

Summary

Link by UMA (Link) is the Hub for Innovation and Entrepreneurship of the University of Malaga. LBU supports entrepreneurs in each step of their journey, differentiating three main phases: Ideation, Maturation and Incubation.

The Hub has been designed to be an innovation and entrepreneurship school, the place where new entrepreneurial initiatives arise, a meeting point between students, academics and other actors, an incubation space where new projects can mature, and a research center focused on entrepreneurship.

The entire offer of activities, programs and services has been created thanks to an open innovation model taking into account a great diversity of partners. In this sense, linkers are everyone who adds value to the project.

The Hub provides a unique collaborative environment where training activities and social events take place, allowing the interaction between students, researchers, companies, investors, entrepreneurs, public agencies, consultants and mentors.

Development of the program

Objectives

Link by UMA (LBU), www.link.uma.es, is the Hub for Innovation and Entrepreneurship of the University of Malaga (UMA) and was set up with the aim of becoming a connector between the University and the innovative and entrepreneurial ecosystem. This is the main reason of the naming and branding.

The Hub has the mission of generating entrepreneurial capital and promoting behaviors oriented towards innovation and entrepreneurship in the University community. LBU is conceived to be: an innovation and entrepreneurship school; the place where new entrepreneurial initiatives arise; a meeting point among entrepreneurs and other actors, a research center focused on entrepreneurship; and a good partner for other actors of the ecosystem and entrepreneurial universities.

Nowadays, LBU centralizes the entrepreneurial activity of the University providing a unique collaborative environment where training, events, hackathons and many other activities takes place.

Solutions

LBU is defined by its conceptual and physical sides:

Model definition.

The model of LBU is based on the idea that the value is cocreated through the interaction of different actors according to institutional rules (description of the model in *Figure 1*). Thus, the processes developed to cocreate value attend to three tasks:

1. Mapping of actors identifying their value proposals for the University community;
2. Creation of a friendly environment for engagement and exchange among actors, as well as the management of networks and new members;

3. Institutional innovation, reshaping rules and values towards an open and collaborative organization model.

Figure 2 shows the diversity of actors that engage in the ecosystem facilitated by LBU. In this sense, Link's strategy places great importance on fostering a friendly environment that allows for increasing interaction among those actors to maximize their value cocreation.

Physical definition. Spaces

The spaces of Link are organized in 4 floors:

1. First floor includes ten incubation spaces. This area is designed to host entrepreneurial initiatives for one year. UMA provides them mentoring and training. Since last year there are also four new spaces for companies launched by researchers from the University of Malaga (Technology-Based Companies)(Figure 3).
2. Second floor is composed by meeting /training rooms and recording studio. These spaces can be booked for any initiative linked to creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship (Figure 3).
3. Third floor is a training and co-creation space fit to host all kind of conferences, workshops, demo-days, hackathons, etc. (Figure 4).
4. Fourth floor is Link's largest and most distinct area. It's a co-working space open to the entire University community, companies and other collaborating institutions at any time (Figure 4).

The best way to get to know the spaces: <https://www.link.uma.es/espacio-link/>

Activities

The daily agenda (<https://www.link.uma.es/events/>) is the best evidence that Link is a lively place. LBU supports entrepreneurs in each step of their journey, differentiating three main phases: Ideation, Maturation and Incubation. A great number of diverse activities and services have been developed to achieve this goal: <https://www.link.uma.es/programas-formativos-link/>. Figures 5 and 6 show the capacity to design and generate new programs in line with the three main strategic objectives. All of them have been co-created through the engagement of external partners (critical strategic activity) achieving good participation and results. Some of the most noteworthy and high-impact programs are:

- Hackathon Flash Session (<https://flashsession.uma.es/>). Two editions per year to promote new University-based ideas.
- Explorer (<https://explorerbyx.org/>). Project maturation program in collaboration with Santander Bank.
- YUMP (<https://www.link.uma.es/yump/>). Project maturation program in collaboration with Sombradoble.
- K-Skills (<https://www.link.uma.es/k-skills6-cursos/>). Seminars focused on soft skills training.
- K-Projects (<https://www.link.uma.es/proyectos-k-project/>). Multidisciplinary project development program based on the learning by doing methodology.
- Social Change Makers (<http://socialchangemakers.es/>). Hackathon to foster social innovation and entrepreneurship, participated by 60 organizations and almost 500 students.
- Polaris Academy and Mentoring (<https://www.link.uma.es/polaris/>). Training and mentoring program for incubated projects.
- Spin-Off (<https://www.link.uma.es/proyectos-spinoff/>) (At present 26th edition). Competition that rewards the University's top ten entrepreneurial projects created by

the University community (students, researchers, teachers, etc.) and offers incubation and specific training.

Resources

Foundation year	2015
Space size	2.000 sqm
Approximate initial investment	150.000€
Approximate annual costs for operating the space	400.000€

Conclusions

Learnings

1. The context affects the actor's disposition to collaborate with the University's entrepreneurship strategy. The permeability of the University and the design of new linkages is a critical task to facilitate the co-creation of value between the University and the ecosystem.
2. A strategic model facilitates the decision-making process and is the basis to develop the own concept of entrepreneurial University.
3. The definition of the entrepreneurial university model must fit all the expectations of the university's stakeholders.
4. Communication is a key activity and we highlights its influence on the actor's engagement.
5. The size of the project depends on the size of partnership network.

What comes next

In the future it will change what we do and how we will it woll change in the future. However, it is important to preserve the why. Link was conceived because we believed that a mission of the University was to promote innovation and entrepreneurship at the campus and we undestood that the best way to achieve this goal is through value co-creation relationships with the rest of the actors in the ecosystem. This why should be kept as a reference point to lead the growth of LBU.

Furthermore, we believe that LBU has two objectives to achieve in the future:

1. The international growth of the project. We want to network with universities in other countries.
2. The greater impact on the culture of the University. LBU should be an active focus of internal change in the institution.

Outcomes and impacts

Figure 7 shows the main metrics derived from the execution of the Link project. In addition, the University of Malaga has achieved the accreditation as an entrepreneurial University granted by ACEEU. Finally, we can distinguish the following results:

Outcomes and Impacts on governance, strategy and policy of the University

Since 2015, we can highlight some milestones related to the strategic consideration of entrepreneurship at the University of Malaga:

- 2016. Creation of a Vice-Rectorate for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Since its creation it has been based at Link.
- 2018. Approval of the Strategic Plan for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. <https://www.link.uma.es/peie/>
- 2021. The IV Strategic Plan of the University includes Entrepreneurship as one of the five strategic axes: <https://www.uma.es/plan-estrategico-uma/cms/menu/plan-estrategico/>
- 2021. The University of Malaga is accredited as Entrepreneurial University by ACEEU.

Outcomes and Impacts on specific scientific literature

LBU has been used as case study for research on entrepreneurial university in:

- Ventura, R., Quero, M.J. (2017): "La Universidad emprendedora como ecosistema de servicio: El caso Link By UMA-Atech". Revista Economía Industrial, nº 404, pp.105-114.
- Ventura, R. (2017): "The Green Ray: Global Entrepreneurship by PTA-UMA". En Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Andalucía. Cátedra de Emprendedores University of Cadiz.
- Ventura, R., Quero, M.J. and Díaz-Méndez, M. (2020): "The role of institutions in achieving radical innovation". Marketing Intelligence and Planning. Earlycite. DOI 10.1108/MIP-01-2019-0050.

Outcomes as Engaged University

The entire offer of activities (*Figure 8*) has been created thanks to an open innovation model and co-creative relationships with a great diversity of partners (*Figure 2*). The capacity to manage this community of linkers is key for Link. *Figure 9* presents some of the testimonials on Link from different stakeholders.

Public recognitions and awards

UMA and Link by UMA have been awarded and recognized due to their entrepreneurial activity:

- "Evolución award": Given by BBVA and the journal Diario Sur.
- "Enterprise Challenge 4.0 award": given by the journal La Opinión de Málaga.
- "Reconocimiento Sobresaliente": Given by the regional government of Andalucía.
- "Innovative and Collaborative Space of the Year 2022 (2nd)" Entrepreneurship and Engagement Excellent Awards in Higher Education, given by ACEEU.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBcZC62k4Yk>

FIGURES

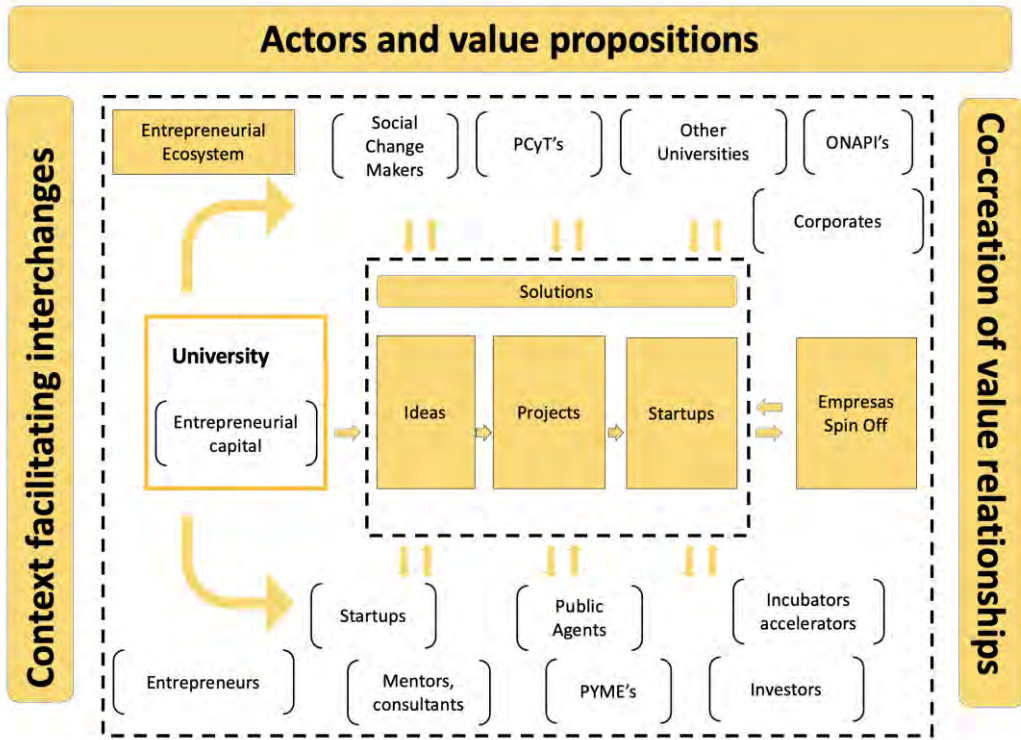


Figure1. LINK by UMA model

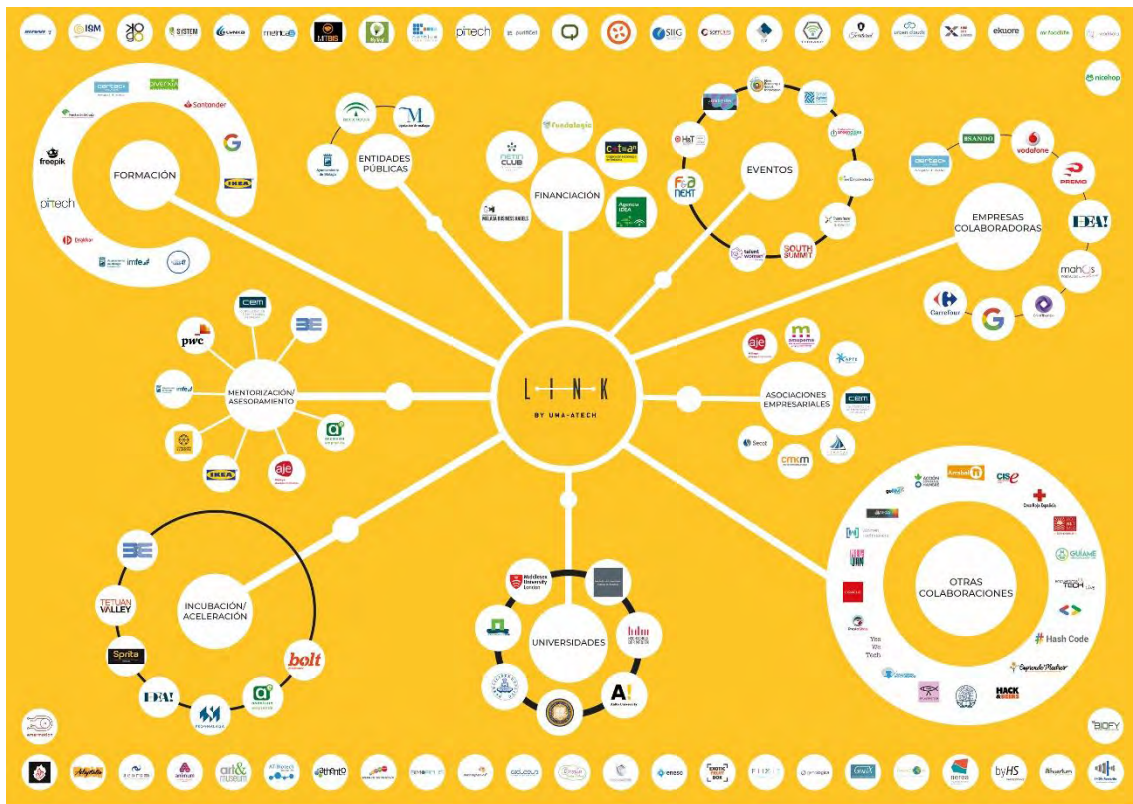


Figure 2. Engaged actors of Link by UMA

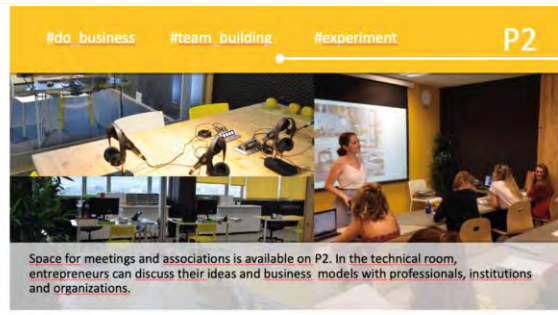
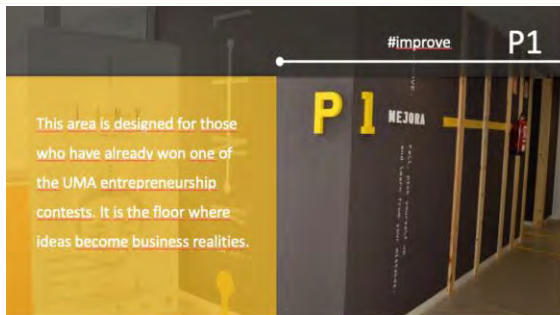


Figure 3. Floors 1 and 2 in Link by UMA

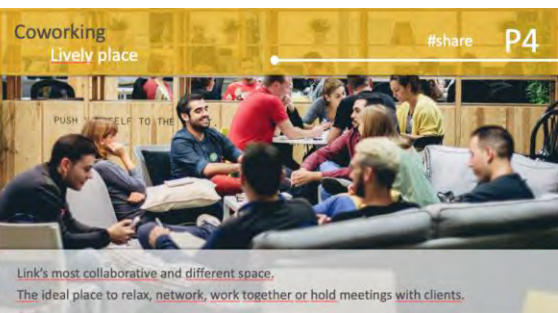
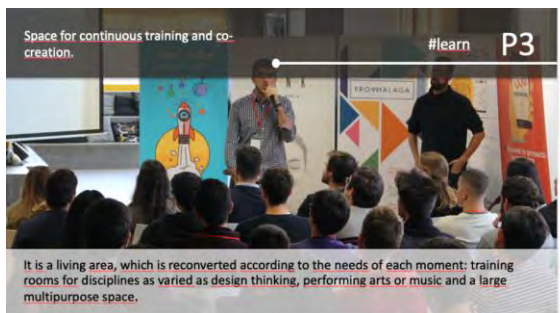


Figure 4. Floors 3 and 4 in Link by UMA

Objective: Training for employability and entrepreneurship

Strategic Line	Actions	Indicators	2020/21	2019/20
Training in innovation and entrepreneurship competences	Training courses for PDI and PAS aimed at improving competences linked to innovation and entrepreneurship	Academics participating in training courses on innovation and entrepreneurship	24	
	Training actions to improve students' competences for innovation and entrepreneurship	Training actions for innovation and entrepreneurship	119	15
		Students and graduates participating in training courses on innovation and entrepreneurship	8,532	2,148
		Level of student satisfaction with training actions on innovation and entrepreneurship	4,54	4,25
Promotion of training experiences in international contexts that improve the competence profile of students	Participation of students in international programs for the improvement of entrepreneurial skills		24	0

Objective: New university-based entrepreneurial initiatives

Strategic Line	Actions	Indicators	2020/21	2019/20
Identifying opportunities for the creation of Technology-Based Companies	To understand the market potential of the research results produced by the University's research groups.	New entrepreneurial initiatives of academics assessed for their potential to become EBTs	10	8
	To promote the design of sustainable business proposals that allow the transfer of knowledge through the creation of companies	Academics involved in new entrepreneurial proposals	25	28
Generate new knowledge-based solutions by students and graduates	Generate new ideas and solutions that address societal needs, are knowledge-based and have the potential for social and economic impact	Students participating in ideation programmes	463	549
		New entrepreneurial initiatives promoted by students and graduates	55	39
	Promote the maturation of entrepreneurial projects led by students and graduates	Students and graduates participating in entrepreneurial projects in a maturation phase	120	83
		Initiatives participating in maturation or acceleration programmes	62	24

Figure 5. Strategic objectives 1 and 2 and indicators - Link by UMA

Objective: Knowledge-based enterprise creation

Strategic Line	Actions	Indicators	2020/21	2019/20
Facilitating project validation and incubation	Offering incubation to university-based projects	Incubated projects	10	10
	Providing training for the validation, constitution and growth of business projects	Initiatives that have accessed specific training for the validation, constitution and growth of business projects	11	10
	Facilitating mentoring and technical consultancy for business projects	Projects that have received mentoring or technical consultancy	11	10
Promoting the establishment of new knowledge-based companies	Facilitating the formalisation of Technology-Based Firms	Projects that have applied for approval to form a TBE	3	5
		Newly established TBEs	2	2
	Assist the creation of new enterprises by students and graduates	Incubated projects that have been constituted as a company	3	6

Figure 6. Strategic objective 3 and indicators - Link by UMA

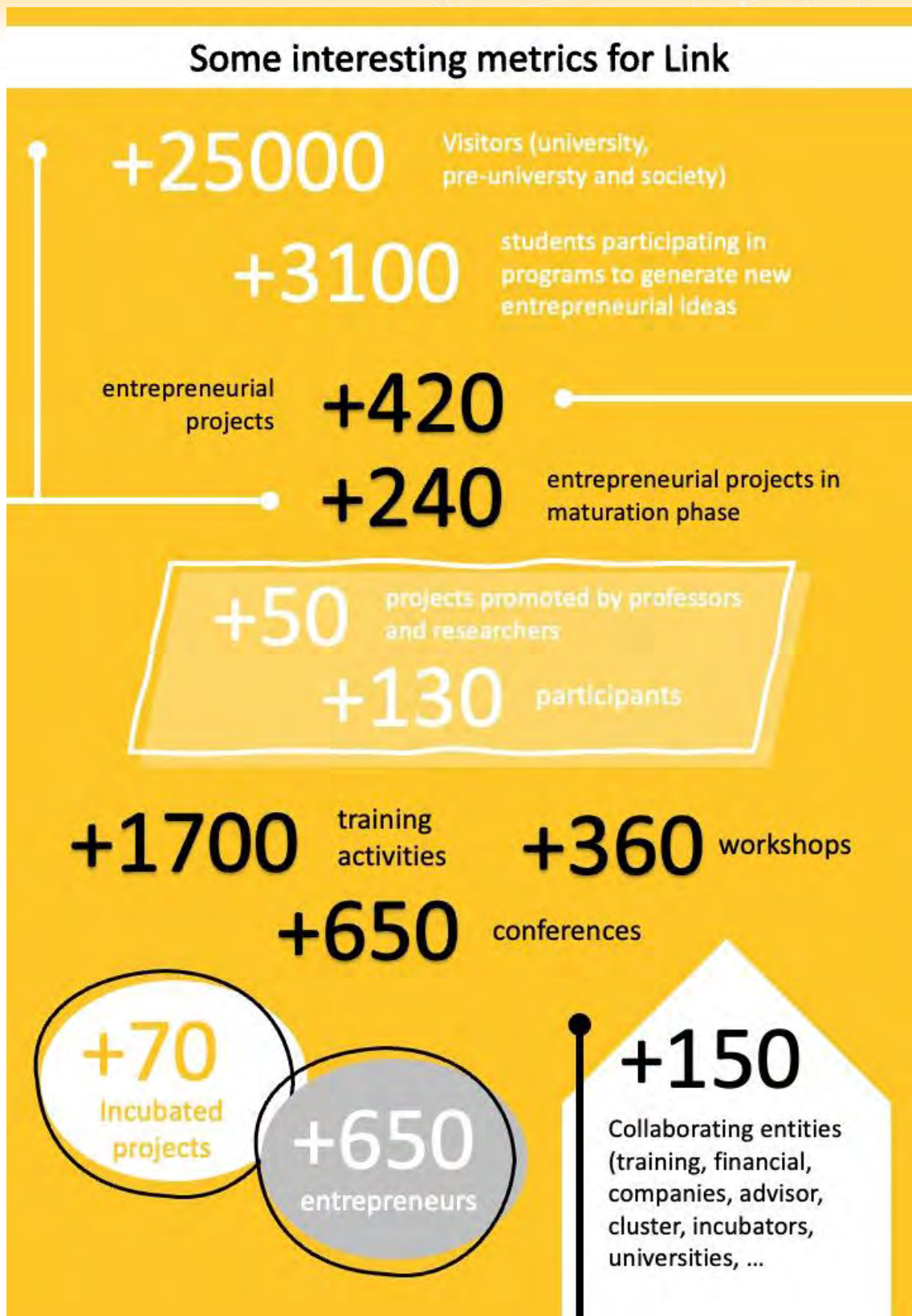


Figure 7. Metrics from Link by UMA activity

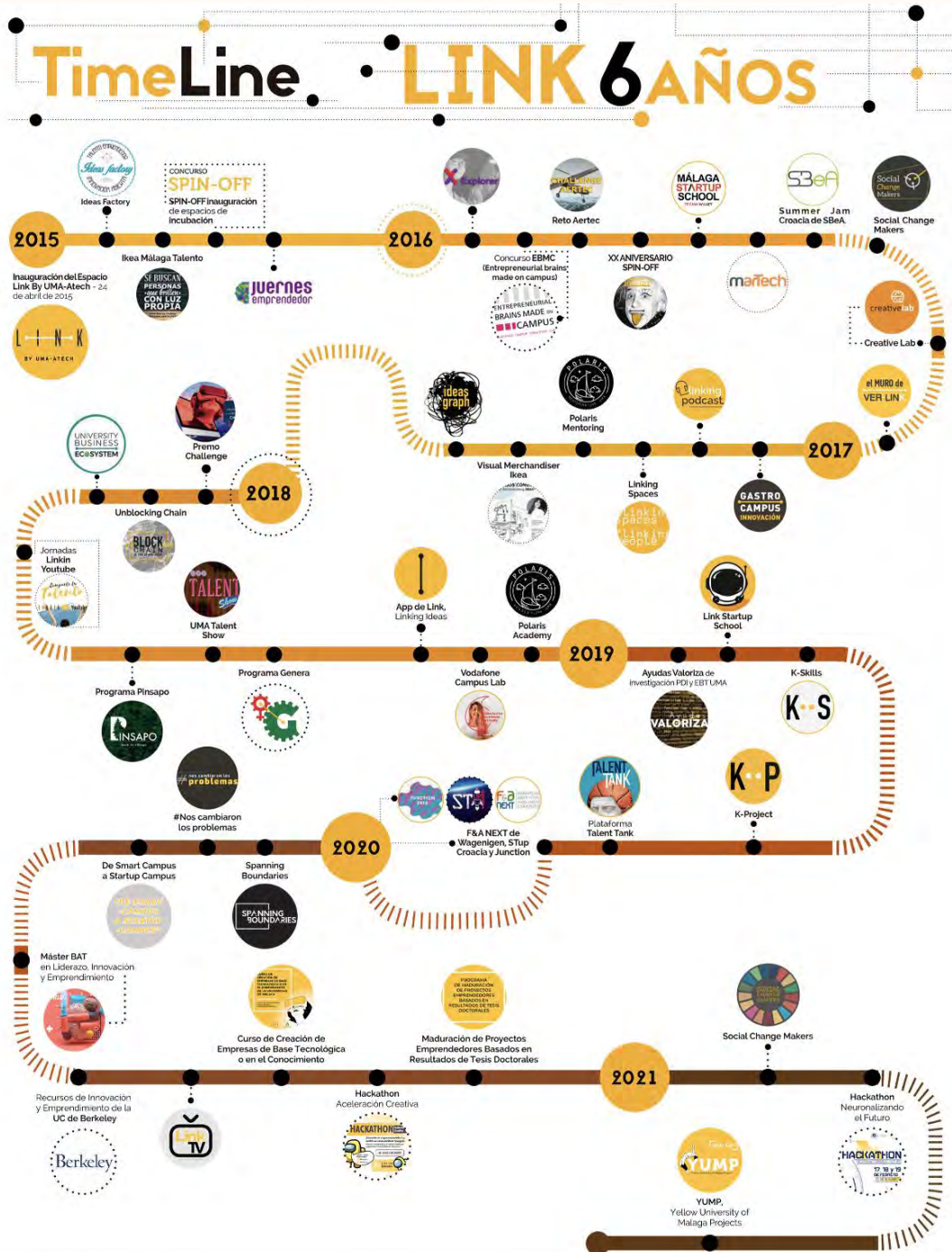


Figure 8. Activities and programs in Link by UMA

Testimonials

- "I think Link is a clear beg for innovation, they really try to be an entrepreneurial ecosystem, they are excellent in new programs, collaboration with enterprises and putting together the university with the future work of the students. I really think the University of Malaga is pioneer and different to other universities in this aspect". **Carlos Guevara, entrepreneur.**
- "Link is something new in the University context (...) It's a new relationship model". **David Páez, Corporación Tecnológica de Andalucía.**
- "The way of connecting people and developing ideas is different, accessibility is the norm, this is the "Link philosophy"". **Juan Aguilar, Professor.**
- "I think Link is a clear beg for innovation, they really try to be an entrepreneurial ecosystem, they are excellent in new programs, collaboration with enterprises and putting together the university with the future work of the students. I really think the University of Malaga is pioneer and different for other universities in this aspect". **Alvaro Villacorta, Entrepreneur and investor.**
- "The secret of Link by UMA Atech and the PTA is that for me there is no distinction between the workers from the University of Malaga and those working at the PTA, we re all in the same boat (...) I believe it's a model to be imitated by other organisations that are very structured". **Felipe Romera, Director of Malaga Tech Park.**
- "The first breaking off in Link has been opening the university to the private company. This means come here, the University is not a closed organisation, needs to talk with you, needs you to be part of it". **Francisco Muñoz, Professor and entrepreneur.**
- "They do things in a different way. Now many organisations come here (to Link) and say: what are you doing? (...) And I have heard more than once: I want a Link in my city". **Alvaro Simon, manager of BIC Euronova.**
- "They success (Link's) is on the way they are connecting all parts: students, entrepreneurs, firms, etc. Link came in a good moment and is becoming a referent". **Karel Escobar, Tetuan Valley, entrepreneur and investor.**
- "Without spaces like Link the future would be impossible. There should be many Link by UMA (...) of course, innovation starts in considering a wide range of actors". **Beltran Berrocal, consultant.**

Figure 9. Testimonials stakeholder for Link by UMA

Images.









flash
SESSION4
HACKATHON

Un viaje de emprendimiento sostenible

