Learning from heroes and looking for champions

The world needs a variety of personalities, imaginations, talents and skills to meet 21st century aspirations and challenges. Education must nurture creativity, stimulate ingenuity, encourage the questioning spirit, and promote strategic thinking.

Creativity and entrepreneurship are critical elements for cultivating talents and skills. The linkages between creativity and entrepreneurship in education were explored and discussed during the 15th UNESCO-APEID International Conference, *Inspiring Education: Creativity and Entrepreneurship*, held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 6-8 December 2011.

The conference was organized by UNESCO in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education and Culture (MOEC) and the World Bank in Jakarta. It provided a forum to:

- Increase understanding and knowledge of creativity and entrepreneurship;
- Showcase and promote innovative and educational approaches, projects and practices that enhance creativity and entrepreneurship;
- Encourage national, regional and global collaboration across all sectors and levels to improve creativity and entrepreneurship; and
- Facilitate networking and exchange of experiences among policy makers, researchers, educators, administrators, youth and private sector personnel.

Eminent speakers and paper presenters shared their rich experiences in linking theory to practice. About 350 participants – comprising policy makers, educators, academicians, researchers, representatives from the private sector and students – from 20 countries examined the broad concepts of creativity and entrepreneurship, and questioned the failure of their education systems in nurturing creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit in children, youth and adults.

The participants were inspired to learn from their heroes – the enterprising educators and entrepreneurs – who recounted their personal journeys in overcoming obstacles through their resourcefulness, commitment and persistence. While acknowledging that some people are specially gifted, the participants agreed that creativity and the entrepreneur spirit can be nurtured.

Education must be structured to facilitate the development of creative, useful and productive members of society.

The conference concluded by calling for champions who will continue the effort to nurture creativity and entrepreneurship in education.
Case study: Entrepreneurship education in Universitas Ciputra, Indonesia

Knowledge accumulation from five decades of Ciputra Group experiences strongly suggests that creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are important for transforming dirt and scrap into gold.

Recognizing that entrepreneurship is critical to the growth of the Indonesian economy, Dr. Ciputra, Chairman of Ciputra Group, established Universitas Ciputra (UC) in 2006 in Surabaya, Indonesia, to increase opportunities for young people to become entrepreneurs and be job creators instead of job seekers.

UC’s entrepreneurship education programme aims to create world-class entrepreneurs who possess the following characteristics:

- Passion
- Independence (of thought and action)
- Ability to spot market opportunity
- Creativity and innovation
- Calculated risk taking ability
- High ethical standards
- Persistence

The core of UC’s model of teaching entrepreneurship is a combination of the following three critical factors:

Knowledge + Spirit of Mentoring + Real Project

The Inspiring Wednesday is an innovative example of UC’s approach to increase the students’ knowledge of the entrepreneurship. A compulsory activity for all students in the first six semesters, the weekly one-day programme is dedicated to entrepreneurship topics and accounts for 10 percent of the total credits in all fields of study.

Dr. Ciputra believes that becoming an entrepreneur requires persistence and a willingness to learn from failures. Success is also determined by an ability to spot the opportunities and the courage to take the calculated risks. He has a dream to create four million entrepreneurs over the next four years as an answer to Indonesia’s economic challenges, and UC will be instrumental in making his dream come true.

Case study: School is the answer for 2010 CNN Hero

After surviving the Khmer Rouge regime, Ponheary Ly returned to Siem Reap, Cambodia, with what was left of her family. They had lost everything, including her father, an educator. She became a teacher and learned to speak French, English and Russian. In 1998, Ponheary became a tour guide and during her rounds at the temples, she saw children out working instead of going to school. She began leveraging her relationship with those who toured with her and started a project to support the return of rural children back to school and help them stay there. Ponheary was named the CNN Hero in 2010 in recognition of her contribution as an “every day” person in changing the world.

Ponheary’s story offers an insight into the life of a child who lived through war and genocide. Despite the hardships faced, the child grew up believing in the power of education to provide a better future, not only for herself, but for thousands of children in Cambodia through her social entrepreneur spirit and the generous donations and help from volunteers.

For her, school is the answer to all problems and questions about life.

From her, we learn that entrepreneurship is not only about doing business and making money. It is just as important to provide opportunities for others who are less fortunate to help them become productive citizens.
Key points from the conference

Creativity and entrepreneurship
- Creativity is the catalyst that revolutionizes and transforms society.
- Entrepreneurship is more than starting a business. It is important to understand the distinct difference between ‘education for creating enterprises’ and ‘education for entrepreneurship’.
- The entrepreneurship spirit is closely linked to creativity, both of them encompassing traits such as flexibility, originality, thinking outside the box, problem solving, risk taking, etc.
- Creativity and entrepreneurship can be nurtured, preferably as early as possible and paying particular attention to the poorest and most vulnerable children.

Creativity in education
- Make education relevant.
- At the school level:
  - Start nurturing creativity in school and at home, beginning from early childhood. This will help to lay the foundation for desirable mindsets, attitudes and values.
  - Facilitate an enabling environment to stimulate flexible and original thinking and behavior, e.g.,
    - Provide resources for teacher professional development and train teachers to nurture creativity and the spirit of entrepreneurship in their students.
    - Embed elements for creativity into the curriculum across all subjects.
    - Develop challenging materials and tools that can be used in many ways to promote creativity.
    - Ask open-ended questions and have stimulating conversations to nurture children’s creativity.
    - Encourage critical thinking, curiosity, conversations, collaboration and peer learning to help students overcome their fear of failure, sense of inadequacy and shyness.
    - Bring the world into the classrooms and the classrooms out into the ‘real’ world.
    - Remove barriers that block creative learning and exploration in the classrooms.
  - Transform schools into stimulating and enjoyable places of teaching and learning for both teachers and students.
    - Include creative domains for monitoring and evaluating the quality of educational services and learning outcomes.
- At the tertiary level:
  - Offer MBA programmes on entrepreneurship education.
  - Facilitate entrepreneurial spirit for all students through various schemes and programmes.
  - Provide governmental support for entrepreneurial schemes, funding and mentoring.
  - Conduct research to increase creativity and entrepreneurship.
  - Document and disseminate educational innovations and links to creativity and entrepreneurship.
- At the society/community level:
  - Link schools to community and use local resources and knowledge.
  - Involve private sector, NGOs and communities in entrepreneurship programmes.
Creativity and entrepreneurship for employment

- Governments are not able to provide enough jobs for graduates. With current high unemployment rates, young people may be better off being self-employed and creating jobs for others at the same time.
- It is necessary to change societal perceptions and parent/family expectations about entrepreneurship.
- Entrepreneurs are not limited only to commercial business people who are focused on making profits. They must include social entrepreneurs who contribute substantially to enhance the well-being of the poor and marginalized groups.
- Enhance access to venture capitalists for young entrepreneurs.
- Support creative industries.
- Encourage private-public partnerships, e.g., techno-entrepreneurs for IT and high-tech industries.
- Provide a forum to bring all stakeholders – government, academics, private sector, NGOs, communities, youth – for more discussion and collaboration.
- Take advantage of the media to promote creativity and entrepreneurship, e.g., produce a reality TV show for entrepreneurs.

Next steps

- Seek feedback from conference participants through online evaluation.
- Form core group of champions/community of practice to review recommendations and explore potential follow-up actions.
- Conduct more conferences/meetings (on smaller scale) on similar themes.