



EUCIS-LLL POSITION AND COMPENDIUM OF GOOD PRACTICES “FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSETS”

June 2013

Within the last ten years, entrepreneurship skills have been prioritised in the EU agenda for a more competitive and innovative Union; this interest for our citizens' sense of initiative and creativity has even increased in a context of crisis where growth and employment are the key words for recovery. EUCIS-LLL points out the need to better define the concept, approach and scope of entrepreneurship education as a condition for trust and collaboration between actors. EUCIS-LLL particularly stresses the need to have a broad understanding of the entrepreneurship competence as a set of transversal competences not only aimed at setting up a business. It also raises awareness on the need to develop social entrepreneurship, teacher training and recognition and validation of entrepreneurial competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning. This paper follows up on the outcomes of the workshop held on entrepreneurship competences during EUCIS-LLL 2013 Annual Conference as well as a policy debate on “Entrepreneurship skills: common understanding? Common expectations?” organised in the European Parliament and hosted by MEP Heinz K. Becker in June 2013.

EUCIS-LLL Key messages

- Agree on and promote a broad understanding of entrepreneurship as a set of key transversal competences for various personal and professional purposes;
- Better and broader define learning contents and outcomes and mainstream them in all curricula from an early age;
- Insert social entrepreneurship in entrepreneurship education;
- Acknowledge teachers and other learning facilitators as key agents of change towards quality entrepreneurship education with proper initial and continuing training;
- Bridge formal, non-formal and informal learning environments as equally favourable settings to develop entrepreneurship competences;
- Provide specific support and training for future entrepreneurs;
- Develop validation schemes to boost self-recognition and further learning;
- Foster an adequate policy framework at national and EU level for a coherent approach to entrepreneurship education, embedded into EU lifelong learning strategies.

Coming back to basics: a holistic vision of entrepreneurship mind-sets

1. From a common definition to a common understanding: entrepreneurship is not always business

The need to foster entrepreneurial mind-sets as mentioned in the 2000 Lisbon Council Conclusions had more than a decade to mature and be prioritised in the EU political agenda. The role of education in fostering entrepreneurship abilities had especially a growing significance in the framework of recent skills and employment strategies; yet before assessing their contribution to more growth and jobs, it is important to clearly define them. To this purpose, the 2006 European Key Competences Framework is still very much used and there is a broad consensus on the fact that the entrepreneurship competence is a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes mostly aimed to make an individual capable of “*turning ideas into action*”. But today **the “skills” concept is the most commonly used while it is extremely reductive**. Indeed narrowing the definition to a certain type of abilities or professional purposes is counter-productive for the Europe 2020 objectives, as it does not fully exploit employability perspectives and reduces the scope to a certain type of sector. Keeping a broad definition of the entrepreneurship competence makes it more inclusive, enlarges its scope and extends the range of stakeholders that can feel concerned and show support.

The semantics is also very important when assessing what the entrepreneurship competence is useful for. “Entrepreneurship education” is a widely spread term but relevant stakeholders usually consider that **the competence behind it can be used for a whole range of different purposes**: not only to build your own business. Indeed, being a team-player or knowing how to manage projects will be useful in many other jobs (often defined as “*intrapreneurship*”). Besides, the entrepreneurship competence is also much about adaptability and anticipation of labour market trends, meaning thinking employment as constant evolution. Second, because acquiring this competence will also personally enrich the learners and make them better citizens. They should use the agreed European definition in order to move towards a common understanding on “**entrepreneurship skills**” understood as a set of “**transversal competences**”¹.



European Key competences framework 2006

Definition: sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and 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.

Recommendation: EUCIS-LLL welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to work on a reference framework for the entrepreneurship competence. Stakeholders should define together the specific transversal competences needed to develop entrepreneurial

¹ Among which but not exhaustively: *Leadership, Initiative, Creative, Openness, Collaborative, Communicative, Responsible, Inquisitive, Competitive, Willingness to explore, Willingness to question, Ability to think critically, Ability to take risks, Ability to make risk assessments, Willingness to experiment, Able to plan, Ability to judge, Ability to take decisions, Ability to prioritise, Digital competences...*

mindsets. The concept “competence” should be used instead of “skills”, that is too reductive.



Good practice: the MIROIR project, FEDEC (European Federation of Professional Circus Schools)

The [MIROIR](#) project is a survey launched to gather information on how the circus schools and the teaching they provide are viewed by the sector and by their former students, by creating an interaction between the labour market and the former students. The circus arts sector obviously requires its artists to master and use a defined set of skills, some of which deal mainly with technical and artistic know-how. It is the Fedec’s hope that the key skills identified through the surveys will act as a starting point for professional development, and career and performance management in the long-term, through the development of training. One of the competences identified (seen in the project as additional key competences to artistic know-how) and adapted to the circus context was the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. The main conclusion of the survey was that better communication between training centres and the circus sector employers is desirable. Several recommendations were thus formulated for the Fedec, all in favour of consolidating the connections between employers and schools.

Different learning settings to acquire entrepreneurship competences

1. Develop entrepreneurship education from an early age

Another **challenge lies in the way entrepreneurship education is taught** across Europe. EU studies have shown that the situation from one Member State to another and within each is very different: some have included it in broader lifelong learning strategies (Czech Republic, Austria); some have already implemented a specific entrepreneurship education for a long time (Lithuania in 2003, the UK in 2004) while others are currently leading reforms to do so (Bulgaria, Spain). Within countries, the way entrepreneurship competences are taught greatly varies according to sectors (i.e. much more significant in VET) and education levels; generally, the higher education is, the more likely entrepreneurship is a specific or separate module (while it is more mainstreamed in curricula in primary or secondary education)². It implies to implement active learning pedagogies and creativity on behalf of the learning and of the teachers/educators.

Recommendation: if entrepreneurship education aims to foster transversal competences for a better management of learners’ personal and professional life, those competences shall be mainstreamed in curricula from a very early age, and should not be business-oriented.

² See “Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe”, Eurydice for the European Commission, 2012



Good practice: Entrepreneurship Module for Certification, Centre of Expertise on VET & the Labour Market for the Trade Sector (KCH), EVTA (the European Vocational Training Association)

The [Entrepreneurship Module for Certification](#) in the Netherlands, developed by [KCH](#) (member of [EVTA](#)) and partnering the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, gives upper secondary vocational education institutes the option to add entrepreneurship (seven work processes elaborated in competences, knowledge and skills) to existing vocational training courses. This is a partial answer to the struggle of the Dutch government to embed entrepreneurship within upper secondary vocational education curricula. Centres such as KCH are responsible for prescribing at national level educational requirements for a qualification that will be endorsed by the Dutch government and act as a directive. This module has been therefore embedded since 2011-12 in the national qualification structure for upper secondary vocational education. It aims to be exported in other EU countries and contribute to create international standards. The module also ambitions to be included in all curricula and adapted to all EQF (European Qualifications Framework) levels with specific learning outcomes in a lifelong learning approach. In 2016, yearly 3 to 5% of Dutch VET students should get access to the module.

2. Insert social entrepreneurship in entrepreneurship education

It is essential to develop and encourage social entrepreneurship as a way to develop new answers to current social and ecological challenges. Social enterprise is used to refer to a different way of doing business, which occurs when enterprises are created specifically to pursue social goals (i.e. foundations, mutuals, cooperatives, associations). Today social entrepreneurship and the social economy is still largely absent from the classrooms. Young people are generally much more keen in developing social projects and it thus represents a great opportunity for them to acquire entrepreneurship competences. It is an appropriate way to foster a better understanding between the education and labour market world as the ambitions of social entrepreneurship better match values taught in school such as solidarity and team work as well as being creative, setting up plans, presenting and defending a project.

Recommendation: social entrepreneurship should be inserted within entrepreneurship education activities in schools, universities, vocational education and training and in non-formal education.



Good practice: Bellacoopia: cooperative business competition at school

[Contact 2103](#), an international youth NGO, counts among its members the Legacoop national network (1250 regional level cooperatives). Legacoop Emilia-Romagna in particular is the initiator of a strategic action named [Bellacoopia](#). It is addressed to upper secondary schools to sensitise young generations to cooperative values such as solidarity. Bellacoopia supports young students to create virtual cooperative enterprises to experience what running a business means. Each class develops a business idea, supported by teachers, tutors and experts. The most innovative ideas are awarded. 1497 students were involved in 2012. Bellacoopia is a perfect example of cooperative work also at policy level as it is financed by local, regional and national public funds as well as local banks, foundations and organisations, chambers of commerce, local cooperatives, etc.



Good practice: SETYL project: Social Entrepreneurship Training for Youth Leaders

The International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) has set up a [programme](#) giving innovative tools to individuals who are interested in the concepts of social innovation and social entrepreneurship for a better future. The aim of the programme is to transform traditional young volunteers into agents of social change who can scale up the potential and impact of existing social enterprises and/or innovations. It encourages participants to link social work and entrepreneurship as a means of working towards the public good; the SETYL programme explores how social entrepreneurship can enhance the impact of volunteer work and enhance the voluntary experience of the participants.

3. Empower teachers and facilitators as agents of change

Within the scope of formal education, studies have shown that teachers are often the key agents of change when it comes to moving entrepreneurship education reforms forward. Besides teachers are the first learning facilitators that could **mainstream entrepreneurship education within curricula** instead of making it incidental and additional to traditional courses³. However many are reluctant to entrepreneurship education as they feel it has a very narrow objective (business setting) and requires from them new ways of working. It is important to **raise awareness on the concept, approach and scope** of entrepreneurship education as a pre-condition for trust and collaboration between actors. Without the **adhesion** and enthusiasm of teachers/facilitators, entrepreneurship education cannot be implemented successfully. Yet, in order for them to be the actors of a paradigm shift, **they need to receive quality training**. For instance teachers should be able to liaise with entrepreneurs and define learning objectives in partnership with them. They also need to be provided with the **right support and resources in order to implement learner-centred strategies**. In **non-formal and informal settings**, the same applies with trainers, youth workers, volunteers, etc. that should be properly trained and supported.

While we emphasize the role of the pedagogical team here, there is a danger to put pressure on its sole shoulders, to be the catalysts for change. They are perceived here as the essential links of a chain of stakeholders that should be all empowered to enable systemic change. From public authorities designing curricula, to the learners themselves setting up their own entrepreneurship projects, everyone should be incited to deliver the vision.

Recommendation: raise awareness on the concept, approach and scope of entrepreneurship education and provide quality initial and continuing training including practical training on how to implement and assess transversal competences. Working in team and being able to liaise with external actors (parents, entrepreneurs, NGOs, cities, etc.) is also key. EUCIS-LLL welcomes in that sense the work of the European Commission on a manual to teach entrepreneurship education.

³ [Building entrepreneurial mindsets and skills in the EU](#), European Commission, 2012



Good practice: Ent-teach project – Lifelong Learning Programme

The [Ent-teach](#) project, partnering the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training ([EfVET](#)), has an innovative practical approach to stimulating entrepreneurship among students in VET institutions by providing their teachers with the tools and materials to educate, inspire and motivate their students for them to be able to pursue a career as an entrepreneur. Most teachers are unaware of the next steps a student takes after graduation. Relations between teachers and the world of work should be improved, especially the relations between VET teachers and former VET students of (start-up) micro firms. With this project, teachers gain insight to competences that are required for the entrepreneurs of today and tomorrow, involve entrepreneurs (former students) in the classroom and can better interest, support and educate VET students to pursue a career as an entrepreneur.



Good practice: LIFE 2 “Transfer of Innovation Project” – Lifelong Learning Programme

The European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training ([EfVET](#)) is working on the [LIFE 2](#) project. The LIFE 2 project team developed a ‘Train the Trainer’ pack including a range of resources and examples for teachers to use within vocational learning. These resources help to develop the employability and entrepreneurship skills of learners. Employers were involved throughout the project to check that workplace needs were addressed including ‘soft’ skills. Pilot results showed that the LIFE 2 resources helped teachers and learners to connect with employers and the real world and stimulated creativity and entrepreneurial thinking through activities. Following the pilot, new resources have been developed, many of which help to develop entrepreneurial skills. The Pack is transferable to other countries and can be used in all levels of vocational education.

4. Recognise the role of non-formal and informal learning to develop entrepreneurship

It is essential to take into consideration **non-formal and informal learning as privileged environments** to acquire entrepreneurship competences. Entrepreneurship mind-sets are mostly about “know-how” rather than academic knowledge. For example the involvement in volunteering experiences such as youth work can be beneficial for young persons. The [“Study on the impact on non-formal education in youth organisations on young people’s employability”](#), authored by the University of Bath/GHK consulting for the European Youth Forum found that 5 out of the 6 most demanded skills in the labour market are those developed in youth organisations. Furthermore, there is sometimes a gap between formal and non-formal education. The involvement in volunteering activities should particularly be acknowledged and encouraged by educational institutions but also by employers, that are often not enough aware of the benefits of such learning experiences. Indeed, volunteering enables individuals to gain or develop entrepreneurial competences such as teamwork, personal confidence, motivating oneself and others, etc. These experiences and the development of these competences are seldom acknowledged. At last, one should not neglect the potential of international experiences when linking non-formal and informal learning to entrepreneurship competences. As learning abroad is a mean for gaining a broad set of skills (i.e. language and intercultural skills), broaden their horizon and boosting their self-confidence, EU programmes such as Erasmus Placements or Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs should be further developed.

Recommendation: acknowledge and assess entrepreneurial competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning and encourage a positive volunteering environment. Create

bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning. Encourage learners to value the competences gained in their CV; raise awareness among employers.



Good practice: Youth UnEmployment project (European School of Entrepreneurship) – Youth Employment Action Consortium, AEGEE

In the framework of the [Youth Employment Action](#), the European Students' Forum ([AEGEE](#)) launched the [Youth UnEmployment project](#) aiming to help young people to increase their employability. A series of activities are implemented to advocate for a better recognition of non-formal education as it has been identified as a critical factor for youth employment. One of those actions is the [European School of Entrepreneurship](#) (ESE), a non-formal education course (workshops, case studies, practical sessions, information, experience sharing) to help young people taking the first step in creating their own business. By the end of 2012, the ESE action had already entered its 2nd cycle.



Good practice: National Network of Junior Associations (RNJA), France

The Junior Association is a flexible framework that allows a group of young people aged 12-18 to implement projects in a simplified associative process. The associations shall respect some values and basic criteria such as having a democratic functioning. Youth workers or professionals, policy-makers, parents and adults cannot be members or representatives of a Junior Association but the association can ask to be supported by a local advisor that they will designate. When recognised by the RNJA, the association benefits from an insurance that covers their activities and members, they can open and manage a bank account (partnerships with banks), they can receive help from professionals, access tools and be part of a larger community. The [RNJA](#) is an association that consists of more than 800 Junior Associations, gathering 8500 young people.

5. Support and develop partnerships and cross-sectoral cooperation

This brings us to the idea that **partnerships should not only be foreseen between formal education and businesses** but also with other stakeholders such as civil society and regional and local authorities, that are also as mentioned above high quality learning providers and are often much more in advance than education systems when it comes to teaching transversal competences such as entrepreneurship. Both parties can benefit from transectorial collaboration (“**entrepreneurial ecosystems**”) based on **mutual trust**.

Recommendation: communication is lacking between the world of education and business; the way education actors see labour market actors has to be improved, while more incentives are needed to convince businesses to get involved in education and training.



Good practice: Cross Border Virtual Incubator (CBVI) – Lifelong Learning Programme

The European network for open and flexible education ([EADTU](#)) is a partner of the [CBVI project](#) that aims to systematically improve discussion and cooperation between higher education institutions and regional stakeholders in order to optimise the opportunities for entrepreneurship and the design of the associated entrepreneurship ecosystem. To improve the skilling of individuals in enterprise start-up, it hosts multiple development pilots, which are regional, and are conducted with students, stakeholders, SMEs and multipliers. Through those partnerships, the CBVI project fosters a holistic vision of entrepreneurship education by reaching education providers beyond traditional universities and potential entrepreneurs beyond students.

Supporting entrepreneurs

1. Provide specific support and training for future entrepreneurs

If the education systems shall provide basic and transversal competences, it is important to support those who want to become entrepreneurs in their endeavours. Here again having a partnership approach is essential. Employment services, Chambers of commerce, vocational institutions can all contribute to **coach and advise** those who wish to start a business. This is particularly important since **practical experiences** are indispensable; while this is more and more acknowledged in formal education with the inclusion of internships or traineeships in curricula (in particular in VET with dual systems), more needs to be done to develop bridges between the labour and the education world. Students should be taken out of the classroom into the local community and real businesses including social enterprises.

Recommendation: EUCIS-LLL supports the proposal of the European Commission that all young people shall benefit from at least one practical entrepreneurial experience before leaving compulsory education. Specific support should be provided to those willing to open their business in a coherent way linking employment, regional, training policies.



Good practice: Women Entrepreneurs in Rural Tourism – Lifelong Learning Programme

Developing the entrepreneurship skills of women in rural communities was identified as a way to stimulate rural economies, encourage young people to stay and improve the wellbeing of local communities. The [WERT](#) project, partnering the European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training ([EFVET](#)), produced and tested a course to develop the business skills of women entrepreneurs in both existing and new start businesses. The course helped to develop the entrepreneurial mindset and covered areas such as marketing, e-marketing, finance, legal and developing a sustainable business plan. A wide range of resources included a win-win game to encourage networking and community development. The delivery of a flexible and informal training programme was adapted to meet local needs. Workshops were held close to where the women lived and helped them to build their own supportive networks.



Good practice: FREE (Fostering Return to Employment through Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Creativity) - Lifelong Learning Programme

The [FREE project](#), partnering the **European Distance and E-learning Network (EDEN)**, aims to make people who work with the unemployed (i.e. counsellors, trainers) gain hard and soft skills in the areas of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity. This should allow them to provide better support to those who want to reintegrate the labour market or set up their own business. Therefore one of the premises of the FREE project is that entrepreneurship education is not only made for young entrepreneurs but also to make people in difficulty more employable; besides, the competences to do so are perceived in a holistic way, including knowledge, skills and abilities.



Good practice: ENTANGLE – Lifelong Learning Programme

The European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training ([EfVET](#)) is involved in the [ENTANGLE](#) project: “Entrepreneurship trainers for VET: a novel generation learning approach”. ENTANGLE provides VET teachers with materials and tools to improve the quality of entrepreneurship training and develop new programmes better adjusted to the business world. It also aims to provide them with the skills and competences in order to cope with future challenges. In particular, the project will optimise their position and practical role in between students and current start-ups and/or small entrepreneurs. The project’s ultimate goal is to have more VET students starting their own enterprise.

2. Develop validation schemes to boost self-recognition and further learning

The **validation of prior learning is a key step in an entrepreneur’s career-path**, as self-employment begins with a self-recognition of entrepreneurial competences and skills. Their legal recognition shall be therefore systematised across Europe, notably via the related [2012 Council Recommendation](#). Entrepreneurship education should be perceived in a holistic way, as it encompasses a whole set of competences that cannot be acquired and valued without more flexible learning pathways. **Validation systems also frame entrepreneurship education in a lifelong learning perspective**, as it gives opportunities for reorientation and second chances and increase workers’ adaptability and self-esteem. Validation can also be a pathway to further learning.

Recommendation: EUCIS-LLL encourages Member States to set up validation mechanisms that take into account learning acquired in all kinds of settings.

The need for a coherent policy framework

1. A national transectoral dialogue to support the paradigm shift

Ultimately, the recommendations above – adopting a broader definition and goal of entrepreneurship mind-sets, mainstreaming entrepreneurship education in curricula, bridging different learning settings, fostering cooperation between stakeholders... - cannot be achieved without consistent reforms at national and EU levels. Comparative research has shown how diverse the situation is between and within Member States, and **no efficient reforms can be led without seeing the big picture**. As much as best grassroots practices can lead to bottom-up innovation and change, policy-makers from education and employment also have to enter into a transectoral dialogue in order to **provide the right conditions for a paradigm shift in entrepreneurship education**: providing spaces for dialogue and exchange of experience, adequate financial support, leading research, coordinate policies, raising awareness, etc.

2. Strengthen European cooperation and monitoring mechanisms

At EU level, the same transversal cooperation mechanisms should take place in order to establish common standards for teaching contents, methods, competence assessment and validation; collect and disseminate good practices and enable a European debate; mainstream entrepreneurship education priorities in EU strategies (i.e. Entrepreneurship 2020 Action plan) and funding programmes (as it is already the case via the Lifelong Learning Programme and the European Social Fund) and ensure complementarities between actions

in a **comprehensive lifelong learning approach**; and finally to establish a set of indicators to measure progress in entrepreneurship education reforms across EU countries in a common monitoring framework⁴.

Recommendation: EUCIS-LLL thus supports the proposal of the European Commission to publish policy guidance on entrepreneurship education in 2013 and establish, jointly with the OECD, a guidance framework for entrepreneurial education institutions, as well as develop tools to monitor progress and the acquisition of entrepreneurial competences such as self-assessment frameworks for schools, VET schools and universities. We hope that those guidelines will take into account our recommendations.

Who is EUCIS-LLL?

The European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL) brings together 31 European organisations working in education and training. Together, they cover all sectors of education and training including networks for primary, secondary and higher education, vocational education and training, adult education and popular education. Together they represent millions of students, school heads, parents, human resources professionals, teachers and trainers, reaching out to hundreds of millions learners all over Europe and beyond.



For more information, please contact EUCIS-LLL secretariat: info@eucis-lll.eu

⁴ [Study on Support to Indicators on Entrepreneurship Education](#), GHK/European Commission, 2011