



International  
Labour  
Organization

## Fostering Future Entrepreneurs

### Encouraging entrepreneurship for jobs and development

*Know about Business* (KAB) has helped over 3 million young women and men in more than 56 countries since 2008 to develop core entrepreneurial skills. Tracer studies in eight countries have shown that former KAB students had more positive attitudes to entrepreneurship, whether as owners or employees, were more likely to set up in business and to develop business plans prior to doing so.

With many young women and men unable to secure formal employment opportunities, encouraging entrepreneurship is an ever more important way of harnessing their enthusiasm, energy and ambition to contribute to economic development. The majority of the world's young people are in developing economies, where formal jobs are scarce and even informal jobs may be hard to find.

Micro, small and medium-sized businesses are the drivers of new jobs and behind every enterprise lies the spirit and imagination of an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship strengthens economic growth and can play a crucial role in spurring sustainable development and generating decent jobs. However, adopting policies conducive to the development of small businesses will only work if women and men are ready and equipped to seize the entrepreneurship challenge. Entrepreneurship education is essential in raising awareness about business among young women and men so that those who so choose can take the difficult but rewarding steps needed to transform their business dreams into reality.

Some of the basic skills and attributes required to be a successful entrepreneur, such as self-confidence, communication and negotiation skills, networking, initiative and motivation, should be developed early and can reach large numbers of youth through the formal education system.

### The ILO approach to entrepreneurship education



*Know about business* (KAB) is an entrepreneurship education programme that seeks to introduce young women and men to the world of business and entrepreneurship. To know about business is to understand the role of business in society and the important part played by enterprises in achieving sustainable economic, social and environmental development. To know about entrepreneurship is also to understand that entrepreneurship is the recognition of an opportunity to create value, both economic and social, and the process of acting on this opportunity, whether or not it involves launching a new enterprise.

The ILO sees entrepreneurship as a means to create decent and productive work, recognizing that, for young women and men in particular, the development of entrepreneurial skills and attitudes while in the education system can contribute to their ability to compete successfully for employment opportunities when jobs are scarce.

The overall objective of the KAB programme is to help create an enterprising culture among young women and men by encouraging qualities such as initiative, innovation, creativity and risk taking. By initiating young people to entrepreneurship early, they are more likely to become entrepreneurs driven by opportunity, rather than by necessity. The programme aims

to raise their awareness of the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurship and self-employment, and gives them a better understanding of the role that youth can play in shaping their futures, as well as that of their countries, by being entrepreneurial in their working lives and careers. Entrepreneurship education also contributes to encouraging young women to take up the challenge of business and increasing the numbers of future women-led businesses. The specific objectives of KAB are:

- Developing positive attitudes towards sustainable enterprise, self-employment and social entrepreneurship.
- Creating awareness of enterprise and self-employment as a career option for young people.
- Providing knowledge and practice about the desirable attributes for starting and operating a successful enterprise.
- Preparing students to become better employees through improved understanding of business.

## The ILO in action: The KAB programme

### The KAB education package

The KAB package is for teachers and students in public and private secondary schools, vocational and technical training institutions and universities. Typically, students are aged 15 to 18 years. When KAB is taught in higher education, students may be up to 24 years old.

The KAB package is designed to provide teachers and trainers with materials and session plans for a 120-hour course, which can be implemented in sessions of three hours a week over the course of the school year or over two hour sessions over a two year period. The package consists of a Facilitator’s Guide, a Learner’s Workbook and 9 modules, each representing a key area of entrepreneurship. The first four modules are focused on awareness raising and softer skills while the other five modules begin to introduce more technical aspects of starting a business. KAB also includes content to promote gender equality, environmental awareness and disability inclusion among young women and men. The international version of KAB is available in English, French and Spanish. Adapted versions have been developed in languages such as Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, Chinese, Khmer, Laotian, Russian, Sinhalese, Tamil and Vietnamese.

Module 1: What is Enterprising?	Module 6: How do I organize an enterprise?
Module 2: Why Entrepreneurship?	Module 7: How do I operate an enterprise?
Module 3: Who are entrepreneurs?	Module 8: What are the next steps to become an entrepreneur?
Module 4: How do I become an entrepreneur?	Module 9: How to develop one’s own business plan?
Module 5: How do I find a good business idea?	Optional materials: Green Entrepreneurship Module and Module with additional games and activities.

Participatory and learner-centered teaching methods involving role plays on risk taking, negotiation, team work and business games are used throughout the year to make the learning fun, inspiring and interactive. There is also an option for students to experience running a business through the “KAB/SIYB Business Game” and/or set up and run a school business or social enterprise.

## KAB has global reach

The KAB programme has been introduced in more than 56 countries in Latin America, Africa, the Arab states, and Central, East and South-East Asia. In 18 countries, KAB has been integrated into the national curricula, while in others it is being taught in selected schools and institutions. Pilot testing in selected institutions normally precedes any government decision to introduce entrepreneurship education and the KAB programme into the national educational curricula. KAB can also be combined with other topics such as financial literacy or start-up management training (like ILO-SIYB).<sup>1</sup>

As of 2013, more than 13,100 teachers from the same number of educational institutions had been trained to deliver entrepreneurship education, and more than three million young people had taken a KAB course. This number is expected to continue to grow significantly over the coming years as countries integrate KAB into their education curricula. The programme is delivered by a team of international, regional and national key facilitators accredited by the ILO.

## KAB achieves its objectives

In 2009 and 2010, the ILO carried out tracer studies of former KAB students. Findings included<sup>2</sup>:

- In Syria, 89% of former KAB students found the programme to be useful or very useful in preparing them to start a business, and over 80% found it useful in preparing them to enter the labour market.
- In China, a sample survey of former KAB participants found that over 90% of business owners rated it as useful or very useful for starting a business, while former KAB students had fewer objections to employment in a small business than non KAB students, indicating that the programme had changed attitudes.
- In Kyrgyzstan, 35% of former KAB students who were now employees said they had tried starting a business, compared with 17% in a control group. Lack of financial resources was the main reason cited for not remaining in business. Former KAB students were also eight times more likely to have developed business plans compared to the control group.
- In Peru, three out of four former KAB students questioned said they intended to open a business compared to one out of four of the control group. One third of those interviewed said they had drawn up a business plan, compared to one out of four from the control group.
- In focus group discussions, former KAB students said the programme had helped them develop key communication skills and self-confidence.



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<sup>1</sup> ILO. *Building Business and Entrepreneurship Awareness: An ILO experience of integrating entrepreneurship into the national vocational education system*, 2011. [www.ilo.org/empent/publications/WCMS\\_168356/lang-en/](http://www.ilo.org/empent/publications/WCMS_168356/lang-en/)

<sup>2</sup> ILO, *Tracer Studies On The Know About Business Entrepreneurship Education Programme - A synthesis report from eight studies*, 2010.

## The ILO and Sustainable Enterprises

The ILO Sustainable Enterprise Programme helps create more and better jobs through enterprise development. It connects business growth and competitiveness with the needs of people to make a decent living in a healthy environment - today and in the future. Anchored in the ILO's mission to create decent work for all women and men, this programme is centred on three pillars:

- An enabling environment for enterprises - Creating the right framework that enables businesses to start, grow and create decent jobs;
- Entrepreneurship and business development - Helping entrepreneurs, in particular youth, women and marginalized groups, to start and build successful enterprises;
- Sustainable and responsible workplaces - Demonstrating the link between productivity gains and improved working conditions, good industrial relations and good environmental practices.

The programme combines evidence-based policy development with capacity building and enterprise support services, delivered at the international and country levels, through advisory services and a large portfolio of technical cooperation. It works with governments, employers' and workers' organizations, in partnership with other UN agencies, financial and academic institutions, donors and others.

## Further reading

Global resource site for KAB entrepreneurship education Global resource site for KAB entrepreneurship education: [www.knowaboutbusiness.org](http://www.knowaboutbusiness.org)

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