Case Study

Global Enterprise Project (GEP)

11 European Countries*

http://keyconet.eun.org

* Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden
KeyCoNet (2012–2014) is a European policy network focused on identifying and analyzing initiatives on the implementation of key competences in primary and secondary school education.

On the basis of the evidence collected through literature reviews, case studies, peer learning visits, country overviews, videos and exchanges between network members, the project’s final objective is to produce recommendations for policy and practice regarding the enablers and obstacles to a holistic implementation of key competence development.

Among KeyCoNet’s current 18 partners in 10 countries (Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden), are Ministries of Education/related agencies, universities/research institutes, European organizations, and practice related partners. KeyCoNet also has a growing number of associate members from other countries and stakeholder groups, steadily increasing our network’s scope and influence.
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ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

Part of a series
This case study is part of a series of case studies being produced by KeyCoNet, to highlight various initiatives concerning key competence development, taking place across Europe. Each case study analyzes the initiative’s implementation strategies in depth, and will feed into the network’s recommendations for policy and practice on how to implement a key competence approach in schools most effectively.

How and why was this case selected?
Each year the KeyCoNet network identifies initiatives concerning key competence development across Europe, and a case note is produced providing basic information about each one. Following this, network partners participate in an online selection according to pre-established criteria, as well as an in-depth face-to-face discussion, in order to select the most interesting initiatives to develop into case studies. The GEP case study has been selected because it is only initiative combining entrepreneurship education with raising awareness on global competition. It is a large scale initiative, implemented already in 11 countries in Europe, which exposes young students to global industries to enable them with the skills they need in the transition from school to the workplace.

The Global Enterprise Project (GEP) was selected by the network for case study development as it involves developing the entrepreneurial skills and employability of young people, through a large scale European initiative. Secondary school students between the ages of 16 and 18 are given the opportunity to create and manage their own real enterprises in collaboration with peers in other countries, strengthen their entrepreneurial know-how and apply their academic skills in new ways. The project involves close cooperation between teachers and business professionals who work together to support the students in the development of key competences. The project’s focus on using entrepreneurial skills, which are transversal in nature, as an entry point through which to develop various other key competences, was considered particularly interesting by the network.

Which methodology has been used?
Case studies are the main tool used by the network to probe beneath the surface of each selected initiative and provide a rich context for understanding the implementation issues involved. The initiatives selected by the network differ in many ways, according to the nature of the key competences addressed, the implementation process used, the number of students and teachers directly concerned, the type and number of actors involved, and the duration and stage of development etc. A multiple-case study design, whereby each initiative generates its own case study, but uses one single prism for a common analysis, was therefore chosen. This method makes it possible to explore diversity, as well as the enablers and obstacles to the initiative’s implementation, as perceived by the initiators and stakeholders interviewed. Moreover, through a multiple-case study design it is possible to identify choices, strategies, characteristics, situations or contexts leading to success or failure in a recurrent manner. This will particularly contribute to fuelling the set of recommendations for policy and practice at institutional, local, regional, national and European level, for the effective implementation of key competences in school education.

Each case study included interviews with the initiative’s coordinators and stakeholders, as well as desk research. In some cases, where considered feasible and fruitful, focus groups were also organized. This particular case study was conducted through two face-to-face interviews with the two main partners of the initiative; the CEO of JA-YE Europe, the managing partner, and the Senior Policy Adviser from the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT). Two additional stakeholders’ interviews were carried out by telephone with the coordinator for Siemens volunteers, one of the companies in the consortium, and the local JA-YE Coordinator in Ireland. The answer to each question incorporates the views of the various coordinators and stakeholders interviewed, as well as the desk research undertaken.
## Basic Information

**Country:**
11 European countries: Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden

**Title of initiative:**
Global Enterprise Project (GEP)

**Coordinator/Organization:**
Junior Achievement Young Enterprise (JA-YE) Europe

**Key competences addressed:**
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Social and civic competences
- Cultural awareness and expression digital competence
- Learning to learn
- Communication in foreign languages

**Type of initiative and channels used for implementation (e.g. curriculum reform introduced through legislation etc.):**
Student programme (entrepreneurship education)

**Partners:**
- European Round Table of Industrialists
- European Schoolnet

**Scope:**
- (student/teacher/school level; local/regional/national)
  - Learning-by-doing in a school entrepreneurship educational programme, with practical hands-on activities led by a volunteer business consultant for secondary school students (15-18 years old)

**Learning context:**
- (formal or non-formal)
  - The first part of the programme is delivered in schools during school hours while the second is delivered after school as an informal education activity

**School education level/s:**
Upper secondary (15-18 years old)

**Target groups:**
Secondary school students (all type of secondary schools including vocational education institutions)

**Time frame:**
- (start and end date)
The project lasts one full school year in each school, and is a 3-year initiative which was launched in September 2011 and will run until June 2014.

**Relevant links:**
www.globalenterprise-project.eu
SUMMARY

The labour market of the 21st century is global and Europe’s younger generation must be better equipped with the skills they need to excel in the hyper-competitive global economy. Clearly, every effort must be made to accelerate change within our education systems to help young people succeed. Employability and entrepreneurship are crucial enablers and go hand-in-hand.

The Global Enterprise Project (GEP) aims to increase 15,000 young people’s entrepreneurial potential and employability by exposing them early on to the realities of global business, thus raising their awareness of globalisation and the opportunities it offers them. Through a pan-European partnership between European businesses and education, students will learn-by-doing, testing their entrepreneurial abilities, developing transversal and life-long skills, and interacting with people from a variety of industries and career backgrounds.

A partnership of three European networks (JA-YE Europe, European Schoolnet and ERT) aims to bring the world of work and education closer together to develop the right mix of skills that better anticipate the skills of the future.

In GEP, secondary school students between the ages of 15 and 18 from several European countries learn about various industries in the context of the global economy, create and manage their own real enterprises, develop enterprise ventures with peers in other countries, strengthen their entrepreneurial know-how and apply their academic skills in new ways. This is achieved with the support of teachers working closely with business professionals who will share their experience, expertise and raise awareness of the variety of career opportunities that exist in today’s global environment.

INTRODUCTION

GEP is a unique programme that brings company volunteers together with students aged 15-18, in order to teach them business and entrepreneurship skills in an international business context. The project uses proven methodologies combined with real-world business perspectives to enable young people to witness and experience the skills that they will need if they are to succeed in today’s business environment. Students gain an understanding of setting up a new business, delivering new products and services to clients in international markets and creating new jobs in the economy.

More than 10,000 students, 200 company volunteers and 150 teachers took part in GEP activities in the first two school years following its launch. The program will run for an initial three-year pilot period, during which it will reach a total of over 15,000 students and involve more than 600 volunteers from industry.

GEP is currently running in 11 European countries: Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.
Why GEP: Research has shown that participants in early-stage entrepreneurship education are 4-5 times more likely to start their own business and contribute to European employment. Given the skills that are acquired through these programmes, alumni typically have an easier time securing a job, earn higher salaries and are more motivated in their careers than their peers. However, the European Commission estimates that less than 5% of young people in Europe participate in entrepreneurship education in school.

As students will need to learn how to compete for business and jobs across borders, the programme was developed to provide students with solid entrepreneurship education within the context of international business.

The main goal of GEP is to increase young people’s entrepreneurial potential and employability by exposing them early on to the realities of global business and by raising their awareness of globalisation and the opportunities it offers them. Through a pan-European partnership between European businesses and education, students will learn by doing, testing their entrepreneurial abilities and interacting with people from a variety of industries and career backgrounds. While the main focus of GEP is the key competence “entrepreneurship and sense of initiative”, students are exposed to several other key competences through the project’s activities, including communication in foreign languages, communication in the mother tongue, digital competence, learning to learn and cultural awareness and expression.

The European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT), Junior Achievement-Young Enterprise Europe (JA-YE) and European Schoolnet (EUN) are the three main European-level partners of the GEP initiative.

1. CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCE

Which contextual factors have been perceived as enablers to the implementation of the initiative, and why?

The economic crisis in Europe

The project was developed at the time when Europe was hit by the economic crisis. When the partners first sat down at the discussion table (in early 2011) the European dialogue was already focused on employability and entrepreneurship, but within two years this theme has become more and more important in the political agenda of the European Union and its member states.

Members of ERT recognised that Europe needs to have competitive labour markets and education systems if it is to be industrially competitive. Flexible and productive labour markets combined with responsive education systems must be put in place quickly in order to achieve employment security for individuals through school-to-job and job-to-job transition.

The need for Europe to have responsive and innovative education systems to fill the gap between business and education

The European Union promotes entrepreneurship as a key factor for competitiveness and has highlighted the importance of advancing a European entrepreneurial culture by fostering the right mind-set and skills related to entrepreneurship.

Since 2006, entrepreneurship has been recognised as one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning by the European Commission.
The need to improve the entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities of citizens is also underlined in three of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and sustainable growth: ‘Innovation Union’, ‘Youth on the Move’ and ‘An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs’.

Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training is also a long-term objective for ‘Education and Training 2020’, the strategic framework for European cooperation.

In this context, the Commission set up a working group on entrepreneurship education in November 2011 (with participation from JA-YE Europe and its members). The group was made up of experts from 24 countries as well as business and union representatives. The aim of the group was to support efforts by member states regarding the implementation of entrepreneurship education and to guide the Commission’s work on promoting entrepreneurship education.

For ERT, education and training are an investment that will raise productivity and increase the competitiveness of Europe and its member states. The high rate of youth unemployment in nearly all member states highlights a significant skills gap and suggests a failure of the education systems to prepare young people with the skills needed to make them employable. The number of successful graduates must be increased and at the same time high performance must be achieved in basic reading and math skills.

ERT, JA-YE Europe and EUN are among the European actors engaged in the dialogue with the European institutions to drive this process. It is for this reason that ERT identified JA-YE Europe, the main entrepreneurial education actor in Europe, and EUN as strategic partners to set up an initiative for young people focused on entrepreneurship education

**Research on Attitudes to Work by the Societal Changes Working Group of the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT)**

The idea of the GEP was born of a request to JA-YE Europe and EUN from ERT. ERT is an informal forum bringing together around 45 major multinational European companies covering a wide range of industrial and technological sectors. ERT’s working group on Societal Changes has explored the need to further involve European businesses in educational activities through an initiative that would promote entrepreneurship and raise awareness on globalisation and skills for the future.

As early as 2004, ERT had already begun working on the lack of qualified European graduates in the STEM field. In 2011, ERT started to look at the question of attitudes to work around the world. ERT’s companies are based in Europe but work globally; many of ERT’s members have noticed striking differences in attitudes towards work and many have become increasingly concerned about such attitudes in Europe.

One of the focus areas of the working group was the transition from education to the world of work for young Europeans. The research showed that young people in Europe have become very risk-adverse, meaning that it is more appealing for them to become a government official than to become an entrepreneur.

ERT noticed a clear need for greater awareness of the globalised economy and competition for jobs. Employers all over the world are competing for talent, skills and ideas. The
labour market of the 21st century is a global one and Europe’s younger generation must be more aware of just how much competition there will be for jobs and how they can better prepare themselves.

JA-YE Europe and EUN, together with ERT and its working group, worked together over several months to establish a pan-European initiative that would bring together European businesses, ministries of education/schools and local stakeholders to provide a dynamic and entrepreneurial experience for students in what might be their first taste of life in the global marketplace.

Which contextual factors have been perceived as obstacles to the implementation of the initiative, and why?

Diverse corporate social responsibility culture within the 18 partner companies

GEP is funded by a consortium of 18 ERT Member Companies. Some companies are very experienced with such activities but for some others engaging human capital in volunteering activities was quite a new experience.

In the preliminary phase it was crucial for company partners to identify where to place the programme within their internal structures. There are many different ways of organising the project and of making it sustainable after the pilot year. Companies not only need to engage in the activities but also need to provide a structured organisation for volunteering activities and place the project within the organisation in a strategic way. This can be an obstacle or an enabler depending on what level of investment the companies give to the volunteering activities. Several of these companies have a volunteering culture and well-developed corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies and therefore are organising GEP activities in a structured way. Other companies, however, do not have such volunteering experience, in which case it is more difficult for the company’s management to agree to allow their employees to spend time in schools, particularly in this time of crisis, and the overall coordination of the project becomes much more difficult.

Solution

Companies that have engaged in the project with a European coordinator and national coordinators have been much more successful in the implementation of GEP activities. Several companies have established the coordination within their HR departments or in their foundations or CSR units (if they have one) and have worked with the support of PR for internal communication. In general it is also crucial to have the support of senior management. When CEOs or senior executive are engaged in the project and volunteers are recognised by the management for their activities, the volunteering activities run more smoothly.

Level of resources (human capital and financial) that companies can give

GEP relies on the voluntary activities of the sponsoring companies. Business volunteers from partner companies deliver the class activities, act as advisors in the classroom and mentor students throughout the programme. One of the main obstacles is the situation of financial and human capital within industry in Europe.
The crisis that started in 2008 has only deepened in recent years and, as the major industries in Europe, ERT companies have been hit hard. Today we see an increasing impact on the companies’ operations. Financial resources are much tighter, the number of personnel in companies and the number available to go into the classroom receives much closer consideration and scrutiny than it did in the past.

**Solution**

The positive impact is that these types of activities are a positive point within company communications. Volunteers return from their participation in the classroom with increased enthusiasm and they feel more motivated during these difficult times. The project gives employees the chance to feel that they are playing a positive role, making a change from simply hearing bad news.

Immediately after taking part in the European Final Event of GEP in 2013, Jim Snabe, co-CEO of SAP, said: “Today’s event demonstrates that Europe’s youth, equipped with the right set of skills, have the capacity to innovate and the energy to confront challenges and find opportunities. Entrepreneurial attitudes and skills for working in an international environment are essential for economic growth and new jobs, 80% of which are created by SMEs.”

**Time in the classroom**

European education systems work in various ways and a pan-European initiative therefore has to be adapted to the different school systems in the countries where it is implemented. Nevertheless, time is an obstacle since teachers have to follow their schedule and programmes and it is sometimes difficult to adapt such activities to their limited time and resources.

**Solution**

Starting planning at the end of the school year (June) for the next school year (September) is undoubtedly the best solution in order to give enough time to teachers and schools to embed the programme into their classroom activities.

**2. Substance Related Issues**

Which substance related issues have been the most difficult ones to fix when deciding on the content of the initiative, and why?

**Defining the set of competences and skills**

All partners agree that there are no major issues related to the substance of the initiative. It was very clear from the beginning that all partners wanted to create an initiative for secondary school students (aged 16 to 18) with a focus on global economy and entrepreneurship.
The activities set up by JA-YE Europe focus on entrepreneurship and sense of initiative but also touch upon all of the other seven key competences. Moreover there is a clear focus on several other areas and skills such as:

- Ideation and creativity
- Marketing and customer relations
- Business planning
- HR and administration
- Enterprise organisation and governance
- Financial Capability: budgeting, accounting, financing, taxation, etc.
- Design and Technology
- International Trade
- Careers Education
- Functional Skills
- Personal Learning and Thinking Skills
- Foreign Languages
- Citizenship
- Communication

The substance of the programme was never an issue for any of the partners. Few obstacles were encountered in the implementation and in the sustainability of the initiative, as described in the other sections of this case study.

**Defining the activities**

JA-YE Europe is the implementing partner of the initiative. The three main partners worked together, under the lead of JA-YE, to define the main activities of the project. There are four components to the GEP programme:

- Website and Quiz (online)
- GEP Classroom Visit (in school)
- Mini-Companies (in school)
- Challenge (outside school at national and European Level)

**GEP WEBSITE AND QUIZ**

The Global Enterprise online platform (www.globalenterprise-project.eu) is the virtual home of the project. It is a lively community where participants can meet, collaborate and receive training. All students are required to take an online quiz about globalisation prior to the classroom activities. The quiz gives an overview of important aspects of globalisation: the economy, the environment, demographics, labour markets and skills, and technology.

**GEP CLASSROOM VISIT**

The classroom visit brings professionals from different industries (ERT Member Companies) into schools, where students can interact with them directly. These employee volunteers are not just role models, but also provide expertise in their chosen fields. The volunteers lead a 1-2 hour learning activity and discussion around the global issues that businesses are faced with every day.
GEP MINI-COMPANIES

Over the course of the school year, students create and manage their own real enterprise. It is likely that this is their first experience in entrepreneurship, and, in addition to learning the basics of business, they gain valuable skills such as team building and organisation. They are supported by trained teachers and a mentor from industry. They also establish partnerships with mini-companies in other countries and participate in a variety of competitions and events.

THE GLOBAL ENTERPRISE CHALLENGE

The Global Enterprise Challenge is a one-day innovation workshop focused on fostering young people’s problem-solving, idea-creation and presentation skills. Students are given a challenge to solve together in a team, and the topic of the challenge is designed and presented by industry experts. Employee volunteers are involved as facilitators for the teams. There is a series of challenges at the local level, with winners progressing to an international Global Enterprise Challenge.

International Mini-Companies Activities

The main obstacles in the design and implementation of the activities are to be found in the internationalisation of the mini-companies activities. Students who take part in the mini-companies in GEP should create international joint ventures with schools around Europe through an online platform called Enterprise without Borders®. Although students are motivated to interact with their peers in other countries there are several obstacles to this activity:

- Language barriers: some students do not speak English, but more importantly, some teachers lack the language skills required to be able to guide the students in this process.
- School Calendar: the Mini-Companies Activities start and finish at different times of the year and students tend not to connect with other students if they are not in an advanced phase in their mini-company activity.
- Technology: participants rely too much on technology to establish relations with other schools. The platform, however, is just one of many ways to communicate with schools and students abroad.
- Lack of IT Equipment: some schools do not have sufficient IT equipment and students are obliged to work online at home on their own devices.

Solutions

The international activities for the GEP mini-companies are crucial. Several actions have been and will be put in place to find solutions to this problem:

- Schools will be peer at the beginning of the year and students will work with a peer GEP school in another country from the very beginning of the school year; they will develop their ideas, products, production and marketing strategy in a joint venture approach together with their teachers and cross-border volunteers.
- Language teachers will be asked to help with the international activities.
- The platform will be fully revised and the teaching materials made more user-friendly for students.
3. PARTNERSHIP RELATED ISSUES

Which key aspects should be taken into consideration when defining the partnership?

GEP has a unique partnership that works at European, national and local level.

The idea of the GEP was born of a request to JA-YE Europe and EUN from ERT. The three partners worked together to define the goals of the initiative and its implementation strategy. Once the project design was complete, ERT presented the project to its members through the Societal Changes Working Group.

18 ERT members joined the projects as partner companies, financing the project and providing business volunteers to run the learning activities.

JA-YE and the 18 ERT companies identified 11 countries across Europe to implement the activities and engaged 11 JA-YE national members in those countries. Each member organisation appointed a coordinator at national level to follow the schools and to supervise the volunteers and the relation with the sponsor companies.

Once the project was up and running, each company assigned a project coordinator (not necessarily the same person that participates in the Societal Changes Working Group), who is generally a member of the volunteering coordination group, the HR team or the company’s foundation (see above for more info). ERT holds monthly conference calls with its company coordinators. Each company then has a coordinator in the country where activities are taking place.

The programme works as a matrix and there are many deliverables at different levels. Not only is the relationship management aspect of the project one of the main activities, it is also what makes the project unique, since this is the first time that 18 European multinational industries have worked together in an entrepreneurial education initiative.

The coordinators, ERT and JA-YE, manage the everyday activities at national and European level and the Societal Changes Working Group acts as a steering committee, monitoring the project development and giving strategic feedback to JA-YE Europe. This structure worked quite effectively since the beginning of activities.

As we move forward into a sustainability plan (for the 2013/14 school year) ERT will ask the sponsoring companies coordinate the activities directly by JA-YE Europe.
### MAIN SPONSORS

- **ST Microelectronics**
- **Royal Dutch SHELL**
- **GDF Suez**
- **Siemens**
- **Nokia**
- **Vodafone**
- **Philips**
- **KONE**
- **SmurfitKappa**
- **Telefonica**
- **Deutsche Telekom**
- **Repsol**
- **Heineken**
- **Solvay**
- **Total**
- **AstraZeneca**
- **SONAE**
- **SAP**

### PARTNERS

- **AstraZeneca**
- **T-Mobile**
- **HEINEKEN**
- **NOKIA**
- **KONE**
- **PHILIPS**
- **TOTAL**
- **Smurfit Kappa**
- **SOLVAY**
- **Telefonica**
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### Matrix of activity per country and per company

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- Table cells are filled with ✓ to indicate activity in that country.
4. STRATEGY RELATED ISSUES

Which aspects of the strategy implemented for the initiative have proven to be particularly effective, and why?

**Communication with partners and with volunteers**

The partners had very clear roles from the very beginning of the project and they established a strong collaboration; the strategy of having constant contact points with all the stakeholders has proven to be very effective.

The number of contact points needs to be increased in direct proportion to the number of stakeholders that are involved in the activities.

This cannot be done virtually but must be done in person and over the phone to ensure the creation of solid relations and trust. It is important to remember that the people who are giving their time are volunteers. In a business environment people are paid to do their jobs; when volunteering the goals and objectives of the project are not necessarily what makes volunteers interested in being involved in this experience. Volunteers are interested in the experience itself, in receiving recognition, being thanked, having a good feeling at the end of the day and giving back to the community. The motivation is crucial for volunteering activities and if this is missed then the modus operandi of the project is lost.

**Managing volunteer relations**

The biggest success and risk factor of the project is the engagement of volunteers. When dealing with multiple companies, building up the volunteering strategy is more challenging. It is important that all partners involved from the company sector would take responsibilities for their roles and engage in volunteering activities. At the same time it is important for the JA-YE local organisation to create a smooth relationship between the volunteers and the schools in order to maintain high levels of engagement and to provide a positive environment for volunteers, students and teachers.

**Maintaining the integrity of the project**

It is also crucial for the success of the project that the activities suit the school systems, while at the same time maintaining the resonance and connection with the goals of ERT without falling in a commercial space, for example avoiding branding and marketing of companies inside the school space. It is of utmost importance that every partner stays focused on the aim of the initiative and their role and responsibilities in the project.

**Managing the consortium**

The most challenging aspect of GEP is the implementation of the project at local level. 18 companies provide volunteers in the four components of the project in 11 countries across Europe. Managing such a large consortium was quite challenging at the beginning and setting up the volunteering activities at local level was very time-consuming. Trying to coordinate school calendars and business needs was also challenging.
5. MAINSTREAMING RELATED ISSUES

If the key competence initiative aims/aimed at mainstreaming, what are/have been the major obstacles encountered to generalise it?

According to JA-YE the initiative has completed 50% of the path towards mainstreaming. The project has great potential to grow within the 11 countries where it is already implemented and through exploring activities in new countries, but also inside the corporations that are sponsoring it. The activities have proven to be successful and there is room for further development and growth after the pilot. However, greater awareness needs to be developed, particularly within the companies that have already taken part in the project.

6. SYSTEMIC ASPECTS

To what extent has the initiative been designed as a systemic one from the starting point, i.e. introducing changes in several areas related to the student curriculum [such as teacher training, assessment, school organisation, etc.]?

The project was designed as systemic from the very beginning. The implementation at local level is embedded in JA-YE local activities with schools and this is why its implementation model varies from country to country. Some countries work on an elective module, while others have managed to embed the activities in the curriculum. The project was designed in a flexible way (flexible modules and activities) that could be easily adapted to different national
and educational contexts. This flexibility is one of the reasons for the fast rate of integration of the project within schools.

**What have been the enablers encountered during the implementation because of the systemic aspect of the initiative?**

The structure of the partnership, with three main coordinators at European level, has enabled the project to take on a systemic approach.

In all cases, the JA-YE local organisations have a relationship with the school system and the activities are always organised within those systems, endorsed by the Ministries of Education and local authorities.

The figure below presents the 3 main actors of GEP and their interactions with the system.

What have been the obstacles and/or challenges encountered during the implementation because of the systemic aspect of the initiative?

The consortium was set up very quickly and the project has grown hugely under the umbrella of ERT. This is a risk factor that must be taken into consideration during the following stages, when the sustainability plan will be carried out and ERT will step out of the corporate coordination of the project.

**How have the obstacles and/or challenges encountered been overcome?**

This last pilot year of the project is crucial in terms of strengthening the partnership and putting in place the sustainability plan in order to ensure that the project is sustainable in the future. This will obviously be a challenge in today’s economic climate because companies are very low on resources (funding and human resources); it is not just funding that represents a cost to the companies but also sending volunteers to the classroom. Some of these obstacles can be overcome by an intelligent use of IT tools and of course by maintaining the motivation of volunteers.

**Have some parts of the original design of the initiative [from the systemic point of view] been abandoned and why?**

The original design of the initiative has not changed significantly from the beginning but the activities and materials have been constantly revised and updated every year.
7. EVALUATION RELATED ISSUES

In case a simultaneous/real time evaluation process has been part of the initiative:

- Evaluation of activities is crucial to the project. Immediately after each activity, an evaluation is made by students, volunteers and teachers.

**Main results from students’ evaluation in 2013**

Students’ evaluations from the first two years highlighted that GEP activities had a positive impact on their motivation to learn more and to pursue an international career. 94% of students involved in the activities stated that GEP activities motivated them to continue with their studies and 66% stated that they would like to start their own business in the future. The chart below summarise the students’ learning outcomes.

- At the end of the year, volunteers are also asked to take part in an overall evaluation of the activities, in which they are free to give feedback on all the activities in which they took part during the year.

**Main results from volunteers’ evaluation in 2013:**

When asked about students outcome. Most of volunteers stated that GEP contributes to raise students’ awareness about the importance of speaking foreign languages as well as how important skills are to succeed in the world of work. Throughout the school year, business volunteers also acknowledged the importance for young people to have access to role models and to understand what it means working and living in a globalised world.

When asked about their experience as volunteers, most of participants also agree that there is a gap between education and the world of work and that the experience was important and enriching also for them.

- At the end of the pilot period a full evaluation of the project will be implemented, during which a more in-depth impact analysis will be made.

**What have been the obstacles to implement it, and why?**

- The evaluation tools used in the countries for the Mini-companies activities are not always harmonised therefore it is difficult at this stage to have comparable data among countries.
- It is difficult to get replies from the volunteers after the end of the activities

**What have been the difficulties or risks that have been solved/avoided thanks to the simultaneous evaluation process, and why?**

- Activities have been adjusted after receiving the feedback of all participants.
- Unhappy volunteers have been identified and the relations with the companies strengthen thanks to the feedback received.
- Immediate impact has been measured.
8. ACHIEVEMENT OF INITIATIVE’S AIMS

Have the original aims of the initiative been achieved?

The original aims of the initiative were:

- **To bring the world of business and industry closer to education** at an early age. To provide structured learning environments that work well within the school system, enabling young people to interact with business people.

- **To combat youth unemployment** by increasing the number of young people who have access to entrepreneurship education at their school (= entrepreneurial skills + increased entrepreneurial potential + more positive attitudes towards school/work). To help teachers and students to develop positive views towards enterprise and entrepreneurship and to have a better understanding of how industry works, the skills needed and the education pathways that lead to employment.

- **To cultivate entrepreneurial and intercultural skills as key competences**, through developing students’ business and enterprise acumen, building projects with peers in other countries and coaching them about work in a globalised workplace.

- **To provide high quality teacher training**. To teach teachers how to use innovative and entrepreneurial processes in the classroom. To help educators shift from the role of traditional teacher to facilitator/coach and project-based learning.

- **To improve European mobility** of students and teachers through international learning opportunities.

- **To help make the case for supporting** this kind of business-education partnership by conducting research on learning outcomes.

The demand for the project to continue, both within the ERT and from the schools and employees involved, is still high and these objectives have not been modified. When the project was born, ERT member companies offered JA-YE the opportunity to implement this project, as ERT members felt it was important to do such types of activities in schools. What was there an opportunity offered to JA-YE is now seen as a necessity by companies but also by other actors such as the European Commission. Therefore, partners are experiencing a greater interest in this project from both the world of education and of business.
9. NEXT STEPS

What is planned next for the initiative?

The pilot phase will run for another school year.

After these three years of initiation and piloting, the partners will implement a sustainability plan that will allow the programme to grow and become sustainable outside the ERT space. To be able to do this it is necessary to attract a much broader range of partners and to increase the number of volunteers and the amount of financial resources in order to also widen the geographical scope of the project.

In order to do this the partners have developed a sustainability plan where ERT will delegate more responsibility to JA-YE Europe, who will coordinate the operational committee and the steering committee, while individual JA-YE Members will be encouraged to identify national partners to join the initiative.
European Schoolnet is the coordinator of the KeyCoNet Project.

European Schoolnet is the network of 30 European Ministries of Education, based in Brussels. As a not-for-profit organisation, we aim to bring innovation in teaching and learning to our key stakeholders: Ministries of Education, schools, teachers, researchers, and industry partners.

Since its founding in 1997, European Schoolnet has used its links with education ministries to help schools make effective use of educational technologies, equipping both teachers and pupils with the skills to achieve in the knowledge society.

In particular, European Schoolnet pledges to:

• Support schools in achieving effective use of ICT in teaching and learning
• Improve and raise the quality of education in Europe
• Promote the European dimension in education

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