The Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education

The Conference on "Entrepreneurship Education in Europe: Fostering Entrepreneurial Mindsets through Education and Learning" held in Oslo on 26-27 October 2006 was a follow-up to the Communication on the same topic adopted by the Commission in February 2006. The Conference aimed to exchange experiences and good practice, and to propose ways to move forward in promoting entrepreneurship education more systematically and with effective actions. Presentations and consequent discussions highlighted a wealth of concrete proposals. The ideas advanced during this Conference result in a detailed catalogue of initiatives that could be usefully taken by all stakeholders concerned: the "Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education".

This Agenda is conceived as a rich menu, from which all those who have a role in promoting a more entrepreneurial culture in our society can pick up actions at the appropriate level, and adapted to the local situation. Items in the menu are grouped under five headings, depending on the type of activity and on the corresponding level of responsibility. Relevant categories of stakeholders are identified for each one of the proposed actions.

Framework for policy development	EU	Member States	Educational authorities	Regional/Local authorities	Schools/Universities	Intermediary organisations	Businesses
❖**Ensure political support** to entrepreneurship education at the high level. Real progress will be possible only with a strong commitment from national and regional governments and from the relevant Ministers, in the context of the implementation of the Lisbon strategy.	●	●	●	●	○	○	○
❖Set up a **European-wide framework** of what is to be achieved, followed by proper evaluation of the impact of measures taken. Coordination needs to be ensured at the EU level, with the definition of broad objectives and of desired outcomes for entrepreneurship education.	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
❖Launch **national strategies** for entrepreneurship education, with clear objectives and covering all stages of education. Such strategies should call for the active involvement of all relevant actors (public and private), and establish a general framework while defining concrete actions. These will range from the inclusion of entrepreneurship into the national curricula to providing support to schools and teachers.	○	●	○	○	○	○	○
❖Promote entrepreneurship education also at **regional level,** with a coherent programme bringing together local stakeholders and addressing the various levels of education through a range of different instruments.	○	○	○	●	○	○	○
❖Create **Steering Groups** both at European and at national level where all the different stakeholders involved in entrepreneurship education can be represented (public administrations, businesses, educational establishments, students, etc.). These Groups would have among their objectives that of setting targets for entrepreneurship education, taking into account its various elements, and that of reporting on progress achieved.	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
❖**Review the Bologna process** in order to facilitate the development of entrepreneurship education, including by: encouraging the mobility of teachers (across countries and across different institutions, including in the private sector); recognising the role of educators other than teachers (practitioners, entrepreneurs, students themselves); recognising entrepreneurial career paths in undergraduate education at university.	●	●	○	○	○	○	○
❖Increase coherency between **European funding programmes** that can be used to support entrepreneurship education projects and activities (e.g. the Lifelong Learning Programme, the ESF, the ERDF). These programmes can be valuable in supporting actions taken at national and local level.	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
❖Coordinate the **evaluation of programmes and activities,** in order to ensure comparability of results. The EU could bring together a group of researchers in entrepreneurship education, to help define indicators and specify typical educational processes. Develop research at European level on the impact of activities based on students running concrete enterprise projects and mini-companies.	●	○	○	○	●	●	○

Support for Entrepreneurship Education	EU	Member States	Educational	Regional/Local	Schools/Universities	Intermediary	Businesses
❖Better integrate entrepreneurship programmes and activities in the **established curriculum:** as a horizontal element in all fields of study (entrepreneurial mindset) and/or as an (elective) subject in its own right (entrepreneurial skills)	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
❖In its broader definition (fostering attributes like creativity, autonomy, initiative, team spirit, etc.) entrepreneurship should be included also in the established curriculum for **primary schools**.	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
❖Support the use of **student mini-companies** and embed these activities in official school programmes, particularly at secondary level.	○	●	●	●	●	○	○
❖The Commission should **support curricular reforms** to be undertaken at national level and facilitate comparative analysis, through a range of instruments going from the coordination of the implementation of the Lisbon strategy to facilitating the exchange of good practices, among others.	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
❖Stimulate - through targeted public funding - the implementation of **pilot projects in schools,** in order to test different ways of delivering entrepreneurship education. The final goal will be to disseminate resulting good practices widely, and to encourage take up of tested methods by the largest number of schools.	○	●	●	●	○	○	○
❖Ensure **long term funding** for concrete enterprise projects and for student company activities at school. The termination of short-term project funding or the changing of funding mechanisms creates fragility to sustainable provision, unless this can become embedded within a coherent strategy .	○	●	●	●	○	○	○
❖**Teacher training** for entrepreneurship is a policy issue and should be therefore attached to the national curriculum reform. The educational authorities should talk to teachers in their own language, explaining them why entrepreneurship is a key competence for all and how related methods and activities can bring more dynamism and innovation into different courses.	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
❖Adopt **innovative methods to train teachers** in entrepreneurship, such as work on enterprise projects and running mini-companies. By acquiring direct experience, teachers will be more effective when using these methods with their students.	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
❖Set-up **incentives at school level** to enable teachers to teach entrepreneurship, for instance by means of setting up staff development funds, and by recognising and rewarding the involvement of teachers in activities that require an innovative pedagogy and very often also an extraordinary effort from them.	○	○	○	○	●	○	○
❖Build **common European and national platforms** of existing programmes, projects and teaching material, in order to help sharing and dissemination. Such platforms may greatly support practitioners in improving the offer of entrepreneurship education.	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
❖Launch a strategic **piloting of teacher training** on entrepreneurship, to be supported under the Community Lifelong Learning Programme, testing innovative methods with a European dimension.	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
❖Support the **mobility of educators** across Europe, particularly in higher education, through the Community Lifelong Learning Programme and/or other instruments specifically designed for that purpose. Greater mobility and exchange of experience is needed in Europe, not only between universities but also between academia and the business world. Programs need to be developed that allow educators to spend time at other institutions and/or in the private sector to truly engage, learn and develop. Europe needs more entrepreneurial learning models and greater sharing of knowledge and good practice across sectors and national borders.	●	○	○	○	●	○	○
❖Develop surveys and research to **evaluate the results** of entrepreneurship programmes and activities, and to assess their **impact** on young people's career choices and professional success.	●	●	○	○	●	○	○
❖Grant public funding for the establishment of **Entrepreneurship Centres at universities** and the creation of a network between them. These Centres would have the missions- among others - of spreading entrepreneurship across different fields of studies within the institution, and of fostering the commercialisation of research and the exploitation of new business ideas.	○	●	○	○	○	○	○

Entrepreneurship activities in Schools and in Higher Education	EU	Member States	Educational	Regional/Local	Schools/Universities	Intermediary	Businesses
❖Introduce **innovative pedagogies** into all courses, as a necessary basis for building an entrepreneurial spirit. School education should not destroy the curiosity and the natural entrepreneurial ability of children.	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
❖Embed **elements of entrepreneurial behaviour** (curiosity, creativity, autonomy, initiative, team spirit) within primary education. To this end, use games, cartoons and other tools appropriate to the age of pupils.	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
❖Starting from primary school, raise awareness of young kids of the **role of enterprises and entrepreneurs in society**.	○	○	●	○	●	○	○
❖Disseminate within schools a book with **success stories of young entrepreneurs**, in order to improve the image of entrepreneurs as role models for young people.	○	○	●	○	●	●	●
❖As part of the final evaluation of a programme or course in entrepreneurship, **test the entrepreneurial competences** of students and offer them a certificate ("entrepreneurial driving licence") acknowledging the acquisition of those skills. This entrepreneurial certificate will accompany young people in the following steps of their studies and professional life.	○	○	●	○	●	●	●
❖As part of activities whereby students run **a virtual firm,** associate training firms to real companies, and students to business people, in order to ensure a close relation with real business experience.	○	○	○	○	●	●	●
❖Allow and support the spontaneous **initiative of student associations** pursuing objectives such as creating links with businesses, and involving students in work on enterprise projects. Recognise and reward the time that students dedicate to these activities by means of educational credits.	○	○	●	○	●	●	●
❖Offer entrepreneurship education to **disadvantaged groups**. In particular, young people at risk of social exclusion (low-income youth, school dropouts, adolescents in danger of long-term unemployment, refugees, etc…) may greatly benefit from this type of training. It can raise the motivation of those who learn best by doing, and who have difficulties in more traditional subjects. Some programmes addressing these specific target groups proved particularly successful in terms of youngsters starting their own business or achieving long-term professional integration as employees.	○	○	●	○	●	●	○
❖Higher education establishments should integrate entrepreneurship **across different subjects of their study programmes**, as it may add value to all degree courses (e.g. technical and scientific studies, but also humanities and creative studies).	○	○	○	○	●	○	○
❖In higher education, bring entrepreneurs into the classroom and **involve students directly in enterprise projects**. Using active learning methods is more complex than traditional teaching methods. It requires engaging students' feelings and emotions in the learning process. Educators/facilitators therefore must be able to create an open environment in which students develop the necessary confidence to take risks.	○	○	○	○	●	●	●
❖Increase the production of **European case studies** to be used in the classroom in higher education. Group work on concrete cases is an effective method, as it improves the understanding of real issues related to entrepreneurship and engages students in finding solutions to real problems. To be most effective, case studies used should have a European and local dimension, rather than being imported from the US.	○	○	●	○	●	○	●
❖Encourage graduates of higher education **to start up** their own knowledge-based companies, by providing a range of support services within the institution (incubators, financing, mentorship, etc.).	○	○	○	○	●	●	●
❖Build **evaluation** systematically into all programmes. The most effective evaluation is **independent and comparative** (i.e. it should be run before the beginning of the programme and after its conclusion).	○	●	○	○	●	●	○

Building links, and joint actions	EU	Member States	Educational	Regional/Local	Schools/Universities	Intermediary	Businesses
❖Give young people the opportunity to develop their enterprising skills by helping them to **create their own "summer job"**, and earn money by using their own ideas and initiatives. These activities can be promoted through cooperation between schools, non-profit organisations, businesses, local authorities.	○	○	○	●	●	●	●
❖Businesses should **donate** at least a tiny part of the **working time of staff** to participation in activities within schools and universities, as part of corporate social responsibility. Mentoring and coaching from people with business experience are a basic element in all entrepreneurship training.	○	○	○	○	○	●	●
❖Develop or support **research on how employers** can be better engaged in school/university education. The business community need incentives to more fully engage with educational institutions. Opportunities for mutual benefit can work, e.g. by using their business activity as the basis for constructive analysis, but are often not recognised as verifiable and appropriate staff activities.	●	○	●	○	●	●	●
❖Help developing the **pedagogical abilities of entrepreneurs** and business people, in order to make their participation to activities in the classroom more effective. This task could be usefully performed by those non-profit organisations dedicated to linking schools and businesses, and by business organisations.	○	○	○	○	●	●	○
❖Conceive, develop and promote a **label for "entrepreneurial schools"** or **"entrepreneurial universities"**, to be used by educational institutions on a voluntary basis. Broad criteria could be defined at European and/or national level, which should be in any case adapted to the local environments and education systems. This initiative could be implemented at national level by intermediary organisations with in-depth experience in entrepreneurship education, through cooperation with educational authorities and with schools/universities.	○	○	●	○	●	●	○
❖Build **Entrepreneurship Centres** at a local level, with the missions of assisting schools and teachers, developing links between educational establishments and enterprises, facilitating the participation of entrepreneurs and business people in programmes at school and university, promoting raising awareness initiatives in the local community.	○	●	○	●	●	●	○

Communication activities	EU	Member States	Educational	Regional/Local	Schools/Universities	Intermediary	Businesses
❖Launch **awareness campaigns** at European and national level, ensuring that entrepreneurship is understood in its broader sense (not just about running a business). Broad initiatives could bring together and coordinate different actions to take place at national and local level (e.g., entrepreneurship days, or a Year of Entrepreneurship).	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
❖**Celebrate** entrepreneurship education activities and programmes that work well, by organising **awards and competitions**.	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
❖Establish **awards**, at European and/or at national level, to acknowledge enterprises that distinguish themselves more in dedicating funds and working time of their staff to teaching, mentoring and more generally to participating to activities within schools and higher education establishments.	●	●	○	○	○	●	○