

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIFE COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

Laura Alvarez Marques¹, Cristina Albuquerque²

¹ Coordinator of a Training and (Social) Entrepreneurship Department, Lisboa, Portugal

² University of Coimbra, Portugal

***Abstract.** Actually several studies and authors underline the importance of (early) entrepreneurship education to the creation of an entrepreneurial and innovative culture of social and economic change. This requires models of education more focused on preparing people for tomorrow's labour markets and for a more unpredictable and complex society, as well as new policies especially target for this area. Assuming that entrepreneurship skills can be taught and that they should be considered as a general attitude, useful in all work activities and everyday life, the discussion about teaching goals and methodologies is very relevant. Thus, in our paper, we will reflect about the questions associated to this subject and illustrate our assumptions by presenting the main conclusions of a study developed in Europe in 2010. This research was about the contribution of entrepreneurship education in the development of life skills in young people from disadvantaged communities. Our aim was to study, in a comparative and qualitative approach, the goals, processes, recognised importance and teaching methodologies developed in the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) in Belgium and Ireland (an international project born in the United States in the eighties).*

***Keywords:** entrepreneurship, education, life skills, teaching methodologies, competencies, young people, NFTE.*

Introduction

In contexts of social and economic crisis, like the one that actually exists, the political and academic interest for strategies to promote an entrepreneurship culture acquires a renewed dimension. In fact, one of the main challenges facing the European Union Member States is the need to boost entrepreneurship in order to improve employment and to develop the economic sector and social cohesion. Several authors (Reynolds, 1992; Acs, 1999) have argued indeed that the economic and social impact (Bridge et al., 2003, quoted in Bjerke, 2008) of entrepreneurship is not just on business establishment level but also in its growth. In this conception, 'entrepreneurship' and 'prosper economy' are inseparable (Crijns & Vermeulen, 2007; Cuervo *et al.*, 2007). In the same way, the so called social entrepreneurship, while oriented toward the production of social value, and not explicitly of economic prosperity, asserts itself more and more as an innovative way to respond to complex social issues, fostering alternative ways of managing the social and economic, setting conditions for social inclusion and

employment (including self employment), and mechanisms for greater social and democratic participation. It includes then a high potential for innovation and initiative tied with assumptions of efficiency, social and human development and economic, social, environmental and cultural sustainability.

Recently, the European Union Green Paper on Entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2003) set out a range of benefits that can be associated with entrepreneurship. These benefits include contributing to economic growth by job creation and growth; fostering social and economic cohesion particularly in less developed regions being crucial to competitiveness and productivity improvements; unlocking personal potential and satisfying a range of social interests, by making wealth, jobs and diversity of choice for citizens available.

Thus, the call is made to create/achieve innovation and new ways to intervene, facing us with a new paradigm of economic and social intervention. This new paradigm requires solutions that are more focused on the strengths and skills of the individuals and communities, built with and for them. Encouraging entrepreneurship is then presented as a central key to create jobs and to improve competitiveness, social integration and economic growth throughout Europe. For this, entrepreneurship education and training are very relevant.

In fact, we consider that entrepreneurship is more than a functional strategy. It is mainly a culture, a way of thinking, a way of acting, a concept of life and freedom to innovate and to assume risks. The European Commission, in many work papers, has defined it as a basic skill, stressing the importance of developing an entrepreneurial spirit among European citizens.

Entrepreneurship education intends to reveal usefulness and dynamic potential in each person. This potential can be boosted by the development of new pedagogical approaches, which will be useful in all activities of anyone's life. Thus, the entrepreneur is not someone "different", with particular or special innate capacities, but someone who had his/her potential stimulated. Entrepreneurship education can have like this an important role in the promotion of social cohesion through value recognition. The motivation, the self-esteem and the critical thinking, among other personal and social competencies, are, as we will argue, important axes for an entrepreneurial attitude that can be stimulated.

Like this, in our paper we intent to discuss the importance to conceive new models (articulating key global orientations and contextualised based principles) and methodologies to teach entrepreneurship competencies and skills and to underscore the importance to construct initiative competencies from early ages. For doing so we will illustrate our discussion with data from a study developed in 2010 about the contribution of entrepreneurship education in the development of life skills in young people from disadvantaged communities. Our aim was to study, in a comparative and qualitative approach, the goals, processes, recognised importance and teaching methodologies developed in the NFTE - Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (an international project born in the United States in the eighties), in Belgium and in Ireland. To state more exactly we intended to identify the skills developed in the work with young people, as well as to understand formers' and students opinions about which teaching methods they considered the most suitable to achieve the program objectives in a more consistent way.

Entrepreneurship education: skills and methodologies

Education can contribute tremendously to economic development and social inclusion. The creation of an entrepreneurial society, starting at school with the younger people, is nowadays essential to promote new ways to act and to think about complex problems and to re-act to a culture of fatalism and passivity.

Entrepreneurship education started over a century ago, with organizations such as Junior Achievement. However, it has only been part of the *curriculum* in higher education institutions for the last 60 years. The first graduate course in entrepreneurship was offered at Harvard University in 1947 (Katz, 2003). However in the past 15 years entrepreneurship education has growth spectacularly through the US and in other parts of the world, namely in several European countries. This growth is reflected in many initiatives focused in entrepreneurship education as well as programmes targeted towards young people (Greene & Rice, 2002).

The field is then expanding and some research has been conducted in the past two decades. However, there has been relatively little studies conducted on the impacts of entrepreneurship education and training, namely on the development of entrepreneurial skills and values (McMullan *et al.*, 2001). Most of the research has tended to be fragmented and mainly with a descriptive orientation (Sexton & Ksardarda, 1991).

Nevertheless, recent research made on the contribution of entrepreneurship education indicates conclusively that it contributes significantly to risk taking attitudes, to the formation of new businesses (Garavan & O’Cinnelde, 1994) and to the propensity to be self employed (Charney & Libecap, 2002). Entrepreneurship competencies education also seems to have a positive effect on the perceived feasibility of entrepreneurship, or on entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Hytti, 2008, Alberti *et al.*, 2005; Lepoutre *et al.*, 2010). It was as well demonstrated that positive entrepreneurship education impacts are stronger among students with a positive prior exposure to entrepreneur’s concrete experiences (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003).

The recent literature highlights the existence of different types of education and training programmes for entrepreneurs. While all of them have a common base, in that they emphasize skills that the entrepreneurs need, course methodologies and evaluations differ significantly. As Damon and Lerner (2008) note, there is a lack of commonly accepted “factors of success practices” and protocols for conducting the necessary evaluations. These factors could be associated with indicators that fall into four categories (1) academic knowledge about entrepreneurship; (2) academic performance more generally; (3) business formation and wealth generation, and finally (or mainly) (4) personal values and aspirations.

In fact there is a lack of knowledge on the impact of personal and initiative characteristics on entrepreneurial intentions and other outcomes. In fact we can assume that to simply know something it’s not, *per se*, a predictor of associated attitudes or performance. The “entrepreneurial education” doesn’t generate necessarily entrepreneurs, but can promote, or potentiate, with renewed pedagogical goals and tools, the possibilities or capacities to be one (Ferreira, 2011). It’s crucial to educate for a more proactive attitude towards life and to a more positive perception about ourselves. Thus, we can talk mainly about an “entrepreneurial pedagogy” (Dolabela, 2003). In the next sections we will try to explore more these assumptions

Can entrepreneurship skills be taught?

The idea that the characteristics of entrepreneurs cannot be taught or learned, because they are innate, has been for a long time prevailing. Today, the recognition of entrepreneurship as a discipline is helping to disperse this myth. In fact, there are some qualities that cannot be taught (to have entrepreneurial parents and some innate risk-taking propensity), but certain competencies can be stimulated, trained and potentiated to become an entrepreneur. The presupposition is that “all human beings are inherently entrepreneurial, that is, entrepreneurial potential is in all of us” (World Economic Forum, 2009: 25). According to Drucker (1993: 3) “most of what you hear about entrepreneurship is all wrong. It is not magic; it is not mysterious; and it has nothing to do with genes. It is a discipline and, like any discipline, it can be learned.”

Therefore it is crucial to encourage entrepreneurship through an entrepreneurial culture, education and public policy. Education can help to shape this entrepreneurial culture, while a renewed pedagogy and policies can help to increase the effectiveness of entrepreneurship educational initiatives (Bjerke, 2008).

In the US and Europe, recent studies have revealed a high number of students who drop out of school, with the consequent social and economic problems. Some of the reasons pointed to explain such situation were that students do not understand the connection between the academic curriculum and what they need to know to manage their life and workplace. To address both the problem of school disengagement and the need for individuals to learn to take responsibility for their futures, we think that an entrepreneurial pedagogy should be integrated at education and training structures in several levels.

It is important to note the extent to which european governments give priority to supporting specific target groups in the area of Entrepreneurship Policy. Offering entrepreneurship as a career option to everyone in our societies is presented as the key to economic benefits, giving also new perspectives to people’s careers, specifically for disadvantaged people (Lundström, Almerud & Stevenson, 2008; Cuervo, Ribeiro & Roig, 2007). In our conception, more than just conceive entrepreneurship within this utilitarian perspective, it’s important to reflect about the potentialities of an entrepreneurial pedagogy to develop more conscientious, ethical and proactive citizens, and not just functional individuals. Assuming this perspective we must reflect about what to teach, how to do it, by whom and when.

What to teach?

As we assumed, the development of an entrepreneurial attitude can be encouraged in all people (European Commission, 2004a). Therefore, entrepreneurship should not be considered just as a mean for creating new businesses, but as a general attitude that can be usefully applied by everyone in their daily life and working experiences (Ferreira, 2011).

The nature of work is already changing: technological team work, job rotation and multitasking, have a considerable impact on the type of skills and competencies required nowadays (Dickerson & Green, 2002). Therefore, employees in all jobs will be increasingly required to acquire a range of generic and transferable skills and attitudes, including people-related and critical thinking competencies. There is also a growing demand for problem solving, analytical thought, self-management, communication, linguistic and pro-activity competencies.

Education and training systems should, therefore, be ready to develop new programs for emergent new professions, and new competencies should be taught as part of changing job and social participation profiles. It should provide the tools which will be even more important in the future: the technical skills and the so called life competencies, such as: critical thinking, team work, creativity, communication and a sense of innovation and pro-activity. Instilling these life competencies will require changes in the way schools are organized, including renewed teaching practices, long-term processes, field work and the error value (Denny & Harmon, 2000).

Generic, horizontal, soft, key, transferable, life competencies or skills; those are the more common classifications used when broadly referring to combinations of competencies, skills and personal attributes which are deemed essential to be effective in the workplace of the 21st century, as well as socially (EGFSN, 2007; Dickerson & Green, 2002).

The European Commission (2004b:5) defines those skills as “those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment”:

- a) basic skills (e.g. mother tongue; foreign language; mathematics, science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competencies; sense of initiative);
- b) people-related skills (e.g. communication, interpersonal relationship, team-working, cultural awareness/ expression) and
- c) conceptual skills (e.g. organization, problem solving, planning, learning-to-learn skills, innovation and creativity skills, systematic thinking) (Pullen, 2000; Faustino, 2010).

The same skills, articulated in a holistic development concept, are also mentioned in the European report “*Employability Skills for the Future*” and “*New skills for new jobs*” (European Commission, 2010), so, they should be prioritized into all funded education and training provision to operate successfully within society.

The objectives of an entrepreneurial pedagogy (adapted to the different levels of education) will therefore include personal development, business development and entrepreneurial skills development (European Commission, 2004a). Personal development means to promote personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship, such as confidence, personal initiative, creativity and responsibility. Business development is increased by providing the business skills that are needed in order to engage, with efficacy, in economic or social initiatives. And finally, the entrepreneurial skill development is assured through training on social competencies, creative problem solving, opportunity seeking, selling, presentation, group leadership, community co-operation, dealing with bureaucracy, among others. Ultimately, it is about skills and attitudes that can take many forms during an individual’s career, creating a range of long-term benefits to society and economy.

The entrepreneurial pedagogy is adapted to the educational act and to different levels of education (desirably on the regular, obligatory educational system). This implies a progressive strategy (Johannisson *et al.*, 1997), according to student ages and previous knowledge, from “field games”, in the basic levels, to “field projects” articulated with scholar subjects, in secondary and superior levels. This way it is possible to stimulate capacities of: problem solving (planning; strategy; decision

making; communication; assumption of responsibilities), cooperation and adaptation to new roles, independent and critical thinking, creativity and initiative.

How to teach?

Davies and Gibb (quoted in Greene & Rice, 2002) suggest that using traditional education methods to develop entrepreneurial skills and competencies does not have the wanted results. In fact, teaching entrepreneurship requires a different pedagogical approach to subjects and to the “traditional” teaching methodologies. We can see, in Figure 2, the differences between a “traditional” teaching pedagogy and an entrepreneurial pedagogy.

Traditional	Entrepreneurial
Emphasis on the content as a purpose	Emphasis on the process (learning to learn)
Led and dominated by the teacher	Appropriation of the learned subject by the participant
The knowledge is conveyed by the teacher	The teacher facilitates the discovery and learning
The knowledge IS acquired and unaffected	The knowledge can change
Curriculum and highly planned sessions	Flexible sessions and targeted to needs
Imposed education objectives	Learning objectives negotiated and evolving
Priority for the performance	Priority to self-development which generates performance
Convergent thinking, rejects conjectures	Divergent thinking and assumptions as part of the creative process
Emphasis on analytical and linear thinking	Holistic thinking strategies
Theoretical and abstract knowledge	Theoretical knowledge together with practical applications
Resistance to the influence of the community	Encouraging the community's influence
Emphasis in the outside world	The inner experience is a source of learning, feelings are embedded in the action
Education as a social necessity for performance of a particular role	Education as a lifelong process, and only barely related to school
Errors are not accepted	Errors as a source of knowledge ("good mistake")
Knowledge is the bond between teacher and student	Relationship is the key link between teacher and student.

Source: Dolabela, 1999: 171.

Figure 2. Traditional and entrepreneurial pedagogy

The findings of a large number of researchers (Garavan & O’Cinnelde, 1994; Greene & Rice, 2002 ; Bucha, 2009; WEF, 2009; Ferreira, 2011) indicate, in fact, that the best way to teach entrepreneurial skills is through student centred and active experiential learning (including for instance their own experiences of life), and not just didactically as most other general subjects can or should be taught.

Entrepreneurial pedagogy intends to prepare students to learning in and for the outside world. So, teaching models that encourage students to continue learning throughout their experience and to identify and build life opportunities are essential. In this context, the possibility of “learning by doing” becomes important.

The World Economic Forum (WEF, 2009), for instance, describes some examples of experiential learning methodologies and stresses the importance of learning outside the class and through real context approaches. As it is underlined, “mainstream pedagogy will have to change, leading to the hands-on, project-based, multidisciplinary, non-linear approaches that education entrepreneurship requires. (...). Entrepreneurship is reflective action; no amount of book-based learning on its own will allow the student to progress in this field. One cannot just study a chart of the steps to learn a new dance!”

(WEF, 2009). Apart from that, it is agreed that the contact with concrete examples of entrepreneurs inspire students.

This experiential learning gives students an active role, in opposition to the traditional “listen and take notes” role (Garavan & O’Cinnelde, 1994). In this perspective it’s essential to prepare them to be able to think for themselves, considering the possibility to learn through “errors” (the perspective of the “good error”), encouraging the use of feelings, attitudes, and values, also when dealing with conflict situations. So, they must employ different and articulated learning styles: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation (see Figure 3).

Concrete Experience <i>Stage I - Feeling</i>	
III. Active / applied Skills and attitudes changes (Role-playing; management simulation; structured exercises; process discussion; group tasks; diaries; field projects, etc)	II. Reflexive / Applied Changes under consideration (movies; applied speech; dialogue; limited discussion; case studies; examination of problems; programmed instruction)
Active experience <i>Stage IV – Doing</i>	Reflective observation <i>Stage II – Observing</i>
IV. Active / theoretical Change in the understanding (focused learning groups; argumentative discussion; experiences and research; suggested readings; analysis of articles)	I. Reflexive / theoretical Knowledge changes (lectures on theories; required reading; communications; programmed instruction / conceptualizations; theoretical articles; content examination)
Abstract conceptualization <i>Stage III - Thinking</i>	

Source: Adapted from Randolph & Posner, 1979, as quoted in Bucha 2009: 99.
 Figure 3. Conceptual framework of learning styles and pedagogical techniques

Who teaches?

The teacher plays a crucial role in the overall effectiveness of any entrepreneurial learning programme. To be successful, it demands entrepreneurial teachers, working as entrepreneurial socialization agents. Teachers may need training in either or both the experiential pedagogy and the business content, because it implies at least some operational changes in the current education model in some schools. Their training curriculum should be nearly as extensive as the underlying curriculum for students (WEF, 2009). It is also important to work closely with entrepreneurs, as an example for others to follow. As it is said in the World Economic Forum (2009:33), “no entrepreneurship programme can succeed without close interaction with entrepreneurs”. In this perspective, the most suitable profile would be a combination of a good classroom facilitator (with or without previous experience in entrepreneurship) and structured interactions with entrepreneurs. “Very few teachers will have been entrepreneurs, and very few entrepreneurs will be good teachers” (WEF, 2009: 33).

Bertrand (2001) stresses the importance of an open pedagogy, as it allows personal growth while respecting personal rhythm and the style of students. Then, teachers should be, as we said before, focused on the student’s needs and characteristics, not strictly on their *curriculum* (AIESEC, 1992). It should allow the development of competencies, skills and talents of each student through a rich and stimulating

environment. For such, teachers should take a more dynamic and active learning, becoming essentially facilitators of learning.

The Council of Europe (2003: 21) defines a facilitator as “someone who helps the group to discover the knowledge they already have, which encourages you to learn more and help you explore your potential. Facilitate means creating an environment where the group learns, experiences, explore and grow. Not a process where experts, transmit their knowledge and skills to others”.

Like this, Penin (2010) says that moving from teacher to facilitator requires a new perspective. It is working from the point at which each student is in a flexible, unpredictable, and reinvented way. It’s creating a team spirit, inspiring dreams and challenges, attainable but defying. In this process teachers are called to work with students more responsibly in the conduction and evaluation of their learning process (Faustino, 2010).

At this point it’s important to underline that this new paradigm should not imply a simplification of knowledge acquisition and a mere experiential and limited learning process constructed by students. The structural knowledge must be achieved, the cultural and humanistic approaches must be explored, and the traditional teaching methodologies (integrating however a new attitude towards students and their knowledge and experiences) must be combined with the new approaches to achieve a holistic model of competencies.

When to teach?

Even if entrepreneurship can be partly learned, another question is when this should be done. As we have pointed out before, the education system should help to stimulate an entrepreneurial culture among young people, not only in high education but also in basic and secondary levels (European Commission, 2004b). This could be either through public initiatives or through partnerships between private and public, as for example the initiatives of civil society and international networks long implemented in several countries (as NFTE).

The importance of entrepreneurship as one of the basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning is recognized today. The Lisbon European Council and the European Charter for Small Enterprises have stressed this point and the importance of teaching entrepreneurship at all school levels (European Commission, 2004a). The purpose of embedding entrepreneurship at all levels of education is to create an environment that is conducive to entrepreneurial activity among students, researchers and university members (Greene & Rice, 2002). Like this fostering an entrepreneurial culture in education involves an intervention in the education and training systems, but also in other institutions and socializing agents, such as the media, to achieve this goal (Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 2006).

Apart from this global understanding of the several ways (not only in the school system) to promote an entrepreneurial culture, the European Foundation for Entrepreneurship Research (EFER) and several authors (Lipper, 1987; Hatten & Ruhland, 1995) consider that the earlier and more widespread the exposure to an entrepreneurial education is, the more likely it is that students will consider becoming entrepreneurial in one form or another, at some stage in their lives

A case study: The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) organization in Ireland and Belgium

To illustrate some of the theoretical assumptions that we have just discussed we will present, in this section, some general conclusions of a 2010 qualitative research about the contribution of entrepreneurship training for the development of “life skills and competencies” in young people. For the accomplishment of this goal we have made contact with NFTE organizations in Belgium and Ireland (Brussels and Dublin). Our main aims were to understand the students’ and teachers’ opinion on the most appropriate teaching methods to achieve the goals of the program in a more efficient way; to realize the importance recognized by the different actors (manager and trainer) to the profile and social context of young people in program results; and to understand how is the program evaluated from the perspective of different actors (manager, trainer and former trainee).

Steve Mariotti, in 1987, founded in US the NFTE to prevent dropouts and improve academic performance among students who were at risk of exclusion. Nowadays, NFTE mission is to teach entrepreneurship and empower young people from low-income communities by improving academic, business, technological and life skills. Since its founding NFTE has worked with more than 300,000 young people. It has programs in 28 states and 13 countries outside the United States (namely European countries such as: Belgium, the first in Europe, Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, Austria and Netherlands).

The Brandeis University (1993-1997), the Koch Foundation (1998-1999), and the Harvard Graduate School of Education (2002-present) have researched the impact and effectiveness of NFTE’s programs. The Harvard Graduate School of Education findings, in 2001, stressed the increasing students’ interest in attending college and in occupational aspirations. Brandeis University and Koch Foundation in 1993 had highlighted the impacts of NFTE programs in their academic and professional life: 70% of the attendants were in post-secondary education; 43% had part-time jobs and 33% were still running a business.

a) Mission and delivery strategies:

The general mission of NFTE Ireland and Belgium is the same: to empower young people of disadvantaged communities, through the development of their competencies and skills. All the actors that we interviewed, in both countries, recognized the importance of integrating entrepreneurship education in school system, as well as the important role of education and training in the development of skills and the personality, important for the labour market and social integration.

In Ireland, entrepreneurship education it is required to be given by teachers; in Belgium, it is required an entrepreneurship background. However, despite the different profiles, there is unanimity on the importance of entrepreneurs presence, in the classroom (e.g. as trainers, guest speakers), as a concrete model for students. It is also unanimous that the most important criteria for being a good trainer is the motivation and the entrepreneurial passion. In fact, as it was underlined, passion creates more passion, involving managers, teachers and students.

b) Evaluation:

Although NFTE's Belgium and Ireland have started at different periods of time, none of the interviewed agents doubted about the success of the programme.

Both managers interviewed believe that the entrepreneurial competencies and skills should be worked with students the earlier possible (as many authors subscribe) to get more impact. The trainers, underlined however the importance and impacts of the students' development and maturity level on the capacity and predisposition to understand and assume some of the knowledge, practices and strategies of personal development. In fact, the interviewed former trainees have given the same feedback. So, it is important to have in mind the environment and development moment in which this pedagogy should be integrated and adapted. Scholars of entrepreneurship in a variety of disciplines agree that age, gender, work status, education, income, motivation and perceptions are all significant socio-economic factors in a person's decision to start a business for instance (Bosma & Harding, 2007).

Focusing on young people from disadvantaged communities has, according to the managers and trainers, more impact than NFTE's programme would have on advantaged communities. According to them, it is because NFTE's programme is, in an international scale, the only one focusing on this specific population giving them opportunities and support. Because of the social context of these students, their need of opportunities will guide them as opportunity seekers, much strongly than other populations.

c) Teaching methodologies

The NFTE teaching methodologies were clearly pointed, not only by trainers but by all agents interviewed, as a factor of success of NFTE's programme. Characterized as a practical, active, dynamic and social oriented, the "learning by doing" methodology has a positive impact on the youth skills development. In addition to business skills, students develop life competencies such as: self-confidence, different thinking, planning, opportunity seizing, relational skills, know-how, responsibility and teamwork capacities.

According to trainers and trainees, the success of the learning process is then due to the practical and dynamic methodologies, allied to the programme's structure and curriculum, which gives young people a new perspective on learning and future life, since they learn useful skills and competencies for the future.

Learning methodologies however, would not have the expected impacts without the high motivated NFTE trainers. NFTE managers reports to them as the key factor of NFTE's programmes. For trainees, their support is the key for the programme success and their involvement. "Trainers as facilitators", "more like friends", as they are described by young people, and even more for this specific target group, might have an important impact in their personal development, since some of them might not have this kind of relation at home.

d) Contents, goals and skills

NFTE's program is not only focused on the acquisition of business knowledge but also in the student personal development and value recognition. In fact, trainers do see them "changing in the line of sixty hours". They are changing the way of thinking, behaving, in the way of dressing and relating with each other. And trainees do feel this change. The confidence that they gain in this program produces the unfolding of other skills that they already had, or can achieve, and the image that they have of themselves.

Like this, through the practical methodologies, the facilitators support and the program contents, they develop their skills, since they have to put them into practice. Those skills are not really taught by the trainers. They are seized by imitating the behaviour of the trainer, and also because they have to learn by themselves, with their mistakes and conquests. Putting in practice a renewed teaching paradigm, the trainers consider that the best way of learning is actually, doing it, to reflect about the process and the result and doing it again, until students get able to understand.

In addition to business skills students develop, as we have already said, other structural skills, such as: self-confidence, different thinking, planning, opportunity seizing, relational skills, know-how (those were mentioned by all former trainees), responsibility, use of IT and teamwork. Those skills can be named as entrepreneurial, because for being an entrepreneur you might need them as well, however they are important in all areas of life. In fact, life skills are those skills that are learned in the pathway of the program which are important because they are “skills for life” which “they can take with them forever”. These skills were not mentioned directly in the class, but they were progressively constructed. Therefore, students were not conscious of what they were learning to their lives, but educate to be an entrepreneur is in fact working with the person as a whole. It requires an individualized work, an active role, a confidence about them and about the possibilities for progressive and open learning, as well as a promotion of prospective and positive thinking about future life.

In fact interviewed trainees recognize that they become more aware of the possibilities for their future. The concept of success for NFTE’s managers and trainers is, with no doubt, to give them a “sense of future”. They all agree that seen personal development in those young people is the most motivational and emotional (immeasurable) impact they could have.

Effectively when the self-confidence is developed, all the other skills might also gain colour. Some authors (Lourenço, 2008; Jardim & Pereira, 2006) agree that skills are mobilized and integrated into the various contexts of life, but they are also influenced by the personal characteristics, as self-confidence and the image that each person has of himself. The self-esteem, and the feelings that they can do it, is the major achievement that also might have an impact in other areas of life and self continuous development. Like this, entrepreneurial education also affects social inclusion. In fact, the interviewed trainees, all of them feel motivated to continue studying. Also, they all want to continue working, or those who did not, want to start.

Final considerations

Not everyone needs to become an entrepreneur, but all members of society need to be more entrepreneurial (Ferreira, 2011). We can presume that there would be more active, aware and responsible citizens if entrepreneurial education and pedagogy would be further promoted, especially since early ages.

To achieve this it’s important to develop new public policies on this subject, as well as to promote, namely in the faculties of education, the teaching preparation for non-traditional approaches and pedagogies, to train others in the future and to increase the efficiency and motivation of the learners. Trainers and teachers should act, not only as cultural, holistic and critical thinking promoters, but also as facilitators, to develop a supportive environment to the learning process.

In the sequence of the contributions already discussed about the strategies to promote an entrepreneurial education, that is much more than an entrepreneurship education, there should be more programs or training initiatives open to all individuals, in the scholar system or outside. In the same way, providing entrepreneurial training courses for educators, and other professionals who work with young people as social workers, social animators, psychologists and kindergarten teachers, would be an important asset to disseminate an entrepreneurial attitude towards life and society.

There are many other areas to be further researched, as the impacts of such programs in *alumni* in long-term, regarding their professional activity. Also it should be interesting to study the impact of entrepreneurship education strategies at different ages, and the correlation with their developmental stage, as well as the influence of the social context in the impacts of an entrepreneurial education and action.

Actually, from the social, political and economic context, we are in an ideal position to develop initiatives in this field. A crisis could be a propitious moment to be seized and an opportunity to be taken.

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