

Embedding entrepreneurship competence in vocational education and training in Europe

28 September 2023
Online conference

#KeyCompetences
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PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2023

(indicated times are CET)

9.30 – 10.00 Registration and technical checks

10.00 – 10.15 Welcome address

Chair: Loukas Zahilas, *Head of department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop*

Mara Brugia, *Deputy Director, Cedefop*

Chiara Riondino, *Head of Unit VET, European Commission, DG EMPL*

10.15 – 10.30 Inspirational talk

The challenges and opportunities of implementing entrepreneurship as curriculum

Andreas Fejes, *Professor and chair of adult education research, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Linköping University, Sweden*

10.30 – 11.10 Entrepreneurship competence in VET: insights from Cedefop research

Main findings from eight European case studies that revealed key paradoxes in embedding entrepreneurship competence in VET

Dmitrijs Kuļšs, *research coordinator, Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop*
Iván Diego Rodríguez, *research team, Valnalón, Spain*

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

(see paradox descriptions on page 2)

1. The conceptual paradox: is the term 'entrepreneurship' supporting or hindering the development of the competence?

Moderator: Jaana Seikkula-Leino, *research team, University of Turku, Finland*

2. The curricular paradox: dedicated modules/subjects or cross-curricular approach?

Moderator: Mats Westerberg, *research team, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden*

3. The implementation paradox: broad goals versus narrow actions

Moderator: Olivier Toutain, *research team, Burgundy School of Business, France*

4. The employability paradox: does entrepreneurship competence improve the employment prospects?

Moderator: Christina Enichlmair, *research team, Austrian Institute for SME Research*

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

Moderator: Slavica Singer, *research team leader, J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia*

12.10 – 13.00 Comfort break

13.00 – 14.10 Panel discussion

Key findings, lessons learned, and inspiring practices discussed by the panellists (researchers, policy-makers, teachers/principals and learners/graduates)

Moderator: Daniele Morselli, *research team, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy*

14.10 – 14.30 Reflection on the day's discussions and outlining the path forward

Participants are invited to share:

- takeaways from the conference;
- needs for future research

Moderator: Loukas Zahilas, *Head of department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop*

14.30 End of the conference

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DESCRIPTION

The conference aims to engage key stakeholders from the European vocational education and training (VET) landscape (including VET providers, policy-makers, social partners and researchers) in a focused and collaborative discussion on entrepreneurship competence in VET.

The conference seeks to:

- promote a focused debate on entrepreneurship competence in European VET;
- examine enabling and hindering factors for integrating entrepreneurship competence in VET;
- share inspiring practices for improving VET entrepreneurial learning ecosystems.

FIVE PARADOXES

These paradoxes will be the focus of our discussions during the interactive parallel sessions

In the multifaceted landscape of VET, embedding entrepreneurship competence is accompanied by intriguing paradoxes that have been identified through case studies conducted in Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, Latvia, Spain and Sweden. They invite us to delve deeper into the complexities and challenges related to the definitions we employ, the curricular approaches we adopt, the environment we work in, the implementation strategies we utilise, and the impact we aspire to achieve. Paradox thinking is not about opting for one way or the other. Each paradox represents an opportunity to question our assumptions, reconsider our methods, and reshape our understanding of entrepreneurship in the VET context.

1. The conceptual paradox: is the term ‘entrepreneurship’ supporting or hindering the development of the competence?

The conceptual paradox is about how we use and misuse the term ‘entrepreneurship’. Is it right to label everything that seems creative and innovative in VET as ‘entrepreneurship’? Can the entrepreneurship label hinder the embedding of entrepreneurship competence?

2. The curricular paradox: dedicated modules/subjects or cross-curricular approach?

The curricular paradox triggers a debate on whether we should have specific subjects/modules for entrepreneurship, or whether it should be included in all subjects (cross-curricular). Is having entrepreneurship-specific subjects a good idea or does it limit flexibility and the meaning of entrepreneurship, and lower motivation of teachers and trainers to invest in the development of the competence? This session will also address the concern that integrating entrepreneurship into all subjects may water down the skills learned.

3. The implementation paradox: broad goals versus narrow actions

The implementation paradox urges us to consider the gap between the intention to deliver the entrepreneurship competence as a broad transversal skill (rather than just for starting up a business) and how it is actually implemented through narrow actions (mainly mini-companies, virtual firms and work-based learning). Can these actions naturally develop entrepreneurial skills in VET learners, or is this just wishful thinking?

4. The employability paradox: does entrepreneurship competence improve the employment prospects?

One of the selling points for developing entrepreneurship competence in VET is that it improves the employability prospects of learners in addition to the ability of starting up their own business. However, our field research hints that employers, particularly in sectors with labour shortages, may give priority to technical skills when hiring VET graduates. The employability paradox pushes us to look closely at what employers across Europe really want when they ask for entrepreneurship competence.

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.