



## Embedding entrepreneurship competence in vocational education and training in Europe

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Online conference

#KeyCompetences  
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### Background paper for session

## 11.10 – 12.10 Interactive parallel sessions: navigating the paradoxes and solutions

### 5. The policy paradox: do those who act on policies participate in designing them?

Policies supporting entrepreneurship competence are often in place, but VET principals, and teachers and trainers are not always fully aware of them. The policy paradox raises questions about multi-level governance and stakeholder engagement in joint creation of policies, participatory approach in designing them, measuring the impact of policies, and the importance of research in evaluating and informing our actions.

There is no shortage of policy goals and instruments around the topic of entrepreneurship in VET. European, national and regional policies tend to pile up in a Tetris-like and not always orderly way. This results in an overwhelming and fragmented policy landscape. While sharing similar goals, the alignment of all these policy instruments can be challenging, due to different timeframes, overlapping agendas and, at times, contradictory demands. VET teachers remain largely unaware of or simply confused about the national and regional policy measures in place.

Entrepreneurship policy programmes and action plans support the embedding of entrepreneurship competence in VET through a series of specific goals, guidance and actionable measures in areas such as curricular and extra-curricular provision, teacher training and support, assessment, governance and quality assurance.

However, policy implementation is not always sufficiently monitored, and impact evaluation is a pending challenge. Monitoring and evaluation tend to concentrate on a limited set of indicators capturing the degree of satisfaction of participating learners and teachers through surveys. Often, none of them are fully suitable to evaluate the contribution of all these activities to the development and acquisition of entrepreneurship competence of VET learners.

Policy evaluations conducted in Finland (Finland. Education Evaluation Centre, 2018) and Sweden (IVA, 2022) identified several common challenges and areas for improvement in entrepreneurship education. Both recognised the need for improvement in evaluation methods, interdisciplinary approaches, and monitoring of strategic plans for entrepreneurship education. In Finland, the evaluation highlighted the need for effective communication and emphasis on versatility, multidisciplinary, and practical application of entrepreneurial skills. It also emphasised the importance of partnerships, networks, and monitoring in promoting entrepreneurship. However, challenges in verbalising the competence and limited awareness of national and regional strategies were identified. In Sweden, the workgroup emphasised the absence of guidelines for governance, leadership, and financing, as well as the lack of clear definitions and comprehensive guiding principles for entrepreneurship education. The development of teacher and professional training, along with the absence of an implementation plan, were also identified as shortcomings.

The scant research found in this area is mainly undertaken at the micro level (classroom, teacher, student) with few examples focusing on the meso level (VET provider) and the macro level (ecosystem and policy).

### Key discussion points

- Do policies on entrepreneurship really work in VET? If so, for whom and in which context?
- How can we advocate for more effective policies to develop entrepreneurial competence? Do those who act on policies (should) participate in designing them?
- Are national/regional entrepreneurship policies effectively communicated to VET teachers and school principals?
- How can we improve the monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation?

### **References** (in addition to [Cedefop research papers 2022-23](#))

Finland. Education Evaluation Centre (2018). Yrittämään oppii yrittämällä: Yrittäjyys ammatillisessa koulutuksessa ja korkeakouluissa -arviointi. [Entrepreneurship is learned by trying: entrepreneurship in VET and higher education: assessment].

IVA (2022). *Vi utbildar för framtiden nu. Inspel till en ny strategi för entreprenörskap i skolan* [We educate for the future now. Input to a new strategy for entrepreneurship in school].