

Podcast - How to Hochschule



Show transcript

Episode 8 - How to Innovate

00:00:00: Stephan Hanf:

00:00:05: Stephan Hanf: Welcome to How to Hochschule, our audio guide about tackling life and work at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, one of the most international universities in Germany. So grab a cup of hot KKD, put on your comfiest headphones, and join us as we explore the world of Hochschule Rheinwall.

00:00:47: Stephan Hanf: How does innovation sound like? If you were to wander the halls of Hochschule Rhein Wahl, that sound might just be the hum and buzz of the Fab Lab. A place where ideas come to life and creativity knows no bounds. Could you explain what the Fab Lab is for people who don't know what that even means? I mean lab, the most people probably know what a lab is, but what is special about

00:01:16: Philippe Vayda: the Fab Lab?

00:01:17: Philippe Vayda: So the FabLab is like a fabrication, fabrication laboratory. Thank you. So FabLab is fabrication laboratory, and it's basically a open space where, um, you can build your own prototypes, your own. Um, projects and, um, it's usually related to a university, but as I said, it's also, I think, usually also accessible to the public.

00:01:45: Philippe Vayda: So if you want to fulfill a project, if you want to build on something, then you can come there and use the machines.

00:01:58: Stephan Hanf: Today, we're diving deep into the heart of innovation with two individuals who have not only experienced this firsthand, but also have transformed their inspirations into tangible solutions.

00:02:12: Daniela Venegas: I'm Daniela Venegas. I am originally from Colombia. I work in the medical industry and I am part of Art-Glove team.

00:02:21: Philippe Vayda: I'm Philippe Vayda, I'm 30 years old, and I'm working as a UI UX developer in automotive, but I'm also CEO of the Art-Glove team.

00:02:31: Stephan Hanf: So how was your first experience in Kamp-Lintfort? What was your first day? Maybe

00:02:37: Philippe Vayda: I should start because you arrived a bit later. Um, my first day in Kamp-Lintfort was actually quite nice.

00:02:43: Philippe Vayda: I looked up two flats or like two shared apartments and I had a good conversation with the landlord. He's the same age and I loved like the location and it was super close to the university. It was just like crossing the street. And it was like all quite small to say, but neat and new. So it was very exciting.

00:03:04: Philippe Vayda: And I was impressed that also this location on Kamp-Lintfort had the FabLab, which was like, for me, new because I thought, okay, just like your big campuses has like a FabLab. So yeah. How about you?

00:03:19: Daniela Venegas: First time in Germany? First time in Germany, almost first time in Europe because I had been only like in Turkey before, so it's not really Europe.

00:03:27: Daniela Venegas: I didn't know anything before because I set up my accommodation and everything from Colombia. So everything I had, it was like Google street, some pictures and a lot of expectations. So when I arrived, I was just very surprised to how small the town is, or the city, sorry. But it was just like, everything was new and interesting.

00:03:53: Daniela Venegas: Can

00:03:53: Stephan Hanf: you explain how did you came up with the Art-Glove?

00:03:56: Daniela Venegas: Can I? Of course. Yeah. So no, I think this is my favorite part to tell. And I like to go back to, I don't know, anywhere 15 years ago or so when my mom got diagnosed from rheumatoid arthritis. So she had a lot of pain in their hand all the time. And I was little and I used to give her hand massages.

00:04:21: Daniela Venegas: All the time, just as a nice gesture from the daughter to mother. And she was always telling me that was really relieving her from the pain. And many years after 2010, I started my industrial design bachelor's degree. And I remember we visited the university together. I got the introduction to the bachelor's and then she told me.

00:04:43: Daniela Venegas: Yeah. Now you can design something that provides me a massage as nice as you do it. And then you will become rich if you do it. I ignore her for how many years? Nine? Nine years. I remember her requests. That I really never put it into execution until the day I arrived, like the next day that I arrived to Kamp-Lintfort and a colleague was catching me up.

00:05:12: Daniela Venegas: Okay. And we have this class and for this class, we need to create something that solves or that helps with a human need.

00:05:30: Stephan Hanf: Lesson number one. Seeing problems and trying to find solutions. Innovation isn't just about creating something new. It's about identifying challenges and seeking solutions.

00:05:43: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: Okay. My name is Gerhard Heusipp. I'm head of the Centre for Research, Innovation and Transfer, Zentrum für Forschung, Innovation und Transfer ZFIT for short. As

00:05:52: Stephan Hanf: we delve deeper into the essence of innovation, our next segment brings to the forefront, a unique

00:05:59: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: perspective.

00:05:59: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: Uh, we are doing. Lots of different things, mostly in the kind of research management, meaning we help people in the university with a research grants, getting funding, stuff like that, but also in knowledge transfer. So starting from startups, but also for example, patents, intellectual property rights. In addition, the huge project where we started just a few months ago, our research information system, research data management, all these different topics.

00:06:35: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: Also the Deutschlandstipendium is associated with ZFIT. We are organizing that. The alumni. They are organized by a colleague and the, yeah, so called

career service. So it's more or less a database where we offer jobs from local and international, basically in industry, offering jobs for students, lots of different things that are all associated with it.

00:07:02: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: That's it.

00:07:03: Stephan Hanf: It's a project you're involved with. There are always in a startup

00:07:06: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: period, right? When I came here. Basically, we had the first funded project, which was just funded, was an Interreg funded project. It was about regional products, regional food products, um, marketing of regional products and stuff like that.

00:07:25: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: So, Wirtschaftsförderung, Kreis Kleve, Wasserburg Rindern, and University Rheinbach. I had no background in that and I didn't know much about that, but as it was the first funded project, we learned not also the research background, but also the administrative background, how to deal with a funded project.

00:07:54: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: How about the third party funds? How do we deal with that as a university? Where do we get the funding? How do we interact with, uh, partners outside, stuff like that. And no structures for that had been established at that time. And so it was learning by doing. And we, from that, we, we learned we need a process.

00:08:20: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: We need structures to deal with research funding. Also the funding agencies, the special Conditions they have and special conditions that apply for different funding agencies. And that was something we learned, not also in the set fit, but also in the administrative departments in the financial department, also in the legal department for corporation agreements, stuff like that.

00:08:47: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And from that, we professionalized we as a university, all of us. And that was interesting and also necessary. And yeah, we still do these, yeah, let's say central projects. At that time, somebody asked us, Hey, you fresh new university, do you want to participate in this project? And we said, yeah, sure. Of course.

00:09:13: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: Why not? Yeah. Today, I think we would not do that again because we've learned, we have grown, we have certain things that we Do in the central department as the set fit, but we now give it to the faculties. What we still do is having projects mentioned in the beginning. Research information system is something that we establish as many universities do it now and have to do that now to report.

00:09:46: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: numbers to industries and stuff like that. And so this is a funded project to establish the system, also research data management. How do we deal as

a university with research data? How do scientists deal with that? This is also a project that is funded. So it's more like a, let's say, more strategic project to establish processes and knowledge.

00:10:10: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: In the university, well, we as a university, our researchers can have a profit from in the long run. The same is true for the start local project where we say, okay, we want to support entrepreneurship, startups, entrepreneurship, knowledge in the university. So we say, okay, we go ahead with this project and roll it out into the university.

00:10:34: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And now we do it with the TransRegINT project in a similar manner. So we do not do research projects. We do projects that help the university to grow, to establish structures, to also set a certain focus, for example, in the area of sustainability with transvagant and stuff like

00:10:54: Stephan Hanf: that. The question is regarding the topic of innovation.

00:10:57: Stephan Hanf: Sometimes people really don't understand what the university is in general, right? They think it's go there, you have a degree and that's it, but there's more things happening here. at the same time, like projects you just mentioned. Why is it so hard to explain that? Not to the student community, of course, but to the whole society that's surrounding Hochschule Rhein-Waal?

00:11:19: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: I don't know. When we look at ourselves as university, we have to bring more into the minds of the people that we can do research and bring innovation to them. Now we are a university of applied sciences. We are not sitting in our labs and doing research and telling nobody we're doing applied research.

00:11:41: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And we're looking for questions that come from industry, from society, and we offer help. This can be a funded project can be a contract research, but this can also be, and this is. Mostly easier in smaller projects together with students, with thesis projects, which internships and stuff like that. And this can be very rewarding for both sides.

00:12:11: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And this is what we try to promote. When I talk to people in the faculties, I see that there is a lot going on and a lot with different, uh, cooperation partners from all over the region, from German wide, Europe wide. And, uh, this is a huge chance, not only for the region, but also for our students because they learn and applied projects.

00:12:40: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: They not only in a theoretical background, but they can see, okay, this is a real problem from company next door and they can't find a solution to their problem, X, Y, Z, whatever. And we can help them. And this is a corporation on both sides

where both sides profit on the other hand. Also, for the external partners, you need to be open for this kind of cooperation.

00:13:05: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: You need to say, okay, I open my door and not only that, I'm willing to spend time and invest in a kind of way to put some kind of resource in to this corporation. I cannot just say, okay, dear student. Come here, now work. You have to invest time. You have to invest into the idea that you give or the question, the research question that you give to the student.

00:13:31: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And if both sides are able to invest, then it's usually a very fruitful cooperation. And we have great examples. And I talked to professors and I did a project here with this company with, and we had a bachelor's thesis. It was really great. And that it's really something, um, where you see, okay, yeah, it's rewarding.

00:13:54: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And so, yeah, this is what we're here for. This is very good.

00:13:58: Stephan Hanf: What I always find interesting, not everyone, of course, but you talk with people. A lot of people come from this region who work here and they also have a cultural connection, but then there's a mix of other people coming here. And that's also like a good soil, I would say for.

00:14:14: Stephan Hanf: an innovative environment. It depends, of course, also on the people. Nothing is perfect, but it's a good soil, right?

00:14:21: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: I see more and more that I meet people who are in a job here in the Visual Design. I studied at the university in that study course and I finished and after that I went to this company and now I'm back here and I work here.

00:14:35: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And this is also interesting. Oh, yeah, great. Yeah. And these are the alumni from our university that work in the region and work in the companies. And this is why the university was founded, because there was a structural change in the regions in Kamp-Lintfort, in Kleve. Okay, we want to do something for the region.

00:14:57: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: We want to bring innovations into the region. And this works best by hats, come back to the region and work in the region. And we have lots of companies who start with practical training, um, for the students and do the bachelor's thesis. And then people stay there with, with a new contract and work for years and develop further.

00:15:23: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And with that bring knowledge from university, from the study courses, from what all the things they learned. Bring to the companies. And this is also kind of innovation if you want to. Yeah. So

00:15:35: Stephan Hanf: if you look back from until you started to now, what is in your opinion, like the main takeaway, what you learned working here, working in this environment.

00:15:46: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: Yeah. Basically when the university started, it was like a small startup and they were growing. And then after a few years, okay, we did some good things. We did some things that were, it was a mistake at that time. Uh, not was a mistake now at that time it was the right decision, but you have to adapt and say, okay, we have to drop this and do that instead.

00:16:09: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And this is how, yeah, all small startup and later on, uh, big, uh, companies also run, you need to innovate. You have to adapt to changes, external changes, internal changes. And yeah, this is basically also innovation. You have to adapt to a market and find your place on the market. And this is. Also what you do when you as a company innovate a few years ago, nobody used smartphones and now nobody can live without smartphones.

00:16:41: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And it's, what is the market? Can you create a market or can you adapt to a changing market? And this is also something that you do in research, that you do with startups and in transferring knowledge. And we try to help As the University of Applied Sciences to adapt, we help companies and hopefully also society to adapt to challenges that are, that they are facing.

00:17:11: Dr. Gerhard Heusipp: And now with climate change, energy, war in Ukraine and stuff like that, there are so many challenges where society, where economy needs solutions to adapt to these problems. And this is what we try also to address in the TransRegINT project, where we try to help to transform the region. Therefore, what we do now in research and also knowledge transfer is basically seeing challenges, seeing problems and trying to find solutions and with the solutions to the next step.

00:17:56: Stephan Hanf: Lesson number two, step by step. Innovation is often a journey taken one step at a time. As we continue our exploration into the world of innovation at Hochschule Rhein Wahl, our next segment offers a deep dive into the meticulous process of turning an idea into reality. So, both of you took the master's course, right?

00:18:16: Philippe Vayda: Yes. Usability engineering.

00:18:18: Stephan Hanf: We welcome back Daniela and Philippe who will share their methodical approach to design and the evolution of their invention Art-Glove as we uncover the stages, challenges and triumphs of their innovative journey. Like the structure, how it was in Kamp-Lintfort, the structure with the FabLab and was the course because of this a little bit different?

00:18:37: Stephan Hanf: Were you more open and free to explore? Was it the same thing with your bachelor studies?

00:18:43: Stephan Hanf: For

00:18:44: Daniela Venegas: me, it was. Somehow similar to my bachelors, because also in my home university, we used to have this fab lab. It was not called like that, but was called more like a building space. And we also have the different areas for glass, for metal, for wood and different materials.

00:19:03: Daniela Venegas: And every semester we were introduced to a material and we needed to have a project with this material in order to get used to. different prototyping tools and machines. Yeah. I was really happy to have this space to feel a bit like home.

00:19:20: Philippe Vayda: Yeah. Like for me, it was rather new. I would say I also started on a new university of applied sciences in Munich, but like the practical or the action was like real problems or like real practical issues was in a way different.

00:19:37: Philippe Vayda: So for me, it was rather new to use the FabLab. Was

00:19:40: Stephan Hanf: it clear that it will be a glove?

00:19:44: Daniela Venegas: No, this is part then of the whole design process. So we are encouraged and let's say the base of our masters was to use a human centered design approach to come up with a solution. So you start from the need. So I had the need and I had an idea of.

00:20:03: Daniela Venegas: What it could be a solution, but not the way of transporting this solution to the need. I don't know if that's clear. So let's say that the glove is something that came out of digging into the user need, the user requirements, what's in the market already, what is not working, what it is working. And from there, you build up your requirements.

00:20:26: Daniela Venegas: And with these requirements, then you start building up a solution that it's iterating all the time until it becomes to, to the glove in this case.

00:20:37: Stephan Hanf: What timeframe was from the idea to, I would say the first

00:20:40: Philippe Vayda: prototype? Well, it was like one semester, right? A bit shorter actually, because we have to present it and maybe also document it.

00:20:47: Philippe Vayda: Um, I think, but it was like almost a one full semester. It flew actually by very fast because in my case, I also had an idea, we were of course facing some problems and also other courses we had, of course, so that the time flew by very fast, but I would say it was a bit less than one semester.

00:21:09: Daniela Venegas: Yeah. At that point, we, each one of us have individual projects.

00:21:13: Daniela Venegas: It took the whole semester to develop a prototype because the prototype is the very end thing you do after going through the whole process. The building up of the prototype doesn't take too long. What it takes longer is to come up with a solution of what are we going to prototype actually.

00:21:32: Philippe Vayda: To get like all these information user needs.

00:21:34: Philippe Vayda: And actually at the end you also, uh, tested. So like we also had to do some testing, which is like always part of the human-centered design approach to test your prototype and improve with this feedback, your product.

00:21:48: Stephan Hanf: So how many project were in, in the program?

00:21:51: Philippe Vayda: So like each student had like his own project or like his own idea to work on, and we were like in the first semester around.

00:22:00: Philippe Vayda: 25 students, I don't know,

00:22:03: Stephan Hanf: something like this. So around 20 projects, that's quite a lot. When you came up with the decision, because I guess a lot of other students finished a project and that was probably it, right? They didn't move on with it. When did you make the decision? Okay. That may be something that's interesting to further develop.

00:22:22: Daniela Venegas: Everything developed pretty organic, I will say. We all were presenting our findings on our final prototype and project. The teacher, Carsten Neve, he told us there is this program, it's called the Best Idea Cup. It was organized by the Hochschule Rheinwald. You have very good ideas. I think you should present your ideas.

00:22:47: Daniela Venegas: So I think he gave like a general statement to, to most of us and I look it up, check what was requested and went for it. I think three or four more projects also applied, uh, for this best idea cup contest. At that point, let's say we had not officially, uh,

become a team. And then in the best idea cup, I don't know how many applications there were at that point, but only I think around 100.

00:23:19: Daniela Venegas: Applications, but only 11 or 10 projects were pre selected and then they were like three final winners and our glove or the project was into these three winners and then there was like a money prize. And there was also like a coaching sessions for. As a surprise, and our coach was Adriana Boldisova. And in the first session, she told us of many different options that we could have for moving ahead.

00:23:50: Daniela Venegas: She recommended us that we should do this as a team. She had already seen that Philly was supporting me during the whole contest. So she was like, okay, you are making a good team. You should maybe apply together to it. And I. Yeah, I proposed to Philip if he wanted to, yeah, work on it, if he will leave it on it.

00:24:11: Daniela Venegas: And then we applied to the Gründerstipendium and we got it. So that's a, yeah, it like very organic, little steps, lot of work in between.

00:24:23: Philippe Vayda: Yeah. But that also made you believe in it and to continue with it. Like you could also have said like, Oh no, that's it after winning the contest. Yeah. Yeah.

00:24:31: Daniela Venegas: Yeah. It was.

00:24:32: Daniela Venegas: It was quite overwhelming, I was crying, uh, when the idea was called on stage in this very first Best Idea Cup and it was called and then I was just thinking on my mom and how happy I felt to finally, let's say, return something to her. So many people were asking and impressed and giving their cards and giving feedback and giving input was so overwhelming in a good way that I was like, wow, this is real.

00:25:03: Daniela Venegas: This is nice. And this can make a change, not only to my mom, but to 7 million people or more, 77 million people. Sorry.

00:25:13: Philippe Vayda: Yeah.

00:25:14: Stephan Hanf: And that was like the starting point to say, okay, let's try to make this into a company.

00:25:23: Daniela Venegas: We got the scholarship and this scholarship had the requirement that within six months we needed to officially register the project as a company.

00:25:37: Daniela Venegas: So let's say that was. Motivation to, to do it.

00:25:41: Stephan Hanf: You never had any doubts until this point that maybe because you won the best idea cup, but I think to to maybe to further explain this point, can you explain its audio, it's probably quite hard what the product actually is and what, what it does. The goal is clear, but can you explain how it looks like and how it works more or less?

00:26:01: Stephan Hanf: Is it possible?

00:26:03: Daniela Venegas: Yeah, I think we have talked about the need, the idea, but actually not the solutions, uh, the final or not the final, because it's always improving. But what we developed so far is a self massaging glove. I think maybe Philippe can explain a little bit more in detail.

00:26:22: Philippe Vayda: Yeah, it's a massaging glove, what Daniela said, which is fingerless and also portable.

00:26:27: Philippe Vayda: Users can enjoy a massage while they're like anywhere and anytime. And it also actively massages the joints of the hands. So for each joint of the hands, also of the fingers. We have like a individually, like a compression technology, which compresses these joints and like also on the muscles and to give it like a relief.

00:26:52: Philippe Vayda: And also we have another system to stimulate the nerves of the hand. Basically it's yeah, a portable massaging glove for any time, anywhere, which is fingerless. Their vision is to not. basically distract you from your daily tasks and, and give you like a relieving massage while doing, and also it's like also a washable glove.

00:27:19: Philippe Vayda: So you can also wash it and keep it hygiened. Stay Forever

00:27:23: Stephan Hanf: That's really impressive, but I guess there were a lot of challenges, right? Just design wise and technical wise that you had or still. trying to solve. I don't know how far you are right now, but

00:27:35: Philippe Vayda: yeah, actually we are right now in the sixth iteration.

00:27:38: Philippe Vayda: So we built up six prototypes and we are basically building up the sixth prototype already. We started small, just like with the nerve stimulating. Then we tried out. Okay, how can the massage feeling be more enhanced or like more intensive? So we came up with this compression system. Um, Then we tried to combine both together.

00:28:01: Philippe Vayda: Then we tried to combine both in one glove. So it's like also portable. And what was the biggest challenge right now was like the compression system to make it work, to make it airtight and also, yeah, usable for the user, not too big, and that was right now, or like. For the, for the last one, for the sixth one, for the sixth prototype, the, the biggest challenge

00:28:28: Daniela Venegas: actually.

00:28:28: Daniela Venegas: This draws back to this human centered design process. So it's when I tell you about these requirements. So when we were talking to people, we were asking them, okay, what is your idea? Or if you have three magic wishes. What it will be or why you don't use this product or why do you use this one instead?

00:28:51: Daniela Venegas: So there we started what users wants. Okay, they want a product that they can use when they are not at home. So it has to be portable or they want a product that They don't need to put your hand over and over again because it gets sweaty. Okay, we can make it washable that they don't need to be attached to a single place.

00:29:11: Daniela Venegas: Okay. We need that. This has batteries. According to what people were telling us in different ways, so there are different usability methods to find out what actually people wants and needs. We, we came out with these characteristics that our product needed to have to, let's say, um, need. The user expectations and requirements.

00:29:32: Stephan Hanf: Okay. When you won the contest, so go back in the timeline, then it was clear for you. Okay. We have to be a company in the next six months, was it, or half a

00:29:42: Philippe Vayda: year? Yeah. By winning the Gründerstipendium Nordrhein Westfalen, then basically, yeah, we had this requirement to establish a company within six months in order to keep the scholarship running because the scholarship was for one year.

00:29:56: Philippe Vayda: And, um, then basically I think it made like the switch to, okay, let's try it. Um, let's keep going. And we always have this mindset, just the step by step. We are not too much looking into the future, into the big picture, which might come up with the product. We just want to see how far we can go and to see, okay, how.

00:30:24: Philippe Vayda: Well, we can develop the product in order to fulfill the requirements and to also, yeah, basically, I have to say also to fulfill like their own. Expectations and yeah.

00:30:37: Stephan Hanf: And you both studied at the same time, right? Doing this phase. So how was it? Did you have any time for anything else besides both projects or not really probably, right?

00:30:47: Daniela Venegas: So I think the main strategy was that we managed to merge this project into our studies. So we use it as a use case for. Different tasks that we were having. So we also have a class. APA. Kai. Yeah. Essig, Kai Essig is the, his name, where we also needed to work on a project and we needed to do the whole development.

00:31:13: Daniela Venegas: It was also from, yeah, like a full. project from beginning to end. At the point we talked to him, uh, Philip didn't need to do that class because he had it homologated actually, and he did it anyway because I talked with the professor to see if we could use our glove as a case of studies. And then he knew already about this project because of the contest we had won before.

00:31:37: Daniela Venegas: And he was like really motivated to help us and to incentivate us to keep working on it. So it was really. nice because we improved our product. We did two more iterations during this course. And of course, we also got a great result academically.

00:31:55: Philippe Vayda: Yeah, we got the credits, we could use it for the classes as Danila said, and we could also even write our master's thesis about Art-Glove with the same professor, with Professor Essig.

00:32:05: Philippe Vayda: And together, both of us, it was a good, um, way to improve the prototype to continue with the master's thesis. We actually built up two prototypes and tested it and validated it and improved it. So, um, it was luckily very good ways that we could. integrate Art-Glove, like our own project into the study. And yeah, thanks again to all the professors who let us do, do this.

00:32:35: Philippe Vayda: So what

00:32:35: Stephan Hanf: was, what happened after you graduated?

00:32:37: Daniela Venegas: I think here it was really important that mainly Philippe, he wanted to keep going. I think. He was always looking for these new programs and new options to enroll the project. So we got into other programs, right? So let's say this is a race that is never ending.

00:32:57: Daniela Venegas: Accelerator programs. Yeah. Yeah. I think at this point, it's a really, I would like to make a note to Philippe that he has been after the studies, obviously, like the one who said, okay, let's keep working on it.

00:33:12: Philippe Vayda: Yeah. Like from my side, I have had some internships before on big companies. And I also, after graduating from the university, I had an internship, uh, in the automotive industry and it was usability related, so it was like related to our study, I was so, I got so disappointed by this.

00:33:35: Philippe Vayda: internship. And it makes, I was like always, almost quitting the internship because I got so, it was not what I expected. Let's say like this, it was a very big company. So like the processes they take for ages and was like, yeah, just feeling that you are just a little part in a big. Company in a big pool.

00:33:58: Philippe Vayda: And, uh, this made me like really think, okay, we have a good idea. I'm passionate about it. I, I think this idea can succeed. So why not continuing and be your own boss basically to decide what you wanna do or not. And to have the bit of flexibility, but establish or to make something great was like the, the motivation.

00:34:21: Philippe Vayda: And so we continued. I convinced Daniela to continue as well.

00:34:28: Stephan Hanf: So your end goal is a consumer product, right? You don't want to have a product for the medical field, like in, I don't know, clinics. Your end goal is actually that I can buy it on the shelf in a supermarket? Or what is your goal with Art-Glove

00:34:41: Philippe Vayda: right now?

00:34:42: Philippe Vayda: Actually, the big vision is yes, to have it like medically certified, however, there are different approaches. It will depend actually what the next test will show. There are like some, let's say, companies, they already approached us to make a cooperation. And yeah, if we do it on our own, probably it would be easier to have it as a wellness product.

00:35:07: Philippe Vayda: So for everybody available, so to, to get like some revenue already in a very early stage, we are also lucky to test, um, Art-Glove with our master thesis, like the last prototype in a hospital. So we really had like the first contact to a hospital, do it as a medical product to do like all the big hurdles for a medical product or a certified product.

00:35:30: Philippe Vayda: But it's, that has to be also built up or figured out in the team.

00:35:36: Stephan Hanf: If I look back on, on the history so far of Art-Glove, there seems to be always like crossroads. How do you want to go next? What do you want to do next? Do you think that's something that will ever

00:35:48: Daniela Venegas: end? I think that's a very interesting question because it can motivate you, but it can also be discouraging because you know, when you start, but you don't know where it ends and it's all the time applying to a new project or looking for a new opportunity or thinking what is coming next.

00:36:08: Daniela Venegas: Oh, what if this doesn't work? Then what do we do? The idea is good. We believe on it, but executing this idea is the real challenge. So how, how would you keep going and how you keep going in the right direction? And when does it end, if it does at all, right? Because it's. Philippe just mentioned, there are so many more ideas building up all the time and all the time you get new feedback, new input, not only for the product itself, but from different programs or clinics or companies interested.

00:36:43: Daniela Venegas: So it kind of be, again, overwhelming and I don't know how you do it, Philippe, to ground and let's say, okay, this is the next step now. And focus on it and blog. Everything else to be able to continue.

00:37:00: Philippe Vayda: Yeah. It's just like step

00:37:01: Philippe Vayda: by step.

00:37:07: Stephan Hanf: Lesson number three, the smaller, more simple things are the ones that can make a bigger impact in the vast role of innovation. It's often the subtle nuances, the seemingly insignificant details that leave the most profound impact. As we embark on our last lesson, we jump into the philosophy of things and we want to shed light on the general concept of the entrepreneurial.

00:37:30: Adriana Boldisova: Mindset. Okay. Uh, so I'm Adriana. I'm, uh, working at our university as a project coordinator in a startup local project.

00:37:39: Stephan Hanf: With Adriana's unique perspective and experiences, she will guide us through the profound impact of innovation.

00:37:46: Adriana Boldisova: I studied here at our university, the master program, sustainable development management.

00:37:52: Adriana Boldisova: And while studying here, I found a job as a student assistant, uh, here at the center for research, innovation, and transfer. And somehow I stayed here. Uh, and now I have a full time job, uh, in a StartGlocal project. And, uh, we are trying to support, uh, students and also employees and alumni of the Rhein-Waal University in their startup and entrepreneurship activities.

00:38:15: Stephan Hanf: What was the first time as a student you heard about

00:38:17: Adriana Boldisova: StartGlocal? My first time hearing from StartGlocal was actually, I was not hearing from StartGloco because StartGloco even didn't exist since then. I used to work actually as a student. My student job was in the project called Innovations und Grundungsoffensive Niederrhein.

00:38:35: Adriana Boldisova: It was... Basically a project for English speaking people. And it was also a project which used to support startup and entrepreneurship activities at our university. But back then I was alone in the project and I did all those top workshops, even startup coaching only by myself. And somehow the project went to an end.

00:38:58: Adriana Boldisova: So it was finished, stopped, and there was an opportunity to apply for a grant for a funding program. And then we told ourselves, well, we decided to get, uh, with Gerd Heusipp and other colleagues at the Center for Research, Innovation, and Transfer, that it would be nice to have another initiative at our university, which would support startups and motivate students for entrepreneurship.

00:39:22: Adriana Boldisova: And therefore... We wrote a grant application for StartGlocal back then with one, another colleague from the university who was later on working in the project as well. And uh, yeah, we got the grant, like the competition was really, really big. Almost all universities of Applied Sciences from all Germany. And at the end, also 142 universities got the grant, but we were one of few universities which got the grant alone.

00:40:02: Adriana Boldisova: Other universities were, were applying like as a group. Of universities, so they have to split the grant, but we have also a privilege like of a pretty good budget, I would say. And also we can make a lot with this. Therefore, we are organizing a plenty of workshops, events. We are doing startup coachings. We have also good manpower in the project.

00:40:27: Adriana Boldisova: We used to be at the beginning, like eight people in the project, not everybody full time, but like eight people personal. Now we are like five scientific members or scientific staff members, so to say, and five student assistants. Uh, so it's also still pretty good manpower. And with this, you can make almost anything happen, I would say.

00:40:50: Adriana Boldisova: Yeah. So that's, that's the story how I got into the contact. I was basically not only by myself, but it was like a teamwork. I would say together with the colleagues from center for research, innovation and transfer, but I was the one who fine tuned it with one of my colleagues. And then we just send it and was hoping for the best.

00:41:13: Stephan Hanf: So what is StartGlocal now? You talked a little bit about the history, but what it's like, what it's like the main idea behind

00:41:19: Adriana Boldisova: it. Uh, StartGlocal's vision is to establish a vital startup community at Rhine-Waal University. Actually, we have three goals. First goal is to motivate, uh, our students and employees for startup and entrepreneurship activities.

00:41:38: Adriana Boldisova: So we basically want to show them that's, that there is also another option, like next to corporate job or normal job in a company. You can maybe also think about self employment or starting your own business. So this is our first goal. Our second goal is to support students, employees, and also alumni who already have ideas.

00:42:01: Adriana Boldisova: So if you have a specific startup idea, business idea, you can come to us, uh, to my teammates and we help you to develop it further. So we support you or during the whole process. Uh, from ideas through prototype until pitch funding programs and going to market. So basically on the whole entrepreneur journey, so to say, and the third thing is, uh, that, uh, we try to establish a network.

00:42:28: Adriana Boldisova: Which would support our startups at our university with the region. So together, uh, for example, with local companies, for example, with chamber of commerce and industry regional, how it's called Wirtschaftsförderung, business support agency, or how to say in English and like regional stakeholders. And also later on in the time, if there are already some successful startups at the university to make like the transfer both ways, like not only winning the regional stakeholders for our startups, but maybe our startups giving also something to the region.

00:43:09: Adriana Boldisova: Uh, back in our project application, we actually had a very big vision that start glocal. wants to become the project for international students or international founders in Germany. So we want to be best practice, uh, example with our university and StartGlocal for international student founders, because this is a big USP of our university.

00:43:38: Adriana Boldisova: We are one of the most international universities in Germany, but I have to also say that we are somehow A startup project itself. I approached from the beginning, the whole project as a startup itself. Basically we had some plan, what things we should do in the project. We knew, okay, we would like to do.

00:43:58: Adriana Boldisova: This and that, uh, workshop and event we knew, okay, we have startup scouts who are doing startup coachings in faculties and this stuff, but each semester, like we reflected in a team, uh, in a feedback, maybe you know it, uh, in the startup world, it's called retrospective event, uh, where the whole team, uh, was sitting together.

00:44:18: Adriana Boldisova: Like actually we did it at the beginning on a monthly basis. When we reflected on all the stuff which we have done. So we did also events, such as Make

an Impact Day, or many of you probably know also Best Idea Cup, which we are doing like since 80s, also before StarClocklight was already. And, uh, these events were, for example, very successful.

00:44:42: Adriana Boldisova: Then we have also some workshops. As I told you, we had semester. Uh, during which we have like around 70 workshops. I'm doing the startup statistics. So it was really like very high number of workshops, but we realized, okay, this doesn't make sense to make such big amount on workshops, even if it were online because of Corona, but this is.

00:45:03: Adriana Boldisova: It's too much for students. So now we are like around six to seven workshops, uh, during the semester and winter semester is a bit more because we have their entrepreneurship week. But this is the stuff which you are like doing or learning by doing, so to say, uh, really like a startup. You are like launching your product.

00:45:23: Adriana Boldisova: You are iterating a bit, also asking students what they want. And we tried actually to implement, I would say 99 percent of the feedback. And we didn't stop to learn or haven't stopped to learn

00:45:36: Stephan Hanf: yet. It's really interesting that you have the same challenges as students that come to you with their ideas and projects.

00:45:43: Stephan Hanf: So maybe out of your perspective, but also for students, what is like the mindset? You have to start your own company or to innovate something. I

00:45:52: Adriana Boldisova: actually think that innovative mindset and entrepreneurial mindset are very important for all people, not only for people who would like to start up their company.

00:46:03: Adriana Boldisova: We have sometimes people who are afraid to come to startup coaching because they think their ideas are not good enough. But if you have only an idea, then just come to us, talk with us, even if you don't have idea, even if you just want to talk, then come to us and we will see what will happen. Sometimes ideas are coming like when talking, but I think the best mindset or, or very good mindset is if you are somehow creative or try to explore ideas.

00:46:35: Adriana Boldisova: Uh, if you are like problem solving person, uh, that you. Like, uh, try to look around yourself and, uh, for example, okay, this is not working. We have a lot of students who, for example, see many things not working in Cleves, and we have many ideas, uh, when somebody is coming to us, okay, this is not working, uh, let's make it better.

00:46:59: Adriana Boldisova: And there is, uh, a startup idea out of it. So also a little bit like, I would say thinking out of the box, so. Just think narrow, don't judge yourself, be creative and also somehow flexible. Okay. The things are not only dark in your life, be somehow optimistic, trust yourself. I think this is the right attitude.

00:47:20: Adriana Boldisova: And not only for entrepreneurs, but also for all students who would like also to work in corporates on all kinds of companies, you just need the right mindset and that's it. So you don't even want to establish a startup. Can

00:47:36: Stephan Hanf: you tell us more examples, like people who went through the program?

00:47:41: Adriana Boldisova: Yes, so we have 3, 000 people.

00:47:43: Adriana Boldisova: I have to say we have 7 startups. This doesn't sound as a big number, but first of all, I have to say, uh, our target in the project or goal, it's not basically our KPI, key performance indicator number one, it's not a number of established startups. It's basically number of people who we make aware of. The opportunity of entrepreneurship and startups.

00:48:11: Adriana Boldisova: So more about our project is more about sensitize the people for the topic. Uh, but anyhow, we had seven startups. These startups have been also partially established, uh, by international students, and one of our first startups was actually Startup Art-Glove. They were even before StartGlocal. Uh, starting their entrepreneurial journey, so to say, and I was there as a second supervisor.

00:48:41: Adriana Boldisova: It was really an honor for me, like somehow to support the startup project. And they are still going farther with that idea. That's how you can develop your idea, actually, which you had only, so to say, in some study module into a startup.

00:48:58: Stephan Hanf: Yeah. And I think it's also sometimes like a misconception that From every year, there will be very successful startups coming out of the program, because that's not how it works.

00:49:09: Stephan Hanf: Even with the bigger universities, it doesn't work like this.

00:49:12: Adriana Boldisova: Maybe I can give you a comparison. So even the university here in Essen doesn't have 10 startups per year. I think it's only like imagination because we. We watch a lot of American movies and this, we are like brainwashed somehow with the Silicon Valley stories.

00:49:29: Adriana Boldisova: If you start a startup initiatives, you will have 100 startups in a year. Everybody's successful. And this thing, we have somehow this American idol in our heads, so to say, but it doesn't work like this. Actually StartGlocal is, uh, since 2020, then we had two, two and a half years Corona. And, uh, all innovations take their time.

00:49:53: Adriana Boldisova: So it's not like, this is a big actually myth about innovation. That innovation is something what happens like a big crash. Uh, and that's it. It's a one big moment. Many people think this, it's not like that. It's not one big moment. It's actually a continuous process. It's like you develop something, you ask people how they like it.

00:50:16: Adriana Boldisova: You got feedback, you implement it, then you ask another time. And all this implementation actually takes a lot of time. If it's an innovative, really scientific based idea, it takes a lot of time. Also, uh, for example, startup scholarships. We have also like, uh, startup scholarship for scientific, uh, staff or scientific members of universities.

00:50:41: Adriana Boldisova: And the scholarships are for two, three years because you can't innovate in one month. It's not possible. You need team, you need expertise, you need resources, you need finance. Just a big, big misconception. Also, everybody is asking us, like, oh, seven startups. Well, what is seven startups? Like, I know it's not 100, but also the seven are with international students.

00:51:09: Adriana Boldisova: And if you imagine international students, some of you already struggle, like with studies, or it's a big, big challenge already to adapt to new culture, to new study life. And next to study, start a startup seven times at our university. This is a big deal, really. This is a really big deal. So you have to see it from this.

00:51:34: Adriana Boldisova: Perspective, actually,

00:51:36: Dr. Claudio Abels: my role is the startup scout in that project. We have different roles. These, the event manager, she is preparing a lot of events. She's in inventing new formats and she tries to combine or couple the, the people who attend to the events and. Put them to our coaching sessions, that cross setting thing.

00:51:58: Dr. Claudio Abels: Continuing

00:51:58: Stephan Hanf: our story into the nuances of innovation. We're joined by Claudia Abels, another Luminary from Hochschule Rhein Wahl.

00:52:04: Dr. Claudio Abels: Then we have the startup scouts. Those are people who are located at the faculties. They have their offices also close to the faculties and they are. They are actively looking for innovation at the university.

00:52:18: Dr. Claudio Abels: They are going into the lectures. They are talking to the, to the professors and tried to get the setup topic, that mindset into the teaching because not every program has entrepreneurship as a class or module. So for instance, I didn't have that in my studies. That is why, uh, those scouts and also me as a scout, I'm trying to go and talk to as many students as I can and see what they're doing, what are they are working on in their bachelor thesis or math thesis, what are they maybe doing.

00:52:55: Dr. Claudio Abels: in a project that they joined or contribute. So we are trying to find the innovation and identify that and also motivate then the student maybe to stay a little longer after their degree because to actually build up and. Go from an idea to something that you can show someone like an investor or to a bank that needs a couple of months time.

00:53:19: Dr. Claudio Abels: We want to look into the university, see and, and find the innovation, the potential, not only at the labs or from our colleagues, but specifically our international students, they have really nice ideas and they have a different way of thinking. When compared to us Germans, maybe, and that is our aim. We want to help support our students and our colleagues at the university and help them building a business.

00:53:53: Dr. Claudio Abels: How

00:53:53: Stephan Hanf: about the German students? Why is it an interesting project for them as well? Yeah,

00:53:58: Dr. Claudio Abels: because There is the possibility to not start a job at a company after you're, you're, you're finished here, but to maybe start your own business or to do both at the same time, and that is why we also support freelancing activities.

00:54:17: Dr. Claudio Abels: It is allowed to be a freelancing engineer like I am right now and working part time at a company, university, whatever you might call it. So the, that second option to start your own business is. I think nowadays important to understand and to learn and to teach someone all that is required to know for that step is what we actually do.

00:54:45: Dr. Claudio Abels: So for students who are interested in learning that second option. That is, I think, also for the German students, interesting to understand. I think that has changed. Maybe 20, 30 years ago, you went to the big company. And right now, the time changed. The kind of modern students, they actually learned that they can do multiple things at the same time.

00:55:11: Dr. Claudio Abels: They actually learn work online. They just need a computer. They log in somewhere and boom. Right? So they can actually do, uh, various things at the

same time, working for different companies at the same time. And the companies also know that that new model, that new work model is there and it is not going anymore, right?

00:55:29: Dr. Claudio Abels: It is there. That's the modern way of working. And I think learning how that works, what the tools are that they, that the students need to understand. Also the rules. We are in Germany, there is rules for everything and building up companies, at least there are some rules. Text rules and the company kind of structure, how that looks like, if it's a, it can be a how or something else, right?

00:55:52: Dr. Claudio Abels: There was some rules, but the way from the idea to. The business model that you need for a successful company is always the same. It doesn't matter if it's a freelancing thing or if it's a big company or something else, this is always the same. That is where we are, where we want to support our students, but also our staff.

00:56:16: Dr. Claudio Abels: But we learned that the staff members are not really. They are not, I don't want to say they are not keen on doing something else, but they have a lot to do in their daily job. So there is just no, no time for them to think about something else, especially if you are working 40 hours a week. There is just no time.

00:56:34: Dr. Claudio Abels: And then you have family, maybe small kids.

00:56:37: Stephan Hanf: It's just impossible. Can you tell me about the networking aspect and the learning aspect as well? Like how to profit from multicultural and intercultural project

00:56:45: Dr. Claudio Abels: teams? Yeah. And also what is, what is interesting to understand or to know if you want to, maybe if I have a company.

00:56:52: Dr. Claudio Abels: At some point here in NRW, you have to have access to a network from our university and we do have that network. Of course we have, we are a university. Yes, we are smaller than the big ones. Sure. We do have the contact to the industry, to the local companies. So that is why I would always recommend come and visit us and see how we can help you.

00:57:16: Dr. Claudio Abels: We don't have money for you, but we can do everything else, bringing you in contact with a person who might be a good match for you, or just recommending you a, it's just an event that we maybe are hosting in the next few couple of months. Or maybe we recommend you choose to participate in the Academy.

00:57:35: Dr. Claudio Abels: We have an Academy program. It's a 12 week workshop series where you learn everything from typing to financing, to taxing, to pitching the entire program. Yeah, we can help you with a lot. We can teach you, we can give you content. We have a lot

of video tutorials online. And I think being a student is the perfect time of trying things out because your actually main job is to.

00:58:05: Dr. Claudio Abels: Right. But you can do some things at the same time. Why not? That is why that is, that's a good option. And it's for free. You have to invest time, but that's

00:58:14: Stephan Hanf: all. They have, however, one very important additional challenge, which is they have to learn German. What is your experience with that? How do students deal with it?

00:58:25: Dr. Claudio Abels: I can maybe give you one, one example. So if you apply for the Gründerstipendium it's a funding program here in, in, in our, in our state, specifically for students from universities in NRW and most of the pitches I actually held in German on need to be. Done in, in, in German language, which is a big problem, obviously there is, I think one, one spot in Dusseldorf or in Cologne, I think where they can go and they can pitch in English, but that structure is still for Germans.

00:58:58: Dr. Claudio Abels: It's right. And that is maybe one challenge. The second challenge is that trying to build a German company in Germany, you have to follow German rules. And even the Germans don't understand all German rules. This is really hard and that is really challenging. They need to know someone, colleague, I don't know, from the study degree may, maybe, who could then do the translation work.

00:59:22: Dr. Claudio Abels: If they find someone or a fellow student who maybe joins the team. That, that would be even better. And we had good examples where there was a German student in their team, plus international students, and that system worked quite nicely. I don't know how hard learning German is because I grew up learning it, right?

00:59:44: Dr. Claudio Abels: But I can see if. You are from the U S or England, or I don't know, learning German is difficult. Yes. What I, what I experienced is that there's a lot of students who have grouped in kind of teams and international teams and the students who work in a lab, for instance, in one of the fab labs, for instance, we have, or working on a project at the university, they learn German way faster than students who are not in those.

01:00:14: Dr. Claudio Abels: Groups and maybe that helps if you really aim to learn the German language, maybe go into one of those projects and contribute, um, makes it easier for you to learn German.

01:00:28: Stephan Hanf: According to some startups play an important role because they are very important for innovation and more than maybe even a traditional company.

01:00:37: Stephan Hanf: Is that something that you would recognize as well, that startups are more innovative than traditional companies? No,

01:00:43: Dr. Claudio Abels: by definition, a startup is a very risky business. That is why you have to find investors who actually bet whether or not that company will be successful. Usually investors just invest in maybe 10 companies and they know.

01:01:00: Dr. Claudio Abels: That maybe one is successful, so they compensate that they have to get the money from that one successful business. That is why maybe startups are more, they actually take more risk. In what they are doing and I think the people who work there are younger than in, in established companies, not always, but I think that's the case startups are a little bit quicker in what they're doing.

01:01:31: Dr. Claudio Abels: They can adapt to maybe the changing market, but because they have that very risky business, and I think you have to be a sort of person to fit into those concepts, I think. Whether or not big companies cannot be innovative, no, they are, they still are, but they always have that challenge that the last 30 years of research need to be used for the next product, right?

01:01:57: Dr. Claudio Abels: They are really facing the problem. They cannot just delete what the people did in the last two decades, they are always adding one more feature, one more feature, but it's harder for them to actually remove an entire set of things and start from scratch. And a startup is actually doing that on purpose.

01:02:19: Dr. Claudio Abels: They may be seeing it from a different perspective. Maybe they are just combining two things that exist into one new product. startups.

01:02:29: Dr. Claudio Abels: In their very limited field, what they do, they are more innovative than bigger companies. But I think the bigger companies, they have more power on the market because they exist already. They are established and the people who work there have more experience, obviously. So it's hard to, to answer that question.

01:02:47: Dr. Claudio Abels: I think. So startups

01:02:49: Stephan Hanf: do not always have better ideas, but they can be more risky.

01:02:52: Dr. Claudio Abels: Because it's not their money. It's the investor's money. I think the, the more money the research department at that company expects. Is being provided the better they can innovate, I think, and the more freedom they have to actually try out things.

01:03:09: Dr. Claudio Abels: I think nowadays there's the big companies. Who actually set up their own programs to actually in their own companies have startups that are completely free. They are not contributing to the daily things. They just are paid for being crazy and have crazy ideas and trying things up out. But that's, I think only with the big companies and I think they understood that they have to do it also to get that, that young students with the new backgrounds, with the new skills that they have.

01:03:44: Dr. Claudio Abels: I think what they, for instance, are looking for is exactly what the university here is providing, namely students who had degrees who are combined, who actually know a lot in A and B, not only A.

01:04:02: Stephan Hanf: So what was the one thing you learned about innovation from? Starting in Kamp Limpfort until now, what was like the one lesson takeaway you have about innovation?

01:04:14: Daniela Venegas: For me, it will be that the solutions are close to us, uh, more than we think.

01:04:21: Stephan Hanf: We welcome back

01:04:21: Daniela Venegas: Daniela and Philippe. Of course. A lot of work came out of that, but it didn't need to be anything crazy or anything extravagant.

01:04:31: Daniela Venegas: And sometimes the smaller and more simple things are the ones that can make a bigger impact.

01:04:37: Philippe Vayda: I would say if you elaborate the user needs. If you have gotten feedback that people really would need such a product and you have like proof of that on, yeah, then just keep going. Don't give up. There are hard times.

01:04:54: Philippe Vayda: Yes. But if you have the market, if you have the users, they are waiting for this, then it's worth the effort. And it's basically, it's the biggest motivation to continue. And to, yeah, to believe on your own idea and keep going. Yeah, perfect. Because you said if you want to add something. Yeah, of course. I would like to thank all to the professors, uh, of our master's study, ability engineering, also big thank to Adriana, who was our coach, uh, during the time who, yeah, helped us and motivated us.

01:05:32: Philippe Vayda: And of course, to all the support we got from physiotherapists, from patients, from family and friends and all the network and yeah, we are. Continuing the story of Art-Glove, we are always looking for supporters, like patients or like doctors, physiotherapists who support us, who give like their knowledge, their expertise.

01:05:54: Daniela Venegas: And you just forgot to thank to the most important person, to my mom, to inspire all these project and beautiful idea.

01:06:28: Stephan Hanf: Thank you for listening to the How to Hochschule Podcast. We hope you enjoyed the show and feel free to follow us and recommend us to your friends. If you have any thoughts or suggestions or just want to let us know how

01:06:39: Stephan Hanf: you liked

01:06:40: Stephan Hanf: the episode, please don't hesitate. Take courage and do reach out to us at podcast@hsrw.eu. We are always looking for ways to improve and we appreciate your feedback. Also be sure to check out our show notes and links and more information on today's topics and guests. Tune in next time as we finish this season with an epic four part special where we spend 24 hours at Hochschule Rhein-Waal, one of the most international universities in Germany.

01:07:06: Stephan Hanf: Thank you very much for joining us. This is the How to Hochschule podcast. We are looking forward to having you back next time. Tschüss!