



Entrepreneurship Education in Germany – Brief Overview of German Specific Aspects in Entrepreneurship Education for the DESERVE Project

Abstract

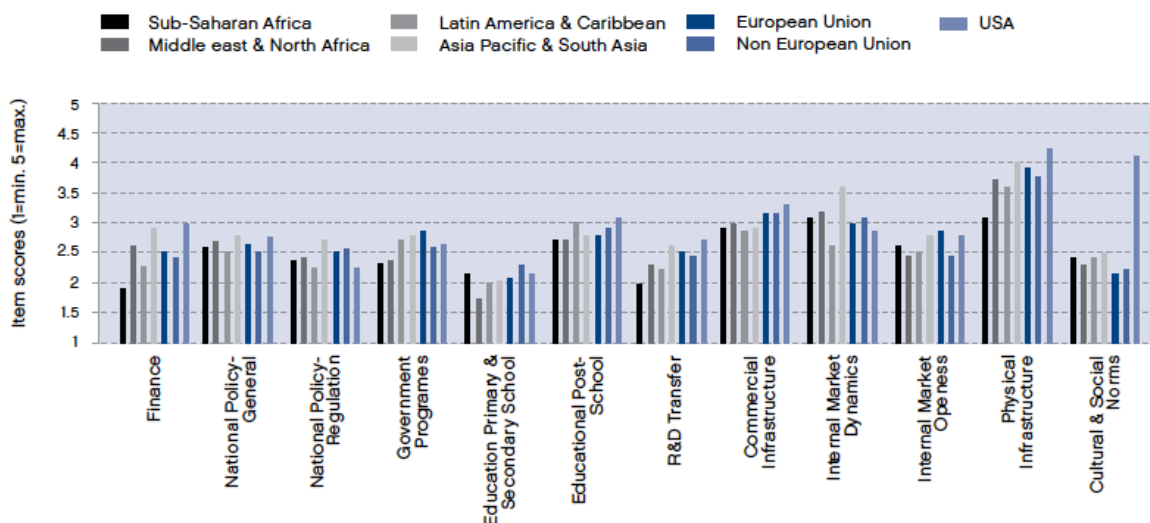
For the profile of the German Entrepreneurship Education the basic understanding is lined out. Within the documentation the missing of an institutionalized support framework is described as one of the critical aspects. We characterise entrepreneurship education within the vocational initial and continuous education and from the perspective of the students. The report ends with a brief profile of the situation of entrepreneurship education within the University of Cologne (as one of the project partners).

Aims of Entrepreneurship Education

The German situation of entrepreneurship education can be described as a very low institutionalized but as an on going discussed topic for general and vocational training. The aims for entrepreneurship education are ‘entrepreneurial thinking and acting’ as it is defined in the German idea of ‘unternehmerischer Kompetenz’. Therefore the aim is more broad and general in its understanding. Entrepreneurship Education tries to foster values and attitudes in combination with skills and knowledge that can be applied in founding an enterprise or for working with the same set of competence as an employee. So the understanding is general and tends more towards the combination of entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial aspects.

Critical aspect of German Entrepreneurship Education

One of the critical aspects, which is crucial for the further development of entrepreneurship education, is a missing institutional framework. Within the global entrepreneurship monitor (2012) the education in secondary and post secondary schools is rated within lower and middle ranks. Having a closer look on the German situation within the EU-countries the lack of an institutionalized strategy is evident.



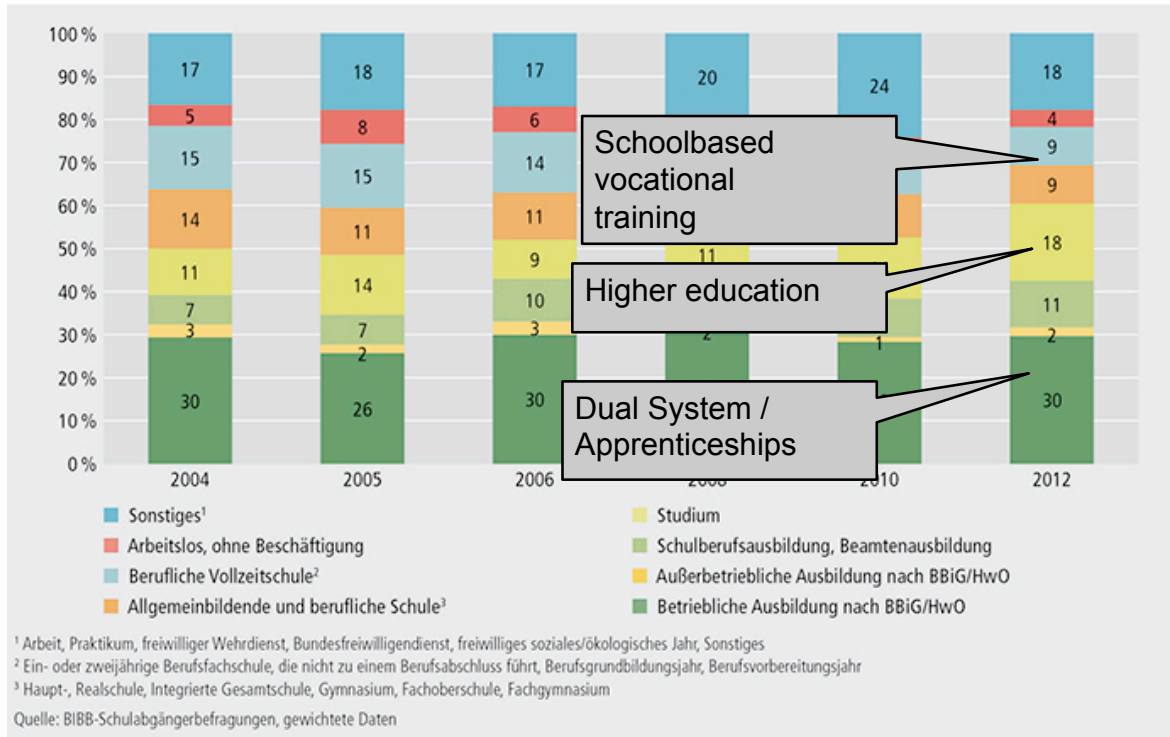
graphic 1: global entrepreneurship monitor 2012



But the importance of entrepreneurship education can still be described with the old phrase of H. Ford, who pointed out that the competitiveness of a country starts not in the production places or the research and development labs, but begins within the classrooms.

Entrepreneurship Education within the initial vocational training in Germany

Having a look on the career choices of general school graduates the initial vocational training within the dual system is chosen by the majority of students (in the years 2013 for the first time more general school graduates chose to start studying than the initial vocational training and is right now almost equal in numbers).



graphic 2: career choices of general school graduates (BiBB 2012)

Entrepreneurship Education in the initial vocational education within the Dual System

Within the Dual System aspects of entrepreneurship education can be found in the different curricula for the school-based and the company-based training. The overall intention for the vocational school part is to foster a global action competence within the profession. The main emphasis is on independent and self-responsible planning, acting and reflection. The goals are described mostly as outcomes for an employee. In specific training programs (e.g. retail) the competences for founding a company or working self-employed is integrated as optional modules. For the curricula in the companies the overall intention is to foster qualified professional abilities and experiences. There is no explicit definition of starting an own business but business related managing processes and competences needed for those processes are defined.

Entrepreneurship Education within full-time vocational school based trainings

For the program and the aims of full-time vocational school based training the situation in the different 'Laender' of the Federal Republic in Germany differs. In regard to North-Rhine-Westphalia the overall intention is the development of general competence in professional, social and private situations. Right now the curricula are reformed. In all defined professional areas (social, health, technical, business, agriculture, ...) one of the core processes is defined as "founding and managing an enterprise". For the core process

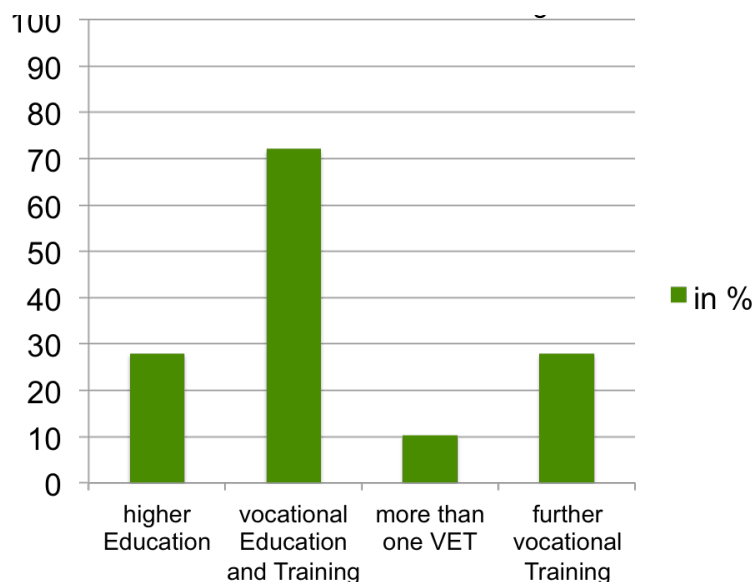


the requirements, specific goals and core concepts are defined. The curriculum aligns the general subjects and vocational subjects towards the defined core processes. In that understanding founding and managing a company becomes more relevant in comparison to the traditional curricula.

Entrepreneurship Education within further vocational education

Within certain further vocational education programs the foundation of a company is a major part of the further vocational training, especially in the craft sector. The overall intention is to find and manage a craft enterprise. In approximate 25 % of the curriculum the goals are defined around the spectrum of founding and managing a craft company. In the other parts the training of apprentices; craft specific working processes and customer-related processes are defined as basic parts.

Having a look at the educational background of enterprise founders in Germany there is not much data available. In one study the BiBB found that the majority of enterprise founders have a background in the initial and further vocational training.



graphic 3: Educational background of enterprise founders in Germany (Paulini Schlottau 2004)

Reasons for fostering entrepreneurship education in Germany

For entrepreneurship education in the German vocational education and training sector the institutionalization strategy is relatively new (since 2000). There is a comparably low structural framework for entrepreneurship education. The global entrepreneurship monitor sees Germany at one of the least developed countries in regard to the aspect of institutionalization of entrepreneurship education. There are frictions between the VET and future employment (regional considerations about youth unemployment rates and structural changes). On the other side, from the start on the vocational training makes use of professional and practical experience. Therefore there are learning and development opportunities for early adoption of an entrepreneurial mind-set. The reforms of outcome



respective competence orientation lead towards a clearer outline of aspects of entrepreneurial education in the certain vocational education and training programs in the initial and further training.

Entrepreneurship Education from the students' perspective

According to a study (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2007) there is only a little part of the student cohort who already has a defined will for founding a company. The vast majority has general but vague expectations in regard to entrepreneurial activities. The most influencing factors that determine the attitude towards the entrepreneurial mind-set are school background, entrepreneurial background in the family and migration background. The number three reasons pro entrepreneurial attitudes are:

- to realise own ideas
- to be one's own boss
- to be able to show individual capability

The main reasons against entrepreneurial attitudes are:

- the unpredictable economic situation
- the dynamic changes in the environment
- the high work load

In regard to participation in entrepreneurship education activities the students see motives in the participation in the action-based approaches used in entrepreneurship education, and its relevance for real world processes. The positive challenge and the team-based experience as well as the positive impacts on the own CV are further motives why students participate in entrepreneurship education activities. The hindering factors lay in the time constraints of the students and in alternative career options.

Entrepreneurship Education at the University of Cologne, school of business administration, economics and social science

On the university level there is a program with lectures in entrepreneurship, skill seminars, invitations of entrepreneurs and mentoring and scholarship programs. All the offered entrepreneurship activities are extra curricular and especially students who already have decided that they want to found a company benefit from those activities. In cooperation with regional entrepreneur development centres, consultancies and incubators are implemented to foster the entrepreneurial activities.

On the school level there are lectures and seminars with entrepreneurship contents, mainly in the profiling area of the study program, so students can chose entrepreneurship as profiling modules. Business plan seminars and business projects are part of specific programs on the master level.

Within the teacher training for vocational schools there is no explicit entrepreneurship education module. Within the teachers training the competence orientation is the basic pedagogical and didactical norm. In one didactic course the development of an entrepreneurship education approach was planned and prototyped by the students.