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Nurturing innovation in entrepreneurs from PNG

Six innovative and dynamic entrepreneurs from Papua New Guinea were chosen to attend the Entrepreneurial Bootcamp on 5 to 10 July 2018 at RMIT University, Australia.



The program's objective was to provide the entrepreneurs with the knowledge, networks, and learning experiences to grow and accelerate their business ventures. It aimed to help them better understand their role and contribution towards economic development and their local start-up ecosystem.

Professor Andrew MacIntyre, Director of the Australian APEC Study Centre, said that 'the Bootcamp is a chance not just for us to share some ideas but a chance to build closer links between Papua New Guinea and Australia, and to be contributing to the wider regional engagement and wider interconnections of economies across APEC.'



The joint Bootcamp is the first of its kind in Melbourne. Entrepreneurs from Papua New Guinea, joined by local start-ups, were provided with the opportunity to enhance their business skills.

The cooperative initiative between RMIT and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) under DFAT's Cyber Cooperation Program, involved collaboration between the Australian APEC Study Centre, RMIT's Activator, and Blockchain Innovation Hub as well as Papua New Guinea's APEC Business Advisory Council.

The event signals the Australian APEC Study Centre's recognition of the value of entrepreneurship as a positive and empowering force in making a difference in people's lives and fostering people-to-people linkages.

RMIT Activator, the university's hub to access entrepreneurial resources, training and coaching was the Centre's partner in delivering the Bootcamp, and responsible in bringing together a diverse set of resource speakers and Bootcamp participants. Founders of promising Melbourne-based business ventures were also at the event including Cupcake Central, A La Mez Community Kitchen, and Roamni.

The entrepreneurs appreciated sessions on learning to communicate effectively, building resilience as an entrepreneur, and using a lean approach to product validation to help leverage their knowledge and skills in business.

"The key takeaway for me would be the lessons we learnt on effective communication and how this affects leadership" shares David Valentine, co-founder of Refer Tech, a fit-for-purpose electronic records management system to simplify tuberculosis case management in Papua New Guinea.

A networking session with participants from Papua New Guinea and Melbourne provided the opportunity to the start-ups to pitch their business ideas to each other. The event fostered collaborative relationships through interaction with like-minded participants.

Ravu Verenagi, manager of the Papua New Guinea APEC Study Centre, said that the Bootcamp had influenced the direction and future planning of the Centre. He plans for future replication of the Bootcamp to encourage knowledge transfer and forge stronger links with a diverse range of people working for innovation in Papua New Guinea.



The Australian APEC Study Centre also tapped into the valuable expertise of university academics and researchers from the RMIT Blockchain Innovation Hub and the School of Fashion and Textiles and Research Centre highlighting areas for possible synergies and closer collaboration.

For more information about the Bootcamp, please visit the [RMIT Activator site](#).

Read what one of our participants, Emmanuel Narokobi has to say about the Bootcamp: [A start-up ecosystem for the pacific learnings from the APEC entrepreneurial bootcamp](#).