

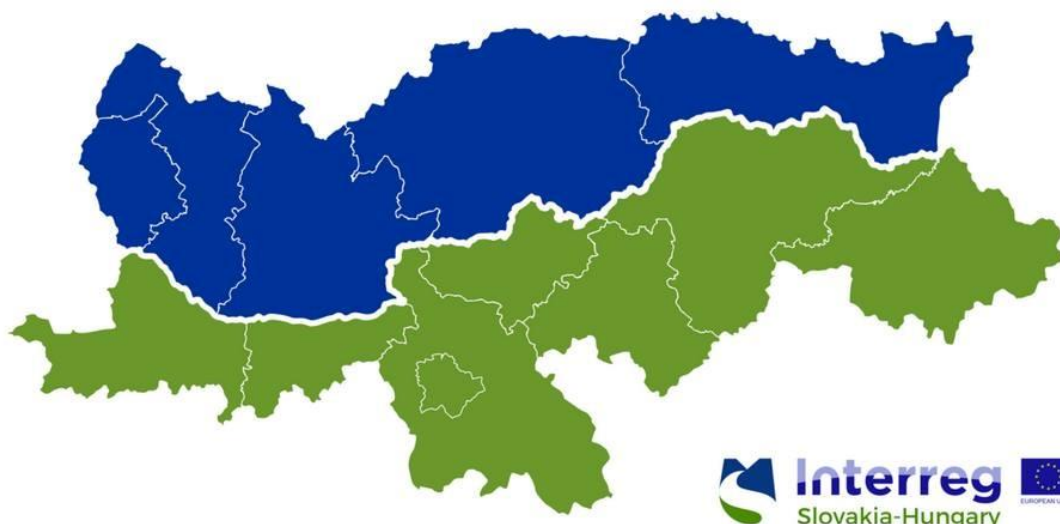
# DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS WITH GAMES

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## ANALYSES OF DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES OF THE PROJECT

**SKHU/1601/4.1/062**

PROVOCENT - „PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROJECT  
IN INTERREG V-A SLOVAKIA - HUNGARY COOPERATION PROGRAMME FUNDED BY THE  
EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND.



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## Development of Entrepreneurial Skills with Games

As we stated in our application, entrepreneurial skills are essential competences nowadays to lead a successful life, yet they are often staying neglected or unexploited. The Hungarian – Slovakian border region is not an exception, as the region’s entrepreneurial potential is far from being exploited at the moment. In addition, the education of the entrepreneurial skills and competences is a hard and an often argued issue for the vocational mid-level schools on both sides of the border.

Our project intended to create a new, cross-border capacity of educational tools and supporting networks for students in VET, while promoting the idea of entrepreneurship and encouraging young people to plan a carrier as entrepreneurs. We also aimed to empower the economic potential of the border region, and to show that potential cross-border cooperation can offer new opportunities to the fresh entrepreneurs. Also, in a bigger context we aimed at fighting youth unemployment and early school leaving.

We believe that our outputs (studies, e-learning courses and methodologies) will be counted as an example of good practices in cross-border context.

## Presumption behind the project

The project “Promoting Entrepreneurship in the Vocational Education – ProVocEnt”(SKHU/1601/4.1/062) project was implemented within the Interreg V-A Slovakia - Hungary Cooperation Programme and was funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The preliminary concept behind the project was that in our countries – Slovakia and Hungary – fewer young professionals start new businesses than it is being presumed or expected although the EU-28 SME employment grew by 5.2 % from 2013 to 2016, almost 50 % faster than overall employment in the EU-28 economy over the same period.

Researches before the project design showed that either the taxation regulations or the economic laws or the capital needed for starting can intimidate the young entrepreneurs-to-

be. And a massive obstacle can also be the gap between the skills acquired at school and the skills needed on the market.

The latter is the field we analyse in this document and explain how our project helps skills development in hope of encouraging the young professionals to start their own businesses.

### What competencies does the traditional school material develop?

The project examined lots of materials before the development of the training programmes began. As the project focuses on vocational education as a target area, the materials were taken from the vocational education learning stuff.

We have found a lot of material that promote theoretical knowledge about entrepreneurship and develop cognitive skills. Less material was found about practical competences and we discovered even less material developing soft skills needed in everyday running an enterprise.



Interviews with vocational school headmasters and headmistresses, talks with teacher who have been teaching business subjects for years show a little bit more detailed picture of possibilities in acquiring business knowledge.

## Pros and cons of opportunities students have for further learning and practicing

The first and most available resource of knowledge – of course – is the skills development lessons at school. Later we will discuss in details what kind of development of the school material needs according to the students.

As an additional opportunity at vocational schools, different programmes help expanding the knowledge about financial and entrepreneurial issues. In Hungarian schools, there are thematic weeks each year about important issues, like earnings and family budget, savings and financial planning, banking services, credit cards and banking cards etc. In each school, at least a day is spent with presenters who are well-known in the local community, for example a businessman or business woman, a banking clerk, craftsmen running their own businesses etc.

The problem is that it is only a once-a-year occasion and most students are not interested in it – as it is part of the school schedule, it means no difference.

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The popular event called “Night of vocations” is also a good opportunity to meet local business persons, especially leaders or workers of small and medium enterprises.

The students can talk to them about the advantages and positive experiences but also about the disadvantages and difficulties of the trade and the entrepreneurship.

The programme starts in the afternoon of an April Friday and finishes at about 11 o'clock at night. It includes presentations, practical trade shows, informal talks, and it is interactive.

The problem is that this event puts stress on orientation, not the real problems of entrepreneurship, so students cannot have relevant information about the topic.

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In 2017, “Bankolj okosan! – Use the bank services cleverly” a quite diverse teaching material for students and also a teacher training material were completed by a leading savings bank and given at disposal of vocational schools.

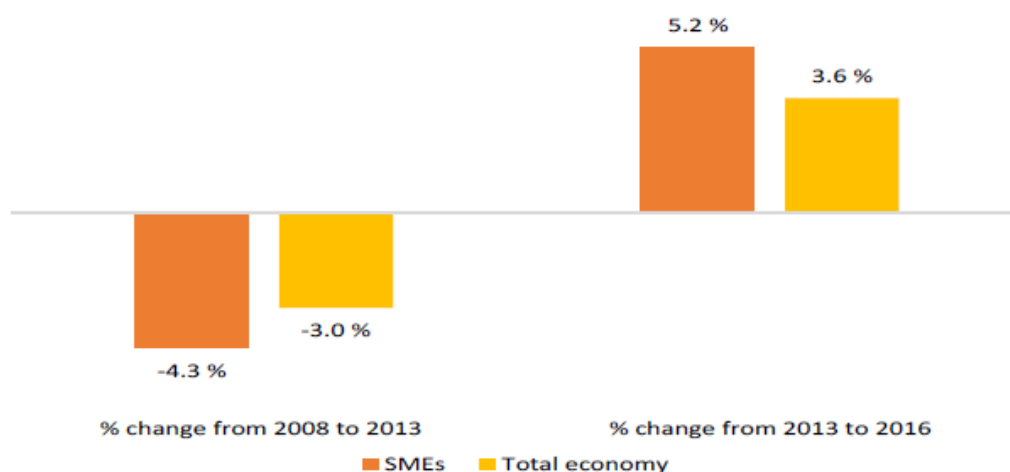
The material was very welcomed, but – being a book – it again channels theoretical knowledge, not practical.

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A very good international initiative is “The European Vocational Skills Week”, which was very popular in 2018, too. It included 1852 events in 45 countries, meaning, that not only the members of the EU participated. The Week takes place in the autumn, mainly in October or November, and its objective is to inspire people to discover and improve their talents through vocational education and training, and show students the skills they need in a fast-changing labour market. Lots of schools, EU agencies, national and regional authorities organised events, mainly conferences, careers days, open door events.

**Figure 1: Change (in %) of EU-28 SME and EU-28 economy-wide employment, 2008 to 2013 and 2013 to 2016**



Source: Eurostat, National Statistical Offices, DIW Econ

Note: Total economy employment = number of persons employed in the economy (national accounts basis from AMECO)

The Week has been organized since 2016 and the experience is that only a minimum rate of the events is about the form of working (employment or entrepreneurship) although the importance of SME's in the field of employment potential is rising radically.

## EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL SKILLS WEEK

Considering the above mentioned events and materials, we were convinced that a training material giving both theoretical and practical knowledge is needed.

This is how we structured our online course.

### What was the basic situation before the project?

The results of the initial interviews and questionnaires show that the school material could be very useful with some changes. The head teachers and business teachers told their opinions how they would reform the methodology. According to their points, the content of the subject is quite up-to-date and adequate, but bigger practical proportion in teams could be useful. The official material focuses on learning objectives so it is the teachers who have to adjust their methods, explanations, own presentations or exercises – so the learning outcomes got into focus instead of the learning objectives.

As they stated, learning outcomes should refer to observable and measurable

- knowledge (which is, more or less, given by the school material)
- skills (to which more practical lessons and bigger proportion should be allocated in the future than today)
- attitudes (in the development of which very-very small energy is invested, skills development trainings should be involved)

## Teachers vs. students? Teachers AND students!

The teachers' well-formulated opinion was the main reason we asked for the students' opinion about the methods they enjoyed the most while participating in the pilot course.

For our biggest surprise, the opinion of the students was very much similar to the teachers' points – although the questions were put from a totally different aspect:

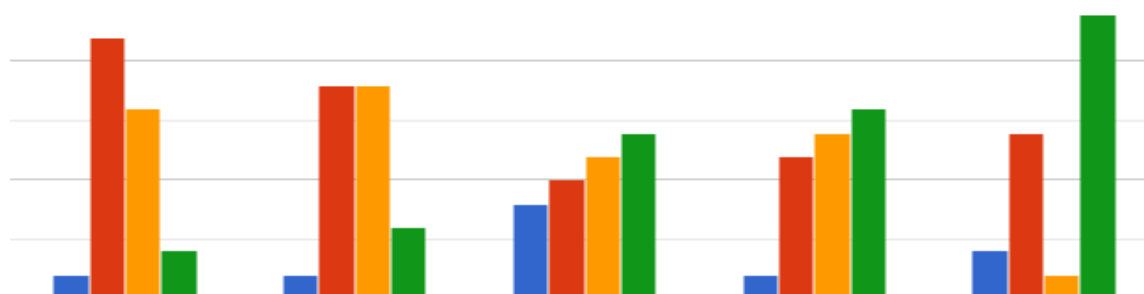
- the teachers declared what kind of additional material to the school material is needed
- the students declared what the most useful parts of the pilot material were

About the results of the whole final survey we wrote a separate report, because we are convinced that the answers can brilliantly be used for making a direction for the future developments. But, it is worth highlighting one cluster of the opinions before the final analyses!

*[Before analysing that particular issue, we have to be familiar with the practical side of the online learning material: The students formed virtual enterprises after the first module. Each firm had three members. During the pilot course, the students worked for themselves (while acquiring knowledge and techniques) and also for the enterprise (making virtual products or investing virtual money in other firms. A good answer to a question was rewarded with virtual coins that increased the capital of the virtual enterprise)].*

This particular cluster of questions we asked in the students' questionnaire focused on the different types of exercises applied for acquiring cognitive knowledge, making the practical tasks, producing the virtual products of the virtual enterprises and also for assessment and evaluation.

During interim analyses, the questions paid attention to the usefulness of the types of exercises. The most common types were evaluated as follows:



Case studies or Videos		Playful exercises		True or False questions		Practical teamwork		Skills trainings in teams	
not useful	4,5	not useful	4,5	not useful	17	not useful	4,5	not useful	8,7
kind of useful	52,0	kind of useful	43,5	kind of useful	26	kind of useful	26,0	kind of useful	30,5
generally useful	35,0	generally useful	39,0	generally useful	26	generally useful	30,5	generally useful	4,3
very useful	8,5	very useful	13,0	very useful	31	very useful	39,0	very useful	56,5

In a confirmation process of the survey results we divided the evaluation into two categories:

- dislike: "not useful" and "kind of useful"
- like: "generally useful" and "very useful"

So we can come to the following conclusions concerning the most common exercise types:

- The number of the students who liked case studies and videos does not reach fifty percent, mainly because studies and videos are arranged individually and they connect to cognitive knowledge.
- A little bit more than half of the students liked playful exercises in spite that they are arranged individually and they connect to cognitive knowledge BUT they use the method of games.
- More than half of students liked "true or false" questions because they are easy to solve and they can connect either to cognitive or practical knowledge.

- The practical exercises arranged in a team are definitely in the highest category of liking! The skills development trainings were enjoyed by almost 61% of students, while the practical teamwork (e.g. making the virtual products) was the favourite of almost 70% of them.

Analysing the latter percentages from the point of view of pedagogy and pedagogical psychology we presume that the development trainings were so popular because they meant a new methodology after the frontal teaching method and connected to attitudes and practical competences, not cognitive knowledge; the practical teamwork was even more popular as it is not directed or instructed, and it means a problem-oriented alternative to teacher-centred instruction. The practical teamwork means debates, brainstorming, problem-solving, experimenting and common work in a team. We presuppose that the target group enjoyed not-instructed small group cooperation very much because it gives the illusion of the real work in a real enterprise.

### How to go on with the developments?

Leaning on the current results, we expand the number of users of the application. The new experiences will be added the current practices that will be renewed, refreshed and brushed up.

We suppose that the opinions concerning the methodology, especially about the types of exercises, will not change, so we can use the teachers and students points of view in the purpose of formulating a suggestion towards policy makers.

The sustainability of the partners in the current cooperation will be ensured by expanding the partners' network on both sides of the border. The new partners are

offered partnership cooperation and will be provided with the free training material, methodology guides and manuals. So, the feedback about the quality of the material is to be amended and added with fresh views.

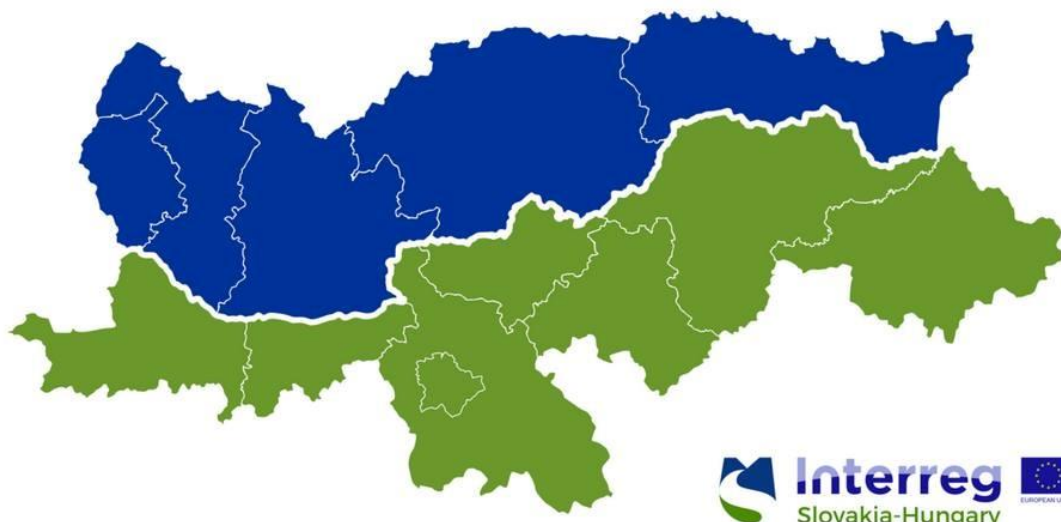
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The network of mentors expands with new members. We are to examine how the training programme of mentors can be accredited for teachers upgrading course.

A survey among the new participants is to be implemented in the purpose of assessing a new skill that is needed for a young entrepreneur and steps to develop the additional module / modules will be made. We will use the current tools developed in the recent project and that make the running of the project possible: the homepage, online networking tool, working application and the mobile m-learning system. The system will be under continuous maintenance and – depending on the financial capacities of the partnership – both the elements of hardware and the software is to be updated.

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