

# Flash Report: Entrepreneurship Education and the Future of Learning

Vienna, 17-19 April 2013: Thematic meeting on implementing entrepreneurial teaching and learning in the curriculum  
Hosted by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Austrian Economic Chamber

## Part of the European Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education

Made up of policy makers and EU experts from across Europe, this group is developing policy guidance on entrepreneurship education. This is an action in the [Rethinking Education](#) package and responds to the call in the [2013 Annual Growth Survey](#) for increased levels of entrepreneurial skills.



## The Future of Learning

The world is changing and when we think about the future of learning, it is clear that the knowledge and skills that young people will need in the future may be wildly different to those needed today. Entrepreneurship education is about equipping young people with the skills they need to adapt to a changing world. Europe needs young people who can be creative, come up with innovative ideas, and turn the best ideas into action. It is about how to develop entrepreneurial competences applicable to life and work, not simply about learning how to run a business. And this is about all forms of learning, education and training which support the development of entrepreneurial attitudes, knowledge and behaviours - with or without a commercial objective.

*“How do we educate our children to take their place in the economy of the 21st century? Given that we cannot anticipate what the economy will look like at the end of next week?”*

Sir Ken Robinson: [Changing Education Paradigms](#)

This meeting explored how Member States can stimulate the development of entrepreneurial skills through the learning experience and how entrepreneurship education is implemented in curricula, as well as the potential of innovative pedagogies.

The results will contribute to the development of practical policy guidance for EU member states, providing country specific insight and solutions for policy makers on key policy areas for entrepreneurship education.

## The Austrian approach to entrepreneurship education

Austrian experts have identified a weakness in their education system, where students and young graduates are not sufficiently prepared for self-employment, business and social entrepreneurship. Instead, they are rather encouraged to follow the tradition of job-seeking. Their solution was to implement entrepreneurship education at several levels of education. The rationale behind this was that an entrepreneurial can-do attitude does not only develop in business life, but should be encouraged early on - thus education has the position to trigger and support these processes.



Entrepreneurship Education is now seen as an integral part of Austria's lifelong learning strategy. It is included across different levels of education and supported by a variety of actions within the curriculum such as project based learning. . It is a broad concept aiming at supporting self-employment (independence of own lifestyle) as well as an individuals' sense of

citizenship (independence of the mature, jointly responsible citizen) as well as vocational independence (independent thinking and acting as a professionally competent employee) and entrepreneurial independence (independent entrepreneurial activity - facilitation of equal opportunities).

*“Entrepreneurship means participation - Austria puts great emphasis on including disadvantaged young people and on empowering the unemployed”*



A speed networking session gave insight to several of those Austrian actions and initiatives:

- Barbara Wimmer presented 'COOL', the [Centre for Cooperative Open Learning](#) in Steyr. This is an accreditation offered to schools who sign up to be a Cool School. This is sponsored by the Austrian government and is based on three principles: 1) freedom to choose what is learned and when, 2) team-working, 3) planning and self-organisation. The aim is to develop the transversal skills valued by employers including entrepreneurial skills and mind-set.

- Erika Hammerl, Expert for Team-Coaching at [Schumpeter College](#), explained the concept of practice firms embedded in the curriculum of several secondary schools in Austria, where students form virtual companies with real international partners. This develops entrepreneurial skills, simulates company practice as well as improving language skills and cultural understanding.
- Clemens Ragl introduced the [Vienna Public Employment Service Start-up Programme](#) offered to unemployed people, providing excellent start-up outcomes for those who may not have otherwise considered starting a business as a career option.
- Stuart Simpson outlined the idea of the [SmartCities](#) – a seven-city network to inspire through innovation and entrepreneurship training. Smart-Points in each city engage young people from the age of 16 and provide support plus mentoring to create new businesses in growth sectors such as green / creative / ICT.
- Encouraging culture and creativity was presented by Monika Mott from [Kulturkontakt Austria \(KKA\)](#). This is a European centre whose core activities are cultural education in Austrian schools with international educational cooperation and international residency programmes for artists.



### Entrepreneurial teaching and learning

Stephan Breidenbach, Dean Humboldt Viadrina School of Governance Frankfurt/Oder (DE) and Member of Vision Entrepreneurs presented the [Schule im Aufbruch programme](#) [Schools on the Rise], developed in Germany and currently practised in around 150 schools. It is based on the idea that to develop 21st century skills, schools should move away from the idea

of transferring knowledge; and instead focus on unfolding the potential of students. He advocated the use of practical projects to challenge young people, working with schools to advise how innovative approaches could be implemented within current curriculum structures. He wanted young people to have ‘magic moments’ where learning became relevant to their lives outside education or helped them realise their own future potential, stating that these were very likely to be based within environments where learners feel safe and the teacher-pupil relationship was based on trust – since ‘fear is not a good companion for learning’.

*“Entrepreneurship should now target how to tackle social problems”*



### Entrepreneurship Education and the social dimension

Sven Ripsas, Professor for Entrepreneurship at the [Berlin School of Economics and Law](#) (DE), looked at the future of entrepreneurship and business creation, using the example of NFTE to demonstrate how disadvantaged young people can engage through entrepreneurship education. He emphasised how entrepreneurship education needs to target social entrepreneurship. In his understanding, social entrepreneurs are ‘those people who bring to social problems the enterprise and imagination that business entrepreneurs bring to wealth creation.’

*“New knowledge must be based on imagination – in words or deeds”*

Bengt Johannisson, Senior Professor in Entrepreneurship at [Linnaeus and Jönköping Universities](#) (SE) sees entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon, and as a learning process which develops a genuinely human faculty. It is about enhancing life,

being energised by diversity and creative tensions and being part of arenas for genuine dialogue/polylogue. Johannisson put forward that children are already entrepreneurial through the innate desire to imagine, experiment and learn, and invited teachers to co-construct this entrepreneurship as a mode of creating new knowledge.

*“Children are entrepreneurial by their very nature, education must develop this”*

On a more practical note, Katarzyna Bordiniuk (PL) presented an innovative programme for teaching entrepreneurship in secondary schools that has been developed by [Pwn.pl](#) and implemented in 30 schools in Poland. Katarzyna is coordinator of the Entrepreneurship projects for pwn.pl – Poland’s leading company specialized in modern multimedia software for education. The programme – comprising an e-book, several presentations, exercises and games – is based on a learning-by-doing-approach. It was assessed positively both by teachers and students. The testing process and the use of the innovative ICT tools by teachers and students were monitored. However, it was also found that there are still limitations to use ICT-based methods and tools based in some schools and for some students – due to a lack of equipment.

*“ICT based tools are important to deliver entrepreneurial learning”*



### Outcomes

The future of learning might require re-discovering traditional values and qualities of education – like dedicating attention to the individual needs of every child; and providing an educational setting that values a culture of appreciation and mindful relationships. However, this should go together with using modern teaching methods and ICT-based tools.

Several speakers underlined that children are 'born entrepreneurs'. Therefore, in primary and /lower-secondary school entrepreneurship, education should be about encouraging the students' to learn through spontaneous play and exploration. In secondary and higher education, stimulating entrepreneurship can be regarded as an attempt to rejuvenate students' lost identities as entrepreneurs. This can be done by organising projects where the students work in teams and cross boundaries. On the next level, in university, a supportive structure should be provided that helps the students to launch commercial, social or cultural ventures, building bridges between the academic and other communities in society.

*"Establishing a culture of appreciation and mindful relationships helps create an educational setting to support children to maintain their innate entrepreneurial selves"*



When collecting and analysing entrepreneurial teaching and learning methods, the TWG found that a wide variety of methods and divided these into different levels of implementation. At the micro level, short interventions were suggested that can easily be included in existing lessons or subjects – for instance a more intensive use of ICT, real practice examples or action learning. At meso level, ideas required some adaptation of existing teaching approaches – for instance creating a challenging learning environment orientated at each students' individual capabilities and previous learning outcomes.

*"Policy reform is required in most countries to implement macro changes to the teaching and learning environment"*

The majority of ideas and suggestions on how to implement entrepreneurship education came at macro level.

These included ideas like making entrepreneurship compulsory for each student, creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the institution or developing teacher education to support changes. These require a certain amount of structural change in most countries - either at institutional level or at policy level.



### Next steps

The 'Future of Learning' sub-group will refine their conclusions from the results of the three days. These will feed into the policy guidance document on entrepreneurship education to be published by the European Commission in November 2013.

The next meeting of the group will take place on **13-15 May 2013 in Brussels.**

The May meeting will provide an opportunity to take the next step in the development of the policy guidance. The group will take stock of the information gathered and review the examples and case studies collected. They will work on their sub-topics and formulate key messages to convey to policy makers across Europe. Moreover, they will discuss a dissemination strategy for their common work.



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**Disclaimer:** This Flash Report was designed by ICF GHK as part of a contract to support the work of the Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education. The views expressed in these proceedings do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Commission. They cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of this information.

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