

Stronger Together - Micro-Entrepreneurs' Resilience Development in a Communal Training Space

Authors : Halonen

Abstract : Covid-19 pandemic and the succeeding crises have profoundly shaken the accustomed ways of interaction and thereby challenged the customary engagement patterns among entrepreneurs. Consequently, this has led to the experience of lack of collegial interaction for some. Networks and relationships are a crucial factor to strengthening resilience, being especially significant in non-ordinary times. This study aims to shed light on entrepreneurs' resilience development in and through entrepreneurs' communal and training space. The context for research is a communal training space in a municipality in Finland of which goal is to help entrepreneurs to experience of peer support and community as part of the "tribe" is strengthened, the entrepreneurs' well-being at work, resilience, ability to change, innovativeness and general life management is strengthened. This communal space is regarded as an example of a physical community of practice (CoP) of entrepreneurs. The research aims to highlight the importance of rediscovering the "new normal" communality as itself but as a key building block of resilience. The initial research questions of the study are: RQ1: What is the role of entrepreneurs' CoP and communal space in nurturing resilience development among them? RQ2: What positive entrepreneurial outcomes can be achieved through established CoP. The data will be gathered starting from the launch of the communality space in September 2023 onwards. It includes participatory observations of training gatherings, interviews with entrepreneurs and utilizes action research as the method. The author has an active role in participating and facilitating the development. The full paper will be finalized by the fall 2024. The idea of the new normal communality in a CoP among entrepreneurs is to be rediscovered due to its positive impact on entrepreneur's resilience and business success. The other implications of study can extend to wider entrepreneurial ecosystem and other key stakeholders. Especially emphasizing the potential of communality in CoP for fostering entrepreneurs' resilience and well-being ensuing business growth, community-driven entrepreneurship development and vitality of the case municipality.

Keywords : resilience, resilience development, communal space, community of practice (CoP)

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