



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training



Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Synthesis report on 2009/10 study visits

Overview of the issue on the European agenda

Promoting entrepreneurship education has been one of the policy objectives of the EU and Member States for a considerable amount of time. Not only to encourage people to become entrepreneurs and, thus, help create jobs. Enterprises also need employees with entrepreneurial mindsets to be able to develop new work processes, products and services. People with entrepreneurial mindsets are also likely to adapt to change and manage transitions more easily. Despite a number of initiatives, systematic approaches have, however, remained scarce.

Europe 2020 - the EU's economic strategy for the coming decade - aims to create smart, sustainable and inclusive growth with greater coordination of national and European policy. As in previous strategies, entrepreneurship is acknowledged as a major driver of productivity through its role in supporting knowledge and innovation.

The Communication '*Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning*' (2006) stressed the importance of promoting a more entrepreneurial culture and of crafting a supportive environment for SMEs in order to create a European economy that has the capacity to compete successfully and grow. The Commission communication and the outcomes of a conference in Oslo in October 2006 aimed at integrating entrepreneurship education better into Europe's overall strategy for growth and jobs. They outlined what entrepreneurship education is trying to achieve and how this could be done.

In its broader sense, entrepreneurship education should foster attributes and attitudes like creativity, communication, self-confidence, taking initiative, team spirit, problem solving, taking calculated risk, leadership. Learning by doing, early contact with the world of business and training how to start a business could also encourage young people to consider self-employment as a career option.

The measures which were proposed to achieve these aims included: national entrepreneurship strategies which cover all levels and types of education, integrate entrepreneurship better into curricula as a horizontal element (entrepreneurial mindset) and a subject in its own right; assessing entrepreneurial skills and the impact of entrepreneurship education; innovative pedagogies, training teachers and providing incentives for entrepreneurship education⁽¹⁾.

The significance of entrepreneurship was further emphasised within the Commission's 2008 '*European Economic Recovery Plan*', with entrepreneurship noted as offering significant potential in stemming the loss of jobs, helping people return rapidly to the labour market (rather than face long-term unemployment and preparing the economic base to take advantage of the return of growth).

Entrepreneurship is also one of eight transversal key competences for lifelong learning within the Commission's *Education & Training 2010 Work Programme*, helping young people to be more creative and self-confident in whatever they undertake, and

(1)

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/support_measures/training_education/oslo/plen_th_b_00_weinberger_en.pdf

therefore necessary for personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability.

In the context of giving increased focus on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in Europe, a recent Cedefop report examined how guidance supports entrepreneurship learning and contributes to the development of entrepreneurs' career management skills⁽²⁾.

This synthesis report is based on the group reports of the study visits that took place in the 2009/10 academic year on the topic of developing entrepreneurship. It provides an overview of the main findings of nine study visits that took place in Cyprus, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Sweden, focusing on examples of:

- entrepreneurship education, such as integration of entrepreneurship into curricula, training for teachers and the dissemination of good practice resources and materials, and collaboration with businesses, etc.
- support for young entrepreneurs, such as courses on business awareness, planning and start-up, getting a loan for creating an enterprise, etc.

Although there is no consensus on the basic definitional issues within the broader literature, there is a common understanding of what entrepreneurship education is generally trying to achieve. In the 2007 'Key Competences for Lifelong Learning: European Reference Framework', DG EAC defined the competence 'sense of initiative and entrepreneurship' as an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. Specifically, this includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This helps individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace, to be aware of the context of their work and to seize opportunities, and it is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

Summary of findings from the group reports

The findings from the discussions that took place during the study visits under the theme of 'developing entrepreneurship' are organised around the following sections:

- **key findings from the study visits**, specifically that there has been movement towards general recognition of the importance of entrepreneurship education across the EU in recent years, but with variable progress in establishing the strategy and cross-sectoral partnership required to maximise the potential benefit;
- **common approaches identified across the participating countries**, in relation to strategic recognition of the value of entrepreneurship in driving socio-economic development with subsequent policy support, with an emphasis on collaboration between schools/colleges and business; and,
- **common challenges**, particularly around defining entrepreneurship, creating synergy across policy areas, and generating cooperation amongst educator and business stakeholder groups - a range of potential solutions are identified across the participating countries, including examples of good practice.

Key findings from the study visits

The most prominent messages from the study visits under the theme of 'developing entrepreneurship' can be summarised as follows:

- the development of the entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to turn ideas into action is a priority in each country. There are

⁽²⁾ Cedefop. Guidance supporting Europe's aspiring entrepreneurs - Policy and practice to harness future potential (forthcoming study).

similar approaches, but each country is at a different stage of implementation and/or has opted to adopt a unique approach to suit their national circumstances;

- the promotion of entrepreneurship particularly amongst young people is best guided through the creation of a strategy and integrated approach covering all levels of education and business support, taking into account the socio-economic context;
- strategy and policy is most successful where there is constant dialogue between education and business to ensure that both sides are aware of one another's needs and requirements.

Common approaches identified across the participating countries

There is a high degree of commonality across participating countries with similar kinds of approaches used to foster entrepreneurial skills.

- **Recognition of the value of entrepreneurship in driving socio-economic development**

Policies to promote entrepreneurship typically acknowledge (either explicitly or implicitly) the potential to generate significant societal benefit, in terms of economic and social impact. In this way, entrepreneurship programmes often focus on promoting economic inclusion for 'hard to reach' and/or underrepresented groups, driving regeneration and community development in deprived areas, and/or lessening dependency on welfare through linking entrepreneurship to welfare programmes i.e. through upskilling individuals to improve their chances of securing employment with an existing enterprise, or promoting self-employment through new business creation as a viable route out of unemployment.

- **Policy support for entrepreneurship education**

Creativity and innovation are considered to be core components of lifelong learning, with entrepreneurship education now commonly embedded within the national curricula from an early age. Content falls into three key categories:

- ✎ The acquisition of key (or core) skills: these may relate to literacy, numeracy, communications, information and communication technologies (ICT) and problem solving.
- ✎ Programmes designed to develop personal and social skills, such as team working; self-confidence; self-awareness; risk taking; problem solving; creativity; and the desire to innovate.
- ✎ Skills relating to business start-up or financial literacy, such as drafting business plans, marketing, financial management, sales, and human resource management.

Two themes occur across the study visit findings:

Simulation of a business ('learning by doing'): creation of virtual businesses, work on 'real world' problems, and the use of competition (in identifying the most viable ideas, obtaining funding, etc.). Activity often focuses on business planning and the production of services/products i.e. making a profit or loss within a protected but realistic environment.

Change in teaching and learning: integration of entrepreneurship into curriculum, with staff development to drive pedagogic change, i.e. guidance for entrepreneurship

learning. Only in some instances have robust indicators been developed to ensure teaching pedagogy is effective and is delivering the required outcomes (i.e. leading to measurable change in a student's level of self-confidence, ability to develop a business plan or desire to become self-employed).

- **Support for young entrepreneurs**

There are programmes designed to develop entrepreneurial activity to increase the business birth rate, including pre-incubation, incubation, start-up training, mentoring and technical support.

- **Collaboration between schools/colleges and business** refers to the creation of partnerships and networks to bring educators and businesses together to influence one another continuously and persuading businesses to offer facilities, such as work experience placements or staff time to supervise or mentor students doing work placements within companies.

Common challenges, potential solutions and examples of good practice

During study visits, participants visit educational and training institutions, learn about effective policies and practices, share their own experiences on the topic. As a result, some examples of good practice are identified that address the common challenges faced in different countries. These challenges are presented below, together with some good practices identified during the study visits that are worth further exploration and could potentially be adapted and transferred to other countries.

Difficulties in defining entrepreneurship

Policymakers, awarding/accrediting bodies and deliverers appear to use differing objectives and outcome definitions in explaining the entrepreneurship agenda; some focus on the acquisition of 'soft', qualitative outcomes such as attitudinal change or raised aspirations, whilst others focus on 'hard', quantitative outcomes such as the number of new businesses created. Even if a person has the skills and abilities of an entrepreneur, it does not necessarily mean he or she will set up a business or secure employment, although a link exists.

A lack of synergy across policy areas

Entrepreneurship education is evident at all levels of the education system (primary through to tertiary), but with little synergy across policy areas at the different geographic levels within a country and across nations within the EU.

Reliance on short-term project funding

Many entrepreneurship initiatives are funded using short-term project funding, which may not be available in the future (especially in the current financial climate). A key challenge facing policymakers and practitioners is how to mainstream these activities so that they take place on an ongoing basis without the need to apply for project-based funding continually.

Potential solutions:

Clearly defining objectives and identifying expected economic/social/environmental gains through the creation of a vision and strategy (with clearly assigned roles for each organisation) to ensure that policymakers, awarding/accrediting bodies and deliverers all understand the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of entrepreneurship education programmes.

Wherever possible, policymakers should find ways to incorporate entrepreneurial education into mainstream provision, perhaps by embedding it within broader

regeneration or development activity i.e. promoting social enterprise in deprived rural areas, or teaching basic business planning skills to people that are unemployed.

Good practice examples:

Skelleftea, Sweden (52): the Swedish notion of 'entrepreneur', particularly as taken forward in Skelleftea, has a strong ethical and social foundation. The study visit group was impressed by the coherence and clarity of the analysis, policies and vision at all levels; with a strong emphasis on creativity and entrepreneurship, schools, teachers and young people are all clear about what is important, and the direction in which they should all be heading. The geographic level of intervention was also seen to be significant: large enough for critical mass and provision of a good range of facilities and activities, but small enough for there to be human-scale interaction, feedback and warmth between participants.

MORAINÉ project, France (50): a project that helps participants overcome psychological resistance to becoming an entrepreneur, opens up thinking and encourages people to take charge of their own destiny through a three-step approach (1. look outside the box; 2. be creative; and, 3. use your own skills to develop ideas). The study visit group considered this example to be effective and easily transferable, culturally and economically.

Tameside Enterprise Innovation Labs, the UK (49): one of 13 government sponsored enterprise hubs in the North West of England, Tameside College has embedded the Enterprise Innovation Lab initiative into the general curriculum across all subject areas to introduce staff and students to entrepreneurship.

Transition Year, Ireland (48): a one-year programme designed to ease transition from the junior cycle to the senior cycle. The programme includes the development of the skills of personal enterprise and entrepreneurship, often through student-run mini businesses, with special support for teachers given through modular courses.

The entrepreneurship curriculum project, Finland (201): a curriculum is offered in post-compulsory education that ensures that all vocational students have an element of entrepreneurship and can opt into further opportunities such as setting up mini companies that operate within the college.

Lack of buy-in amongst educators: there has traditionally been a great deal of opposition to entrepreneurship and work-related learning in the mindset of many teachers, and many believe that core curriculum requirements do not leave them sufficient time to get involved in the development of entrepreneurship skills.

Potential solutions:

Clearly defined objectives for entrepreneurship education should be integrated into the curriculum across all levels of education, while it will be important to have allocated time in school timetables for entrepreneurship training.

Entrepreneurship education should be provided to all teachers at the initial teacher training level, so that all new teachers embed entrepreneurship education in their teaching from day one. In-service education must also be provided to teachers already in-post to show them how they can introduce entrepreneurial skills into their teaching and the benefits for young people if teachers manage to do so.

To change mindsets and inspire teachers, entrepreneurship resources should be developed and disseminated, in particular through the promotion of networking to share good practice.

Good practice examples:

Integrated entrepreneurship curriculum, Spain (48): entrepreneurial skills are built into the curriculum at all levels (from primary education to tertiary education) to ensure

that the approach adopted by each stakeholder group is consistent and complementary.

'Enterprise Village' (Tameside), the UK (49): an online one-stop shop for students and teachers, providing resources, information, professional development and support for entrepreneurship education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Educators can also review resources and materials of other schools, which allows them to build on other good practices.

Network for teaching entrepreneurship (NFTE), Ireland (48): this project provides free courses for at-risk students and those who have left mainstream education to help them explore their creative side. It also provides training for teachers, and financial help and support for students looking to set up a small business.

Research Centre for enterprise learning at Umeå University, Sweden (52): the conjoining of teacher education and enterprise learning/entrepreneurship in a single university department means that teachers are educated within a wider context (beyond pure pedagogy). They are encouraged to teach for a bigger purpose, hence entrepreneurship is reinvigorated and given a grounding in children, young people and their creativity.

Access to appropriate support for newly founded and start-up ventures: for those individuals wanting to progress beyond the development of personal skills towards the establishment of a new business venture, start-up support services are required. The focus has been on 'start up' to date. Follow-up support for newly founded businesses has, in general, being less readily available.

Potential solutions:

Provision of small amounts of funding and support (advice, guidance and mentoring) to encourage those starting out in business, and challenge them to succeed. The impact for this type of support is greatest where there is review and follow-up over the medium term.

Good practice examples:

Tameside Business Family (TBF), the UK (54): arranges for local delivery of government's intensive start-up support assistance through a third party organisation. Once a business is set up, a small grant is given, then the TBF offers ongoing support through advisors and contacts within existing local businesses. TBF are also able to signpost to other assistance or training where necessary.

FAS Kick Start, Ireland (48): provides support for existing businesses through a newly founded network called Kick Start.

Train 2000, the UK (51): delivers business awareness and start-up support across the Liverpool and Manchester regions, working with local government to undertake outreach through schools, colleges and children's centres. This is offered in differing formats for various target groups (i.e. women, young people, graduates, etc.) and includes the creation of support networks and incubator space.

Follow-up support is also provided in Poland for 6-12 months after funding has occurred, and in France 1-3 years after the business is created (48).

Lack of business buy-in: collaborative working requires a considerable investment of time and energy by public and private sector stakeholders, with businesses often taking a short-term view rather than seeing the long-term benefits in terms of the potential to identify talent and new recruits. Educators often therefore find it difficult to find companies that are willing to provide students with work-related learning opportunities. This reluctance has been exacerbated by the current economic situation, which is placing micro enterprises and SMEs under constant threat, which means that they frequently do not have the resources or staff to commit to

programmes offering work-placement opportunities to young people.

Potential solutions:

Development of relationships between the education and commercial sectors to ensure that both sides are up to date with the needs and requirements of the other is a process that takes time. It is therefore important to select the right companies that give the student a realistic, yet positive experience, with good role models that generate enthusiasm for a prospective career.

Study visit findings suggest that there is value in public sector partners developing communication strategies to encourage communities to embrace entrepreneurship in all its forms, and demonstrate the benefits of involvement to businesses (in terms of the potential to identify new recruits and understand/influence educational provision). Offering incentives for businesses to get involved might also improve participation rates i.e. tax incentives, subsidised training for staff, etc.

The involvement of business support agencies (chambers of commerce, etc.) in education (filling the skills gap that teachers may lack) and the integration of qualified business advisors and business networks within the process, can ensure a realistic and proactive communication and support structure between the educational establishment and the world of work (51).

Ambassador programmes, (e.g. SPARK Ambassadors Programme, UK) which lead by example and show positive role models, can encourage young people to develop their entrepreneurial ambitions and raise confidence and aspirations (51).

Good practice examples:

Young Enterprise in the UK, Sweden and Norway (49, 52 & 54) encourage students to start a business within the confines of the school. In these cases, teams of students set up real companies using real money, selling products or services to the general public (sometimes working with local businesses who offer mentoring and/or work experience). In addition to setting up a business, in Sweden, students have to pass an exam in entrepreneurship, which consists of the preparation and execution of a business plan.

Simulated training company (Matera), Italy (54): students set up and manage a virtual company over a three-year period, supported by local businesses. External relationships and interfaces are addressed through a Web site that imitates relations that would exist in real life.

Start-Up Cafe in Leuven (Belgium) and Coventry (UK), (54): this initiative bridges the gap between education and work, by providing students with the opportunity to start and run their own small cafe business in their school. The students are baking, taking money, serving, doing advertising and menus, etc., with teachers and partners acting as coaches.

Technikcollege, Sweden (52): an initiative promoting collaboration between schools, local authorities and industry through networking, placements, work-based learning, etc. The study group believed that the focus on partnership and on finding win-wins (rather than very concrete courses) brought significant benefits for schools in terms of better teaching, placements for students, etc. The fact that Technikcollege is a concept rather than a place helps to blur the boundary between school and industry, with collaboration becoming an ongoing process based on dialogue.

P-seminar, Germany (48): student participation in project work as a group is compulsory, lasting 3 semesters (2 lessons per week included in the normal course). Funded by the government but delivered in partnership with companies, it aims at developing soft skills such as teamwork, advanced computer skills, time management, etc.

Conclusions

To sum up, the findings of the study visits highlight that there are many common approaches and common challenges to developing entrepreneurship in the participating countries. In light of the difficulties presented by the current economic climate, entrepreneurship is recognised as a key driver of long-term sustainable economic growth through its potential to increase the business birth rate and grow local indigenous companies that have their roots firmly embedded in the local economy. It is also seen to offer the potential to realise significant returns in terms of economic inclusion through enhanced employability.

Considerable progress has been made to date across the participating countries, with study visit findings highlighting examples of good practice relating to the establishment of a clear strategy and vision to guide policy development in education and training (often with entrepreneurship incorporated into broader strategy aimed at socio-economic development, such as lifelong learning), the inclusion of entrepreneurship at all levels of the curriculum, and the development of networks and partnerships to promote collaboration between the education and the commercial sectors.

Though there is considerable scope for progress in ensuring that all participating countries are implementing good practice and are measuring the success of activity in this area, the findings of the study visits presented above resonate with the latest policy statements at the EU level, which define entrepreneurial skills as one of the eight key competences necessary for personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and enhanced employability⁽³⁾.

⁽³⁾ If you are interested in further information of policies and initiatives that countries have introduced within VET, you might want to consult Cedefop's policy report 'A bridge to the future. European policy for vocational education and training 2002-10'. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010 at <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/17297.aspx>

You may consult:

Related national policy reports by Cedefop's ReferNet available on:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/networks/refernet/index.aspx>

European Commission. Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry. Best procedure project: 'Entrepreneurship in vocational education and training'. Final report of the expert group (2009)

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/education-training-entrepreneurship/vocational/index_en.htm

ANNEX
LIST OF VISITS CITED IN THE TEXT

Visit number	Visit title	Country
46	Entrepreneurial skills? Yes you have!	Portugal
47	Enterprise learning - entrepreneurship and democratisation at school	Sweden
48	Fostering and teaching entrepreneurial skills	Ireland
49	Entrepreneurship in education	Cyprus
50	Employment and self-employment in depressed rural areas	France
51	Practice firms: preparing students for the global economy	Italy
52	Cultivating innovative minds and brave hearts - fostering tomorrow's entrepreneurs	Sweden
54	Simulated training company to develop new entrepreneurship competences	Italy
102	Innovative personalised learning at the secondary vocational level for young and adults	Finland