

MAPPING REPORT OF INITIATIVES IN BULGARIA FOR ADOLESCENT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INNOVATION, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND FINANCIAL LITERACY



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BDTF – Bulgarian Centre of Training Firms
CPD – Continuous professional development
CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility
EIT – European Institute of Innovation and Technology
EU – European Union
FSC – Financial Supervision Commission
INFE – International Network on Financial Education
ISCED – International Standard Classification of Education
LLL – Lifelong learning
MES – Ministry of Education and Science
NGO – Non-governmental organisation
NRA – National Revenue Agency
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSEA – Pre-school and School Education Act
SES – State Educational Standard

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a mapping exercise of programmes and initiatives in Bulgaria focused on adolescent skills development for life and work through innovation, social entrepreneurship and financial literacy implemented during the period 2015 – 2020. It provides a snapshot of some trends in adolescent skills building and is intended to identify gaps, potential opportunities and areas for further improvement with a particular focus on vulnerable adolescents and youth, where applicable.

The mapping exercise was conducted in 2020 through desk research considering several criteria as defined in the Terms of Reference – the thematic area of the initiative, the skills it aims to develop, the age range/school level and the size of the target group, sources of funding, the involvement of marginalized and vulnerable youth, the main partners engaged and their role, the delivery mechanisms including the setting – school-based, out-of-school, non-formal, camps or other relevant formats, the scale of the initiative, its geographic reach (local, national) and the time period of the intervention.

An **overview of national policy and legal frameworks** of school education encouraging transferable skills development is provided to outline the context in which the initiatives have been implemented. The available national strategic and legislative documents were analysed from a perspective of the opportunities they provide for the development of transferable skills as part of the key competence entrepreneurship. These skills include problem solving, analytical thinking, creative thinking, communication and leadership skills, skills for cooperation, negotiation and decision making, research skills, digital and ICT skills, financial literacy, civic awareness, respect for diversity, empathy, participation and personal well-being.

The **key findings** of the mapping exercise are presented by the criteria applied.

A total of 95 initiatives in the two thematic areas – entrepreneurship/social innovations and financial literacy were identified. Some of the initiatives are ongoing. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or complete and is organised as an inventory (in Bulgarian) in Annex 2. It also contains an additional group of 24 initiatives for young people aged over 18. A more detailed overview of 15 selected initiatives in English is included in Annex 1.

The initiatives under the two areas target both specific (hard, technical) skills and transferable (soft, universal) skills associated to entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy. In addition, there are activities aiming at enhancing digital skills, personal development, civic awareness, respect for diversity, empathy as well. However, the information about some initiatives does not provide enough or accurate descriptions

of the targeted skills.

Several sources of funding for the initiatives were identified. They are divided in two main groups – public and private. Public funding is received mainly through EU programmes like Erasmus + or the Operational Programmes as well as central or local authorities' budgets. The sources of private funding are from business organisations directly or through their foundations.

The available information about most initiatives is from their launch and rarely there are data about the number of reached people or other indicators. The initiatives are quite different regarding the involved participants – from small, one-off local ones to large European projects. The numbers included in the inventory – where available – are only about the Bulgarian participation in them.

The initiatives are categorized as local, regional, national, European or international. Thus, if one school from Bulgaria is involved in a European project, the initiative is indicated in the inventory as “local, part of a European project”, because the impact and reach in the country remains limited despite the European dimensions.

The involvement of marginalised and vulnerable youth is considered both in the cases when the initiatives target such groups and when the outputs of the initiatives are intended to solve identified problems of such groups without their direct involvement.

The initiatives are implemented usually as extracurricular activities or elective/optional subjects by actors like public institutions, financial institutions, private business organisations (non-financial), schools, higher education institutions, NGOs.

Most of the identified initiatives are implemented by NGOs and are funded by grants (from public or private organisations). In most cases, the private companies just support the initiative and only with some exceptions they set its objectives and scope. There are few initiatives launched by public institutions. However, there are very active public authorities supporting many initiatives like some municipalities.

The types of activities included in the initiatives can be classified in four main groups.:

- ✓ Development and dissemination of educational resources for different age groups;
- ✓ Development of teacher training programmes and provision of teacher training;
- ✓ Organisation of workshops, camps or other forms of training for students;
- ✓ Organisation of fairs, competitions and other events.

The **inventory** also includes brief description of the initiatives, links to the source of information about the initiative and the contact information of the implementing organization.

The **conclusions** of the report provide an analysis of the findings – identified gaps, challenges and recommendations. The main gaps regarding the policy and legal frameworks are related to the limited number of hours in the curricula for primary and lower secondary levels and share of the topic related to entrepreneurship in the subject Technologies and Entrepreneurship. The subject, though compulsory, is not included in all curricula, thus, the larger number of students grades 8 and 9 do not study it at all. In grade 10 the subject is not part of the general curriculum.

Although the legal framework guarantees opportunities for developing the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship as a key competence within the general and vocational school curricula and the national policy for lifelong learning supports that, the specific measures and actions in its implementation are quite few. Through the years the MES has provided teacher training and support to practice enterprises but they target only certain groups of teachers and students.

The existing strategic documents and legislation as well as the SES or the new syllabuses still lack clear definitions and guidelines about the specificities of entrepreneurship or financial literacy education. Despite the attempts, the spiral education model, still needs improvement as the links between the levels are vague and the learning outcomes do not fully complement or build upon the previous level. The lack of national strategies on entrepreneurship and financial literacy affects the conceptual understanding what, how and when they should be studied at school. Therefore, overcoming the gaps in the educational policy and legislation is of critical importance not only regarding formal education but also the initiatives implemented in non-formal or informal context.

Most often the implementing organisations – mainly NGOs – provide no information how the impact of such projects on students' knowledge, skills and attitudes is measured and compared to the baseline determined by the learning outcomes in formal education – whether and how they complement them and what gaps, if any, have been filled in.

Although there is a number of long-term initiatives with a high level of sustainability, their scope is limited as the target groups are very specific.

An important note that should be made regarding financial literacy initiatives is the different focus of the skills they aim to develop. Most of the projects funded by the private (financial) sector in Bulgaria perceive financial literacy as awareness about financial

products and services and practical skills for their usage in personal finance management. Such context does not comply with the understanding of financial literacy as a transversal skill. Financial literacy education needs to be understood as a set of skills (in the context of the entrepreneurship competence) and be focused on developing an entrepreneurial mindset, instead of providing information about products and services offered by the financial sector.

The age group peculiarities at the different school levels are not taken into consideration by many of the initiatives. As a result, the targeted skills related to the key competence initiative and entrepreneurship do not communicate to the expected outcomes of the SES for general and profiled education for each school level and the expected outcomes in the syllabuses for each year. In addition, most of the projects target the upper-secondary level. Students at lower secondary level (grades 5 to 7) are the most neglected group, together with students from vulnerable groups.

Most of the identified initiatives are one-off projects of local character targeting a limited group of students, which lack potential for scaling up.

During the mapping exercise a problem was encountered related to the inadequate or incomplete information about the initiatives provided to the public by the implementing organisations. Very often it is not possible to find data about the reached target group, the duration of an intervention or the achieved impact. As stated above, the publicly available data is rarely comparable. Another gap is that very often the learning outcomes are not properly defined or measured. Only few of the initiatives are based on sound pedagogical expertise, which is evident from the description of the intervention.

One of the main challenges identified is related to the development of relevant strategies for entrepreneurship (including social innovations) and financial literacy education that will ensure sound theoretical and methodological basis and provide mechanisms for measuring their impact. This requires the joint efforts of public institutions, academia and the non-governmental sector, which is a challenge itself. Such strategies should outline the framework within which consistent plans will be formulated to achieve the aims and objectives set through defining appropriate measures and activities. This will give educational institutions and NGOs working in the field clear signals what is important for society and economy and will save efforts and funds otherwise spent on initiatives that are not addressing real needs.

In order to ensure that funds are spent efficiently and there are outcomes related to skills acquisition are achieved, it is also important that funding organisations have procedures not only to control financial accountability but also the quality of developed educational

materials and the provision of training, which should be done by experts in the area.

The availability and appropriate training of teachers in entrepreneurship and financial literacy is yet to be studied and addressed. Teachers need to raise their qualifications or obtain new ones in order to teach entrepreneurship and financial literacy related topics in Technologies and Entrepreneurship as the subject is completely new and most of the teachers have had no formal training in them.

The mapping exercise was conducted in a time of a world crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It has had a profound impact on all spheres of life and affected not only the educational system at all its levels but the various learning initiatives for skills development as well. Therefore, one of the greatest challenges that providers of future initiatives will face and have to overcome is how to revise and adapt them in order to respond to the changing realities and empower young people with the skills they will need for tomorrow.

There are opportunities that can be used to overcome some of the existing gaps and challenges related to the initiatives for developing transversal skills through entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy – the regulations in the PSEA and the accompanying regulations, the projects of the MES for encouraging extracurricular activities, the funding mechanisms provided by the EU and co-financed by the state. EU instruments like the **Erasmus+ Programme** will continue to play a vital role in that process with its increased funding for education and training as envisaged by the new EU long-term budget, which focuses on investment in activities for skills development.

Despite the identified gaps and challenges, the large number and the diversity of initiatives, some of which have proven their sustainability, speaks of already accumulated experience by all stakeholders, which is a good basis for developing strategies that will structure and focus future efforts. The most important investment in that aspect will be initial teacher training, which will ensure a long-term and profound impact and sustainability of all efforts invested so far in skills development through initiatives in entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy.

Based on the identified gaps, challenges and opportunities, the following **recommendations** have been elaborated to address four main groups of stakeholders: public authorities; educational institutions; implementing organisations; funding organisations. The recommendations suggest possible actions addressing the need of:

- ✓ consistent national policy and legal frameworks for entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy education

- ✓ more visibility, scalability and replication of existing good practices
- ✓ effective and efficient utilisation of initiatives funding
- ✓ inclusion of underrepresented groups.

Recommendations to public authorities

This group of recommendations is intended to suggest possible actions of public authorities – like the Council of Ministers, the Ministries of Education and Science, of Finance, of Economy and their structures – to respond to the need of a clear and consistent framework for entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy education. Such a framework will provide the education in these domains with sound theoretical and methodological basis and ensure mechanisms for measuring its impact. This will have a positive effect not only on the formal education process but also on youth skills development in a non-formal or informal context. Their aims and objectives will give implementing organisations – educational institutions and NGOs – clear indications what skills to target and will save efforts and funds otherwise spent on initiatives that are not addressing real needs. Taking these considerations into account, it is recommended that:

- ✓ Public authorities in collaboration with the stakeholders from educational institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organisations should develop national strategies for entrepreneurship education/social innovation and financial literacy¹, aligned with the objectives of the national policy for lifelong learning and containing relevant action plans, mechanisms for measuring the impact of the actions and allocation of financial resources for their implementation.
- ✓ The MES in collaboration with educational institutions, should revise the SES and the syllabuses for entrepreneurship related subjects based on an overall evaluation of their implementation since the adoption of the PSEA in 2016 and the framework set by the future strategic documents on entrepreneurship and financial literacy education.
- ✓ The MES should initiate a study on the status quo of entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy initiatives that will provide an assessment of the achievements and shortcomings of existing practices.
- ✓ The MES should provide publicly available data about the impact of its projects for extracurricular activities by their area, type, involved students and teachers and the mechanisms used to measure the skills and knowledge gained that will allow applying performance-based budgeting of these projects in order to tighten the link between funding and achieved results.

¹ During the process of finalisation of this report the National Strategy for Financial Literacy has been adopted and currently the working group has started developing the competencies framework on financial literacy. <https://www.24chasa.bg/novini/article/9502889>



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Recommendations to educational institutions

These recommendations are intended to highlight existing opportunities that educational institutions can use in order to enhance the development of students' and educators' skills through entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy initiatives. The opportunities stipulated by the PSEA allow schools to pursue specific educational objectives and engage with municipalities, NGOs, employers and other stakeholders in the public dialogue on relevant issues in education. The autonomy of universities and colleges allows them to respond more quickly and efficiently to identified gaps at the labour market. Of special interest is the provision of teacher training, which seems to be the most important investment as it will ensure a long-term positive impact and sustainability of all efforts invested so far in skills development in entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy. To take full advantage of these opportunities, it is recommended that:

- ✓ Schools should innovate their curricula or include subjects related to entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy or include them as electives and extracurricular activities to ensure relevant transferable skills development and fill in the gaps in the SES and the syllabuses.

- ✓ Universities and colleges should provide elective courses for students in non-economics specialties in order to enhance their entrepreneurial culture and financial literacy.
- ✓ Universities and colleges offering pedagogical programmes should include courses in entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy education for initial teacher training and continuous professional development.

Recommendations to implementing organisations

This set of recommendations addresses the lack of comparable public information about the scope and design of the initiatives. They suggest some possible actions that implementing organisations may take regarding the visibility and communication of their initiatives that will enhance their scalability, replicability and sustainability and serve as a basis for benchmarking. It is recommended that:

- ✓ Implementing organisations should provide publicly accessible and comparable information on students' knowledge, skills and attitudes attained through the initiatives and measured against the baseline of the learning outcomes determined in formal education with special emphasis on the deficiencies they have remedied.
- ✓ Implementing organisations should design their training materials by taking into consideration the competences targeted in the policy and legal documents to ensure that the initiatives complement them relevantly and efficiently.
- ✓ Implementing organisations should perform benchmarking both internally and externally, which will improve their performance and encourage the exchange of good practices.

Recommendations to funding organisations

This set of recommendations suggests some actions that can help the organisations providing funds for the implementation of the initiatives to obtain relevant feedback and ensure that funds are spent efficiently, and appropriate learning outcomes related to skills acquisition have been set and met.

- ✓ Funding organisations should establish procedures not only to control financial accountability but also the impact achieved through the quality of developed educational materials and the provision of training, which should be done by experts in the area.
- ✓ Funding organisations should require from the implementing organisations to use clear mechanisms for measuring the impact of the intervention through the initiatives.
- ✓ Funding organisations should encourage initiatives for underrepresented groups in the initiatives – lower secondary students (grades 5 to 7) and students from vulnerable groups.
- ✓ Funding organisations should encourage more initiatives that build upon previous experience or have a potential for scaling up.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope

This report presents a mapping of existing programmes and initiatives in Bulgaria focused on adolescent skills development for life and work through innovation, social entrepreneurship and financial literacy. The mapping exercise is based on the findings of a desk research of national education policies and legislation encouraging the development of entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented mindsets, as well as programmes and initiatives delivered by different stakeholders – government, private sector, civil society organizations, academia and research institutions focused on promoting practical entrepreneurial experiences.

The mapping provides a snapshot of some trends in adolescent skills building. It is intended to identify gaps, potential opportunities and areas for further improvement with a particular focus on vulnerable adolescents and youth, where applicable.

The initiatives fall in two main categories depending on their focus on skills development through 1) social innovation/entrepreneurship and 2) financial literacy. The first category is broader, therefore, the initiatives in it are more in number.

The analysis of the national policies and programmes relating to skills development of adolescents through entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy covers the period from 2015 to 2020. The mapping includes the thematic area of the initiative, the skills it aims to develop, the age range and the size of the target group, the involvement of marginalized and vulnerable youth, main partners engaged and their role and delivery mechanisms including the setting – school-based, out-of-school, non-formal, camps and other relevant, scale of the initiative and geographic reach (local, national) and time period of the intervention.

Structure

The report is structured as follows:

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Overview of existing national policy and legal framework encouraging the transferable skills development
4. Mapping of initiatives for skill development through entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy and key findings
5. Conclusions – identified gaps, challenges and opportunities
6. Recommendations

Annex 1. Selected initiatives (in English)

Annex 2. Inventory of projects, programmes and initiatives in Bulgarian)

Methodology

The methodology for this research includes a series of tasks designed to meet the aims and objectives. The approach involved four main tasks:

1. Review of policy and legal frameworks. The findings present the frameworks within which the initiatives, programmes and projects have been implemented since 2015.
2. Desk research of relevant programmes and projects of different stakeholders organised in a structured template. During the process a wide range of online sources – e.g. websites of relevant institutions, organisations or projects, were consulted.
3. Mapping of the initiatives with an analysis of the identified gaps, potential opportunities and areas of actions for further improvement focused on skills development of adolescents.
4. Inventory of the identified initiatives. It is presented as an annex to the mapping report.

Limitations

The research method used for the mapping exercise was online desk research, through which was gathered information only from publicly available sources like websites and social media pages. The initiatives identified through the research process are not only diverse in their character but also in their descriptions provided by the implementing organisations. These descriptions vary immensely in form and information about the explored aspects of the intervention like clear definition of the skills developed, size of the target group, role of each partner, delivery mechanism and even description of the initiative itself.

The selected initiatives target adolescents between 10 and 19 years but due to the heterogenous data format regarding the age range of the target groups, they were divided in three groups according to the school level of the target groups – primary, lower secondary and upper secondary (ISCED 1 – 3) in order to achieve some comparability of the initiatives.

As no primary data collection methods were used like interviews or surveys, the conclusions with the identified gaps, opportunities and areas for further improvement are based only on the information about the initiatives, collected through the desk research.

The mapping includes only programmes, projects, initiatives and actions (referred herein

collectively as initiatives) of national or local coverage that have been carried out in the last five years (2015 – 2020) or are still under implementation. Therefore, it represents only a snapshot of the current situation and was not intended to make any insights into long-term trends.

The mapping did not aim at making any evaluations about the quality of the educational materials used in the initiatives or the teaching methods involved. The impact of the initiatives is discussed only in terms of scope and scale, where such information is available.

Another limitation is the lack of similar research on initiatives building transferable skills through social innovation/entrepreneurship. The only existing comprehensive overview and analysis of the activities and the main actors in the field of financial literacy in the country is the White Paper on Financial Literacy in Bulgaria (2016)² developed by Financial Literacy Initiative Foundation. It also includes an exhaustive list of existing resources and their providers. However, the information and recommendations reflect the state of the art in 2015.

Currently, Bulgaria does not have a specific national strategy for entrepreneurship education. A draft strategy for financial literacy education was published only recently for public discussion. The lack of strategies means that no or little substantive research has been done so far to establish the status quo of entrepreneurship (including social innovations) education and financial literacy education both in formal and informal settings and identify the existing gaps and issues. This negatively affects the overall policy framework as there is no clearly defined context, in which entrepreneurship and financial literacy education are placed, their priorities, aims and objectives as well as the time frame for that.

To overcome the limitations discussed above, these issues have to be addressed with further research focused on the quality and impact of initiatives including the opinions of funding organisations and beneficiaries of such interventions.

Definitions

For the purpose of this report the following definitions of key terms and concepts adopted by UNICEF are used:

² The analysis was implemented within the project “BG Financial Literacy Map”, funded by the NGO Programme in Bulgaria under the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area. <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/bg/resource-centre/content/byala-kniga-na-finansovata-gramotnost-v-blgariya>

Innovation: a new or significantly improved solution that accelerate results for children and young people to reduce inequities and to foster high quality evidence. It is perceived as a strategy for tackling complex challenges faced by children and adolescents around the world.

Social innovation: a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals.

Human centered design: a design and management framework that develops solutions to problems by involving the human perspective in all steps of the problem-solving process. The approach results in interventions that are tailored to fit the capacities, constraint, and interests of the people they are meant to serve.

Transferable skills (21st century skills): a broad set of skills that are believed to be critically important to success in today's world. The specific skills may be defined differently from person to person and place to place, but typically include problem solving, analytical thinking, creative thinking, communication and leadership skills, skills for cooperation, negotiation and decision making, research skills, digital and ICT skills, financial literacy, civic awareness, respect for diversity, empathy, participation and personal well-being.

Accelerator: collective programmes, supporting a cohort of start-up business over a fixed time period with intensive mentoring, training and funding to develop their business ideas. They usually culminate in a pitch or demo day, with the aim of securing further investments.

Incubator: an incubator helps new and start-up companies by providing services such as office space, training, networking and marketing and business advice. They could be serving for a research or technology hub or they would be set up within a company to incubate the development of new ideas.

Financial literacy (OECD definition): knowledge and understanding of financial concepts and risks, and the skills, motivation and confidence to apply such knowledge and understanding in order to make effective decisions across a range of financial contexts, to improve the financial wellbeing of individuals and society, and to enable participation in economic life.

Adolescents: UNICEF defines adolescents as a person aged between 10-19 years. Youth are defined by the UN as those persons aged between 15-24 years.

OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS OF SCHOOL EDUCATION ENCOURAGING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Transferable skills as part of the key competence entrepreneurship

Transferable skills (21st century skills, soft, basic or universal) are defined as a broad set of skills critically important for people today and include problem solving, analytical thinking, creative thinking, communication and leadership skills, skills for cooperation, negotiation and decision making, research skills, digital and ICT skills, financial literacy, civic awareness, respect for diversity, empathy, participation and personal well-being. Development of such skills in adolescents is of critical importance to individual's success in 21st century.

In the competence-based education model adopted across the European Union (EU), such skills are part of the eight key competences for lifelong learning, understood as “the process of constant acquisition of knowledge and skills ... not only through the traditional forms at educational and training institutions, but also at the work place, at home, or during your free time.” Key competences are defined as “a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which are needed for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship” (European Council, 2018). One of these competences is the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, which “refers to the individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects to achieve goals. This supports people not only in their daily lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace” (2006/962/EC, 2006). In 2018, the European Council revised the Reference Framework on Key Competences and the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship is already referred to as entrepreneurship competence. It is founded upon creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value” (European Council, 2018).

The entrepreneurship competence is developed through interventions aiming at achieving the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with it. Learners should know about “contexts and opportunities for turning ideas into actions” and “understand approaches to planning and management of projects”. Self-awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses is as important as economic knowledge and the principles of sustainable development. The entrepreneurial skills are related to different aspects of creativity – imagination, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, teamwork as well as the ability to make financial decisions. Learners should be able to “cope with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk as part of making informed decisions as an essential life skill”. The entrepreneurial attitude includes the sense of initiative, pro-activity and perseverance in achieving objectives as well as in relationships

motivating others and showing empathy (European Council, 2018).

The educational policies aimed at promoting the development of the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship in Bulgaria are closely linked to the country's accession to the EU and the need of an educational reform in order to synchronise knowledge levels by adopting the competence-based approach and the concept of lifelong learning as fundamental. In addition to the competences relating to the specific knowledge, skills and abilities required for a given professional field, the competence-based approach emphasises the importance of developing transferable skills.

Since the learning outcomes of the identified interventions aim at developing transferable skills predominantly fall within the scope of the key competence sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (or entrepreneurship), the following overview of the policy and legal framework in Bulgaria will discuss the actions and measures encouraging the development of this key competence. However, though not explored in detail herein, other competences like digital, learning to learn or citizenship competences are also connected to the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship in the process of skills development through social innovation and financial literacy.

Policy framework

Entrepreneurship education was put on the educational agenda in 2008 with the adoption of the **National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (2008 – 2013)** (2008). This was the first policy document stating the role and place of entrepreneurship education. It recognises the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship as one of the key competencies and includes objectives for the implementation of entrepreneurship education.³

By adopting the EU concept of lifelong learning as fundamental, the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (or entrepreneurship) has been introduced into the national educational policy and legislation as a key competence. The national strategic and legal documents do not give country-specific description of the competence as the definition provided in the Annex to the Recommendation of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning is accepted:

Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals,

³ The National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (2008 – 2013) promotes the integration of entrepreneurship in other subjects and provides for activities aimed at: “Development of key competences in school education such as ICT, foreign languages, entrepreneurship, learning skills in view of the EU framework that defines them as knowledge, skills and attitudes not only in formal (school) education, but also in non-formal (extracurricular and extracurricular initiatives) and independent learning (self-education)”. It also called for systematic integration of key competencies – including entrepreneurship, at all levels of school education. <https://www.mon.bg/bg/100208>

not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance (2006/962/EC, 2006).⁴

This wider understanding of entrepreneurship as the ability of the individual to turn ideas into action lays the theoretical grounds of entrepreneurship education in Bulgarian national curriculum (Delinesheva, 2019). Like in most EU countries, the following definition of entrepreneurship education is used in Bulgaria:

Entrepreneurship education is about learners developing the skills and mind-set to be able to turn creative ideas into entrepreneurial action. This is a key competence for all learners, supporting personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability. It is relevant across the lifelong learning process, in all disciplines of learning and to all forms of education and training (formal, non-formal and informal) which contribute to an entrepreneurial spirit or behaviour, with or without a commercial objective. (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2016)

During the period under review, the main policy document in Bulgaria setting out the principles, priorities, actions and targets related to lifelong learning is the **National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (2014 – 2020)**. It defines the strategic framework of the state policy for education and training in the period, aimed at achieving the European goal of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Strategy emphasises the need of continuous development of nine key competences including proactiveness and enterprise⁵. One of its priorities is: “Promoting education and training aligned to the needs of the economy and changes in the labour market” (2014).

The Strategy also highlights the need of partnerships between the education sector and the business in order to build the knowledge, skills, and competences, required by the labour market, and promotes innovations and enterprise in all forms of learning so that all citizens attain universal key competences, such as learning skills, cultural awareness, proactiveness and enterprise, as well as the so-called „soft skills” such as skills for teamwork, decision making, conflict resolution, etc.

The Strategy is executed through annual **action plans** on its implementation adopted by

4 The revision of the Key Competence Framework substituted initiative and entrepreneurship with entrepreneurship competence defining it as: “the capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them into values for others. It is founded upon creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value” (European Council, 2018).

5 The sense of initiative and entrepreneurship is referred to this way in the English translation of the Strategy. <https://www.mon.bg/en/74>

the Council of Ministers, which are subject to regular reporting on the status of implementation including the problems found and the need of adaptations to the measures, as well as the cooperation among various participants. However, the measures in the action plans encouraging the development of initiative and entrepreneurship as a key competence are quite limited.⁶

The importance of entrepreneurship education is highlighted in **the Action Plan “Entrepreneurship 2020 – Bulgaria”** (Council of Ministers, 2015). It is adopted in accordance with the Action Plan for Entrepreneurship 2020 of the European Commission, which addresses education and training in entrepreneurship with special emphasis on its inclusion in primary and lower secondary school (COM(2012) 795 final, 9.1.2013). The most important thing is that even if they do not pursue a career as an entrepreneur, young people increase their employability with the acquired “knowledge of the business sector and basic skills and attitudes, such as creative thinking, initiative, perseverance, willingness to work in team, ability to assess risk and sense of responsibility”. Although the Action Plan puts emphasis on the need of entrepreneurship education throughout the whole education system, there are no specific actions with allocated budgets envisaged.

Neither the Strategy for LLL, nor the Action Plan “Entrepreneurship 2020 – Bulgaria” discusses social innovation and financial literacy in the context of entrepreneurship education and competence.

As it was mentioned above, Bulgaria does not have specific national strategies for entrepreneurship or financial literacy education although there have been some efforts especially regarding financial literacy. In 2013, there was an attempt to initiate a national strategy for financial literacy, which to provide for a gradual inclusion of financial education in secondary schools in the period 2014 – 2018.⁷ In 2018, an inter-ministerial working group headed by the Ministry of Finance was established within a five-year technical assistance project with the OECD/INFE and the Ministry of Finance of the Netherlands, working on a strategy for financial literacy. The project includes the provision of technical assistance in three main areas – research, review and mapping of the level of financial literacy, current activities and initiatives, identification of priorities and target groups, by using OECD methodology and standards.⁸ In December 2020, the draft strategy and action plan was published for public discussion.⁹ The finalisation of the documents is currently underway.

6 A more detailed description of the measures is provided in the section on initiatives of public organisations below (author’s remark).

7 <https://www.fsc.bg/bg/novini/finansovata-gramotnost-e-nay-dobrata-zashtita-za-potrebitelite-na-finansovi-uslugi-3583.html>

8 The working group includes representatives of institutions, supervisory bodies and non-governmental organizations involved in conducting activities related to financial education and literacy. <https://www.minfin.bg/bg/news/10631>

9 <http://www.strategy.bg/PublicConsultations/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=5744>

The lack of strategies means that there is no clearly formulated state policy on entrepreneurship and financial literacy education regarding their priorities, aims and objectives, specific measures to be implemented in formal, non-formal and informal education settings as well as the time frame to achieve them.

Legal framework

The legal framework in Bulgaria regulating school education – general and vocational, includes acts and ordinances among which the most important are:

- ✓ Preschool and School Education Act (PSEA, 2015)
- ✓ Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA, 1999)
- ✓ State Educational Standards (SES) – 19 ordinances setting out the mandatory requirements for the results in the preschool and school education system, as well as for the conditions and processes of their attainment.¹⁰

The adoption of the **Preschool and School Education Act (PSEA)** (2015) brought about fundamental changes in the philosophy, objectives and principles of school education. It shifted the existing paradigm to a competence-based approach to education. Nine key competences based on the European Key Competence Reference Framework were introduced including initiative and entrepreneurship. A new compulsory subject Technology and Entrepreneurship to be studied from grades 1 to 9 in general schools became the main instrument for the development of this key competence. In vocational schools Entrepreneurship and Market Economy became compulsory subjects for all students in grades 8 and 10 respectively. A new subject profiling subject Entrepreneurship was introduced in grades 11 and 12 in the new profile Entrepreneurial in general schools.

Technology and Entrepreneurship substitutes three subjects in the former cultural and educational field Lifestyle and Technologies and extends the scope of concepts related to economics, entrepreneurship, financial literacy and career orientation, which have been studied in them. Its objectives, content and characteristics are laid down in the SES for general education (Ordinance No. 5 of 30.11.2015). According to it, the subject Technologies and Entrepreneurship is aimed at acquiring skills to respond to innovations and take responsibility by building a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. Thus, the focus of the learning outcomes related to economics has been shifted from the field of technological to entrepreneurship knowledge, skills and attitudes. The SES also sets out that critical thinking,

¹⁰ The SES are on: 1. pre-school education; 2. the mastering of the Bulgarian literary language; 3. the curriculum; 4. general education; 5. profiled education; 6. vocational qualifications; 7. inclusive education; 8. civic, health, environmental and intercultural education; 9. assessment of students' results; 10. information and documentation; 11. institutions; 12. the physical environment and the information and library services at kindergartens, schools, and personality development support centres; 13. knowledge books, textbooks, and teaching aids; 14. the status and professional development of teachers, heads of schools and the other pedagogical specialists; 15. quality management in institutions; 16. inspections at kindergartens and schools; 17. financing of institutions; 18. labour rating and remuneration; 19. organization of activities in school education. <https://www.mon.bg/bg/100104>

problem solving, decision making, initiative, creativity, taking responsibility, teamwork are competencies acquired through all general education subjects.

The subject Entrepreneurship for profiled education studied in grades 11 and 12 builds upon Technologies and Entrepreneurship and represents the final highest level of entrepreneurship education acquired at general school. However, it should be noted that the emphasis on economics in entrepreneurship education is still too great and to some extent there is an overlap between the content studied in economics/management. There are also some deficiencies regarding the consistency between the specific objectives and learning outcomes at each level, which is not completely ensured in the SES and the syllabuses.

Only students in grades 11 and 12 in vocational schools of economics study various compulsory vocational subjects in different fields of economics including entrepreneurship and management.

In addition to the subject Technologies and Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship and financial literacy education as well as career orientation (as part of the entrepreneurship competence) can be taught during the class time – a special hour per week “used for the consistent development of the class, for patriotic upbringing and for building civic competencies, including through student self-government” (PSEA, 2015). The State educational standard for civil, health, environmental and intercultural education (Ordinance No. 13, 2016) stipulates that in addition to the competencies specified in the framework requirements for each of these educational areas, activities and projects on topics related to financial and legal literacy, including choosing a first job, shall be carried out as well in the class time. According to the framework requirements career orientation shall be studied 1 hour in grades 4, 7 and 10, and financial literacy including “My first job” – 1 hour in grades 8, 9, 10 and 11 and 12 hours in grade 12.

Although not included as a separate thematic area in the framework requirements, the initiative and entrepreneurship competence can also be developed through activities for career orientation during the class time or the hours for interest activities within the all-day organization of the educational process.

Entrepreneurship related subjects by school level and their specific objectives are presented in Figure 1.

PROFILED EDUCATION

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Upper secondary – second sub-level (ISCED 3)

- To recognize, analyse and interpret the processes, personality traits and behaviour related to successful career development and performance in entrepreneurship;
- To know the basic economic concepts, understand the basic principles of market economy and develop economic thinking;
- To acquire cognitive and practical leadership skills, To start an entrepreneurial activity and implement business ideas;
- To know and apply skills for effective and efficient teamwork, implement basic management functions and make informed decisions.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Upper secondary – second sub-level (ISCED 3)

Compulsory vocational subjects
in all professional fields of economics

Specific objectives for each subject.

GENERAL EDUCATION

TECHNOLOGIES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Upper secondary – first sub-level (ISCED 3)

- To understand the role of technology in solving entrepreneurial problems and implementing one's own idea;
- To ignite the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship of students;
- To motivate students to make informed career choices.
- To realise the opportunities for career development and choice of appropriate profiled education at second upper secondary level
- To enhance students' knowledge of economics and financial literacy;
- To develop entrepreneurial skills for starting up a business in a free enterprise system.

Lower secondary (ISCED 2)

- To start developing the key competence initiative and entrepreneurship by:
 - entering a real economic environment;
 - studying examples of good entrepreneurial practices;
 - demonstrating entrepreneurial initiative.
- To create conditions for making a conscious choice of education and profession.

Primary (ISCED 1)

- To build basic knowledge, skills and attitudes related to modern economic life;
- To understand the importance of different professions and the need of leaders for community development;
- To cultivate a sense of initiative, entrepreneurship and responsibility.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (including arts and sports schools)

Upper secondary – first sub-level (ISCED 3)

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- To acquire basic knowledge about entrepreneurship;
- To cultivate the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- To form an entrepreneurial mindset;
- To develop the skills and attitudes of entrepreneurial behaviour;
- To build a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship as a possible career choice.

ECONOMICS

- To acquire basic knowledge of economics;
- To develop the economic thinking and standpoint of young people to assess the phenomena in society and economy;
- To shape students' behaviour on the basis of developed economic values.

Despite these positive steps, the scope of entrepreneurship related topics remains quite limited. At primary level (ISCED 1) the subject is studied 1 hour per week. Its content and learning outcomes related to entrepreneurship are included in only one of the five topics in the syllabus – Professions and Entrepreneurship, which means that students receive entrepreneurship training only 6 to 8 hours per year.

The situation at lower secondary level is similar – as a compulsory subject Technologies and Entrepreneurship is studied 1.5 hour per week in grades 5 and 6 and 1 hour in grade 7. The content is organised in 6 topics, only one of which is entrepreneurship related – Economics, and is covered in 10 to 13 hours per year.

It should be noted that at upper secondary level (first sub-level) the subject Technologies and Entrepreneurship is compulsory only for students in general schools in classes without intensive or extended foreign language instruction. The others – who are the predominant part – do not study the subject, including students who are admitted in grade 8 to attain profiled education in entrepreneurship in grades 11 and 12. In addition, Technologies and Entrepreneurship, which is the only compulsory subject linking general to profiled education in entrepreneurship, is not studied in grade 10. This challenges the preparation of students for profiled education. A way out of this situation is to “make” the subject an elective and include additional subjects as elective or optional. The latter, however, are quite limited and often not offered by schools due to financial reasons. In addition, this cannot solve the problems faced by students who choose the profile after grade 10 and come from other schools.

Profiled education is organised in general school in grades 11 and 12. There are eleven profiles, one of which is called Entrepreneurial¹¹. The aim of profiled entrepreneurship education is to develop economic culture, management skills, entrepreneurial competencies and behaviour. Entrepreneurship is the main compulsory profiling subject (Ordinance No. 7 of 11.08.2016). It consists of four modules – Entrepreneurship and Career Development, Market Economy, Starting up a Business, Management of Entrepreneurial Activity, which follow the syllabuses approved by the MES (Ministry of Education and Science, 2018). The second compulsory profiling subject may be Information Technologies or Geography and Economics. The curriculum should also include one or two additional elective profiling subjects as well as other subjects chosen by the school including experience in a practice enterprise (e/g. training firm, mini company). Entrepreneurship can be studied as a profiling subject in other profiles as well – e.g., Foreign Languages, Arts or Software and Hardware Sciences.

¹¹ This profile succeeds the former one called Technological – Entrepreneurship and Business. The new profile has been intended to provide better structured and comprehensive curriculum and syllabuses (author’s remark).

The curriculum for vocational education includes the compulsory subjects Entrepreneurship in grade 8 and Economics in grade 10 that are studied in all types of vocational schools and specialised schools like arts¹² and sports schools, which provide professional qualification as well (Ordinance No. 4 of 30.11.2016). A number of different compulsory vocational subjects are studied by students in all professional fields of economics in the 5-year course of education at upper secondary level. Students undergo compulsory practical training in profession-related fields including work in a practice enterprise (e.g. training firm, mini-company) and practical training (short internship) in an enterprise.

In both vocational and profiled education entrepreneurial skills and attitude are also developed through setting a student company (practice enterprise). The student company¹³ is “a pedagogical tool based on practical experience by means of running a complete enterprise project, and on interaction with the external environment (i.e. the business world or the local community).” Student companies can be divided into two main groups: “1) students conduct a real economic activity by running their own company, although in a protected environment and for a pedagogical purpose: i.e. student companies producing and/or selling real products or services; 2) or simulation of economic activity (virtual or training firms)” (European Commission, 2005).

In Bulgaria, student companies are established in the form of training firms, mini-companies, start-up clubs or other models depending on the programme. In vocational education the work in a practice enterprise is part of the compulsory training practice in grade 11. In profiled education it can be included in the elective and/or optional hours. Student companies can also be established in other grades as optional or extracurricular activities at the request of students and according to the capabilities of the school. Despite the differences between the programmes, they all are based on a learning-by-doing approach and give students the opportunity to go through the entrepreneurial process and develop entrepreneurship knowledge, skills and attitudes through hands-on activities. A special emphasis is put on building transversal (soft) skills – such as teamwork, leadership, successful communication, time management, etc. (Delinesheva & Jolovski, 2020).

Entrepreneurship subjects in the curricula¹⁴ for each level of general and vocational education are presented in Figure 2.

12 In arts schools economics is studied in grade 9 (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015).

13 The definition was developed under the Best Procedure project conducted by the European Commission and experts in the field of education for entrepreneurship appointed by the national authorities, under the Multiannual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (2001 – 2005) coordinated by the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission (European Commission, 2005).

14 The curriculum is divided in three sections – Section A – compulsory hours, Section B – elective hours, Section C – optional hours (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015).

**Upper secondary – second sub-level (ISCED 3)
grades 11 – 12, age 17 – 19**

**Section B
Entrepreneurship**

Compulsory profiling subject including four modules – Entrepreneurship and Career Development, Market Economy, Starting up a Business, Management of Entrepreneurial Activity.

Studied by students in general schools in profiled classes
(4 hours per week)

One more compulsory profiling subject, two elective profiling subjects and other subjects chosen by the school
(16 hours per week)

**Section B
Compulsory vocational subjects**
in all professional fields of economics

Studied by students in vocational schools
(20 hours per week including compulsory practical training and practical training (short internships) in an enterprise – 64 hours in grades 11 and 12)

**Section C
Optional subjects**

(4 hours per week in all grades)

**Section C
Optional subjects**

(4 hours per week in all grades)

**Upper secondary – first sub-level (ISCED 3)
grades 8 – 10, age 14 – 17**

**Section A
Technologies and Entrepreneurship**

Compulsory subject only for students in general schools in classes without intensive (IFLI) or extended foreign language instruction (EFLI) (2 hours per week in grade 8, 2.5 hours per week in grade 9).

Four out of five topics – Profession and Career, Market Economy, Entrepreneurial Process, Entrepreneurial Initiative

**Section B
Elective subjects**

(IFLI – 2 hours per week in grade 8, 1.5 in grade 9, 5.5 in grade 10)

(EFLI – 1 hours per week in grade 8, 6.5 in grade 9, 5.5 in grade 10)

(No IFLI or EFLI – 7 hours per week in grade 8, 8 in grade 9, 5.5 in grade 10)

**Section C
Optional subjects**

(4 hours per week in all grades)

**Section A
Entrepreneurship**

Compulsory subject in grade 8 in vocational, sports and arts schools
(1 hour per week)

Topics – Basics of Entrepreneurship, The Figure of the Entrepreneur

Economics

Compulsory subject in grade 10 in vocational and sports schools, grade 9 in arts schools

(1 hour per week),
Topics - Market Economy, The Enterprise on the Market

**Section B
Compulsory vocational subjects** in all professional fields of economics

Studied by students in vocational schools (1 hour per week in grades 8 and 9, 3 hours in grade 10)

Compulsory practical training (1.5 hours per week in grade 10) and short internships (64 hours in grade 10).

**Section C
Optional subjects**

(4 hours per week in all grades)

**Lower secondary (ISCED 2)
grades 5 – 7, age 11 – 14**

**Section A
Technologies and Entrepreneurship**

Compulsory subject for all students in general schools (1.5 hours per week in grades 5 and 6, 1 hour per week in grade 7)

One out of six topics – Economics

**Section B
Elective subjects**

(2.5 hours per week in grades 5 and 6)
(3 hours per week in grade 7)

**Section C
Optional subjects**

(4 hours per week in all grades)

**Primary (ISCED 1)
grades 1 – 4, age 7 – 11**

**Section A
Technologies and Entrepreneurship**

Compulsory subject for all students in general schools
(1 hour per week)

One out of five topics – Professions and Entrepreneurship

**Section B
Elective subjects**

(3 hours per week in grades 1 and 2, 2.5 in grades 3 and 4)

**Section C
Optional subjects**

(4 hours per week in all grades)

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) annually sets out the measures for the implementation of its strategic objectives¹⁵. Between 2015 and 2018, one of these objectives is “Advancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training”. However, no specific actions promoting initiative and entrepreneurship were included. However, it was during that period when the syllabuses in all subjects were updated because of the adoption of the PSEA, including the new subject Technologies and Entrepreneurship.

The updated priorities and strategic objectives for 2019 and 2020 include “Improving skills in the field of entrepreneurship, information technology and active citizenship”. The specific measures are related to the update of the textbooks according to the new curriculum and the adoption of the syllabuses for the new subject Entrepreneurship for profiled education as well as teacher training.

However, all these positive developments have raised a number of issues related to the availability and appropriate training of teachers. Before the new PSEA came into force in 2016, entrepreneurship at primary and secondary school was “taught neither widely, nor effectively” according to the 2016/2017 GEM National report on entrepreneurship in Bulgaria (Andonova & Krusteff, 2017). The report gave a strong negative rating of the quality of entrepreneurship education at school. One of the reasons stated in the report is that many teachers do not have the necessary academic competence. It is unlikely to expect that these problems could be solved overnight with the introduced changes. Currently, there are 27 available courses for CPD in entrepreneurship approved by the MES and included in its Register. Such training is a good opportunity for teachers to enhance their skills, but these courses cannot provide professional qualification in Technologies and Entrepreneurship, which is a requirement for the teachers at lower and upper secondary levels. However, since no monitoring has been done during the last four years, it is unclear what the current status quo is and whether any measures need to be taken.

Post-secondary education opportunities

With a view of continuity of the efforts for skills development through social innovation/entrepreneurship and financial literacy, below are discussed some opportunities for students to further develop their entrepreneurship skills after finishing school.

Professional qualification¹⁶ in business and management including entrepreneurship may be acquired in vocational colleges. Currently, such courses are offered in most of all 30

¹⁵ The documents are available in Bulgarian on the website of the MES at <https://www.mon.bg/bg/100207>.

¹⁶ Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4).

active private professional colleges providing training in Administration and Management.

The Higher Education Act (1995) guarantees the academic autonomy of universities in Bulgaria. Thus, these institutions benefit of the decentralized approach in developing and implementing certain types of strategies and policies. However, neither universities, nor the MES has provided a sound basis for encouraging entrepreneurship or enhancing financial literacy on a broader scale. Education in the entrepreneurial sphere is available mostly to students enrolled in this specific field of study – in the respective programmes¹⁷ in business management and entrepreneurship, technology entrepreneurship and innovation, social entrepreneurship. Such programmes, for example, are offered by the University of National and World Economy, New Bulgarian University, Sofia University, VUZF University, University of Economics – Varna, Academy of Economics – Svishtov, Veliko Tarnovo University, South-west University of Blagoevgrad, Plovdiv University, Technical University – Varna, Varna Free University.

A specific aspect of entrepreneurship education at tertiary level is the initial training or continuing professional development of teachers of subjects like Technologies and Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship or other economic disciplines. The introduction of the PSEA and the new subjects Technologies and Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship (for vocational schools and profiled education) has put qualification requirements for the teachers of that subject, which the educational system had not been prepared to meet both on the part of schools and universities providing teacher training. However, since then, universities – of pedagogy as well as of economics – have started adding bachelor's, master's or CPD programmes for acquiring additional qualification and specialisations to their portfolios in order to address the need of qualified teachers. In addition, their departments and centres for continuing education provide credit awarding programmes for teachers. Such programmes are also offered for by other training organisations as well, which have to be included in a specialized register¹⁸ supported by the MES.

Students in other specialties rarely have the opportunity to acquire entrepreneurship education, which is most often provided in optional courses usually designed and delivered in partnership with other organisations or within specific projects. Examples include optional courses like Social Entrepreneurship (Sofia University, VUZF University), Entrepreneurship and Innovation Open Course (Sofia University), Personal Finance (VUZF University, Sofia University, Plovdiv University, Ruse University, the University of Library Studies and Information Technologies), Entrepreneurship in the Arts and Creative Industries (National Academy of Art).

¹⁷ Bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes (ISCED 5 – 8).

¹⁸ Information register of approved programmes for raising the qualification of pedagogical specialists, <https://iropk.mon.bg/>

Since the higher educational system does not offer enough opportunities for students in non-economic specialties to develop their entrepreneurship skills, the most important question is how they (as well as other adults) may access entrepreneurship training outside the system. These functions are carried out mainly by organizations and initiatives, which serve as (pre)accelerators and/or (pre)incubators.¹⁹ The efforts for developing entrepreneurial skills in this target group are aimed at encouraging the starting up of businesses. Most of them are focused on technology start-ups with innovative ideas. Most of these accelerators not only provide funding for the start-ups through acquiring part of their shares but also but also foster development of entrepreneurial skills, building profitable models and business growth.

Accelerators and incubators work with start-ups in more advanced stage of development – a working prototype or minimum viable product (MVP). While pre-accelerators and pre-incubators encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills such as creativity and critical thinking and in order to foster the idea generation stage.

Opportunities for further development of the entrepreneurial competence of university students are provided by initiatives on European level such as the European Institute for Technology (EIT) and HEInnovate. Significantly less stakeholders are engaged with that target group, therefore the amount of resources (human and financial) spent is much lower. However, sporadic initiatives for universities students are organized as well.



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¹⁹ This is discussed in more detail in the next section of the report.

MAPPING OF INITIATIVES FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP/SOCIAL INNOVATION/ AND FINANCIAL LITERACY

Mapping criteria

The mapping was done by the following criteria: the thematic area of the initiative, the skills it aims to develop, the age range/school level and the size of the target group, sources of funding, the involvement of marginalized and vulnerable youth, the main partners engaged and their role, the delivery mechanisms including the setting – school-based, out-of-school, non-formal, camps and other relevant formal, the scale of the initiative, its geographic reach (local, national) and the time period of the intervention.

Several difficulties related to the classification of the initiatives by the different criteria were encountered during the mapping exercise. The criteria in many cases could not be applied relevantly because of the diversity of the initiatives and the information available about them. Some of them lack key data like the size of the target group or the main activities. There are also cases of inconsistencies in the information provided by the implementing organisations about the scope and scale of the projects. The key findings regarding each of the mapping criteria are summarized below.

Key findings

Thematic area

The initiatives are divided in two categories depending on the type of intervention aiming at specific transferable skills development – social innovation/entrepreneurship and financial literacy. Business incubators and accelerators are also counted in the list as they provide opportunities the developed skills to be employed in actual starting up a business.

The first thematic area includes interventions intended to develop skills by addressing social challenges or finding innovative solutions to social problems that bring value to society as a whole. Since between these two groups there are only some slight differences and they often overlap, they are presented in one large category. However, the aimed skills are emphasised to make a distinction between them. In this category were identified 56 initiatives.

The second thematic area includes 39 initiatives focused on skills developed through financial literacy education. The inventory contains only a part of the initiatives, which have achieved a certain degree of sustainability or have had considerable impact on the beneficiaries. An exhaustive overview of existing financial literacy initiatives, the main actors and available resources by 2016 is included in the White Paper of Financial Literacy in Bulgaria (Financial Literacy Initiative Foundation, 2016).

An additional thematic area – Initiatives 18+ with 24 examples, which is not within the scope of the mapping, is included in the inventory as well. It presents various opportunities that can help young people start their own business after they finish school or graduate from university.

Targeted skills

The initiatives in the first thematic area are related to the development of the entrepreneurship competence – including knowledge, attitudes and skills – both specific (hard, technical) in management, marketing, financial planning, production etc., and transferable (soft, universal) like creative and innovative thinking, teamwork, problem solving, analytical thinking, communication and leadership skills, skills for cooperation, negotiation and decision making. Such transferable skills are also aimed at in the context of work readiness, therefore career orientation is included in this thematic area as well.

The second thematic area comprises initiatives aiming at developing skills related to financial literacy, which includes knowledge about financial matters (e.g. credit, saving, investing, spending, taxes, insurance, debt management, retirement planning) and specific skills in applying that knowledge like numeracy, financial planning and management or budgeting. Transferable skills like critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, goal setting, communication, self-awareness, processing and analysing information are also aimed at through particular initiatives.

In both categories some activities also aim at enhancing digital skills, personal development, civic awareness, respect for diversity, empathy.

It should be noted that the formulation of the targeted skills in a number of initiatives is quite vague, sometimes inaccurate or even not explicitly specified in the publicly available information. Due to that, in some cases it was necessary to derive and interpret them from the descriptions of the initiatives.

Time period of the initiatives

The initiatives were implemented in the period between 2015 and 2020. However, there are some long-term initiatives, which had been initiated back in the 1990s and are still ongoing. Each school year they take place again. Some examples for such initiatives are the annual competitions for training enterprises or the projects of the MES for extracurricular activities.

Sources of funding

Several sources of funding for the initiatives were identified. They are divided in two main groups public and private, but within each group the sources are extremely diverse and cannot be summarised. Public funding is received through EU programmes like Erasmus + or operational programmes as well as central or local authorities budgets. The sources of private funding are mainly from business organisations directly or through their foundations (e.g. MetLife Foundation), foreign or Bulgarian foundations – e.g. Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation, the Trust for Social Achievement and others.

Age range/school level of the target group

The age range of the target group often does not comply with established criteria like school levels. Despite the inconsistencies, the mapping includes both age range and school level nevertheless how the target group is described. This approach was chosen in order to provide some degree of comparability between the skills aimed at through the interventions and the specific objectives and learning outcomes related to the key competence initiative and entrepreneurship for each school level.

Size of the target group

The available information about most initiatives is from their launch – i.e. about what is planned to be achieved. Rarely there are data about the number of actually reached people or other indicators. Therefore, most of the information in the inventory refers to the planned results. The initiatives are quite different in terms of involved participants from the target group – from very small one-off projects for a group of students in one school to large scale international projects. However, in case of the latter, the data included in the inventory – where available – are only about the Bulgarian participation in the project.

Some of the smaller initiatives, however, are often aimed at social and environmental problems such as sustainable development, social inequality, etc., which are related to developing the transferable skills discussed herein. They are included in the report in order to achieve greater representativeness rather than demonstrating good practices.

Scale of the initiatives and geographic reach

The initiatives are categorized as local, regional, national, European or international. Thus, if one school from Bulgaria is involved in a European project, the initiative is indicated in the inventory as “local, part of a European project”, because the impact and reach in the country remains limited despite the European dimensions. Such initiatives are usually one-off projects and despite their potential for scaling up and replicating, they usually are not continued. The reasons for that need to be studied further as it is important that funds invested in such initiatives are utilised properly and bring added value.

Marginalized and vulnerable youth

The involvement of marginalised and vulnerable youth is considered both in the cases when the initiatives target such groups and when the outputs of the initiatives are intended to solve certain identified problems of such groups without their direct involvement.

Delivery mechanisms

The delivery mechanisms include the setting, in which the initiatives are implemented – e.g. extracurricular, out-of-school, online or other relevant formal. Most of the initiatives are implemented as extracurricular activities within different type of projects.

Main partners and their roles

The initiatives fostering the development of transferable skills through social innovation/entrepreneurship and financial literacy are implemented by actors like public institutions, financial institutions, private business organisations (non-financial), schools, higher education institutions, NGOs. Most often these initiatives are implemented in partnership. The established partnerships are between NGOs and business organisations, NGOs and public authorities, schools and businesses including financial institutions.

Most of the identified initiatives are implemented by NGOs. In some cases, they are initiated by the organisations as one-off projects or long-term initiatives financed by grants (from public or private organisations). In most cases, the private companies just support the initiative and only with some exceptions they set its objectives and scope. There are few initiatives launched by public institutions. However, there are very active public authorities with many initiatives like some municipalities.

- Initiatives of public institutions

The Bulgarian Centre of Training Firms (BCTF)²⁰ to the MES, coordinates the network of over 350 training firms in vocational and secondary schools. It provides organisational and methodological support and training to teachers and students on the establishment and management of training firms, organisation of national fairs and participation in international competitions. Training firms simulate the activities in an enterprise. Stronger emphasis is put on the administrative organization and documentation in an enterprise, as well as the work with various services and registers simulating the main institutions and functions of the state (Mavrudieva & Dobriyanova, 2017). Annually around 300

²⁰ The Centre was established in 1995 by teachers at the National School of Finance and Economy to facilitate and coordinate the work of training firms organised as part of the education process in vocational schools. Since 1999, the Centre has been a secondary budgetary unit to the MES. <https://buct.org/english>

training firms participate in the national fair. The final event for the students participating in the programme is the TF Fest (Training Firms Fest). It has been approved as an international event by the European Commission and is included in the European Week of Small and Medium Enterprises. The BCTF is a member of the Worldwide Network of Practice Enterprises EUROPEAN PENInternational. EUROPEAN PENInternational, within which international competitions are organized.

The MES has several initiatives, which have contributed to increasing the participation of students in activities developing entrepreneurship and financial literacy skills. The most popular of them are the projects for funding extracurricular activities²¹: USPEH (2011 – 2014) under the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” (2007 – 2013); Your Hour (2015 – 2018) and the project supporting interest activities (2018 – ongoing), under the Operational Programme “Science and Education for Smart Growth” (2014 – 2020). Within these projects, schools are provided with additional funds for extracurricular activities, which can be implemented by teachers from the school or by external providers. One of the thematic fields for these activities is entrepreneurship.

Other initiatives of the MES are competitions in entrepreneurship and financial literacy. Examples are the National Competition in Financial Literacy, which was held for the first time in 2019 as a competition in financial mathematics. It aims at increasing the students’ skills for personal finance management by using knowledge and skills in mathematics for the respective age groups. The computer simulation in management and economics “Virtual Enterprise” (JA Titan) organised in partnership with JA Bulgaria was part of the MES calendar of national competitions from 2009 to 2020²². Other competitions organised by the MES, in which are included questions related to financial literacy are the Interdisciplinary Olympiad “I know, and I Can” for primary students, the National Olympiad in Geography and Economy, the National Olympiad in Civic Education.

Other efforts of the MES with regards to financial literacy are the participation of the country for the first time in the PISA financial literacy assessment of students in 2018²³ as well as the involvement in the inter-ministerial working group for developing a national strategy for financial literacy.

The National Programme “Business Teaches” provides funding for seminars and activities both within and out of school as well as teacher training aiming at increasing

21 It should be underlined that the teacher training funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (then) between 2010 and 2015 was instrumental for the promotion and implementation of extracurricular activities focused on developing entrepreneurship and financial literacy skills.

22 It is substituted by the National Competition “Practical Finance” planned to be launched in 2021. <https://mon.bg/bg/80>.

23 The results are available on the website of the Pre-school and School Education Assessment Centre: <http://copuo.bg/page.php?c=30&d=198>.

their competence and further developing skills in entrepreneurship and financial literacy.

The main focus of the interventions in the Action Plans²⁴ to the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning (2014 – 2020) is on increasing the attractiveness and improving the quality of vocational education and training to ensure employment and competitiveness. In that aspect, one of the activities in the Action Plans implemented by the BCTF to the MES is the support of training firms in vocational schools and since 2018 – in secondary schools with profiled education. Another project included in the Action Plans for the period is the establishment of 3 to 5 mini-companies in arts schools and sports schools, including training and mentoring in entrepreneurship and intellectual property protection – the so-called project stARTs, funded by the Ministry of Economy and implemented by JA Bulgaria.

Several other public institutions have their own initiatives in the field of financial literacy. For example, the Financial Supervision Commission (FSC) have been implementing its educational programme “The Non-banking Financial Sector in Bulgaria” since 2002 in partnership with the MES and Atanas Burov Foundation. However, its scope is quite limited as it targets only 20 to 30 students from vocational schools of economics or finance per year. The Bulgarian National Bank provides to students guided tours and free access to its Museum Collection of coins and banknotes as well as lectures by its experts²⁵. The Bulgarian Stock Exchange organises lectures for secondary and university students during its open days and takes parts in events like Global Money Week. The most significant in scope and impact initiative of a public institution is the project of the National Revenue Agency (NRA) “Be in class with the taxes”²⁶.

Local authorities have also been initiating activities encouraging social innovation like the Innovation Camp organised annually by Gabrovo Municipality since 2016 or the Financial Literacy Campaign of Sofia Municipality and Municipal Bank held in 2016.

- Initiatives of financial institutions

The most active players from the private sector in Bulgaria supporting adolescent skills development are financial institutions²⁷ – e.g. NN Bulgaria, Citibank, ProCredit Bank, Raiffeisenbank, Postbank, United Bulgarian Bank and UBB Asset Management, DSK Bank, MetLife Bulgaria, Visa Bulgaria, Mastercard, Provident Bulgaria, EasyCredit, Elana, Karoll Broker. Most of their efforts are focused on financial literacy.

²⁴ The Strategy and the action plans are available in Bulgarian on the website of the MES at: <https://www.mon.bg/bg/143>

²⁵ <http://www.bnb.bg/aboutus/auhstory/auh museumsbnb/index.htm>

²⁶ The project of the National Revenue Agency is presented in the section for the selected initiatives below.

²⁷ According to the White Paper, however, only about 4% of financial companies in Bulgaria are involved in such activities.

Some financial institutions initiate their own Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects like Visa's programme Our Money²⁸, the competition Financiada²⁹ of DSK Bank or the mentorship programme of Postbank for the bank practice enterprise of the National Trade and Banking High School. However, others support initiatives related to social innovation/entrepreneurship as well. For instance, NN Bulgaria has been supporting for years initiatives related to financial literacy implemented by different organisations – e.g. Financial Workshops (for different age groups) of FLI Foundation, JA Bulgaria's projects like Practical Finance³⁰ as well as the Social Innovation Relay³¹, which focus is on innovative solutions of community problems. Citibank and MetLife Bulgaria traditionally support the implementation of JA Company Programme with events like one-day camps building the financial competence of students running their practice enterprises and the final competition.

- Initiatives of private business organisations

Branches of big international companies provide funding through their CSR programmes for projects implemented by local organisations to encourage entrepreneurship education. Samsung Electronics Bulgaria supported between 2016 and 2019 the Growing Talents Academy implemented in 2016 and 2017 by JA Bulgaria, and in 2018 and 2019 by Education 5.0 Foundation. This is a student competition for innovative solutions to business or social problems by using new technologies. It also encourages the development of educational content in entrepreneurship using augmented reality for its online platform³². Philip Morris Bulgaria supports a summer academy for children through BCause Foundation and partners. The Kalnove (Sprouts) entrepreneurship programme at Chelopech Private High School is financed by Dundee Precious Metals Chelopech EAD through the Rinker Centre at BCause Foundation. The International Fair Plovdiv support annually the Training Firms Fest.

- Initiatives of schools

There are also schools – general and vocational, who initiate and implement partner projects for developing transferable skills through gaining entrepreneurial experience in

28 Involving partners like the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF), the online platform Ucha.se, Prosveta Publishing House and co-financed by Bulgarian banks

29 I.e. Finance Olympiad.

30 Supported by institutions like MES, NRA, FSC and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Community Initiative, eight professional associations covering the entire financial sector, Mastercard, NN Bulgaria, BNP Paribas Personal Finance, the Karoll Broker, Bulstrad, DZI and Doverie.

31 This competition is the central activity in the collaboration of JA organisations in NN Group in Europe and respectively supported by NN Bulgaria and implemented by JA Bulgaria in the country. Secondary school students are challenged to generate an innovative business solution that addresses a social need and develop it with the help of mentors from NN.

32 <https://smartclassroom.bg/>

a practice enterprise or in a real working environment, financed by the Erasmus+ Programme under its three Key Actions. Such examples include internship mobility projects³³ like “Practical skills and experience in a real work environment – a challenge for international cooperation” (2017) of the Vocational School of Economics in Varna and “Innovation, entrepreneurship and professionalism without borders” (2018) of the Vocational High School of Light Industry and Tourism, Kazanlak; cooperation projects³⁴ with partners from other EU countries like “CRADLE – Creating Activity Designed Language Learning Environments for Entrepreneurship Education” of International School Uwekind, Sofia, “Promoting entrepreneurship among young people through the management of a mini-company at European level of training”, implemented and coordinated by the Vocational High School of Veterinary Medicine in Dobrich, or “Entrepreneurship practice firms schools – Innovative education and training solution to early school leavers” (2014 – 2016) of Secondary School “Asen Zlatarov” in Shabla. The latter also participates in a consortium of 9 partners implementing a policy reform project³⁵ “Reducing upper secondary early school leaving with the practice enterprise concept (RUSESLE)” (2018 – 2020). There are also examples of smaller projects financed by local donors – e.g. “What should I be?” implemented by 104th Basic School “Zahari Stoyanov”, Sofia, financed by Vivacom Regional Grant.

- Initiatives of higher education institutions

Few higher education institutions organise initiatives for school students. Such examples are the out-of-school activities – the Finance Academy for students in grades 11 and 12, organised annually by the VUZF University, Sofia³⁶ or the annual essay competition of Varna University of Economics³⁷.

- Initiatives for university students and young entrepreneurs, organized by incubators or accelerators

The first significant investment funds (Eleven and LAUNCHhub) to encourage technology start-ups in Bulgaria were established in 2012 under the JEREMIE initiative. These incubators provide training and mentorship as well. Their operations were covered with public funding provided by the structural funds of the EU. However, in the recent years the accelerators evolved by attracting funds from the private sector and gradually has increased in number.

A few of the accelerators are aimed at promoting sustainable business. For instance,

33 Under Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of Individuals.

34 Under Key Action 2: Cooperation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices.

35 Under Key Action 3: Support for Policy Reform.

36 <https://vuzf.bg/>

37 <http://financeclub.ue-varna.bg/>; <https://www.facebook.com/FinanceClubUE>

Cleantech provides funding and mentorship under the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme, funded by the EU. In addition, social entrepreneurship is also fostered in certain incubators such as the Rinker Entrepreneurship and Training Centre supported by the BCause Foundation. The organization is working closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and is actively promoting the sustainable development goals.

In the recent years such initiatives have been organized as CSR activities of certain companies involving the non-government sector. Thus, the start-ups received access to entrepreneurial education without selling share of their business. Furthermore, such approach widened the target group allowing students in the upper secondary stage to partner with university students in the pre-accelerator activities.

Both the central and the local government authorities have implemented programmes for promoting entrepreneurship among adults. For instance, the Ministry of Economy is holding the Th13teen Arts competition (the national round of the Creative Business Cup) and Plovdiv Municipality – the Young Entrepreneur Contest. However, both examples are not specifically aimed at developing skills, they are rather encouraging entrepreneurial activities.

There are few initiatives aimed at enhancing financial literacy of university students. Most of the efforts in that field are aimed at building skills for financial management of an organization. The most significant project for developing competences for personal finance management was financed by NN Bulgaria and implemented by JA Bulgaria in partnership with six Bulgarian universities.

- NGO initiatives

Most initiatives for adolescent skills development through social innovation/ entrepreneurship and financial literacy are initiated or implemented by NGOs. They can be divided in two major groups – local actors and organisations implementing initiatives nationwide.

NGOs have played critical role in the encouragement of entrepreneurship education in Bulgaria. Certain organisations not only contributed to its establishment but developed long-term comprehensive programmes, covering all school levels and areas of entrepreneurship education. JA Bulgaria, which was established in 1997, is the most recognised organisation in the field of entrepreneurship education. It offers the programmes of JA Worldwide for all stages adapted for Bulgaria. Its three main pillars (entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial literacy) cover all aspects of entrepreneurship education. The JA Company Programme has been recognised by the European Commission as a best practice in teaching entrepreneurship. In the Company

Programme students aged 15 – 19 learn how to take a business idea from concept to reality within one school year by setting up and running their own real enterprise – a mini-company, which is liquidated at end of the year. In a mini-company, students have the opportunity to go through all the processes in a start-up, but within controlled risk environment – generating an innovative idea, marketing research, financing, production of a real product, advertising, sales to liquidate the company at the end of the year. The emphasis is on innovation. About 30 mini companies finally compete in the annual fair (Rising Stars) held by JA Bulgaria since its establishment. Students who have participated in the Company Programme can take the exam to obtain the Entrepreneurial Skills Pass (ESP)³⁸, which certifies that have gained the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to start a business or to be successfully employed. The Company Programme is implemented annually in around 50 – 60 general and vocational schools as well as Community Personal Development Centres. JA Bulgaria has also contributed greatly to the promotion of financial literacy education in the country. For this reason, it is not surprising that it is present in the inventory with many projects in each of the categories.

Some more recently established organisations are also very active. For instance, the Financial Literacy Initiative Foundation works on a large variety of projects for financial literacy and has become the most recognised organisation promoting financial literacy education. Currently, it offers programmes for all school levels. The foundation adopts innovative approaches that develop a variety of interdisciplinary skills.

Other translated educational resources for all school levels have been provided by organisations within specific projects or at a local level. For instance, Integra Bulgaria Association³⁹, operating in Burgas region, has offered the materials on social and financial education of the Netherlands-based NGO Aflatoun. The Entrepreneurship Training Initiative “Smart Start Europe”, which is registered as a Bulgarian branch of the Austrian NGO Initiative for Teaching Entrepreneurship, has distributed to schools mainly in Sofia the Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges, developed within an EU funded project. Both organisations have also provided teacher training.

Other organisations with more initiatives in the field are the BCause Foundation and the Business Incubator – Gotse Delchev.

³⁸ ESP includes a full-year in-school JA Company Programme experience; a self-assessment of entrepreneurial competences; an examination of business, economic and financial knowledge and the possibility to access further opportunities offered by small and large businesses, top higher institutions and international organisations across Europe. <http://www.entrepreneurialskillsPASS.eu/>

³⁹ <http://www.integra.bg/>

Types of identified initiatives

Several main types of initiatives related to social innovation/entrepreneurship and financial literacy were identified through the research process. Most of the initiatives are different types of projects including various other activities besides delivery of training to school students.

The activities included in the initiatives can be classified in four main groups:

- ✓ Development and dissemination of educational resources for different age groups;
- ✓ Development of teacher training programmes and provision of teacher training;
- ✓ Organisation of workshops, camps or other forms of training for students;
- ✓ Organisation of fairs, competitions and other events.

It should be noted that this classification is only of descriptive value as most initiatives usually include more than one of these types of activities as they are in a logical relationship with each other. For instance, the dissemination of developed educational materials requires trained teachers to utilise them in their classrooms. Workshops or camps support student training, while fairs and competitions give them the opportunity to show what they have learned through the process. There are also some examples of popular ongoing initiatives, which incorporate all these elements and have been implemented since the late 1990s. These are, for instance, the practice enterprise⁴⁰ programme of the Centre of Training Firms or the Company Programme offered by JA Bulgaria, which have been described above.

Brief description of the initiative

The inventory also includes brief descriptions of the initiatives. Most often the available information is from the launch of the initiative.

Contact information

The last sections of the inventory include links to the source of information about the initiative and the contact information of the implementing organization.

⁴⁰ Defined as “a pedagogical tool based on practical experience by means of running a complete enterprise project, and on interaction with the external environment” (European Commission, 2005)

CONCLUSIONS

This part of the report is focused on the identified gaps in the policies and practices of social innovation/entrepreneurship and financial literacy education, the challenges to be overcome and the areas of future improvement.

Identified gaps

Regarding the policy and legal frameworks

The introduction of the new compulsory subjects Technologies and Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship with the new PSEA is among the greatest achievements so far regarding formal entrepreneurship education. However, the number of hours in the curricula for primary and lower secondary levels, is still quite limited and the share of the only topic related to entrepreneurship is very small, which has a negative effect on the development of initiative and entrepreneurship as a key competence. Another problem is that Technologies and Entrepreneurship is a compulsory general subject but is not studied by all students at first upper secondary level. Thus, the larger number of students do not study it at all, including those who will be in the Entrepreneurial profile in grades 11 and 12. In addition, in grade 10 the subject is not part of the general curriculum.

Although the legal framework guarantees opportunities for developing the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship as a key competence within the general and vocational school curricula and the national policy for lifelong learning supports that, the specific measures and actions in its implementation are quite few. Through the years the MES has provided teacher training and support to practice enterprises but they target only certain groups of teachers and students.

It should be noted that the existing strategic documents, the legislation as well as the SES or the new syllabuses still lack clear definitions and guidelines about the specificities of entrepreneurship or financial literacy education. Social innovations in the context of social entrepreneurship are not included in the strategic documents. Although there is an attempt for introducing a spiral education model, so far this has not been achieved in practice through the new documentation as the links between the levels are vague and the learning outcomes do not fully complement or build upon the previous level.

The lack of national strategies on entrepreneurship and financial literacy affects the conceptual understanding what, how and when they should be studied at school. The curricula and the syllabuses for the separate levels still do not provide good continuity between them, there are also inconsistencies between the objectives and the expected outcomes in the SES and those in the syllabuses. All these deficiencies in the political

and legal frameworks affect not only the school education process but the concept, content and organization of elective subjects or extracurricular activities and projects related to entrepreneurship and financial literacy. Therefore, overcoming the gaps in the educational policy and legal documents is of critical importance not only regarding formal education but also the initiatives implemented in non-formal or informal context.

Post-secondary formal, non-formal and informal education are also areas which need significant improvement to ensure the quality and continuity of entrepreneurship education after school. There are just few examples of courses for university and college students in non-economics specialties aiming at enhancing their entrepreneurial culture and encourage them to consider self-employment or business ownership as a career option. Currently, besides financial support, the incubators and accelerators provide mentorship and consultancy. However, its quality and effectiveness has not been studied yet.

Regarding the initiatives

- Implementing organisations

The identified initiatives focused on skills development through social innovation/entrepreneurship and financial literacy are mainly implemented by NGOs. Based on the evidence gathered through the mapping exercise, the experience and expertise of the organisations differ significantly. As it was mentioned above, most often the initiatives, which are quite different in scope and scale, include the development or adaptation of educational programmes, teacher training and involvement of students in training and various activities. However, the implementing organisations provide no information how the impact of such projects on students' knowledge, skills and attitudes is measured and compared to the baseline determined by the learning outcomes in formal education – whether and how they complement them and what gaps, if any, have been filled in.

- Sustainability

There are several long-term initiatives related to entrepreneurship education with a high level of sustainability. However, their scope is not so large as the target groups are very specific – e.g. students in vocational schools of economics or in general schools with profiled education.

An important note that should be made regarding financial literacy initiatives is the different focus of the skills aimed at. Most of the projects funded by the private (financial) sector in Bulgaria perceive financial literacy as awareness about financial products and services and practical skills for their usage in personal finance management. Such

context is rather limited. It does not comply with the understanding of financial literacy as a transversal skill and does not significantly contribute to building the entrepreneurship competence. Just a few projects are focused on involving an interdisciplinary approach and linking important aspects of financial literacy to setting life goals, educational and career development, budgeting and opportunity cost, etc. Therefore, financial literacy education needs to be aligned more with the entrepreneurship competence – and be perceived closely to the definition adopted by the OECD (in the context of the entrepreneurship competence). This means that such education should be focused on developing an entrepreneurial mindset, instead of providing information about products and services offered by the financial sector. In such broader context, financial literacy is understood as a set of skills rather than theoretical knowledge. It is related to encouraging financial management (both personal and corporate). However, it should be underlined, that in terms of educational consistency (curricula, learning outcomes, targeted age groups, etc.) financial literacy education seems to be organised better than the overall entrepreneurship education.

- Age groups (school levels)

As evident from the descriptions of the initiatives, they rarely take into consideration the age group peculiarities at the different school levels. As a result, the skills related to the key competence initiative and entrepreneurship aimed to be developed by the projects do not communicate to the expected outcomes of the SES for general and profiled education for each school level and the expected outcomes in the syllabuses for each year. This raises the question whether the syllabuses of the educational programmes developed under the projects adequately reflect the level of knowledge, skills and competences of the students involved in these initiatives and how efficient the skills development is.

There is no large-scale initiative which can involve students who have had only limited access to entrepreneurship or financial literacy provided through the PSEA. This especially concerns upper secondary students (first sub-level) in intensive or extended foreign language classes, who do not study Technologies and Entrepreneurship at all. It should be noted that there are some good examples of projects incorporating successfully practice enterprise models, which are initiated and implemented by schools with extensive experience in entrepreneurship training. However, these are only isolated cases as most often schools are involved in projects of external organisations, whose agendas and project objectives might not fully coincide with that of the school.

In addition, most of the projects target the upper-secondary level. Students at lower secondary level (grades 5 to 7) are the most neglected group and are rarely involved in such projects. However, there are several initiatives targeting students at all school levels offering age-appropriate educational materials.

- Vulnerable groups

Vulnerable groups are the target that needs intervention the most. However, just few of the initiatives are focused on them. In addition, although some of the projects are initially aimed at these groups, the focus often shifts during the implementation phase. The reasons for that need to be further explored in order to be suggested appropriate measures to overcome this deficiency.

- Scalability

Most of the identified initiatives are one-off projects of local character targeting a limited group of students, which lack potential for scaling up. Usually, the organizations do not report data for the scale of their initiatives. Furthermore, the methods for reporting numbers are not unified. Thus, the scale is rarely fully comparable.

- Publicity

One of the main problems regarding the initiatives that was encountered during the mapping exercise is the inadequate or incomplete information about them provided to the public by the implementing organisations. Very often it is not possible to find data about the reached target group, the duration of the intervention or the achieved impact even for EU funded projects. As stated above, the publicly available data is rarely comparable. For instance, the projects of the MES for encouraging extracurricular activities have provided good opportunities to develop initiative and entrepreneurship on a larger scale. However, there are no publicly available data about the activities by area, type, involved students and teachers or the applied instruments to assess the skills and knowledge gained. Without such data it is not possible their effect to be studied and measured, which is crucial for the future projects to utilise these opportunities fully.

- Impact measurement

Another gap regarding the initiatives is that no consistent mechanisms are applied to measure their impact in terms of achieved learning outcomes as well as the efficient and effective use of funding. Since the learning outcomes of many of the initiatives are not even accurately formulated and no mechanisms to measure them at the end of the intervention are pointed out, it is questionable what the impact of such initiatives will be at the end of the day. Only few of the initiatives are based on sound pedagogical expertise, which is evident from the description of the intervention. In some cases, pedagogical terminology is not used properly, which raises questions about the expertise

in education of implementing organisation.⁴¹ These observations are based only on the descriptions of the initiatives, provided by the implementing organisations since the overall quality of the educational resources and completed training does not fall within the scope of this report.

Little information is available about another important aspect of the impact measurement related to the efficient and effective use of funding. The information, where available, refers to the total amount of the funding without specifying how the resources are allocated to the different activities or even projects within one bigger initiative. “The averaging of results and total funding does not accurately reflect efficiency and effectiveness, as they may vary between different projects and activities. However, if this information is presented separately in detail and, accordingly, the overhead costs are allocated on an appropriate basis, accurate indicators of the efficiency and effectiveness of each activity will be obtained.” (Jolovski, 2018). In addition, when it comes to public funding such an approach does not ensure enough transparency.



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Identified challenges

One of the main challenges identified is related to the development of relevant strategies for entrepreneurship (including social innovations) and financial literacy education. This requires the joint efforts of public authorities, the private sector, educational institutions

⁴¹ For example, the adaptation of an educational programme for Bulgaria is described as being fully compliant with “the official syllabus”, as well as integrated into the “syllabuses of 10 schools ... the programme being fully adapted to the syllabus”. Obviously the authors do not make any distinction between a syllabus and a curriculum (author’s remark).

and non-governmental organisations, which is a challenge in itself. The development of strategies for entrepreneurship and financial literacy education – the latter already under way – is a good starting point that will channel the efforts of all stakeholders. In other countries establishing such strategies has proven to be successful as they provide an overall framework with clear priorities, definitions, aims and objectives for each school level as well as other target groups. However, this will subsequently require a revision of the SES and the syllabuses and respectively new textbooks and teaching aids. Having in mind that the recent educational reform is being implemented for only four years now, such a revision should be attempted carefully and not be rushed, as this may create tensions in the education community and society, which will compromise the effectiveness of the strategies.

The availability and appropriate training of teachers of entrepreneurship and financial literacy is yet to be studied and addressed. Teachers need to raise their qualifications or obtain new ones in order to teach entrepreneurship and financial literacy topics in Technologies and Entrepreneurship as the subject is completely new and most of the teachers have had no formal training in them. According to data of the National Statistical Institute, 6.3% of the teachers in general education are below 30 years of age, which means that only they are most likely to have undergone initial training including the methodology of teaching Technologies and Entrepreneurship. In addition, the entrepreneurial culture in the educational system still needs to be developed. Teachers and heads of schools should be aware of the advantages and benefits of entrepreneurship and financial literacy education not only for students but for themselves and their institutions as well. Thus, they will be able to use the opportunities provided by the law and students will have access to entrepreneurship education provided by trained teachers both within the curriculum and as extracurricular activities or participation in initiatives of the school or external organisations. For this reason, continuing professional development as well as initial teacher training should include such programmes not only for teachers in the subject area, but for all teachers.

The mapping exercise was conducted in a time of a world crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It has had a profound impact on all spheres of life and affected not only the educational system at all its levels but the various learning initiatives for skills development as well. The changing environment requires new skills and non-formal and informal learning initiatives will play an even bigger role in the future. In a recently published issue note, UNESCO underlines that such initiatives have already become “a critical part of many cities’ educational response to the pandemic”. It is underlined, they are probably the most efficient and flexible instrument for “addressing the needs of the population in general and of vulnerable groups in particular such as students from low socio-economic backgrounds” (UNESCO, 2020). Therefore, one of the greatest

challenges that providers of future initiatives will face and have to overcome is how to revise and adapt them in order to respond to the changing realities and empower young people with the skills they will need tomorrow.

Opportunities

It must be underlined that the PSEA and the accompanying regulations provide opportunities to overcome some of the existing gaps in entrepreneurship education at all levels. Schools have much more freedom to choose at their discretion not only optional but various elective subjects as well and to offer extracurricular activities. These opportunities can fill in the gaps and complement the curriculum with subjects and activities focused on developing the key competence initiative and entrepreneurship. Thus, all initiatives and projects will also be better structured and linked to the overall priorities and objectives of the educational policies and legislation.

Another opportunity for enhancing initiatives focused on skills development through entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy are the funding mechanisms provided by the EU and co-financed by the state. The proposals for the **Operational Programme “Science and Education for Smart Growth”** for the new programming period 2021-2027 put an emphasis on continuing the efforts for modernisation and quality of education. The envisaged measures can successfully address the aforesaid gaps and challenges related to the qualification of teachers, the necessary changes of syllabuses and teaching methods as well as help for development of new skills.

EU instruments like the **Erasmus+ Programme** will continue to play a vital role in that process with its increased funding for education and training as envisaged by the new EU long-term budget – a **Recovery Plan for Europe**⁴². It focuses on investment in activities for skills development within the context of the new **European Skills Agenda**. The Agenda is a five-year plan containing 12 actions focused on skills for jobs, among which skills for green and digital transitions, STEM, entrepreneurial and transversal skills, and skills for life. It aims at responding to the need of more and better skills to repair the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic by strengthening sustainable competitiveness, ensuring social fairness, and building resilience to react to crises (European Commission, 2020).

Despite the identified gaps and challenges, the large number and the diversity of initiatives, some of which have proven their sustainability, speaks of already accumulated experience by all stakeholders, which is a good basis for developing strategies that will structure and focus future efforts.

42 https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_en

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the identified gaps, challenges and opportunities, the following recommendations have been elaborated to address four main groups of stakeholders: public authorities; educational institutions; implementing organisations; funding organisations. The recommendations suggest possible actions addressing the need of:

- ✓ consistent national policy and legal frameworks for entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy education
- ✓ more visibility, scalability and replication of existing good practices
- ✓ effective and efficient utilisation of initiatives funding
- ✓ inclusion of underrepresented groups.

Recommendations to public authorities

This group of recommendations is intended to suggest possible actions of public authorities – like the Council of Ministers, the Ministries of Education and Science, of Finance, of Economy and their structures – to respond to the need of a clear and consistent framework for entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy education. Such a framework will put the education in these domains on sound theoretical and methodological basis and provide mechanisms for measuring its impact. This will have a positive effect not only on the formal education process but also on youth skills development in a non-formal or informal context. Their aims and objectives will give implementing organisations – educational institutions and NGOs – clear indications what skills to target and will save efforts and funds otherwise spent on initiatives that are not addressing real needs. Taking these considerations into account, it is recommended that:

- ✓ Public authorities in collaboration with the stakeholders from educational institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organisations should develop national strategies for entrepreneurship education/social innovation and financial literacy⁴³, aligned with the objectives of the national policy for lifelong learning and containing relevant action plans, mechanisms for measuring the impact of the actions and allocation of financial resources for their implementation.
- ✓ The MES in collaboration with educational institutions, should revise the SES and the syllabuses for entrepreneurship related subjects based on an overall evaluation of their implementation since the adoption of the PSEA in 2016 and the framework set by the future strategic documents on entrepreneurship and financial literacy education.

⁴³ During the process of finalisation this report the National Strategy for Financial Literacy has been adopted and currently the working group has started developing the competencies framework on financial literacy. <https://www.24chasa.bg/novini/article/9502889>

- ✓ The MES should initiate a study on the status quo of entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy initiatives that will provide an assessment of the achievements and shortcomings of existing practices.
- ✓ The MES should provide publicly available data about the impact of its projects for extracurricular activities by their area, type, involved students and teachers and the mechanisms used to measure the skills and knowledge gained that will allow applying performance-based budgeting of these projects in order to tighten the link between funding and achieved results.

Recommendations to educational institutions

These recommendations are intended to highlight existing opportunities that educational institutions can use in order to enhance the development of students' and educators' skills through entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy initiatives. The opportunities stipulated by the PSEA allow schools to pursue specific educational objectives and include municipalities, NGOs, employers and other stakeholders in the public dialogue on relevant issues in education. The autonomy of universities and colleges allows them to respond more quickly and efficiently to identified gaps at the labour market. Of special interest is the provision of teacher training, which seems to be the most important investment as it will ensure a long-term positive impact and sustainability of all efforts invested so far in skills development in entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy. To take full advantage of these opportunities, it is recommended that:

- ✓ Schools should innovate their curricula or include subjects related to entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy or include them as electives and extracurricular activities to ensure relevant transferable skills development and fill in the gaps in the SES and the syllabuses.
- ✓ Universities and colleges should provide elective courses for students in non-economics specialties in order to enhance their entrepreneurial culture and financial literacy.
- ✓ Universities and colleges offering pedagogical programmes should include courses in entrepreneurship/social innovation and financial literacy education for initial teacher training and continuous professional development.

Recommendations to implementing organisations

This set of recommendations addresses the lack of comparable public information about the scope and design of the initiatives. They suggest some possible actions that implementing organisations may take regarding the visibility and communication of their initiatives that will enhance their scalability, replicability and sustainability and serve as a basis for benchmarking. It is recommended that:

- ✓ Implementing organisations should provide publicly accessible and comparable information on students' knowledge, skills and attitudes attained through the

initiatives and measured against the baseline of the learning outcomes determined in formal education with special emphasis on the deficiencies they have remedied.

- ✓ Implementing organisations should design their training materials by taking into consideration the competences targeted in the policy and legal documents to ensure that the initiatives complement them relevantly and efficiently.
- ✓ Implementing organisations should perform benchmarking both internally and externally, which will improve their performance and encourage the exchange of good practices.

Recommendations to funding organisations

This set of recommendations suggests some actions that can help the organisations providing funds for the implementation of the initiatives to obtain relevant feedback and ensure that funds are spent efficiently, and appropriate learning outcomes related to skills acquisition have been set and met.

- ✓ Funding organisations should establish procedures not only to control financial accountability but also the impact achieved through the quality of developed educational materials and the provision of training, which should be done by experts in the area.
- ✓ Funding organisations should require from the implementing organisations to use clear mechanisms for measuring the impact of the intervention through the initiatives.
- ✓ Funding organisations should encourage initiatives for underrepresented groups in the initiatives – lower secondary students (grades 5 to 7) and students from vulnerable groups.
- ✓ Funding organisations should encourage more initiatives that build upon previous experience or have a potential for scaling up.

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ANNEX 1. SELECTED EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES

Detailed descriptions of 15 initiatives are presented below. The initiatives are divided by thematic area and school level:

- ✓ Primary (ISCED 1) – students in grades 1 to 4, aged 7 – 11 years;
- ✓ Lower secondary (ISCED 2) – students in grades 5 to 7, aged 11 – 14 years;
- ✓ Upper secondary (ISCED 3) divided in two sub-levels: First sub-level – students in grades 8 to 10, aged 14 – 16 years; and Second sub-level – students in grades 11 and 12, aged 16 – 19 years.

In Thematic area 1: Social innovation/entrepreneurship are presented 8 initiative – two for each level and 2 initiatives targeting all school levels. Career orientation initiatives are also included in this thematic area as they also aim at developing skills, which are part of the entrepreneurship competence. In Thematic area 2: Financial literacy are presented 7 initiatives – two for each level and 1 initiative targeting all school levels. The different number of presented initiatives is due to the fact that Thematic area 2 includes less initiatives.

The selection of initiatives is not intended as a representative sample. It aims to reflect their variety of scope and impact, so that a better snapshot of the current situation is achieved. Therefore, both one-off short local projects and large-scale international projects or long-term initiatives are present in the selected examples.

Thematic area 1: Social innovation and entrepreneurship

All school levels (Grades 1 – 12)

- Table 1. Project “Youth Start Bulgaria”

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Initiative, motivation and innovation, confidence and social participation.	Public	January 2015 – June 2017 (two school years)
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills related to business and economic education; transversal skills related to cognitive and personal development, ethical and social contexts.	Initiative for Teaching Entrepreneurship (IFTE), Austria, and its Bulgarian branch Entrepreneurship Training Initiative – Smart Start Europe Association in collaboration with Sofia Municipality.	

Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth
All levels of school education: primary (A1), lower secondary (A2), upper secondary I (B1), upper secondary II (B2).	96 teachers and over 1,200 students.	N/a
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach	Delivery mechanism	
33 schools – 29 from Sofia and one from Varna, Montana, Veliko Tarnovo and Velingrad.	Educational programme delivered by trained teachers school.	
Summary		
<p>The aim of the project is to translate and disseminate in Bulgarian schools the educational programme “Youth Start – Entrepreneurial Challenges”⁴⁴. It includes 47 challenges (13 for A1, 17 for A2, 12 for B1, 7 for B2), based on economic and ethical basic principles that determine the participation of individuals and businesses in the social market economy, emphasizing the economy of the enterprise and promoting a responsible attitude towards disadvantaged people in our society. The challenges cover a broad range of themes, activities and situations of entrepreneurship education, which aim at encouraging young people to be open to new ideas and to implement these ideas creatively.</p> <p>The challenges follow the TRIO Model for Entrepreneurship Education, which encompasses three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Core Entrepreneurial Education – comprises basic qualifications for entrepreneurial thinking and acting, more precisely the competence to develop and implement ideas. ✓ Entrepreneurial Culture – refers to the promotion of personal competences in a social context and developing a culture of open-mindedness, empathy, teamwork and creativity as well as risk-taking and awareness of risks. ✓ Entrepreneurial Civic Education – aims at enhancing social competences and empowering students in their role as citizens to be able to express their opinions and assume responsibility for themselves, others and the environment. <p>A reference framework of entrepreneurship competences⁴⁵ was also developed within the project. It includes three main categories: Developing Ideas, Implementing Ideas and Thinking Sustainably. The framework allowed for setting precise learning outcomes for the challenges and measuring them objectively.</p>		

44 Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges (388460-EPP-1-2014-2-PT-EPPKA3-PI-POLICY), co-funded by Erasmus+ Programme. The project is a collaboration between NGOs and the ministries of education of Austria, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Slovenia. The learning programme was developed by IFTE (Austria) and evaluated by FFE-YE (Denmark). <http://youthstartproject.eu/project/>

45 The Youth Start reference framework has been used as a point of reference in the development of the EntreComp framework by the European Commission, making the Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges compatible with EntreComp.

- Table 2. National Student Competition for green innovative ideas “Young innovator”⁴⁶

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Green entrepreneurship, innovation, environmental protection, sustainable future.	Private	End of 2019 – March 2020.
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills related to business; transversal skills – creative thinking, teamwork, etc.; citizenship competence and skills to support sustainable development.	The project is initiated and implemented by PostScriptum Ventures. Among the partners to the initiative are the Ministry of Education and Science, business and NGO representatives as part of the jury.	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth
Students in grades 1 to 12.	More than 900 students with 100 projects and over 500 drawings.	N/a
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach	Delivery mechanism	
National coverage.	Competition for two age categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drawing for students in grades 1 to 7; - team project for students in grades 8 to 12 competing at three stages – preliminary selection, final ranking and final presentation. The winners are selected by a jury.	
Summary		
<p>The mission of the competition is to provoke children's thinking about environmental issues and stimulate them to focus on real and practical solutions that could contribute to protecting and improving the environment. The aim is to enable further implementation of the projects, but also to unleash the curiosity of the participants to learn more about the principles of sustainable development combining environmental, social and economic aspects.</p> <p>In the drawing category the jury selects 10 drawings based on the artistic performance, the idea and the demonstrated innovative, combinatorial thinking for the future. The selection in the team project category is carried out in three stages – preliminary selection, final ranking and final presentation. The first stage is a 3-minute</p>		

⁴⁶ In Bulgarian: Национален конкурс „Млад иноватор“. Visit: <https://www.mladinovator.bg/>

video with a short description of the team, the idea and its expected impact – environmental, social or economic, as well as a short report about the implementation of the project, its financial planning and how the team will use the award prize. In the final ranking are selected up to 10 teams to take part in the final awarding ceremony with a 5-minute presentation of their projects and a demonstration of the prototypes. The winners in the drawing category receive a money prize as well as additional prizes, provided by the partners of the initiative. In the project category the proposals of the winning team and the first and second runners-up receive financial support and mentorship as well as a personal scholarship for each team member. The aim is to enable the further implementation of the projects, but also to raise the interest of the participants to sustainable development.

Primary level (Grades 1 – 4)

- Table 3. Project “CRADLE – Creating Activity Designed Language Learning Environments for Entrepreneurship Education”⁴⁷

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Foreign languages and entrepreneurship.	Public	2017 – 2020
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills related to business; transversal skills – problem-solving, personal responsibility, social responsibility, curiosity, communication, cooperation.	Bulgaria – International School Uwekind, Sofia, and Shumen University – the Department for Information, Qualification and Life-Long Learning, Varna; Greece – Goethe-Institut (lead partner), Idiotiko Dimotiko Neue Schule A.E., Ellinogermaniki Agogi and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; Denmark – Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship; Belgium – Bantani Education, Scholengroep and GO! Uneschoschool Koekelberg and GO! Basisschool De Iris in Uccle, Brussels, BS Toverfluit, Sint-Jans-Molenbeek.	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth

⁴⁷ In Bulgarian: “Създаване на дейностно ориентирана среда за обучение в предприемачески умения и общуване на чужд език”. Visit: <https://www.cradleproject.eu/>; <https://uwekind.com/uncategorized-bq/predpriemachestvoto-v-uchilishhe-obuchenie-po-sotsialna-otgovornost-i-zhitejski-umeniya/>

Primary school students pupils aged 8 – 12	Students in one school – grades 2 and 3.	N/a
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach		Delivery mechanism
In Bulgaria the project is implemented in one school in Sofia.		Cross-curricular projects.
Summary		
<p>Cradle is an Erasmus+ project, Action KA2, and stands for “Creating Activity Designed Language Learning Environments for Entrepreneurship Education”. It is a new teaching methodology for primary schools focusing on the simultaneous development of foreign language and entrepreneurial skills. Cradle has a triple approach interconnecting cross-curricular and action-focused learning with content and language integrated learning and entrepreneurship education. Teachers who work with the Cradle methodology attempt to combine these three elements in their lessons. It focuses on the intentional development of entrepreneurial skills, which at a basic level, are life skills. The learners choose the topics of the projects. All projects frame activities, where pupils work and learn in a linear four-step process inspired by Design Thinking with problem-solving and designing solutions in mind. The four steps are: 1. Prior understanding and research; 2. Ideas generation and design; 3. Prototyping and actions; 4. Evaluation and foreign language selection.</p>		

- Table 4. Project “What Should I Be”⁴⁸

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Career orientation.	Private	March 2016 – March 2017
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Transversal skills – leadership, innovative thinking, proactiveness and initiative.	104 th Basic School “Zahari Stoyanov”, Sofia with the financial support of Vivacom Regional Grant	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth
Students in grade 3, aged 9 – 10 years.	Nearly 100 students from third grade.	N/a
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach		Delivery mechanism

48 In Bulgarian: „Какъв да стана?“. https://104ou.com/images/Filles/vestnik/OU-104_2017_new.pdf

Local coverage – one school.	Interactive lessons and meetings with professionals – parents and volunteers.
Summary	
<p>The main idea of the project is to organize interactive lessons in career orientation. The students are involved actively in the classes through “experiencing” different professions. Each career orientation lesson includes a theoretical part (interactive presentation with photos, figures and videos) and a practical part in which students “experience” the profession through meetings with professionals. In the career orientation classes aim not only at acquiring knowledge about different professions but also at developing skills like leadership, innovative thinking, proactiveness and initiative. In the practical part students are encouraged to ask questions, work in teams to solve cases.</p>	

Lower secondary level (Grades 5 – 7)

- Table 5. Programme for early career orientation and motivation⁴⁹

Thematic area/s or problems addressed		Funding	Time period
Career orientation.		Public	January – December 2018.
Skills to be developed		Main partners	
Transversal skills – self-awareness, decision making; citizenship competence.		Implemented by Bauersachs Foundation and commissioned by Plovdiv Municipality.	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth	
Students in grades 6 and 7, parents, teachers	Over 150 students from 5 schools in Plovdiv.	N/a	
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach		Delivery mechanism	
Local coverage – schools in Plovdiv and the municipality.		After school activities – meetings with students and parents, visits to industrial enterprises, information sessions with teachers to discuss the careers of the future.	
Summary			

⁴⁹ In Bulgarian: „Програма за ранно кариерно ориентиране и мотивация“. Visit: <http://bauersax.org/bg/bauersachs-foundation-launches-a-program-for-early-career-orientation-and-motivation/>

The aim of the project is to provide assistance to children and parents in choosing a profession by implementing a programme for early career orientation and motivation. The activities include meetings with parents and teachers about manufacturing industry trends in the region and professional opportunities. Within the programme, the students visit leading manufacturing companies in the region of Plovdiv and get acquainted with their production processes. They are able to learn how professions will develop in the future and what the role of man will be in highly automated and modern factories. The project also aims at building sustainable partnerships and communication channels between employers and educational institutions, especially in the context of the growing interest in dual education.

• Table 6. Project “YouNG Goes Further”⁵⁰

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Innovation and entrepreneurship.	Public ⁵¹	From October 2018 – until March 2021 (30 months)
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills related to business; transversal skills – teamwork, leadership, positive attitude, time management, goal orientation, presentation skills, task planning, work ethics, critical thinking.	The project is implemented by a consortium led by NGi Limited, United Kingdom, and partners from four EU countries – JA Bulgaria, Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology, PEDAL Consulting from Slovakia, ZSL, a technical school in the city of Poznan Poland. All partners will be involved in the development of an educational programme with lesson plans and supporting materials, NGi and MCAST – of the programme for SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities), ZSL – of the teacher training programme, JA Bulgaria – of the employer mentoring support programme, PEDAL Consulting – of the summer camp programme.	

⁵⁰ In Bulgarian: Проект „YouNG Goes Further“. Visit: <https://www.mcast.edu.mt/young-goes-further/>; https://www.jabulgaria.org/article/projects/youngoes_further; <https://www.ng-i.co.uk/young-goes-further.html>

⁵¹ The projects YouNG Goes Further is funded by the Erasmus+ Programme, 2018-1-UK01-KA202-048127.

Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth
<p>Students in grades 5 to 12, aged 12 – 18 years (EQF Level 1 to 3).</p>	<p>The project targets students, parents legal guardians and educators in the five partner countries: United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Malta, Slovakia and Poland. In Bulgaria will be involved about 80 students.</p>	<p>One of the outputs of the projects is producing a programme that will support either students at SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) schools or those who have little self-belief and therefore low career aspirations to participate in the YouNG Market programme. The END programme targets students, parents/legal guardians and educators. It will include 8 hours for students and 2 hours for parents /legal guardians.</p>
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach	Delivery mechanism	
<p>In Bulgaria, the pilot version of the educational programme was presented in March and April 2019 to 80 students in 4 schools in Sofia, Shumen and Varna. The project activities will be implemented among students, parents/legal guardians and educators in the five partner countries: United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Malta, Slovakia and Poland.</p>	<p>Involving teachers trained to deliver the YouNG Markets programme in class with the support of business volunteers as mentors. Final five-day summer camp during which the students will run a stall on a local market.</p>	
Summary		
<p>The project responds to the need that the generations now at school will need to</p>		

create their own employment by embedding enterprise activities into mainstream curricula and make it accessible to a wider cohort of students. It aims at creating innovation, therefore its activities will focus on research, developing curriculum innovation and teaching/learning resources in the first instance. Its activities include creating teaching and learning resources, providing support to vulnerable students, organising training for teachers and business mentors, organising a summer camp for students and providing a working opportunity for students. The resources integrate entrepreneurship education in 4 subject areas – mathematics, national language, art and craft/design/technology, and build upon the YouNG Market programme related to setting up and running a business on a local market. They include lesson plans, worksheets and exercises for students to use, reference to the curriculum specification and links to work and relevant careers. The aim is to develop a model and procedure by which the school curriculum can be taught in line with the YouNG Market programme. Employers will also be involved in the delivery of the YouNG Market programme as mentors, as dragons to assess their business ideas or as advisers.

Upper secondary level – 1st sub-level (Grades 8 – 10)

- Table 7. InnoSchool Project⁵²

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Social innovation and entrepreneurship.	EU funded ⁵³	01.09.2018 – 31.08.2021
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills related to business; transversal skills – innovative thinking, creativity.	International consortium with Bulgarian project partners Business Incubator - Gotse Delchev, Entrepreneurship Promotion Centre and the Regional Department of Education – Blagoevgrad. The project is co-funded by the European Union funds (ERDF, IPA, ENI) under the Danube Transnational Programme.	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth

⁵² In Bulgarian: InnoSchool „Укрепване на социални иновации и предприемачески дух на ученици от средните училища чрез иновативна система за обучение“. <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/innoschool>

⁵³ The project is co-funded by the European Union funds (ERDF, IPA, ENI) under the Danube Transnational Programme. <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/innoschool>

School students aged 16 – 17 years.	10 classes of students in grade 10 or 11 and one teacher per class (approx. 200 students and 10 teachers).	N/a
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach		Delivery mechanism
In Bulgaria – in 10 schools from Blagoevgrad region. The project is implemented in 9 European countries.	InnoSchool is an innovative learning system, which combines traditional classroom-based learning methods with digital elements in order to meet the needs of the school of tomorrow.	
Summary		
<p>InnoSchool tackles the need for system change, to support weak entrepreneurial culture and low engagement towards social innovation and entrepreneurship starting from adolescence years. Ages 16-17, when adolescents are in secondary schools is a crucial period to motivate and stimulate their interest in order to influence their future work and life career decisions. A high-quality secondary schooling supporting education, not only for the future employees, but also for future entrepreneurs, is needed. The general objective of InnoSchool Project (“Strengthening Social Innovation and Entrepreneurial Spirit of Secondary Schools’ Students by Using Highly Innovative Learning System”) is to strengthen social innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of secondary schools’ students by developing, testing and introducing the innovative InnoSchool Learning System (ILS), combining innovations introduced for adolescents in order to achieve attractiveness and educational impact. The project’s specific objectives are to improve attractiveness and impact learning systems used at secondary schools curriculums to strengthen social innovation and entrepreneurship spirit, to improve stakeholder knowledge on using the innovative learning system and to improve educational frameworks by implementing it into curriculums.</p> <p>The ILS has several important aspects: serious game, classroom activities, social media interaction, guidance and training, inclusive design, action plans, interschool competition. Impact on students’ knowledge and spirit to start social innovative enterprises will be measured through 3 key aspects: social needs awareness, improvement of specific abilities of students and gained entrepreneurial skills.</p> <p>In addition to the development of the ILS, the project activities include teacher training workshops, 4-month pilot testing of the ILS in the partner countries, Institutional learning workshops, policy roundtables, action plans to introducing ILS to curriculums and Policy Guidance for Transferability to further territories.</p>		

• Table 8. Teenovator Programme ⁵⁴

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Teenovator is an entirely practical programme connecting students with examples from real start-ups and businesses.	Private	Since 2018 during the school year.
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills related to business – lean development, rapid prototyping, business canvas model; transversal skills – creative thinking and confidence, design thinking.	The project is implemented by Proznanie Foundation with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Regional Authority on Education – Sofia and the Bulgarian Centre for Entrepreneurship.	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth
Students in grades 11 and 12.	In the first year after the launch of the programme in Bulgaria, start-up clubs were set up in 4. In the second year there were 17 clubs with 300 students supported by 32 mentors.	N/a
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach	Delivery mechanism	
In the first year after the launch of the programme in Bulgaria, start-up clubs were set up only in schools in Sofia. In the second year the programme was implemented in schools in Vratsa, Varna, and Sofia.	Setting up start-up clubs at school and organising a pitching competition at which they present their business ideas.	
Summary		
<p>Teenovator is a programme focused on creating and facilitating start-up clubs at the Bulgarian high schools. It is a part of the international network U School, which is represented by 200 start-up clubs at schools in Slovenia, Poland, Hungary, the USA and Mexico have been established since 2011. The program involves more than 5,000 students from around the world.</p> <p>Through Teenovator, start-up founders and entrepreneurs from different fields of business mentor students from 10th and 11th grade to help them find their passion</p>		

⁵⁴ In Bulgarian: Програма Teenovator. <https://www.teenovator.bg/>

and turn it into a successful start-up project. Teenovator implements successful practices from the Stanford University. Its curriculum is developed at one of the world's leading accelerators, the Unreasonable Institute, USA. The start-up clubs are organized according to the methodology of Ustvarjalnik/Uschool, Slovenia. The programme is focused on developing the students' creative thinking and confidence. The programme is running during the school year. Meetings between mentors and students in Teenovator clubs are held once a week for a period of one school year, on the school grounds. Visits to offices of companies are also organized. At the end of the school year, all teams from Bulgarian schools take part in a national pitching competition and their ideas are assessed by a jury of investors. The best team from Bulgaria participates in an international competition and has the opportunity to win scholarships at Watson University, Colorado. The program is free of charge.

Upper secondary level – 2nd sub-level (Grades 11 – 12)

- Table 9. Project “Tech Hub for Social Entrepreneurship”⁵⁵

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Social entrepreneurship, technological and communication innovations.	Public	April – June 2020.
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills related to business as well as the IT and communication sectors; transversal skills – creativity and proactivity, and develops risk orientated attitude, problem solving skills and self-confidence.	The project is implemented by the Laboratory for Interactive and Media Programs Association with the financial support of the National Youth Program (2016 – 2020), the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Students' House and the National Centre for Innovations and Digital Arts under the patronage of Maria Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth
Students in grades 9 to 12, aged 15 – 18 years, as well as university students under 29 years.	Sixty-six young people will take part directly in the project as	The project encourages candidates to

55 In Bulgarian: Тех Хъб за социално предприемачество. <http://nism.bg/bg/articles/view/2000.teh-hab-za-socialno-predpriemachestvo-pod-patronaja-na-evrokomisar-mariya-gabriel.html>; <https://studenthouse.bg/2020/06/11/interactive-lab/>; <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1011855709190273>

	<p>participants in the organised trainings, mentor sessions, team workshops for generating business ideas and stage presentations of their innovative projects. Indirectly, over 2000 young people will be informed about the opportunities for social entrepreneurship in the IT and communication sector.</p>	<p>present innovative ideas for social enterprises solving problems and benefiting marginalized and vulnerable groups.</p>
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Scale of the initiative and geographic reach	Delivery mechanism
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<p>National with lecturers and mentors from Greece, Spain and North Macedonia.</p>	<p>Phase 1 – online information campaign. Phase 2 – students apply for taking part in the Tech Hub. Phase 3 – provision of training, mentor sessions, group workshops, and presentation session for 66 participants. The patron of the project will make a video address and participate in a virtual discussion about the support to young people and the challenges faced by the Community. Phase 4 – Awarding ceremony, announcing the winners with best projects for a technology social start-up company. The best ideas are offered for financial support from business incubators and included in crowdfunding campaigns.</p>
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Summary

The project aims to create supportive environment for the successful professional fulfilment of young people in Bulgaria in the field of social entrepreneurship. The initiative starts with an online information campaign with a reach of over 2000 young people. The organised training workshops are on the topics “Social Innovation and

Knowledge”, “Digital Future” and “Smart economy”. The project finishes with presentation session of the youth social concepts for technology start-up companies of the participated teams.

The training is focused on developing and improving key competencies and stimulates students’ ambition for economic prosperity and measurable contribution to society. The participants in the project have the chance to learn about good social entrepreneurial practices in other European countries. The young people have the opportunity to meet successful lecturers, vloggers, media makers and entrepreneurs who will share the possibilities they can find in nowadays world economic and social situation.

• Table 10. Online competition: “Tomorrow’s Business Starts Today” ⁵⁶

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Entrepreneurship and innovation.	Private	March – May 2020.
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills related to business; transversal skills – creativity and innovation, self-confidence, persistency, critical thinking.	The project is co-organized by Successful People School Club from Baba Tonka High School of Mathematics, Rousse, and Underline Design and Advertising Studio with the financial support of 1FF/ 1ForFit and Weberest.	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth
The competition is open to students from grades 9 to 12 as well as to university students. The age is from 15 to 25 years.	The number of teams is unlimited. The teams should consist of 3 – 5 people. At the final phase three teams are awarded with First, Second and Third prize. The investors in the jury nominate top 3 teams who may receive financial support for their projects and ideas	The participating teams are encourage to focus their innovative ideas on problems faced by marginalised or vulnerable youth.

⁵⁶ In Bulgarian: “Състезание за бизнес идеи”. <https://bit.ly/3unWwLd>

	after additional conversations.	
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach		Delivery mechanism
<p>National. The participants in the first edition of the online competition were 11 teams from Varna, Pleven, Plovdiv, Rousse, Sofia and Shumen, and one team of students from three universities in Europe.</p>		<p>Phase 1 –registration of the teams with their ideas or projects. Phase 2 – 2-day online competition. For a day and a half the teams have online sessions with mentors, who help them with refining their business idea and time to finalise them. Phase 3 – is the online presentation in front of a jury. Phase 4 – Awarding ceremony, announcing the top 3 teams selected by the jury and the top 3 teams selected by the investors.</p>
Summary		
<p>This is an online competition for business ideas of teams of high school and university students, who spots existing problems and provide business solutions in various fields – automotive industry, IT (software and hardware), healthcare, construction, sports and physical activity, education, services. This competition develops the proactive attitude of students, who are not idle observer of their society but active and responsible citizens who can analyse trends, circumstances, phenomena, conditions and problems and seize opportunities for successful businesses.</p> <p>Business ideas, innovative business projects, young entrepreneurs with inspiring and competitive business plans, entrepreneurship education, solving important problems in different industries, competition for creative business ideas in sections – automotive industry, IT (software and hardware), healthcare, construction, sports and physical activity, education and services.</p> <p>The competition targets young people with ambitious to grow and trains their spirit and mind to search for solutions and innovative ideas, which can improve the life of people or make our planet cleaner and sustainable.</p> <p>The Grand Prize in the competition – is an opportunity to turn the idea of two teams into a start-up business with the participation and share investment, provided by 1FF / 1ForFit and Weberest.</p>		

Thematic area 2: Financial literacy

All school levels (Grades 1 – 12)

- Table 11. Financial Workshops “About Money and Other Important Things”⁵⁷

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Financial literacy	Private	Since 2016 – ongoing. The workshops are conducted during the school year.
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills –financial management skills, budgeting; transversal skills – decision making, emotional intelligence, goal setting, teamwork; other key competences – mathematical, communication in the mother tongue, social and civic competences, learning to learn.	Financial Literacy Initiative Foundation with the financial support of NN.	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth
Students at all levels of school education.	School students across the country. The target group is reached through teachers, educators and facilitators in schools, libraries, community centres and other types of educational centres.	N/a
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach	Delivery mechanism	
Over 200 schools across the country, over 500 teachers trained.	Within school subjects, as extracurricular out-of-school activities by teachers or educators, who have attended training to deliver the workshops. Theatre as a learning method is also applied.	
Summary		

⁵⁷ In Bulgarian: Финансови работилници „За парите и други важни неща”. http://www.finansizadeca.bg/bg_BG

Three guides with financial workshops for students at upper secondary, lower secondary and primary levels were developed since 2016 – “About Money and Other Important Things”, “About Money and Other Important Things – First Steps”, “About Money and Other Important Things – First Steps”. The guides are developed based on an innovative methodology for teaching financial knowledge – through games and other hands-on activities. Each guide contains 10 topics with logically connected series of 25 games on the specific topic. The tenth workshop in the guide for the youngest students uses theatre as a learning method and provides a script for the play “The Carousel of Money”. In 2018 – 2019, a company of 24 primary students from Kozma Trichkov Secondary School in Vratsa embarked on a national tour with the play and put it on stage in Sofia, Vratsa, Kazanlak Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Varna. The performance was attended by nearly 1000 children. Most of the schools applying the programme organise their own performances and public presentations of the workshops.

The guide include topics like– professions and entrepreneurship, financial planning, budgeting, saving, borrowing, investing, reasonable consumption and shopping, basic knowledge of taxation, social security, insurance, life insurance and pension insurance. In addition, issues like environment protection, support and empathy for others are also addressed. The topics are organised in a logical sequence: starting with self-awareness of individual talents, career orientation and entrepreneurship to personal finance management. The guides provide the teacher with detailed instructions and materials for the implementation of the workshops.

The resources are available on the website <http://www.finansizadeca.bg/> and the Financial Literacy Initiative Foundation provides training to the teachers who would like to use them.

The workshops can be used in a number of subjects like technology and entrepreneurship, mathematics, speech development, individual and society, fine arts, as well as in various types of extracurricular activities or outdoor camps.

Primary level (Grades 1 – 4)

- Table 12. Children’s book “Where does money grow?” ⁵⁸

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Financial literacy.	Private	The pilot project was implemented in 2015 – 2016 school year.

⁵⁸ In Bulgarian: Книжка „Къде растат парите? Първо четиво за финансите за деца и родители“. https://www.nnbulgaria.com/bulletin18_book_website

Skills to be developed		Main partners	
Specific skills – personal finance management; transversal skills – creativity and critical thinking.		The translation and publishing of the book was initiated and financed by NN Bulgaria. Within a pilot project with Teach for Bulgaria Foundation the book was presented and disseminated to students and teachers.	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth	
Students aged 7 – 12 years.	In 2015 – 2016 school year the book was presented in 30 schools in the country. The teachers participating in the Teach for Bulgaria programmes used it as a guide in their classes.	N/a	
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach		Delivery mechanism	
Within the pilot project with Teach for Bulgaria the book was presented to 30 schools in the country and the teachers and students received a free copy. NN Bulgaria also disseminated the book through their regional offices and sending it to libraries in the country.		Translation and free dissemination of the book to teachers and students as an additional educational material to be used in class as well to be read and discussed with parents at home.	
Summary			
The children’s book “Where does money grow? First book on finance for children and parents“ by the Czech writer D. Proshkova was translated into Bulgarian and published by NN Bulgaria. The book explains to the children the connection between going to work and earning money and introduces them to new concepts such as salary, expenses, savings, loans, pension, insurance. While reading the book, children can also colour the illustrations in it. In addition to children, the book is useful to their parents who sooner or later face the need to explain to their children what money is and how we should organize our personal finances so that we can live better. In 2016, the sequel of the book was translated into Bulgarian and published.			

Lower secondary level (grades 5 – 7)

- Table 13. Project “Let’s Break the Circle of Poverty Together”⁵⁹

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Financial literacy, citizenship and entrepreneurship education. ⁶⁰	Private	March 1 – August 31, 2019 (six months)
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills – financial planning and management; transversal skills – critical thinking, teamwork.	The project was implemented by Business Centre – Burgas Association and Integra Bulgaria Association with the financial support of Habitat for humanity – Bulgaria	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth
Students in grades 5 to 8, aged 12 – 15 years.	Participants in the project are 30 students, 30 parents and 10 teachers.	The target group is vulnerable students from two schools in two neighbourhoods in Burgas – Pobeda and Rudnik, with predominantly compact ethnic minority communities.
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach	Delivery mechanism	
Local initiative – implemented in two neighbourhoods in Burgas.	School-based delivered by external trainers/mentors.	
Summary		
<p>The project includes citizenship and entrepreneurship and financial literacy training delivered to school students through the international programme Aflatoun. The programme is based on experiential learning and contains the following key elements: self-awareness and self-knowledge; rights and responsibilities; saving and spending; planning and budgeting; social and financial entrepreneurship. As a result, students increase their motivation because they understand how valuable education is for their future development. They build basic skills for time management, goal setting and develop an understanding of opportunities to transform their communities and</p>		

59 In Bulgarian: „Да разчупим заедно кръга на бедността“. <https://www.facebook.com/pg/IntegraBulgariaAssoc/posts/>

60 This project is included into this thematic area, however, the educational programme also includes topics related to social innovation/entrepreneurship (author’s remark).

improve their personal lives.

The students also have the opportunity to generate an idea for social or financial entrepreneurship and to develop a business plan, under the mentorship of their teachers and trainers. The teachers also receive training how to introduce the program into the curriculum so that they can continue to deliver it at school.

Upper secondary level – 1st sub-level (Grades 8 – 10)

- Table 14. LifeChanger Project⁶¹

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Financial literacy.	Private	During each school year since 2014; six editions.
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills –planning and personal finance management, budgeting; transversal skills – goal setting, teamwork.	The project is implemented by JA Bulgaria in partnership with MetLife Bulgaria and is financially supported by MetLife Foundation as part of its regional initiative MetLife LifeChanger.	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth
Students aged 15 – 17 years – predominantly in grades 9 and 10.	During the different years of the project implementation the size of the target group has varied from 4 to 20 classes in up to 18 schools. The total number for the six years of implementation is 2446	In the first year of the project were involved 4 schools in vulnerable areas within Sofia municipality.
Scale of the initiative and geographic reach	Delivery mechanism	
In the first edition of the project (2014/2015 school year), 4 schools in Sofia were included. In the next editions the coverage has expanded to 18 schools in 6 cities – Sofia,	Educational programme delivered by MetLife volunteers in school.	

61 In Bulgarian: „Знания, които променят живота“. https://www.jabulgaria.org/category/projects/prikluchili_proekti

Plovdiv, Pazardzhik, Varna, Burgas, Vratsa

Summary

The LifeChanger project is implemented within the MetLife LifeChanger regional initiative. This initiative facilitates grants to JA member countries across Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa to provide entrepreneurship or financial literacy training to students in school or out-of school settings, host job-shadow days, financial workshops, and innovation camps.

In Bulgaria, the project was launched in 2014 and has already had six editions. It addresses the low level of financial literacy and skills of secondary school students, which has negative consequences for their future lives. Under the project was developed a hands-on educational programme on financial literacy for high school students. The programme includes 5 topics related to personal finance management: saving and investing, reasonable spending and credit decisions, insurance, personal and family budgets, personal goal setting. Each topic is delivered in two sessions by MetLife volunteers, who have attended training on how to deliver the programme. Students' knowledge and skills developed through the programme are measured by entry and exit testing. Other activities of the project include a budgeting competition and a financial camp as well as participation of student teams in JA Company Programme.

Upper secondary level – 2nd sub-level (Grades 11 – 12)

- Table 15. Project: “Be in class with the taxes” ⁶²

Thematic area/s or problems addressed	Funding	Time period
Financial literacy with focus on the tax and social security systems of the country as well as the functions of National Revenue Agency.	Public	During the school year – from 2013 to 2019, six editions.
Skills to be developed	Main partners	
Specific skills – taxes and insurance management; transversal skills – decision making, critical thinking; learning to learn and citizenship competences; digital skills.	The National Revenue Agency (NRA) in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science and Global Libraries – Bulgaria Programme (during the first year of the project)	
Target group age	Target group size	Vulnerable youth

62 In Bulgarian: „Влез в час с данъците“. <https://vlezvchas.bg>

School students aged 14 – 18 years.	From 2013 to 2019 over 70,000 were involved in the activities of the project – in-class sessions, online courses, games, competitions. Over 17,000 followers on the Facebook page of the initiative.	N/a
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Scale of the initiative and geographic reach	Delivery mechanism
National initiative. It started with 100 schools in the 28 regional cities and each year new schools joined the campaign.	A combination of in school face-to-face sessions during the so called hour of the class delivered by employees of the National Revenue Agency and videos on social networks with celebrities popular among the youth audience. A Facebook fan page was also a powerful channel for reaching and communicating with the young people. An internet educational platform with 20 video lessons was developed as well as short courses with tests checking the knowledge and skills acquired. Online games and contests with awards were also part of the campaign.

Summary

The project “Be in Class with Taxes” was launched as an educational campaign in 2013 – 2014 school year when 100 volunteer lecturers – employees of the National Revenue Agency, entered the classroom to discuss topics related to money, taxes and social security with high school students. The lecturers delivered presentations on the topics included in the educational programme. The aim of the presentations was to serve as a ground for discussion with the young people and encourage them to ask questions that are important for them – e.g. “When should we declare our income?”, “How will my health insurance rights be restored when I return to Bulgaria?”. During the first year of the campaign, the students from smaller towns could access the educational materials through the network of public libraries included in the Global Libraries – Bulgaria Programme. In the following years the educational programme was extended with video lessons

like – “VAT technologies”, “Types of taxes”, “Shadow economy”, “Functions of the NRA” etc. The students were challenged to test their knowledge after watching the video lesson thus taking part in an online game with awards.

Facebook was used as the main channel for communication with the young audience. They could find short articles and useful additional information on the Facebook page of the initiatives, while all the educational videos were posted on the YouTube channel of the NRA.

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