Entrepreneurship education in Belgium

1 OVERVIEW

In Flanders, Belgium, the Flemish Action Plan for Entrepreneurship Education was put in place 2011 and drove the implementation of a number of initiatives supporting entrepreneurship. This Action Plan has since been replaced by a wider Policy Paper on Education covering 2014-2019, which incorporates entrepreneurship education within a wider set of priorities. Entrepreneurship skills are explicitly recognised as a cross-curricular objective in secondary education but are not explicitly mentioned for primary education. Schools in Flanders are autonomous so they can decide how/if they reflect this objective in the curriculum and learning outcomes.

In Wallonia, entrepreneurship skills are explicitly recognised as a cross-curricular objective both at primary and secondary education. Similar to Flanders, the schools in Wallonia are autonomous in devising the curricula and thus embedding entrepreneurship education in classes. Entrepreneurship skills are however an integral part of the subject ‘economic sciences’, which is not a compulsory but an optional subject.

The German-speaking community of Belgium explicitly recognises entrepreneurship education as part of the framework curriculum at primary and secondary education. In addition, at secondary schools, for students who choose an economic field of study, entrepreneurship skills are integrated in the subject entitled ‘economy’.

Belgian initiatives and schemes to promote entrepreneurship skills include both extracurricular activities such as the Young Companies or Plan(k)gas initiatives, and programmes integrated fully into curricula, for example the Technikid’s programme.

2 GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Walloon Entrepreneurship Spirit Programme

2.1 SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE

The Walloon Entrepreneurship Spirit Programme (Programme Wallon Esprit d'Entreprendre) ran between 2007-2013, and targeted all levels of education (primary, secondary, higher) across Wallonia. The objective of the programme was to increase entrepreneurial competence and a range of initiatives were included in the programme such as tools for teachers, awareness raising workshops, ‘ambassadors’ to promote the programme and funding for further projects. From 2014 onwards the programme was replaced by “Entrepreneuriat 3.15”, which continues to support and engender the entrepreneurial spirit in all secondary schools in Wallonia.

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The content of this document, including the case studies and the descriptions of the initiatives reflect the information available as of August 2015.
2.2 **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE**

The Walloon Entrepreneurship Spirit Programme ran from 2007-2013 with the objective to make entrepreneurship the ‘eighth key competence’ for education and lifelong learning. The first three years of the programme focused on raising awareness about entrepreneurship and the second three years on developing entrepreneurial attitudes. The programme was run by the Agence de Stimulation économique (ASE). The Agence de Stimulation économique offers a number of different entry points into the programme to help understand what is available in terms of support and guidance. The Walloon Entrepreneurship Spirit Programme targeted all levels of education (primary, secondary, higher) across Wallonia and especially teachers, as they were considered by the ASE as the best vehicle to transmit entrepreneurial attitudes to young people.

There were many different initiatives devised and operated under the programme, organised under five main approaches:

- A team of ‘awareness-raising agents’ - these agents are teachers on secondment who promote the programme in schools and provide follow-up
- A portfolio of actions offered by partner organisations (mostly Les Jeunes Entreprises and ICHEC-PME) to develop the entrepreneurial attitudes of young people
- An annual call for projects on entrepreneurship, open to schools
- Awareness-raising workshops for teachers on the entrepreneurship spirit
- Pedagogical tools prepared by ASE for teachers

This programme was succeeded by ‘Entrepreneurship 3.15’, the 2014-2020 plan which continues with the objectives to engender the entrepreneurial spirit in all secondary school students in Wallonia. In the future, there are plans for the concept of the ‘entrepreneurial school’ to be introduced.

2.3 **TARGET GROUP(S) ADDRESSED**

According to the new Entrepreneurship 3.15 plan, during the 2007-2013 period, around 180,000 students and 4,900 teachers were reached by the different initiatives. Out of the 180,000 students:

- 153,000 were reached by the actions offered by partner organisations.
- 23,661 were reached through 243 entrepreneurship projects selected under the annual calls for projects.
- 3,500 were reached through other actions
- 4,900 teachers are registered in the teacher database and either:
  - Met an awareness-raising agent
  - Developed an entrepreneurship project under an annual call
  - Have carried out an action offered by a partner organisation
  - Have received training
2.4 Organisations Involved

The programme was run by ASE (Agence de Stimulation économique) which was created in 2006 as part of the Walloon Government ‘Marshall Plan’ decree-programme to improve services for businesses and to promote the entrepreneurship spirit. It acts as an umbrella organisation and collaborates on entrepreneurship with a large number of organisations, including Les Jeunes Entreprises, Groupe One, Héraclès and Solvay Entrepreneur.

2.5 Achievements, Results

In 2012, the ASE commissioned an external consultant (Newcom) to conduct a survey among teachers and heads of schools to measure the impacts of the Entrepreneurship Spirit programme. It was a one-off impact measurement done in parallel with the normal monitoring activities. The results were analysed separately for two types of respondents: those considered ‘sensitised’ i.e. who had already heard of ASE and its awareness-raising agents, and those considered ‘not-sensitised’ i.e. who had never heard either of the ASE or of its awareness-raising agents. While the results are only briefly presented in the Entrepreneurship 3.15 plan report, these were analysed more deeply as part of a study for the European Commission entitles: ‘Entrepreneurship Education: A road to success’². The results show:

* In the short-term, the activities conducted by the ASE engendered increased interest and changes in attitudes among teachers/heads of schools (individual level); increased engagement of both teachers/heads of schools and pupils/students (individual level); and increased staff motivation to set up entrepreneurship-related activities and use new tools (organisational level)

* In the medium-term the activities conducted by the ASE increased positive attitudes of teachers/heads of schools about entrepreneurship

2.6 Lessons Learnt

The experience of ASE, through the first programme and its continuation shows there needs to be different offers depending on the age of the student. One target group is primary and the first two years of secondary, and the second is for the last four years of secondary (VET or general education). The functioning and objectives of these two levels are very different. The teachers have different priorities for these age groups. For many teachers in primary or lower secondary, the business world

has very little place in education and so the concept of entrepreneurship is different. One vision is more ‘humanist’ and the other is more ‘utilitarian’.

Another key lesson from the programme is related to the involvement of parents, which is very difficult. After eight years, there has been little progress on this front. It is not they refuse to participate; it is more that the most appropriate mechanisms and the right drivers are difficult to find. This could be for a number of reasons, time, lack of knowledge on entrepreneurship and its importance, for example.

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**Caps**

### Cap’Ten

**2.7 SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE**

Cap’Ten is a project management method and a set of educational tools to help young people, 10-13 year olds, to take up a personal project which captures their interest.

Cap’Ten gives every child a chance to pursue a personal project, simulates the entrepreneurial spirit in individuals and is non-exclusive. Children, including disadvantaged children, from all backgrounds and levels can find a project which inspires them. Cap’Ten has been running since 2004, and it received the European Enterprise award in 2007. It reaches between 10,000 to 15,000 children a year throughout Belgium.

**2.8 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE**

Cap’Ten is a project management method coupled with pedagogical tools designed to inspire pupils between 10 to 13 years old to undertake an ambitious personal project. It aims to develop their entrepreneurial spirit, to stimulate their natural creativity and provides pedagogical support to teachers interested in developing entrepreneurial practices.

To capture the interest of the children the following happens as part of the Cap’Ten project:

- Children receive an invitation to participate in Cap’Ten and to pick up a ‘toolbox’. They learn about the project by reading or listening to the story of Zurk, a mascot that will guide them through the project
- They play a ‘competences game’, in order to enable them to discover the meaning of the ten transversal competences that Cap’Ten aims to develop: choice, autonomy, initiative, courage, organisation, creativity, team-spirit, open-mindedness, curiosity and communication
- Pupils start on the project, which is chosen by them, either individually or in small groups
• Pupils go through seven specific stages in their project and are supported by three main tools:
  – The schedule, seven fiches which take pupils through the steps and sub-steps of project development
  – A manual containing practical tips and advices
  – A self-assessment tool which covers the ten transversal competences

2.9 TARGET GROUP(S) ADDRESSED

Cap’Ten was originally only available for the French Community of Belgium but, since 2011, became available for the Flemish Community. Cap’Ten has now been taken up further and several small-scale tests/implementation of the initiative have been carried out in the following French-speaking countries: France, Burkina Faso, Switzerland, and Cameroon. This international interest has grown through Cap’Ten being presented at international conferences and winning the European Enterprise Awards in 2007. One Swiss school has now translated the tool into English, which increases its potential coverage further.

2.10 ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

The initiative was launched by ICHEC-PME, the SME department of the ICHEC - Brussels Management School. The Agency for Economic Stimulation (ASE) promotes the initiative across Wallonia but there are many other public and private partners involved.

2.11 ACHIEVEMENTS, RESULTS

After 10 years, more than 105,000 children across Belgium have taken part in the Cap’Ten project. For the school year 2013-2014, 5,897 children and 272 teachers from 142 schools participated in the project. By region, there were: 3,553 participants in the Wallonia, 1,567 in the Brussels-Capital Region and 1,049 in the Flemish Region. Participants from Wallonia were mostly in primary education (76%, the rest in secondary education); while in Flanders the majority were in secondary education (61%).

Cap’Ten provides an approach which is inclusive. No matter what the background of the child, there is always a project which will inspire them, with which they can make progress. Making tools available for everyone, not just teachers, is an important part of this approach. It gives autonomy to the students and also makes them actors, not just spectators in the process of creating their project.

Further information

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Website: http://www.step2you.be/fr/step2you.html?IDC=761

Further documents:
**YouthStart Training**

**2.12 SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE**

The mission of YouthStart Training (formerly NFTE course) is to inspire “underprivileged youth to find their path to success through hands-on, interactive and creative training in entrepreneurship”. The initiative covers the whole of Belgium and is present in an additional 12 other countries across the world.

**2.13 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE**

YouthStart Training is a programme focused on the creation of a business plan and its ultimate presentation. Set up in 1999, YouthStart is a training tool for the development of entrepreneurship education, which contains a number of elements. There is the methodology, curriculum content, the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and skills and the final certificate of recognition.

The course covers the following elements:

- Introduction: what is YouthStart, introducing oneself, role-play
- Theory: theory on break-even points, bookkeeping principles: costs and profits
- Skills: telephone skills, negotiation skills, applying for a job
- Attitudes: punctuality, teamwork, live up to your commitments
- ICT: laptop, Excel and PowerPoint
- Field trips to companies, attending special company events, listening to guest speakers
- Certification day: presentation by the students of their business plans

The initiative covers the whole of Belgium. First it was only available for Dutch speakers and since 2004 it has been also available for French speakers. Nowadays, YouthStart is also present in 12 other countries across the world.

**2.14 TARGET GROUP(S) ADDRESSED**

YouthStart Training focuses on underprivileged youth (16 to 30 years old). The target group are recruited and assisted through centres for part-time education, social organisations, training providers, youth centres, public employment services, social assistance centres and cities and municipalities. It is however also possible for young people to enrol outside of these organisations.

**2.15 ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED**

YouthStart Training is under the patronage of the Queen of Belgium and has business, education, social and academic partners involved as well as government agencies (Syntra, VDAB), the cabinets of the Ministry of Employment, Education, Economy and Equal Opportunity and the European Commission.

**2.16 ACHIEVEMENTS, RESULTS**

YouthStart, with the assistance of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, surveyed former participants (1999-2010) and 92.2% of them stated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the course. 11% of them were self-employed, 12% returned to school and 59% were salaried. According to YouthStart, this is a striking result as only 3.5% of the active Belgian population between 16 and 30 years old were self-employed in 2009.
3 EXAMPLES OF ON-GOING INITIATIVES ADDRESSING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

3.1 YOUNG COMPANY
Young Company is a nation-wide initiative in Belgium, covering all three communities (Wallonia, Flanders and the German-speaking community) and implemented under the JA-YE network. The aim of the initiative is to allow students to get experience that is very close to running a company in real life. The idea is developed around the principle of a joint-stock company. Young people can sell share certificates (in value of five euros) to their parents and relatives. They then use this start-up capital to start running their business. This allows young people to experience various positions across the company, from the Director to HR manager, etc. Young Company targets secondary school students. The implementing body, Studienkreis, provides support and takes care of the administrative procedures.

3.2 TECHNIKID’S
Technikid’s is an annual event that tries to combat the negative perception of technical education among pupils. It targets pupils at 5th and 6th grades of primary schools. Having technical education as its main focus, the initiative offers a day long experience for pupils to learn more about the world of technology using modern technological resources that make learning process interesting and more engaging. Technikid’s makes their courses playful, to be attractive to pupils. This event attracts more than 1,700 students from over 70 schools annually, and is well-established.

3.3 COMPETENTO
Competento is an online portal containing more than 500 links to various initiatives, training manuals, guidance documents, all of them focusing on entrepreneurship education at all levels of education. As a virtual knowledge centre, the aim of the portal is to help teachers design courses with embedded entrepreneurship elements. The portal offers access to information on existing initiatives, materials, tools and methodologies that can be used in transferring and developing entrepreneurial competences in the classroom environment and beyond.

3.4 PLAN(K)GAS
Plan(k)gas is an entrepreneurial competition for secondary school pupils in Flanders. Its objective is to give young people real experience of being an entrepreneur through developing their own business
plan. The implementing body, UNIZO, provides constant support and guidelines as well as coordinating the involvement of professionals from businesses. In 2014-2015, a total of 625 pupils participated in the competition and created 214 business plans.

3.5 APPRENTICESHIP

The Apprenticeship programme is an initiative implemented by Syntra, a non-profit organisation in Flanders. It provides practical vocational training, including a placement opportunity in a business organisation. The programme targets young people between 15 and 25 years. The programme delivers assigns an experienced ‘entrepreneur-trainer’ to the participating student. The ‘entrepreneur-trainer’ provides guidance for the student to maximise the benefits of gaining practical experience during the placement. The experience is very valuable to the students, and in 2014, 87.7% of the graduates entered jobs immediately after completion of the programme.

3.6 NETWORK FOR TRAINING ENTREPRENEURSHIP (NFTE) COURSES

The Network for Training Entrepreneurship (NFTE) provides entrepreneurship courses for young people. The courses aim to inspire and guide the start-up of young people's independent activity, empower them to be entrepreneurial and motivated employees, and to resume or finish their studies or training. Course participants experience practical aspects of being entrepreneurs through a range of hands on exercises and stimulating lessons. The courses consist of several parts and they focus on the development of a broad range of skills and competences. Course content concentrates on the development of technical competencies, communication, negotiation and ICT skills, furthermore they involve company visits and contributions from invited guest speakers.

The courses were developed for young people between 16 to 30 years of age. The main target groups include those who have dropped out of formal education, who are ‘tired of school’, but have not lost the desire to learn. Young immigrants also represent an important target group.
### 3.7 Further Information and Contact Details on the Initiatives

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<th>Technikid’s</th>
<th>Competento</th>
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