Entrepreneurship education in Croatia

1 OVERVIEW

The Croatian government strategy for entrepreneurial education for the 2010-2014 period had two main objectives: 1) To raise public awareness about entrepreneurship and develop a positive attitude towards lifelong learning for entrepreneurship; 2) Introduce learning and training in entrepreneurship as a key competence in all shapes, types and levels of formal, non-formal and informal education and learning. An Action Plan 2010-2014 complemented the strategy and introduced a set of targeted measures to achieve the objectives.

The strategy stimulated the development of a number of important initiatives in Croatia. These include a teacher training course and a number of awareness raising activities for students and teachers addressing possible methods to implement entrepreneurship education. Key outcomes of the initiatives so far have included better promotion of the importance of entrepreneurship education and the reduction of negative connotations towards the subject. With the help of regional resource centres such as SEECEL, the South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning, Croatia is moving towards systematically covering all aspects of entrepreneurial education.

Other good examples of innovative practices include the Week of Entrepreneurship, aimed at all pre-tertiary levels of education. School teachers and school leaders in Croatia are now much more willing to include entrepreneurial content in their courses, taking a proactive approach to engagement. For example, the 1st Grammar School in Zagreb applied for European funding in order to develop a comprehensive curriculum, teacher guidelines and accompanying methodology to embed entrepreneurship education in secondary schools across Croatia.

2 GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Children’s Week of Entrepreneurship (Dječji tjedan poduzetništva)

2.1 SUMMARY OF THE INITIATIVE

The ‘Children’s Week of Entrepreneurship’ is a grass roots initiative in Croatia, involving primary school and kindergarten children. The objective of the programme is to educate about the need for entrepreneurship education from an early age. The programme, running since 2008, was launched by the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts and is organised by the Education Group Zrinski with continued support from the Croatian government. The initiative has stimulated a number of schools to set up their own programmes, developing entrepreneurship clubs for children and collaborating further with businesses and other funders.

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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 main aim of the ‘Children’s Week of Entrepreneurship’ is to develop a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship in children from a very young age. The national curriculum in Croatia takes into account the eight core competences for lifelong learning, developed at the European level. The ‘Children’s Week of Entrepreneurship’ serves as one of the vehicles for the development of basic entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes. The approach uses extra curricular activities with an overall aim of developing "positive attitudes and curiosity" within the main curriculum at school. If such an objective is reached at the lower level of education, it will be easier to teach “know-how” at the secondary level.

The initiative was developed by the Educational Group Zrinski in collaboration with the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts in Croatia. It is implemented in cooperation with primary schools across the country. Group Zrinski also works with kindergartens, secondary schools and colleges.

The approach taken by those participating in the ‘Children’s Week of Entrepreneurship’ is to make an initial draft of a project based on the interests of the children. The project is created as a set of workshops for the pupils and teachers. The pupils’ workshops are designed to fit with the stage of development of the age group. The ultimate aim of each workshop is to invent and produce a product which could be sold in the local community. The teachers have additional support and can undertake a short course to help implement the approach and monitor the work of the children.

2.3 **INSTITUTIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED**

The initiative involves primary schools and kindergartens across the country. There are also teachers, headmasters and school administrators that are directly or indirectly involved. Parents of the pupils are also involved through approving pupils’ engagement in the projects and participating as the audience in fairs and presentations.

The government supports the initiative through the Ministries. There are a number of businesses involved at different stages of the initiative as well as in the spin-off activities, such as a pupils’ entrepreneurship club.

2.4 **ACHIEVEMENTS, RESULTS**

The initiative is regarded by participating schools as being a very positive intervention. Teachers report the initiative as a rewarding experience in terms of the products of their pupils’ work. Parents are highly satisfied with the outcomes they see during the presentations and small school fairs.

2.5 **MONITORING RESULTS**

There is regular monitoring and evaluation of the ‘Children’s Week of Entrepreneurship’. The monitoring incorporates feedback from teachers, students and parents/caregivers and evaluation takes place each term.

Results are also evident from the number of spin-off activities, such as the entrepreneurship club and lasting partnerships with businesses. The impact of the initiative is also reflected in the development of different materials and handbooks which are distributed among other interested teachers and pupils.

2.6 **LESSONS LEARNT**

In an environment with limited time and resources for teachers, the ‘Children’s Week of Entrepreneurship’ provides useful additional funding and materials. The initiative proved to be very interesting to teachers who see how the approach can change the educational offer in primary schools. The experience gained from the ‘Children’s Week of Entrepreneurship’ helps teachers to put in place an approach which gives enough freedom to explore the topic in depth, and through all parts of the curriculum rather than as an add on.
3 Examples of on-going initiatives addressing entrepreneurship education

3.1 School of Entrepreneurial Competitiveness in the Labour Market for Secondary Grammar School Students

The School of Entrepreneurial Competitiveness in the Labour Market for Secondary Grammar School Students is a grass-roots project developed and implemented by 1st Gymnasium from Zagreb. The project was funded with the help of Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funds and provides a support system to the development of the Croatian Qualification Framework. It was supported by several stakeholders, most importantly the ministry and agencies in charge of education. The main outcomes were to produce a comprehensive entrepreneurship curriculum for secondary schools, accompanied by textbooks and guidebook for teachers. The textbook and the guidebook for teachers, as well as the English-Croatian entrepreneurial dictionary, are freely available for download from the website of the project.

3.2 Teacher Knowledge Base

The South East European Centre for Entrepreneurship Learning (SEECEL) is one of the main stakeholders for entrepreneurship in the Balkan region. Established in 2008 it aims to help the development of entrepreneurship education in the South East European countries. Teacher support is seen as the core element of developing entrepreneurship education and SEECEL developed the Teachers Knowledge Base (TKB), a platform from which teachers can benefit and gain new ideas. The platform, available upon registration, helps teachers share and learn about interesting classroom practices and access helpful materials.

3.3 A Key Competence Approach, ISCED level 2

A Key Competence Approach is a guidebook prepared by SEECEL. This material offers teaching professionals a helpful set of definitions, contextual insights, and most importantly, examples of teaching and learning exercises to support entrepreneurship initiatives in schools and in non-formal contexts. The document, free to use for anybody, is complemented with other useful documents such as an Entrepreneurial Learning: School Professional Toolkit, Entrepreneurial Learning: A Key Competence Approach in Practice, and Entrepreneurial Learning: Learning Outcomes. All teaching and learning guidelines are designed for ISCED 2 level. The initiative is co-funded and supported by the European Union and by the Croatian Government.

2 The project was co-funded through European IPA funds (65%) with a total value of €167,203.76
## 3.4 Further Information and Contact Details on the Initiatives

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