



ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ALBANIA

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February, 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report follows an exploratory investigation of the situation and policies relating to entrepreneurial learning in Albania, as part of ETF 2009 country activities. A research project on entrepreneurial learning has been set up in Albania, aiming to help the key country stakeholders to comprehend the challenges that the country is facing, particularly from the perspective of teaching and learning and the classroom. To reach that objective, a number of activities have been designed: an exploratory conference in May 2009 in Tirana with about 50 key country stakeholders, with a number of whom consultative meetings were held on two occasions (May and October 2009), a short teachers' survey and a concluding conference in December 2009. At a time when the subject has high priority on the European Union (EU) Lisbon Strategy agenda, this report provides an overview of the context against which the development of entrepreneurial learning will take place in this south eastern European country. It draws on analyses of a number of national strategic papers, but also on the policy dialogue with key stakeholders that has been implemented in the framework of research activity.

The report examines the broader context and nature of entrepreneurial learning as an innovation. The Albanian situation is described and gaps between 'what is' and 'what might be' are explored, before summarising policy issues that need to be addressed.

In **Chapter 1**, the background and rationale for entrepreneurial learning are explained, the lack of clarity about the concept of entrepreneurial learning in Albania is highlighted, and in particular the distinction between narrow and broad conceptions of entrepreneurial learning is emphasised.

The legal and institutional frameworks are explored in more detail and the challenges of policy coordination and implementation are noted in **Chapter 2**. Although they are

presented in the Albanian context, the symptoms are not unique. The 'implementation gap' which stems from the variety of policies in place, indistinguishable policy ownership and ongoing institutional capacity development are common issues in the domain of education and training.

Chapter 3 focuses on secondary school realities and entrepreneurial learning: restructuring, curriculum, classroom and pedagogy. It includes a case study of an entrepreneurial vocational school director and explores topics in different areas: vocational education and training (VET) policy, schools and teachers. There are pockets of entrepreneurial learning initiatives that need to be encouraged and spread.

Finally, in **Chapter 4**, the challenges of entrepreneurial learning as an innovation in Albanian VET policy are summarised as part of a broader shift in the provision of a more student-centred, 'real-life' community-based pedagogy and institutional reforms that pay attention to organisational culture as well as structure.

The report is significant in view of Albania's long-term ambition to better align its economy and education and training system with that of the EU. The complex nature of entrepreneurial learning in the framework of VET policy and the challenge of managing such a multi-level innovation are mapped, outlining the difficulties of achieving impact on teaching and learning in schools and training centres. To frame a concept of entrepreneurial learning for Albania, greater interministerial and institutional coordination and more decentralised adaptive governance are proposed. The intention is to provide insights to share with concerned EU Member States, donors and regional neighbours, but primarily it is for policy-makers and those who are responsible for entrepreneurial learning policy implementation in Albania.

1. CONTEXT FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Albania is travelling the road to EU accession. On 12 June 2006 the country signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, taking an important step towards integration. To advance further in the membership process, it should fulfil all obligations deriving from the SAA including:

- economic criteria, relating to a functioning market economy and the capacity to adjust to market forces within the Union;
- acceptance of Community *acquis* (body of EU law), taking on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

The Government of Albania has adopted a revised National Plan to implement the European Partnership priorities and the SAA, and as a potential candidate country is receiving EU support through the IPA¹ programme. As priorities relating to VET, the latest European Partnership² stresses the need for improvement of secondary education drop-out rates and the integration of employment and vocational training strategies into social, educational, enterprise and regional policies.

Many EU countries have started to define their own conceptual framework for entrepreneurship and to integrate it into their education strategies to guide the development of entrepreneurial learning in curricula, initial and continuing professional teacher education, school management and links with the business world and the community. As the EU 2020 agenda emphasises entrepreneurship and the role of creativity and innovation, European governments are increasingly integrating entrepreneurial learning into their strategic plans for the education sector. Entrepreneurial learning is one of eight key competences that have been outlined for achieving the Lisbon Strategy agenda. The EU has defined and emphasised the importance of entrepreneurial learning in its strategic documents. Thus, according to an EU definition (European Commission, 2004), entrepreneurship is the ability to:

- take initiatives oneself to induce changes;
- welcome, support and adapt to innovation brought about by external factors;
- take responsibility for one's actions, positive or negative;
- develop a strategic vision, set objectives and meet them;

- be motivated to succeed.

The EU's Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education is one of the most widely used guides for entrepreneurial learning policy-makers. The document makes recommendations under the following headings:

- framework for policy in relation to national strategy, steering groups, regional strategies, and coordinated evaluation at EU level;
- support to education institutions in reference to curriculum reform, cross-curricular entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial learning as a subject, new pedagogy for creativity and innovation, and common EU platforms for teaching materials;
- support to teachers and educators in relation to teacher education as models of interactive methods, funding for continuing professional development, mobility for teachers, etc.;
- entrepreneurship activities in schools and higher education to promote an entrepreneurial mindset from primary school onwards, build innovative pedagogies on pupil curiosity, etc.

All these are interrelated and subsume the problems, priorities and areas identified above. The reason why innovation is so complex is that strategies have to be developed in which all four aspects of improving entrepreneurial learning have to be worked on in a coherent and coordinated way and for a considerable time, perhaps even for a decade.

The education sectors are currently being encouraged to promote entrepreneurial learning as are all EU Member States following the Lisbon Strategy of 2000 'to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'. Key competences represent 'transferable, multifunctional packages of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment' (European Commission, 2004). An updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training adopted in Brussels in May 2009 mentioned that 'creativity and innovation are crucial to enterprise development and to Europe's ability to compete internationally. A first challenge is to promote the acquisition by all citizens of transversal key competences such as digital competence, learning to learn, a sense of initiative and

¹ The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, established by Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006, is the Community's financial instrument for the EU pre-accession process for the period 2007–13.

² Albania became a potential candidate country for EU accession following the Thessaloniki European Council of 19 and 20 June 2003. The EU and Albania signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement on 12 June 2006. On 18 February 2008 the Council adopted a new European Partnership with Albania.

entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness' (Council of the European Union, 2009). Accession to the EU is becoming an important driver of policy across all sectors in Albania and the espousal of entrepreneurial learning is one small but significant piece in the EU accession jigsaw. It is particularly important in the agenda of creativity and innovation as it is central to the Lisbon Strategy and spans three key ministries – education, labour and economy.

As in many countries, increased competitiveness in Albania arising from more open trade systems and growing market uncertainty are having a knock-on effect on enterprise performance and employment. This is particularly important for a country that has experienced remarkable levels of economic growth in the last decade³. Doing business is becoming easier. In *Doing Business 2009* Albania ranked 86th out of 181 economies, which represents a significant step ahead compared with its 135th position the previous year (World Bank, 2008a). Albania has been the fastest improver in south eastern Europe. Starting a Business, and Ease of Doing Business sub-indices show Albania partly ahead of neighbouring countries. On the Employing Workers sub-index Albania finds itself in 108th position only. The number of active businesses is growing every year. The private sector is estimated to contribute 75% of the total GDP (EBRD, 2006) and to employ over 80% of the total labour force (World Bank, 2006a). An analysis of newly registered enterprises by size shows that enterprises with one to four employees are dominating (98.5%)⁴. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) employing up to 80 workers constitute more than 99% of all active enterprises. About one-third of employees work in family businesses and many face barriers to growth, which in turn inhibits their contribution to job creation.

In 2006 and 2007 Albania took part in the assessment carried out for the European Charter for Small Enterprises. In the framework of the regional assessment, the ETF supported the development of the methodology and in particular two of the Charter's 10 policy dimensions which are relevant to entrepreneurial learning: education and training for entrepreneurship; and availability of skills. Albania was assessed in relation to other countries in the region using the SME Policy Index 2009⁵, which is a common framework for evaluation consisting of a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators that show performance on critical components of each policy dimension on a scale from 1 to 5 (weaker to stronger).

The SME Policy Index 2009 assesses Albania with an overall score of 2.25 on the Education and Training for Entrepreneurship policy dimension, which includes different aspects of policy, status of organisation, key competence and learning environment for lower and upper secondary levels, as well as good practices and non-formal learning (see **TABLE 1.1**). In relation to the

Availability of Skills policy dimension, which includes training needs analysis, quality assurance, access to training, start-ups and enterprise growth (see **TABLE 1.2**), Albania was assessed with an overall score of 2. Both these policy dimensions are considered crucial for promoting entrepreneurial skills for an effective enterprise environment.

Further, the report notes that a range of stakeholders is engaged in direct policy dialogue and perspective-setting for entrepreneurial learning. It recommends more systematic lifelong entrepreneurial learning, more developed engagement and ownership of the process by the education authorities, more structured and recognised stakeholder partnership, a proactive knowledge sharing between education and training practitioners and a more structured and systematic intelligence framework to bring forward enterprise training. This would additionally make way for a less project-driven environment (OECD et al., 2009, p. 192).

To support the assessment process of the European Charter for Small Enterprises, the ETF conducted its own study in secondary vocational schools and higher education (ETF and HDPC, 2007), focusing on two of the eight Lisbon Key Competences – learning to learn and entrepreneurial learning – and using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The qualitative analysis was conducted in schools and universities through focus-group discussions and individual face-to-face interviews. The quantitative analysis was based on a questionnaire survey of students and teachers at both education levels. In addition, national policies and institutional capacity for curriculum reform and teacher training were examined, as well as relevant national and international reports and other documents relating to learning to learn and entrepreneurial learning. The analysis concluded that entrepreneurial learning is at its initial stage in Albania due to the limited inclusion of entrepreneurship knowledge in the formal education system, inadequate teacher awareness of entrepreneurial learning and lack of relevant training. Ineffective teaching methods based on one-way, teacher to student 'talk and chalk', presentation of isolated theory and facts not linked with knowledge and examples from everyday life contribute to an inadequate learning environment and hinder entrepreneurial learning.

Education in Albania is increasingly seen as a means of supporting enterprises and workers to face both more open competition and the economic downturn and also to boost prosperity, growth and jobs. For a decade now, VET has been one of the key areas on which government policies have been focused. In 2002 Albania approved its first VET legislation, aiming to bring sustainability to VET policy in the country. Institutional development took place in order to support expansion of an innovative and competitive labour force⁶, and there are already visible results of these efforts.

³ Officially estimated real GDP growth rates averaged 7% a year during 1998–2008, which is the highest in the region, and with a GDP per capita of USD 4 073 (EUR 2 785) in 2008, Albania acquired lower middle-income country status.

⁴ See INSTAT: www.instat.gov.al/ → Economic indicators → Business register.

⁵ The SME Policy Index is structured around the 10 policy dimensions covered by the European Charter for Small Enterprises: education and training for entrepreneurship; cheaper and faster start-up; better legislation and regulation; availability of skills; improving online access; getting more out of the single market; taxation and financial matters; strengthening the technological capacity of small enterprises; successful e-business models and top-class business support; and developing stronger, more effective representation of small enterprises' interests.

⁶ The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) became operational in March 2007.

TABLE 1.1 SCORES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Kosovo ⁷	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Policy	2	1.75	3	2.75	2.25	3.25	2
■ Partnership	2	2	4	3	2	4	2
■ Support resources	2	2	3	3	2.5	3.5	2
■ Elaboration process	2	2	2.5	3	2	3.5	1.5
■ Monitoring and evaluation	2	1	2	2	2	1.5	2
Lower secondary	2.25	1.5	2.75	2.25	2	2.75	1.75
■ Organisation	2	2	2.5	2	2	3	2
■ Key competence	3	1.5	3	2.5	2	2	2
■ Learning environment	2	1	2.5	2	2	3	1.5
Upper secondary	2	2.5	3.25	2.5	3.25	2	2.5
■ Organisation	2	3	3.5	2.5	4	2	3
■ Key competence	2	2.5	3	3	4	2	2.5
■ Learning environment	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
Good practices	2	1.5	4	4	3	4	3
Non-formal learning	3	1.5	4.5	2	1.5	2	1.5
Overall weighted average	2.25	1.75	3.25	2.5	2.5	2.75	2

Source: OECD et al., 2009

TABLE 1.2 SCORES IN AVAILABILITY OF SKILLS

	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Kosovo	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Training needs analysis	2	1.5	2.5	2.5	1.5	2.5	2.5
Quality assurance	2	2	3.5	2	2.5	1	3
Access to training	1	2.5	4	1	3	1	3
Start-ups	2	1	2.5	1	2	1.5	3
Enterprise growth	2	1.5	3.5	2	2	1.5	3
Overall weighted average	2	1.75	3	2	2	1.75	2.75

Source: OECD et al., 2009

Opportunities have been created with the introduction of a new structure for initial VET (2+1+1) and a two-level curriculum framework for VET profiles. In March 2010, legislation on the Albanian Qualifications Framework (AQF) was adopted. In general, the reform of education and VET to support the development of the economy and society is advancing; and links between education and the labour market are improving. Certainly these reforms contribute directly to improving conditions for entrepreneurial learning in VET.

There is a strategic framework in Albania to pave the way for VET development. The rationale is that the public policies shaped in different legislation and strategies become instruments for reinforcing the development. However, at present different policy initiatives are being taken on board and their implementation often becomes too excessive to cope with. This can risk the neglect of perhaps the most important aspect of VET objectives – the development of a labour force for competitive and innovative business. Although the terms creativity and innovation are more widely accepted, there is little evidence that the concept of entrepreneurial learning has generally entered professional discourse beyond a small group of VET experts involved in an entrepreneurial learning curriculum initiative. Even in cases when knowledge and deeper understanding of entrepreneurial learning are present, two main perceptions compete:

- narrow perception, where entrepreneurship is perceived as the knowledge required to start and run a business that can be learned by introducing relevant subject content into the curriculum;
- broader perception, where entrepreneurship is seen as a mindset developed through a 'real-life' experiential, problem-based approach to learning that requires both 'hard' technical knowledge and skills, and the 'soft' skills related to the confidence to take initiatives, face risks and achieve success during life as well as in business enterprise.

These challenges emerging from the entrepreneurial learning concept are evident in discussions about curriculum content, methodology, qualification of teachers and school culture. Entrepreneurial learning does not feature overtly in the general policy dialogue in Albania and there is a gap in terms of common and agreed understanding about entrepreneurial learning. A solid conceptual framework for entrepreneurial learning is lacking, as well as a coherent strategic framework. On a positive note, the reference documents supporting the Albanian authorities in the development of entrepreneurial learning are those from the EU. Nevertheless, building and introducing the entrepreneurial learning concept into the Albanian VET policy framework is important, and key to promoting shared understanding among stakeholders. The discussion presented in this report should be seen in that perspective.

2. POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

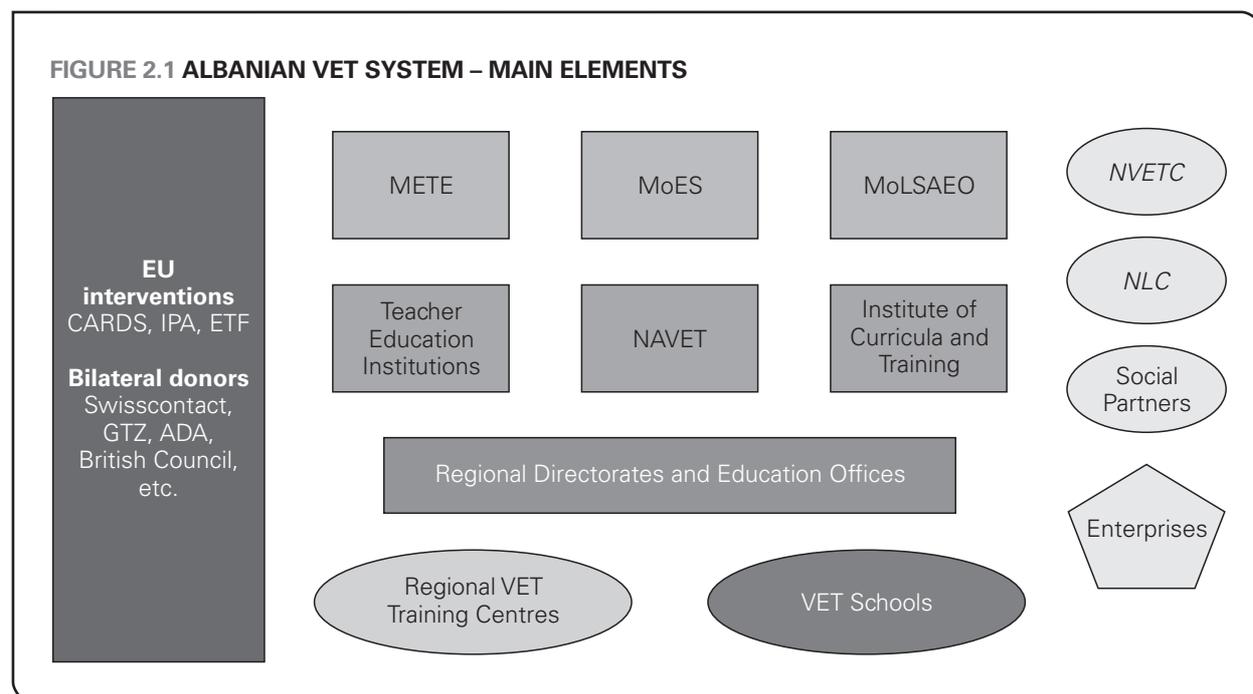
The SME Policy Index 2007 report notes the key challenge that 'entrepreneurship learning does not have a clearly defined policy home. Policy interest is spread across education, labour and economy ministries, in particular where both sides of industry need to be fully engaged. Strategic developments therefore require concerted policy co-ordination and consensus'. In addition, the countries in the region 'rely heavily on donor support, with the result that most entrepreneurship learning is not subject to assessment and is rarely mainstreamed into the existing curriculum. There is the added risk of lack of sustainability upon withdrawal of donor interest' (OECD and European Commission, 2007, p. 50). These observations relating to entrepreneurial learning apply also to Albania. However, in the course of 2009 and 2010 important developments at policy and strategy levels took place that are expected to have a favourable impact on entrepreneurial learning, particularly developments relating to VET.

The main elements of the Albanian VET system are illustrated in **FIGURE 2.1**. They comprise the policy-making ministries and advisory bodies, the administrative institutions, the institutions that develop teachers, curricula and standards and those where the students learn.

The **Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)** is responsible for educational policies and managing the education system. There are two main subordinate institutions, both of which are showing a greater awareness of the need to orient teachers' continuing professional development and students' learning outcomes towards entrepreneurial learning.

- The **Institute of Curricula and Training** was established in 2003 to develop pre-university curricula for general and vocational (academic courses) schools and for the continuing professional development and qualification of all pre-university teachers (including vocational education teachers). Its national responsibility for standards and content makes it of central importance if a mindset of entrepreneurship is to spread across the different levels of the education system.
- The **National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET)**, established in December 2006, is responsible for developing occupational and vocational qualifications, curricula, VET teacher-training standards, accreditation of VET providers, designing student assessment standards and certificates and therefore also has a crucial role in introducing entrepreneurship to teaching and learning in VET.

FIGURE 2.1 ALBANIAN VET SYSTEM – MAIN ELEMENTS



Some 12 regional education directorates and 24 educational offices throughout the country are responsible for implementing education policies at regional and local levels through monitoring, inspecting and supporting pre-university schools (including vocational schools). They also have an important role in training/advising teachers (including advice about entrepreneurial learning methods and pedagogy). Entrepreneurial learning has not yet featured prominently in continuing professional development and the existing cadre of available trainers is small and unfamiliar with current approaches. With the exception of donor projects, there are no funds for outside experts, even for training. Budgets are centrally controlled, leading to inflexibility. Inspection is largely focused on content rather than pedagogy and inspectors, especially in VET, often lack specialised content knowledge.

The **Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO)** develops policies and legislation in the areas of employment, labour environment and vocational training. The ministry is also responsible for the regional vocational training centres (VTCs) and for licensing and monitoring the activity of private vocational institutes.

In terms of social partnership it is important to point out that the **National Labour Council (NLC)** and the **National Vocational Education and Training Council (NVETC)** are two key players in VET reform in Albania. The National Labour Council provides recommendations on human resources development and is the advisory body to MoLSAEO. The National Vocational Education and Training Council is co-chaired by MoES and MoLSAEO and advises on VET policies and strategies, accreditation and assessment, curricula development, professional standards and VET financing. Some donor-supported initiatives that have entrepreneurial learning-related modules are under way in the vocational training centres but they do not involve pedagogic training for instructors. There appears to be no connection or dialogue between the vocational training centres and vocational schools, even in the shared use of premises. This can be seen as a lost opportunity for synergy.

The **Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy (METE)** coordinates and monitors the implementation of the European Charter for Small Enterprises. METE has designed the strategic programme of SME development 2007–09, in which promoting an entrepreneurial culture is advocated by means of:

- improving management and training skills by analysing curricula relating to entrepreneurship at all education levels, developing programmes for introducing entrepreneurial learning in formal education and into vocational courses and training programmes for young people, including new graduates and the unemployed;

- increasing labour force skills by periodical analysis of training needs and design of training programmes, including modules on entrepreneurship.

In 2008 four working groups⁸ were established by METE composed of key actors from MoES, MoLSAEO, universities and AlInvest business and investment services. They aim to develop a strategic entrepreneurial learning paper covering legislation and institutional framework, initiatives and actual projects, possible donors, studies and specific analysis and information on good practices from other European and western countries. The recent preoccupation with major structural reforms has distracted attention from entrepreneurial learning. Nevertheless the strategic paper on entrepreneurial learning from the interministerial working group is awaited⁹. It is expected that the paper will address the 'gaps' in policy ownership, coordination and implementation of entrepreneurial learning. In addition, it should accelerate the debate and raise stakeholder awareness and understanding of the broad concept of entrepreneurial learning, and clearly define the key actors and institutions and their roles in monitoring and evaluating entrepreneurial learning in order to ensure implementation and institutionalisation of related change.

Albanian vocational education and training is based on two main pieces of legislation – Law No 7952 on Pre-University Education System of 21 June 1995, and Law No 8872 for Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Albania of 29 March 2002 which has significantly contributed to further support development of entrepreneurial learning. Since its approval in 2002, this legislation has played an important role in steering VET development. Implementation has revealed the need for a new boost to Albanian VET systems and since 2009 the legislation is being revised. Amendments have been proposed on the definitions of formal, informal and non-formal systems, student, teacher, social partner, etc. For example, the student concept is now much closer to the notion of learner, referring to 'a person who receives training in the formal, non-formal and informal system'. An important distinction is made in the new draft VET legislation between teacher and instructor, in which instructor is concerned with the practical aspects of training including training in enterprises¹⁰.

Several related by-laws (decisions of the Council of Ministers, ministerial orders and administrative guidelines, internal regulations, etc.) complement and support the implementation of the above-mentioned laws. The normative package approved by MoES is the basic guidance document for education at school level. Recent work on the renewal of the national qualifications framework has encompassed the development of lifelong learning opportunities for Albanian citizens. The AQF was ratified by Parliament in March 2010 (Law No 10 247). It is clearly stated that this exercise should 'make clear the relevance of qualifications to employment and learning, meeting the needs of learners, the economy and

⁸ Entrepreneurial learning in nine-year education; entrepreneurial learning in secondary education; entrepreneurial learning in higher education; and entrepreneurial learning in informal education.

⁹ In September 2010, the draft paper was under consideration.

¹⁰ Some amendments to this law have been finalised recently by MoES and were waiting for approval at the time of writing (June 2010).

education and training institutions'. The main responsibility for implementing the AQF lies with MoES and MoLSAEO, and it is regarded as a tool that will provide mobility between different levels of education, incorporating a framework for lifelong learning.

Since it was set up in 2006, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training has become an important player in VET reform in Albania, key issues being the development of VET qualifications and VET curriculum related to the current situation of professions. NAVET is also responsible for the development of VET profiles in accordance with the country's economic development, thus it is interested in cooperating with business. Twenty-one new framework curricula have been developed by NAVET with representatives from the private sector to support the renewal of the respective VET profiles. The new VET curricula introduced the principle of gradual specialisation, where over the years the percentage of general education content (70% in the first year) is gradually lowered in favour of vocational content. Each vocational qualification has a framework curriculum, as a basis for further development by every vocational school of detailed programmes for each theoretical subject as well as a practical module. Vocational schools will have more autonomy to introduce new content and new teaching and learning approaches.

The new VET framework curriculum, a milestone in encouraging better entrepreneurial learning, will have a long-term impact on knowledge and skills in Albania. In addition, the new AQF legislation, including ongoing VET reform, supports the aim of creating new pedagogical environments to promote self-directed learning based on the needs, capacities and goals of the individual learner.

The predominance of SMEs in the economy demands entrepreneurial flexibility, and there is a growing pressure for multi-skilling, where a combination of different qualifications or a combination of specific skills from a variety of qualifications is required from staff, leading to the emergence of new occupations. This is especially true of small and micro enterprises with limited personnel and of small family businesses. Very few companies can absorb more than one or two trainees at a time and introducing VET policies, where lengthy attendance to acquire practical work experience in enterprises is required, would be problematic. Therefore, the challenge of finding enterprise-based learning needs to be carefully and gradually addressed.

The VET-related strategic framework and legislation similarly makes no distinction between entrepreneurship and other core areas of education and training. Although there is an orientation towards 'establishing links between vocational schools/training centres and local business/enterprises', a common view within the education system is that there is a persistent implementation gap between the legislation, policies and enforcement in practice. In Albania, as in south eastern Europe as a whole, when it comes to entrepreneurial learning, there is poor coordination between the three main ministries – MoES, MoLSAEO and METE. Although they all have a good reputation in drafting policies and legislation, ensuring effective implementation remains a problem. Interministerial cooperation in entrepreneurial learning is also hampered by financial obstacles; and in addition to the implementation gap there is an ownership gap, which makes coordination at policy level a challenging exercise.

3. ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: RESTRUCTURED SCHOOLING, BUT WHAT ABOUT REINVENTING THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS?

3.1 POCKETS OF INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY: ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING AS PART OF DAILY CULTURE

Various projects have featured school-based initiatives including fairs and exhibitions of students' work, website design for local businesses, fund-raising for charity and school needs, and establishing and operating fast-food corners in the school.

As an example, MoES is encouraging Pupils' Company's activities in secondary schools. Some secondary schools have established companies within the schools themselves for pupils to manage and deliver products or services as a way of acquiring knowledge of businesses, entrepreneurship and the world of work with the help of teachers and advisors from private business. The Pupils' Company serves clients (school pupils or local communities) and usually lasts for six to nine weeks. Through participation in these activities the pupils are encouraged to develop creative thinking, learn entrepreneurial skills and explore their talents in relation to choosing a future education and career. The most active pupils have participated in exchange programmes covering similar activities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Hungary.

METE encourages a project consisting of a computer simulation game through which eight companies 'owned' by pupils compete with each other in marketing their products. The students learn to face competition, maintain or increase their profits, increase their sales and market share, decide on product prices, define production levels, plan the budget for marketing, research and development, make capital investments, and read and interpret financial reports.

As with skills development, establishing functional relations between education and training providers and the world of work is one of the best ways to develop a real entrepreneurial culture in vocational schools (see **BOX 3.1** as an example of this type of relation). VET legislation and a number of by-laws have attempted to institutionalise and functionalise such important relations between the world of work and VET. Some schools, such

as the vocational school in Shkozet and the Hotel & Tourism High School of Tirana, have succeeded in establishing genuine relations with local business to the benefit of both teachers and students. But in most vocational schools and training centres this has been very difficult to achieve.

With the support of GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) and the former Institute of Pedagogical Studies (1998), the staff of the technical school in Shkodra developed a particular subject attempting to 'integrate' the economic content (expenses, costs, profits, etc.) with the technical content (work procedures and products) of the electro-technical branch. Although the idea behind this initiative was based on the broad concept of entrepreneurial learning, in practice it did not achieve positive results due to low teacher competence, lack of preparation and an inappropriate learning environment.

Attempts have been made to introduce entrepreneurial modules, both in vocational schools and vocational training centres. During the period 1998–2000, the agricultural schools of Lezha and Shkodra, supported by an EU Phare project, introduced a modular curriculum to develop students' managerial and economic knowledge and skills. The modules consisted of agricultural systems, agricultural policy, basic financial recording, cereal enterprise management, farm planning, case studies in agricultural industry, and introduction to agricultural marketing. Related entrepreneurial content such as personal effectiveness, personal development, problem-solving, work experience, and project work failed to be implemented due to the lack of teaching skills and poor school conditions. A five-lesson module on organisation, legislation and economy was also introduced in some short Albanian vocational courses for adults with the assistance of Swisscontact. However, the implementation of these modules and subjects are facing the same problems as the other cases mentioned above.

The approach of the 'training or learning office' is applied in most Albanian vocational economics schools. Teachers are trained and schools are equipped with the necessary equipment and materials for the practical part of the curriculum. The main aim is to establish a simulated professional environment that allows students to practice professional techniques, processes and behaviours, similar to the real professional environment.

BOX 3.1 COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE IN TIRANA

The Municipality of Tirana illustrates how local initiative and enthusiasm, in this case backed by the dynamic leadership and culture created by the mayor, can provide the impetus towards entrepreneurial learning in non-formal education. The municipality is developing a Community and Business Development Centre that will activate the self-organising youth network of secondary-school students that is already part of an expanding social network and benefits from summer schools held for the past six years. The young and dynamic staff of the municipality show how, when responsibilities are decentralised, an entrepreneurial culture can encourage entrepreneurial learning and recreate community spirit based on interpersonal networks and trust, free from the bureaucratic formalities that characterise national ministerial affairs. There appears to be very little dialogue between the municipality and the ministries that would produce synergy in broadening the enterprise shown at local level.

It is important to note that the Youth Empowerment through Community Development initiative will support the development of young people's entrepreneurial spirit. The major objective is to work with disadvantaged youth and youth groups, to help them to access education, employment and community decision making, and become active citizens. Major activities are capacity building for youth through life skill and employment skill training, provision of seed micro-grants to youth groups, grants of up to USD 2 500 to support entrepreneurial activities, promotion of youth inclusion in community decision making and leadership through grant support for youth-identified community development activities*.

www.tirana.gov.al

(* For more information on Youth Empowerment through Community Development, see World Bank, 2008b)

It seems that the teaching and learning process is affected by this approach, rather than the curriculum content. An international network (ECO-NET) of such 'training offices' has also been established. Although this type of virtual business is far from real business, it has a very positive effect in developing the entrepreneurial behaviour of both teachers and students. Another donor project implemented by KulturKontakt Austria has promoted the introduction of 'training firms' in hotel-tourism and agribusiness schools in Albania. The teachers are trained and the schools are also supported to establish the necessary conditions for the implementation of this concept. The hotel education sector is engaged in an international network (TUR-NET) of training firms, similar to that of economic education.

USAID, through the Junior Achievement Enterprise Education programme, has supported the establishment of so-called real firms in Albanian general secondary schools to develop the decision-making skills of students through their involvement in a 'real business' event, where they can win or lose. The project proved to be unsustainable. The Swiss project in VET, in close cooperation with the former Institute of Pedagogical Studies, also designed and implemented a broad in-service training programme (three levels and modular-based) for vocational teachers. Some modules of this training programme cover skills associated with entrepreneurial learning (problem-solving, teamwork and conflict management).

In order to attract more students from rural areas to attend agricultural schools, MoES decided to transform three traditional agricultural profiles (plant production, husbandry and agricultural machinery) into a broader programme entitled Agribusiness, followed by curricular

changes. The new branch is less focused on traditional agricultural skills and work processes and products and gives more space to theoretical and practical subjects covering agricultural business-related issues (management, economy and marketing)¹¹.

The Career and Life Skills programme for the 11th and 12th classes of general secondary schools aims to develop students' abilities to explore their career opportunities and evaluate their own talents and interests in order to decide on future education, training or employment and to become a capable member of society. The curriculum is structured around three core areas:

- career knowledge – related to the development of abilities to understand the labour market and the opportunities for continuing qualification and training as a precondition to achieve a well-considered decision;
- self-evaluation – related to the development of abilities to judge and prepare the decisions by taking into account the impact of the environment;
- planning and decision making – related to the development of students' capabilities to design and adjust plans to meet the demands of change and transition in career.

Through formal education the aim is to increase students' capabilities and individual entrepreneurial skills, their understanding of the entrepreneurial decision-making process, their capacity for planning to be entrepreneurs, and finally to practise entrepreneurial learning and skills through practical work in school and community-based activities. This new programme involves certificates for students for engaging in community and practical activities, and also advocates a school business

11 For more information, see Oldroyd and Nielsen (2010) on the Albanian agribusiness school in Korça.

competition in which all secondary school students turn ideas into products and market them. However, the outcomes should be monitored in order to measure the level of success. In general, teachers are reluctant to organise competitive activities although there are good examples in some general secondary schools.

In addition to this initiative, entrepreneurial skills feature in other compulsory subjects such as economics, which provide theoretical knowledge on entrepreneurship and encourage students to do practical work that promotes creativity and innovation, initiative and teamwork. Additional entrepreneurial learning can also be found in optional subjects with a vocational profile and through extra-curricular activities organised in the school and community. The EU CARDS-VET programme has tried to introduce aspects of entrepreneurial learning in the VET sector through three main interventions.

- Curriculum development: all the curricula developed for several vocational education profiles contain a specific subject – organisation, legislation and economy (see below) – which deals with traditional business issues, management, accounting and similar topics.
- Teacher and school director training: teachers and instructors are trained in teaching and learning methodologies that promote entrepreneurial skills and attitudes of students; and school principals are trained to introduce entrepreneurial aspects in the school management and administration.
- Links with enterprises: vocational schools and training centres are encouraged to establish links with local business and to benefit from their entrepreneurial culture.

'Organisation, legislation and economy', a programme of 150 lessons in the last years of schooling in all vocational profiles, is related to entrepreneurial learning. It is based on the narrow definition of entrepreneurship and aims at improving students' knowledge of organisational, legal and economic aspects related to their future occupation. The subject is uniform for all vocational profiles although necessary adaptations should be made for each profile. The impact of this programme in developing entrepreneurial spirit or skills of vocational students is limited. It is essentially theoretical and is *about* entrepreneurial learning and not *for* entrepreneurial learning in the sense of developing skills, mindset or the confidence that is gained from experiential learning.

3.2 CURRICULUM AND TEACHERS: A BROAD MODEL FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING AND NEED FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Classroom observation of teaching and learning processes and pedagogy that nurture an entrepreneurial spirit is an

important approach to understanding and promoting entrepreneurship education. A study financed by the World Bank and conducted jointly with MoES in 2007 addressed the issue of what was happening in this respect in secondary education classrooms (Sahlberg and Boce, 2009). Data were collected through classroom observations from 34 randomly selected secondary schools, representing about 10% of all Albanian upper secondary schools. The findings suggest that teaching in Albanian secondary schools is dominated by teachers' talk, while students play a very passive role. The study concluded that teachers talk for more than 70% of lesson time. In a typical 45-minute lesson teachers' talk occupies 32 minutes, students' responses to teachers' questions 10 minutes, and only 30 seconds are available for students' talk on their own initiative.

Teachers were observed to teach the same way throughout Albania; the interaction patterns observed in the classrooms are consistent across the different schools and regions. Teachers teach in a similar way regardless of the size of the classrooms. Classes are large, on average about 38 students, and very often have traditional column-and-row seating. Many of them have chronic discipline problems and there appears to be little student motivation to learn productively (Sahlberg and Boce, 2009). This also applies to vocational schools that are part of the secondary education system. These shortcomings are not new. Efforts to change the teaching and learning processes in the classrooms have been under way for at least 20 years, and this paradox is common in the world of education reform.

It is important to note that in the framework of this ETF exploratory investigation of entrepreneurial learning in Albania, a short teachers' survey has been implemented. The target group was composed of 30 teachers: six teachers in five secondary schools (three general secondary schools and two VET secondary schools) randomly selected male and female up to mid-career (age 40 maximum) in different regions of Albania. With a very simple questionnaire and face-to-face interviews, the teachers' perception was sampled on the following issues:

- entrepreneurial learning as a concept;
- the extent to which entrepreneurial learning features in their school;
- their professional development experience and needs relating to entrepreneurial learning;
- their preference for providers of such training.

It is relevant that about 80% of the interviewed teachers associate the entrepreneurial learning concept with students' ability to become problem-solvers. The detailed statistical results of the findings are presented in the annex.

The new structure of the vocational system operates with a two-level curriculum: a framework curriculum decided at the central level and a school-curriculum element that allows flexibility in content and method and easier adaptation locally. About 21 broad vocational qualifications (branches) at the first level were introduced in Albanian

vocational schools starting from the academic year 2009/10. Each vocational qualification is to have a framework curriculum as a basis for further development of detailed programmes for each vocational theoretical subject, as well as a practical module by every vocational school. Thus vocational schools will have more flexibility to introduce new contents and new teaching and learning approaches. This could encourage a new entrepreneurial culture in schools.

Each framework curriculum description states that the vocational schools must support students 'to develop intellectual and professional curiosity, entrepreneurial abilities and moral values', and a learning outcome must be that students 'show courage and entrepreneurial abilities necessary for his/her future life'. One guide on teaching methods states that 'team work and project work should be the two main forms of theoretical and practical instruction, in order to better develop key competences necessary for solving professional and life problems of the students'. Also, most of the practical module descriptors that are part of the framework curriculum for each qualification recommend that 'the module should be implemented in the school workshop or possibly, in the real working conditions of local businesses'.

A common feature of curriculum reform is that changes of programme content are not accompanied by training teachers to use the new methods of promoting learning. Entrepreneurial learning in particular requires a shift to problem-based, student-centred problem-solving and creative risk-taking which are not encouraged by

traditional teacher-centred approaches in the classroom or workshop. Recognising the lack of pedagogical preparation for implementing the new programme, the Institute for Curricula and Teachers is drafting a teachers' guide on how to teach life and career education. It will provide definitions of the main concepts, recommendations about the teaching methodology and models of worksheets for students.

School directors and their deputies are required to conduct teacher evaluation, including classroom observation, but this seems to be rarely implemented in a way that provides feedback and support for improving teaching methods. School-based staff development has proved effective in many countries where senior staff have responsibility for leading it, but only in exceptional circumstances in Albania, for example where a school director was doing a Master's degree in professional development, is this relatively low-cost, high-impact approach evident. More flexibility over school budgets would be needed if school-based staff development is to become more widely used to promote entrepreneurial learning and other school improvements.

These significant pockets of innovation in Albania, including deep structural ongoing changes in the VET system, are not enough to bring about transformation in the culture of schools that seems so important if entrepreneurial learning is to be realised. An entrepreneurial culture is very much a product of leadership that is pro-active in setting an example. The case study on the director of an Albanian vocational

BOX 3.2 ENTREPRENEURIAL DIRECTOR OF AN ALBANIAN VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

This vocational school in Albania, like other vocational schools, has an intake of mostly male students who achieved low marks in basic school. Currently the school offers male students courses in construction-related professions: masonry, carpentry, plumbing, as well as auto-mechanics and tailoring. The school director is a lively, outgoing person who has used considerable initiative and has successfully lobbied MoES to renovate the dilapidated school premises and to a four-storey extension to the school that will leave the old sports hall free for adaptation for entrepreneurial learning and enterprise activities.

The school director sees an opportunity for boosting entrepreneurial learning in the school by converting the spare sports hall into a typographic workshop and developing a programme based on the 'real-life' problem-based learning challenge of setting up a business to publish textbooks and learning materials, covering up to 80 of the 300 professional specialisms taught in Albanian vocational schools that have too few students to attract commercial publishers. In addition to the boost to the students' motivation to be engaging in a genuine and useful 'real-life' enterprise, an added benefit would be the generation of supplementary income that the school could feed into its other programmes and the upgrading of the school premises. There would be no unfair competition with commercial printing firms, which themselves would benefit from better-qualified typographers graduating from the school.

The challenge of being involved in this creative initiative would also encourage an entrepreneurial spirit among the students in a country whose economic development is largely based on SMEs. Also the VET system's pressing need for up-to-date learning materials would finally be addressed. The school director also sees opportunities for engaging his construction and carpentry students in providing much-needed renovation services to other cash-strapped vocational schools. The centralised procurement system of equipment at public schools, including inflexible budget regulations, gives little scope for autonomous initiatives of this sort, perhaps reflecting an absence of trust between the system administrators and school staff. This vignette illustrates how entrepreneurial learning requires innovation and flexibility from school directors and the educational administration at system level as well as from students. The question remains – how to work out this paradox?

school who is creating an entrepreneurial culture illustrates this (see **BOX 3.2**).

Despite such unusual leadership, there are still many barriers to implementing the complex process of entrepreneurial learning innovation:

- a low level of school independence in making decisions that could bring about transformation, particularly valid for vocational schools;
- a culture of excessive central control and over-regulation that limits creativity and/or is used as an excuse not to incorporate innovation in daily school practices;
- risk-averse, passive leadership lacking in initiative;
- teachers not trained or ready to provide formal or extra-curricular entrepreneurial learning;
- little capacity for school-based professional development;
- weak links between schools and businesses and communities;
- poor and under-equipped facilities for entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial activity.

All in all, the general observation is that in vocational schools the lack of incentives seems to discourage 'real-life' production and service activities of the type envisaged by the entrepreneurial school director in the case study above. Encouraging vocational schools to exercise better decision making that will encourage innovation particularly for vocational schools and vocational training centres¹² could significantly influence the inclusion of entrepreneurship curricula in teaching and learning. But the central challenge is obviously to provide teachers and school leaders with the necessary training, skills and incentives to raise their level of competence and commitment to undertake the required changes. Teachers and school leaders and their continuing professional development lie at the heart of innovations in teaching and learning.

Schools should be encouraged to stay open after hours for extra-curricular and informal activities with links to entrepreneurial learning and the business community. Some synergy from business links is known in the higher education sector, for example at Durrës University in relation to business-sponsored work experience in

tourism, economy and banking, but guest speakers and work experience opportunities seem rare at secondary level. Business themselves are generally not yet developed enough to make human resources development a priority and in practice many managers give a very low priority to investment in human resources development, even within their own businesses.

A renewed pre-service teacher training and qualification system is starting up (through the Institute of Curricula and Training and others). This is an opportunity for one-year programmes to focus on student-centred pedagogy consistent with the creative problem-based experiential approach to entrepreneurial learning. The sometimes 'missing link' of pedagogy must be added to the focus on curriculum content. Salaries for teachers have improved considerably and the current recession may bring in better-quality applicants. Recruitment of high-quality teachers and professional development are absolutely central to any national strategy for entrepreneurial learning. If it is to flourish, then teacher education needs to be developed across the system. Pilot projects and other initiatives undertaken and implemented by donors and institutions should be carefully evaluated in order to draw out good practices and lessons learned and to identify better ways of disseminating and sustaining achievements in entrepreneurial learning.

Entrepreneurial learning in the classroom needs to be facilitated by more open-minded leadership to create an entrepreneurial culture in schools in which teachers can take risks and be creative with their students. An entrepreneurial mentality and behaviour will help to build links with the world of business outside the school. Such a school culture also requires a more democratic, less controlling mentality at system level that gives schools more autonomy to use their budgets creatively, rather than having to wait for monthly top-down directives to steer their decision-making process. Establishing functional relations with local business, promoting extra-curricular activities and community projects, being part of local, national and international networks, these should be some of the effective ways to enhance an entrepreneurial culture in vocational schools and training centres.

¹² For example, there is an entrepreneurial learning component in major VTC projects on Employment and Migration for Youth, funded by Spain.

4. ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING: A DYNAMIC APPROACH TO VET REFORM

Entrepreneurship education, learning-to-learn skills and other key competences are part of a broader shift in curriculum and pedagogy needed in Albania to help students to fit into a rapidly changing society. This shift needs to align with EU human resources development policies as outlined in a number of key policy instruments in the areas of VET, lifelong learning, employment and enterprise development. It needs to follow the EU's strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (Council of the European Union, 2009), which advocates:

- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
- improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
- promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
- enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

Enhanced social partnerships can add support to teaching and learning, as underlined by the education ministers in 2009¹³ and will become a key focus.

ETF assessment on two policy dimensions in relation to the SME Policy Index 2009 (see tables 1.1 and 1.2 in Chapter 1) shows that entrepreneurial learning remains an uncertain and undeveloped area, with few reference points for good practice within the EU. Continuing misconceptions about entrepreneurial learning are evident from assessments made at regional level, which reveal a bias towards vocational and management education, whereas the new economic order requires a lifelong entrepreneurship learning agenda (OECD et al., 2009).

In the absence of a coherent vision for entrepreneurial learning in Albania, the current legislation does not adequately incorporate either its broad or narrow concepts, nor do the regulations remove barriers to innovation, such as the inability of schools to create income-generating school businesses. Albanian educational legislation and other related laws regulating the activity of MoLSAEO and METE should be adjusted to align with the broader concept of entrepreneurial learning emerging in the EU – 'building an entrepreneurial ecosystem to support entrepreneurial learning' and encouraging an entrepreneurial mindset in school graduates and other stakeholders.

The cultivation of entrepreneurial qualities in students is more important than narrower technical goals such as starting a business, although clearly the latter can promote the former. It involves both 'hard' technical skills and 'soft' social and emotional skills that can be learned from interaction with teachers in any subject and facilitated by the leadership and culture of the school. Social competence is a core element in entrepreneurial learning and must feature centrally across all subjects in the curriculum. Entrepreneurial learning should be part of school culture rather than limited to one or two subjects.

The broad concept of entrepreneurial learning requires teachers to talk less and listen more – as one school director put it, 'to have small mouths and big ears' – and the central challenge is to shift the role of teacher towards that of activator and coach of students, encouraging much more student activity and dialogue. This would address the need to motivate students to learn because active learning that engages 'head, hand and heart' would be more enjoyable. Regional and school-based professional development is regarded by some as more effective than the national 'multiplier' approach sometimes known as the 'cascade training' model. Given an ageing teacher corps that is lacking in information and communication technology (ICT) skills and is inflexible and resistant to innovation, continuing investment in ICT capacity is also seen as an important aid to entrepreneurial learning for both teachers and students.

Learning activities lie at the heart of the education and training system. To harness innovation and creativity and boost entrepreneurial learning in Albanian classrooms is a major teaching and learning challenge. The key is how VET teaching and learning processes are organised. Although significant steps have been taken to improve teaching and learning processes and practice, a more sustained and consistent effort is needed to deal with:

- the limited choice of curricula and flexibility of course selection;
- an excessive focus on content and facts, which encourages a teacher-centred model and fails to engage and motivate students to acquire wider generic competences and analytical skills, including entrepreneurial learning.

¹³ Conclusions of the Education Council meeting of 12 May 2009 on enhancing partnerships between education and training institutions and social partners, in particular employers, in the context of lifelong learning.

BOX 4.1 ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM TO SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING

A recent World Economic Forum vision offers a sophisticated 'entrepreneurial ecosystem' to support entrepreneurial learning that involves partnership between education, government and business sectors. The three key agents for developing a country's entrepreneurial capacity in an ecosystem that avoids one-off initiatives and builds a self-sustaining partnership between government, education institutions and businesses are presented below.

1. Government (policy-makers)

- Funding and support from international to local levels
- Legal and fiscal framework
- Creation and support of effective agencies
- Coordination of donor projects
- Use of the media to raise awareness

2. Education institutions (providers and practitioners, i.e. leaders and teachers)

- Trust-based organisational culture, e.g. student and teacher creative risk-taking
- Interactive teaching and learning, e.g. experiential project and problem-based teamwork, extensive use of visuals, digital tools and multi-media
- Outreach to world of work, e.g. real-life companies, simulated enterprises
- Incubators of innovation, e.g. case studies, mini-companies, Young Enterprise Awards, business plan competitions
- Sharing good practice, e.g. learning materials

3. Business (producers)

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships: entrepreneurs + SMEs + high-growth companies + large companies
- Case studies and guest speakers
- Financial support, sponsorship and mentoring for mini-companies
- On-the-job entrepreneurial skill and attitude development
- Internships with start-up enterprises

World Economic Forum, 2009

The models for entrepreneurial learning policy presented above indicate how complex an innovation is envisioned. The adaptation (as opposed to adoption) of such a 'new heart' for Albanian VET reform will be a long and difficult process. Entrepreneurial learning in its broader sense is closely related to the long-desired paradigm shift in pedagogy from teaching to learning that has preoccupied VET reformers for many years but is still not widely in place. In the VET sector, the challenge of implementing entrepreneurial learning in its broader meaning will be formidable, involving changes at many levels.

- Policy level – policy-makers whether in the three relevant ministries (MoES, METE and MoLSAEO) or the twelve regional education directorates have to be clear, agree about and sponsor the change, providing encouragement, and tangible resources of time and money.
- Strategy level – advisors and consultants in the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and the Institute of Curricula and Training, need a sophisticated grasp of the change process in order to design effective projects or coordinate donor initiatives.
- Provider level – the cadre of change agents who train and educate teachers needs strengthening and they and school leaders need to model the creative and innovative behaviours that entrepreneurial learning requires.
- School level – senior managers must create the conditions for success and sustained support to develop an entrepreneurial learning culture and entrepreneurial learning opportunities for teachers and students alike.
- Practitioner level – teachers of both general and professional subjects must be willing to change materials, behaviours and beliefs at the core of their professional work if entrepreneurial learning is to permeate learning.
- Student level – students will need to commit to the new ways of learning and take greater responsibility as active creative problem-solvers and team participants.
- Community level – parents and employers will need convincing that the new approaches to entrepreneurial learning are desirable and be willing to support 'real-life' learning outside the schools.

In addition to multiple levels that provide the settings into which entrepreneurial learning can be introduced, the nature of entrepreneurial learning as an innovation is complex, and this complexity involves different discourses about:

- the concept of entrepreneurial learning – from narrow to broad, education *for* not *about* entrepreneurship;
- the strategy – multi-stakeholder approaches and clear ownership by decision-makers and implementers, new ways of financing entrepreneurial learning and providing continuing professional development and incentives;
- donor support, partnerships and networks – for the purpose of sharing knowledge and experience, fostering communication, learning new skills and exchanging experiences;
- institutional leadership management and culture – with entrepreneurial learning mainstreamed across the curriculum of both general and vocational schools and vocational training centres with appropriate experiential learning activities;
- curriculum and pedagogy – with a focus on both ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ skill development, participatory and interactive learning, and new technology such as the internet, websites and blogs;
- school-to-business community links – to provide ‘real-life’ learning of entrepreneurship;
- mindsets – developing open-mindedness and confidence to take risks.

Given Albanian policy-makers’ long-term goal of EU accession, definitions and policy learning from more

economically and educationally developed parts of the world might be adapted to create a vision – currently lacking – of how to use entrepreneurial learning in the education sector to boost entrepreneurship in a country whose economy has a large proportion of SMEs.

Unfortunately, prescriptions for policy and practice from elsewhere cannot be adopted. They have to be adapted to fit the unique features of every national context. They can offer strategic frameworks and generate questions to guide strategic thinking. Stakeholders’ perspectives should help to shape teaching and learning practices in entrepreneurial learning for schools and individuals, if successful integration of students into society is the goal.

As in many transition countries, the gaps are wide between ‘what might be’ and ‘what is’ in the complex area of entrepreneurial learning. A full understanding and long-term vision of what is possible are yet to be formed as a basis for a feasible approach using existing laws, structures and training capacity. The question of when a country is ready always arises. Often before a particular system-wide innovation can be implemented, the system itself needs to be better prepared. An adaptive governance system is needed to shift the current and next generation into a more creative, innovative and adaptive mentality and mode of behaviour in the face of rapid change in the knowledge society. Institutions have to be recultured, given more autonomy, and their staff reskilled. By taking a more strategic approach to entrepreneurial learning, Albania can gain a head start in policy formulation and share its policy learning with other countries in the region, as well as EU Member States.

ANNEX: ETF QUESTIONNAIRE ON ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING AND RESULTS

1. GENDER

Female	62%
Male	38%

2. NUMBER OF TEACHING YEARS

13.6

3. WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING TO BE FOR? TO BECOME:

A good employee	6%
A creative problem-solver in any situation	78%
Self-employed	16%

4. IS ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING A TOPIC THAT IS SOMETIMES DISCUSSED WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES?

Never	–
Rarely	42%
Often	53%
A matter of great concern	5%

5. HAVE YOU EVER HAD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR USING ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING IN YOUR TEACHING?

Never	16%
Some was partly relevant	58%
Special training provided	26%

6. IF YOU HAD SOME TRAINING FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING, WHO PROVIDED IT?

Institute of Curricula and Training	6
National Agency for Vocational Education and Training	5
Regional education office	1
University	3
NGO	5
Foreign donor agency	9
Business company	6
Private training agency	2

7. HOW STRONGLY DO THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS RELATE TO ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING?

	Not at all	Partly	Strongly	Very strongly
A positive psychological climate in the classroom	–	32%	53%	15%
High level of competition between students	5%	37%	47%	11%
Teacher talking most of the time	21%	26%	37%	16%
Students do market research	5%	42%	47%	6%
Students make presentations of their projects	11%	26%	37%	26%
Memorising information	–	47%	42%	11%
Learning to keep accounts	11%	21%	58%	10%
Teachers use PowerPoint presentations	16%	26%	37%	21%
Creative problem solving	–	11%	58%	31%
Students use word processor	11%	26%	47%	16%
Finding right answers	–	26%	58%	16%
Learning to manage in stressful situations	5%	47%	37%	11%
Writing plans for projects	11%	32%	57%	–
Cooperative learning in groups	–	21%	37%	42%
Taking risks by giving students responsibilities	26%	11%	32%	32%
'Real-life' projects in the school or community	5%	52%	26%	17%
Visits or work experience in businesses	16%	42%	26%	16%
Visits or work experience in public sector institutions	37%	37%	16%	10%
Learning to negotiate	–	26%	58%	16%
Students give feedback to their teacher about lessons	5%	16%	68%	11%

8. IS ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING SOMETHING THAT FAMILIES CAN PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN AS PART OF GROWING UP?

Yes	68.4%
No	15.7%
Don't know	15.7%

9. CAN SCHOOLS SUCCEED IN PROVIDING ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING IN SPITE OF FAMILY BACKGROUND?

Yes	100%
No	–
Don't know	–

10. HOW OFTEN DO THESE CHARACTERISTICS FEATURE IN YOUR OWN TEACHING AND STUDENTS' LEARNING?

	Not at all	Partly	Strongly	Very strongly
A positive psychological climate in the classroom	–	47%	53%	–
High level of competition between students	16%	63%	11%	10%
Teacher talking most of the time	–	16%	79%	5%
Students do market research	–	58%	32%	10%
Students make presentations of their projects	11%	53%	15%	21%
Memorising information	–	37%	58%	5%
Learning to keep accounts	11%	47%	26%	16%
Teachers use PowerPoint presentations	16%	47%	16%	21%
Creative problem solving	–	42%	53%	5%
Students use word processor	10%	42%	42%	6%
Finding right answers	–	68%	26%	6%
Learning to manage in stressful situations	26%	42%	32%	–
Writing plans for projects	11%	63%	15%	11%
Cooperative learning in groups	5%	21%	58%	16%
Taking risks by giving students responsibilities	5%	42%	42%	11%
'Real-life' projects in the school or community	–	74%	21%	5%
Visits or work experience in businesses	21%	58%	16%	5%
Visits or work experience in public sector institutions	68%	16%	16%	–
Learning to negotiate	–	53%	37%	11%
Students give feedback to their teacher about lessons	–	26%	63%	11%

11. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU ABLE TO INTRODUCE YOUR OWN INNOVATIONS INTO YOUR TEACHING?

Not at all	–
Rarely	5.2%
Often	52.6%
I have a lot of freedom to do so	42.1%

Example? _____

12. ARE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ORGANISED IN YOUR SCHOOL THAT ENCOURAGE STUDENT INITIATIVE?

Never	–
Occasionally	47.4%
Often	52.6%

Example? _____

13. SELECT THREE ASPECTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN:

Making a business plan	3
Managing a business	5
Creative problem solving	6
Cooperative small group work	5
Setting up a school business	7
Marketing	0
Project-based learning	8
Interpersonal skills	2
Critical thinking	2
Building students' self-esteem	5
Career planning	9
Positive thinking	3
Dialogue skills	4

Other _____

14. FROM WHICH PROVIDER(S) WOULD YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE SUCH TRAINING?

Institute of Curricula and Training	10
National Agency for Vocational Education and Training	11
Regional education office	1
University	4
NGO	3
Foreign donor agency	4
Business company	2
Private training agency	0

15. PLACE 1-4 AGAINST THESE DESCRIPTIONS OF GOALS RELATING TO ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF IMPORTANCE YOU ATTACH TO THEM:

- Learning FOR not learning ABOUT entrepreneurship
- Developing students' creativity and innovation
- Knowing how to become a businessman or businesswoman
- Developing the whole person – head, hand and heart

16. PLACE 1-3 AGAINST THESE OUTCOMES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF IMPORTANCE YOU ATTACH TO THEM:

- *Qualities* – courage to take calculated risks + stamina + ingenuity
e.g. 'can do' attitude, will-power, frugality
- *Soft skills* – interpersonal and intrapersonal
e.g. assertive communication, collaboration, self-confidence, self-esteem, empathy
- *Hard skills* – technical + managerial + digital
e.g. business plan, task clarity, cost efficiency, spread sheets and word processing

ACRONYMS

AQF	Albanian Qualifications Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation) – since 1 January 2011 GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)
ICT	information and communication technology
METE	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoLSAEO	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
NAVET	National Agency for Vocational Education and Training
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NLC	National Labour Council
NVETC	National Vocational Education and Training Council
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	vocational education and training
VTC	vocational training centre

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