

## **The Enterprise and Business Committee inquiry into Youth Entrepreneurship.**

Submission on behalf of Mike Day, Chair of the Building Enterprise Education in Swansea (BEES) group. (NB the views expressed are personal ones but are based on Mike Day's experience with the BEES group)

### 1. Background

The BEES group, made up of representatives from all sectors of education, private sector business, third sector, local authority, Careers Wales, WJEC and business support agencies, is part of Swansea's Economic Regeneration Partnership and Swansea 2020, with the aim of developing a co-ordinated enterprise education programme across all schools, colleges and universities in Swansea, so that all young people can access high quality provision. An Enterprise Summit, supported by Welsh Government and all the relevant sectors, was held in 2009 to identify gaps and stimulate activity. The BEES group is charged with encouraging the promotion of enterprise skills in children and young people.

More details at <http://www.swansea2020.com/index.cfm?articleid=38071>

### 2. Current position in Swansea

The BEES group has a rolling annual Action Plan and measures its performance against that Action Plan. The Plan is being reshaped to accord with the Welsh Government's YES framework of 'Engage, Empower, Equip', which has helped the group to focus its activities. Recent initiatives include the creation of the Welsh Entrepreneurship Academy, run by Gower College Swansea at the city's Dylan Thomas Centre, and the funding by Swansea Council of two Enterprise Development officer posts, one focusing on supporting primary and secondary schools and the other on FE/HE institutions based in Swansea.

Along with Neath Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire Councils, Swansea has participated in Swansea Bay Young Business Dragons' competition since its inception. In addition, last year, an enterprise competition was organized, with the support of the Regional Learning Partnership and Gower College Swansea for Swansea Primary school children, with the seven finalist teams presenting to a judging panel at Swansea's Liberty stadium.

A copy of the BEES Action Plan and progress against those actions is available on request.

### 3. Lessons learned

There are some key lessons that Swansea's experience has given rise to, including:

- a. The development of enterprise skills is essential for all children and young people. Enterprise does not automatically mean having to set up your own business, but every encouragement should be given to doing so;
- b. Starting young helps – we have some experience of running enterprise activities for reception age children - and there is a need then to ensure progression from those activities throughout the lifetime of the young person in education.
- c. Setting actions within a national framework (such as YES) is necessary, but local actions are needed;
- d. A 'map and gap' analysis is critical as a foundation to develop an action plan for local activities. An action plan provides the focus for coordinated activities and engagement;
- e. Creating a 'team' approach through a coordinating group, like BEES, is essential to create clear leadership with vision to develop and deliver enterprise activities;
- f. Recognition must be given to the role of the individual teacher/lecturer/mentor, as it is in schools and colleges, as well as in lifelong learning environments (eg Children's University) that the young persons' interest is nurtured and skills developed. Each learning environment should have an 'enterprise champion';
- g. Identify areas of good practice and build on those. Don't try to duplicate effort or 're-invent the wheel';
- h. Enterprise activities and skills development can, and should, be integral to the curriculum, not a 'bolt-on'. In fact, enterprise activities can and are used for the development of literacy, numeracy and other subject knowledge, and helps to engage children and young people in their education;
- i. Enterprise activities help to provide an appropriate curriculum for young people. Swansea's NEETS figures have reduced over the last 8 years from over 12% to under 3%. Enterprise activities have played their part in this reduction;

### 4. Suggested actions to enhance the further development of enterprise skills amongst young people.

- a. No one agency or organization can be responsible but there needs to be clarity at Welsh Government level about whether enterprise is driven by an economic regeneration agenda or an education one. There are dangers of both – if an economic regeneration agenda prevails, then we lose sight of the

- development of essential enterprise skills, and yet if it is an education driven agenda, then we miss the need to transition those with an interest and desire into setting up 'real businesses'.
- b. Welsh Government wants to see more enterprise delivered through educational settings. There is an opportunity for the Minister to place the same emphasis on enterprise skills as he does literacy and numeracy. The new National literacy and numeracy framework offers an ideal opportunity for enterprise activities to become part of the curriculum planning etc for teachers;
  - c. It is important that there is consistency and continuity of treatment of enterprise skills development between different providers and that comprehensive schools are encouraged to treat skills development in the same way that Work Based Learning providers do. The tracking of pupils' skills development and application when they leave school will help provide that continuity;
  - d. The current team in Welsh Government, led by Sue Morgan, do an excellent job with very limited resources, but they should be given a clearer 'cross-cutting' remit and agenda, with a budget protected from potential cuts in either education or economic regeneration departments;
  - e. There is an issue of helping young people in making the transition from seeing enterprise as an academic exercise to creating a small business. Most business support and funding schemes are not accessible by under-18's;
  - f. Create a Young Person's Enterprise fund with small sums available for investment in businesses set up by young people tied into having a mentor to guide the business, by expanding the scope of Business Mentoring Wales;
  - g. There is a need for young people to have local access to an Enterprise Resource Centre to benefit from physical and human resources to support their business. In Swansea we are seeking to emulate the services offered in InfoNation (<http://www.info-nation.org.uk/>), by having a similar venue for young people but focusing on enterprise.
  - h. Regional collaborations involving local authorities and educational establishments present an opportunity for a more strategic approach to enterprise development. Any funding given to support collaborative activities should also be linked to developing regional enterprise strategies and action plans;
  - i. It is not all bad news! The Carnegie Trust's Enterprising Minds Report (June 2012) states that "In Wales, very clearly, something positive is happening in enterprise terms. Welsh survey respondents indicated the highest levels of enterprise awareness and interest, the most personal and positive visualisations of what enterprise means to them, and the strongest intentions

to pursue self employment and business startup career paths...They rated the highest on the Carnegie Measure of Student Attitudes to Enterprise."

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