

Scottish Government Debate: Scotland Can Do

Parliamentary Briefing

The Carnegie UK Trust is an independent, charitable trust, which for 100 years has worked to improve the lives and wellbeing of people across the United Kingdom and Ireland. Find more information on our website www.carnegiekutrust.org.uk.

Introduction

The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland. The Trust has a proven heritage in the development of skills and lifelong learning through funding the Workers' Educational Association, and helping to create Carnegie College in Leeds, Colleg Harlec in Wales, and Newbattle Abbey College in Scotland. The Trust continues to be interested in skills development, equality of access to skills, and the relationship between education and the economy.

We welcome today's debate on Scotland Can Do: A Framework for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The need to create new opportunities for economic activity and employment is pressing. Tackling long-term unemployment amongst young people is as much a social need as it is a requirement for sustaining economic growth. The financial crisis reinforced a long period of structural change in the national economy. The ability of very large, traditional employers to provide sustainable futures for Scotland's young workforce appears increasingly unrealistic. Young people are expected to work in new environments and sectors for new and changing organisations, and to do so with greater flexibility. The younger generation needs the skills relevant to a changing economy, and the Scottish Government can help to address this need by continuing to invest in

youth enterprise as part of its Framework for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

We welcome the Scotland Can Do Action Framework and its four themes of capable; ambitious; networked; demand and opportunities. Informed by our [Carnegie position on enterprise](#), the Trust would welcome the following additions to the Framework Action Plan.

Share success and learn from the leaders

Inspiration about enterprise and opportunities for entrepreneurship should begin at as early an age as possible and continue throughout the curriculum and beyond, with young peoples' understanding and skills being strengthened at each stage. This joined-up approach should not only be delivered from school to university in order to eliminate interruptions, but it should be delivered across courses so that all young people receive a similar quality and consistency of enterprise interaction.

As our research has found that there is an appetite to [share more public policy learning across borders](#), the Scottish Government should learn from the examples of enterprise education and entrepreneurial learning which have had a proven impact on the aspirations, skills and outcomes of learners in other parts of the UK and

beyond. The free exchange of what works well has the potential to improve not only the quality of enterprise education received by students, but also their attitude, aptitude and possibly, entrepreneurship that creates economic activity and jobs.

Meet the role models

Three-quarters of the respondents to our [survey of further education students](#) agreed or strongly agreed that more opportunities to meet with local, successful businesspeople would be beneficial. More than 80% of respondents who remembered participating in an enterprise activity with a local entrepreneur at college found this useful, but only a third had ever been invited to such an event. As part of the ‘ambitious’ and ‘networked’ themes of Scotland Can Do, the Trust would welcome the Scottish Government:

- Supporting schools, colleges and universities to develop stronger relationships with the local business community and build a programme of interactive events, allowing all students to attend.
- Supporting educators to make full use of their alumni networks and the wider business community to bring local, relatable entrepreneurs and young people together to inspire and inform about the realities of business start-up.

Opportunities for entrepreneurship

Empowering young people to develop their entrepreneurial skills through enterprise challenges and competitions should begin at primary school and continue throughout their education and into the labour market. 74% of our survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that grants, loans and funding to pursue small business ideas after college would be helpful.

Opportunities for entrepreneurship will develop young peoples’ employability by providing them with skills such as team-working, communication and problem solving. With just [19% of business leaders](#) believing that all or most graduate recruits

are ready for the 21st century workplace, and the Chamber of Commerce raising concerns about college leavers’ [attitudes and expectations](#) of the world of work, schools, colleges and universities should be supported to come together to provide young people with real-life experience of employment under the ‘ambitious’ theme in the Action Plan.

Civil society support for enterprise

Many civil society organisations are now active in the public policy field of entrepreneurial learning by supporting or delivering a large number of projects which encourage entrepreneurial attitudes and skills among young people. As part of Scotland Can Do, the Trust would like to see civil society organisations supported to:

- Address the fragile evidence base on student views on and awareness of enterprise and entrepreneurship, what works well in this field, how we measure the impact of enterprise education, and the long-term connection between student engagement with enterprise activities and business start-up.
- Work together to help improve enterprise education and entrepreneurial learning across the UK and Ireland.

Place young people at the heart of town centre turnaround

Our survey into student attitudes found that young people visualise enterprise in a way defined by the media – by innovative, high profile people of extreme wealth. Young people increasingly disconnect their town centre with their own aspirations and employment options, with just 5% in our survey identifying local and regional businesses, small-scale shops and near-by start-ups as enterprising. However, young people are the pathway to getting younger consumers and service users back to our town centres. Only they can understand the products and facilities a town centre can offer which will appeal to the next generation and recapture the younger consumer and their purchasing power.

We welcome the fact that Scotland Can Do Action Framework recognises the entrepreneurial potential of town centres. We would welcome a focus on supporting young entrepreneurs to trade in our town centres by:

- Supporting local authorities, educators and entrepreneurs to come together to help young people interested in entrepreneurship to see towns as innovative hubs and hosts of their future businesses. The enterprising spirit of our young people should be harnessed and put at the centre of plans for town centre regeneration.
- Providing opportunities for young people to test out entrepreneurship in their local communities. We know that practical experience of entrepreneurship has a proven impact on young peoples' skills, attitudes and aspirations. An [evaluation](#) of our project [TestTown](#), which provides young people with the opportunity to trade in vacant spaces in town centres, found that:
 1. 56% of the finalists strongly agreed that they felt more confident in handling new working challenges;
 2. 62% strongly agreed that they had gained new skills that would help them start up;
 3. 81% strongly agreed that their personal enterprise initiative would lead to business success;
 4. Footfall on the TestTown streets doubled and £10,000 was taken by the TestTown teams in 20 hours of trading.

For further information on our work on youth enterprise please visit our [website](#) or contact Lauren Pennycook at laurenp@carnegieuk.org

The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913

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