

# **Creating Opportunities for Young Entrepreneurship**

**Nordic examples and experiences**

**Executive summary**



**FSF 2005:8**

## **Main Findings**

There are few policy measures for young entrepreneurship outside the school system. Most programmes and projects outside school are generally orientated and not targeted towards young individuals. However, some examples have been presented, e.g., from Norway and Sweden. Service-providers regard the target group young entrepreneurs to be of minor interest for a number of reasons. Young individuals lack working experience. Therefore, one could expect that they lack knowledge of the sector in which they would like to start a business; not only a lack of knowledge about the market situation but also a lack of necessary networks and contacts in this sector. Such factors are of importance for service-providers or potential financiers. However, an opposite analysis could be that young individuals could have really innovative ideas since they are not aware of how the existing structure solves different problems. To a certain degree, working experience could be to learn about the existing structure and behaviour in a sector. We know that most new entrepreneurs imitate existing behaviour rather than behaving really innovatively. At the same time, we know that working experience seems to be of importance up to a limited number of years at least for certain sectors. This may be a reason why most entrepreneurs are between 35 and 45 years old when they start their companies. In Denmark, there is a survey illustrating the importance of working experience, even if there is a marginal effect on the probability to survive. It seems that this also differs a lot with sectors given the highest value for building and construction and knowledge service. In the same survey, age does not seem to have a high impact on the probability to survive.

Secondly, one can assume that young entrepreneurs lack financial resources, i.e., they are not able to put so much of their own resources into their business. Therefore, a young entrepreneur would mean a higher risk investment for financial institutions. Young entrepreneurs often do not have houses or other facilities that they can use as securities for financial support. In the Danish survey, assets are of certain importance for survival. In a situation of individuals with relatively low-value assets, few years of working experience and perhaps rather innovative or radical ideas, one could expect that many service-providers will be unwilling to support these individuals.

Thirdly, young individuals with no higher education experience could not expect to get jobs requiring high-level qualifications, which means that they probably will not get 'the right type of working experience'.

Fourthly, projects and programmes that really are orientated towards young individuals are of limited size, i. e., there are few individuals involved in these programmes and projects.

To summarise, no real holistic approach exists in the Nordic countries to stimulate young individuals to become entrepreneurs. One reason is that this group of individuals will demand more support, advice and counselling.

However, as regards the entrepreneurship education area, we see a lot of movement in the different Nordic countries. Finland is the country with the longest tradition. Development has been rather dramatic for more than twenty years since the activities in the region of Vasa started. Norway, last year, instituted a new strategy for entrepreneurship education and, in Denmark, similar attempts have been made. In Sweden, there is a national strategy, initiated in 2005, on its way, and in Iceland there has recently been considerable development in forming different programmes and materials, especially for elementary school.

A lot of projects and programmes have been carried out at different levels in the school system in all Nordic countries. Most of these programmes have been started at local or regional level. However, there are also some programmes, ongoing in all Nordic countries, such as Young Enterprise and the Venture Cup. Another tendency is that an increasing number of programmes have also started in primary schools. The idea behind these is that it is important to have awareness about entrepreneurship as early as possible. Furthermore, we can see that the programmes cover many disciplines in the school system as well as involving students, teachers, school owners, parents and the surrounding society. Despite this development that has taken place, there is still a problem associated with the fact that few students are involved in these activities and that the number of hours spent on entrepreneurship education are limited.

We expect that the development of entrepreneurship education will continue in the future and that soon all Nordic countries will have a national strategy in operation. We furthermore expect that these strategies will have a holistic approach emphasising the importance of different actors being involved as well as activities covering many disciplines. The idea is to increase awareness, skills and training in the area of entrepreneurship. Such a development will create demands for a number of additional actions outside the school system in the future.

An increasing number of students leaving elementary schools with a more positive attitude to entrepreneurship means an increasing demand for supporting projects and programmes outside the school system. Otherwise there will be a gap between future demands for and supply of these individuals. If a higher

proportion of students leaving elementary schools want to start their own businesses, perhaps, after a number of years looking for alternative ways to enter the labour market, this could be a challenge for service-providers and policy-makers. Furthermore, if more programmes are also in place at university level, this will create demands for more incubators and effective systems helping these types of individual to start businesses. So investing in schools creates demands to restructure the system of counselling, financing and giving information to potential entrepreneurs. As far as we can see, no country has so far founded a strategy for such a potential problem.

Furthermore, one has to realise that investment in entrepreneurship education is a long-term orientated type of investment. It will take many years before we can see concrete results in higher proportions of the population starting business as an alternative to obtaining employment. There is a risk that policy-makers will lose their interest in this type of investment if few practical results can be demonstrated.

For many reasons, there are few accurate evaluations concerning the effects of measures taken in the area of entrepreneurship education. So far in the Nordic countries, there is a large number of different projects but rather few examples of nationwide programmes that could be evaluated. Furthermore, this is an area that is very difficult to evaluate since there are long-term effects and measures are taken constantly during this process; see Lundström and Stevenson, 2005 for a further description of this type of methodological problem. The most common way to measure effects is, so far, to carry out surveys concerning attitudes to entrepreneurship among young individuals and also to estimate the number of students attending, e.g., the Young Enterprise programme and who later on become entrepreneurs.

To summarise, one can see that increasing efforts in the area of entrepreneurship education within the Nordic countries will create a better future situation since one can expect that more individuals will prefer to be entrepreneurs instead of being employed. We are not talking about dramatic changes: knowing that today perhaps the proportion of nascent entrepreneurs and the TEA-index (see Reynolds et al 2004) for the countries studied varies between 4% and 12% means that the vast majority of individuals will not consider entrepreneurship as an alternative.

## Background

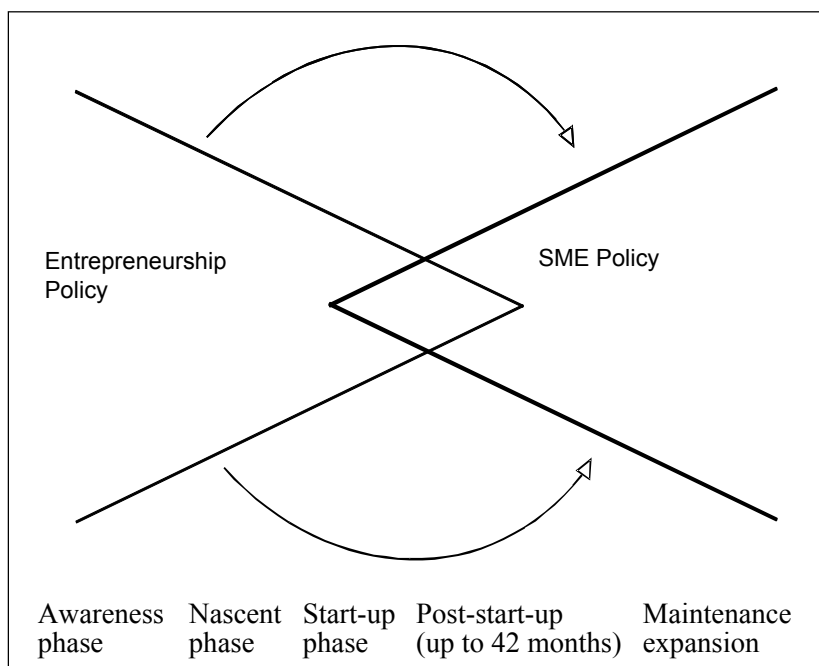
Entrepreneurship policy is an emerging area in many countries around the world, including the Nordic countries. In an earlier study of the development of entrepreneurship policy in the Nordic countries, we could see a growing interest in this area. For some countries, such as Finland, this process started in the early 1990s while for other countries, such as Denmark and Iceland, the process has started more recently. The situation today is that this type of policy now will be built on its own merits. However, it is not obvious what types of measure should be included in the area of entrepreneurship policy. A recent study defines six different areas of importance in the field; see Lundström and Stevenson, 2005. The areas are: administrative burdens; entrepreneurship education; counselling and information; seed or start-up financing; promotion; and target groups, where specific target groups mainly concern women, immigrants or young individuals. The reasons are that these groups are under-represented among entrepreneurs in comparison with their proportion of the population or they have difficulty entering the regular labour market. Measures in this area have been developed in many countries.

Another area of increasing interest has been entrepreneurship education. There are a number of reasons for the interest in this area such as the importance of role models, to increase awareness of entrepreneurship, to increase entrepreneurial skills, to learn about alternatives to being employed on leaving school or to increase creative thinking, all of which described in the individual chapters in the book. There are special circumstances why one can see increasing interest in the Nordic countries concerning entrepreneurship education:

- most of the Nordic countries except Iceland lack entrepreneurial activity, at least as measured by the TEA-index; see Reynolds et al, 2004 for a definition;
- there are demands for restructuring society in order to increase the importance of the private sector; all the Nordic countries have large public sectors;
- there is a need to change attitudes among young people; several studies in the individual Nordic countries indicate relatively negative attitude towards entrepreneurship among young people;
- there is a need to increase the number of young entrepreneurs because of the high unemployment rate among young people, and the problems with the ageing populations;
- many measures have been taken at local and regional levels, but few from a national strategic point of view.

In this book we deal with these two areas of entrepreneurship policy, i.e., entrepreneurship education and the specific target group of young individuals. The objective is to structure experiences concerning measures taken to stimulate entrepreneurial behaviour and skills among young individuals in the various Nordic countries.

The area of interest is measures taken to stimulate entrepreneurial behaviour and skills among individuals between 6 and 35 years old. The idea is to present ongoing measures in the entire school system including primary schools as well as universities and vocational education. Furthermore, our interest is also in individuals leaving school at different stages, e.g. those not going on to universities and young unemployed individuals. We define the entrepreneurship system as a system consisting of actors in a given context working with the aim of increasing entrepreneurial behaviour and skills in such a context. There is also a difference between Entrepreneurship policy and SME policy as well as the importance of opportunity, skills and motivation, which can be illustrated by the following figure:



**Figure: The interface between Entrepreneurship and SME policy**

Source: Lundström and Stevenson, 2002, p 46

Regarding young entrepreneurship, one can assume that most measures are taken in the very early phases in the above figure. This is the case for the area of entrepreneurship education. Measures in this area are taken long before any real

start-up can be made, even if measures at later stages, e.g., at university level are closer to a real start-up phase.

In Lundström and Stevenson (2005) a comprehensiveness-scoring approach is used to measure to what extent a number of countries are working in the area of young entrepreneurship. One important measure in this area is entrepreneurship education. Six different areas in the scope of entrepreneurship policy are defined, namely, promotion of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship in the educational system, reducing administrative and regulatory burdens, start-up and early-stage financing, business support for start-up and early stages and policy for different target groups. In the comprehensiveness scoring, the lowest overall rate for 13 countries is given to entrepreneurship education. However, there is a tendency for almost every country to be increasing efforts in this area.

## **Summarising measures taken for young individuals**

In this section, a brief summary is given for each Nordic country in relation to what is being done in the policy area for young entrepreneurship. Furthermore, some comparisons are made between the different countries.

### **Denmark**

According to statistics, over half of the entrepreneurs in Denmark are below 36 years of age which seems to be a very high proportion compared to the general population where the corresponding figure is 38%. These entrepreneurs also seem to have more working experience compared to other young individuals which could be another way of indicating that the unemployment rate is high for young individuals, i.e., to a large extent, it is not unemployed young individuals who start companies. Furthermore, surprisingly, the proportion of part-time entrepreneurs seems to be higher for older people.

The survival rate seems to increase for entrepreneurs using counselling services and for full-time entrepreneurs. According to a study in Denmark, the lowest chances for survival would be for single persons under 30 years old, with, for example, no subsidy received from counselling services, with 'debts' or at least no positive assets, few years of working experience and no sector experience. The study therefore seems to verify the importance of the characteristics that we discussed in the previous section.

The present Danish government has set as its goal that Denmark be a part of the European entrepreneurial elite by the year 2010. There are two 'bottom lines' to this: conditions for entrepreneurship must be attractive both compared

to salaried employment and compared to the rest of Europe; and prospective entrepreneurs must have had the chance to receive knowledge of and tools for the journey they will embark on. The newly established Government Entrepreneurship Policy is, however, not focusing on young entrepreneurs in the different programmes except in the programme for entrepreneurship education. The policy is based on the following five principles:

- better economic basis for starting an enterprise;
- from client to hero;
- the state as a guarantor of open markets;
- end unnecessary differential treatment;
- the open school.

A lot of initiatives have been taken in respect of the first four principles that are described in the Denmark chapter. Concerning the first principle, one example of initiatives is the modernisation of establishment account regulations to make it easier to save up for future enterprise start-up. As regards the second principle, the Government has initiated, and still plans to launch, a number of information activities and awareness-raising campaigns aiming to raise general motivation and openness towards life as an entrepreneur. One of the examples is The Danish Enterprise Awards 2004 for which entrepreneurs - individuals or groups - of all ages, and who have started a business within the past 4 to 5 years, are eligible. But, as we already mentioned, not one of these initiatives concerning the first four principles is particularly directed towards young entrepreneurs. We do not have any information about the degree to which the different initiatives taken are working with young individuals. We will therefore concentrate the summary on the principle of the open school.

For this principle, there are a number of initiatives such as the need for a culture of independence and entrepreneurship, an entrepreneurship academy, open educational institutions, strengthened counselling in entrepreneurship and enterprise operations, entrepreneurs as innovative teachers, future incubators and an entrepreneur barometer to measure entrepreneurial activity in university programmes. For a more detailed description of these initiatives, see the Denmark chapter. Overall it is about strengthening the entrepreneurial culture in the school system, to increase co-operation between the school and entrepreneurs but also to increase co-operation with parents. There are some initiatives for motivating teachers in school.

The Government's 'Plan of Action for Entrepreneurs – background report' focuses on five areas that the Government considers crucial if Denmark is to be transformed into a first-class entrepreneur land. One of these areas is

strengthening ‘entrepreneurial drive and risk-taking’. In respect of this area, the background report points to the following government ambitions in relation to the educational system:

- give pupils and students the necessary professional competences to be able to participate in a modern knowledge society;
- support students’ personal qualifications and qualities so that they develop their sense of initiative, independence, drive, and risk-taking;
- mediate knowledge about the business world, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

The Government has sketched four concrete focus points that it sees as central elements in education:

- involve the business world in these efforts;
- develop courses, educational methods, and teacher competences;
- strengthen focus on innovation and entrepreneurship;
- share good experiences.

Concerning the implementation of the Government’s action plan, the goal is the establishment of an unbroken chain of educational and learning programmes and courses from the start of primary school through to the awarding of a tertiary degree. Efforts will be subdivided into four groups. The first is the comprehensive and general educational effort to strengthen the culture of independence and entrepreneurship. The second is the development and propagation of teaching and learning methods that strengthen the student's innovative competences. The third is central support to initiatives that target the teaching of those tools that are related to start-up and operation of an independent enterprise. The fourth is the continued strengthening of tertiary education's function as regional generator of growth and development.

One of the five fundamental principles for the road to ‘*a society with room for free initiative*’ is the principle that the educational system must be open to the outside world – the ‘Open School’ principle. Institutions’ and educational programmes’ association with the business world will be broadened through, for example, enterprise partnerships. This ongoing chain of education-business partnerships is a central element of the ‘entrepreneur chain’.

A report about entrepreneurship initiatives in education 2002-2003 concludes that entrepreneurship is seldom a required course in study programmes. In most educational sectors, entrepreneur initiatives can be characterised as ‘special initiatives’ and are often of local character. In the Danish chapter, an estimate is made of how many students at all levels in schools are participating in different initiatives. Even considering the problems of making such estimates, the results

indicate that normally less than one per cent of all students are involved in such initiatives. Even if the numbers could be of importance over time, one could conclude that few students receive entrepreneurship education. This is also true at university level. One exception is vocationally orientated students who receive more entrepreneurship education but less entrepreneurial training. Another conclusion is that there is almost a complete lack of Danish teacher-training initiatives and networks that target entrepreneur activities. Knowledge exchange that could take place across educational sectors and levels is in no way institutionalised. This surely contributes to the fact that entrepreneur activities are limited in Denmark in comparison with abroad. However, one can see more educational material produced and increasing contacts with the business world.

Even if few students are involved in the projects, it is estimated that 60 to 70 different types of project are taking place in the school system. Some examples are: The mini-society; classroom enterprises; event-based entrepreneurship; entrepreneurship integration, e.g., in mathematics; project-independent business owners European Business Games; Young Enterprise; and the Venture Cup. These are examples of projects aimed at different educational levels in the school system, from compulsory school to university.

In Denmark there is also a cross-sector implementation strategy such as an entrepreneur academy seen as a network for education, development and research in innovation and entrepreneurship, a university-based course in counselling in business start-ups and operations, educational entrepreneurial websites and an independent foundation to support the development of a strong Danish entrepreneurial culture.

To summarise, Denmark seems to be active in the area of entrepreneurship education mainly by projects to increase the awareness of entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, very few of all students are involved in the 60-70 different projects taking place in the school system. Furthermore, there are few other types of initiative specially directed towards young individuals, but they are regarded as possible clients for many of the different initiatives in the entrepreneurship policy area.

## **Finland**

In Finland, there is a high unemployment rate among young people. As an example, for young individuals between 15 and 24 years of age, the rate is close to 22%. The start-up rates in Finland are relatively low and, according to available statistics, the age of entrepreneurs is higher than in Denmark. Only around 15% of entrepreneurs are younger than 36. At the same time, attitudes towards entrepreneurship among young individuals seem to be positive.

In the Government Entrepreneurship Programme 2000-2003, measures were directed to the following factors considered crucial in terms of success of the enterprises:

- opening of public service production to competition, including social and healthcare services;
- the role of the educational system in promoting entrepreneurship and enterprise;
- succession of business;
- new technology – and knowledge-intensive enterprises;
- issues concerning entrepreneurs' social security;
- administrative and other burdens connected with business activities;
- availability of professional personnel;
- utilisation of information technology and other technology in business.

In implementing the programme, 15 regional centres played a key role. The existing Entrepreneurship Policy Programme is a development of this programme and focuses on similar areas such as education, training and advisory services, start-ups, regulations, regional entrepreneurship and legislation and the function of the market. As with Denmark, there are no special efforts for young individuals except as regards the education area. This could also be seen with respect to performance indicators, which include no special indicator for young entrepreneurs but do have one for female entrepreneurs. There are, however, some private initiatives such as those from The Federation of Finnish Enterprises that is supporting local networks of young entrepreneurs. The Young Entrepreneurs of Finland initiative consists of both young entrepreneurs and those contemplating starting their own businesses including potential family business takeovers. The aim is to bring out young entrepreneurship and promote co-operation among these young entrepreneurs. They also have a possible test that can be taken – 'Me an entrepreneur?' There is also a competition for entrepreneurs younger than 36.

Incubators in Finland are normally associated with the 31 polytechnics. There is also a network for the 22 technology and science parks around Finland. This is a system promoting entrepreneurship through their networks and incubators. Teachers' attitudes towards entrepreneurship have become more positive and R&D is an integral part of the incubator system.

In general, Finland has long experience in the field of entrepreneurship education. The first projects were started as early as the 1980s and were developed further during the 1990s. One region that started very early was that around the city of Vasa. It has, however, been very characteristic of Finnish

entrepreneurship policy that, instead of consistent education policy, there have been separate regional projects run by different organisations. Most likely this has been the case because entrepreneurship education has not been long included in the National Curriculum for schools. The Finnish school system has also been criticised for giving too narrow a picture of employment opportunities. The possibility of being self-employed has not been suggested as an equal and respectable choice of career.

In order to support entrepreneurship in young Finns, the aim of the Ministry of Education is to strengthen the attitudes, knowledge base and skills of young people through entrepreneurship education. The decision on the policy outlines of entrepreneurship education was made in 2001 and the policy outlines concerning different levels of the educational system were reassessed and revised at the beginning of 2004. Measures will cover the educational system as a whole. The aims to improve entrepreneurship education and training have been incorporated into the Ministry's *Action and Economic Plan 2005-2008*. This includes entrepreneurship education and knowledge-based entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship projects in general, entrepreneurship projects in teachers' in-service training and development projects. The *Development Plan for Education and Research 2003-2008* notes that the bases of entrepreneurship are being created through integrated entrepreneurship education and through favourable attitudes. This is why interaction between education and working life will be promoted, teachers' and guidance counsellors' knowledge about entrepreneurship will be improved and teaching content and methods will be developed further concerning training and education.

Entrepreneurship education is now included in the National Curriculum for primary education and will be put into action step by step during the years 2004-2006. The thematic entity in primary schools is called participative citizenship and entrepreneurship. The emphasis will mainly be on intrapreneurship. The thematic entity in lower secondary schools and at secondary level is active citizenship and entrepreneurship. The emphasis at this level will be on entrepreneurial ways of action as well as on entrepreneurship itself. In primary and upper secondary general education, the aims are set to:

- acquaint entrepreneurs with school co-operation;
- include entrepreneurship in teachers' in-service training;
- strengthen teachers' contacts with working life;
- develop work-immersion periods (TET) to include entrepreneurship points of view;
- develop guidance counselling in such a way that entrepreneurship is mentioned as one career to be considered;

- produce material related to these.

The Finnish chapter also includes the aims for upper secondary vocational education, university and polytechnic education. There are also national projects that will be run simultaneously to support the aims of the Ministry of Education. One example, the Consolidation of Finnish Municipalities, is running a project called *Entrepreneurship and municipalities*, where the purpose is to help the implementation of entrepreneurship education at local level. Another example is that the National Board of Education has established web pages where material concerning entrepreneurship education is collected. The purpose is to provide suitable material for teachers and other instructors who work within the area.

In Finland, there is a holistic view of entrepreneurship education that is described in the Finnish chapter. The idea is that, through the whole school system, entrepreneurial values and attitudes should be created, while an increasing focus on entrepreneurship-related knowledge will be provided in secondary school and further on. In vocational schools and at university level, there is also education concerning entrepreneurial and managerial skills. With this approach, entrepreneurship education will have a very broad perspective also include parents, teachers and the surrounding society. There are also some projects in pre-primary education in Finland.

In the Finnish chapter, a number of interesting examples are described from different levels of the school system. From the lower secondary school in Variska, an interesting case of entrepreneurship education that has been ongoing for many years in Finland is illustrated. It started in 1990 and contains several types of school course, e.g., mathematics, mother tongue, history, religion, and geography as well as basic knowledge of entrepreneurship. Another example concerns how to build up co-operation between schools and working life, and includes parents as well as teachers. In upper secondary vocational education, practical training of 20 weeks is included in all basic degrees. In 1999, a special apprenticeship contract for entrepreneurs was put into action, giving entrepreneurs the opportunity to take a vocational degree while running a company. Young Enterprise is also a programme run in Finland as well as in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Finland, like other Nordic countries, also has the Venture Cup programme. The chapter also includes the description of four projects concerning training for teachers. One of these is the newest nationwide programme Motivator Training. The idea of the programme is to train motivators in entrepreneurial education and in co-operation between schools and companies. After training, they have the knowledge to maintain co-operation between schools and companies and to develop new activities that advance intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship.

To summarise, many projects are ongoing in the area of entrepreneurship education in Finland from pre-primary school up to universities and polytechnics. This type of education has a long tradition in Finland. Furthermore, teachers, parents and entrepreneurs are integrated into many of the programmes. It is also evident that entrepreneurship education is included in many disciplines in the school system.

Research in Finland indicates, however, that parents in general do not encourage their children to become entrepreneurs. Neither the general public nor the Government values such a career. It also seems that young individuals, in comparison with older people, are more afraid of failure, i.e., they are more risk averse. To change this type of attitude will probably take many years.

## **Iceland**

Iceland is the Nordic country with the highest value of the so-called TEA-index; see Reynolds et al, 2004. In Iceland, this ratio is 12.2%, or one out of every nine, which is the highest in Europe. Iceland is comparable to the United States and Australia. With a ratio of 7.5%, Norway is the closest of the Nordic countries to Iceland. The ratio of male to female entrepreneurs is also one of the lowest: 1.92 in Iceland compared to 2.3 in other Nordic countries.

From such a perspective, one can argue that Iceland has a more entrepreneurial culture than the other Nordic countries.

There are many reasons for these results. In the aforementioned report, some of the support programmes that have been aimed specifically at women have played an important role in reducing the gap between men and women. One can also say that other support programmes aimed at entrepreneurs have increased interest in entrepreneurship and in the opportunities that it can provide. This high entrepreneurial activity can also be traced to general policy-making; e.g., by reducing restrictions on financial activity and lowering bureaucratic levels. It may also have something to do with the nature of Icelanders, their attitude towards tasks, and the instinct to survive in a harsh, sub-Arctic environment.

The unemployment rate for young individuals is also much lower than, for example, for young individuals in Finland, even if the unemployment rate for young female individuals under 20 years of age is as high as over 14%. However, the figures for the proportion of self-employment are very low for young individuals, or at least for individuals under 30, so the positive value of the TEA-index reflects what is happening in other age groups. In general, Iceland has a high GDP per capita and a low unemployment rate.

Concerning the public's general attitude towards entrepreneurship, most Icelanders, or 60%, consider entrepreneurship a desirable job opportunity. This

percentage is significantly lower in the other Nordic countries. Icelanders who have successfully established companies are viewed with respect and admiration by 70% of the population, which is just below average among participating countries. The Finns are the most pleased in this respect.

Small and medium-sized enterprises have always represented the great majority of Icelandic businesses. However, it was not until 1995 that the economic importance of SMEs, and the need for specific policy measures for SMEs, was clearly recognised in industrial policy. Recently, the Minister of Industry and Commerce published a mission policy statement for the year 2004-2007. Four major targets are presented:

- to increase economic diversity and Iceland's competitiveness;
- to foster continued rural development;
- to utilise the country's natural resources sensibly;
- to improve business ethics and practices.

In regard to entrepreneurship, the policy targets emphasise increasing entrepreneurial education and establishing and operating new businesses. The policy targets also aim at strengthening support programmes for entrepreneurs and innovation, particularly in rural areas. The policy also aims at developing a more efficient research and development environment, focused on support activities such as emphasising clustering.

General policy-making and programmes aimed at entrepreneurs are, of course, one part of the overall support for young entrepreneurs. However, emphasis on young people as entrepreneurs has increased in both the political and educational arenas. Politically, this is evident from the support for special programmes given by local and state government. Educationally, programmes have been run at compulsory schools (primary and lower-secondary schools). These programmes differ from school to school, but the common thread is to increase interest in innovation and entrepreneurship.

Innovation was added to the curriculum of compulsory schools in 1999, and was part of the information and technical sector. In the curriculum it is viewed as a cross-disciplinary subject, without being given a designated time in the curriculum. School principals have the independent option of attaining these goals by integrating them into various subjects.

In the law and the curriculum, there are no direct references in regard to the terms 'entrepreneur' or 'entrepreneurship'. The emphasis is on points such as independent thinking, independence, creating and developing new ideas, and design. Despite this, a number of programmes introduced into the schools are based on using the terminology 'entrepreneurship'.

There has recently been considerable development in producing various programmes and materials, especially for compulsory schools, that assist teachers in integrating innovation and entrepreneurship into subject matter. These programmes are described in the Icelandic chapter: e.g., Innovation and natural science – a four-year programme on innovation for compulsory schools; Young Enterprise; InnoEd, a European project with the aim of developing a creative process of innovation, the production of teaching materials as well as different competitions; Young Entrepreneur Factory – a project to provide entrepreneurship education in rural areas; websites; special programmes for female young entrepreneurship; and the Enterprise Olympics. The last-mentioned programme is targeting the 16-18 age group where six countries participate in competing for best results in a business model. Many of these activities are in general aiming to create a knowledge-based economy. As in Denmark and Finland, there are few programmes directed at young individuals outside the school system.

Iceland has carried out a survey similar to that of Sweden investigating to what extent different schools work with entrepreneurship education. In general, the figures are lower than for Sweden. However, the terms ‘entrepreneurship’ and/or ‘enterprising’ are used slightly more in Iceland. Close to 30% of compulsory schools use the terms. The most common descriptions of what the term means were to develop the enterprising and creative student. The meaning of the term in itself has a strong correlation with innovation and development in teaching methodologies.

In the Swedish study, there are similar results regarding the meaning of the terms ‘entrepreneurship’ and/or ‘enterprising’, namely developing enterprising and creative students, but the term ‘innovation’ (general creation of new) is less used in Sweden. Instead, ‘school development’ and ‘to develop independent students’ are used more. This can partly be attributed to the fact that the Icelandic curriculum includes the term ‘innovation’.

When asked which teaching method the terms ‘entrepreneurship’ and/or ‘enterprising’ were most related to, 59.1% responded that they are mainly associated with developing innovative and inventive abilities in students. Those who believed that it related to more free and student-active working forms accounted for 40.9%. Primary driving forces, according to the survey, are the schools and the teachers more than outside actors such as communities or local businesses. As in Sweden, the respondents prefer to have such activities mainly at upper levels of compulsory schools.

As regards the answers from upper secondary schools, the figures will be even higher, i.e., 55% of the schools use the terms ‘entrepreneurship’ and/or

‘enterprising’, compared with 78% in the Swedish study. The survey also revealed that all those who responded believe that teaching entrepreneurship and/or enterprising develops the enterprising and creative student. When asked which teaching method the terms ‘entrepreneurship’ and/or ‘enterprising’ were most related to, 85.7% responded that they are mainly associated with developing innovative and inventive abilities in students. Student and youth companies came next with 50%. This is different from the Swedish study, where “students and youth companies” are at the top of the list with 57%, followed by “education about and the collaboration between local working and business life” with 51%. All vocational students and students of business administration and economics receive instruction in this field. It may be concluded that other students in other fields receive little or no education in this field. In Sweden, 77% of schools offer this kind of instruction, which is much higher than in Iceland.

Recently, there has been an awakening in regard to the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation in Iceland. Part of this development is, for example, a new policy concerning the structure of the research and development (R&D) support system, a focus-arena of entrepreneurs concerned with the interests and needs of small, high-tech companies, and the Entrepreneurs’ Parliament, an event that was held in connection with this book. The conclusions came up with measures concerning education, the strengthening of innovation and technology and new financial instruments. As a result, a new programme was announced to start at the end of 2004.

## **Norway**

There has been strong growth in the Norwegian GDP from the early 1980s. This is mainly due to the development of the oil industry. In 2002, Norway’s GDP was 47,900 USD per capita, which is by far the highest GDP among the Nordic countries. According to the statistics, Norway seems to have a high employment rate for young people especially for individuals between 16 and 19 years old. This could partly be explained by how the statistics are produced rather than by there being a real difference compared to other Nordic countries. However, the relatively low unemployment rate for the same individuals indicates that the employment rate for young individuals is slightly higher in Norway compared to other Nordic countries. An interesting fact is that the female unemployment rate is lower than the rate for men of all age groups, not least for individuals up to 25 years of age.

Concerning self-employment, studies have found that approximately 25% of the Norwegian population prefers self-employment to organisational

employment. For the period 2000-2003, the TEA index in Norway decreased from 11.9% to 7.5%. Thus Norway has experienced a decline in entrepreneurial activity.

In 2003, the Norwegian government published an innovation plan called 'From idea to values – the Government's plan for a holistic innovation policy'. Entrepreneurship is one of five prioritised areas in this plan. The Government's goal is to increase the number of business start-ups, particularly those having growth ambitions and potential. To achieve this, one measure is to strengthen entrepreneurship in the educational system. Following this innovation policy plan, the Government's strategy plan for entrepreneurship in the educational system was thus established and is now to be implemented.

The Government considers a strategy for entrepreneurship in the educational system as a strategy to strengthen individuals' ability to utilise possibilities in industry and other parts of the community. The Government's vision is that the Norwegian educational system will be among the best in the world when it comes to entrepreneurial training. However, it is too early to see what will come out of this strategy even if its ambitions are very high. It is a holistic approach for all educational levels and also involves how to increase co-operation between school owners, teachers and the surrounding society.

As regards entrepreneurship education, thoughts in Norway are similar to those in Finland on how this type of training should be carried out at different levels in the school system and they emphasise increased awareness in the early stages and developing skills and more training in the later stages.

Entrepreneurship in elementary and upper secondary school is included to different extents, and the dissemination varies among the counties. The interpretation of the term 'entrepreneurship' is also different among teachers and schools. Thus, the existing initiatives in Norway are, as in other Nordic countries, often based on local programmes, with a couple of exceptions. These are Entrepreneurship on the Timetable and the First Lego league. Entrepreneurship on the Timetable has been carried out in a number of counties and evaluated by the Nordland Research Institute. This evaluation pinpoints that the number of students involved varies a lot between schools and that it has not so far created a more entrepreneurial culture in the schools. The relationships with the surrounding society, as well as sharing experiences between the schools involved, have only been developed to a limited extent.

In the Norwegian chapter, a survey of all universities and state university colleges has been carried out concerning how they are working in the field of entrepreneurship. There are a lot of topics involved in different programmes in this area at universities, such as, business development, capital need and

financing, creativity, market strategy and entrepreneurial process. Based on the results, it seems that Norway at university level has a heavy focus on business plans and elements included in such plans. In Norway there are also several independent organisations operating within university and/or university college education. Three of them, Europrise, Gründerskolen and the Venture Cup, are briefly discussed in the Norwegian chapter.

One of the challenges for including entrepreneurship in educational training is the lack of courses for increasing present and future teachers' knowledge on entrepreneurship as a pedagogical tool. REAL Norway is a new initiative to increase this knowledge. The aim of REAL Norway is to develop a professional and pedagogical method for entrepreneurship to be used in the educational system – from primary school to university level – and among community-based organisations. REAL Norway is divided into three different programmes:

- **Mini-REAL** is a development programme where teachers and pupils in primary schools create and implement a community plan within their classrooms or schools in Norway.
- **Middle-REAL** is the programme for comprehensive schools. The programme is developed in order to provide the pupils with hands-on experience in three areas: 1) being an effective citizen of the school community; 2) being an effective part of an enterprise; and 3) affecting the broader community (e.g. family, neighbourhood, town or some segment of the population) in a positive manner.
- **REAL** is the programme for students at upper secondary and university/university college levels. The purpose of REAL at this level is to guide students through the entrepreneurial process. The process includes: 1) self-assessment to determine the students' potential strengths; 2) external analysis to identify needs and trends in the local economy; 3) researching/writing a business plan for the student's chosen business idea; and 4) start-up support for participants who choose to open and operate enterprises.

By August 2005, the material for all three REAL programmes will be completed, and the Sogn and Fjordane University College has started the training of teachers who want to learn this pedagogical method for including entrepreneurship in the educational system.

Although the report mainly focuses on entrepreneurship education, it is important to see what initiatives/support systems there are for graduates with a desire to become entrepreneurs. If the emphasis on entrepreneurship in the educational system is successful, many future graduates will choose a career as

self-employed instead of being employed in an organisation. The overall goal of youth policy in Norway is to provide secure living conditions and a safe environment for children and young people as they grow up. Youth-related efforts directed towards business and industry are primarily focused on providing job opportunities for young people in rural areas, and providing the necessary conditions to enable them to establish their own businesses. Emphasis is on facilitating entrepreneurship, creative ideas and innovation. An evaluation of the regional policy directed towards young people aged 14 to 30 in rural Norway concluded that initiatives related to this policy are still at an early stage.

Concerning youth initiatives outside the educational system, one actor is Innovation Norway. There are four different programmes carried out by Innovation Norway that are targeted towards young individuals. One of these programmes is The Alchemist, which is offered to individuals aged between 18 and 35 and who have a business idea they want to develop into a new business. The method is a number of seminars in which each individual should participate and for which each participant will have a mentor allocated. Guidance is given during the whole programme. In recent years, about 40 individuals annually have participated in the programme. A relatively high proportion of the participants have started a business even though many of them claimed that they would have started one regardless of the programme. Nearly 70% said that they thought that the programme made them better entrepreneurs.

Etablererstipend is a programme that also includes the opportunity for young individuals to get financial support. In 2003, roughly 15% of the participants, or about 120 individuals, were 30 years old or younger. Another general method that focuses more on young individuals is the programme Hurtigkasse, from which a total amount of 20,000 NOK can be received. The money should be used to investigate the potential for a new product or whether it can be patented. Finally, Hva vil du? is a pilot project in a county and which aims to let young individuals realise their ideas. The target group is newly graduated students. Since the project has just started, it is not possible to report the number of participants.

There is also a private initiative in Norway, Solofondet, trying to help young individuals establishing companies. On average, it annually provides support to approximately 140 projects. To summarise, one can see that these programmes do not involve very many of the young individuals in the different age groups. They could of course be important anyway.

To summarise, Norway has, like other countries, for many years experienced a number of projects and programmes that are normally locally or regionally initiated. There are also a number of national initiatives emerging and now there

is also a national strategy trying to get entrepreneurship education integrated throughout the whole school system. Projects like Young Enterprise and the Venture Cup also exist in Norway. Young Enterprise Norway is engaged in activities at elementary school, upper secondary school and university levels. There are also a number of projects more or less aiming to stimulate young entrepreneurship even if they are limited in how many young people are involved in the different programmes. The Norwegian chapter ends with eight recommendations for stimulating more entrepreneurship among young people.

## **Sweden**

In 2003, Sweden had the lowest GDP per capita among the Nordic countries. The unemployment rate among young people is fairly high compared to Norway but low compared to Finland. Education has become an important means of establishing young people on the labour market and the objective of the Government's policy is that 50 % of an age group will have started university education by the age of 25. The self-employment rate among young males is four times that of females for individuals younger than 25, 3.8% compared to 1.0%, even if the overall self-employment rates for Sweden are fairly low. Entrepreneurial activity is also low according to the TEA-index. At 4.1, it ranks Sweden as 34th among 40 countries. It also places Sweden last among the Nordic countries. Swedish young people's attitude towards entrepreneurship is that becoming an entrepreneur is not a favoured career. Only 29% of young people aged between 18 and 30 would choose to become an entrepreneur as the most preferred way of making their living.

Before 2005, Sweden had no national strategy on entrepreneurship education. Therefore, the number of nationally initiated programmes and projects is limited. Interest in stimulating entrepreneurship in Sweden started at the end of the 1990s and has primarily been an industrial and trade policy question, also concerning stimulation of entrepreneurship in school. Since 1998, NUTEK, the national agency that handles issues concerning industrial policies, has proposed or implemented measures in order to stimulate young entrepreneurship. Between 1998 and 2000, NUTEK ran the project 'Entrepreneurship in school', whose purpose was to increase the school's interest in entrepreneurial approaches to work and to develop the students' enterprising qualities. In 2002, NUTEK developed a three-year-long national entrepreneurship programme concerning young people. The purpose was to change young people's attitudes towards entrepreneurship and mainly concerned the educational system. The 12 million SEK budget was mainly divided among various projects that are run all over the country with different objectives and target groups.

Concerning educational policy measures, the curricula for pre-schools, elementary and upper secondary schools all list fundamental aspects that are important for the enterprising individual. These include: the ability to solve problems; the spirit of initiative; and the ability to be flexible and creative. For that reason, it has not been considered necessary to have additional directions in order to stimulate entrepreneurship in elementary and upper secondary schools. An important step has, however, been taken through the proposition for upper secondary school presented in spring 2004. The Government wants to extend the generic perspective, that must be considered while designing programme objectives and course plans, with an entrepreneurship perspective. Among other things, it is emphasised that upper secondary school “should supply knowledge that prepares for employment as well as self-employment and an active part in society. Through an entrepreneurship perspective, students’ spirit of initiative, creativity and pro-activity can be stimulated.”

The lack of a national strategy does not mean that there are no ongoing projects and programmes in the school system. On the contrary, there are rather a lot on a local or regional basis. In total, 28 regional projects/concepts or activities were identified and they involved 17 of the 21 counties. A survey carried out in the municipalities also showed that 88% of the respondents knew of projects/measures that were conducted in their municipality in order to stimulate entrepreneurship among young people aged between 6 and 18. Three regional projects and one local project are described in the chapter.

The most frequent projects/measures used are nationally spread concepts that are mainly initiated by private organisations or individuals. The most widespread is Junior Achievement that was found in 76% of the municipalities. Junior Achievement was imported in 1980 and involves 10% of the students at upper secondary school. During one year, through the use of a student company, they learn how to start and run a business. Small Genius is, after Junior Achievement, the most established concept in Sweden. Through the survey of municipalities, Small Genius was found in 30% of them. Small Genius was created by the inventor Anders Rosén in 1993 and the work within the concepts is carried out on a voluntary basis, by teachers, invention associations and other driving forces. The target group is children aged between 6 and 10. The objective of Small Genius is to stimulate children’s creativity, spirit of initiative and self-confidence. The children learn to identify and solve problems. Nine nationally spread concepts were identified and are all described in the chapter. It is, however, important to accentuate that there are not many employees within the different organisations.

In order to examine how political intentions and the projects/concepts that were identified are reflected in school, two surveys involving almost all Swedish elementary and upper secondary schools were carried out. The surveys are described in the chapter. The results show that, at early stages, namely, in elementary school, around 20% of all schools have some projects that could be defined as being in this area while, at later stages, namely, in upper secondary school, this figure increases to up to 80%. As in the other countries, it is about awareness and the development of students' fundamental soft personal qualities at earlier stages and more about training and learning entrepreneurial skills at later stages. Interestingly enough, schools in the northern part of Sweden are more active in this area than those in the south of Sweden. The counties with most small businesses and start-ups are those with the lowest activity in the school system and especially concerning elementary schools. One reason could be that communities and regions with high levels of entrepreneurship do not regard learning about entrepreneurship in school with the same importance while the reverse is true for regions with low levels of entrepreneurship.

On asking headmasters, teachers and persons responsible for the municipality business sector whether it is the task of schools to stimulate children's interest in businesses and business management, they express more doubts about early stages than later stages. Representatives from upper secondary schools and communities have a more positive approach here than representatives from elementary schools. About 60% of the respondents from upper secondary schools and municipalities thought it was absolutely the school's task to provide knowledge about entrepreneurship and terms for running small enterprises. Among the respondents from elementary schools only 18% thought it was absolutely the school's task.

There are a limited number of activities outside the school system aimed at young individuals. The general approach is that young people can apply for measures of a more general nature. One of the other few projects to mention is Open for Business that, at the end of 2004, existed in four communities. Open for Business is a project that originated in Canada and aims to work with young individuals leaving the elementary school system. It is about counselling and learning how to start a business. The idea is to test the idea on the market and then to react to and experience from it. A similar approach is the *Communicare* project for unemployed young individuals. Interestingly, individuals responsible for business development in Swedish communities think it is important to stimulate young individuals, mainly from 25 up to 35 years old, to become entrepreneurs. At the same time, very few projects exist for these individuals.

This is also the case when looking at the special regional growth programmes that have been instituted in Sweden for the period 2004 to 2007.

In June 2004 a new innovation strategy, 'Innovative Sweden - a strategy for growth through renewal' was presented. The strategy was jointly presented by the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, and the Ministry of Education and Science. In order to promote positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship, the strategy emphasises the need for joint efforts from different sectors of society – the political establishment, the business sector, the educational system and public agencies – at national, regional and local levels. In order to increase young people's interest in entrepreneurship and to contribute to positive attitudes, the strategy emphasises that entrepreneurship needs to be given a natural place in school and that the co-operation between school and enterprises needs to be developed. Upper secondary school should prepare students both for employment and for running their own businesses. As a result of the strategy, NUTEK will initiate a three-year national programme with a 45 million SEK budget for 2005. The programme concerns mainly students in elementary and upper secondary schools, and at university level. Through the strategy, the possibility of achieving the current youth policy objectives concerning entrepreneurship is increased. The objectives are: an increased number of young people with positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship in different forms; knowledge about the terms of entrepreneurship; and increasing the number of new companies with young entrepreneurs.

### **Comparing the situation in the Nordic countries**

In the different chapters, a context description is provided concerning both the overall general situation and the specific situation for young individuals. We will not repeat all these figures and indicators here but simply make some comparisons for a limited number of variables. One can see big variations for different variables. The size of GDP per capita is almost twice as high in Norway as in Sweden. Iceland has the highest participation rate and Finland the lowest. Public sector employment is high in all Nordic countries but highest in Finland where over 50% are employed in this sector. Finland's unemployment rate is nearly three times that of Iceland. Sweden and Finland have high self-employment rates probably due to a large proportion of sole companies while Iceland has a TEA-index that is three times as high as that of Sweden. In conclusion, it is important to realise that one has to take the specific context for each country into consideration when making a policy strategy for young entrepreneurship.

We have data for variables such as different ages and gender from the individuals countries studied. The following table illustrates some of that data.

**Table: Data for young individuals in the different countries**

	20-24 years	25-29 years	30-34 years	Total
Labour force participation rate, DK	77.4%	83.7%	87.6%	77.8%
Labour force participation rate, FI	67.1%	83.6%	87.0%	66.2%
Labour force participation rate, IC	76.2%	88.4%	92.6%	82.8%
Labour force participation rate, NO	74.3%	81.0%	89.0%	74.0%
Labour force participation rate, SW	65.9%	82.3%	87.1%	78.1%
Unemployment rate, DK	3.9%	4.8%	4.3%	3.9%
Unemployment rate, FI	17.5%	9.9%	7.6%	9.0%
Unemployment rate, IC	5.1%	3.2%	2.8%	3.3%
Unemployment rate, NO	5.5%	5.1%	3.8%	3.9%
Unemployment rate, SW	9.7%	6.4%	4.9%	5.0%
Self-employment rate, DK	1.4%	3.0%	4.6%	3.9%
Self-employment rate, FI	1.8%	3.0%	4.3%	9.0%
Self-employment rate, IC	1.1%	3.7%	6.8%	7.3%
Self-employment rate, NO	2.0%	3.0%	6.0%	6.7%
Self-employment rate, SW	2.5%	5.2%	7.3%	9.4%

Compared to the figures for the total population, Sweden and, to some extent, Iceland show low participation rates among individuals between 20 and 24 years old. Otherwise, for the other ages of young individuals, the participation rates are relatively high. High unemployment rates for young individuals are mainly shown for Finland and Sweden and for individuals below 25 years of age, while self-employment rates are low for all countries for individuals below 30 years of age.

## **Creating a holistic strategy for young entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship policy is about public measures to stimulate individuals to become entrepreneurs. Measures taken could affect motivation among individuals, increase their skills and create good opportunities for starting and running businesses. Individuals could, by themselves or together with others, start a business. Before becoming entrepreneurs, individuals could, for example, work in public or private organisations, be unemployed or be a student somewhere in the school system. Everyone could behave entrepreneurially while relatively few will start a business. A holistic approach in entrepreneurship policy would be to take measures in all three areas: motivation, skills and opportunity.

Furthermore, how a holistic policy could be developed depends on the context that exists in a country, region or local community.

## **Policy Implications**

This book is about entrepreneurship policy for young individuals. As has been described, all Nordic countries today have or are creating a nationwide strategy for entrepreneurship education. However, this process has just started and there are still many problems to overcome. Even if entrepreneurship is now on the curriculum in the school system, a relatively low proportion of all students will be involved in the projects and programmes that today are ongoing in the school systems. Furthermore, there is still a lack of teacher-training and of teaching material related to the subject. One can also see that, for many disciplines, there is no great interest in this subject even if examples are given about the use of entrepreneurship education in, for example, mathematics, geography and religion. The positive development is that there are currently many projects and programmes taking place and that, to an increasing degree, they also involve the surrounding society. There could therefore be many opportunities for the Nordic countries to learn from each other.

However, young individuals drop out of the school system at different levels and we do not find any strategy for them in the different countries. Nor is there any real intention to follow what will happen with this group considering, for example, the number of start-ups or to what degree service-providers invest in young individuals. The general approach is to regard these individuals like all other individuals trying to start and run a company. Few exceptions to this rule have been found. Despite that, it is obvious that to a certain degree there are

higher unemployment rates among young individuals and a lack of resources. In this respect, for most countries, there is also a gender problem since young male individuals have higher employment and self-employment rates than young female individuals. One explanation given is that young female individuals to a greater extent continue in the education system longer than young male individuals. But this does not seem to result in a more positive development later on for young female individuals.

Considering this overall picture what could be done in the countries to improve the situation further? We suggest the following:

### ***1. Define the young entrepreneurship policy area***

All governments should define the area of interest with regard to young individuals. Regardless of whether measures taken should not be aimed only at young individuals but should have a more general character, it is important to follow up to what extent this group would be considered in the system. Therefore, service-providers and similar organisations should describe to what extent they support this group and results should be obtained for both genders. The problems seem to be large for young individuals below 25 years of age considering the level of employment, unemployment or self-employment. This seems to be a general problem in all the Nordic countries. There is a lack of knowledge of how the target group is defined and what level of resources is invested in this group.

### ***2. Create measures for young individuals leaving schools at different levels***

We see a need for a specific strategy for young individuals leaving the school system at different levels. Many of them lack the opportunity to get good working experience. Others have learned about entrepreneurship in school and need services and support in the continuing processes outside school. We need more projects and programmes in this area in the Nordic countries. There are a few exceptions in Norway and Sweden but much more has to be done.

### ***3. Create a policy consisting of measures concerning motivational, skills and opportunities aspects***

From a definition of what the area of interest is in the various countries, we would like to see a holistic approach taken into account for measures in the areas of motivation, skills and opportunity. There is a need to create objectives in such

a strategic approach and to determine how these objectives should be achieved. We assume that such a strategic programme would vary across the Nordic countries since there are different contexts in each country. This is really a result of combining the first two suggestions.

#### ***4. Create and develop the area of entrepreneurship education***

The area of entrepreneurship education has developed rapidly in the countries over the last decade. Nowadays we see strategic approaches in all the countries even if the number of years of experience differs a lot. However, there is still a small proportion of students participating in this type of education, a lack of teacher-training and more demand for co-operation with the surrounding society. We believe that the process will continue and that the countries could, to a high degree, learn from each other.

#### ***5. Carry out surveys like those in Iceland and Sweden regarding entrepreneurship education in schools***

It is important to follow up how the development continues in the school systems. Questions should concern definitions of entrepreneurship education, how many students are involved in different projects and at what levels. Regional aspects and different disciplines are also of importance here. These types of survey should be carried out on a regular basis and also at the same time in all Nordic countries.

#### ***6. Create systematic evaluations of results from measures taken***

There is a lack of systematic evaluation in all the countries. One can see a great need for more accurate estimations of what the results from different measures taken are. Here there is a need for methodological development.

#### ***7. Create more role models for young entrepreneurs***

There is a lack of role models for young entrepreneurs outside the school system. Intentions exist in Finland and Sweden even if these are private initiatives: there is a nationwide competition in Finland and a television competition programme in Sweden. We think it is important to have more examples in the media and special types of award.

### ***8. Carry out a Nordic entrepreneurial week for young entrepreneurs annually***

An entrepreneurial week has been introduced in Norway and such a week has been carried out in Sweden for almost ten years now. We suggest that a special entrepreneurial week for young entrepreneurs and young researchers in the field should be carried out annually in each country. During the week, awards for both research and successful entrepreneurs could be handed out. In this respect, the Young Entrepreneurial Week that has existed in Sweden for a number of years can be developed.

### ***9. Develop a start-up grant for young individuals to develop their business ideas over six months***

Many young individuals leaving school with interesting business ideas have difficulty in obtaining financial resources. We suggest that a project is started in the Nordic countries to give young individuals with interesting business ideas the opportunity to develop their ideas over six months. Such a grant could mean better and solid business ideas and more successful start-ups at the next stage. The grant should not be used for start-ups but for development costs. It should not be mainly for academic spin-offs.

### ***10. Stimulate research in young entrepreneurship***

One conclusion from this report is that there is a lack of research in the field of young entrepreneurship. There are very few extensive research projects taking place in this area in the Nordic countries. We can see a lot of interesting issues that should be considered by researchers, such as start-up procedures and survival rates, the type of business young entrepreneurs start, how innovative their business ideas are, the effects of entrepreneurship education and to what extent young individuals are of interest to traditional service-providers.