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RENKEI: An innovative approach to PhD and Early Career Researcher Development through Collaborating across Cultures

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2014 THE AWARDS SHORTLISTED
OUTSTANDING SUPPORT FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

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Overview

- Who and what is RENKEI?
- RENKEI Business Model Canvas and the wider societal context
- What is the value that has been created?
- Hearing from two participants
- Interactive Session using Business Model Canvas: how might the RENKEI approach and learning be useful in other contexts?

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What is RENKEI?

- A Researcher Development School
- **Collaboration** in Japanese
- **R**esearch and **E**nterprise **N**etwork for **K**nowledge **E**conomy **I**nitiatives
- …and why RENKEI?

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Education + Engagement =Impact

Enterprise education, entrepreneurial and experiential learning

+

Engaging participants with real societal issues and working across boundaries

=

Enhanced capacity to cope with an uncertain world and create **impact** at a personal, professional and societal level, through collaborating across disciplines and domains to come up with more sustainable solutions.

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Key Partners
Some activities are outsourced and some resources are acquired outside the business

Key Activities
… by performing a number of key activities

Key Resources
Key resources are the assets required to offer and deliver the described elements

Value Propositions
It seeks to solve customer problems and satisfy customer needs with value Propositions and Unique Selling Propositions

Customer Relationships
Customer relationships are established with each segment

Channels
Value propositions are delivered to customers through communication, distribution and sales channels

Customer Segments
A business serves one or several customer segments

Cost structure
The business model elements result in the cost structure

Revenue streams
Revenue streams result from value propositions successfully offered to customers

www.businessmodelgeneration.com/canvas *Source*: Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010)

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Placing the BMC for RENKEI in the wider environment

- **Social, political, technological, environmental issues and trends** – HEIs need to demonstrate impact with research, individuals need to work in fast moving, global context
- **Markets and customers –** understanding needs and issues to focus sustainable research projects and collaborations and achieve greater impact
- **The macro-economic environment** – challenging and competitive, internationalisation, globalization
- **Competitive environment –** highly competitive for individuals and HEIs – but also need collaboration

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RENKEI VALUE PROPOSITION

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RENKEI School Aims

- Develop future research leaders with the skills to lead collaborations between different disciplines and cultures (in the broadest sense of the word, also to include academia and business cultures)
- Facilitate the formation of active collaborations between participants to achieve a tangible outcome and enhance impact
- Develop a sustainable network of researchers across Japan and the UK

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RENKEI Value Proposition

- Learning the languages and concepts of other domains, such as business
- Understanding needs from wider perspectives
- Transferable skills for future research projects
- Understanding the value of ECR skills and capabilities in other contexts
- Significant potential value creation

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CUSTOMER SEGMENTS, RELATIONSHIPS KEY PARTNERS

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University of BRISTOL

KYUSHU UNIVERSITY

BRITISH COUNCIL

KYOTO UNIVERSITY FOUNDED 1897 KYOTO JAPAN

RITSUMEIKAN

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

TOHOKU UNIVERSITY

Newcastle University

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

UCL

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

NAGOYA UNIVERSITY

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KEY ACTIVITIES

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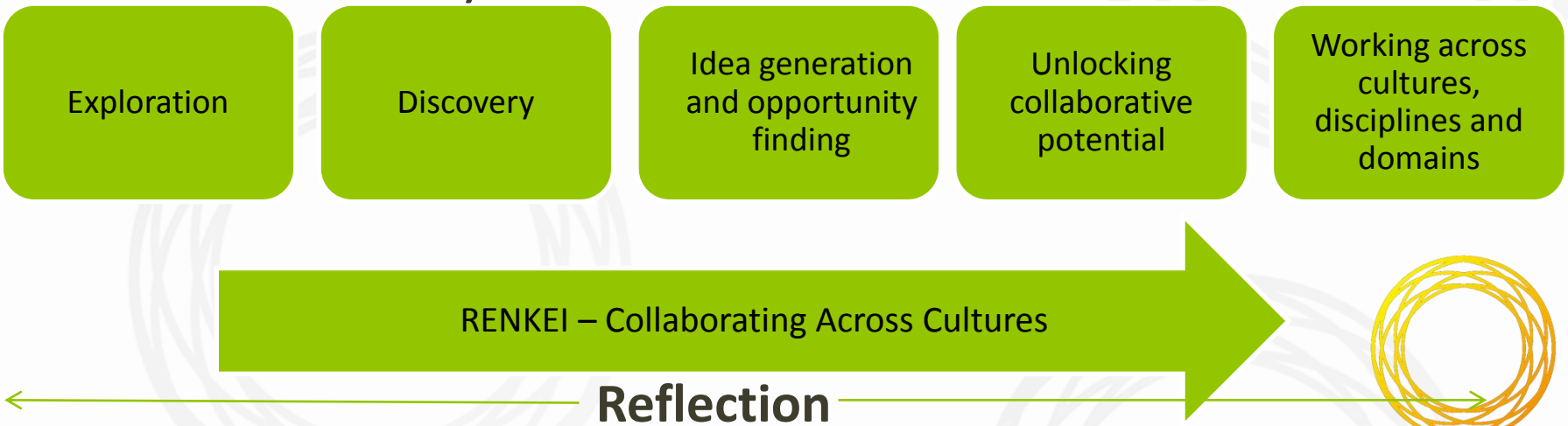
RENKEI School Concept

- Researcher skills development
- Theme – Urban Sustainability and Resilience, using UK and Japanese lenses
- Creating and researching business ideas that are viable and sustainable
- 5 month live inter-disciplinary cross cultural collaboration
- Pitching the ideas to academia, business and communities
- Building a network and capacity for future collaborations

The RENKEI Journey:



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Tools, techniques and approaches

- Speed networking
- Creative problem solving
- Idea generation and evaluation techniques
- Business Model Canvas
- World café
- Myers Briggs Type Indicator
- Drama facilitated presentation, communication and networking
- Interdisciplinary panels
- Contributors from academia and business
- Cultural experiential learning
- Conceptual mapping
- Enterprise Enquiry Cycle
- Reflective practice

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KEY RESOURCES

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Bristol

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Kyoto

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CHANNELS, REVENUE STREAM AND COST STRUCTURE

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- Channels: School itself, cultural immersion and experiential learning through live collaborations
- Revenue streams: RENKEI universities and British Council, in kind from contributors
- Cost structure: expensive…..but looking at how to create the value with less cost

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VALUE CREATED: EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

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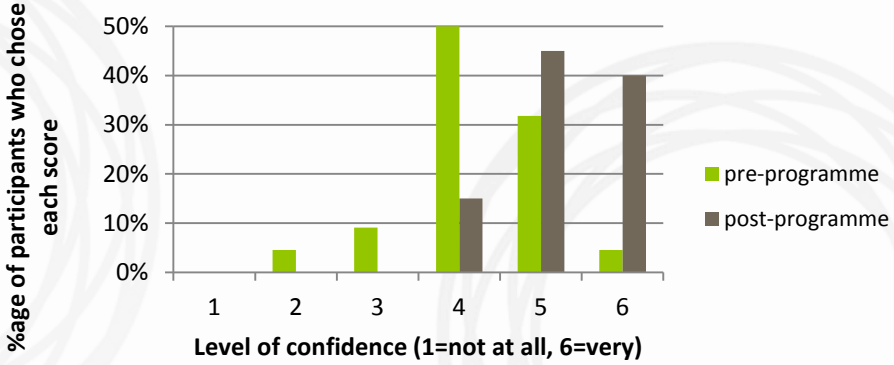
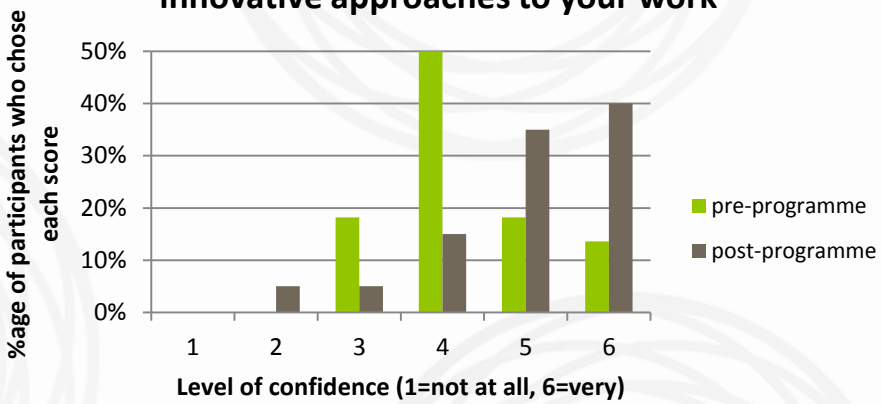
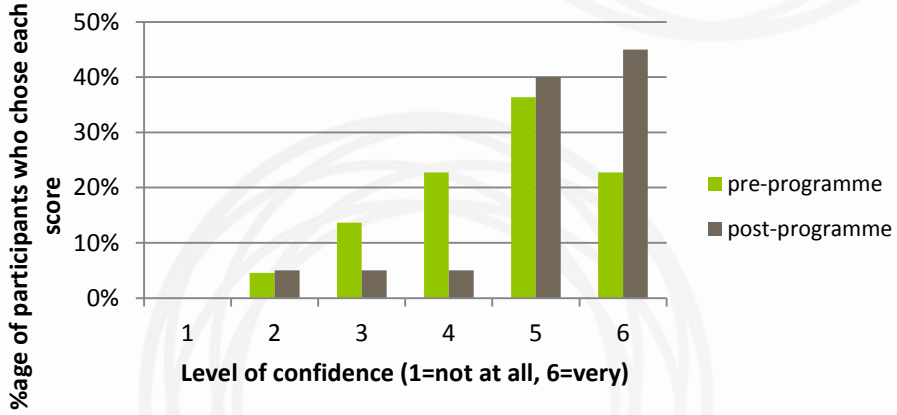
Confidence in effective communication with people in other disciplines



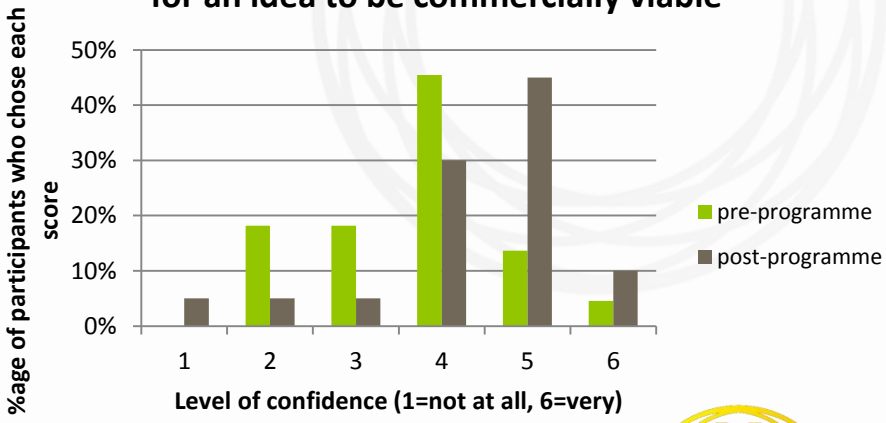
Confidence in taking creative and innovative approaches to your work



Confidence in developing collaborative relationships



Confidence in understanding what is needed for an idea to be commercially viable



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Jasmine Black, PhD Candidate

Kyozon: A financially sustainable organisation helping people access healthy food at a time of rising food prices, food security threats, inequality and austerity

Impact/what I have learned:

- Adapting and working effectively with other cultures and working styles
- Importance and impact of society in the natural world
- Confidence in my ideas and aspirations

Putting these lessons and Kyozon into action

- Helping at the student allotments and raising awareness
- Aiming to work across cultures throughout my career

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Adam Potts, PhD Candidate

Project: Spaces to Places

- Reclaim unused spaces/buildings for art-based community projects
- Maximise our current resources and environment for the benefit of communities

Impact: what did I learn?

- What inter-disciplinarity really means
- How to collaborate
- Where I fit

- **Idea in action**
- Hosted a number of music events in reclaimed spaces

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How to adapt and apply the learning?

- HEIs are global institutions
- Rich diversity of cultures and nationalities
- Effective to use pressing problems and issues or relevant themes to focus the School
- Work at an institutional level - across cultures, disciplines, involving business and wider society
- Work with collaborating partner institutions

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Interactive Session

- Work on Business Model Canvas in small groups for 15 minutes
- How could the RENKEI approach be adapted and applied in other contexts
- Or do you have an example from your own practice to analyse using BMC?
- Consider 3 areas: value proposition, customer segments and key partners
- Short feedback session final 10 minutes

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We are RENKEI!

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Thank you for your participation in the session!

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