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The role of HEIs in supporting innovation in SMEs: university-based incubators and student internships as knowledge transfer tools



IKT 2014 Conference
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HEIs and SMEs: mutual benefits

- HEIs operate in increasingly competitive environment
 - Impact agenda in research evaluation
 - Concerns on graduate employability (Pegg et al.,2012)
- Both factors lead to increased engagement with businesses
- On the other hand, SMEs need access to external expertise in order to improve their competitiveness
- Science-based firms are more likely to engage with universities and research centres



University based incubators: towards effective clusters?

- Business incubators are a particular form of organisation that aims at developing clusters of connected businesses
- Firms' location affects their potential to identify and benefit from innovation opportunities (Cooper and Clark, 2008) even in a largely online world
- However, clusters developed through policy efforts not as successful as those developed organically (Parrilli, 2009)
- Science parks, technopoles and incubators/business hubs form part of the infrastructure that supports small business development (Boldrini et al., 2011)



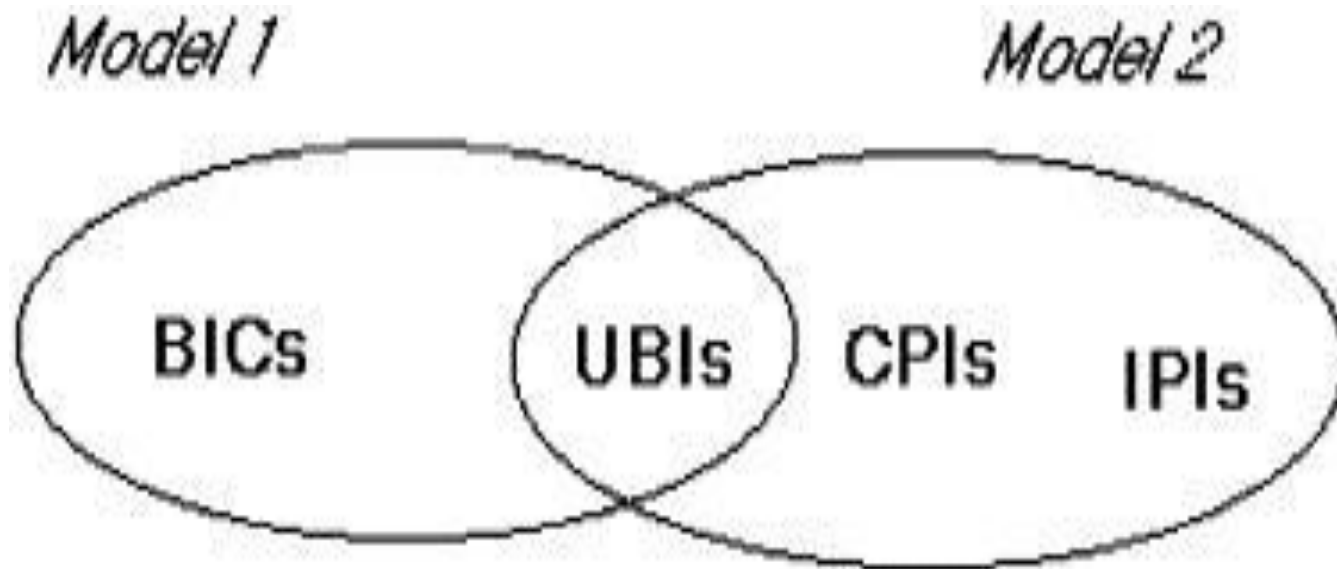
Types of incubating mechanism

- Business Innovation Centres: these are publicly funded centres that offer basic services to their tenants such as space, IT infrastructure and information about finance (BIS)
- **University Business Incubators (UBIs)**
- Independent Private Incubators (also known as accelerators-IPI): founded by individuals in order to support small businesses usually at the growth stage
- Corporate Private incubators (CPI): these are set up by large companies to support the emergence of corporate spin-offs



(Grimaldi and Grandi, 2005)

Models for University-based incubators



Two incubating models: Grimaldi and Grandi (2005, p.114)

Models for University-based incubators

- Both models focus on the role of incubators in new business development and commercialisation of academic research
- However, it can be argued that incubators can also have a pedagogical role in developing a curriculum for entrepreneurship

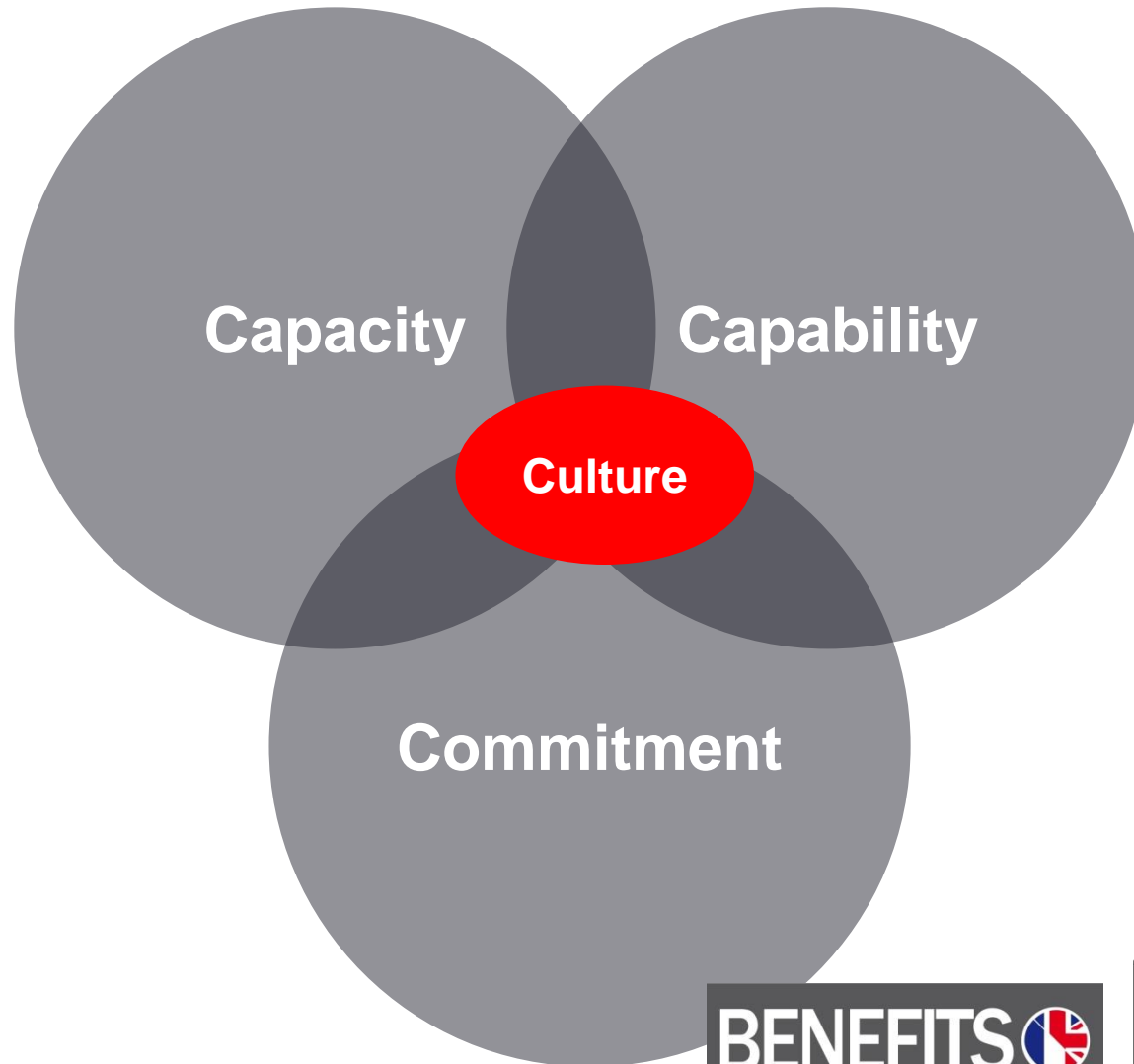


Staffordshire University Business Villages

- There are three locations for the business village in Stoke, Stafford and Lichfield hosting a total of 101 office units
- Staffordshire University Business Villages provides use of space and facilities to small firms: these services are linked to Model 1 of UBIs
- However, it can be argued that incubators are not solely a mechanism for knowledge transfer but they can also act as a *pedagogical tool*:
- They provide the opportunity to students and graduates to develop their entrepreneurial ideas in a more supportive environment



You need ...



Encouraging and nurturing entrepreneurship and innovation



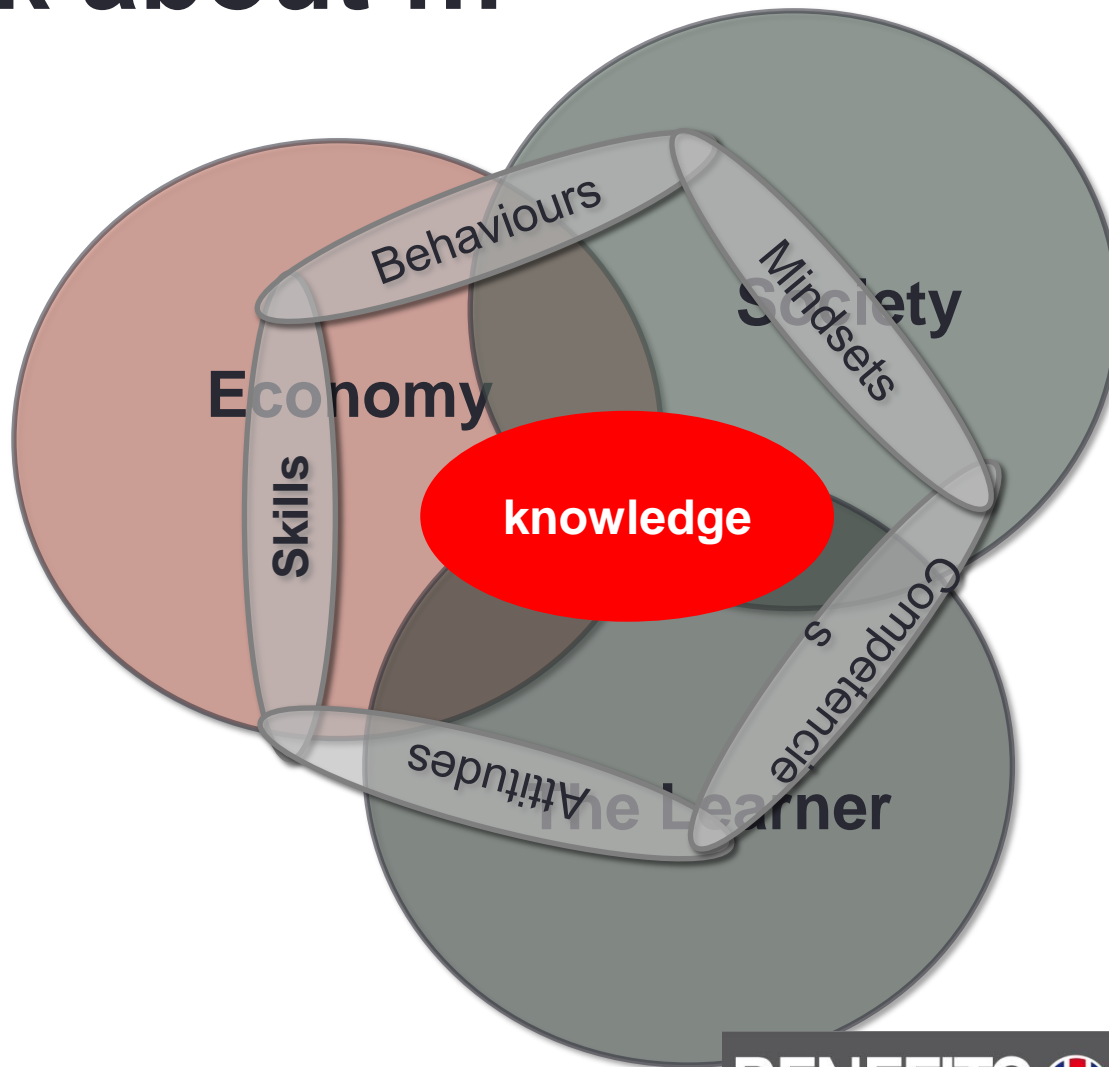
*It's the journey ...
not the
destination*



**Examples of
space
solutions**



Think about ...



Space alone is not enough

Examples of support solutions



UoG Business Ideas / Planning competition

UoG Social Enterprise Challenge

