) since 2009 (refer to Figure. 13). Northeastern University will “spin in” with the latest technological seed, such
as the “Medical IN VIVO Biosensor Technology” in 2009 (Lai, 2009) and the “New Rehabilitation Technology” in 2010 (Tsai, 2010), to provide the students from the both universities to work on the business proposal to customize for their respective country markets. A team of average 5 students from the respective university will be formed to take up assignment. The students will practice the consulting based learning methodology by interviewing the relevant corporation and agencies and work towards an “actual” entrepreneurship proposal for the assignment. The professors will act as technical as well as academic advisors to facilitate the learning and research process. Waseda Incubation Centre will provide the resource support to facilitate the necessary teleconferencing as well as virtual presentation. The final presentation will also be held in conjunction with Waseda “Annual Technological Workshop”, involving other academics, venture capitalists and students. Students from both countries will also take turn to participate in the “Entrepreneurship Mission Trip” for the representation in the host country as part of their entrepreneurship learning experience.

The outcome of the project has given birth to a sustainable model for entrepreneurship education. The program has been run for two consecutive years with great support and learning results for the core components in the ecosystem. It also evolved and created the new ecosystem value chain through the linkages of the entrepreneurship “spin off” initiatives, such as the “Annual Technological Workshop” and “Entrepreneurship mission trip” etc.

Figure 13: “Technological Spin In” Model for New Business Development Strategy by Waseda University
iii) “Academic - Industrial (Spin In) Alliance” Model for New Business Development Strategy” (Waseda University)

Since 2009, Murata Manufacturing Co Ltd, one of the Japanese Multinational Corporation, has diversified its business development strategy through the “Spin in” approach (Ikeda, 2010) of seeking for partnership with Waseda Business School. Instead of the conventional research or direct advisory services, Professor Ohe Takeru, Professor of Waseda University has experimented with the “Consulting Based Learning” methodology by leveraging on the platform and resources of Waseda Incubation Centre (refer to Fig. 14). Through the program, about 30 existing undergraduates and MBA students in Waseda University have been linked up to participate in the “New Piezoel Material - Component Development Business Project” as part of their curriculum in the business course. Professors from Waseda University acted as the Academic Advisor while the Senior Manager from Murata Manufacturing Co. Ltd served as the Corporate Consultant and Facilitator. In the course of the project, students have direct contract with the staff from Murata and are able to create a more “realistic” business proposal that better meet the needs of the corporation. Eventually, the students have to present their business proposal idea and be judged by the senior management from Murata.

The outcome of the project has been positive as students have learnt through the practical experience. As for Murata, they are prepared to continue such a project as a “win-win” model for the business development strategy. They are also prepared to implement any ideas that may eventually convince them through the proposals.
CONCLUSION

In summary, COLBAS program has successfully established a sustainable regional network in Japan and ASEAN region, which comprises of 8 participating countries, 10 COBLAS universities, about 50 professors, 30 local SMEs, 300 COBLAS students, with collaboration and support from local government, non-profit organizations as well as other related agencies, since 2003 till present.

COBLAS has been proved effective for local SMEs development which will eventually vitalize local economy and reduce poverty. The consulting-based learning methodology has shown positive effects on entrepreneurship education. COBLAS program, which utilizes research and education approach with the university serving as a centre of excellence in knowledge diffusion and human resource development, will be more relevant and sustainable in the long-term. Finally, such action oriented entrepreneurship program has a positive effect on the improvement of local SMEs businesses performance either directly or indirectly. In the long term, it leads to better internal planning, new product innovation, strategic regional integration as well as global market expansion.

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