



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Government Offices of Sweden

Ministry of Education and Research
Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and
Communications

Strategy for entrepreneurship in the field of education

Preface

Being self-employed must be as natural a choice as being an employee. To achieve this, the education system can play an important role in helping pupils and students develop and make the most of the knowledge, skills and approaches that are required.

Many of the distinctive features of a good entrepreneur – the ability to solve problems, think innovatively, plan one's work, take responsibility and cooperate with others – are also qualities that students at different levels need to develop to complete their studies and to be successful in their adult lives.

We want to integrate entrepreneurship throughout the education system, and hope therefore that those who are working in different parts of the education system will feel inspired to develop their teaching in this area.

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Education that inspires entrepreneurship can provide young people with the skills and enthusiasm to set up and run a business. More companies that build on new ideas are important in increasing employment, strengthening development capacity and boosting Sweden's competitiveness in an increasingly globalised world.

Entrepreneurship and enterprise are closely linked. Entrepreneurship is about developing new ideas and translating these ideas into something that creates value. This value can be created in companies, in the public sector and in voluntary organisations.

Many young people are positive to the idea of starting up a business, but are hesitant because they do not know how to, or do not dare to invest in an idea of their own. Entrepreneurship education should help young people develop the knowledge required to start and run a business. It can also help encourage the creativity and innovative ideas of young people.

Entrepreneurial skills increase the individual's chances of starting and running a company. Skills such as being able to recognise opportunities, take initiatives and transform ideas into practical action are also valuable to the individual and society in a broader sense. These skills are required by employers, and entrepreneurship education can thus make it easier for young people to become established in the labour market. Other entrepreneurial skills such as learning to solve problems, planning one's work and cooperating with others can also help young people to complete their studies more successfully.

Entrepreneurship education may include the specific knowledge required to start and run a business, such as business administration and planning. Entrepreneurship education can also develop more general skills that are equally useful outside the business world, such as project and risk management. Educating entrepreneurs also means inspiring people to be creative and take own responsibility for achieving a goal. The education system has an important role to play in ensuring that young people develop the knowledge, skills and approaches they need to, independently or with others, realise their ideas and apply them in economic, social or cultural contexts. The education system also needs to work with entrepreneurs in the business sector, the cultural sphere and non-governmental organisations to provide inspiration to teachers and pupils.

The Government considers that entrepreneurship should be integrated throughout the education system. In view of the fact that more young men than young women start up businesses of their own, it is particularly important to promote entrepreneurship among girls and

young women. Certain aspects of entrepreneurship are more relevant in some parts of the education system than others. The foundation for developing an entrepreneurial approach is laid at an early age by encouraging, for example, girls' and boys' curiosity, creativity, self-confidence and ability to take decisions. Throughout upper secondary school and post-upper secondary education, it is reasonable to give greater emphasis to the special knowledge and skills required to start and run a business. At higher education level, entrepreneurship programmes can include both theoretical and practical studies of the entire process, from testing the commercial viability of an idea to establishing a company in the market. More generally, higher education in entrepreneurship can also prepare students to work in the field of change management both in large and small organisations and in the private and public sector.

Reforms of the Swedish education system are currently being planned to raise standards and better meet the needs of the labour market. By sharpening the focus on the school's task to promote knowledge and cooperating more closely with working life, young people will be better prepared to meet future challenges.

Several initiatives have been taken in European cooperation to ensure that the teaching of entrepreneurship has a greater impact in the field of education. One example of this is the focus on entrepreneurship as one of eight key skills for lifelong learning. The basis for the Government's strategy is that the teaching of entrepreneurship is essential, both for schools and agencies in the field of education. The Government considers it important to take into account the experiences of other countries in future work.

Measures aimed at encouraging the integration of entrepreneurship into all levels of education are described below.

1.

The importance of encouraging the skills and abilities that form the basis of entrepreneurship will be emphasised in policy documents for compulsory school.

The school's task to promote knowledge lays the foundations for pupils' future opportunities in life. Compulsory school is also required to stimulate pupils' curiosity, self-confidence and ability to take decisions and in other ways to focus on skills that are vital for entrepreneurship. The Government intends to strengthen this in a pending review of the compulsory school curriculum. In its future instructions, the Government intends to task the National Agency for Education with considering how this can be integrated into relevant syllabuses.

2.

Entrepreneurship will be emphasised in upper secondary school policy documents.

The Government intends to emphasise the importance of entrepreneurship in a pending review of the upper secondary school curriculum. In its future instructions, the Government intends to task the National Agency for Education with considering how entrepreneurship can be integrated into relevant upper secondary school syllabuses.

3.

Greater opportunities for more in-depth studies of entrepreneurship and enterprise in upper secondary school.

The Government has proposed to the Riksdag the introduction of a new upper secondary programme, with a focus on economics. This programme will prepare pupils for both higher education and for running their own businesses. Knowledge of law, marketing and accounting will be important components of an education that will improve the possibilities to succeed as an entrepreneur. It is also important to encourage pupils to develop new ideas and to practise their business skills. The Government also intends to commission the National Agency for Education to investigate how entrepreneurship could be incorporated into the handicraft programme and the business and administration programme.

4.

Upper secondary vocational education will be more closely linked to working life and companies. Apprenticeship training will be introduced and pupils taking part in vocational training will be given better insight into the conditions for enterprise.

Pupils need to gain insight into the conditions for enterprise so that more young people will want to start their own businesses. This will be facilitated by close cooperation with the business sector and entrepreneurs. Workplace-based learning will be an important

component of future upper secondary vocational training. A pilot project consisting of apprenticeship training where at least half the training is spent at the workplace was initiated in autumn 2008. The Government intends to introduce an upper secondary certificate and a final upper secondary project. In upper secondary vocational training suitable tasks can be designed in close cooperation with working life. This may mean, for example, that pupils are given a chance to test their vocational skills in a business-like context.

5.

A new concept for vocational competitions at school level should be developed.

Putting one's ideas into practice, believing in one's own vocational skills and starting up a business require both courage and endurance. For this reason, pupils in vocational training at upper secondary level should be able to challenge themselves and compete with others in vocational skills. The Government intends to task the National Agency for Education with developing and testing out a new concept for vocational competitions at school level. This will be implemented after consultation with Youth Skills Sweden, the Swedish organisation for national vocational championships. The National Agency for Education will present cost estimates and proposals for piloting skills competitions at school level. The National Agency for Education will also report on how the pilot project can be evaluated.

6.

Support to schools to encourage work on entrepreneurship.

The Government has tasked the National Agency for Education with supporting and encouraging work in the field of entrepreneurship. This may involve, for example, promoting cooperation with working life, offering continuing professional development, facilitating the exchange of experience and distributing development funds.

7.

Mapping the work on entrepreneurship in compulsory and upper secondary schools is under way.

While some work on entrepreneurship is already being conducted in schools, there is no overall picture of how this work is being carried out or its results, such as to what extent these efforts have contributed to increased entrepreneurship. The Government has therefore tasked the National Agency for Education with mapping, analysing and disseminating information on the efforts in the field of entrepreneurship of those responsible for schools. In these efforts, the National Agency for Education is expected to take into account the work being conducted in the entrepreneurship programme at the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, and international experiences.

8.

Mapping and analysing work on entrepreneurship at post-upper secondary vocational schools outside the higher education institutions.

Entrepreneurship training is already being conducted in qualified vocational training programmes in close cooperation with representatives of local companies and in regional collaboration. The mapping and analysis of these programmes and the exchange of experience nationally and internationally can help inspire more organisers to develop this area further. It will be particularly interesting if we can see to what extent these programmes have contributed to increased entrepreneurship. The Government considers that this mapping, analysis and support could be tasks for the national agency for vocational higher education, which is to be established on 1 July 2009.

9.

Mapping and analysing education in entrepreneurship and innovation at higher education level.

Many universities and other higher education institutions are already offering programmes at basic, advanced and post-graduate level aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship and enterprise. Most of these programmes have been established in the last five years. However, there is no overall picture of existing programmes and their content nor of the results achieved, such as the extent to which these programmes have contributed to increased entrepreneurship. The Government has therefore tasked the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education with mapping and analysing the development and availability of entrepreneurship, enterprise and innovation programmes, including fine arts programmes, at the higher education institution level. This task includes drawing attention to good practices at higher education institutions to encourage the development of entrepreneurship and enterprise.

10.

Support to universities and other higher education institutions to stimulate entrepreneurship.

In 2009, the Government intends to task the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth with supporting activities that stimulate entrepreneurship at universities and other higher education institutions.

11.

Development of cutting-edge programmes in entrepreneurship and innovation.

In addition to the activities at universities and other higher education institutions described in point 10, the Government intends to implement a targeted initiative at a minimum of two higher education institutions to create Swedish cutting-edge programmes in entrepreneurship and

innovation. Advanced-level programmes in entrepreneurship and innovation of the highest international standard can help to create growth. In November 2008, universities and other higher education institutions were invited to submit expressions of interest in participating in this initiative to the Government Offices. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has been tasked with processing these expressions of interest with the help of international experts.

In the Budget Bill for 2009, the Government announced its ambition for the teaching of entrepreneurship to be an integrated theme throughout the education system. Extensive reforms of the education system are currently being carried out. The Government has already taken decisions on several initiatives that support the development of entrepreneurship programmes in schools and higher education institutions. The Government will make decisions on other initiatives as the reform process continues. All these initiatives are now brought together in a strategy for entrepreneurship.