



# 6 | THE NEED FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE CURRICULUM

**T**HE UK ECONOMY, IF IT IS TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE, needs more entrepreneurial people. It needs people in every walk of life to behave much more entrepreneurially. In particular it needs the creativity and energy of its young people.

Entrepreneurship, in its widest sense, is any enterprise or effort that adds value to the lives of the people on which it has an impact. Entrepreneurial people take calculated risks in order to progress projects that make a difference to the lives of people. Change that adds value to peoples lives, lies at the heart of entrepreneurship. One of the most popular ways in which entrepreneurship is understood is in the area of new business venturing. In this context the emphasis is on business start-ups and on identifying and helping those with the determination to do so to develop the competencies to set up and manage a business enterprise. Entrepreneurship is also crucial within larger, more established companies. If such businesses are to remain competitive, given the dynamics of current markets, then they need to find ways of maintaining the entrepreneurial effort of the business. Entrepreneurial people are equally important in the area of social and community renewal and development. So many of the UK's inner cities are in need of innovative, visionary people who can make a difference to the lives of people who live there. In each of these contexts, that of new business venturing, enterprise development and social entrepreneurship, there is a need for people who have been encouraged to think and behave in entrepreneurial ways and who have the competencies to solve problems and manage change, often in the face of great difficulties and opposition. Entrepreneurial people are innovative problem solvers. They are opportunity focused, calculated risk takers, people who are comfortable with change and frustrated with the status quo. They are strong communicators, effective negotiators and strong team players. They are people who can combine essential attitudes, such as tolerance of risk and uncertainty and low fear of failure, with managerial competencies in such a way that helps them make a difference.

Young people right across the UK need to be helped to identify and develop these attitudes as well as to develop appropriate managerial competencies if they are to stand a chance in the world of work, of new venturing or community development. They are a crucial resource in the UK's effort to build and maintain a vibrant entrepreneurial economy into the future. Recent research and numerous government initiatives have endorsed this fact and sought to stimulate a greater engagement with the entrepreneurship agenda across all sectors. They have suggested that the education sector at every level could do much more to build the awareness of students about entrepreneurship and to encourage their greater engagement with it. The fact is that the vast majority of students at the end of their education careers will seek to find employment in established enterprises, be they private, public or community. Only a few

will take the new venturing option. All, however, will need to be given some insights to who the entrepreneur is, what it is he or she does and how the entrepreneurial process might be understood. They will need to be allowed to experiment with their own entrepreneurial potential and to explore in how many ways they might be entrepreneurial themselves, people who make a difference.

If students throughout the education sector are to be encouraged to engage with entrepreneurship and to explore their entrepreneurial credentials then this has to be done, in the first instance, through curriculum development. The key challenge to those within the education system from Education Managers through to course planners and those directly involved in curriculum development is to examine how key learning outcomes for entrepreneurship might be introduced to and embedded throughout programmes of learning from school, to further and ultimately higher education. This has been the commission of the UK Science Enterprise Centres throughout the UK. Targeting non-business faculties, the project has sought to increase the awareness of students within the Science, Engineering and Technology faculties of the entrepreneurship agenda and to encourage their engagement with it. This has largely been achieved through an intensive curriculum strategy combined with business enterprise competitions. The impact has been impressive.

Experience suggests that this approach of seeking to embed the agenda within the curriculum is the most effective approach to draw out the latent entrepreneurial potential of students. Much more needs to be done.

**Dr Pauric McGowan**

Northern Ireland Centre for Entrepreneurship (NICENT)  
p.mcgowan@ulster.ac.uk

## FOSTERING CREATIVITY FOR FREE!

The Centre for Bioscience has a limited number of 'CASE — how to foster creativity' by Simon Dewulf and Caroline Baillie. This short book provides an excellent introduction to an intriguing and often illusive subject. It explores the literature ideas of what creativity might be, provides a range of case studies and includes a section on implementing creativity. The book normally retails for £5 but we will post it to you for free on a first come, first served basis. Contact the Centre at [heabioscience@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:heabioscience@leeds.ac.uk).