

- FLASH REPORT -

High Level Symposium on “Entrepreneurship Education: Teacher Education as critical success factor”, Budapest 7-8 April 2011

Offering specific training to teachers is crucial in order to make entrepreneurship education generally available and effective: a High Level Symposium was organized on 7-8 April in Budapest to tackle that issue. The aim of the Symposium was to bring together practitioners and policy makers from across Europe to determine how to develop effective teacher education systems for entrepreneurship. At the heart of the event was the question of how best to equip teachers with the skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to foster the entrepreneurial mindsets of young people.

Around **90 participants** from EU institutions and from **28 countries** attended the Symposium, including representatives from the national Ministries for Enterprise and Education, from universities and teacher colleges, from business associations, together with teachers, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders.

A set of five “**Grand Challenges**” were examined during the Symposium:

- How to help primary and secondary teachers to become agents of change through initial teacher education
- Encouraging and enabling in-service teachers to engage in entrepreneurship education through continuing professional development (CPD)
- How to develop teachers as coaches/facilitators of learning
- How to develop support systems for teachers
- How to develop the role of the school and its community (their partners) to help teachers to provide learning opportunities in entrepreneurship.

The method used was the organization of an **Innovation Camp**. This is an intensive, cross-disciplinary workshop where groups of participants work together to generate new ideas, and come up with innovative and feasible solutions to defined problems. The outcome of this process was to develop proposals for concrete action, both at policy level and at the level of concrete practice.

As a starting point, a number of **good practices** were made available by participants, both in the plenary sessions and more informally within the working groups. For instance, effective **on-line platforms** exist already in some countries (the UK and Finland) where teachers can find advice, materials and examples on how to use entrepreneurial methods in the classroom. Such support systems have been highlighted in the following discussions as being of paramount importance to assist teachers in their daily job.

Proposals were tabled by participants for action to take place at European, national and local level. Concrete action plans were subsequently developed.

Some of the **main proposals from the Symposium** were the following:

- **Create platforms to support teachers**, both at local and at EU level:
 - Local partnerships: schools with an interest in entrepreneurship should connect with each other in the local community in order to share examples, and liaise with entrepreneurs who are willing to contribute to education.

- Set up a national resource centre for pedagogical tools and materials, available to all teachers.
- Create an on-line platform at European level, to be coordinated by the Commission in the first phase, but then self-sustainable (a Wikipedia approach should be considered). This platform should bring together already existing tools and become a one-stop shop for teachers. Besides advice, examples and teaching material, it should also include a self assessment tool for teachers.
- Organize high-profile, **prestigious training courses at national and at European level** for teachers who are involved in entrepreneurship education, as a reward and an incentive for them to take part in this type of training.
- Organize **mobility schemes for teachers**, in two ways:
 - Bring teachers out of the school, to have experience in businesses;
 - Encourage teachers to participate in short courses in other countries (“Erasmus for innovative teachers”)
- Develop “**entrepreneurship teachers’ incubators**”, based in teacher training institutions, where good practices and effective methods can be exploited and disseminated (peer-learning).
- Set up a network of **entrepreneurs** who are willing to become **mentors** for teachers and to visit schools, in order to help teachers solve their every day problems in the classroom in an entrepreneurial way. Mentors and businesses involved in education should receive a public recognition or award.

At a more political level:

- Develop an **EU guidance paper** that gives advice to national governments on what needs to be done in practice in this field.
- Work on a joint meeting of the **Councils of Ministers for Education and Competitiveness**, to raise the profile of teacher education in entrepreneurship.

This short list of proposals is not in any way exhaustive: its only aim is to offer a first “taste” of the topics discussed in the different workshops. The Symposium produced a wealth of ideas and proposals that still needs to be thoroughly examined. **A report will be available in June**, with a summary of the main contents and conclusions of the Symposium, and a collection of recommendations and concrete action plans for future developments in this area.

A Manual on Teacher Education in Entrepreneurship will be published in autumn, including good practice cases collected from participants in the Symposium.