# DeThink
# PR4 Policy Brief

**Date:** 2024 May

**Author:** Dilek Tanrıseven

**Content:** PROJECT RESULT 4 Recommendation Handbooks

**Version:** 1

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# 1. Introduction

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals highlight the importance of entrepreneurial competencies. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 33% of young people aged 18-24 worldwide would like to start a business within the next 3 years. While not everyone is born with the same aptitude for entrepreneurship, research clearly indicates that there is a positive link between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial activity.

There is evidence to show that students participating in entrepreneurship education are more likely to start their own businesses. A global study of entrepreneurship education in schools found that there is a considerable untapped opportunity to promote economic growth and reduce unemployment by expanding access to entrepreneurship education to ALL secondary school students (Educating future Founders Report, 2020).

Entrepreneurship education programmes aimed at secondary school students can reduce the risk that a young person will become unemployed later in life and that exposure to innovation and entrepreneurship at an early age can have lasting impacts.

It is critical that the potential of all young people is encouraged at an early stage. Therefore entrepreneurial education must start early. Earlier interventions expand options and allow students to build on their knowledge at a later stage. Equipping students with entrepreneurial skills have a greater effect on the development of non-cognitive skills such as teamwork, self-esteem, and self-confidence which do not fade and can last a lifetime.

However, entrepreneurship is a messy and complex process that is not linear. Despite this, most entrepreneurship education programmes focus on learning about new venture creation rather than using tools to actively engage in these activities. Students are often required to come up with a business idea very quickly at the beginning of the semester and then perform planning activities and show economic viability at the end of the programme. Insufficient attention is paid to

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solving problems, coming up with ideas and acting on them. Entrepreneurial education should move away from approaches that focus on “about” and “for” and focus more in the “how” and “through.”

A design thinking approach focuses on developing empathy and identifying needs and generating solutions to address those needs. It looks at diagnosing problems and needs, developing new ideas and deploying these in practice. It advocates an iterative approach with key stages e.g., empathise, define, ideate, prototype and test. Essentially it is about showing how to look with fresh eyes, identifying opportunities and problems, and testing and implementing ideas.

Design Thinking has been widely used to design new products, services, solutions and businesses. A design thinking approach to entrepreneurial education allows students to follow a process, apply templates and tools to come up with problems and ideas. It enables them to understand the mindsets of entrepreneurs and develop a tangible skillset. It fosters a student-centred process and work can be graded on the development of competencies rather than output.

DeThink is designed  is to optimize secondary school teachers’ self-efficacy to enable an entrepreneurial mindset, critical thinking and creativity. It provides state of the art training for secondary school teachers in the field of design thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship by integrating lessons learned and know-how and showing them how to apply these in practice.

# 2. DeThink Guides

The DeThink Recommendation Handbooks offer recommendations and supporting material for the target agents and stakeholders, based on the insights and real experiences of participants with the DeThink e-learning platform. They are developed from the perspective that the potential of the DeThink training and it´s take up and continued use can only be guaranteed with the active support from secondary education schools, teachers, educational stakeholders and public administrations.

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The present handbook forms thus part of a wider set of Recommendation Handbooks for different stakeholders:

1) Handbook for teachers which explains the rationale for the training and introduces teachers to the concept of design thinking for entrepreneurship education. It provides s a step-by-step approach on how to use the training programme in the best way, and includes examples and testimonies of peers, experts on design thinking for entrepreneurship. It informs them about the community that can provide support and a space for knowledge exchange with peers beyond the project. It also includes a technical user guide.
2) Handbook for school managers and boards, which introduces the school managers and boards to the topic of De-Think. It will show them how they can motivate and support their teachers to use the proposed design thinking approach in their entrepreneurship classes. To enhance the ease of the take-up experiences from the schools (and in particular their managers or board members) that participated in the pilot validation are included.
3) Policy brief for educational authorities, is a set of recommendations, for educational authorities with secondary education competences. It generates awareness and provides understanding about the new approach to entrepreneurship education as proposed by De-Think and how to on how to adapt the educational system.

# 3. Target Group

The specific policy authorities in charge of secondary education can vary depending on the country. However, typically, the following entities or government departments are responsible for overseeing secondary education policies:

Ministry of Education or Department of Education: This government body is typically responsible for setting national education policies, including those related to secondary education.

State or Regional Education Departments: In some countries, education policies are managed at the state or regional level, with departments or ministries overseeing secondary education within their jurisdiction.

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Education Boards or Councils: These bodies may be responsible for implementing national education policies and standards at the regional or local level, including those related to secondary education.

School Boards or Authorities: At the local level, school boards or authorities may have responsibilities for implementing secondary education policies, managing schools, and ensuring compliance with national standards.

These are general categories, and the specific names and structures of policy authorities can vary from one country to another.

# 4.Empowering Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs

Design Thinking for Entrepreneurial Education suggests educational authorities include the systematic integration of design thinking modules into the secondary education curriculum. These modules emphasizes key components of design thinking, such as problem identification, ideation, prototyping, and iteration, providing students with hands-on experiences to foster their entrepreneurial mindset and skills.

Policy authorities can prioritize the development of comprehensive teacher training programs focused on design thinking methodologies. These programs equips educators with the knowledge, tools, and pedagogical approaches necessary to effectively integrate design thinking into their teaching practices. Workshops, seminars, and ongoing professional development opportunities can further support teachers in mastering these innovative techniques and adapting them to diverse classroom settings.

Moreover, educational authorities can establish dedicated spaces within schools, equipped with resources and technology, to facilitate design thinking activities. These innovation hubs can serve as collaborative environments where students can engage in experiential learning, tackle real-world challenges, and develop entrepreneurial solutions. Encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration and project-

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based learning within these spaces fosters creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration skills essential for entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, fostering partnerships between educational institutions and local businesses or startups can provide students with authentic entrepreneurial experiences. By engaging with industry professionals, students gain valuable insights into real-world entrepreneurship and opportunities to apply design thinking principles in practical settings. These partnerships also create pathways for mentorship, internships, and future career opportunities, enriching the educational experience and strengthening the connection between education and the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem.

By embracing the Dethink project's methodologies and implementing concrete strategies outlined in this blueprint, educational authorities can empower students to become confident, innovative, and socially responsible entrepreneurs. This proactive approach not only prepares students for success in the 21st-century economy but also cultivates a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation that drives socioeconomic growth and prosperity.

# 5. Catalyzing Economic Growth: Transforming Secondary Education

Catalyzing Economic Growth hinges on the implementation of innovative methodologies like by the Dethink project.Policy authorities can prioritize the integration of design thinking principles throughout the secondary education system. Concrete suggestions may include incorporating design thinking modules into the curriculum, focusing on areas such as problem-solving, empathy, ideation, prototyping, and iteration. This ensures that students not only understand entrepreneurial concepts theoretically but also develop practical skills to innovate and create real-world solutions.

Furthermore, policy authorities can invest in professional development programs for teachers to familiarize them with design thinking methodologies and equip

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them with the necessary tools and resources to effectively integrate these approaches into their teaching practices. Workshops, seminars, and ongoing support networks can facilitate the adoption of design thinking across schools, ensuring consistency and quality in implementation.

Moreover, creating dedicated spaces within schools for design thinking activities, equipped with tools, materials, and technology, can provide students with the environment they need to engage in hands-on, experiential learning. These spaces can also serve as hubs for collaboration and innovation, fostering a culture of creativity and entrepreneurship among students.

Additionally, policy authorities can encourage partnerships between schools and local businesses or startups to provide students with real-world challenges to solve using design thinking methodologies. This not only enriches the learning experience but also exposes students to the practical application of entrepreneurial skills in diverse contexts.

# 6. FUTURE INNOVATORS

Policy authorities hold a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of secondary education to nurture future innovators, particularly through initiatives like the Dethink project. Advocating for flexible assessment methods that value creativity and practical application alongside academic knowledge can incentivize innovative thinking among students. Traditional assessments often focus solely on rote memorization and regurgitation of facts, failing to capture the diverse skills and talents of students. By introducing flexible assessment methods, such as project-based assessments, portfolio evaluations, and real-world problem-solving tasks, educators can provide students with opportunities to showcase their creativity, critical thinking, and practical skills in addition to their academic achievements. These assessments encourage students to apply their knowledge to authentic situations, fostering a deeper understanding of concepts and promoting innovative approaches to solving complex problems. Moreover, by valuing creativity and practical application, flexible assessment methods validate diverse

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learning styles and talents, motivating students to explore their interests and pursue their passions. Ultimately, by embracing flexible assessment.By implementing these extraordinary suggestions, policy authorities can create an educational environment that not only equips future innovators with essential skills but also instills in them the confidence and drive to tackle real-world challenges with entrepreneurial spirit and ingenuity.

# 7. Education 4.0: Rethinking Secondary Education for the Entrepreneurial Era

"Education 4.0: Rethinking Secondary Education for the Entrepreneurial Era" underscores the imperative for policy authorities to overhaul educational paradigms in alignment with the demands of the contemporary entrepreneurial landscape. As Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, aptly stated, "In the new world, it is not the big fish which eats the small fish, it's the fast fish which eats the slow fish." This profound observation encapsulates the urgency for educational systems to evolve towards Education 4.0, which prioritizes agility, innovation, and adaptability. Drawing insights from initiatives like the Dethink project, which advocates for Design Thinking for Entrepreneurial Education, policymakers are called upon to integrate forward-thinking methodologies into secondary education curricula. As echoed by Tim Brown, CEO of IDEO, "Design thinking can be described as a discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity." Thus, embedding design thinking principles fosters entrepreneurial mindsets among students, equipping them with the critical skills necessary to thrive in today's dynamic economy. By embracing Education 4.0 and leveraging insights from innovative projects like Dethink, policy authorities can catalyze transformative change and empower the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators to shape a brighter future.

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# 8. Concluding Remarks

In today's rapidly evolving landscape, the imperative to nurture entrepreneurial mindsets and innovative thinking among students has never been more pressing. Secondary education stands as the cornerstone for fostering these critical skills, preparing students to thrive in the entrepreneurial era. Policy authorities hold a pivotal role in shaping the future of learning, tasked with implementing transformative reforms that embrace initiatives like the Dethink project.

Empowering Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs necessitates a proactive approach from policy authorities to transform secondary education. By integrating design thinking methodologies into curricula, educators can equip students with the creative problem-solving skills essential for entrepreneurship. Ensuring teachers receive adequate training is paramount to effectively implementing these innovative approaches in the classroom. Through strategic investment in teacher development programs, policy authorities can cultivate a cadre of educators capable of fostering entrepreneurial mindsets among students.

Catalyzing Economic Growth through education reform requires a multifaceted approach from policy authorities. Policymakers can drive innovation and economic prosperity by investing in the creation of innovation spaces within schools provides students with the resources and environment to explore entrepreneurial concepts. Furthermore, fostering partnerships between educational institutions and industry stakeholders enriches students' learning experiences and bridges the gap between education and the workforce.

In conclusion, as we embark on the journey to transform secondary education, policy authorities are expected to prioritize initiatives that foster entrepreneurial mindsets and innovative thinking among students. By embracing the principles of the Dethink project and implementing concrete reforms, policymakers can shape an educational landscape that prepares students not only for the challenges of today but for the opportunities of tomorrow. This proactive approach ensures that

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our educational systems remain agile and responsive to the evolving needs of the entrepreneurial era, driving economic growth, and societal progress.

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