Entrepreneurial Competences for School Leadership Teams

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This workshop introduces an Erasmus + Strategic Partnerships project entitled ‘Entrepreneurial Competences for School Leadership Teams’. It invites participants to engage with the key research question: can the quality and efficiency of school leadership be enhanced through improved creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship? It offers group tasks aimed at identifying key entrepreneurial competences from the business world and considering their relevance for the Education sector. The discussion will consider whether incorporating the development of an entrepreneurial mindset in new leadership development resources can help to address the Erasmus+ priorities of improving the leadership and management of schools.

The workshop is innovative in that few previous studies have sought to define "entrepreneurial leadership" in educational settings. Roomi and Harrison (2011) suggest that it entails a fusion of two constructs: having a vision and having the ability to communicate that vision to engage teams to identify, develop and exploit opportunities in order to gain competitive advantage. Hentschke (2009) argues that until recently there has been no compelling argument that school leaders require entrepreneurial attributes, and hence no consensus about the attributes that are desirable or essential in the edupreneur. In fact, more conformist leadership attributes may be favoured in many countries, such as upholding professional norms, compliance with procedural demands, and faithful stewardship (Hentschke, 2009, p.147).

However a number of factors have created challenges and opportunities for educational leaders to demonstrate distinguishing entrepreneurial characteristics or attributes. The shift of government oversight of education from compliance to performance; the emergence of new forces and forms of publicly supported educational establishments, services and goods demand leaders who are resourceful, opportunistic, creative, and risk-taking (Leisey and Lavaroni, 2000, cited in Hentschke, ibid). These changes in the education landscape also demand changes in the ways in which professional learning and development opportunities for school leaders are designed, delivered, assessed and incentivised, to embrace the notion of educational entrepreneurialism.

We offer workshop participants the opportunity to engage with Roomi and Harrison's assertion(2011, p.29) that leadership development should employ diverse, socially interactive, reflective and experiential methods to motivate entrepreneurial thinking and to cultivate leadership ability in entrepreneurial contexts. During the project schools in both the Primary and Secondary sectors will partner with university research teams in Finland, Romania, Slovakia and the UK, using the methodology of in-school 'professional enquiry' and action research to support the development of training materials to promote entrepreneurial thinking and abilities for existing and aspiring school leaders.

Workshop participants may wish to continue to track the progress of the project through social media, to volunteer to be members of an advisory group, or to pilot materials as they are developed. Findings, recommendations and outputs from the project will be disseminated to School Leaders and Training organisations across the EU, through the network of the European Schools Heads Association (ESHA), and the European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL). The intention is to integrate the final modules into a joint EU masters programme. In parallel with the practical resources to be developed, longitudinal research into the impact and the methodologies used, will
be undertaken and the outcomes of the research and a set of policy recommendations will be published.


