PASCAL International Observatory

Briefing Paper 15

Building entrepreneurship in sustainable learning cities

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Executive summary

Entrepreneurship is now recognised as an important part of learning city development. The concept is incorporated in the recent UNESCO Cork Call to Action on Learning Cities and in PASCAL EcCoWell 2. There are good reasons for this given current labour market trends in a world of rapid technology development.

While entrepreneurship has traditionally been thought of in the context of business development, the European Commission is clear that it no longer refers only to business – oriented activities 'but also to an individual's ability to actualize his or her own ideas through a combination of creativity, innovation, risk-taking, management, opportunity seeking and striving for sustainable development in different aspects of life' (Yu & Lee 2017). This broadened concept poses a challenge for learning cities in developing policies and actions to harness entrepreneurship in local, personal, global, and business development. This Policy Briefing is focussed on conceptual, skill, and cultural aspects of building the foundations of entrepreneurship in learning cities.

Entrepreneurship is developed through a combination of skills, behaviours, and attributes. Developing these qualities in a community requires strategic perspectives and partnership that provides for continuity and progression in development. Good learning cities provide ideal frameworks for such partnership with each of the sectors of education contributing, along with a range of partners. Schools lay the foundations for entrepreneurship with basic and generic skills such as problem solving important Social enterprises for young people have a value in developing entrepreneurial skills and attributes in an era of high youth unemployment.

The broadened concept of entrepreneurship set out in this paper has much in common with the OECD Learning Framework 2030 which advocates a similar broad approach across knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. The OECD Framework includes transformative competencies required in a rapidly changing world to transform our society and shape our futures (OECD 2018b).

The sustainable learning city of the future will be an entrepreneurial society in which innovation and entrepreneurship are normal and continuous. Learning cities should plan carefully to build such a society.

How to build the foundations for entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been added to both the UNESCO Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities and PASCAL EcCoWell 2: the question which now arises is how best to develop learning city strategies to build this capacity in learning cities. In some cities this will require considerable cultural change. As shown below, entrepreneurship requires a combination of skills, attributes, and behaviours that are usually developed over time with all sectors of education and training contributing, including schools. This in turn needs considerable partnership development so that there is progression in developing these attributes in communities.

This paper follows the European Commission in adopting a broad concept of entrepreneurship which extends beyond business to all aspects of life so that the central challenge is to build an entrepreneurial society 'in which innovation and entrepreneurship are normal, steady and continuous' (Drucker, 1985: 236).

Insights from recent work

The situation of entrepreneurship in learning cities has been given a boost by the publication of a new book Entrepreneurial *Learning City Regions* (James, Preece, Valdes-Cotera 2017) which both examines conceptual aspects and also provides examples of good practice across education sectors and other aspects of society. This paper draws heavily on this book.

A chapter by Yu and Lee (2017: 139) in the book cites the view of the European Commission that the need exists to recognise that entrepreneurship is not only an approach to business development, but goes beyond this to recognise the need to enhance the capacity of individuals to reshape their own ideas 'through a combination of creativity, innovation, risk-taking, management, opportunity seeking and striving for sustainable development in different aspects of life'. This means building a mindful learning culture in communities where entrepreneurial mindsets are usual. This is a challenge for all sectors of education and training.

Three pillars of entrepreneurship

Haskins follows Gibb in developing examples of the three pillars of entrepreneurship. These include the following.

- **Entrepreneurial skills -** problem solving, social skills, creative thinking, negotiating.
- **Entrepreneurial behaviours -** opportunity seeking, creative problem solving, taking initiative, rapid use of judgment.
- **Entrepreneurial attributes -** autonomy, achievement oriented, action oriented, perseverance. (Haskins 2017: 96)

It will be seen that some aspects flow across these categories reflecting a debate as to whether some attributes should be included in sets of generic skills such as key competences (Kearns, 2001).

Global competence

Entrepreneurs need to thrive in a context that is increasingly global and interconnected. There is a good case that global competence should be added to the pillars set above as one of the foundations for 21st century entrepreneurship in a global interconnected world.

OECD has recognised the importance of this competence and has added global competence to the PISA school assessments. The OECD PISA Global Competence Framework provides a useful guide to this competence which combines knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills.

OECD Learning Framework 2030

The broad approach to entrepreneurship set out in this paper has much in common with the OECD Learning Framework 2030 which advocates a similar broad approach across knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. The OECD Framework includes transformative competencies required in a rapidly changing world to transform our society and shape our future (OECD, 2018a)

Foundations for entrepreneurship

Schools are responsible for laying the foundations for entrepreneurial skills and growing entrepreneurial attributes and behaviours in their work. Schools are well placed to foster qualities such as imagination, curiosity driven learning, creativity and divergent thinking in their courses, as

well as laying the foundations for literacy, reading, science knowledge and skills, and learning to learn in their work.

Triennial OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessments are now available to offer guidance on high performance schools, together with valuable articles on strategies adopted by individual countries. The articles in PISA on High Performers are particularly valuable, with Singapore an example of one of the best.

The 2015 PISA assessment noted the top performance of Singapore was achieved from successive phases of development since 1959 with the Singapore Framework for 21st Century Competences and Student Outcomes providing a very good example of how the foundations for entrepreneurial skills, behaviours, and attributes can be laid in the work of schools (OECD, 2015).

The Framework includes the following developmental rings.

- Outer ring – confident person, self directed learner, concerned citizen, active contributor
- Inner ring 1 – communicator, collaboration & information skills, civic literacy, global awareness & cross-cultural skills, critical & inventive thinking
- Inner ring 2 – self awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, relationship management.

This is an excellent framework for building entrepreneurship foundations in the work of schools, so it is not surprising that Singapore is seen as a model for good sustainable development with high outcomes in areas such as happiness assessments, as well as economic outcomes.

Building on the foundations

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, universities, and learning community initiatives have the opportunity to build on the foundations laid by schools. In the case of VET, the role of generic skills, such as key competences, in several countries provide opportunities to grow entrepreneurial skills. OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences (PIAAC) assessments offer guidance on country performance in problem solving in technology rich environments (OECD, 2013). A paper by Benneworth and Osborne (2016) is useful on *Institutional Approaches to Supporting University Entrepreneurship Education.* There will be a supplementary paper by Judith James (2018) on the PASCAL website which will deal with university and business roles in building a supportive entrepreneurship eco system.

There are two OECD (2017a and b) papers on Entrepreneurship provide useful overviews with the paper on *The Missing Entrepreneurs* valuable in providing information on policies for inclusive entrepreneurship with its focus on disadvantaged people and places. This is very relevant for learning cities. The Princeton Review (2018) has a ranking for entrepreneurship education in universities; it is interesting that the Tec de Monterrey which serves as the PASCAL Centre in the Americas is the only foreign university included and featured.

Innovative learning cities and communities have shown how collaborative community projects can be used to foster creative ideas and entrepreneurial skills such as social networking and judgment. Learning Neighbourhood projects undertaken by Taipei and Cork, which were reported at the 2016 PASCAL International Conference at Glasgow provide good examples. Collaborative international projects between countries and be used to extend such benefits.

Social enterprise experience for youth

A particularly valuable way of building entrepreneurial experience for young people exists in the role that social enterprises can play in learning cities and communities. In a context of high levels of youth unemployment around the world, social enterprises offer young people valuable experience in planning and running a business, and acquiring business and entrepreneurial skills. Social enterprises for youth can involve simple activities where the necessary know-how is easily obtained. Examples from the Brimbank Learning Community in Melbourne that I encountered in 2007 included running a coffee stall, providing a lawn mowing and garden maintenance service, and simple house repairs for elderly people. The strong Sunshine Youth Centre in Brimbank served as a hub for this development.

Mugione and Penaluna (2017: 116-118) offer useful guidance on policies and pillars to develop youth entrepreneurship, suggesting six pillars for developing this activity.

Implications for policy and practice

Drawing from the examples above, a number of implications for policy and practice for learning cities are clear:

- All learning cities and communities should develop planning and activities to foster entrepreneurship.
- This will require contributions from all education sectors with schools having an important role in providing the foundations for entrepreneurial skills.
- Business and civil society should support the work of the education sectors under partnership arrangements.
- Entrepreneurship should be seen as not only involving business development but also assisting individuals to meet the challenges of life and thrive with entrepreneurial mindsets.
- Learning cities can use a wide range of resources to build a sustainable entrepreneurial culture, including the work of libraries and museums as well as education institutions
- Social enterprises for young people should be a prime vehicle for giving youth entrepreneurial and business skills and experience.

PASCAL will develop its own work to assist learning cities follow these actions. PASCAL will develop EcCoWell 2 so that it can provide guidance on successful approaches to building entrepreneurship in learning cities and communities. It will develop further work on ways in which the foundations can be laid in schools and exchange ideas and experience on entrepreneurship with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Key sources

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The PASCAL International Observatory can help promote and validate innovative solutions. Experts in our Learning Cities Network can:

- *Address university leaders at the Vice-Chancellor level, city leaders including mayors, the administrators who do things, and policy-makers at regional and national level.*
- *Reach the development and philanthropic sectors by producing a stand-alone report and an active web site.*
- *Inform and engage local business leaders who can help define educational and skill needs and promote entrepreneurship especially among young people.*
- *Identify research priorities for foundations and national research councils.*

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