



CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF INNOVATORS

Entrepreneurship training provides students with 21st century skills

When students in the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship's (NFTE) in-school program attend their first wholesale market, they are each given \$50 to purchase products. Afterwards, they sell their wares retail—and pocket the profit.

Needless to say, the exercise is very popular with its teenage participants. But the year-long high school program has a larger agenda than making students happy—or even training them to be entrepreneurs.

"Our objective is not to have students start businesses. We focus on getting them to think like entrepreneurs," says the NFTE's Derek Newton.

Extracurricular Entrepreneurship

Developed for high schools in under-resourced districts, the NFTE program is offered as a year-round elective, akin to home economics or shop class. It's one of a growing number of programs which recognize that entrepreneurial skills are critical for young people entering the 21st century workforce.

"The nature of the workforce has shifted," says Newton, who notes that the days of having one—or even seven or eight—jobs in a lifetime are waning. "The younger generation may have fifteen or twenty jobs. We have seen an explosion of freelancers running their own businesses, working from gig to gig."

Entrepreneurship skills are not only essential for future business owners, they are also highly sought after by employers. In a survey conducted by The Economist Intelligence Unit, U.S. executives said the skills they

valued most were "critical thinking and problem solving," "collaboration/teamwork," "communication," "adaptability" and "technical skills associated with the job." The report, [Closing The Skills Gap](#), also said executives see a shortage of these abilities in young people entering the workforce today.

Research indicates that entrepreneurship education can help bridge that gulf. A [University of Amsterdam](#) study, the results of which were published by The Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) in Bonn, Germany, found that students who participated in an entrepreneurship-education program called BizWorld saw a significant increase in non-cognitive skills compared with a control group. The participants made substantial gains in their self-efficacy, willingness to take risks, desire for achievement and analytical skills. In addition, they became more persistent, proactive and creative than the children in the control group.

Bizworld Offers Project Based Curriculum

BizWorld was founded by Silicon Valley venture capitalist Tim Draper in an effort to cultivate the next generation of innovators. The twenty-hour program currently operates in one hundred countries, offering a project-based business curriculum to children in primary and middle schools in underserved areas.

In one BizWorld program, BizMovie, students work in small teams to create a movie production company. The students pitch themselves for various positions and, as a group, determine who will assume each role, such as director, producer, vice president of finance, etc. The team then creates, markets and sells tickets to an animated film, which is shown to peers and school faculty.

BizWorld CEO Thais Rezende says that not only does the program introduce technology to children who often have limited exposure to computers, it also helps them envision different possibilities for their futures. She notes that shy children often shine in leadership roles, while many more boisterous kids successfully channel their energy into sales.

The program also aims to show children that entrepreneurship is a viable career path, even for those who don't obtain a four-year degree. "We want to make sure that children understand that they could create their own job," says Rezende. "Their business doesn't need to be the next Facebook or Google. It could be a small community-based business that creates income and employs others."

Graduating the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs

At the university level, the USAID Jordan Competitiveness Program and Intel have partnered with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies to create the USAID-Jordan Electronic Design Program, which aims to develop the computer and information innovators of the future.

In the three-year youth employment initiative, students and the faculty of eleven Information and Computer Technology and Electrical Engineering colleges will be supplied with Intel Galileo design boards, which are designed specifically for makers, students, educators and DIY electronics enthusiasts. Six members of the Intel Education Service Corp team will deliver training for the open-source hardware.

The higher education curriculum will include mentoring, business modeling and incubation. The academic program will be followed by competitions at the regional, national and international levels.

By combining technology and entrepreneurial skills, the program aims to empower students to advance their economic opportunities, while accelerating the country's growth and competitiveness. As Newton notes, "The ability to merge technical skills with an entrepreneurial mindset is going to be the sweet spot for employability and success.

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