

3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

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Policy Framework

Entrepreneurship education in Austria is primarily regulated through the [Austrian Strategy on Lifelong Learning](#) and the curricula of schools and prevocational school, accompanied by a set of well-established support mechanisms for implementation. Austria has developed a **diverse range of entrepreneurship programmes at the national and regional level**. Initiatives are available on different levels of education targeting students, teachers and the schools themselves.

Both, the **governmental institutions and the institutions of the social partners** play an important role in fostering entrepreneurship skills. As a cross-curricular educational goal, elements of entrepreneurship education are already taught in all school subjects.

[Entrepreneur's Skills Certificate® \(Unternehmerführerschein®\)](#)

'The Entrepreneur's Skills Certificate® goes back to an initiative of the [Austrian Economic Chambers](#) (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKÖ) and is offered as a **supplementary qualification from grade eight in school**. It is based on the firm belief that entrepreneurship and business knowledge can already be fostered during school years. Entrepreneurship education turns students into responsible and entrepreneurial individuals and helps them to acquire the necessary skills and attitudes. This successful model was recognized by the European Commission in 2006 and the umbrella association of European chambers of commerce Eurochambres in 2011 as a best-practice example of entrepreneurship education. A reliable standard, online examinations and a certificate recognized at European level caused the dissemination of the Entrepreneur's Skills Certificate®. Tens of thousands of students are annually ESC® trained and certified in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.'

[Entrepreneurial Skills Pass](#)

The Entrepreneurial Skills Pass (ESP) is an **international qualification that certifies students (15-19 years old), who have had a real entrepreneurship experience**

and have gained the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies in order for them to start a business or to be successfully employed. ESP includes a **full-year in-school mini-company experience**, a self-assessment of entrepreneurial competencies, an examination of business, economic and financial knowledge and the **possibility to access further opportunities** offered by small and large businesses, top higher institutions and international organisations across Europe.

One of the most innovative aspects of the ESP is the establishment of **National Focus Groups (NFG)** and the organization of **networking activities** at national level. The NFGs include individuals from a variety of public and private organizations providing input, raising awareness and supporting to disseminate ESP.'

Junior Chamber Austria - Junge Wirtschaft Österreich (JWÖ)

Junior Chamber Austria - Junge Wirtschaft Österreich (JWÖ) is an association of young entrepreneurs between the age of 18 to 40 years. JWÖ is part of the [Austrian Economic Chambers](#) (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKÖ) and provides different kinds of **services and lobbying** for better regulations as well as **national and international networking opportunities** with more than 600 events per year all over Austria.

The organisation provides information on current entrepreneurial topics on its **website**, its **newsletter** as well as in the biannual **magazine** "die junge wirtschaft". The junior chamber with its 9 provincial organisations offers plenty of events with keynote speakers, **seminars and workshops focusing on how to improve different management skills**. Furthermore, the participants can take the chance on sharing their experiences with others and develop new business ideas.

Formal learning

Entrepreneurship is a major concern of the [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research](#), which supports numerous measures in cooperation with other ministries and institutions.

[Entrepreneurship Education](#) signifies developing pupil's own ideas and imparting the skills to implement these ideas. It encompasses **all educational measures for awakening entrepreneurial attitudes and skills**, i.e. the development of certain values, attitudes and personal qualifications that enable the establishment of a business but are also essential for dependent work. In a narrower sense, entrepreneurship education means the development of specialised knowledge, skills and abilities that are necessary for successful business start-up and management as well as for an independent, self-reliant lifestyle.

Cross-curricular Educational Goal and Specialised Schools

As a **cross-curricular educational goal**, elements of entrepreneurship education occur in all subjects. **Some school types furthermore teach specialised subjects** such as business administration, business accounting/accounting, economics, business and law, project

management, quality management, case studies, business management exercises, personality development and social competence, practice firm, controlling and annual financial statements. Entrepreneurship Education is implemented most strongly in **commercial secondary schools**, where it is anchored in the curriculum of the commercial academy in the cluster Entrepreneurship, Economics and Management. The training focus on entrepreneurship and management is offered at more than one third of the commercial academies. Colleges at commercial academies with entrepreneurship and management offer graduates of other types of schools a post-secondary 4-semester special training.

The TRIO Model

The **TRIO model of entrepreneurship education developed in Austria** comprises three levels:

- **Level I ('Core Entrepreneurship')**: the learning of **core competences** for entrepreneurial and professional independence as well as for an independent private lifestyle takes place. **Business models** for ideas of entrepreneurial, professional and private challenges are developed and implemented.
- **Level II ('Entrepreneurial Culture')**: emphasises the promotion of a **culture of independence, openness to innovation**, empathy and **sustainability** as well as an encouraging culture of relationships and communication.
- **Level III ('Entrepreneurial Civic Education')**: emphasises the strengthening of a culture of maturity, autonomy and **responsibility for social challenges**.

The Youth Start Entrepreneurial Challenges Programme

The learning programme, based on the TRIO model, **offers learning with small and large challenges across all grades and subjects** (starting from primary to upper secondary, ages 7-19). It consists of different modules which combinedly make up the programme and aim to empower every child and young person through holistic learning. The Programme was developed as part of a cooperation between the Ministries of Education of Austria, Luxembourg, Portugal and Slovenia, with PEEP, Danish Entrepreneurship Foundation, KPH Vienna/Krems, eesi and ifte.at.

Non-formal and informal learning

Alongside school and the social partners, out-of-school youth work plays a major role in fostering young people's entrepreneurial competences.

WIK:I – What I can do through informal learning ([WIK:I - Was ich kann durch informelles Lernen](#))

WIK:I is a **low-threshold model on making basic and key skills informally obtained** by young people and young adults **visible and recognised**. It's a flagship project of the [Department of Families and Youth at the Federal Chancellery](#) and is carried out in cooperation with the Alliance of Austrian Educational Work ([Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke](#)) and the Federal Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres ([Bundesnetzwerk Österreichischer Jugendinfos](#), BÖJI).

Methods

WIK:I **enables young people to record and present their informally acquired competences**. The focus lies on informal learning among peers, in leisure time, in family, sports, voluntary work, hobbies, jobs and others. Qualified WIK:I portfolio guidance supports young people in **systematically recording their informal learning experiences**. Starting from collecting and describing personally significant activities ('What I do'), young people finally arrive at identifying and describing the competences they have acquired ('What I can do'), always keeping the link to concrete activities in mind ('I can do that because').

The WIK:I procedure is a **guided self-assessment** in which young people align their strengths and resources in a process of being empowered and stimulated to self-reflection. The work is orientation towards dialogue and group processes (peer learning) as well as biographical learning.

Benefits and results

The benefit of creating a portfolio for young people lies in **making them aware of informally acquired competences and in gaining orientation for further education and career planning**, but above all in **empowering them to present** their personal competences (for example in job interviews).

The **WIK:I competence portfolio for young people** is a folder containing the worksheets (including data sheets, checklists, questionnaires, posters) that were created during the workshop and during the participants' own work. It provides participants with a **competence profile** (naming and describing the competences), an **action plan** (indication of next steps, need for resources and support, timetable), and the competence description or **proof of competence** for job applications. The focus of the portfolio is **individually aligned with the respective goal** of its creation. The portfolio can be used as a **supplementary application document**.

Your projects ([EureProjekte](#))

The aim of [EureProjekte](#) is for young people to experience their own effectiveness and to put themselves to the test, with failure allowed. At the same time, young people's innovation and commitment are made visible. Young people aged 14 to 24 with a **project idea can apply for grants of up to € 500** (€ 750 for projects of the annual focus). In addition to this initial funding,

they also receive an **individual project consultation** with employees of the youth information centres in the Federal States.

EureProjekte is an initiative of the [Department for Families and Youth at the Federal Chancellery](#) and is carried out by the [National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres](#).

Junior Enterprise Austria ([JA Austria](#))

Junior Enterprise Austria **offers pupils the opportunity to set up their own real company for the duration of one school year**. Students aged 15 to 19 can thus offer self-developed products and services on the real market. They independently develop their own business idea and go through all the phases of a real business project from brainstorming and team building to planning, setting up a business plan (not obligatory), production, marketing and sales to closing the deal. By working independently, the young people learn about the challenges of the working world, acquire basic economic knowledge and social skills that are important for professional life. **A junior teacher coaches each junior team**. In addition, **business people are available to advise** the pupils as experts, thus guaranteeing the project's realism and practical relevance. Junior teams can register their companies in the Junior Database each year until the end of November. The Junior Company Programme is **carried out as a school event**, often as part of an elective subject. For successfully starting their business, the **teams receive share certificates worth a maximum of € 800**, which they can sell to build up their start-up capital.

The project is inter alia funded by the [Austrian Economic Chambers](#) (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKÖ), the [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research](#), and the [Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology](#).

[Global Entrepreneurship Week](#)

Austria takes part in the [Global Entrepreneurship Week](#). In Austrian schools, **the whole November stands in the sign of the Global Entrepreneurship Week**. The idea is to give young people the possibility to develop own ideas and to find new ways. Young people and teachers should be inspired to develop the entrepreneurial spirit.

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

EESI Impulse Centre and Competence Compass

In order to further strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit, the [Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research](#) has set up the EESI Impulse Centre ([eesi-impulszentrum](#)), the task of which is to work together with the EESI multipliers of the federal provinces to **promote specialised entrepreneurship education as well as positive attitudes towards entrepreneurial activity among pupils and teachers**.

Certified EE schools are awarded for excelling in the field of entrepreneurship education. It is an ÖNORM certification organised and juried by the EESI team.

Furthermore, a **competence compass** (profile for entrepreneurship teachers) was developed, which is available to schools and teachers and can be used for self-testing and as a control element.

Moreover, the [Youth Start](#) Entrepreneurial Challenges Programme, based on the TRIO model, **offers teaching material and challenges across all grades and subjects.**