

# DEVELOPMENT DURING AND AFTER SARS COVID-19 THROUGH ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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## Abstract:

*The economy and people's lives have been severely affected by the covid-19 pandemic, and the road to "recovery" requires a lot of work, energy, and solid knowledge. Considered essential in the process of economic growth and job creation, education and entrepreneurship seek to respond to a multitude of challenges aimed at training a new generation of people with an enviable track record. The recognition of the value of experience and learning from both positive and negative examples is essential to achieving it. For a country to progress, it needs strong entrepreneurship. If we look at the approach of successful entrepreneurs about risks, we will notice the importance of the education they received. Lately, the courses of the vocational training centres were adapted to the needs of a changing economy. Armed with determination and courage, people who have lost their jobs need a positive boost through professional retraining to become active members of society again. The initiatives in Romania and Hungary show us the increased interest of people to develop the knowledge and skills to be able to keep jobs or get a new one. People are beginning to understand the true meaning of lifelong learning.*

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship, covid-19 pandemic, recovery, economy, economic education

**JEL Classification:** A2, I310, L26

## 1. Introduction

The word entrepreneur "entreprendre" of French origin means to undertake. The study of the fundamental concepts of entrepreneurship began only in the eighteenth century. Traditionally, Jean-Baptiste Say is credited with advancing the concept of entrepreneur, but in fact, the basis of entrepreneurial thinking was laid by the Irish-French economist Richard Cantillon who first used the word entrepreneur in "Essai sur la nature du commerce en général"(Cantillon, 2010). In Cantillon's vision, the entrepreneurial activity involves risk, perspective thinking and speculation. Later, the Austrian economist Joseph Alois Schumpeter implemented innovation as a key element of entrepreneurship. The entrepreneur's orientation towards profit, possessing good management and leadership skills is the model agreed by the Austrian economist Bert F. Hoselitz bearing the ideological imprint of the University of Chicago, where he studied. To have an overview, we must mention the opinion of the Jewish-American economist born in Ukraine, Harvey Leibenstein: "The most important skill of an entrepreneur is cross knowledge gaps and find original and effective solutions in any situation" (Alam, 2014).

Nowadays, everyone has in mind an image of a successful entrepreneur being able to list the elements that characterize them. Does this image likely reflect the characteristics needed by an entrepreneur? We can answer this question starting from the behaviourist school's vision of entrepreneurs: "innovators, leaders, risk-takers, independents, creators, tenacious, energetic, original, optimistic, results-oriented, flexible and materialistic" (Bucurean, 2009).

Undoubtedly through the activity of identifying business opportunities, entrepreneurs need flair and intuition. When designing the vision, they must show imagination, passion and independence. Orientation, constancy and tenacity are important in achieving the vision. Reason and prudence play an important role in decision-making. At the same time, determination and perseverance must be their shadow to face the difficulties encountered. A great emphasis is on the choice and involvement of staff, and to determine the employees to act according to the plan, communication becomes essential. Driven by the desire to win, entrepreneurs analyze risks, but focus on opportunities, use failure as a source of learning, do

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not demoralize, but instead trust their skills. The sense of responsibility and the high level of energy, fortified with a dose of optimism, tilts the balance towards success in this field. Independence often manifested by the desire to differentiate oneself from others, to strive for originality, to adopt a different way of thinking by exploring new horizons is characteristic of the entrepreneur, although these facts do not stop him from encouraging teamwork. The existence of these characteristics is not the guarantee of success, but they are an indispensable basis for the entrepreneur of the present and the future (Bădulescu, 2013).

## **2. Research methodology**

The research in this article is a quantitative type. This involves the study of national and international specialized literature, as well as the analysis conducted by international organizations about education and entrepreneurship. The increasing presence of entrepreneurship education in Romania and Hungary proves that people are beginning to understand and give more importance to this field because they seem like a solution to mitigating the consequences of the pandemic and the precarious financial situation of many people. Out of the desire to form an overview keeping pace with the preferences of the people of the 21st century, I researched the digital world. A strong argument for participating in these courses is to provide a different perspective by facilitating the exchange of information globally. The coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) that hit the world demonstrated the usefulness and necessity of these courses, through the increased number of participants. But regardless of how the courses are taught, we need to give importance to examples of good practice based on economic realities that facilitate hands-on learning.

## **3. Prerequisites for success**

The Romanian educational system has undergone reform in the hope of becoming more competitive to contribute to the country's prosperity. Among the high grievances is the fact that it is not sufficiently aligned with the current needs of the labour market. The increasingly frequent and rapid changes caused by the covid-19 pandemic in the professional field have prompted Romanian society to adaptability and flexibility. Thus, continuous professional training and professional reconversion through various courses is an activity that supports macroeconomic and social development and evolution. Given the importance of time, these courses must have a clear structure that helps to acquire and consolidate up-to-date knowledge.

### **3.1. Economic education and entrepreneurship training**

The qualification and professional training courses designed by Atelierele Ilbah have enjoyed authorization since 2012. In the locations Bucharest, Ploiești and Cluj-Napoca, the entrepreneurship course takes place according to after-work program and weekend program. The emphasis is on actively acquiring theoretical notions so that a generous component is dedicated to putting into practice the information gathered. The course "Entrepreneurship from A to Z" divided into four weeks looks like this: the introductory part describes the profile, skills and competencies of the entrepreneur. Following to starting and running a business to present the business idea and planning process. The external sources of financing and the marketing strategy are pointed out, in which the target market and the positioning of the products/services are discussed. Then it focuses on the development of business products/services by marking the following: acquisition, installation, maintenance of the necessary technology, the product itself, design, packaging, research, costs, investments, protection of intellectual property rights, international relations, acquisition of know-how, franchising and licensing. The course agenda includes risk and success by exemplifying the typology of risk in various situations along with possible ways to minimize them. The course ends with the presentation of the logistics necessary to run a business, and in the annexes are

provided business plans models. And in the end it is a part of fixing knowledge through grid tests, questions and exercises (ateliereleilbah.ro).

Extreme Training is a training company that since 2005 has delivered training courses for tens of thousands of students. During 4 days, the aim is to train and improve business professionals, starting from simple business ideas to their implementation. Following that the skills, knowledge and abilities acquired are to be implemented for the benefit of the development of the economy. Using modern teaching methods, trainers try to show what a business involves in terms of law and opportunities for the chosen field. Guide students in implementing the business idea, helping to develop their plan so that the chances of success are as high as possible. The course provides relevant models for starting and developing a sustainable business. The course plan includes an introduction to entrepreneurship, starting a business, marketing strategy, financing a business, developing business products/services, promotion policy, development strategies, business risks and business plan. To deepen the acquired knowledge, each student benefits from an introductory guide in entrepreneurship (traininguri.ro).

Centrul Athena operates in Bucharest. It has taken on the mission of caring for the quality and level of training of students by finding the middle ground between passion, goals and the demands of the labour market. The target audience of entrepreneurship courses is those who want to open their own business or already own a business and want to manage it more efficiently. Assistance and advice are provided to graduates in the implementation of business plans built during the courses. The structure of the course does not differ from other qualification centres. Starting with an introduction, after which talk about organizing the business activity, marketing strategy, negotiating contracts, promotion policy, financing, product/service development, staff organization, logistics, development strategies and business risks (centrul-athena.ro). The certificate obtained upon graduation of the course is recognized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education and Research. It is valid throughout the European Union and in the states with which Romania has concluded agreements regarding the equivalence of qualifications.

Founded in 2012 with headquarters in Oradea, Corporactive Consulting is a multifaceted company, offering in addition to about 100 training courses consulting and recruitment services, personalized team building and coaching. The entrepreneurial skills course was authorized on 8.12.2014. From 2016 to 2020, 102 students graduated from this course with a duration of 40 hours. 28 hours are allocated to theory and 12 to practice. The agenda of the course is the following: Management of entrepreneurial activity according to the legal provisions; Market research and marketing environment; Establishing the marketing, communication and sales strategy; Elaboration of a business plan; Finding the best sources of financing for the planned business; Business risk assessment and management. Given the vision of the company and the trainers, the emphasis is on flexibility, because it is desired that each student leaves at the end with solid knowledge, finding the answers to the questions he came up with (corporactive.ro). Among the professional skills acquired at the end of the course, we can mention: identifying the logistics necessary to carry out the entrepreneurial activity, negotiating contracts, writing a business plan, defining development strategies and identifying business risks.

When we talk about entrepreneurship courses, we must mention Mr Marius Ghenea, entrepreneur and business angel with successful investments in Eastern Europe. As a professor of entrepreneurship, innovation and new business ventures at the Maastricht School of Management, he was involved in many educational activities being one of the founders of the BusinessDrive program for entrepreneurs and managers, he was co-organizer at School for Startups Romania and last but not least he is co-founder of Venture Connect, a support platform for tech start-ups and investors. In his book entitled "Entrepreneurship, the Road

from Ideas to Opportunities and Business Success" provides valuable information for both entrepreneurs and those who want to follow the path of entrepreneurship. His intensive entrepreneurship course discusses the qualities and skills needed for a good entrepreneur, developing a simple and effective business plan, team building, entrepreneurial approach to marketing activities, efficient business financing, business evaluation and exit options from a business (Ghenea, 2011).

DallesGo, founded in 2010, provides interactive after-work courses in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Timisoara, Iasi, Constanta, Brasov, Oradea, Craiova, Sibiu and Galati that have become a benchmark for excellence in alternative education. A large number of enrolled in the Entrepreneurial Skills Course in Bucharest is due to the person of Mr Claudiu Șerban. With a 15-year career in leadership positions in the media and publishing industry, his name is linked to brands such as Revista TV Mania, Unica Magazine, Gazeta Sporturilor, Capital and Evenimentul zilei. Over the course of 12 weeks, the following topics are covered: business plan, tactics vs. strategy, key success factors, Pareto's rule, decision-making processes, time management, Porter's strengths, branding, advertising, P.R., social media and e-commerce. Trainers being successful people in their field of activity, professionally pass on knowledge, try to give the best advice to students who want to become entrepreneurs and last but not least share their failures, showing that an essential feature of an entrepreneur is tenacity. These courses are meant to train human intelligence in finding solutions in the most complicated situations. Certainly, the acquired knowledge and skills will be an asset in the professional career of students (dallesgo.ro). In Romania, Atelierele Ilbah, Extreme Training, Central Athena, Corporative Consulting, Marius Ghenea, and DallesGo centres in 2019 had some 1.198 students. Due to the transition to online activities, the number of students increased to 1.567. This is also because many see entrepreneurship as a way out of the economic difficulties created by covid-19. Partial data for 2021 show that this interest is maintained even growing.

We cannot conclude without talking about the presence of female entrepreneurship. Since 2010, through CONAF (National Confederation for Female Entrepreneurship), female entrepreneurs have joined forces to promote this field in the country and abroad. At the Women In Economy Gala, second edition in 2020, CONAF President Cristina Chiriac stated that "Romania is currently ranked 9th in the world in terms of female entrepreneurship". From this perspective, the year 2020 for female entrepreneurship meant the year that forced them to overcome the limits. The year 2020 came with major achievements for CONAF, becoming the only employers' organization in Romania that represents the interests of women entrepreneurs on the board of WEGATE, a body created by the European Commission to support and promote female entrepreneurship (conaf.ro). One of the actions in 2021 is the granting of 1000 scholarships for women who want to certify their knowledge in the IT field, thanks to CONAF's partnership with Google Romania. Armed with determination and courage, more and more women are enrolling in special programs in which they benefit from free mentoring and entrepreneurship education, thus daring to follow the path of entrepreneurship.

### **3.2. The need for economic education**

Economic knowledge prepares people to become responsible people, helps them develop the skills and abilities they need to achieve their goals. It has been shown that people with economic knowledge, skills and competencies find easier a job. Education in Romania and Hungary, with the desire to take the pace demanded by the global requirements, has embraced a system based on performance, emphasizing the preservation and creation of value for future generations. This system urges the promotion and emphasis of the importance of economic education from primary school to higher education and beyond, pointing out long-

term benefits such as personal development, capacity for innovation and adaptability, including more efficient use of resources.

Seeing that nowadays those people can maintain their economic position by continuously investing in education, lately, the social importance of education has increased. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, the traditional educational cycle seems too long, so especially adults choose faster options, adapted to the needs of the modern world. Among these variants, we can mention the courses designed especially for them, which make it possible to acquire knowledge for quick retraining to be present on the labour market. We must not forget that in 2020, there were 96.5 million people in the European Union at risk of poverty or social exclusion, representing 21.9% of the population. But hope is also seen because, in the European Union, the employment rate of people aged 20-64 stood at 72.8% in the second quarter of 2021, which represents an increase of 0.7 percentage points (pp) compared to the first quarter of 2021 (Eurostat, 2021).

Economic education received more and more importance during the covid-19 pandemic on the territory of Hungary. Centers such as Vállalkozás Okosan, Oktáv Training Center, NŐ a siker!, Ioszia Center and Fiatal Vállalkozók Országos Szövetsége (FIVOSZ) through online webinars, online courses and digital kits have ensured the transmission of valuable knowledge. The Vállalkozás Okosan Center was founded by Anita Szilágyi and György Vuray out of a passion for entrepreneurial practice. The main topics of the course: what an entrepreneur should pay attention to at the beginning of the road; the right choice of business form; elaboration of the business and financial plan; what impact will the fiscal changes in 2021 have on the business; KATA tax form and online reporting of invoices to the National Tax and Customs Agency. This course does not promise that every student will instantly become a successful entrepreneur, but that he will be much more aware of the processes of starting an efficient business. They will also be able to write their business plan, identify the type of business that suits them and calculate the tax due correctly. Thus, each student will leave with tips and practical information that he can implement with confidence (vallalkozas-okosan.hu). As an accredited institution for adult education, Oktáv has been providing training and vocational training since 1993. The courses are held in Budapest, Debrecen, Dunaújváros, Eger, Esztergom, Győr, Kaposvár, Kecskemét, Miskolc, Pécs, Szeged, Szolnok and Szolnok. Due to the approach that focuses on personalized learning, thousands of adults have chosen to study and obtain a certificate of training. The Training Center has joined the Operational Program for Human Resources Development (HEFOP), the Operational Program for Social Renewal (SRÖP) and the Program for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities operating in an international context offering free courses to disadvantaged or temporarily disadvantaged people. The purpose of the entrepreneurship and payroll course is to train professionals who will be able to perform tasks related to the establishment and operation of enterprises. For a year, the course proposes to cover the following topics: basic business activities; management tasks of small and medium enterprises; social Security; accounting tasks; business financing and taxation; labour management; pay and employment. The practical part of the course is carried out at the companies with which Oktáv has a contract, and students participating in domestic and international projects use the knowledge gained in the fields of business development, crisis management, innovation, organization and coordination of micro-regional vocational programs. At the end of the course, an examination is held after the promotion of which the internationally recognized certificate with the Europass supplement is issued (oktav.hu). Female entrepreneurship is also beginning to gain ground in Hungary. A good example is the work of the NŐ a siker centre! who worked hard during the pandemic to help women who lost their jobs. The adult education centre, Ioszia with over 10 years of experience offers training based on a well-defined quality management system. Offer high-quality training that responds to the national and European challenges of

the labour market. In more than 150 authorized courses, trainers in Hungary try to transmit applicable knowledge (felnottkepzes.hu). Topics discussed in the courses include: starting a business, financing a business, business plan, marketing strategy, contract negotiation, promotion policy, product development, development strategy and risks. From the beginning of 2020, these courses can also be chosen in online format within the E-learning Education Center Ioszia. The community of young Hungarian entrepreneurs, FIVOSZ since its founding in 2007 is officially recognized both in Hungary and by the European Union as a body that helps educate and guide the next generation of entrepreneurs. With 13 years of experience, this organization focuses on young people between 18 and 40 years old. The founder, Dr Kovács Patrik is also the leader of JEUNE - the Organization of Young Entrepreneurs in the European Union. Since 2014, FIVOSZ has contributed to the creation of 1.346 companies in Hungary, because it believes that young entrepreneurs should have a practical education where they can acquire real knowledge and not be abandoned after starting a business. FIVOSZ partners include OTP Bank, Mol, the Ministry of Human Resources, Hepa, Mogyi, E-on, the National Tax and Customs Agency (NAV), Wizz Air, Ericsson and many others who believe in economic growth and expand human well-being through entrepreneurship. Through an innovative approach in various programs, young people benefit from the advice of experienced entrepreneurs who help in exploring the potential, starting and developing business. The most popular program is "Vállalkozz itthon!" (fivosz.hu). In FIVOSZ's opinion, an entrepreneurship education program is much more than explaining how to set up and run a business. They want to help turn business ideas into reality.

#### **4. Online education**

This type, of course, combining innovation and competitiveness has undeniable advantages such as the opportunity to learn from experts in the field around the world, to progress at your own pace and last but not least, to build your library for personal and career development. It is often questioned whether these online courses are a more effective way to educate people than regular courses. A popular platform in 2020-2021 was Udemy, providing lifelong learning with over 100.000 online courses. Those who want to acquire the knowledge of economic education have at their disposal 1.693 well-structured courses. Most Udemy course participants who leave feedback mention the main purpose of participation: "Expanding career opportunities" (udemy.com). The platform provides both free and paid courses. The range of courses available is very wide: Elizabeth Heck's course "Successful start-up with natural products", Asif Masood's award-winning course "Recruitment Agency from the comfort of home", Vladimir Raykov with "Entrepreneur Psychology", Terry King with "Startup social - how to start a non-profit business ", John Westbrook with " Profitable online business ", Adnan Mahmood with " Entrepreneurship for engineers (E4E) ", John Shea with " Own SaaS company (software as a service) "just to remind them some. For a better understand what these courses offer, I will present the course by Guy Kawasaki, an American marketing specialist and venture capitalist in Silicon Valley, called "The Essential Guide to Entrepreneurship" available in English, Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese and Italian enjoyed some 22.674 students in 2020. One of the arguments for choosing this course is that Mr Guy Kawasaki, thanks to over 30 years of experience with technology giants such as Apple and Google understands the point of view of the entrepreneur as well as the point of view of the investor, and this helps those at the beginning of the road to look at the business on both sides of the table. The course agenda goes through each stage necessary for the start of your own business, starting with the launch, moving to fundraise, creating teams and ending with marketing. The special section where Mr Kawasaki answers each question comes to the aid of all those who have doubts about the topics covered. Regardless of the theme of the chosen course, they are meant to provide a valuable experience to the students.

## 5. Conclusions

With each passing day, entrepreneurship is gaining more and more ground, so there has been a demand for a practical entrepreneurial education, anchored in the economic reality. To contribute to the training of adults in the field of entrepreneurship, the Ilbah Workshops, Extreme Training, Athena Center, Corporative Consulting, Marius Ghenea and DallesGo have created practical and perspective courses that train creative thinking. Eager to become better and more useful, the centres are constantly adjusting training to the needs of students. The secret of the success of FIVOSZ programs is to build entrepreneurial education on economic and practical realities. The online courses of the analyzed centres are characterized by flexibility, adaptability to the requirements of the future that train creativity, intelligence, innovative spirit, knowledge exchange and cooperation.

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