

# Create Your Own Job – A Workshop to Kickstart Entrepreneurial Mindset and Mentorship of Rwandese Physiotherapists – a Danish/Rwandese collaboration

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## Background

The population of Rwanda is approximately 12.5 million people. Non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, neck and back pain increase in developing countries. Diseases are related to industrialization and urbanization, and due to Rwanda's positive development of society, new diseases follow. In 1996, a formal Physiotherapy program was established. Today 352 physiotherapists are registered and to date 96 (27,7%) are unemployed. In today's Rwanda, patients are most likely to meet a physiotherapist regarding orthopedic and neurological problems. Thus, there is an extensive need for innovations and physiotherapists to grow an entrepreneurial mindset to create jobs in new fields of physiotherapy.

## Purpose

The aim of this project was to inspire young Rwandese physiotherapists to define areas of interests for their professional lives, to guide first steps of action-taking towards realizing their ideas as well as to gain knowledge on the impact of on-line mentorship.

## Methods

Physiotherapists were informed by mail and social media to join a workshop. A 3-hour participant-centered workshop was facilitated by Danish entrepreneurship teacher in collaboration with two local physiotherapists. 11 physiotherapists participated: Four females and seven males. Data were collected through a self-reported questionnaire composed of closed and open-ended questions on evaluation of participants' expectations and perceived impact of the workshop. Response rate was 100 %. Online mentorship with facilitator was highlighted as a follow-up possibility.

## Results

The workshop content met the needs of participants. Participants expressed gains such as, awareness on network, inspiration to formulate and express their dream job and how to take a first step. Participants had a variety of dream jobs covering many aspects of physiotherapy. Participants expressed a need for further advice, support and mentorship. Important issues to further develop were stated by participants as: the importance of improving self-confidence, having role models, getting inspiration from successful entrepreneurs and sharing ideas related to finding and creating jobs. Key benefits perceived of mentorship were expressed in terms of exchanging ideas and knowledge, encouragement and to get 'how to' inspiration and advice for action-taking.

Two physiotherapists sought minor on-line mentorship on concrete aspects. A third physiotherapist was in the process of launching a company – and asked for further mentorship related to specific tasks. This physiotherapist was extensively mentored online for three months and launched a company on Continuous Professional Development in November 2017. To date the company have organized 43 courses with 1110 participants from allied health professions.

## Conclusion

There is a substantial need for carrying on activities focusing on enhancing innovative and entrepreneurial mindset, creating networks and promoting mentorship. Engaging activities are needed to promote Rwandese physiotherapists' future engagement in healthcare and to prevent physiotherapists from leaving the profession. Low-key and on-line mentorship is feasible.

## Implications

Mentorship can facilitate growth of an innovative and creative mindset among physiotherapists in Rwanda to expand their field of work, to stay in the profession and to make a living out of physiotherapy-related jobs.

## Funding

The project was funded as part of an Erasmus+ exchange program.

## Ethics approval

The project needs no ethical approval. Informed consent received.



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