



NEWSLETTER

First meeting in the TWG on Entrepreneurship Education

5-6 December 2011



Madou Tower, DG Education and Culture

On 5-6 December 2011, 33 national experts and policy makers from 20 countries gathered for the first Thematic Work Group on Entrepreneurship Education in Brussels at the European Commission. The purpose was to explore the opportunities, challenges and focus areas for moving the Entrepreneurship Education agenda forward as well as creating a road-map for the group's work for the coming year.

The meeting was highly participatory building on the input of the participants and provided a co-created agenda and some rough outlines for the work ahead. A second meeting is already planned in the beginning of next year where the proposals for the different sub-workgroup meetings and the roadmap will be finalised.

5.12.2011

Welcome and purpose

Carlo Scatoli, Acting Head of the Unit "Skills and Qualifications" in DG Education and Culture, highlighted that 'Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship' is seen as a key competence, but lacks a sustainable focus in national education systems and curricula similar to other key competences as mother tongue and math, science and technology. However, it is also important to underline that putting entrepreneurship into the curriculum does not mean that everyone will/should become an entrepreneur, just as not everybody becomes a mathematician because there is mathematics in the curriculum. But as it is important to have math skills, it is important to be entrepreneurial to cope with uncertainty and to be able to take initiative when needed.



Acting Head of Unit Carlo Scatoli welcomed everyone

Mr. Scatoli mentioned that the Thematic Working Group has been set up under the Open Method of Coordination. The invitation is to exchange ideas, discuss and test solutions between countries and provide valuable input to European and national policymaking. This was one of the reasons why a participatory working method had been chosen. He expressed that he was confident that the group would produce effective deliverables.

Policy Officer Sannie Fisker explained that the purpose of a Thematic Work Group is to work on a specific area of priority, for a given period of time. The groups can set their own work programme and decide the output and ensure the dissemination of it. And during its first meeting, the Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education was invited to do just that.



Policy Officer Sannie Fisker introduced the purpose of the meeting

The mandate of the group is found in the strategic framework for cooperation in Education and Training – the ET2020. Here, the 4th strategic objective is to "Enhance creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training". And, as it is highlighted in the council conclusions of May 2009 on ET2020, it is crucial that the transversal key competences, including sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, are acquired by all citizens, calling for a lifelong learning perspective, including adult education as well as non-formal learning.



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Round of introductions

Check-in

The meeting started by a round of introductions and some reflections on, why each participant had chosen to accept their nomination and join the workgroup.

The introductions revealed a diversity of experiences ranging from 25 years in the field to being fairly new, as well as different reasons for joining the group. Some of the motivations were; to exchange ideas with peers and learn from good examples and practices in other countries. Others expressed concerns that entrepreneurship needs to be part of all levels of education and calls for a broad cooperation between different stakeholders. Overall the topic was seen as a positive agenda for Europe during difficult times.



Keynote address by Hanna Dumont

Food for thought

Keynote address by Hanna Dumont, researcher at the Center for Educational Science and Psychology at the University of Tuebingen, Germany.

The topic for the keynote was *“Research based learning principles for the Design of Innovative Learning Environments”*

The keynote was based on wide research in an OECD project of how people learn and Hanna Dumont outlined the conditions for learning in a 21st century knowledge economy, which is among other things driven by advances in science and technology, in particular in information and communication technologies. Knowledge is the central force for economic activity and therefore lifelong learning becomes inevitable. Higher-order thinking skills and the ability to generate, process and sort complex information are necessary as well as teamwork, social skills and communication skills.



Questions and answers

She stressed that the pedagogical model underlying too many of today's schools is still aimed at preparing students for the industrial economy instead of preparing students for activities of knowledge-based enterprises in the knowledge economy

The study has identified six important learning principles, which were later referred to several times during the meeting, i.e.

1. *Learner centeredness*
2. *Social nature of learning*
3. *Responsiveness to motivation and emotions*
4. *Sensitivity to individual differences*
5. *Use of assessment*
6. *Horizontal connectedness*



More information about the OECD project can be found here: http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3746,en_2649_35845581_459839_42_1_1_1_1,00.html#4

Hanna Dumont's presentation was followed by reflections from the group. One central theme was that the trend outlined in the study on innovative learning environments was already on its way in the 80's and in many countries the recent development has been more returned towards a focus on the industrial paradigm of learning.



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Listening to the keynote

Ms. Dumont underlined that using the 6 principles does not mean that the learning is unstructured and students can do what they want. There is no contradiction between output-driven (standards) and innovation. "We need standards, but that doesn't mean conservative teaching methods".

In the question and answer session it also became clear that, at this point, there is no country where these principles have been applied on a large scale, the experiences still result from smaller scale examples.

Exploring opportunities and challenges

The first conversation explored the question:

Imagine that you are the one with full powers to decide what happens in the entrepreneurship education agenda in Europe / your country:

1. **What are the areas of opportunity you would like to develop now?**
2. **What are the present challenges you would want to overcome?**



Café conversation

Some of the opportunities defined were:

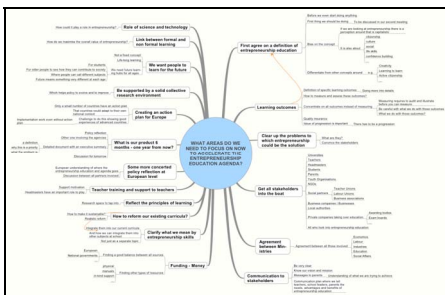
- *To have a definition of some overall goals for entrepreneurship education and learning outcomes on a European level, with room for more defined national goals and a freedom to decide how to achieve them.*
- *Entrepreneurship education as a lifelong learning path, not just teaching business skills, opens up new possibilities.*
- *Redefining assessment criteria to include "soft" skills.*
- *Developing an ongoing training for teachers using methods that reflect entrepreneurship.*
- *The present crisis can be an incentive for entrepreneurship.*
- *The Group itself can be a driver of the agenda*



Surfacing opportunities and challenges

Some of the challenges defined were:

- *To bring together different stakeholders needs. Ministries, institutions etc. and to convince them of the need for E.E.*
- *Language, mindset and concepts are not understood.*
- *Lack of resources e.g. financial resources, time, facilities; (smaller classes) and competences (more and better educated teachers) etc.*
- *It is a daunting task, the scope is huge, but you need to start somewhere.*



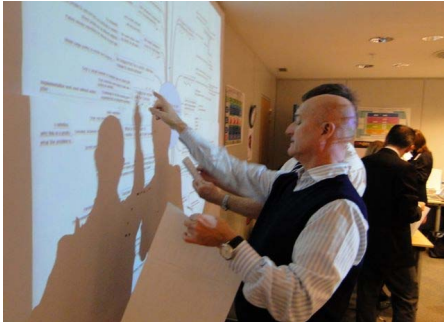
Collective mind-map

Mind-map

At the end of the first day a shared overview was created through a collective mind-map focused on the question:

"What are the areas we need to focus on now to accelerate entrepreneurship education?"

Through the mind-map process all potential areas of interest were surfaced and the day was closed by a dinner and an invitation to think about which areas should be the main priorities.



Issues on the mind-map were prioritised



Voting on the priorities



Prioritised issues were discussed in work groups



Suggestions for a road-map were presented

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Identifying priorities

The work of the second day started by prioritising the topics on the mind-map. Some of the main priorities were:

- To identify and define relevant learning outcomes
- To get all stakeholders involved and get them to cooperate for a shared agenda as well as finding effective ways of communication
- Teacher training and support for teachers
- To create an action plan for Europe
- To define the future strategy for how to implement entrepreneurship education into curricula
- Indicators and international measurements (policy level)

Workgroups were formed to explore the topics in more detail creating a first level of ideas.

Creating a roadmap

A first draft of a plan ahead was created, including a number of Thematic Work Group meetings and a few peer learning activities, focusing on the prioritised areas.

The priorities of the work groups and the road-map are to be finalised in the next meeting, planned at the beginning of next year.

The desired output and outcome of the groups work

Two questions were posed to engage in a first brainstorm on the topic:

1. What would you need to be able to implement entrepreneurship education in your country?
2. What should a 'policy handbook' look like for it to be a help to you in your daily work on entrepreneurship education?

It was expressed that there is a need for sharing good practices as well as creating overall European guidelines with a co-ordination between EU and national activities as well as cooperation between ministries on the national level.

There was a general agreement that the policy handbook should contain good examples of entrepreneurship education and that it could be digital and a dynamic workspace, practical as well as easily accessible.

The topic of outcome and output will be explored further in the next meeting of the Thematic Working Group.