

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL INITIATIVES IN EDUCATION:

“B-KIDS BUSINESS KIDS”

Initiative Analysis

INTRODUCTION

With the support of the Association Study Center City of Foligno and in collaboration with the Primary School Escola Veïnat of Salt (Catalonia), the Primary School of Magione (Italy) got a European Union funding under the Erasmus + KA2 for the project "Business Kids (B-KIDS¹)".

The aim of the project is to develop students' entrepreneurial education, encouraging young students' key attitudes, skills and competencies from primary school throughout life.

Both primary schools involved in B-KIDS argue promoting entrepreneurial mind-set entails two key elements:

- a more specific focus on the learning enterprise skills on how to create and manage a business providing early knowledge of and contact with the world of business, and some understanding of the role of entrepreneurs in the community;
- a broader concept of learning entrepreneurial skills focused on the key competencies that play a key role in fostering young learners' democratic and active citizenship.

Assuming “children need the chance to develop lateral thinking, team work, risk-taking and creativity” (Carl Hopkins), B-KIDS claims preparing young students for the challenges of the future workplace is a key element of the 21st century education.

“Much entrepreneurship education practice tends to be ad hoc, varies vastly in quantity and quality, is not treated systematically in the curriculum and has relied heavily on the enthusiasm and commitment of individual teachers and some schools. Some activity is structured and ambitious, much is not” (European Commission 2010).

So, going into business is not just about learning a business, it is not merely concerned with the creation and management of a new business. In fact, besides developing

entrepreneurial attitude, the core benefits of entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneur-building activities involves fostering kids' imagination, creative thinking and autonomous and active forms of learning.

Therefore, being so transversal, the entrepreneurial culture can be basis for the acquisition and development of key competences for lifelong learning, in particular: communication, learning to learn, autonomy and personal initiative.

Considering that entrepreneurial culture is one of the most important mission of Europe 2020, and taking into account the role played by the entrepreneurial mind-set for the development of the European economy, we do claim steps should be taken to make entrepreneurship a priority from initial teacher education programs throughout life.

On the ground of the above, entrepreneurial culture should be considered as a lifelong learning process and a key educational path. So, entrepreneur-building activities have to be systematically structured at each level of educational, from early ages to MBA.

How can entrepreneurship be taught at Primary and Secondary Schools?

The European approach is mainly based on two main approaches: one is based on teaching entrepreneurship as a separate subject, the second focuses on integrating the entrepreneurial culture into the different subjects.

BKIDS wants experiment new ways of producing, documenting and disseminating entrepreneurial practice based on *authentic experiences*. In fact, B.KIDS aims at promoting a very realistic approach based on creating practice field of entrepreneurial actions.

So, the project intends to experiment the integration of the entrepreneurship in the curriculum, assisting both teachers and pupils to incorporate entrepreneurial culture into

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existing school curricula. Not only pupils can benefit from the project. In fact, BKIDS has also played a crucial role in assisting teachers to improve their competencies in the area of entrepreneurship education and integrating entrepreneurship into the existing curriculum.

Considering the strong need for experimenting innovating ways aimed at integrating the entrepreneurial mind-set into the existing curricula, it is important to point out that the project will not deliver intellectual outputs, but raw material which can be a reference point for structuring a solid entrepreneurial culture. In fact, throughout the project, a large part of documents (all based on pupils' authentic experience) showing both Primary Schools' experiences have been collected and shared.

The Project also has a strong community approach, as local private organizations have supported the project acting as pupils' facilitators. Having a strong focus on local and European community, we do assume BKIDS also provides inspiration and case scenarios encouraging other schools to engage in the full entrepreneurial process.

Since BKIDS aims at making education accessible and attractive, the teaching material will be accessible by all students even at home. In fact, it will make an extensive use of ICTS (ETwinning open digital educational platform , Skype, Facebook, email etc.).

Entrepreneurial competencies

B-KIDS specifically aims to:

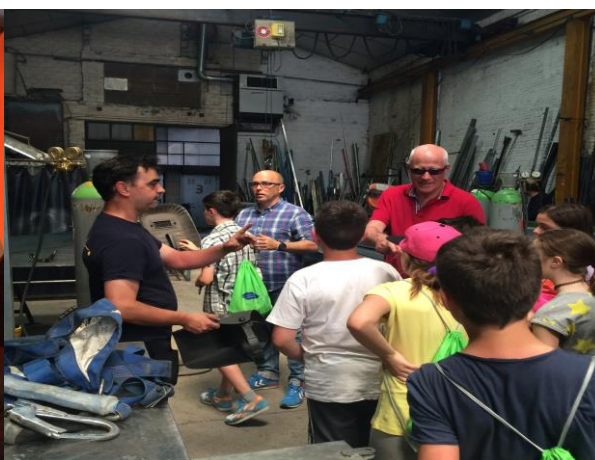
- foster students and teachers' creativity
- improve pupils' risk-taking and problem solving strategies
- develop teachers, students and their parents' knowledge of their territory and its potentialities
- support pupils and teachers ability and skills to work in team
- improve (direct and indirect) participants' sense of belonging to their community
- develop pupils and teachers' intercultural skills
- foster students and teachers' digital competence.



Skype Meetings



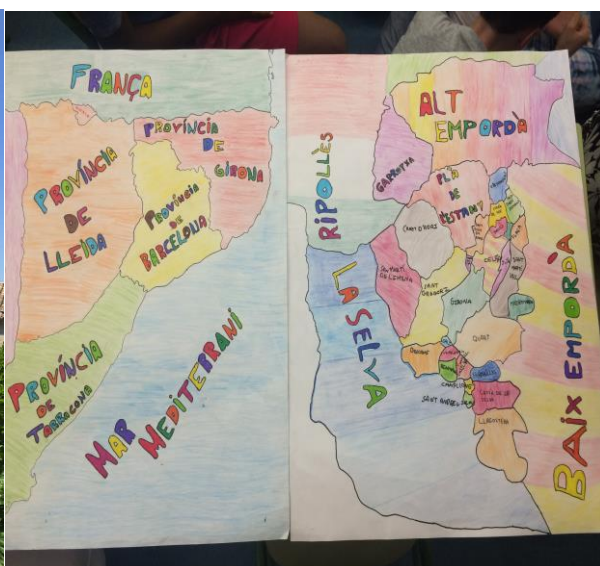
Pupils at work (Salt, June 2015)



Visiting the local company Mobra (Salt, June 2015)



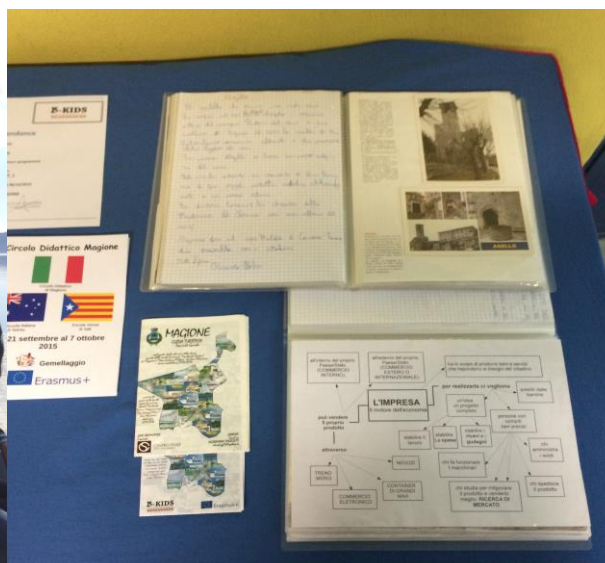
Exploring Girona (June 2015)



Out territory (Salt, June 2015)



Exploring the Lake Trasimeno (Magione, October 2015)



The “entrepreneurship corner” (Magione, October 2015)

DESCRIPTION

B-KIDS has been involving two classes of each partner school (about 80 students and 10 teachers).

The activities were carried out by experimental a teaching methodology that allowed an active construction of knowledge: learners have been enabled to explore, discover and learn, within a participatory and relational dimension.

These excellent results were driven by the positive synergy that the different actors of the project were able to create: the Primary Schools involved in the family, the families, the Association Study Centre City of Foligno, the entrepreneurs who have been acting as facilitators, the local institutions and the business systems.

From the very beginning, the students have taken a very active role both in the creation and sharing of material on the eTwinning platform (<http://twinspace.etwinning.net>).

The teachers organized a Skype, giving pupils the chance to introduce themselves in English and get information about their project partners.

In close collaboration with the Escola Veïnat , the Italian students have managed to create a tour guide of the Lake Trasimeno and its surrounding area. Creating the tour guide, the students has the chance to investigate into the history and socio-economic peculiarities of their territory.

The tourist guide produced by the Italian Primary School addresses to all young tourists who are interested in exploring the area of the Lake Trasimeno enjoying their stay in our region.

The tour guide is made up of a map of the Lake Trasimeno; the drawings were made by the learners. Three tourist routes were integrated on the map wishing to present the treasures of the place for young explorers who are visiting the area of Perugia and the Lake Trasimeno. The Three tourist routes have been organized by subject areas: monuments and buildings, sports and games, nature and cultural paths. A special section has been dedicated to the typical products and delicious recipes.

The map has a comfortable size to be transported and left in the hands of young travellers.

In June 2015, 20 students from Magione and some accompanying persons, travelled to Salt to undertake a number of key activities for the implementation of the project: presentation of their national and local realities (key prerequisite for the definition of the market strategy to be adopted); analysis of the local companies; discussions with local entrepreneurs; educational activities focused on learning by doing; laboratory activities designed to stimulate students' creativity and cooperation among students.

The second meeting of the partners, which took place in Magione in October 2015, was the occasion for the official presentation of entrepreneurial ideas developed from both Primary schools. Escola Veïnat introduced the business idea they created: the tourist guide of Girona based on the local legends.

With the support of entrepreneurs acting as facilitators, students were able to develop their business ideas, following the key steps needed for turning ideas into action: market research and business plan.



Magione City Map



Escuela Veinat at work

THE FRAMEWORK OF INCLUSION

Social justice

In Italy discussions about embedding entrepreneurship in education are very visible, although entrepreneurship education is not explicitly recognised as an objective at primary school level.

Moreover, considering Italy does not have a specific national strategy for entrepreneurship education, we do assume B-KIDS plays a key role in fostering and underpinning entrepreneurial mind-sets.

This new approach is focused on the providing learners and teachers the appropriate tools to face a challenging world and the labour market, which is constantly evolving, enabling young people to develop the skills they need for life and work.

In our view, *entrepreneurship education* deals with the concept of converting idea into reality by developing entrepreneurship skills in pupils, including literacy, writing, presentation, drawing, technology, research skills, numeracy, financial and consumer awareness, storytelling, listening skills, creative thinking, problem solving, team building and collaboration.

On the ground of the above, and considering “initial education and training offers all young people the means to develop the key competences to a level that equips them for adult life, and which forms a basis for further learning and working life”², we do assume B-Kids provides concrete advice as to how educational communities can invest in skills for better socio-economic outcomes.

Legislation/Policy/Initiatives

Taking into account that, at national level, there is not a specific national strategy for entrepreneurship education, B-KIDS aims at developing the quality and effectiveness of the European common objectives in our country.

In fact, with the support of the whole educational community (teachers, pupils and families), the local community (entrepreneurs, local institutions and associations) and the European network created throughout eTwinning and Facebook, B-KIDS aims at inspiring other European Schools to foster the entrepreneurial mind-set from early stages throughout life, giving the chance to experiment innovative teaching and learning paths.

² RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning(2006/962/EC).

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SPIDER ANALYSIS



Age: 3rd-4th grade (pupils aged 8-10)

Duration: 2 years

Key words: creativity; involvement of the local communities; creation of local/European networks; teamwork; critical thinking; risk-taking; spirit of initiative; problem solving strategies; turn ideas into action.

STRONG POINTS

B-KIDS has:

- promoted the sense of initiative among young learners;
- fostered teachers, staff and pupils' capacity to plan and share entrepreneur-building activities;

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- strengthened the interest in the local community in participating in school projects;
- developed the integration of the entrepreneurial culture into the existing school curricula.
- created a Data-base focused on project partners' experience (the material is available on the e-Twinning platform)
- developed business ideas arose from pupils 'cooperation.

WEAK POINTS

Teachers and staff involved in B-KIDS recognize that the integration of the entrepreneurial culture within the school and its systematization require more time. Boosting entrepreneurial culture and embracing meaningful change require effort and time. Teachers experienced some difficulties in making the entrepreneurial competencies transversal to the curricula.

CHALLENGES

In our view, the following aspects play a key role in supporting the integration of the entrepreneurial mind-set into the exiting school curricula, from early stages throughout life:

- Local communities' active involvement
- Sharing of good practices that can inspire other Schools/actors to undertake innovative learning and teaching paths aimed based on entrepreneurial culture
- Creation of network (educational communities, SMEs, European Associations) able to train teachers and students to develop business ideas.

