



Past - Present - Future

# CREATIVES MEET INDUSTRY

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Implementation

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T4.3.2



Reporting Period 5



PP 10, Stebo



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## **Abstract**

*Creative entrepreneurship is relatively unknown or considered too risky by the local population (which was and often still is brought up with a typical blue-collar worker mind-set). Producing companies, on the other hand have difficulties in finding and attracting creative minds guiding them through this transition.*

*In order to counter this process Stebo has centralized the goal of fostering creative entrepreneurship within WP T4. In DT4.3.2 a Living Lab was set up for this purpose.*

*The main results of the 'Living Lab' are the boosted entrepreneurial initiatives which are rooted in the region's industrial culture. While going through an 'inspiration-learning-showcase' trajectory entrepreneurs have developed a new line of products - hereby combining traditional and modern (industrial) techniques. A dialogue between producing companies and creatives has also been setup, through which both ideas and skills are communicated at both sides, and seeds were planted for a closer cooperation. A cultural interplay between the creative and industrial sectors has as such been created.*

## 1. Project context

The InduCult2.0 partnership aims at reviving the cultural spirit of long-standing industrial regions in Central Europe. While capitalizing on the tangible and intangible cultural assets of the industrial past, present and future, regions mono-focused on industrial production are supported to position themselves as attractive places for a.o. working and living. The project set-up comprises regional partners from 8 Central European nations and two academic partners. For more information see also [www.inducult.eu](http://www.inducult.eu) or [www.facebook.com/Inducult2.0](https://www.facebook.com/Inducult2.0).

The creative community is a specific target of the InduCult2.0 project. Indeed, the transition towards Industry 4.0 has or is starting to emerge in the producing industry regions as well. In order to adapt to these developments, creative potentials based on the rich historic pioneering culture of peripheral industrial areas need to be stimulated. The partners engaging in thematic work package 4 have taken actions to locate that potential in their region, and to build up a creative community around it.

The action takes place in the project's workgroup T4, combining activities focused on improvement of interaction between producing industry and creative communities.

## 2. Introduction

Creative entrepreneurship is relatively unknown or considered too risky by the local population (which was and often still is brought up with a typical blue-collar worker mind-set). As a result non-metropolitan regions have difficulties in competing with their metropolitan counterparts, yet are forced anyway to make the transition to an Industry 4.0 environment. Producing companies, for example, have difficulties in finding and attracting creative minds guiding them through this transition.

In order to counter this process Stebo has centralized the goal of fostering creative entrepreneurship within WP T4. In DT4.3.2 a Living Lab was set up for this purpose.

The main results of the 'Living Lab' are the boosted entrepreneurial initiatives which are rooted in the region's industrial culture. While going through an 'inspiration-learning-showcase' trajectory entrepreneurs have developed a new line of products - hereby combining traditional and modern (industrial) techniques. A dialogue between producing companies and creatives has also been setup, through which both ideas and skills are communicated at both sides, and seeds were planted for a closer cooperation. A cultural interplay between the creative and industrial sectors has as such been created.

### 3. Approach: Living Lab

A 'living lab' is both a trajectory and a meeting place. It inspires and motivates local people to make the shift towards innovative intra- and entrepreneurship, building on the region's industrial DNA.

The industrial culture - as it is today and/or as it will be tomorrow - has been the underlying theme of the InduCult2.0 living lab.

#### 3.1 A three-phase trajectory

People were trained to make the shift towards creative intra- and entrepreneurship in 3 phases: 1) Inspiration, 2) Learning, 3) Show moment.

Inspiration was offered during two workshops, both hosted in The Box (a plug-and-play pop-up store set up by Stebo in the vicinity of the former mining site of Winterslag) (see also 4.1). The first interactive presentation was held by a local designer and focused on cooperation modalities with manufacturing companies for serial production of personalized objects. Financial and communication aspects emerging during such cooperation were highlighted during the second workshop by the designer's financial manager.

A smaller group of entrepreneurs - holding specific industry related profiles (see also 4.2) engaged into a learning phase. Some of them participated in a specific offer developed by Stebo, called Starterslabo / Start!.

The entrepreneurs also received a special training on the use of modern techniques (3D-printing, lasercutting, embroidering machine,...).

In a third phase regional creative entrepreneurs with the ambition to start serial production, were invited to pitch their products to a group of manufacturing companies. The companies were looking for new products as well as creative minds enabling the transition towards Industry4.0.



#### 3.2 A story of cooperation

Working on actions to enhance the relationship between creatives and industry, Stebo has reinforced and broadened its relationship with existing stakeholders. During the three phase trajectory cooperation with the following organizations has been key:

##### Objet Portrait

Objet Portrait is one of the projects of Roel Vandebek, in which personal objects based on the personality traits and habits of Flemish public people were created. Some of these products were produced in series by manufacturing companies. Roel Vandebek therefore embodies the idea of 'Creatives meeting industry'. For that particular reason he was invited to act as 'inspirer' in the first phase of the trajectory (see also 4.1).

## MIA-H (and other incubators)

MIA-H stands for fashion and accessories incubator and offers a set of modern machines/technologies to be used (3D-printer, lasercutter, embroidery,...). It is one of the chains in the Limburg incubator network. As much as it is an expertise center, it is also a meeting place for creative people. It was against this setting, and with the professional guidance of the MIA-H counselors that the ideas of the entrepreneurs were turned into actual InduCult2.0 products during the learning phase.



## Starterslabo - Start! / AZO!

Starterslabo supports unemployed people with a valuable business idea. They are coached in order to prepare them to undertake entrepreneurial activities and to increase the survival chances of their business. This programme also offers financial security, so the risk factors of becoming self-employed are eliminated. Start! offers the opportunity to create and to evaluate your business plan. During a series of workshops participants are taught how to make up their business plan so they are able to evaluate whether or not their businesses are ready for a start-up.

A large network of local creative entrepreneurs is available at Starterslabo and AZO!. As such the creative potential present in the region was already largely charted and could be easily invited to participate in the workshops via several communication channels (Facebook event, personal invitation - digital and physical). Also a number of entrepreneurs participating in one of these offers, has had the chance to focus specifically on the link between their products and Industrial Culture, with the professional help of the counselors on how to make a business out of it.

## The Box Vlaanderen



The Box is an initiative developed by Stebo in Genk (province of Limburg). It is currently spread out in the other Belgian provinces, under the auspices of Stebo. As such, a chain of boxes was created.

The Box Genk is situated in the Vennestraat, a former merchant street of the Winterslag Mine. Through its location it is strongly linked to the industrial past and its heritage community, but to the industrial future as well. C-mine, located only a few tens of meters from the Vennestraat, is turned into a cultural hotspot where creative economy has earned its place (creative entrepreneurship and education are present at the site). The neighboring garden city of Winterslag is still populated by ex-miners and/or their families.

The Box was set up in close cooperation with the municipality of Genk, in order to bring back the vibrant atmosphere that used to typify the mining merchant street. It can be used by creative entrepreneurs to present their products to a large audience, for a maximum three-months stay.

Both workshops, the meet and greet and the show moment were organized at The Box Genk, as such emphasizing the link between the region's industrial signature and its creative entrepreneurship

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Inspiration

#### Workshop 1: Roel Vandebeek



As no other Roel Vandebeek is experienced in cooperation with manufacturing industries. In his portfolio numerous examples of designs being adopted by or sold to companies. At the same time he is able to safeguard the authenticity of his products, a quest which many creative entrepreneurs are still struggling with. Companies are also keen on cooperation when it comes to product design as a competence, asking Roel Vandebeek to develop innovative items. In 2018, for example, he won the Henry van de Velde Award in the category 'Efficiency' with his design 'Dubio' - a special type of brick combining aesthetics and durability.

During the workshop Roel shared how he has grown into this role, and how he convinces companies of his authentic designs and skills.

Participants went home with tons of advice for starting their business, and on how to approach companies. Elements they have used during the meet and greet with companies as part of the Living Lab (see also 4.3).

In total 13 people participated in the workshop.

#### Workshop 2: Koen Windmolders



As many other designers, Roel Vandebeek is mostly engaged in designing and creating. He soon came to realize that the financial and management aspects received less attention, yet should be equally important for his business. Therefore Koen Windmolders was hired as his financial manager and project communicator.

The creative entrepreneurs participating in the Living Lab are also facing the struggle of finding a balance between doing business and the creative process. During the second workshop Koen Windmolders offered valuable tips & tricks on these aspects. Topics ranged from financial management and budget control over contracts with companies and sponsors, and touched upon the importance of communication and marketing as well.

In total 10 people attended the workshop.

### 4.2 Learning

Five entrepreneurs were selected to participate in the learning phase which (for some) included guidance by Startserlabo/Start!. This part of the learning process was mostly applied during the showcase moment at The Box (see also 4.3).

They also received coaching at MIA-H on the use of new technologies. In the latter case there has also been peer-to-peer training by creative entrepreneurs who were already experienced in the use of these machines (e.g. 3D-printing). In total 5 man-days were spent at MIA-H. A new line of InduCult2.0 products, connected to the industrial character and culture of the Limburg region, is the result of this part of the learning process on design and techniques.



## Participants

Each of the participants responded to one or more of the following criteria set by Stebo when initiating the Living Lab, and meeting the objectives defined in the InduCult T4 work package:

### PROFILE

- Connected to Industrial Design, namely entrepreneurs with the ambition to have their products produced in series by industrial companies;

and/or

- Working with new/old technologies and especially mixing craftsmanship with innovative design techniques;

and/or

- Working according to circular principles which are at the basis of new consumption and business models emerging in the Industry 4.0 context. Circular design e.g. centralizes maximizing of the re-usability of products and minimizing impairment and depreciation. The focus on sustainability is further translated in the creation process (rethinking production systems, smart designs, disassemblability in function of the ability to repair and replace product parts,...) and in the quest for capturing product value (reusability, recycling, prolonging of lifecycles,...).

and / or

- Having a thematic relevance related to regional Industrial Culture.





## DESIGNERS



**Katja Noelmans (left)** - is specialized in 3D printed objects with a focus on jewellery.

**Sofie Hermans (right)** - specialized in textile production with a special interest in print designs. One of her print lines is based on the former coal mines of Genk.

**Kathleen Bessemans (left)** - produces ceramics and porcelain objects, thematically related to the former mining industry of the province of Limburg.

**Leen van de Wouwer (right)**- combines different materials and techniques in her designs (glass, metal, ceramics, synthetic materials). She is specialized in translating personal (life) stories into personalized designs.



**Julie Vandeboren - Pōur** is a design and product development brand that RE-harvests raw materials to create new circular products and applications. Pōur challenges the concept of waste. ('Redesigning the existing').

## Products

A new line of InduCult2.0 products has been designed by these entrepreneurs, while using old and new techniques (ceramics, embroidering, forging, laser cutting, 3D-printing,...). In a way they are handcrafted products produced with the most contemporary techniques. So, as much as they represent a co-creation and peer-learning process, they are rooted in the region's industrial past, present and future while combining authenticity with the possibility of serial production.

The products are based on two touristic routes. On the one hand there is the heritage route connecting the mining sites of the province, on the other there is the cycling network which is used by thousands of locals and tourists every year. Each of the entrepreneurs has set out its own route while connecting the present dots/locations with which they feel a strong connection, as inhabitants of the peri-urban industrialized region. As such each of the products carries the Industrial Culture signature of the individual designers, and yet they are all developed against the industrial background of the province of Limburg - be it jewellery, ceramics, bags,....

These creative products in other words meet industry, both thematically and technically.





### 4.3 Showcase - Meet & Greet

On November, 22th a meet & greet between creative entrepreneurs and producing companies was organized.

The participating entrepreneurs were mostly interested in getting some contacts in the industrial sector as they find it very difficult to approach companies that might be interested in producing their products. The meet & greet was therefore both a networking moment, but also a 'pitch' exercise. Each entrepreneur was offered the opportunity to do a five minutes pitch with multiple companies who provided them with valuable feedback. They received advise on the (financial) feasibility, efficiency (circular design) and market demands.

Producing companies on the other hand were looking for creative minds and fresh, innovative ideas. Some of the entrepreneurs have expressed their ambition to become part of the company staff as a designer. Numerous follow-up meetings have been planned, as reported by the participants.

In total 17 people participated in the meet & greet, with 11 entrepreneurs and 6 companies. All entrepreneurs had also joined the previous workshops given by Roel Vandebeek and Koen Windmolders, and included the 5 creatives who had designed the new product line. A diverse set of companies was represented ranging from industrial textile printing (Print City), over woodworks (Polidore), product development and manufacturing (Cuthings), to 3D-printing (Formando) and creative hubs (Mamzel). The participants were also able to meet up with a representative from a sheltered employment company (BEWEL).

At least 6 new cooperation agreements were made along with 3 appointments to do a test production. Also one company was interested in offering freelance assignments to one of the entrepreneurs, and a new pop-up location for the InduCult2.0 product line - at that time present in The Box- has been arranged.



## 5. Evaluation

Bringing companies and creative entrepreneurs closer together has been the red thread running through the three phases of the Living Lab. There has been a lot of interproject learning on the topic. In the InduCult2.0 workgroups which gathered during the partnership meetings we presented our ideas to other participating partners and integrated new ideas into the initial concept. In that aspect answers on finding the balance between authenticity and serial production, and looking for a better understanding of the needs (and therefore mindset and way of acting) of both companies and creatives,...have taken cooperation between the two sectors to a next level. Yet there is still a certain threshold - both for starters and 'anciens' - when it comes to cont(r)acting.

Limburg companies have had the chance to get acquainted with the creative potential present in the region, while entrepreneurs were stimulated to work on the industrial past-present-future. The new product line - the result of using many modern and traditional - technologies was presented to the large audience and has succeeded to create awareness at the level of the Limburg population.

Working on actions to enhance the relationship between creatives and industry, has also reinforced Stebo's relationship with existing stakeholders and enabled us to broaden our network with new companies and support organizations active in the industrial sector. Peering with other partners participating in the InduCult project has proven very valuable regarding tools for matching creative entrepreneurs with companies (e.g. Pantopicon Antwerp, Creative Camp methodology elaborated by the POLITECNICO OF MILANO). Also, a delegation from the Zwickau region (Germany) visited The Box in June 2018 and has had the chance to hear the closing remarks of the second inspiration workshop, getting acquainted with the applied methodology.





## 6. Conclusion - Outlook and sustainability

Both entrepreneurs and companies have addressed their interest in participating in follow-up workshops and especially in meet and greets. We can state that a dialogue between the two parties has certainly been initiated and will be further facilitated by Stebo in the future. Many follow-up meetings between the two parties have been planned. The InduCult2.0 project has thus strongly contributed to bringing the creative potential of the region in closer contact with the industrial sector.

In that respect Stebo will keep expanding its stakeholder network, especially with producing companies and set up contacts between them and the Limburg creative community. We hope that this cross-over will lead to innovation and diversification of the economic basis.

## 7. Annexes

### Invitations

STEBO en STARTERSLABO nodigen u uit:



**Living Lab**  
*creatieve ondernemers en de maakindustrie:  
a perfect match?*

*"Hoe kan ik mijn met zorg ontworpen, unieke object in serie laten produceren zonder dat het aan authenticiteit verliest?"*

Het is een vraag waar veel creatieve ondernemers mee in aanraking komen. Of je nu een starter bent of een 'volleerd' ondernemer, het blijft een uitdaging om je product in grote aantallen te lanceren op de afzetmarkt.

**WORKSHOP 1**  
Roel Vandebeek  
Do. 17 mei - 20u00-22u00

Inschrijven

**WORKSHOP 2**  
Koen Windmolders  
Do. 7 juni - 20u00-22u00

Inschrijven

STEBO, STARTERSLABO en THE BOX nodigen u uit:



**Creatieve ondernemers en de maakindustrie: a perfect match!**

Plannen om je met zorg ontworpen producten te lanceren op de afzetmarkt?



**PITCH!**

Do. 22 november – 13u00-17u00 (incl. receptie)  
Locatie: The Box / Vennestraat 127, 3600 Genk



Wil je graag je producten voorstellen aan investeerders, bedrijven en expertisecentra? Of ben je benieuwd naar de samenwerkingsmogelijkheden met de sociale economie?

## Participant lists



Past - Present - Future



### Creatives meet Industry

#### Living Lab workshop 1 - Roel Vandebeek

List of participants

17 05 2018, 20:00 - 22:00

Name	Company	Signature
Hetalidis Iza	Steco	
Priemans Kim	STUDIO GEWOONZO	
Vreede Willems	DE Projects	
Dafja Nelman	Souveniers/Hapfalkhman	
Manette v Wiplich	Manette v Wiplich	
Xier Van de Waa	SJC	
Wout Van der haat	Wout Kooht	
Julia vanden Boen	Pour product	
Maarten Tronssers	Pour product	
Leinders Ron	Sticks & Bones	
Tran Tung	Simply Photography	



Past - Present - Future



### Creatives meet Industry

#### Living Lab workshop 1 - Koen Windmolders

List of participants

07 06 2018, 20:00 - 22:00

Name	Company	Signature
Hetalidis Iza	STECO	
Dafja Nelman	Souveniers/Hapfalkhman	
Eddy Leinders		
Marc Bogenhoff		
Kira v. Landschoot	vankira	K.v.L.
Ues Van de Waa	SJC	
Leinders Ron	Sticks & Bones	
Trung Tran	Simply Photography	
Maarten Tronssers	Pour	
Julia v/d Boen	Pour	





Past - Present - Future



### Living Lab Workshop 3 - Meet & Greet / Pitch

List of participants

22 11 2018, 13:00 - 17:00

Name	Business	Signature
Bessemans Kathleen	Catti	
Franssens Maarten	Polir	
Gouilleaume Stéphane	Black Hawk	Excused
Hermans Sofie	duoWonder / Sofie Hermans Textile and Surface Design	
Leinders Ron	Sticks & Bones	
Manshoven Sabine	Beelden Sabine Manshoven	Excused
Noelmans Katja	duoWonder / Souvenirs@katjanoelmans	
Peere Miek	Creatief Ontwerp Mode	Excused
Van de Wouwer Leen	SJIC	
van Landschoot Kira	Yankira	K.v.l.
Van Wijlick Mariëtte	Broderie d'Art - Couture - Design	
Verbruggen Isabelle	Breed	
De Clerck Hilde		

Name	Company	Signature
De Holiogne Jeroen	Polidore	
Hardy Kim	Mamzel	
Houben Robin	Formando	
Ketels Tom	BEWEL	
Martens Charly	Studio Mattes	Excused
Thys Jirky	Print City Textile	
Weckx Kristof	Cuthings	

### Relevant websites

#### Stakeholders:

[www.objetportrait.com](http://www.objetportrait.com)  
[www.mia-h.be/nl](http://www.mia-h.be/nl)  
[www.starterslabo.be](http://www.starterslabo.be)  
[www.theboxvlaanderen.be](http://www.theboxvlaanderen.be)

#### Entrepreneurs:

[www.katjanoelmans.com](http://www.katjanoelmans.com)  
[catti.be/en/gallery/](http://catti.be/en/gallery/)  
[www.sjic.be](http://www.sjic.be)  
[www.pourproduct.com/?lang=en](http://www.pourproduct.com/?lang=en)  
[www.sofierhermans.be](http://www.sofierhermans.be)

## Companies:

[www.formando.be](http://www.formando.be)

[www.polidore.be](http://www.polidore.be)

[www.cuthings.be](http://www.cuthings.be)

[www.printcity.be](http://www.printcity.be)

[www.bewel.be](http://www.bewel.be)

[www.mamzel.eu](http://www.mamzel.eu)