

Country: Poland

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I. Introduction

In today's economic realities particular importance in contributing to the growth of employment gains the support of knowledge, skills and abilities related to entrepreneurship among youth people, including vocational schools students. Students and graduates of vocational schools often lack knowledge, skills and motivation in the first steps the labour market in the area of business. They receive no or little support while facing the free market economy. Preparing young entrepreneurs to the effective functioning on the labour market requires the development of comprehensive and effective approach and a set of proper methods and tools.

The report has been prepared within the project Business incubator supported by the Erasmus + Programme. The aim of the project is to provide a comprehensive support for vocational school students and graduates planning to start their own business through targeted to their needs. The method planned to be elaborated through the project will be the Business Incubator- a place where young people can find support, consultancy and training leading to self- employment and independent functioning on the labour market. Developing a model of the functioning of the incubator in a strategic partnership, with the development of tools that will be used, as well as the development of a comprehensive training program and methodology for the staff working with youth- it will support the efficient and effective functioning of the Incubator. It is an innovative method which has not been applied yet and need to be elaborated and tested to obtain the tailor-made shape.

The aim of this report is to describe the vocational education in Poland and the place of the entrepreneurship education within vocational curricula. The report also maps the vocational school students plans concerning the own business creation including the main barriers and benefits they notice as well as all needs they identify.

II. Entrepreneurship teaching and practice of vocational school students and graduates

The main aim of vocational upper secondary education is to provide the proper preparation to young people for direct and smooth entering the labour market after graduation. The following upper secondary technical and vocational schools are created to candidates who have graduated from the lower secondary school: 4-year technical upper secondary school – a type of school that gives 4 years of full-time technical and vocational upper secondary education for pupils aged 16 to 20. The number of hours for vocational education (sufficient to take an exam) in this program shall be 570 hours during 3 years. It offers the matriculation exam compulsory for applying to higher education and an external vocational examination leading to vocational qualifications. Upon passing the external vocational examination or a set of examinations each giving separate qualifications, graduates have access to a trade or occupation or can continue their education in schools for adults.

In vocational education practical vocational training is organised in the form of practical training classes at school or vocational placements or at the employers with whom the school cooperates (in case of apprenticeships). Practical vocational training is organised in school workshops, continuing education centres, practical training centres, school labs with employers; it applies to students of public upper secondary schools offering vocational education. Practical training is provided by the school.

The novelty since 2012 in the vocational education system is introduction of vocational courses. Employers may commission schools to run them. In consequence, it is easier for educational facilities to adjust the curricula to the exact needs of the local labor market and to the specific employers demands.

There was also a set of separated from professions specified in the classification of professions of vocational education. A qualification in a profession is understood as the scope of knowledge and a set of certain skills allowing for performing professional tasks and enabling to undertake a job in a

profession. Each qualification is accompanied by a description of educational effects divided into knowledge, skills and personal and social competences. Each profession may have from one to three qualifications. Some professions have alternative qualifications on the level of one qualification. The new classification of professions comprises 8 areas, in which 200 professions are described. 251 qualifications were in the professions (including 23 professions with 3 qualifications per profession, 72 professions with 2 qualifications, 98 professions with 1 qualification and 7 professions of art education with no specified qualifications).

The special position in vocational education has the entrepreneurship teaching and entrepreneurship as one of the key competences to be built and developed, therefore in Poland entrepreneurship is a compulsory subject. Within this education one of key outcome is economic and financial literacy. The new curriculum emphasizes the development of students' attitudes and competences not only through subject such as entrepreneurship or economics in practice but also during education or other subjects such as 3 last grades): History and Society, Mathematics at 3 last grades at level one at Civic education, Geography, Mathematics, IT at level 2 and at Civic education, Geography, History and Society, IT At level 3. The example of the education outcome concerning entrepreneurship competences, abilities and skills are as follow: to know the list examples of various human needs and ways to fulfil them calculate percentages and become familiar with elements of descriptive statistics, to understand the market economy rules including economic processes, to understand rules of rational everyday life management, acquire skills related to the analysis of future education and professional career prospects, to understand current problems of the labour market, features of regional economy and import as well as economics related problems of neighbouring countries and wide; to use a calculation sheet for solving arithmetical problems such as planning of expenses; to prepare presentations of data and reports; to become familiar with fiscal policy of territorial self-government and budget organisation; to recognise rules in the economy and mutual links and dependencies in the system man-natureconomy; to be aware of forms of crediting of trade activities and other ventures, to acquire skills related to data collection and presentation, databases, to familiarize with the functioning of enterprises; to plan an economic venture and its

implementation in form of a project, to become familiar with the market analysis; to understand the organisation of the enterprise and assessment of effects.

The teachers are prepared to through proper post- graduate studies. There has been also projects run by governmental bodies, education institutes and NGOs (most of the financed via EU programmes) providing innovative tools to teach entrepreneurship such as games, role- plays and other active methods. There has been also schools which support youth in practising entrepreneurship. They give them the responsibility for small school facilities, such as copy machine, school shop. Still, entrepreneurship education is more theoretical than practical. It often lacks the contact with the entrepreneurs, it has been conducted by teachers who know it only from books and studies and who has never lead an enterprise.

III. Methodology description

There were 103 youth surveyed, including 7 girls and 89 boys. Youth represented 2 schools from Lubelskie region, Polish Air Force Academy from Dęblin and Lublin Centre of Vocational Education from Lublin from the first, second and the third education year. The survey was conducted in April and May 2015.

There had been a questionnaire distributed. There was a set of 6 questions enquiring youth about their plans concerning opening the own business, identifying the barriers and difficulties they foresee at this path, the main benefits from being the entrepreneur they notice as well as the assessment of the effectiveness of the school education preparation to the entrepreneurial operating.

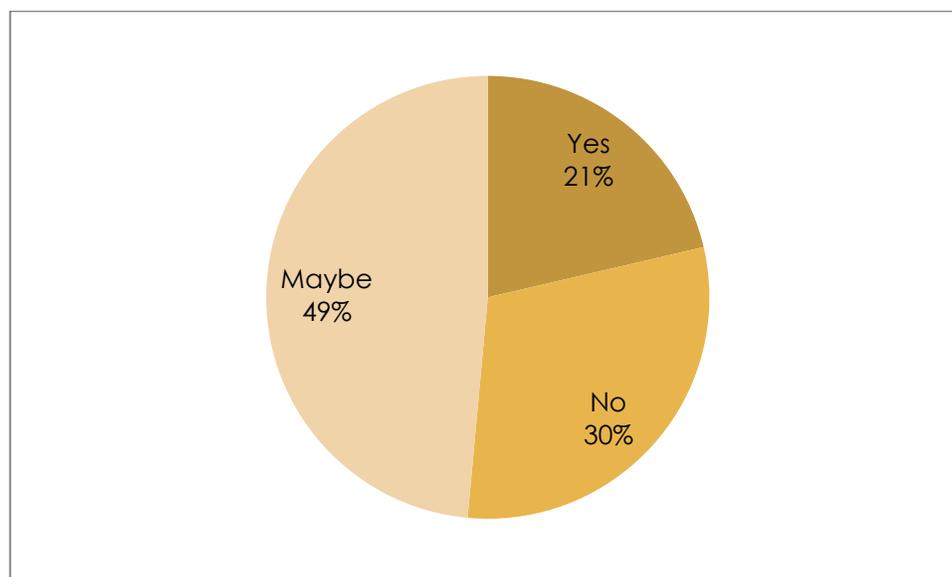
The questions were as follow:

1. Are planning to be an entrepreneur when you finish school?
2. Does your school prepare a young person to be an entrepreneur?
3. How do you think why so few young people decide to start a business after graduation?
4. To decide to become an entrepreneur, I would need (sentence to be finished)
5. In my mind, the biggest advantages of being the entrepreneur are (sentence to be finished)
6. If I decided to start a business, first I would ask for advice and support (sentence to be finished).

In each questions apart from the compulsory answer, students were asked for additional comments, such as a profile of a company they plan to open, comments on the school preparation to become the entrepreneur.

IV. Conclusions

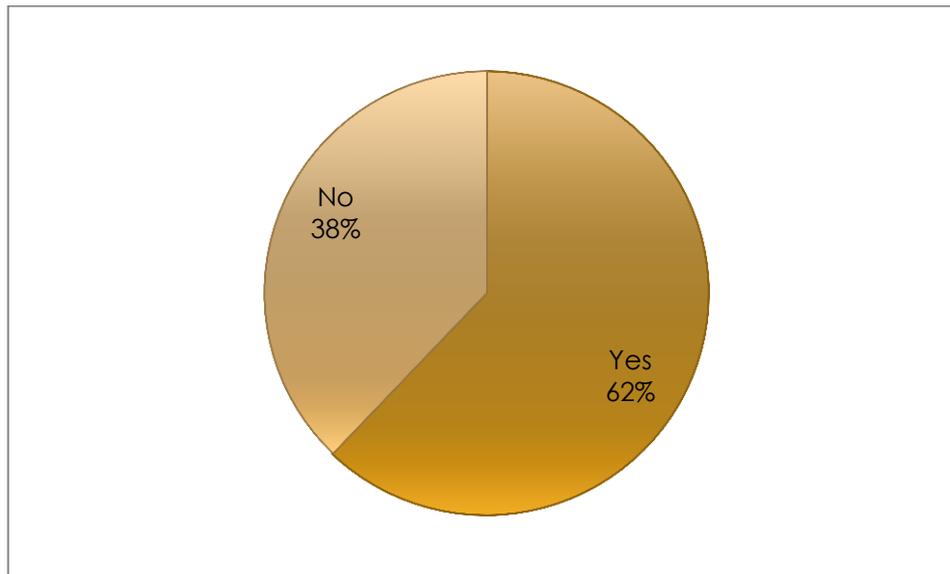
Students were asked about their plans concerning starting up the own business after vocational education. Twenty one percent plan to open own company directly after school completion and 49 % treat it as one of the possible options. One third definitely excludes this option from plans.



There are various ideas for the future company profile of those who plan to open a company. There were the following ideas for the enterprise: car repair shop (2 persons), IT company (2 persons), transport company, audio equipment repair shop (3 people), kiosk, music band (2 persons), electricity installment, graphic services (3 persons), kindergarten, e- shop, advertiser company, dance studio, landscape architecture, distribution company. Half of those who plan the own business running would like to open a company operating in a field close to the education path, the other concentrate on their interests and hobbies such as dance.

Youth assess positively the school engagement into preparation them to opening own business. Sixty two percents answered that their schools prepares them to opening own business after school.

In their comments they mentioned the entrepreneurship lessons, meeting with the career adviser. Some commented that there should be more proposals for school after lessons, some would like more international exchanges, and there were also opinions that there is a need to introduce more practical classes instead of theory both in entrepreneurship education and in vocational subjects' education.



Youth were also asked why so few youth decide to be the entrepreneur after school. The most frequent answer were the financial barriers, one third find them as a main obstacle to become the entrepreneur. Twelve persons responded that youth do not have enough courage and they are afraid of failure, problems. There were seven comments that taxes in Poland are too high, the same number assume that the main reason is simply a lack of idea for a business. Five people mentioned that there must be more practical classes at school to prepare youth more effectively. Among other barriers, there were pointed: lack of knowledge (4 persons), too much bureaucracy (4 persons), Polish reality, hard kick-off, easier start as an employee, lack of creditworthiness, lack of people supporting in environment, lack of motivation, lack of proper education, complicated law.

They were also inquired what would they need to decide to be an entrepreneur. The answered were similar to main barriers commented in the previous question. The main answer (62 persons) was money, at the second position were was idea (8 persons). Among the after factors there were

enumerated: assurance that I will bear no consequences in case of failure, equipment (2 people), promotion, motivation (2 people), entrepreneurship training (6 persons), meeting with other entrepreneur (2 persons), financial knowledge, experience (2 persons), equity partner, place to work (2 people), education, legal advice, support from somebody (4 persons).

Vocational schools students find the own business as a source of economic success. More than one third assumes that running own business brings financial profits. One fifth finds independence as a main advantage. Five persons mentioned as a main positive side the ability to employ other people, the same number finds own business as way to do what you like doing. Among the other benefits, there were: joy, possibility to cooperate with other people, known brand, respect from others, and tax credits.

Youth were also enquired were they would address to get support and advice while opening the own business. One third would trust somebody who already has experience as an entrepreneur; one third would consult the family. Ten people would ask the career adviser at school, eight people would go to a teacher, six would ask a friend. There were also the following answer- somebody from the town hall, an accountant, a tax adviser, a lawyer, somebody from bank. Eight people would only search in net on their own.

V. Recommendations

A dynamic economy, which is more and more innovative and creative require a greater number of young people who are willing and able to become entrepreneurs – young people who will launch and successfully develop their own companies. Because education is key to shaping young people's attitudes, skills and culture, it is crucial that entrepreneurship education is addressed from an early age both by schools, families, NGOs and all environments that influence youth people. According to

the Key Competence Framework, the entrepreneurship key competence refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. There is a great need of specialists, iWhile many youth dream about opening the own companies and regard it as a very positive form of functioning on the labour market, when they finish school and face realities, most of them chooses to be an employee. They lack financial sources and substantial support. Youth emphasize that they would a direct contact, advice and support from the experienced enterpreurs. They lack knowledge, competences, skills, inspiration and practice. They consider that the amount of knowledge about enterpreurship they receive at school is sufficient, but they would need more practice, more contacts with experienced people both during school formal education and after graduation when they would try as entrepreneurs.