

THE CREATIVE PLOT

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Based on interviews with Katarina Scott, Lars Mattiasson,
research reports, reports and other information

This was The Creative Plot

In late 2009, the City of Lund was in the running for becoming European Capital for Culture 2014. The bid was a consolidated effort by the several of the departments of the City of Lund to ensure a transversal, timely and thorough plan, with a focus on the innovative and entrepreneurial nature of the City, in particular within the cultural and creative sectors (CCS). Even though Lund did not succeed in its bid, the plans for how the city would invest in the development of its CCS remained, albeit in a more concentrated form. A pot of money was put aside to initiate an incubator, a place where cultural and creative organisations and companies could receive the training, coaching and connections necessary to grow their ideas into sustainable, thriving businesses. At the same time, it was a place for traditionally non-profit arts organisations to find ways of diversifying their financial models and develop their resilience in view of fluctuating financial support and a changing world. This was the start of The Creative Plot (TCP).

This document is an attempt to give an overview of TCP, its journey, its learning outcomes, its projects and ideas. It is a documentation of TPC organic nature and its fundamental principles, as told and experienced by its two main leaders 2018, Katarina Scott and Lars Mattiasson.

Starting TCP

From the outset it was Katarina Scott and Debora Voges from the Culture Department of Lund, who were given the task to start an incubator with a focus on CCS. The aim was to promote sustainability within the cultural area and offer some kind of support structure. A pot of money was set aside in the bid, which could now be put towards raising the professional level of culture organisations in the city of Lund. From the outset there was a passion for entrepreneurs and promoting entrepreneurial thinking within the CCS. The incubator idea in the ECOC application stood out as a good place to start and a draft for an incubator was presented to the culture department, which also garnered some support from the business department of the City. After several other fundraising efforts the initiative got support from Tillväxtverket as a part of the national Swedish investment in CCS together with the Region of Skåne starting to build the area of CCS..

The idea was structured in three parts:

1. to develop an incubator and position it within Ideon Innovation at the Ideon Science Park in Lund
2. to raise money for an Open Programme, to raise awareness of the initiative and offer activities and events while at the same time providing learning opportunities
3. to raise money for research together with the Copenhagen Business School (CBS)

At this point, towards the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2012, there was a need for an experienced project manager with solid entrepreneurial experience and a broad background in the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), which is when Lars Mattiasson joined TCP.

From the outset TCP was an organic, experimental entity. The approach was pragmatic, hands-on, relying on the experience, skills and connections that its creators brought to it: Katarina and Lars led the operational side, coaching, business development, and Debora led the research

side, which gave weight to the operational aspects of the organisation. Together as a team the three were building structures, testing ideas, methods and concepts, securing content.

A structure of four pillars, or founding principles, emerged, that underlined the work of TCP :

- **Cross- collaboration:** “find someone who is not like you in order to learn something new”
- **Co-entrepreneurship:** “we know how it feels when you get stuck, let’s solve it together”
- **Co-learning:** “you learn something with every start-up you work with, it’s key to development”
- **Mobility:** the eco-system of innovation in Sweden is kind of static. There was no flow of CCS ideas coming to the incubator. The approach was therefore to be mobile, scout ideas, connect them to the TCP network and scale them up.

TCP had just started scratching the surface. It became increasingly clear that everyone has an idea but most people do not know what an incubator is and what it can do for them.

TCP was not a solitary initiative. There were more projects that got funding from Tillväxtverket with a special focus on CCS. Transit, an incubator in Stockholm, has a focus on the artistic side and the ongoing question of not compromising on art is the core for them. Cred, based in Varberg, focuses on adapting business canvases to be more usable by artists. They produced really good templates, but were more focused on the art side of culture.

For TCP the approach was different. Given that all three team members of TCP came from sustainability, event, performing and fine arts fields, collaboration was at the heart of the TCP approach from the start. It was ingrained in all three that you should be more than one, not just the artist on their own, but focusing more on the artistic/cultural entrepreneur, which inevitably demands an ability to work with others.

New Kid at The Science Park

TCP was unique in its form and constellation, its mission and approach deemed unusual at the time, both from a CCS and traditional business perspectives. Being placed at the IDEON Science Park was not an immediate fit, in spite of being surrounded by institutions, banks and venture labs and capitalist firms, as well as the University of Lund. TCP were not business coaches that were known, they were brand new. It challenged the informal structures of the entrepreneurial and incubator area, where there is a recruitment process and a relocation of many of the same people within the system. One needs to be introduced by someone, be brought in by someone. But TCP came from nowhere with something new that wasn’t understandable. It was through the support of Per Persson, head of the business department at the city council, and Rickard Mosell, the head of IDEON Science Park, that TCP eventually was included and accepted as a credible entity with the potential of raising the profile of CCIs as viable investment opportunities.

During this first phase of TCPs history a trajectory and a mission emerged: to break in to the system. The stark reality was that the possibility of creating new resources was minimal, so the only option was to tap into already existing resources. In order to do that TCP had to make CCIs visible within the existing system.

The aim was therefore very pragmatic: open up and co-create with the others in the house, do things together and show what TCP can do, show the potential in the co-creation and what could potentially be done with joint forces. The long-term goal was that in ten years there will be no need for specific incubators for culture and creative business.

All the while the idea of cross-collaborations was at the forefront of TCP's approach towards its colleagues at IDEON. There was a fundamental belief that cross-collaboration creates the conditions for new ideas and innovations to appear. An idea is a network of neurons syncing. Everyone has bits and pieces of the puzzle, which, when moved around, re-puzzled and re-combined, lead to new solutions, approaches, methods and conditions on which innovative ideas thrive.

Breaking the cultural mold

TCP was not only an oddity in the business innovation world, it was also new to the culture sector. An early realisation was that TCP had to rephrase everything because one could not use pure business language and expect anyone from the CCS sector to actually pay attention. The language had to be adapted to the realities of the CCSs, then mixed with the business "lingo", whereby a new language emerged. This sometimes led to criticism from people who thought that TCP were simplifying things too much by not using pure business sector language.

But this could also go the other way. It is a reality that many people from the CCSs are not fond of using business jargon or anything business related which inevitably leads to a discussion of art vs business. There was also an initial suspicion, from the culture sector in particular, of a hidden agenda, something many other similar initiatives faced as well. TCP confronted this notion head-on by stating that The Creative Plot is not for everyone. TCP was for those who wanted to think and work in the TCP way, referring to the four principles mentioned above. It was optional to join but to do so was to accept that cross-collaboration and learning from each other is key to progress.

It became increasingly obvious that the attitude towards TCP also was a generational issue. Younger people active in CCS were less concerned with what they call themselves and had an easier time accepting that being an entrepreneur is a way of life. One can be a cultural worker, artist and entrepreneur at the same time. Sometimes art sometimes business. The older generation was more likely to be rigid in their self-definition, as it had been built into their identity as artists or cultural creators.

There are fundamental differences between the culture and business fields that needs to be highlighted. Culture has its own support system through public investment in the form of grants. This implies that one always aims for plus/minus zero, and is supposed to be running your operations as a not-for-profit organisation, which inevitably leads to project-thinking, with a start, a middle and an end. The entrepreneurial approach is that a company is supposed to live forever, growing and refining and re-doing. In culture one doesn't think in terms of investments, surplus or profit.

So how does one address these fundamental differences in structure and approach? What is the right side to be on? The TCP states: we want you to be sustainable. The level of sustainability would be negotiated with the whoever becomes part of TCP. Ultimately it was a matter of connecting with the fundamental mission of TCP: sustainability in the culture and creative sectors needs to be improved.

It was, and to a large extent still is, a reality that one can choose to be an entrepreneur or not, but in order to be one, one has to accept that there is no allocated money for cultural entrepreneurs. There are grants, public and private, but there is almost no money for investment or business development. At least there was no such money available when TCP started. This meant that if one came up with an idea that could grow and be made sustainable, there was no public support for businesses to sustain it. Today there is ongoing development in that field because of two reasons: almost everything today needs creative content, and the downfall of public money for culture in Europe overall has forced people to go in that direction, in order to survive. Today, 7 years later, there are specialised investors appearing on the scene, with the capacity to see the potential in CCSs. But the fundamental difference between grants and investment is that grants you are given, investments are paid back. Understanding this difference is a matter of education, training and approach.

TCP's approach to business development – be Part of the Plot

Cross-sectoral work implies diversity. Diversity means that one has to use a variety of languages in between different sectors and people. It's important to get people connected and find the kind of energy that exists inside this area, which is where innovation starts.

People often take things at face value, business canvases for example. Although they are undeniably useful, they do not take the process far enough. One can take all the required steps and still not make the company take off. The Startup Lean Methodology, despite being scientifically supported, does not take the "soft" aspects into account. Business development methodologies often omit the human factor and do not take into account that one is working with human beings. TCP mixed different methodological tools and approaches to create its own, where human values are valued.

Practicing Value-driven Development and Entrepreneurship

TCP used values of individuals, teams and organization to create a filter through which one created rules, decisions and priorities and how relations would be nurtured - be it public, private or civil organizations. The thesis was simple: Values are the driving force of people. To create a value foundation TCP used a Swedish scientific interactive tool, Valuesonline, for personal value mapping (see value.se). Through specific storytelling and workshop methods one can share an understanding of what is important. This is the value foundation that is then transferred into teams and organizations. The entrepreneurial value method was developed within The Creative Plot to tackle the problem within entrepreneurial teams. One of the most common reasons why start-ups, projects and SME:s fail is due to the inability of teams to join forces or stay together. Value methods create trust and focus, clarify goals and what is important for the team and the team members individually. Applying value thinking also in relation to users, partners, and customers also makes it easier to explore their personal driving forces (drivers) and priorities. This is extremely important within city development when one seeks participation and co-ownership. Values are often a very important foundation and drive within culture, social entrepreneurship, cleantech and other sustainable businesses areas.

It was clear to the TCP team from the start that value-driven entrepreneurship was key to its approach, but there was a need to develop a framework because it was not commonplace. There was a need to have it done within the team itself, as they felt the limitation of what had been done previously and seeing what it takes to make things work one could see that what

was needed was a way to adapt things, to develop a proper framing so that everyone could understand where it all starts from.

However, this is not a static model. Once one understands and accepts the framework one has to start adapting it as needs change and evolve. From that moment on one starts to add, co-create, reshape etc.

Coming out of the Barcamper tour end the end of 2017 (see below for more information on Barcamper), it was important to stress that TCP had a research dimension as well. However, it focused on the learning process for the participants, not on the product. It looked at their movement and the building of an entrepreneurial identity, because there is very little research done on this aspect to date. CCS do not acknowledge the identity as entrepreneurial, which was what TCP needed to foster by building models for value-driven entrepreneurship and value-driven innovation. Ultimately it is a matter of using tools and methods based on scientific models that goes one step further back from asking Why? Why is this “why” here? What is driving you? Whether it is culture, social entrepreneurship, green or clean or blue, there is an assumption that there is a value-driven base that starts the whole process. It is there with every entrepreneur at large, but it is even better articulated or permitted within the CCS. However, money is not. If one wants someone to become an entrepreneur one needs to say that it is ok to be an entrepreneur. TCP does not claim credit for every successful entrepreneur that has passed through its doors, but there are enough indicators between them that show the value of nurturing the skills and drivers that make people grow into whatever they want.

Fostering cross-collaboration and co-learning

By practicing the four founding principles, the TCP team acknowledged that its purpose was not to be all-knowing and experts at everything related to business development of CCIs. There was never an assumption of knowing it all. Given the extensive experience of the team of having worked both in and out of CCIs for many years, the focus was rather on finding the right experts for the challenges or topics at hand. So, if what was needed was someone who was good with film they would call someone who has that particular expertise and connect with that person. The role of TCP evolved to being more of a curator rather than being the experts, de facto practicing the principle of co-learning along the way.

Curating also implies other things. The TCP team decided to make a new process where one would apply to take part in TCP and applicants would be accepted in batches, making them sit and talk to each other in order to create a team, a group, some sort of connection between the entrepreneurs. This was based on the assumption that a) TCP did not know everything, and b) the applicants are already skilled people. The co-learning between them needed to be there from the start. It followed then that TCP’s task was therefore both to create and curate the meeting of the entrepreneurs between the sectors. The synergies that emerged were positive and often unexpected. For instance, a really young designer making jeans met with a company wanting to start a new theatre, and through this meeting they learnt how to work together, joining each other’s movements, applying the values of one to the business of the other. Suddenly they were swapping ideas and methods and approaches, because there is a big difference between design and theatre. The results were beneficial to both and it cemented them as collaborators. The TCP’s approach therefore was always to use the participating entrepreneurs to teach each other and co-learn from each other’s experiences. Hence becoming Part of the Plot.

Different steps for TCP

An interesting aspect of TCP was that it went through the same process as anyone who starts a business, but it was done within the structure of the City of Lund, simply because the support was needed. The whole premise from the beginning was if one wants to have sustainability within CCS one needs to create something new because there is no new money coming in. It was not too far to say that there was a combination of need and curiosity that underlined TCP. The TCP's aim became to co-create small "test beds" to showcase the value of presenting new things that had not been seen before and inviting change-makers from the other side who could be the bearers of something new. It was a pragmatic way of seeing every way in which something can happen at any given moment.

One of the difficulties of creating something unknown like TCP within the municipality was the fact that the TCP team did not have full mandate over the project as a whole. That meant that the construction, resources and legal structure often obstructed its growth as a start-up in itself. TCP was part of public service, it was not owned by the team. However, the learning outcomes, the experiences and the progress belongs to TCP. What was fairly unusual for such an initiative was its organic, experimental nature where learning by doing, self-reflection and constant evaluation shaped whatever steps to be taken next. This freedom is rare within a municipality, but greatly appreciated by the TCP.

After the initial phase of establishing TCP, with its three areas of focus and its funding from several public sources, a shift came. The funding from Tillväxtverket came to an end. The city took over the organisation and shifted its focus from a research and developmental approach to a stronger focus on stabilisation, coaching and incubation. This meant changes in the team itself and a regrouping of resources and competences and TCP needed to take stock and plan its next steps. New tasks were added, such as coaching the recipients of the special social entrepreneurship grants that the City gave out, which included coaching by the TCP to maximise the impact of the grant. TCP was also brought closer to the innovation platform Future By Lund and its connection to the culture department was diminished.

There was also a feeling of inadequacy within the incubation structure. The normal approach is to focus on the end product and not the process, which can lead to failure should such an end product not materialise. An important part of an incubator is the alumni. They are called that because the two years of incubation have ended but their venture has not. Very often entrepreneurs get stuck in a loop where they move from incubator to incubator, often tied to set spaces where one pays rent to access the services, but without the long-term value-based thinking that is required for a company to scale up. Sustainability is a long journey with ups and downs. TCP looked at the business canvas in a new way, focusing on the sustainable part, the environment, the social impact of what one does, beside the money.

There is an increasing acknowledgment within the world of venture capitalism and business investment of the importance of social and environmental impact of investment. There is a solid interest today, where it is common knowledge that when one talks about smart cities one has to include CCSs as fundamental components. It is no longer enough with technology. One has to take the human factor into consideration as well. The social impact of businesses is therefore extremely important. The tone has been set by one of the biggest venture capitalist

firms in the world, the Black Rock Foundation, which states that this is the only way to invest in sustainable business in the future.

In order for this shift to happen in earnest, TCP believes that it all starts with what kind of entrepreneurs you shape and what kind of entrepreneurship you promote. A basic premise is that one has to like people! One has to nurture the human behind the idea in order for the idea to grow into its full potential. Part of TCP's success was due to the fact that everyone in the team was driven by the need to see others succeed. Building trust, strong relationships and networks is key to developing value-driven, sustainable businesses, be they within the CCS or outside. One walks the extra mile and tries to change something for someone. Satisfaction comes from the fact that one has contributed to their success. That included anyone connected to TCP. Empowerment, help to self-help, support and honest engagement are fundamental values. Entrepreneurs teach themselves. They can be coached, of course, but the coaching focuses on them teaching themselves what they need to find within themselves to reach their goals. Not everything can be taught. One has to also account for timing and interest.

Examining the KPIs

One important realisation throughout the development and establishment of TCP has been the bluntness of the current KPIs. When it comes to measuring success the KPIs applied in today's business environment fail to take into account indicators typically prevalent within the CCIs. There is a shift happening, not least since big players such as Black Rock state it clearly that the last line of the current KPIs are no longer adequate. However, it still poses the question: how does one measure success when working with start-ups in the CCIs?

There are, of course, the regular measurements:

1. How many are interested in using TCP? At its peak in terms of funding (it has had more or less funding along the way) TCP was approached by between 50-80 at its lowest and up to 125 ideas/projects and people every year, without an advertising budget.

TCP has supported between 5-20 organisations or already existing projects within culture each year. Up until 2018 it has had at least 3-5 existing companies up and running within the incubator at the science park and they have also been running special projects that have given TCP the possibility of launching concepts and try out specialities within different areas.

There is a huge potential at the moment of creating new business models because, the game will be based on what is measured. What one measures from an incubator is how many people pass through with their startups within a given period of time. If the incubators are changing their modes of funding and their business model they will also change indicators and models of measurement as well. Today everyone counts every start-up in four innovation incubators. It follows then that if you have a different ecosystem for incubators in Sweden there will also be different measurements of what constitutes success. For instance, one could imagine if it was possible to take a stake in a company and be paid off like a crowd-funding campaign (see below for more details on how TCP worked with crowdfunding). One would have a base for funding and then a stake in the company, or some other way that one can actually collaborate with business end users so that they have stakes in the company. The incubator would then take care of the business development to secure the investment. That could be a more honest setup because the advice given would be more accurate, because the incubator would have something to lose if it does not do it right. In today's system there is very little risk or

responsibility involved as a business coach or incubator. Start-ups can get hundreds of pieces of advice going to a hundred places. There are no measurements of the quality of the coaching. There is no evaluation or check-up on coaches and given that entrepreneurs tend to move between incubators it is difficult to assess if one is doing a good job or not. Basically start-ups can be moving around the incubation system, occupied within the system, rather than with their company. This maintains the current incubation system and it can calculate one start-up several times in their own KPI and no one is the wiser. Another interesting aspect of the current system is that the whole innovation system in Sweden, with over 40 incubators/accelerators, attracts and evaluates around 4000 ideas every year. However, that is divided over a substantial amount of people. The combined time available at TCP has been one full-time person, with some periodic variations. This meant that the TCP team was twice as effective if you compare to how ideas are evaluated through the normal system. TCP was arguably five times more efficient in scouting and finding ideas. Seen from this perspective its KPIs are strong.

There was a 50/50 participation rate between women and men. There was a higher percentage of people who have never been involved with entrepreneurship.

One short-coming initially was that the organic process of TCP's development made evaluation and research difficult. However, this changed with the study provided by CBS and the inclusion of research in major projects, such as Barcamper (see below for more information on this project).

An important aspect of practicing the TCP way of value-driven entrepreneurship was transferring the courage of letting an idea go. Although all ideas are worth examining, there are key elements that need to be there for the idea to grow and the entrepreneur with it. One cannot survive without the other. Sometimes one reaches a dead-end, the idea is not taking off, the cost of holding on to it is greater than the benefits. The idea can be too closed, difficult or impossible to share with others for whatever reason. This can be acceptable when it comes to art, but in business it almost guarantees that the idea needs to be closed down. TCP created an environment where *closing down an idea is not something negative and shameful, but an opportunity to learn and evolve*. This attitude towards learning from "failed" ideas was fundamental to TCP itself, as has been demonstrated through a number of projects below. The key was to always look at the value-chain, always go back to the values that drive the person behind the idea, in order to find the truth, the drive and the commitment for growth.

The never-ending learning

The key to understanding TCP as a concept, as an entity, is to place learning at the heart of any idea, project or initiative. TCP was not focused on building structures. Its primary concern was to address whatever issues, challenges or needs its entrepreneurs face in their personal and professional growth. In such iterative processes, where agility is a prerequisite, there will always be a learning curve. Growth happens by practicing what one preaches, and learning from the outcomes, which can be unexpected. TCP safe-guarded the unpredictable nature of its existence in order to be able to respond to the needs of their entrepreneurs in as flexible and immediate way as possible. It follows then that there was no division between TCP as an entity and the entrepreneurs. It is the four principles of cross-collaboration, co-creation, co-learning and mobility put into practice, one new concept, event or project at a time.

This fluidity in this approach where not without its challenges. Working in this manner, being responsive and in tune with the fluctuations of the CCSs and the constant emergence of needs and synergies, made it difficult to fit within the existing systems and structures. The very nature of the initial financial structure made it difficult to explain to the public funders what the exact KPIs would be, what targets would be met and what kind of impact could be expected. When one puts mutual learning at the core of any endeavour there will always be an element of unpredictability, which public institutions both within business development and the CCS can find hard to relate to. However, the consistency of TCPs approach, its insistence on putting themselves in the shoes of their entrepreneurs and constantly examining their methods and approaches, have paid off. The particular nature of CCIs and the need for new perspectives and methodologies in order to empower and nurture them was now gaining traction within the more traditional business development and incubation areas. It is no longer odd to include CCIs in urban planning, sustainable development strategies and long-term investment for smart cities, and even though TCP cannot claim credit for this shift, it can certainly claim its place as a contributor.

Milestones

During the course of the past seven years, TCP kept its pragmatic approach to its mission through a number of projects. An extensive list and detailed information may be found in the annexes of this document. However, it is worth emphasising a few milestones that illustrate how TCP walked the talk. The formula is simple enough:

1. What is the need?
2. How can we address it?
3. Did we achieve what we wanted?
4. What have we learnt that will allow us to do better in the future?

A first such milestone worth mentioning is from the very start of TCP, in its initial phase. The first real need that emerged within the CCS is the need for investment and for funds. As already mentioned, funding for business ventures and ideas within CCS were virtually non-existent, TCP did its research and teamed up with a crowdfunding initiative, Funded by Me, which was also a new player on the Swedish business scene. Crowdfunding had been established internationally for a few years, through sites such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo, but it was still largely unexplored in Sweden. TCP connected with the initiators of these crowdfunding platforms and created a series of events and activities where entrepreneurs from the CCS as well as venture labs, banks, institutions and other services inside the Ideon Science Park could join. This approach to putting potential stakeholders in a room and connecting them with experts within a given field achieved several things:

1. It exposed the entrepreneurs to experts and opportunities for raising funds
2. It invited other players inside Ideon to learn more about the ideas that existed
3. It helped establish a new crowd-funding platform in Sweden
4. It created an environment of sharing and exchanging perspectives and ideas, both locally and internationally
5. It revealed a new need:

During the series of events and networking opportunities it became clear that in order for any crowdfunding campaign to be successful, it needs to be visually appealing and of a high creative quality. This in turn begs the question who is most qualified to provide content of such

standard? The answer was filmmakers in the region, who in themselves were a natural part of TCP's target group. By engaging them in providing high-quality campaign films TCP met the need of the entrepreneurs seeking crowdfunding, among them filmmakers themselves, whilst creating assignments that provided valuable experience and exposure. This is a classic example of TCP's way of operating: If there is a gap to be filled, a need to be met, then there is something new to be learnt, an issue to be solved, which in turn leads to new opportunities for filling gaps, finding solutions, and keep on learning.

The methodology in this was also created from need, in this case the lack of resources. TCP created a way of working both because they enjoyed it but also because of limited resources. How does one maximise the resources available? The answer was simple: one does not do anything someone else is good at!

However, in order to be able to work like this, one has to prefer to do things with others. You always have to share your resources, time or learnings because it is an efficient way of working, and if someone else can learn from it then the only thing you ask is if they can give something back, if not to you then give to someone else. So this was the fundamental TCP rule of engagement: you have to participate and contribute with something. The TCP will facilitate, curate, connect and initiate. But it would not do the work FOR anyone. It was always a matter of "help to self-help", which led to empowerment and confidence in the entrepreneurs.

Other projects worth highlighting are Phase2Face, Southern Sweden Creatives, Barcamper and Creative Lenses, who all illustrate important learnings while at the same time providing direction for the next phase of development.

Phase2Face was an attempt to build brands around sports personalities, personal brands and individual performers that were coming to the end of their athletic or cultural careers. The basic premise was whether the entrepreneurial route could be a possible way to go where both the TCP's experience and the persons brand could be a kickstart towards an accelerated process? It was tested on high level personalities who have already made the transition successfully. However, there were fundamental obstacles for the project to be successful, some really difficult areas that could not be addressed. One of the most important ones was the realisation that many of especially the athletes are true individualists. They are not largely interested of building teams, which, as we have established, was a fundamental principle for working with TCP. Another important lesson was that athletes' brands are intimately connected to large organisations, such as the Swedish Olympics Committee (SOC), which makes it problematic to start building a "future" brand when the current brand is still thriving and which the SOC claims rights to. Athletes are not in control over their own brand. By the time the athlete is ready to move on, they will probably have a strong profile already and one that is built around the individual, making it difficult, if not impossible, to open it up to external influence in the shape of a team, in the manner intended by TCP. As a project it was unsuccessful in its pursuit of its intended results. However, valuable lessons were derived from the experience, not least how important the four principles of the organisation are, and how fundamental the values are to TCP's raison d'être.

Southern Sweden Creatives (SSC) had a regional uptake between (2016-2018) funded by the European Regional Development Fund, through Tillväxtverket. The aim was to promote Swedish CCSs internationally by broadening their scope and connecting them to new markets.

TCP was invited into the project as experts on business development and to coach entrepreneurs. However, there was a big implication which was the value chain, remembering the Why? behind the why. TCP had grown its network, it knew how to work with a set of values based on trust and mutuality. Suddenly when stepped into a new area and expected to coach designers without any influence over screening or who was picked for the project and for what reason. The Why? behind the why was missing. The realisation in this example was that it simply was not doable to coach. There was very little coherence between the chosen companies, ranging from hobby designers to large corporations with several millions in turnover, and all expected to be included in the same process. The TCP was completely out of its framework and could not apply its principles of working. Added to that some of the project participants just wanted to work on their craft and were not interested in opening up to new influences, ideas and collaborations. "I don't want to grow!"

This experience, however, had an important outcome for TCP. It made them explore one thing that is problematic within the whole entrepreneurial area: the system itself needs entrepreneurs to showcase Sweden, how good they are in building networks and representing Sweden internationally. They are sent all over the world, and most of the time they have to pay for their participation at least in part out of their own pocket. In the end, they end up focusing on the wrong things, and this is taboo to talk about. During the years TCP has learnt themselves and then advised participants that you need to be careful and calculate what you are going to get out of your investment and participation. There is a problem between the branding perspective of being successful and the actual nitty-gritty work of running a business. Can you actually cope with international success for example getting many orders from a fair if you have now investments to cover cash flow for manufacturing. Or you are perhaps a designer who is selling to a company who then sells to customers and other business. When you go to a fair or promote your brand, you will only earn money when customers buy your stuff. You are doing the marketing, the branding, you are building the whole chain into the retailers' platforms. However, you still need to get paid for branding and you need to talk to the company and get more return on your investment, regardless of the size, because ultimately you as a designer are building relationships for your retailers. In SSC none of the designers that TCP talked to had that kind of kickback or support from the beneficiaries or sellers. This experience garnered several important learnings: firstly, you need to develop your business models as well as your craft or skills, and secondly, that veering off the value-driven course can have negative consequences for collaborations that do not share the same values.

The idea of being mobile, of finding people where they are, rather than expecting people to come to you, has been a principle for TCP from the start. Many incubators expect start-ups to be housed within their four walls as a part of their own business idea, whereas TCP believes in digging where you stand. The reasons are multiple: firstly, one tends to know their local context best, there are support systems and target groups to tap into. Secondly, the nature of CCSs means that not everyone has the possibility of coming to you. Thirdly, when resources are limited it is difficult to reach out broadly and really find those ideas that would not know where incubators are and how the system works. Mobility was also reflected in how TCP worked to constantly connect with new ideas, people and concepts. **Barcamper** was such an idea.

The **Barcamper** project stands out because of how it has crystallised what TCP really was about. The project derived from an initiative by an Italian venture capitalist who formed a firm, dPixel (see www.barcamper.it for more information) and backed up by a fund, travelled around various regions in Italy and abroad, scouting for innovative business ideas, offering coaching and eventually investment to get those ideas to become viable ventures. A conversation with dPixel led to the idea that Barcamper could be a way for TCP to reach more start-ups and entrepreneurs who had yet to be discovered. The idea grew into a concrete project, backed up with funding from public sources, where a camper van travelled around the region of Skåne to meet people where they were based.

The idea was simple: show up at Barcamper, pitch your idea to a group of Swedish and Italian business coaches and if your idea has potential, you would be invited to participate in the Barcamper programme in an accelerator. During this time your idea would be nurtured through coaching, group sessions with other entrepreneurs, and connected with potential backers and stakeholders. What was expected was that you would have a collaborative attitude and were willing to work together with others in order to build a viable company based on your values. At the end you would pitch your developed idea to peers and investors.

Having taken stock of its previous endeavours, TCP connected with the academic world, given the lack of research in existence at the time on the topic of entrepreneurial approaches, forms of measurement and what drives new ideas forward.

TCP also knew the value of connecting with local stakeholders in order to both reach out into the small towns and villages where Barcamper would set up shop and at the same time generate interest for potential financial backing from local businesses.

There were a number of learnings derived from the project that helped TCP in its development, and to improve its methods of how to best support entrepreneurs within CCS.

The project discovered a number of start-up ventures around the region, with some growing into serious ventures, and others coming to a standstill where scaling became difficult. The difference between Barcamper in Italy and the one in Skåne was that there was no money to invest in the idea that won the final pitch. The lack of such resources exposes the gaps in the incubation system but it also led TCP to transform its approach. It became no longer merely an incubator, but also an accelerator and an excubator, meaning it did not “let go” of start-ups who had exited the incubation period. It found ways of supporting them beyond the initial stage and support them growing into the next phase of their venture’s life. An important learning was therefore that Barcamper needed to be backed up by investment funds at the end of each programme in order to really make an impact, and give the programme the weight it deserves.

Another important realisation was that in order for TCP to keep up with the times, and indeed its own ambition, it had to evolve beyond its original form. Many of the incubation activities were taken over and incorporated by other players at the Ideon Science Park..

It is worth mentioning that Barcamper led to an unexpected new discovery for TCP. Through the connection with Barcamper Italy, TCP met with representatives of the Giffoni Film Festival for children and young people, the largest of its kind, held in Italy every summer. TCP has previously run summer camp projects for young creative entrepreneurs in Lund and Skåne, and film is a medium that generates many new talents and ideas. A visit to the film festival led to

new connections and ideas of how to connect young filmmakers and creatives, give them opportunities to develop their art but also their business skills in order to create a future for themselves in the film and moving image world.

Another international development and learning environment has been **Creative Lenses** which is a four-year project (2015-2019) that seeks to make arts and cultural organisations more resilient and sustainable by improving their business models and developing their long-term strategic and innovation capacities.

The key question Creative Lenses seeks to answer is, what are the most viable and suitable business models for non-profit arts and cultural organisations to be more resilient and financially sustainable without compromising their artistic integrity, mission and values?

Creative Lenses consists of a partnership of 15 arts and cultural centres, performing arts organisations, universities, city authorities, networks and cultural agencies from 9 countries are producing and taking part in the project, which is hoped will have lasting effects on the European arts and cultural landscape. The Creative Plot has been part of the project from start and has participated in all activities and as mentor within the catalyst program. Here the focus has been to develop two cultural centers, Kaapeli Finland and Truc Sphérique / Stanica Slovakia.

The project's activities include 25 workshops, 2 international conferences, 8 Forums, a 10-month Catalyst Programme for eight of the partners to innovate and test new business models, the publication of two books, a business models development toolkit, a digital benchmarking tool and new research on the sector's specific needs and how they can be supported.

The legacy of the project will be the know-how, tools and support mechanisms required for the European arts and cultural sector to strengthen their business capacity and achieve greater financial sustainability, so that they are more able to successfully deliver their missions and create value. CL hope that the involvement of policy makers and stakeholders together with the dissemination of the project's results, will have an impact on funding schemes and policy development at local, regional, national and European levels.

In these times of challenge and uncertainty, Creative Lenses is a concentrated attempt to devise new ways of working, providing arts and cultural organisations with the possibility to move into the future with confidence.

[read more: creativelenses.eu](http://creativelenses.eu)

Lessons learned

All good things comes to an end.

Through ongoing cut down within the cultural sector and lack of other resources, TCP closed down the support to social, cultural and creative entrepreneurs at the end of 2018. As a part of this seven-year run, it became important to reflect on and share what has emerged as the main lessons and learnings of the people behind TCP.

It was clear that this sometimes abstract but highly instinctive way of working with promoting value-driven, sustainable entrepreneurship within the cultural and creative industries has garnered some important insights for its leaders, Katarina, Lars and Debora:

By relying on its principles and holding on to the notion that values are fundamental to any new venture, TCP was able to take on the different phases of its journey.

The four pillars, or founding principles, that underlined the work of TCP :

- **Cross- collaboration:** “find someone who is not like you in order to learn something new”
- **Co-entrepreneurship:** “walk in the shoes of the entrepreneur and let’s solve it together”
- **Co-learning:** “you learn something with every start-up you work with, it’s key to development”
- **Mobility:** Be mobile - go where they are, scout ideas don’t wait for someone to show up, connect with networks and helpers everywhere, be agile and give tailor made help if possible and needed.

Main insights

- TCP developed an actual **value-driven methodology**, that made the intangible part of their work more understandable, accepted and framed, making it more concrete.
- **The learning never stopped!** It was a process of constant reflection and learning, followed by the realisation that it was not something that could have been done on one’s own. In order to progress and succeed one had to be able to do things with others and be open to new associations, connections and perspective.
- There was **constant movement**, both mentally and conceptually.
- TCP became accepted in other sectors, as a go-between between culture, business and innovation. The **methodology, approach, network and creative area was as an asset**, able to do cross-sectorial work.

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