

Final report – Executive summary

Entrepreneurship education in schools – current trends and developments, sustainability of projects, transparency and success factors

A study commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy



MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Background and aim of the study

Promoting entrepreneurial thinking and action in schools is key to providing individual students as well as the national economy with essential competitive advantages. Current studies confirm the rewarding effects of the embedment of Entrepreneurship Education in the school system for the economic and digital education of students starting at an early age.

Against this background, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) commissioned Kienbaum Consultants International GmbH, supported by Prof. Dr. Ewald Mittelstaedt, with this study on "Entrepreneurship education in schools - current trends and developments, sustainability of projects, transparency and success factors ". The study was aimed at analyzing the current state of entrepreneurship education in the German school system and at developing recommendations for action with regard to success factors and obstacles.

The study's final report presents the most important findings, draws conclusions and provides recommendations.

Methods and data

A combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to analyze the defined questions. Quantitative methods were employed primarily for the description of patterns based on facts, numbers and quantitative data. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, were applied for the evaluation of current circumstances, the identification of risks and opportunities as well as the analysis of future trends and recommendations.

In particular, the study included following research activities:

- » Project initiation including a kick-off discussion with the Federal Ministry and exploratory interviews with experts
- » Literature review of national and international studies reflecting on the defined research questions
- » Online-survey targeting all state ministries of economic affairs and education in Germany
- » Telephone-survey of 30 projects in the field of entrepreneurship education
- » Online-survey of heads of schools and teachers in five German states
- » „Mini-Case-Studies“ of good-practice-examples
- » Consolidation of findings in a workshop with experts
- » Development of recommendations

Key findings

The **literature review** shows that the existence of a subject called "Economics" in the curriculum leads to positive long-term effects regarding the promotion of entrepreneurship education. Additionally, the role of teachers is of decisive importance in educational development. Moreover, performance results and self-reflection on personal achievements of students are vital for the advancement of entrepreneurship in schools.

The results of the **online-survey of federal ministries** showed that the majority of ministries consider entrepreneurship education to be a politically relevant topic. However, only eleven of them also pursue a clearly defined strategy in this context. Existing goals are especially the promotion of entrepreneurial thinking and action as well as the promotion of self-employment as a professional option. Furthermore, only three federal states offer the subject “Economics” as such whilst other states offer similar subject matter only in combination with other topics. Regarding institutional anchoring, entrepreneurship education activities are bundled outside the responsible ministries in eight federal states; permanent working groups have been established in six federal states. Finally, the quality and the possibility of integrating projects into everyday school life were identified as important success factors for entrepreneurship education projects.

The **telephone-survey of the 30 projects** showed that existing projects primarily aim to convey entrepreneurial thinking and a positive and realistic entrepreneurial image, to build up and deepen economic knowledge, to acquire key qualifications and cross-cutting skills, and to promote career guidance. The observed effects on participating students largely coincide with the declared objectives of the projects. Many projects also work together with a corporate network or are supported by it in different ways. In order to make their projects a success, many project promoters rely on making integration into the classroom work as easy as possible and on building active support of teachers.

Meanwhile, many respondents expressed a wish directed at the political realm that entrepreneurial education should be given higher priority and become more firmly anchored in politics.

The **online-survey of the teachers** confirmed that the support of relevant actors such as school management and business is an important aspect in the implementation of entrepreneurship education projects in schools. The respondents of the survey, moreover, thought the content of projects to be well target group-oriented and the workload to be reasonable. At the same time, the school administrations and teachers surveyed see positive changes in students' competences and skills as a result of the implementation of entrepreneurship education measures in schools, especially in the development of cross-cutting competences.

Finally, the **case studies** revealed that the presence of committed teachers is one of the biggest success factors for the initiation as well as positive outcomes of entrepreneurship education projects. In addition, particularly motivated students, cooperation with professional partners and early and comprehensive planning were critical to success. Then, both sides - schools and students - benefit greatly from entrepreneurship education projects.

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, investment in entrepreneurship education of students is one of the most valuable ones regarding the propensity of self-employment, empowerment through the development of key competences and social inclusion of students.

In contrast to other European countries, Germany has no uniform national or regional definition of entrepreneurship education and therefore no unified strategy for the incorporation of entrepreneurship education in schools. As a result, the level and type of incorporation differs from state to state; however, a majority of the federal states agree that promoting entrepreneurship education in schools is a politically relevant and important issue.

There are many initiatives that want to bring entrepreneurial education to schools. They differ in content and form, but take place primarily in the Upper Secondary school level ("gymnasiale Oberstufe"). Many of them share similar objectives.

All the actors surveyed see clear and positive effects in schoolchildren / students through participation in entrepreneurship education

measures. Meanwhile, the motivation of teachers and students also plays a central role in the implementation. On the other hand, stereotypes regarding the private sector, lack of equipment in schools, resources and in some cases non-existent curricular anchoring make implementation difficult.

The following recommendations were developed based on the study results:

- 

Improve the political embedding and coordination of entrepreneurship education, including a common, shared definition / strategy all across Germany
- 

Establish a central authority for the promotion of entrepreneurship education in schools
- 

Intensify networking between stakeholders, aiming at better coordination of initiatives and knowledge-sharing
- 

Invest in education and training of teachers with the goal of enhancing knowledge and appreciation of as well as enthusiasm for entrepreneurship education