



Executive Agency, Education, Audiovisual and Culture



The Entrepreneurial Skills Pass

Final Report

Public Part

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Executive Summary

The [Entrepreneurial Skills Pass](#) (ESP) is an **international qualification** certifying that students (15-19 years old), who have had a real entrepreneurship experience, have gained the necessary knowledge, competences and skills to start a business or be successfully employed.

According to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, within the ESP, “qualification” means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. This is the reason why ESP includes the following **elements**:

- a) a practical entrepreneurial experience (1 school year mini-company experience),
- b) an assessment of entrepreneurial competences (pre-post self-assessment),
- c) an examination of business, economic and financial knowledge (1 hour-online test).

The peculiarity of ESP is this combination of elements which makes it possible to assess all components (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of entrepreneurship as a competence. Only the students fully participating in the three elements of ESP and correctly answering 70% of the questions of the exam get the final certificate, which is issued at international level by the [European Business Network for Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR Europe\)](#), [EUROCHAMBRES](#) and [JA Europe and its member organisations](#). Successful candidates, after getting the certificate, have the possibility to access **further opportunities** offered by small and large businesses, top higher institutions and international organisations across Europe.

The development of ESP was co-funded by the European Commission, DG Education and Culture, under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme through a 3-year project (October 1, 2013 - September 30, 2016). The [Danish Foundation For Entrepreneurship \(FFE\)](#) and [JA Europe](#) led the initiative, in cooperation with the [Austrian Federal Economic Chamber \(WKO\)](#) and [CSR Europe](#). The consortium included 14 organisations, among which 9 JA national partners in Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Switzerland.

In the first year of the project (2013-2014), the consortium focused on the development of the qualification package and ran a **pilot (in English)**, which allowed it to test and improve the contents according to the feedback received from students, teachers and other key players. In the following 2 years (2014-2015 and 2015-2016) the qualification was **translated and fully implemented at the national level** by engaging 850 schools, training more than 1,700 teachers and getting 25,000 students starting to assess their competences and skills.

The main result of the project is linked to the development of the qualification package for vocational schools, including online training tools for teachers and students. Since the consortium was able to engage new countries working on the ESP, at the beginning of the school year 2016-2017, the qualification package is available in 20 languages and rolled-out in 25 countries/organisations across Europe. This positively affected the number of participating schools (both academic and vocational) as well as the number of teachers trained and stakeholders involved, and increased the extent of participation from both public and private organisations. In 3 years of implementation, **5,881 students successfully obtained the ESP certificate** (2,932 from VET schools and 2,949 from academic schools).

The ESP today is an international evaluation tool that explicitly promotes and certifies the particular kind of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and competences students acquire through entrepreneurship education; it allows assessing the impact and effectiveness of this kind of education across multiple countries. It represents an attractive tool for potential employers; it helps teachers in improving their teaching methods and encourages young people to develop their entrepreneurial mind-set while being at school. For all those reasons, several public institutions and private partners have shown interest and supported its development. The ESP shows today **solid future plans, high levels of sustainability** as well as **high potential to be transferred** to other regions and contexts.

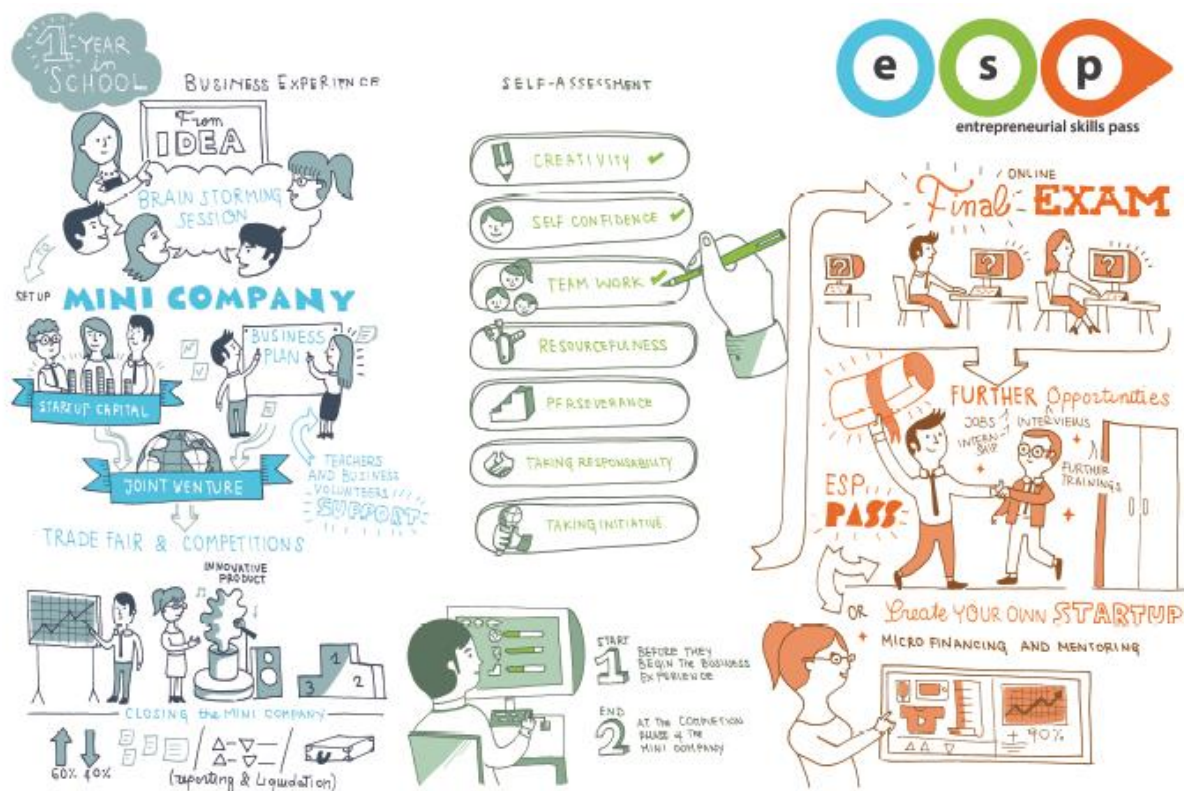
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1. Project Objectives

The Entrepreneurial Skills Pass (ESP) is an **international qualification** that certifies students (aged 15-19), who have had a real entrepreneurship experience, have gained the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to start a business or to be successfully employed.

ESP includes a **full-year in-school mini-company experience**; a **self-assessment** of entrepreneurial competences; 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.



To assess all components (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of entrepreneurship as a competence and use its results to contribute increasing the penetration of entrepreneurship education across Europe and through education-business partnerships, the project integrates several dimensions and its **main objectives** can be clustered as follows:

- To develop a certification package able to improve students job prospects and act as more comprehensive proof of the skills and competences employers are looking for;
- To train teachers, especially in vocational schools, to use the tools that lead to the certification;
- To engage and involve business and industry by having them participate in entrepreneurship education activities in schools as well as endorse the certificate by offering further opportunities to successful candidates;
- To generate strong local stakeholder support and drive more constructive collaboration between key actors in the entrepreneurship education ecosystem.

The ESP was designed as a qualification that builds a bridge between the education system and the world of work. Therefore, it offers benefits to a wide range of targets:



Students develop their creativity, their ability to generate ideas and turn them into action. They learn to work in a team, take initiative and accept responsibility by experiencing what it means to manage a real enterprise. They understand how economics and finance work and apply their math, science, language, writing, IT or specialized skills in a new practical ways. During the experience, students assess their entrepreneurial competences and, by the end of the year, can certify their skills and knowledge through an internationally recognized qualification.



Entrepreneurship and sense of initiative is one of the 8 key competences for lifelong learning. The ESP offers **schools** a full package to support entrepreneurial learning outcomes, including the mini-company programme, teacher training and assessment/evaluation. Through the ESP, teachers have access to high quality materials, innovative tools and professional training. They can be part of a network of entrepreneurial teachers exchanging ideas and best practices with colleagues from other countries.



The ESP represents a valuable complement to standard academic qualifications and it is attractive to potential **employers** who are looking for qualified and committed graduates with entrepreneurial experience and business skills. By representing the business community they can be involved in entrepreneurship education activities in schools (e.g. as volunteers, by sharing their experience, by mentoring and acting as role models) and support the students by offering them further opportunities.

The quotations below give an idea of what the main target groups involved in ESP think about the qualification. Students participate in a real activity notwithstanding their relatively young age and gain key employability skills. Teachers have the opportunity to differentiate their practices and support students in a didactic project, which will help them to have a competitive advantage when entering the labour market. Companies endorsing the ESP can cooperate with the education system and by providing good quality, tailored and personalised solutions can do something to facilitate young people's transition from education to employment.

"The adjective I would use to describe the whole experience I had with ESP (the JA Company Programme, the self-assessment and the final exam), would be "INSPIRING". I am fascinated by every aspect of this experience. I am glad to have passed the exam since it will be really handy when it comes to my future and my entrepreneurial plans! The ESP experience has definitely affected my future expectations".

JA Alumnus and ESP holder from Greece

"The ESP certificate is a unique opportunity for students. This qualification process motivates our students to develop their knowledge and to work on their competitive advantage while entering the labour market".

Teacher from Slovakia

"We want to drive forward the awareness and implementation of the Entrepreneurial Skills Pass to ensure that entrepreneurship competencies are recognised on the European labour market. The ESP is a great way for a young and proactive professional to differentiate themselves and to prove the high-standard of their entrepreneurial abilities, essential for their success within small and big companies".

Company endorsing the ESP

2. Project Approach

The development of ESP was co-funded by the European Commission, DG Education and Culture, under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme through a 3-year project (October 1, 2013 - September 30, 2016). The [Danish Foundation For Entrepreneurship \(FFE\)](#) and [Junior Achievement Europe \(JA Europe\)](#) led the initiative, in cooperation with the [Austrian Federal Economic Chamber \(WKO\)](#) and the [European Business Network for Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR Europe\)](#). The consortium included 14 organisations, among which 9 JA national partners in Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Switzerland.

The objective was to develop an international qualification certifying the knowledge, skills, and competences acquired through a real entrepreneurial experience by offering students and teachers a **full package to support entrepreneurial learning outcomes achieved through a blend of both formal and informal approaches**. To achieve this challenging objective, the consortium decided to leverage the experience gained through the JA Company Programme (mini-company at secondary level) and to focus on the high level of expertise of the partners in the field of entrepreneurship as well as on their commitment to business-education partnerships. The activities carried out to develop such a complex project can be summarised as follows:

- **Development of the Qualification Package:** the design of the content for the qualification process was led by JA Europe in cooperation with WKO (content) and Bit Media (technical development) on the basis of the learning outcomes of the JA Company Programme. This consisted of two main elements:
 - A self-assessment where students involved in the entrepreneurial experience reflect on their own competences as they progress through the year.
 - A final examination to certify the business, economic and financial knowledge and skills students have gained as a result of this experience.

Additional learning materials (e.g. online demo, syllabus, glossary, etc.) were developed to support teachers and students throughout the programme.

- **National Implementation:** JA Europe led the activities related to the implementation of the ESP at the national level by working closely with the JA national organisations that were responsible for engaging and training the participating schools and teachers. The first year of the project mainly focused on content development and a small pilot was carried-out to test the qualification package. During the following two years, the ESP was translated, fully implemented and delivered in schools.
- **Quality Assurance & Evaluation:** a step-by-step approach was adopted to ensure the quality control in the development and test of content and activities of the qualification process. Quantitative metrics, defined by an external evaluator, were collected on an annual basis and a set of in-depth interviews was carried-out in each country to collect feedback from headmasters, teachers, students, and business volunteers. That information, together with the results of the self-assessment and final exam, allowed a continuous improvement of the content of the qualification.
- **Dissemination, networking and exploitation of results:** generating strong local stakeholder support is key for the implementation of ESP. This was done through the work of the National Focus Groups and the Advisory Council at European level, both including stakeholders from education, business, government, and civil society. Thanks to the input of these two groups and to the effort of all partners, the project received good visibility and was linked to other relevant initiatives (e.g. Drop'pin, LinkedIn, Pact for Youth, etc.) and Europe-wide networks (such as EUROCHAMBRES or CSR Europe). This approach helped to raise awareness, generate endorsement from the business community and engage more private companies working on the ground in schools or offering further opportunities. It also positively affected the number of schools and teachers involved as well as the number of participating countries.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

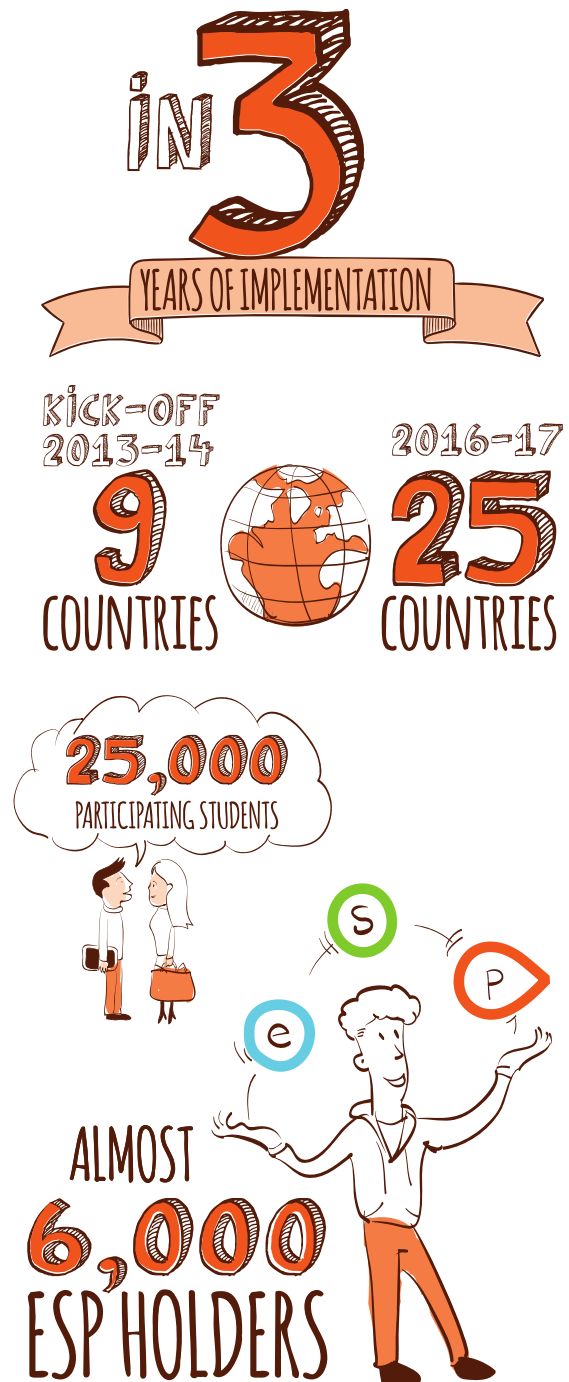
Overall Results

In 3 years of implementation, the consortium developed the qualification package, worked on its implementation at national level and generated strong stakeholder support by getting endorsement from public and private organisations, both at European and national level.

Since its start, the project had a reach beyond the organisations directly involved in the EU grant, as several other JA Members joined the ESP considering it a key evaluation activity for students. At the start of the 2016-2017 school year, the ESP is running in **25 countries/organisations across Europe**¹.

In the first year (2013-2014), the consortium focused on content development and carried out a small pilot in English with the objective to test and validate the content of the qualification with a small number of students and by getting feedback from teachers and other key players. During the following two years (2014-2015 and 2015-2016), the **certification package was adapted and translated into 20 languages**² and made it potentially available to all JA Company Programme students in the participating countries (495,743).

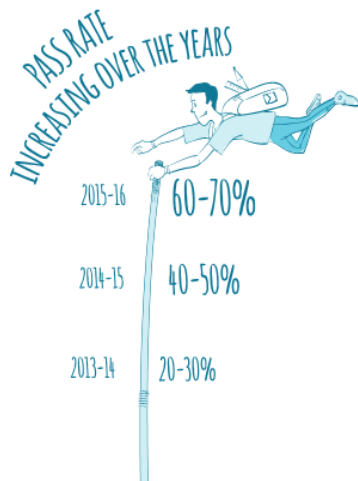
Overall, the ESP reached 25,242 students³, among which 12,765 completed the self-assessment, 11,934 took the final exam, and **5,881 students successfully got the ESP certificate** (2,932 from VET schools and 2,949 from academic schools).



¹ Albania, Belgium FL, Belgium FR, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey, besides the ones in the EU grant (Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Switzerland).

² After the pilot in English, the certification package was translated in the 9 languages of the EU Grant (Austrian, Czech, Danish, Estonian, Greek, Italian, Romanian, Slovak and German for Switzerland) plus 10 additional ones (Dutch, Finnish, French, German for Austria and Germany, Hungarian, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish). Albania, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal and Serbia are delivering the ESP in English.

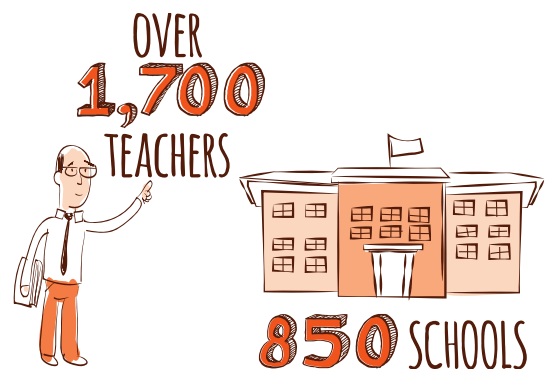
³ During the 3 years of the project, 25,242 students showed interest in the ESP by registering at the self-assessment platform. This number represents 5% of the 495,743 students involved in the JA Company Programme in the countries where ESP was implemented. The objective for the future is to increase the penetration rate by getting at least 20% of JA Company Programme students taking the ESP.



The **pass rate has been increasing over the years**⁴ which shows how the qualification process was constantly improved both in terms of content and in the way the project was implemented at local level. The outcomes also show **similar results between vocational and academic students**, which confirms how a different approach to education can bring good results regardless of the type of school.

Another important aspect of the ESP is the involvement of teachers and businesses volunteers who support students during the programme. Teachers' training and the engagement of business/industry are key to achieving good results and making the ESP a successful project.

Teachers play an active role in guiding students through the mini-company experience, providing feedback about their self-assessment results and preparing them for the final exam. As a result of the work the JA organisations have been doing at national level, **850 schools** (566 vocational and 284 academic) were involved in the ESP and **over 1,700 teachers were trained** either face to face or online (1081 teachers from vocational schools and 630 from academic). In addition to the training, to further support teachers running the ESP, the consortium developed some **learning materials**



that were translated and made available for the participating schools. The materials include a syllabus covering the topics of the exam, an online demo which can be used to test students' preparation for the exam, a glossary providing a list of business terms and concepts which are useful to guide the students from the mini-company experience to the final exam, and an online teachers' toolkit providing a step-by-step description of the qualification process and a detailed explanation about all learning materials available. Additional (online) courses and resources have been suggested to students as well as teachers.



In the 3 years of implementation, **the ESP has been increasingly supported by companies**. Apart from sponsoring students and engaging companies' human capital and expertise in coaching and mentoring students at school, the business/industry sector is also offering successful candidates further opportunities in terms of training, work experience or start-up support. Overall almost **300 businesses were involved** at both the national and European level.

At national level, a key role was played by the National Focus Groups and by the networking activities participating countries organised by engaging almost 6,000 different stakeholders. At the European level, by leveraging the relationship with important institutions (such as the European Commission and Parliament) and relevant networks (such as CSR Europe, EUROCHAMBRES, ERT, UEAPME,

⁴ The pass rate increased from 27% in 2013/14 (during the pilot year the exam was delivered in English) to 40% in the 2014/15 and 64% in the 2015/16.

etc.), the consortium managed to get [letters of endorsement](#) and link the ESP to other relevant initiatives which will be key for the future of the project. This effort also resulted in a [number of publications](#) featuring the ESP and highlighting its advantages (for further details see [4.Partnerships](#) and [5.Plans for the future](#)).

Beside the recognition the ESP is getting, teachers and students consider it an important tool to deliver entrepreneurship education at school with the added value of certifying the knowledge, competences and skills acquired – which is also something of high value for companies and institutions.



“The most important lesson that I have learned is that entrepreneurship is not a skill obtained at the end of some long academic process, but it is rather an aptitude that must be nurtured from a young age”.

JA Alumnus and ESP holder from Malta

“What can better prepare young professionals for the job market than an education programme and a final examination of their abilities in a safe environment, supported by trained educators and experienced business volunteers?

The ESP offers a unique opportunity for young people to gain the skills and expertise necessary to excel in today's job market, while providing businesses with the skilled and driven professionals that they need”.

Company endorsing the ESP

Project Specific Outcomes

Throughout the 3 years of the project, the content of the qualification and the features of the online platforms used were progressively enhanced by evaluating the results and assessing the feedback provided by teachers, students, and business people. The ESP is a key project as it allows not only to evaluate and compare students' learning outcomes, but also to assess the variability in the implementation of the JA Company Programme by identifying best practices and making sure students across countries get a similar experience. The following section provides information about the ESP elements and their specific outcomes.



A practical entrepreneurial experience (JA Company Programme)

The JA Company Programme is a practical entrepreneurial experience where students have the opportunity to set up and run a “real” mini-company while being at school. The programme targets students (15-19 years old) at secondary level, it involves teachers and business volunteers in a role of coaches and mentors and it includes competitions and other activities organised locally. On average, it is an experience of 20-25 weeks with 70-100 contact hours per student. During the process, students work in teams and practically learn how to cooperate with others to achieve a result. By the end of the programme, they participate in trade fairs and in national and international competitions where they can interact and compete with other teams from other countries.

JA mini-companies are the most widespread mini-company programme in Europe, running in 39 countries and reaching over 300,000 students (2015-2016). In 3 years, within the countries that participated in ESP, the JA Company Programme reached 495,743 students among which 25,242⁵ were enrolled in ESP (5%).

⁵ Number of students that registered on the self-assessment platform.

Recognised by the European Commission Enterprise Directorate General (today known as DG GROW) as a 'Best Practice in Entrepreneurship Education', the JA Company Programme is based on a clear set of steps and learning outcomes and mainly focused on learning-by-doing methodologies and practical application of students' basic skills. It embraces all components of the entrepreneurship competence - a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

| The JA Company Programme Competences: | |
|---|--|
| Knowledge/Experience about | Enterprising skills, attitudes and behaviours |
| Company structure and roles (**) | Creative thinking and problem solving (*) |
| Idea generation and business opportunity (**) | Confidence and a can-do attitude (*) |
| Customer/User Focus (**) | Taking initiative (*) |
| Marketing Strategies (**) | Teamwork and leadership (*) |
| Business Plan (**) | Being resourceful (*) |
| Design and Production (**) | Perseverance, negotiation and decision-making (*) |
| Sales strategies (**) | Ability to take responsibility and manage risks (*) |
| Financial literacy (**) | Ability to apply math science, language, writing, technological or specialised skills (**) |
| Presentation techniques and communication skills (**) | |

Source: based on European Commission – JRC Technical Report, *Entrepreneurship Competence: An Overview of Existing Concepts, Policies and Initiatives - In-depth case studies report, 2015*⁶.

As part of the programme, students develop the ability to generate ideas and turn them into action; they learn how to work in a team, take initiative and accept responsibility; they experience what it means to manage a real enterprise; they understand how economics and finance contribute to the project's success; they apply their competences in a practical way. Learning objectives incorporated in the ESP are drawn from the experience of JA Europe and the JA Company Programme, and they are defined alongside the programme's topics:

| Topics: | Key learning objectives: |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| | Students will be able to: |
| Organising a company | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summarise the responsibilities of the jobs and describe leadership opportunities within the JA Company Programme - Evaluate the leadership, educational and social opportunities gained from the JA Company Programme - Organise a company, sell stock, produce a product, market a product or service, and maintain financial records |
| Developing a business plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrate leadership ability - Develop a business plan - Carry out the plan - Establish production and sales goals for a product or service |
| Managing a company | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop an effective sales presentation - Differentiate between production and productivity & monitor quality control - Describe the effect on productivity of employee attitudes and skills - Evaluate the impact of technology, management, and government regulations on productivity |
| Liquidating a company | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe and compute the taxes the company will have to pay - Explain how dividends are determined and paid - Evaluate the impact of entrepreneurs on the local economic system |








Source: based on European Commission – JRC Technical Report, *Entrepreneurship Competence: An Overview of Existing Concepts, Policies and Initiatives - In-depth case studies report, 2015*.

⁶ (*) indicates the elements tested by the self-assessment tool; while (**) indicates elements tested by the exam.



A self-assessment (pre and post)

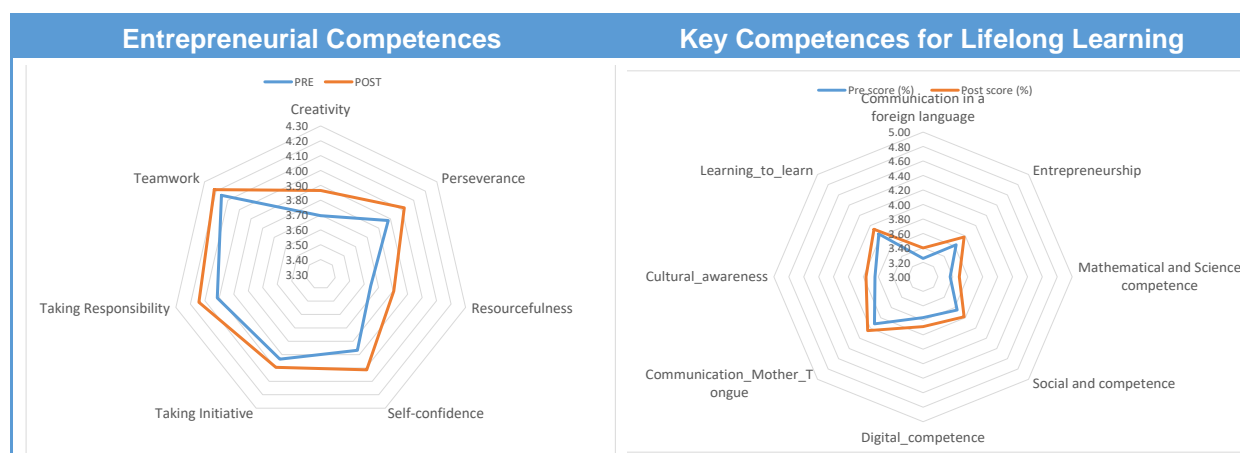
The self-assessment tool targets students involved in the JA Company Programme reflecting on their own progress in acquiring practically oriented skills and entrepreneurial attitudes throughout the year: **creativity, self-confidence, teamwork, resourcefulness, perseverance, taking responsibility, and taking initiative** (see the box below for further details). The questionnaires also include an evaluation of the key competences for lifelong learning (e.g. communication in mother tongue and in a foreign language, science and technology, math, digital competences, etc.)⁷.

| The ESP Self-Assessment Competences | |
|--|---|
|  CREATIVITY | The use of imagination to create something, to identify an innovative solution, to come up with new ideas. The quality of being inventive, clever and original. |
|  TEAMWORK | The ability to cooperate, work or play with other people to achieve a common goal. This includes feelings of mutual trust, respect and friendship. |
|  PERSEVERANCE | Persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success. The ability to be determined and resolute until a person finishes what was started or achieves a good result. |
|  SELF-CONFIDENCE | Feeling able to do something and being positive and certain of one's abilities and qualities. This includes also the ability to accept failures and to learn from them. |
|  TAKING INITIATIVE | Behaviour characterised by its self-starting nature and its proactive approach. This includes the ability to use one's knowledge, to cope with the unexpected and to transform a problem in action to be taken or in an opportunity. |
|  TAKING RESPONSIBILITY | Being aware and taking ownership of having a duty to deal with. This means doing what needs to be done and to achieve what has been agreed with someone else (e.g. group, organisation or myself) |
|  RESOURCEFULNESS | The ability to observe an environment or a situation and to understand how to be a player in it. This includes the ability to identify one's skills and potential and to look for what a person needs to cope with the environment/situation. |

⁷ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning. OJ L 394, 30.12.2006.

The self-assessment is carried out in the form of a pre and post self-assessment test (one delivered at the beginning and one at the end of the mini-company) translated in 21 languages and delivered by using an online platform⁸. Teachers have been provided with teaching materials to support students' understanding of the concepts behind the self-assessment and their main role in this phase is to provide feedback and discuss the results in the classroom. Students must have completed the two questionnaires of the self-assessment in order to qualify to take the ESP final exam.

During the 3 years of implementation, 12,765 students completed the self-assessment. Evidence demonstrates that, as a result of the JA Company Programme, **young people develop important competences which will be crucial in their future**. This is shown by an average variation between pre and post-test of +3.2% of students' own perception of their entrepreneurial competences and a +3.5% average variation of students' own perception of their key competences for lifelong learning⁹.



In addition to the successful achievement of a wide range of learning outcomes, the data shows the positive effect the JA Company Programme has on students' plans for the future by helping them **identify a career goal** or considering the **self-employed option**. The self-assessment results also show how much students enjoyed the experience and appreciated the mini-company as educational method. **7 students out of 10 positively evaluate the programme** and mention as key factor the possibility to set up and run a mini-company by working under the guidance of teachers and business volunteers.



A final exam

The exam, as a final step to earn the ESP, aims at assessing, validating and certifying students' theoretical and factual knowledge as well as their cognitive and practical skills about the most important business issues and concepts. It is delivered under the supervision of a teacher and through an online platform¹⁰ that is available only in specialised test centres.

Apart from the online platform, a pool of almost 300 questions was developed and translated in 20 languages during the project timeframe, together with a demo (exam example) used as training exercise. During the exam, the technical system presents each student with 28 questions randomly extracted from the database.

⁸ <https://self.entrepreneurialskillspass.eu/>

⁹ During the pilot, students completed only one questionnaire of the self-assessment in English. After the second year of implementation the number of questionnaires was decreased from 3 to 2 and the questions improved by adding some independent variables and a section dedicated to students' future plans. The radar charts in the text refer to the results from 2015-2016.

¹⁰ <https://exam.entrepreneurialskillspass.eu/esp/#Start>

Since there is a direct link between the activities experienced in the entrepreneurial experience and the exam, its questions focus on skill-based tasks with emphasis on applied understanding and practical scenarios rather than solely assessing knowledge and factual recall. The ESP final exam is based on 4 main areas of knowledge that students should have acquired during their entrepreneurial experience:

| Categories: | Topics: |
|---|--|
|  GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF ORGANISATIONS | General Understanding of Organisations: Entrepreneurship; Vision, mission and ethics; structure; leadership, competence in a team; value of ICT, personal development |
|  MAIN STEPS LEGAL REQUIREMENTS | Main Steps & Legal Requirements: Business life cycle, starting up, operating, liquidation, IPR |
|  IDEA GENERATION THE MARKET | From Idea Generation to the Market: Idea generation, business opportunity, kinds of innovation, market research, selling strategies, marketing strategies, internationalization, business plan |
|  FINANCIAL RESOURCES BUDGETING | Financial Resources and Budgeting: Funding opportunities, costing and pricing, budget and financial analyses, key terminology |

Only the students fully participating in the three elements of the ESP and correctly answering 70% of the questions of the exam receive the final certificate, which is issued at international level by [CSR Europe](#), [EUROCHAMBRES](#) and [JA Europe and its member organisations](#). The final certificates are delivered automatically through the exam platform and are based on a validation process that works through a QR code placed in the back page of the certificate¹¹.



¹¹ The QR code can be used by human resources staff to check the validity of the certificate and it allows students to re-download the certificate in case of need, by making it more attractive to employers and students alike.



The further opportunities

After obtaining the ESP certificate, successful candidates can access further opportunities offered by small and large businesses, top higher institutions and international organisations across Europe. These opportunities are promoted through several channels, among which the [ESP website](#), the [LinkedIn network](#), and the [European Commission's platform Drop'pin](#).

The main objective of the ESP further opportunities is to increase the value of the qualification and facilitate the transition from education to employment by providing students with opportunities to further develop and gain valuable skills.

At **European level**, a number of companies and organisations have backed the ESP, recognising the value that it brings to students that will eventually need to be prepared to find a job or start a business. By establishing partnerships with **65 companies and institutions**, JA Europe has managed to obtain support for the programme (from 20 companies) and to offer further opportunities (in cooperation with 45 companies) to **320 students in 2015 and 2016**. At **national level**, a similar approach was taken and additional opportunities have been offered to ESP holders by **28 companies**, in addition to the 199 that are supporting the programme.

Within the ESP a wide variety of further opportunities is available to students, including further training (e.g. webinars, online courses, etc.), work experience (e.g. internships, career insight through job shadowing, etc.), and start-up support (e.g. mentoring, financial support, etc.):



Students really appreciate this part of the ESP as they can see the link with their future and understand what it takes to be successful in today's world:



"ESP was a great chance for us. After the JA Company Programme, when we decided to take the exam, we were expecting nothing. Then, suddenly, we got the opportunity to take part in the Enterprise 2020 Summit, meet the King of Belgians and present our mini-company experience to an international audience. We got the opportunity to experience for one day the life of a real entrepreneur by doing many things for the first time and learning how to take responsibility of our success".

RAUTECK Students from Germany

Given the positive feedback of companies and institutions providing further opportunities, further work will continue to be done in order to extend the recognition of the ESP as a valuable certification to enter the job market:

"Youth will shape the future economic and innovation landscape in Europe. It is critical that big and small companies create partnership solutions, like the ESP, with educators, business and the non-profit sector that will support a quality transition for youth into jobs". "In our opinion, the ESP has a great potential and in the long run it could become a great tool and a CV booster for those students who are looking to get their first job".

Companies endorsing the ESP by offering further opportunities

4. Partnerships

Being an international qualification, the ESP aims to be recognised by relevant public and private stakeholders in the education and business sector.

The results achieved in 3 years of the project in terms of impact and dissemination are good and demonstrate the need for a qualification certifying the knowledge, skills and attitude students acquire when participating in an entrepreneurship education experience. This is visible not only in the feedback from participating students and teachers, but also from the attention the project received from the business sector and other public institutions at both the national and international level. Below a recap of the main achievements in terms of dissemination and policy outreach:

- The ESP is recognised as an important cross-border qualification by the European Parliament - Committee on Culture and Education ([Opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on skills policies for fighting youth unemployment - 2015/2088\(INI\)](#)).
- The ESP is analysed and presented as a reference on how entrepreneurship is taught and learnt as a key competence by the European Commission. For further details see the in-depth case-studies report the European Commission - Joint Research Centre published together with the European Reference Framework for Entrepreneurship ([EntreCOMP](#)).
- The ESP is recognised as one of the key initiatives to boost enterprising attitude by the European Round Table of Industrialists. The [document](#) was published to leverage employability and to recommend a range of measures to boost the hard and soft skills needed by Europeans.
- The ESP is among the [evaluation tools promoted by the EE-HUB network](#), a focal point for entrepreneurship education in Europe bringing together organizations and individuals from both the public and private sectors with strong records of accomplishment in entrepreneurship education at regional, national and European level.
- 7 international organizations have decided to endorse the ESP by sending a letter that explains the benefits of the ESP ([all letters are available on the ESP website](#)).
- At national level, each partner presented the project to their respective Ministry of Education and other local stakeholders. The Ministries of Education in Slovakia and the Czech Republic have certified the ESP as a formal part of the curriculum.
- JA Worldwide commissioned a pro bono assignment with Accenture to look at research from around the world on which competencies and skills lead to employment and entrepreneurship outcomes. The Global Impact Team reviewed more than 100 studies and analysed the competences that the ESP measures against those highlighted in Accenture's meta-research. They found strong alignment. This is important back-up from robust research that the ESP, at the age group that it targets, is focused on building the "right" skills and competences.

The consortium was focused not only on the short-term results, but also on the future sustainability of the ESP. Throughout the project, the partners worked to create an ecosystem of partnerships and a community of trained educators that would support continued growth and expansion of the initiative.



Firstly, the ESP benefited from the **JA Europe network** as a driving force to spread the certification across Europe. Acting as the main distribution channel, through the JA national offices, the ESP is currently available in **25 European countries/organisations** and it is increasing its penetration rate in the national school systems. Every year the number of schools involved, teachers trained, and students obtaining the certificate is increasing overall and within each country. The ESP self-assessment piece is being tested also globally in 5 other continents (delivery ongoing).

The **support of the private sector** is key to the ESP's success. To bridge the gap between successful students and the world of work, the consortium has worked on different levels: European, national and local. A pool of almost **300 companies** is supporting the programme. Apart from engaging companies' human capital and expertise by coaching and mentoring students at school, business/industry is endorsing the ESP by sponsoring students or offering successful candidates further opportunities in terms of further training, work experience or start-up support.



The consortium also sought other possibilities to facilitate the match between successful candidates and companies interested in offering them further opportunities. In that regard, the ESP is established as a badge in **LinkedIn** where the ESP holders can add the ESP certificate to their profile and it is also included in **Drop'pin**, a platform the European Commission developed to enable companies and organisations to promote their youth-oriented opportunities to a ready and willing pool of young people from all over Europe. As in the case of LinkedIn, a student can publish the ESP certificate on their Drop'pin online profile.

In addition to all of the above, the ESP is acting as a tool to drive a more constructive collaboration between key actors in the entrepreneurship education ecosystem both at national and European level. The engagement of the high-level people in the **National Focus Groups (NFGs)** has generated strong local stakeholder support, while the **ESP Advisory Council**¹², at the European level, is jointly undertaking actions to increase endorsement and link the ESP to other relevant initiatives and networks¹³.



¹² The ESP Advisory Council was set-up by JA Europe in cooperation with the Austrian Chamber of Commerce (WKO) in June 2016 and it includes 8 high levels representatives from the following institutions: CSR Europe, ibw Austria, EUROCHAMBRES, European Commission - DG Employment & DG Education, European Parents Association, European Training Foundation, and UNESCO. More information are available [HERE](#).

¹³ For more details on the initiatives linked to the ESP consult the section Plans for the FuturePartnershipsProject Approach.

5. Plans for the Future

Today, there are **solid future plans** for the ESP which has shown itself to be **sustainable, scalable and replicable** across regions and learning environments.

In the future, the analysis of the data will continue to play a key role to keep the quality of the qualification high and increase the impact on students and teachers. Additional efforts will be allocated to further increase the recognition of the ESP among relevant stakeholders.

To make sure to properly disseminate, exploit, mainstream and multiply the ESP results the following activities are identified as crucial for the future:



Pact for Youth: after being presented as part of the Skills for Job Business Campaign, the ESP Further Opportunities has been included under the Entrepreneurship Education Pillar of the [Pact4Youth](#), an initiative promoted by CSR Europe by bringing together representatives from business, education and youth, and the European institutions. JA national offices are working closely with CSR Europe's national partner organisations to define a strategy for the activities to offer to the ESP students. So far, two CSR Europe's national partners (Impronta Etica from Italy and CORE Platform from Malta) have taken concrete action towards supporting the ESP; and in the future, other CSR Europe's national partner organisations will take action to support the qualification in the framework of the Pact for Youth.



National accreditation: the partners have been discussing how to frame the ESP within the European Qualification Framework (EQF). Since the EQF does not yet allow international certifications to be accredited, it was agreed that all countries involved in the ESP should work at the national level by trying to obtain national accreditation (NQF) in as many countries as possible. These efforts have already produced a positive result in Slovakia and the Czech Republic where the Ministry of Education has recognised the ESP and included it in the school curriculum.



Letters of Endorsement: the ESP has been receiving letters of endorsement from relevant institutions and local universities. So far, JA Europe has collected 6 letters at European level and at national level Slovakia received a letter from the University of Prešov. More will come in the next months, especially from SMEs and universities. By having the support from those institutions, students that have the ESP certificate will have increased chances of finding a job or going into higher education because their skills and competencies will be recognised.



Link with the Innovation Cluster for Entrepreneurship Education (ICEE): to further prove the impact of entrepreneurship education on students at secondary level the consortium decided to link the ESP to the [ICEE project](#). Thanks to the research of this policy experimentation grant, it will be possible to distinguish ESP certificate holders as a separate unit of analysis in order to conduct dedicated research on this group – even using other sample groups in the ICEE research project as a control group. In this way, evidence on whether ESP certificate holders bring added value to future employers/investors compared to non-ESP certificate holders can be provided by further proving the benefits of the ESP.



Europass: to strengthen the recognition of the ESP as an international qualification, the consortium has been exploring connections with the Europass at national level by preparing a Europass Certificate Supplement for the ESP. The Certificate Supplement is an additional document within the Europass Portfolio describing the knowledge and skills acquired by holders of vocational training certificates. This document was developed to help people find work or study in other European countries by making qualifications, skills and other attributes more easily recognised and understood by employers or education institutions. Turkey is already in the process of developing such a document and the consortium is working to extend this practice to all the countries implementing ESP.



More countries in and beyond Europe: within the project timeframe, the geographical reach of ESP was remarkably extended. Actions are being taken to make the ESP available in as many countries as possible, either by adapting its sustainability model to specific needs or through grants that allow to transfer the results of a European project to other countries (as it has already happened in Turkey)¹⁴.



Link to other relevant initiatives: regarding the assessment and evaluation components, the ESP has and will continue to leverage other relevant initiatives and networks in the field of entrepreneurship education such as the [EE-HUB](#) (where the ESP is among the evaluation tools promoted as a good practice) or [The Entrepreneurial School](#) and its virtual guide (with 125 entrepreneurial tools and methods in several languages that the ESP teachers can use).

This list is linked to the work done so far and should not be considered comprehensive. For instance, another important element that the consortium is considering is the possibility to use the LinkedIn badge to track the ESP alumni to study the impact of the ESP in the long term or to customise the ESP for programmes JA Europe has for upper grades (university) as well as to see whether the qualification process can be opened to other practical entrepreneurial experiences. Every year the partners will discuss what actions need to be taken to exploit ESP results and increase its visibility and recognition.

¹⁴ Through the action “Strengthening Entrepreneurship Education in Turkey”, JA Europe and Genç Başarı Eğitim Vakfı (JA Turkey) are jointly working on the translation and adaptation of the ESP to the Turkish system. The project will last 15 months with the objective to kick-off the ESP in Turkey by starting from three key cities: Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir.

6. Contribution to EU Policies

The European Commission has underlined in various policy documents the fact that it is of crucial importance to bring the world of education and work closer together to ensure that people have the right skills for employment, including entrepreneurial skills and attitudes.

In the “Rethinking Education Initiative”, the European Commission encourages education systems to introduce by 2020 new teaching and learning methods that will enable them to equip students with the right set of skills. The initiative has a significant focus on the needs of vocational schools and it mentions the need to include work-based learning, engaging companies as training providers and providing qualifications that facilitate transnational mobility¹⁵.

Moreover, in the 'New skills for new jobs' agenda, it is stated that *"in order to ensure that the qualifications people obtain are actually of value to them on the labour market, and so that employers can employ people who possess the skills they need, cooperation between 'work' and 'education and training' should be much more substantial and intensive"*¹⁶. In addition to these aspects, the European Commission has also underlined the fact that teachers are important multipliers: offering specific training to them is crucial in order to make entrepreneurship education generally available and effective¹⁷.

The outcomes of the ESP are fully in line with and support these policies in various ways:

- Providing students with an entrepreneurial experience in their education: the mini-company experience, where students are introduced to new work-based learning methods offered through cooperation between (vocational) schools and businesses;
- Providing a tool that enables the recognition of skills and competences: the self-assessment tool, the ESP final exam and the ESP certificate;
- Building strong collaboration between the worlds of education and work: engagement of business mentors/volunteers in the mini-company experience and the further opportunities offered by businesses to successful candidates;
- Increasing the number of entrepreneurship educators and improving the quality of their entrepreneurial teaching methods: targeting teachers with appropriate training and the teacher support kit.
- Offering a European level impact measurement instrument that continuously improves consistency in programming across borders and is an indicator of the extent of uptake of entrepreneurship education at national level.

The relevance of the ESP at the European level is also highlighted by the European Parliament that recognised it as an important cross-border qualification to facilitate the mobility of young people across Europe's job market¹⁸. Also, the Joint Research Centre, the European Commission's knowledge and science service, has analysed and presented ESP as a reference on how entrepreneurship is taught and subsequently used the results of the case study to produce the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp).¹⁹

The ESP is well-aligned to the Lifelong Learning Programme objectives and priorities in several areas. It has a positive impact on the employability of young people, improves the quality and volume of cooperation between different institutions and enhances the mobility of young people throughout Europe.

¹⁵ EC (2012). Vocational education and training for better skills, growth and jobs, Commission Staff Working Document (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52012SC0375>)

¹⁶ EC (2010). New skills for new jobs: Action now. A report by the Expert Group on New Skills for New Jobs prepared for the European Commission

¹⁷ EC (2011). “Entrepreneurship Education: Enabling Teachers as a Critical Success Factor”. A report on Teacher Education and Training to prepare teachers for the challenge of entrepreneurship education

¹⁸ European Parliament (2015). Opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on Skills policies for fighting youth unemployment

¹⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/entrecomp>

