

**Agnieszka Żur**

Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Krakowie

## **Entrepreneurial education for social responsibility**

### **Kształtowanie postaw odpowiedzialności społecznej w nauczaniu przedsiębiorczości**

#### **Abstract**

Over the last decades entrepreneurship education has become a vital area of research, classroom practice and policy regulations. Modern practice-based approaches to entrepreneurship education reveal a shift from passive forms of teaching and learning focused on knowledge acquisition towards active, engaging, inclusive and holistic forms, focused rather on postures and skills. The primary goal of this article is to address the problem of shaping postures and attitudes associated with social responsibility within entrepreneurship education. The article introduces the need for socially aware entrepreneurship education, outlines the numerous benefits related to socially responsible entrepreneurship postures to both individual students and society at large. This paper analyses the frameworks of entrepreneurship education by reviewing articles published in this field and draws conclusions in the form of suggested approaches to applied pedagogy.

#### **Streszczenie**

Na przestrzeni ostatnich dekad edukacja przedsiębiorczości stała się przedmiotem nie tylko praktyki pedagogicznej, ale również badań naukowych oraz polityki edukacyjnej państwa. Współczesne modele edukacji przedsiębiorczości charakteryzują się odejściem od pasywnych form nauczania skupionych na przekazywaniu wiedzy na rzecz aktywnych, angażujących i holistycznych form, kładących nacisk na rozwój postaw i umiejętności. Wiodącym celem niniejszego artykułu jest zwrócenie uwagi na kształtowanie postaw odpowiedzialności społecznej w nauczaniu przedsiębiorczości. Artykuł prezentuje liczne korzyści kształtowania społecznie zaangażowanych postaw przedsiębiorczości zarówno na poziomie indywidualnym, jak i ogólnospołecznym. Na podstawie analizy publikacji w dziedzinie nauczania przedsiębiorczości, artykuł formułuje propozycje konkretnych metod dla pedagogiki przedsiębiorczości zarówno w szkołach, jak i na uczelniach wyższych.

**Key words:** education; entrepreneurship; social responsibility

**Słowa kluczowe:** edukacja; odpowiedzialność społeczna; przedsiębiorczość

*“Education cannot be neutral. In a world like this – already moving in certain, often terrible directions – to be neutral or to stand by is to collaborate with what is happening”*

Howard Zinn

#### **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship is a wondrous human activity that cuts across all sectors and aspects of human existence. It is a universal set of skills and attitudes that can be applied in numerous undertakings. Entrepreneurship skills and attitudes are essential at all stages of a professional career and

add substantial value to all human activity. Therefore, much effort is put into promoting entrepreneurial behavior across countries. The European Union introduced numerous programs aimed at creating and reinforcing the entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurship education is a fundamental element of that policy. Education institutions lay at the heart of attempts to create an innovative and entrepreneurial culture. The new Europe 2020 strategy identifies that “education and entrepreneurship have a critical role to play in maintaining and further enhancing Europe’s position as a key global player in the coming years.” (World Economic Forum, 2010). The strategy lays out conceptual frameworks for entrepreneurship education putting a clear emphasis on promoting entrepreneurial mindset by involving students in real-life projects. The framework encourages innovative pedagogies to build “an entrepreneurial spirit, development of creativity, initiative and self-confidence.” (European Commission, 2010).

The Commission’s idea of entrepreneurship education echoes multiple publications in this domain of the last two decades, which represent a sharp shift from educating about entrepreneurship to educating for entrepreneurship. The meta-analysis conducted by Mwasalwiba (2010) of top publications on entrepreneurship education identifies the following distribution of goals among goals of the education process: (i) to enhance attitudes, values, intentions and behaviors – 36%, (ii) to develop personal skills – 32%, (iii) opportunity recognition skills – 18%, (iv) to develop skills necessary for establishing a new business – 9% and (v) general management and organizational skills – 9%. The analysis of other publications shows a very clear hierarchy of goals within entrepreneurship education, which are consistent with the above meta-analysis. All existing conceptualizations include the dominating goal of developing an entrepreneurial drive, spirit and culture among students. Second in line is the goal of generating the ability to recognize and pursue opportunities in various areas, including business, social and academic (Raposo and Paco, 2011). A significant number of authors associate entrepreneurship with the ability to create and operate new firms (Bridge et al, 2010). Finally, a quickly growing body of publications is calling for entrepreneurship education aiming at developing contributions to the community and society at large (Dees, 2007; Tracey and Phillips, 2007; Bender, 2007; Shrivastava, 2010).

Polish authors follow this trend. Rachwał (2005) writes that, among other areas, it is the entrepreneurial education that allow students to learn to assume responsibility for themselves and others around them (p. 138). Among goals described as attitudes in entrepreneurial education Rachwał and Makiela (2003) outline:

- understanding the reasons for developing own entrepreneurial potential;
- assuming responsibility for self and others;
- possessing ability to align self-interest with other people’s interests;
- exposing positive attitudes towards people;
- engaging in dialog;
- skills to recognize and prioritize moral values;
- understanding the role of ethics in social and economic life.

This article is devoted to explore how the above skills and attitudes can be developed in entrepreneurship classes by introducing entrepreneurial education for social responsibility. This approach is defined as a collaborative teaching and learning strategy designed to promote students’ academic enhancement, personal growth and social responsibility (Bender, 2007). First, the paper looks at the fundamentals of entrepreneurship to make the argument for socially engaged entrepreneurship education. Then, the paper will outline several methods practiced by teachers and academics to raise students’ awareness, develop social responsibility and enhance skills to pursue entrepreneurial goals.

### **Entrepreneurship today**

The first and foremost argument for socially engaged entrepreneurship education derives from the fact, that we as teachers need to expose students to all forms of entrepreneurship; to provide them with a full and complete picture of this phenomena. It is our responsibility as educators to facilitate the acquisition of differentiated and complete knowledge of numerous forms of entrepreneurship. All of these forms have a common denominator. Contemporary mainstream entrepreneurship research refers to the individual-opportunity nexus (Shane, 2003). Shane's work provided a much needed, deep and comprehensive analysis of objective, independently existing, opportunities for entrepreneurial activity deriving from a market or social imbalance, new inventions, gaps and information deficiencies. However, only human creativity and possessed entrepreneurial skills can bring that opportunity into life. This framework is a solid base for introducing entrepreneurship topic within the classroom.

Opportunity, being advantageous circumstances, carries the possibility of future profit gains. Shane and Venkataram define entrepreneurial opportunities in a Schumpeterian tone as "those situations, in which new goods, services, raw materials and organizing methods can be introduced and sold at greater than their cost of production" (2000: 220). Recently Shane has explained that this definition does not imply that entrepreneurship requires profit generation, but only indicates the possibility: "our definition suggests only that the probability new goods, services, raw materials and organizing methods could be introduced and sold at greater than their cost of production exceeds zero" (Shane, 2012: 15). This definition clearly implies potential profit gains as the dominating motive for entrepreneurial opportunity exploitation. Economists very early identified the entrepreneur as a bearer of non-insurable uncertainty and thus legitimized the profits collected by him (Say, 1960). Although the majority of scholars agree that entrepreneurial opportunities cannot always be profitable (Singh, 2001), it is clear that profit probability is one of the most important motivation factors for entrepreneurial undertakings.

Yet, as entrepreneurship research has spread over numerous settings and contexts, including international (Luke et al, 2007), institutional (Maguire et al, 2004) and academic (Laukkanen, 2003) attention is drawn to a much more complex set of motivation factors for which individuals and groups engage in entrepreneurship. In the last two decades entrepreneurship research has devoted much energy into new factors that individuals take into account when pursuing entrepreneurial activity and that is to create social value and address social or environmental needs. Morris et al. (2011) suggest that the social purpose motivation is a factor too often overlooked by scholars. New entrepreneurial ventures emerge to fill the social gaps and deliver social value. Firms may practice corporate venturing for non-profit reasons. These new ventures are often a part of their CSR programs, often initiated and developed by their employees and referred to as 'corporate social entrepreneurship'. Entrepreneurship works across different settings and aspects of human activity and offers the opportunity to improve firms, societies and their environments.

Hence, there is a number of potential motivation factors identified by the literature for which individuals and organizations engage in entrepreneurial undertaking, as it holds the potential of growth and development within many areas.

Parallel to the individual-opportunity nexus, most scholars agree that the entrepreneurial process encompasses three variables: innovation, risk-taking and proactiveness (Miller, 1983). In order to pursue a process characterized by these features individuals need to possess "entrepreneurial spirit, development of creativity, initiative and self-confidence." (European Commission, 2010).

The above-cited stream of publications provides a coherent conceptual framework for entrepreneurship research and education. It points to recognition of opportunity as the first and foremost condition for any form of entrepreneurship to take place. It is therefore clear why the existing entrepreneurship pedagogies put so much emphasis on entrepreneurial cognition, spirit and drive. Only that set of attitudes and postures will ensure the discovery of entrepreneurial opportunities.

### **The need of entrepreneurial pedagogy for social responsibility**

Public universities as well as other education institutions bear a historical commitment to meet the needs of their societies. They seek ways to be increasingly more relevant and to bring their knowledge and educational practice to influence the shape of the future of their countries. It is a responsibility that all public educational institutions share as they are funded by government, and thus the public. Therefore, the public good is the highest principle of educational processes, including entrepreneurship education. Schools and universities need to be at the forefront of positive change and not staggering behind.

It is therefore clear that public education institutions have a responsibility and obligation to address current social problems, including environment degradation, pollution, social injustice, social exclusion, social inequalities and others. Entrepreneurship has been widely recognized as an effective way for introducing long-lasting changes and even radical shifts on both market and social arenas. It is therefore crucial that we, as educators, reinforce this trend and include our national social agendas into entrepreneurship education and contribute to engage the same kind of determination, creativity and resourcefulness to create sustainable social impact.

A socially aware entrepreneurial pedagogy will:

1. Expose students to different forms of entrepreneurship and deepen their understanding of the phenomena.
2. Expose students to different social issues and challenges.
3. Provide students with an understanding of their responsibilities as citizens and as human beings to others.
4. Prepare and empower students to undertake their role as positive change makers in their future careers.
5. Inspire students to engage in social change.
6. Enhance students' self-confidence through acquired knowledge and new skills.
7. Contribute to students' personal growth.
8. Provide measurable impact for social partners.
9. Reinforce social responsibility attitudes, which will benefit the society as a whole.

All of the above mentioned benefits encourage us, as educators to engage in entrepreneurship education for social responsibility. We not only have strong arguments to expand our current curriculum, but also numerous examples of how to approach this challenge. Many authors offer valuable guidelines as how to build a socially aware entrepreneurial pedagogy. Shrivastava (2010) emphasizes the importance of creating emotional engagement in entrepreneurship education for sustainability; "cognitive or intellectual understanding is necessary for changing human behavior, but they are not sufficient. Behavior change requires, among other factors, emotional engagement and passionate commitment" (p. 443). He goes on to argue that that kind of spirit can only be acquired through direct authentic work and relationships; the conviction of being engaged in socially and ethically anchored activities. This is a very valuable guideline for course design, implying that social awareness can be spurred by exposing students to natural working environments. Experiencing the environment and its people along with its complexities, inter-

dependencies and challenges leads to understanding contemporary problems. Therefore, students should be engaged as often as possible in real-world settings and physical exposure.

Bender (2007) makes an important point of harmonizing the following three segments of entrepreneurial education for social responsibility: external (national policies and accreditation criteria), internal (within home institutions) and personal (individuals' commitment and personal belief). She argues that without civic engagement and deep conviction of teachers and academics curriculum reforms will stagnate.

Audits, accreditation criteria and national policies collectively challenge education institutions. One of these challenges and imposed objectives is to change the scholarship agenda on life-long learning, community engagement and social service from a one-way transfer from university expertise to the public and promote vital exchange. Below, this paper presents some examples of how that interchange can be introduced and fostered within our entrepreneurship curriculum.

### **Building blocks of entrepreneurial pedagogy for social responsibility**

The presented methods of instruction and student activity have been ordered according to the level of community exposure: starting from in-class tasks and projects ending at full exposure community engagement practices.

#### ***Enriched content***

The simplest way of exposing students to important social issues is to include a wide array of cases introduced in the classroom. Another way is to invite speakers from socially engaged organizations that serve as top examples of entrepreneurial behavior. Each entrepreneurship course includes case studies of usually successful business ventures. Yet these ventures may as well be successful third sector organization, non-profits or not-for-loss organizations pursuing long-lasting social impact. Many of these are very entrepreneurial and innovative. Exposing students to their work will broaden their spectrum of interests, deepen their understating of the multi-faceted nature of entrepreneurship opportunities and processes.

#### ***Real-world pragmatic projects***

Learning entrepreneurship can be enriched by projects woven around specific problems, issues or gaps. Social responsibility projects can be built around the identification of local social problems. Students research chosen issues and work on entrepreneurial solutions to address these challenges. Themes might range from recycling processes, through promoting employment of disabled people, to closing underprivileged children's educational gaps. The identification of entrepreneurial opportunities can and should include various areas of social challenges. Students then work on business plans and follow the pathway of entrepreneurship process to find and develop innovative, financially sustainable, business solutions.

Another approach focuses on already existing business ventures. The project focuses then on a social or sustainability intervention. It involves students in identifying a social or sustainability challenge facing an existing organization and attempting to address it. They research the problem, identify entrepreneurial opportunity and develop innovative solutions. They can communicate with the organization in an effort to gather more information. They can write a letter to organizational decision makers presenting their work and hoping for an opinion. At the end of these classes, students should be required to write a reflective paper on what they have learned, what skills they have acquired and how their convictions have changed.

For young learners, to engage in these projects with commitment, the themes must be of deep interest to them. It is important that they can explore and choose areas with which they identify themselves.

### ***Service learning***

Service-learning methodology is based on educational sciences emerged in the 1970s. It developed as a response to the growing need to promote civic engagement and active participation of students within the community. It is a method of teaching that combines classroom instruction with meaningful community service. It is learning by doing. Service learning addresses three objectives (Bringle et al, 2004):

- it enhances the quality of students' learning
- it develops a quality service that meets specific needs of a community
- it promotes values education and raises students' social awareness.

These three pillars are interconnected. Application of academic knowledge improves the quality of the service. In turn, community actions affect students' educational process and stimulate a new production of knowledge. Therefore, both, the academic preparation phase and the quality of service work is essential for obtaining results. The results include the extent to which the purpose of the service is addressed, the community partner's level of satisfaction and the skills, knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired by students.

This methodology requires extensive planning and preparation. The design must be carefully tailored to the courses' intended outcomes on one hand, and to specific benefits to the community partner on the other. Many authors emphasize the need for establishing long-term relationships with community partners to understand their specific context and service needs (Eyler, 2009). The quality of service learning grows with time.

An essential characteristic of service-learning is the employment of continuous reflection. Students may be asked to keep journals of their experiences, reflections and observations. It allows them to connect what they observe and experience with academic knowledge. In effect, service learning strengthens the role of students as constructors of knowledge and changes the teacher's role from the center role to the facilitator role. Students become greater role-players in their learning. Service learning also promotes self-confidence and empowerment among students. When conducted with professionalism and quality, participating in real-life community work develops a sense of pride and self-worth.

### ***Internships and volunteering***

These two forms of outside classroom learning are forms most detached from the classroom experience. Both academic internship and school volunteering programs can be carried out in organizations, which pursue positive social change. Through these programs, students have the opportunity to experience every day real-life work of these organizations, learn to understand their mission and the nature of social engagement. By spending time in the organization, students are also exposed to the effects of social work and can grasp the idea of social impact. The aim of teachers is to bring the experience acquired through internships and volunteering to the classroom and enhance their value by anchoring them in an entrepreneurship knowledge base. Teachers also help students to identify newly acquired skills and to reflect on the social processes they have been a part of.

### **Conclusions**

All of the above mentioned in and outside classroom methods of learning can significantly enhance our entrepreneurial education curriculum and play an important role in developing the skills and attitudes that we, as society, have recognized as important. Teaching and learning for social responsibility is a complex educational approach, which includes:

- transforming the curriculum and introducing a new design to courses,
- changing the assessment methodologies,

- integrating different teaching and learning modes,
- building long-lasting relationships with community partners and organizations,
- introducing ways of monitoring the positive impact of students' work within these organizations,
- harmonizing the needs of educational institutions with the need of community partners.

An entrepreneurial education for social responsibility requires extensive training and support for educators. First of all, in terms of teaching and assessment methods. Second, in transforming the role of teachers from the center stage suppliers of knowledge to facilitators and enablers of individual knowledge acquisition. And last, but not least, teachers need support in terms of starting and building relationships with outside parties. This pedagogy is a group project, involving multiple players: educational staff, educational authorities, government agencies, local administration and numerous community organizations. The aspect of cooperation and networking is a crucial element of success. Entrepreneurship pedagogy for social responsibility includes therefore greater institutional engagement and greater responsiveness of external communities and organizations. Only the activation of all partners will enable students to engage in a richer process of entrepreneurial education that will enhance their entrepreneurial skills and social responsibility.

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**Agnieszka Żur**, doktor nauk ekonomicznych w zakresie nauk o zarządzaniu, absolwentka, a następnie pracownik Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie. Autorka publikacji z zakresu przedsiębiorczości organizacyjnej oraz przedsiębiorczości społecznej. Zainteresowania badawcze: przedsiębiorczość społeczna, metodyka nauczania. Wieloletnie doświadczenie w nauczaniu przedsiębiorczości i zarządzania. Certyfikowany trener oraz tutor akademicki (w systemie OxCam). Specjalista w zakresie aktywnych metod nauczania na uczelniach wyższych. Członek Academy of Management od 2010 r. Gościnne wykłady m.in. dla Grand Valley State University (Grand Rapids, USA), Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, USA), Durham University i Luton University (Wielka Brytania), Sodertorn University (Sztokholm, Szwecja).

**Agnieszka Żur**, PhD in management (corporate entrepreneurship). A graduate and later employee of Cracow University of Economics. The author of publications on corporate entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. Current research areas include: social entrepreneurship, teaching methodology, socially engaged teaching and learning. Extensive experience in entrepreneurship and management teaching. The certified trainer and academic OxCam tutor. The member of Academy of Management since 2010. A guest lecturer for Grand Valley State University (Grand Rapids, USA), Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, USA), Durham University and Luton University (Great Britain), Sodertorn University (Stockholm, Sweden).

**Adres/Address:** Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Krakowie, Katedra Przedsiębiorczości i Innowacji  
ul. Rakowicka 27  
31-510 Kraków, Polska  
e-mail: zura@uek.krakow.pl