

PUBLIC SELECTION BASED ON QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERVIEW FOR THE AWARDING OF NO. 1 GRANTS LASTING 12 MONTHS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN ACCORDANCE WITH ART. 22 OF LAW OF 30.12.2010 NO. 240 IN CYFE - CENTER FOR YOUNG AND FAMILY ENTERPRISE – A.R.F. 13/A1 - ECONOMICS, A.D. SECS-P/01 – ECONOMICS

announced with decree of the Rector Rep. no. 594/2016 of 18.11.2016 and posted on the official registry of the University on 18.11.2016

RESEARCH PROJECT

“Entrepreneurship, education and human capital development in innovation- and knowledge-based contexts”

Project objectives and research project

Entrepreneurship is considered one of the driving forces of economic growth and innovation. Furthermore, from a labor market perspective it may be a relevant port of entry into employment, especially for individuals “at the margin” of the labor market (such as immigrants, women and the young) and in years of shortage of job opportunities as dependent workers.

The European Commission has recently stressed that, in order to foster the entrepreneurial dynamism of our economies, it is crucial to reinforce entrepreneurial education in schools and universities. Through the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan and the Rethinking Education Communication, the European Commission has emphasized the need to embed entrepreneurial learning in all sectors of education including, non-formal learning. The aim is to provide all young people with a practical entrepreneurial experience before leaving compulsory education.

The impact of entrepreneurship education goes actually beyond the creation of business start-ups, since it makes young people more employable and “intrapreneurial” also when they work as employees in existing companies or organizations.

Entrepreneurship education is getting more and more relevance also in our University, particularly in the departments/degrees with a management vocation. However, research and practice have been more silent on fields related to new technologies; filling that gap is particularly urgent in enabling and knowledge-based technological sectors, including in particular life sciences, given their impact in terms of innovation and employability.

Furthermore, while there is a large body of literature on the effects of entrepreneurship education on the creation and performance of new start-ups, little is known on the effect of such type of education on the performance of (young) people in their academic studies and subsequent dependent employment.

This is a relevant issue for both research and policy making, provided that the majority of the students who take one or more entrepreneurship courses during their years of formal education will be employed as dependent workers once entering into the labor market.

The aim of this research project is hence to empirically study whether and how entrepreneurial education affects the performance of young individuals both in their academic studies and once entering the labor market as employees. Several indicators will be considered, such as the length of academic studies, the graduation mark, the probability to gain stable employment, the probability to experience unemployment spells, earnings and skills differentials.

The empirical analysis will be based both on administrative data on a selected sample of students of the University of Bergamo and on other sources, including international data-sets such as the General Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). As long as Bergamo is concerned, particular attention will be paid to the recently launched course in “Engineering of health technologies (School of Engineering)”.

The identification of a “true” causal effect in this context is a challenging task, since a number of sources of endogeneity could bias the relationship between entrepreneurial education and labor market outcomes. Individuals with higher innate ability or innate entrepreneurial skills (such as ability to deal with risk, attitude towards change and multitasking ability) could actually self-select into entrepreneurship courses and they could be subsequently more successful in the labor market regardless of the education they got. In order to properly deal with this problem and to get useful policy implications (see following Section), a great effort of the empirical analysis will be devoted to data selection and identification strategy.

The following scheme provides an overview of the main steps and timing of the research project.

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