

Making European schools more entrepreneurial will benefit the economy, the schools and young people

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Increasing the amount and quality of hands-on entrepreneurial experiences offered to young people at school brings proven benefits to the economy, the schools as well as young people. The joint Education and Economic Affairs Ministerial meeting is a unique opportunity to create the necessary links between policies addressing education issues, skills, and labour market needs. Enhancing entrepreneurship competences of young people within the education systems will make the transition from school to work life smoother for young people, also to the benefit of future employers and the economy as a whole. EU Member States should therefore commit to reviewing their national curricula to assess whether entrepreneurship education is a course component in the school curriculum for all young people, at different levels of education. Success stories of such strategies can be found in recent research: <http://innovation-clusters.icee-eu.eu/ICEE/National-Strategies/Comparative-Analysis-of-Eight-National-Strategies-on-Entrepreneurship-Education>

The triple payoff of Entrepreneurship Education is explained along the three sections below.

1. Entrepreneurship Education as a driver of the economy

Longitudinal studies among alumni across different geographies have proven **the long term impact of entrepreneurship education on employability, economic growth and job creation.**

- An external evaluation in Sweden shows that JA alumni are finding jobs within 4 months after graduation while for the control group the period was 11 months or more.
- Another study in Norway also shows JA alumni have a 12% higher average income and are 44% more likely to occupy leadership positions. The JA Company Programme also proves to increase the probability of an individual starting a firm later in life.
- A study in the UK shows that JA Company Programme alumni demonstrate start-up rates which are three times as high (15%) than among the average population in Europe (5%-6%). In addition, these companies tend to employ more people, are more innovative and diverse.

2. Entrepreneurship Education as a way to modernise teaching and education

If Europe wants to cultivate entrepreneurial mind-sets and produce more entrepreneurs as a long-term outcome of its policies, one key action is to build entrepreneurship education as a core element into the European education systems. We must encourage EU Member States to increase the focus and support of entrepreneurship education, and other innovative ways of teaching, throughout the educational system.

- Research has demonstrated that entrepreneurship education creates a collective engagement of all members of the school community (leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, and business community) resulting in a positive impact on the school environment. The relationship between teachers and students seems to shift in positive ways, and teachers and students found

themselves on more equal terms through their work, with relationships that are more informal and cooperative in nature. Studies have shown how creating such environments can increase the students' "sense of belonging" at school, promoting inclusion and reducing drop-outs.

- Innovation is also an important element still missing in many education systems, and up to 75% of European teachers do not feel encouraged to bring innovation to the classroom. Teachers as facilitators of entrepreneurial learning need more training and other support.
- Benefits of Entrepreneurship Education are especially visible for Vocational Education and Training (VET), and therefore entrepreneurial learning should be an integral part of VET education.

Broad stakeholder involvement is one of the success factors of strengthened impact of entrepreneurship education. As highlighted in recent research such as the ICEE (Innovation Cluster for Entrepreneurship Education: <http://www.icee-eu.eu/the-research/final-report.htm,l>), parents and school leaders play a critical role in this process, in addition to teachers and policy-makers. All stakeholders need to be informed about and engaged in developing entrepreneurial work readiness competences of young people.

3. Entrepreneurship Education equips young people to succeed in the global economy

We believe that every young person should be able to acquire at school the entrepreneurship competences identified in the EntreComp key competence framework.

- Entrepreneurship education builds **competences** that are in high demand and at the same time essential for future job creation. This sets an important challenge for the education systems all over Europe as key drivers of job creation, innovation and the development of key competences for young generations.
- Entrepreneurship education **improves school performance** by stimulating the development of key competences such as mathematical, digital and communication skills, and stimulates a positive impact into other subjects as well.
- **Positive behavior and attitudes:** research on the impact of entrepreneurship education shows that students become more motivated to learn and that they perceive their education as meaningful.
- As a result of the real work experience and exposure to business volunteers, young people with entrepreneurial experiences show **clearer career goals and aspirations**.
- Students who have had a practical entrepreneurial experience at school have **higher entrepreneurial ambitions** later on.

CALL TO ACTION: Ministers of Education and of Economic Affairs shall commit to:

- ⇒ Increased cross-ministerial coordination at national and European level in order to align education to the needs of the labour market;
- ⇒ Reviewing their national strategies for education and economic policy which should both include an emphasis on Entrepreneurship Education as a way to equip young people with the skills they need;
- ⇒ Ensuring that young people are a horizontal priority in the future Strategic Agenda for Europe across all policy fields.