

PRESS RELEASE

Social Impact Lab Leipzig

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Learn in Germany, launch in home country

Social startup scholarship program supports portuguese and spanish startups

Leipzig, 08.03.2016. The incubator program „Social Startups in Residence“ offered by the Social Impact Lab Leipzig – part of the non-profit company Social Impact, with its headquarter in Berlin – supports spanish and portuguese entrepreneurs to launch a social business in their home region. Already for the fourth time the social incubator calls for social startups from Portugal and Spain. Two teams have the chance to receive a financial and ideal scholarship and live for six months in Leipzig. The program aims to enable young, motivated founders to change something crucial in their home country. Since the financial crisis especially Spain and Portugal are facing several social challenges – in particular the threatening youth unemployment has negative long-term consequences. Social startups are a chance to solve those challenges with new and innovative business models and find solutions where the government cannot. Social Impact gGmbH and the swiss Drosos Foundation are building the bridge to Germany because unfortunately the social startup ecosystem in south-west Europe lacks infrastructure and support for startups. The scholarship program aims to encourage people to actively become Changemakers in their country and create their future themselves. The next round will start on the first of July 2016. **The deadline for applicants is the 24.04.2016.**

The Social Impact Lab in Leipzig is one of six startup incubators in Germany and opened to the public in August 2014. Since the beginning the Lab offers two fellowship programs for social entrepreneurs from eastern Germany as well as for teams from Portugal and Spain. „Our Lab became an international meeting place for startups. The exchange between teams from different countries with different governmental and cultural backgrounds is a big advantage and a source of inspiration,“ explains Marcus Bittner, the branch manager of the Social Impact Lab in Leipzig.

So far six startup teams have participated in the fellowship program. The business ideas they worked on were quite diverse. „We are looking for projects that are innovative, that create a social impact and aim to solve the problems our society face nowadays. Of course we also check the ideas in advance for a sustainable business model,“ explains Bittner. Last year, for example, we hosted the spanish startup „Elenko“, which worked on a system for recycling of E-Waste to establish in the spanish region Extremadura. The two current portuguese teams are working on ongoing problems: The founders of „Crosshands Architecture“ are developing an organization that promotes smart solutions for refugees to make their migration journey safer. „Try it! Azores“ wants to give perspective to young, unemployed people on the Azores by elaborating a new supporting program.

„Social Startups in Residence“ gives two teams the possibility to come to Germany for six months, work intensely on the launch of their startup and elaborate with experts their business model. As part of the scholarship they get individual coaching and access to the germanwide and international network of Social Impact. They also get a desk in the coworking space in Leipzig, a fully furnished apartment as well as monthly cost of living allowance. The purpose of this allround support is that on the one hand the teams can use the time abroad to fully focus on their business and on the other side to get every help they need to launch a sustainable and economically working business in their home region.

Application Deadline: 24.04.2016.

Applications are to be handed in online only:

<http://leipzig.socialimpactlab.eu/social-startups-in-residence>

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