

Climate-KIC, a new generation of young entrepreneurs

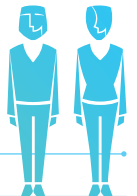
In order to foster a more innovative and entrepreneurial culture in Europe, the EIT is putting strong emphasis on educating a new generation of young entrepreneurs equipping them with strong leadership, creativity and entrepreneurship. Europe needs real pioneers: young innovative talents with entrepreneurial and global thinking.



The six-week Climate-KIC 2010 European Summer School in Innovation and Entrepreneurship did just this by taking 44 students on a learning journey from Paris via London to Zurich.

The result? Through a business plan competition in which all students participated, two project groups have been awarded seed funding. One of these groups, DeCo! has been developing significantly and has started harvesting the first fruits of its work by winning the international SEED Award 2010.

2010 EUROPEAN SUMMER SCHOOL IN INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Dozens of young entrepreneurs from across Europe became the first-ever graduates of a novel course showing how to develop innovative solutions for tackling climate change that are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

During this first Climate-KIC summer school, the students learned about the many facets of mitigating and adapting to climate change and in particular, how to make a business case

“With the backing of the EIT, the most reputable European universities like Imperial College London and ETH Zurich as well as major corporate partners like SAP, Shell, Cisco and Bayer, the summer school is the perfect accelerator for your career and provides a valuable network of academic and business contacts.”

Tobias Münch, SAP Research Centre Dresden, SAP AG.

“Being around this wonderful group of bright, creative and energetic minds for six weeks in this well selected and organized ‘breeding ground experiment’ uplifted and strengthened my entrepreneurial spirit. I quit my current job to pursue my own projects now...”

Niels Lehmann, ETH Zurich, Switzerland.

from it by learning from corporate, academic and public world representatives.

At their home institutions and companies, the scholars studied environmental or climate sciences, engineering, supply chain logistics, sustainable development, business, marketing or investment: a portfolio of disciplines as diverse as the challenges of climate change.

The entrepreneurial focus of the summer school centred on the elaboration of ideas for innovations in the Climate-KICs four programmatic areas: 1) assessing climate change and managing its drivers; 2) low-carbon production systems; 3) adaptive water management; 4) transitioning to resilient low-carbon cities.

On their learning journey, the students stayed for two weeks each at IPSL-ParisTech (France), Imperial College London (UK) and ETH Zurich (Switzerland), which host three of Climate-KIC's five European co-location centres (additional co-location centres: Delft, Netherlands and Berlin, Germany).

DECO! STUDENTS' INNOVATION PROJECT HELPS SUB-SAHARAN FARMERS FERTILIZE THEIR SOIL

DeCo!'s foundation was laid as early as in 2008, when Christoph Schmitz first travelled to Tamale, Northern Region. Christoph had come to Ghana to conduct research for his Master's thesis at the Wageningen University and Research Centre in the field of land use economics and by chance, met Yakubu Inusah and Ibrahim Amadu.

All three knew about the imminent problem farmers faced in the Northern Region: soil degradation caused by an insufficient amount of organic matter and nutrients in the soil. Christoph, Yakubu and Ibrahim wanted to do something about it and laid the foundation for DeCo!.



Together with local partners and stakeholders, DeCo! team members examine the quality of Tamale's municipal waste for use in the DeCo! plant. [Photo source: ©DeCo! 2011]

DECO! AND THE CLIMATE-KIC SUMMER SCHOOL

"I need people to help develop a sustainable agriculture project in Ghana," said Christoph, "Who is interested?"

(Paris, summer 2010).

The project pitches at the first Climate-KIC summer school led to lively discussions on innovative climate technologies and services. Everybody was advocating for his or her own idea, or was trying to join another participant's project team: "I would

like to contribute", "Would you need somebody with an engineering background?", etc. Creative and energetic discussions, many people talking at the same time, experts for every field: a few hours later, DeCo! was born.

Since shaping its business plan during the 2010 Climate-KIC Summer school, DeCo! has developed significantly and has started harvesting the first fruits of its work by winning the international SEED Award 2010.

DECO! THE ROAD AHEAD...

For achieving its ambitious goals, DeCo! counts on the great support of several important players. The Climate-KIC team and later also the SEED initiative through Adelphi have provided coaching helped significantly in developing the business, including its strategy, finance and execution plan, and in creating a company. They always lend an ear to DeCo! when new chal-

lenges are encountered along the way and are still actively involved in the further development of the social business.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

on Climate-KIC:

www.climate-kic.org

on DeCo!:

www.deco-farming.com

on the EIT:

www.eit.europa.eu



The DeCo! team winning the 2010 SEED Award [Photo source: ©DeCo! 2011]

DeCo! works and collaborates closely with a range of local Ghanaian partners to improve the compost and its potential as fertiliser. In 2010, DeCo! was also able to secure a grant from GIZ, the German Technical Cooperation.

With the help of the Climate-KIC team, DeCo! is currently looking for private partners who would like to support it financially by means of a Public Private Partnership. GIZ is its public partner and will contribute half of the requested subsidy. With this subsidy, DeCo! plans to build a research and demonstration plant close to Tamale in order to spread DeCo! knowledge and experiences.