

Sustainable Future: Insights from Global Entrepreneurship Week in Zwolle

3.12.2024

A Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) is an innovative educational format that combines both online and physical learning experiences. Overall, BIPs provide a flexible and engaging way for students to enhance their education while gaining valuable international experience. They are part of initiatives like the Erasmus+ Programme, which aims to promote mobility and cooperation in higher education across Europe and beyond.

We took a five-day trip to Zwolle, Netherlands, on November 11th-15th 2024, with one teacher and three students from SeAMK. Before the live week, we had online week where the students got to know each other and already familiarized with the tools and software, like Triple Connection Game, that were used in the actual live week.

This five-day journey was centered around the Global Entrepreneurship Week at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences, where we engaged in a unique learning program designed to enhance student's understanding of sustainable entrepreneurship. It was an enriching experience as part of a collaborative initiative with various universities of applied sciences, including SeAMK, GEA College (Slovenia), Thomas More Kempen Campus Turnhout (Belgium) and VAMK (Finland).

With around 20 nationalities represented among the students, the program fostered a rich cultural exchange. This diversity enhanced collaborative efforts and broadened perspectives on global issues. The friendly competition within teams encouraged students to communicate effectively and prioritize goals, aligning with the program's focus on People, Planet and Prosperity.



Picture 1. Group picture of the students and staff during Global Entrepreneurship Week (Pic: Katri Juppi, 2024).

About the city of Zwolle & Windesheim University of Applied Sciences

Zwolle is an inspiring city located in the northeast region of the Netherlands, known for its relaxed ambiance and rich history. Just 1-2 hours away from major cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and Groningen, it offers a perfect blend of accessibility and charm. One of its most iconic landmarks is the Peperbus, a stunning church tower that stands as one of the tallest in the country. The city is adorned with historical buildings, winding lanes, quirky shops, and excellent restaurants, making it a delightful place to explore. (Internal data source, 10.9.2024.)

Windesheim University of Applied Sciences is recognized as one of the top three universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands. It is celebrated for its personal approach to education, small class sizes, and strong connections with the business community and public institutions. According to Elsevier, Windesheim ranks among the best Dutch universities of applied sciences, with students appreciating the quality of education, the expertise of the teaching staff, and the supportive learning environment. (Internal data source, 10.9.2024.)

The Triple Connection Game

A highlight of the trip was participating in the Triple Connection Game, an innovative serious game that challenged the students to develop sustainable strategies for a virtual chocolate milk manufacturer (Windesheim University of Applied Sciences, n.d.). Working in international teams, students had to balance profitability with sustainability, making critical decisions that impacted various aspects of the business. This hands-on approach not only deepened their understanding of life cycle assessment but also emphasized the interconnectedness of different fields and their influence on sustainability.

During our stay, we participated in a mix of activities, including:

- Guest Lectures: Experts shared insights on sustainable entrepreneurship and innovative business practices.
- Field Trips: Visits to local companies provided real-world context to learning.
- Workshops: Interactive sessions allowed students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical scenarios.

Winning Team

There were in total of 9 teams competing of winning the game. I’m happy to announce that the winning team included our International Business student Dipawali Prasain! Together with four other students they managed to get the best outcome and for a prize they can participate to Global Student Challenge, where there will be students joining from all around the world competing with the Triple Connection Game.



Picture 2. Winning team of the Triple Connection Game (from the left: Joleen Diefenbaugh (VAMK), Dipawali Prasain (SeAMK), Steff Haesen (Thomas More), Sven Eilander (Windesheim), Sven Laubinger (THOWL) (Pic: Katri Juppi, 2024).

Conclusion

Completing this program equipped especially students, but us teachers also, with valuable skills and knowledge applicable to real-world challenges in sustainability. The program was a perfect blend of education, cultural exchange, and personal growth, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a dynamic and inspiring program.

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References

Windesheim University of Applied Sciences. (10.9.2024). *Information Booklet.* Retrieved 26.11.2024. Email.

Windesheim University of Applied Sciences. (n.d.) *Global Entrepreneurship Week.*

https://www.windesheim.com/study-programmes/blended-intensive-programmes/global-entrepreneurship-week