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9 CHAPTER

ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETENCE

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Entrepreneurship competence

Entrepreneurship competence refers to the capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them into values for others. It is founded upon creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value.

Knowledge

Entrepreneurship competence requires knowing that there are different contexts and opportunities for turning ideas into action in personal, social and professional activities, and an understanding of how these arise. Individuals should know and understand approaches to planning and management of projects, which include both processes and resources. They should have an understanding of economics and the social and economic opportunities and challenges facing an employer, organization or society. They should also be aware of ethical principles and challenges of sustainable development and have self-awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Skills

Entrepreneurial skills are founded on creativity which includes imagination, strategic thinking and problem-solving, and critical and constructive reflection within evolving creative processes and innovation. They include the ability to work both as an individual and collaboratively in teams, to mobilize resources (people and things) and to sustain activity. This includes the ability to make financial decisions relating to cost and value. The ability to effectively communicate and negotiate with others, and to cope with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk as part of making informed decisions is essential.

Attitudes

An entrepreneurial attitude is characterized by a sense of initiative and agency, pro-activity, being forward-looking, courage and perseverance in achieving objectives. It includes a desire to motivate others and value their ideas, empathy and taking care of people and the world, and accepting responsibility taking ethical approaches throughout the process.

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Entrepreneurship matters: looking through Montessori lens

The European Union names entrepreneurship as one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning-and for good reason. In a world that changes faster than ever before, young people need to be adaptable, curious, and courageous. They need to make thoughtful decisions, navigate uncertainty, and transform ideas into meaningful action. Entrepreneurship competence gives them these tools, helping them shape lives of purpose and contribute to the wellbeing of their communities.

Maria Montessori herself was, in many ways, a global social entrepreneur. She sparked a worldwide movement led largely by women-teachers, school founders, and parents-who continue to create educational environments that balance mission with sustainability. Even our classrooms reflect this entrepreneurial spirit: Montessori teachers lead micro-communities with care and vision, school founders innovate to meet evolving needs, and Montessori children often grow into adults who shape new paths in technology, the arts, social justice, and beyond.

In Montessori, entrepreneurship is always tied to purpose. Success is not measured only in profit but in the positive impact one creates-socially, culturally, and environmentally. This mirrors the EU's understanding of entrepreneurship as a form of value creation that serves humanity.

At its heart, entrepreneurship includes the ability to:

- Turn ideas into action-to notice opportunities, imagine possibilities, and take initiative to bring them to life.

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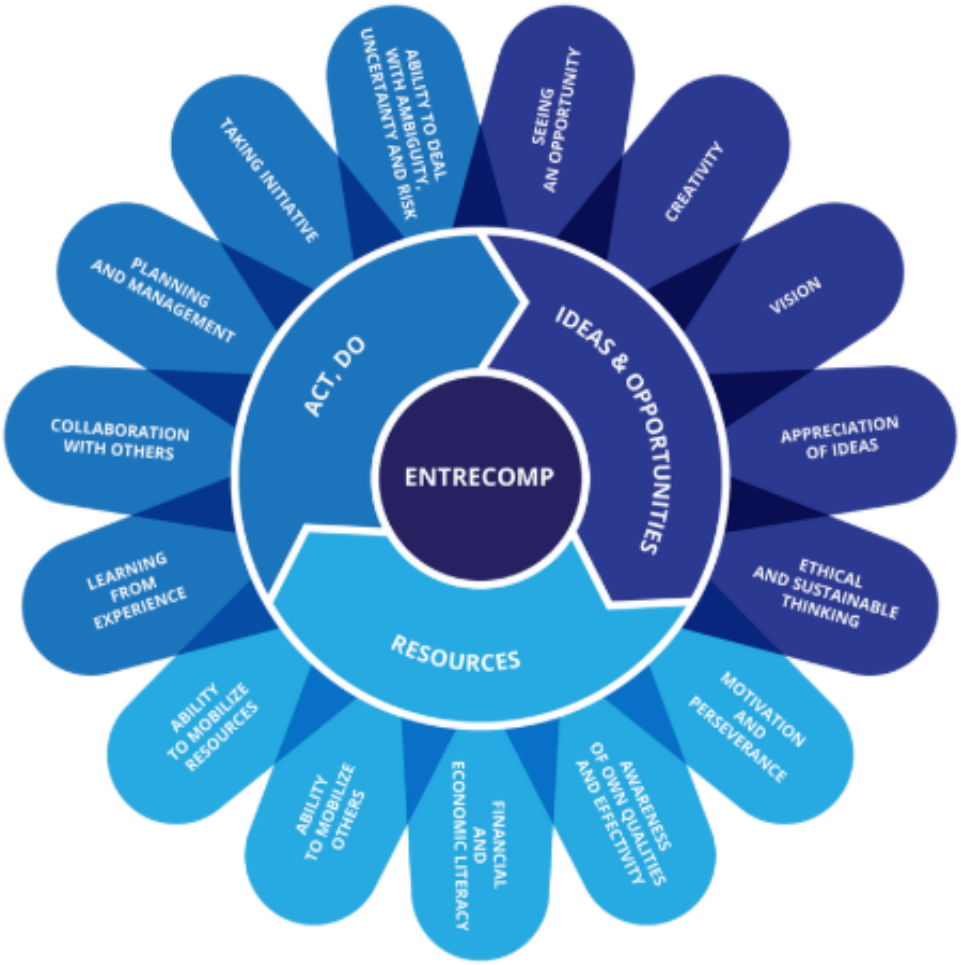
- Create value for others-whether through economic contributions or through social, cultural, or community-based work.
- Use creativity, innovation, and resilience-to solve problems, take responsible risks, and learn from experience.

These abilities align naturally with the Montessori approach. Our environments invite children to explore their interests, initiate projects, collaborate, and take responsibility for their work. In doing so, they practice the very capacities that will one day help them lead, create, and contribute meaningfully to the world.



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The purposeful entrepreneurial spirit in prepared environment

Entrepreneurship in Montessori does not begin with business plans or profit models. It begins with a child entering a space designed for purposeful action. The prepared environment is our quiet partner in cultivating the entrepreneurial spirit. It communicates trust, responsibility, beauty, and possibility. It invites the child to act, to make decisions, to solve problems, to collaborate, and to transform ideas into reality. In this way, the foundation of entrepreneurship is not "taught"—it is lived, every day.

Freedom Within Limits Creates Initiative

In the Montessori Elementary classroom, freedom is not an empty concept. It is structured, intentional, and deeply empowering. The environment offers clear limits—only one of each material, a shared schedule, community ground rules. But within these boundaries, children are free to choose their work, plan their time, and follow their curiosity.

This freedom-with-responsibility is the birthplace of initiative. Children learn to identify opportunities in their environment: *What calls to me today? What do I need to accomplish my idea? Which resources are available, and which must I find elsewhere?* These choices mimic real entrepreneurial thinking. The child becomes the driver of their own learning, developing the capacity to act—not because an adult told them to, but because something inside them moves them toward purposeful work.

Choice teaches them to manage their own energy. Limits teach them to do so responsibly. This balance prepares them for the real world, where autonomy and responsibility must coexist.

Control of Error Builds Resilience and Problem-Solving

In Montessori, adults do not correct every mistake; materials do. The environment is filled with tools that reveal their own inaccuracies: a miscalculated area that doesn't match the geometric control card, a science experiment that fails because water wasn't measured properly, a timeline that doesn't align when the dates are off.

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This built-in feedback system forms a quiet contract with the child: *trust yourself enough to check your work, and trust yourself enough to try again.*

Entrepreneurs understand that failure is information. Montessori children absorb this truth early. When a mistake is detected by the material rather than an adult, shame dissipates. Curiosity takes its place. A new question emerges: *What happened here? How can I fix it? What will I try next?*

This is resilience in action—what modern innovation culture calls "failing fast and learning faster." Over time, children internalize standards of excellence. They move from external correction to internal evaluation: *Is it true? Is it always true? Why does it work this way?*

In the Elementary years, control of error becomes social as well. Children check each other's work, offer suggestions, discuss reasoning, and provide peer feedback. They learn to defend their ideas and revise them collaboratively—exactly the practices that fuel team-based creativity in adult life.

Real Work Creates Value for the Community

Montessori classrooms blur the line between "school tasks" and real contributions. Children prepare shared snacks, care for plants and animals, organize materials, welcome visitors, produce class newspapers, run library systems, and create small services that support classroom life. Their actions have immediate, visible impact.

This is not symbolic work; it is genuine value creation.

A child who buys fruit for the week after researching prices, organizing a budget, and coordinating time with a classmate embodies core entrepreneurial abilities: planning, decision-making, collaboration, responsibility, service orientation.

A child who waters plants daily understands that community wellbeing depends on follow-through.

A group who organizes a "Going Out" trip must write emails, call institutions, arrange transportation, and make social decisions that mirror real-world problem-solving.

Through these experiences, children learn the essence of entrepreneurship: **My effort can make life better for others.** This understanding grows a sense of purpose and civic responsibility that no abstract lesson could provide.

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Order, Beauty, and Precision Inspire Excellence

A Montessori environment is intentionally beautiful. Materials rest on shelves in logical sequence. Tools are complete, well-maintained, and aesthetically pleasing. There is exactly one of each—never more. This scarcity by design teaches children to plan, negotiate, and collaborate:
If someone is using the material I need, how can we work together? Who can I learn from while I wait? How can we share responsibility?

Order becomes a silent guide. Beauty becomes a motivator. Precision becomes a habit of mind.

The Elementary environment deepens this experience. Materials offer only "keys"—not full answers. A chemistry card may provide ingredients but require the child to gather beakers, scales, and heat sources. A geography experiment may give instructions but rely on the child to find the equipment and organize space. This "incomplete" design is intentional. It teaches entrepreneurial resourcefulness: the ability to mobilize resources, plan steps, and bring an idea to completion.

When the environment communicates that excellence is possible—and expected—children rise to meet it. They learn to care for materials, to use resources wisely, and to produce high-quality work. These habits become the basis for thoughtful, responsible entrepreneurship in the future.

The dual environment: classroom and the world

In Montessori, the environment does not end at the classroom door. The world itself becomes material for learning. "Going Out" experiences extend the child's reach beyond familiar walls: visiting museums, interviewing experts, exploring historical sites, navigating public transportation, or contacting community organizations.

These experiences demand real initiative. Children must plan, communicate, assess risks, manage money, and act with independence. The world becomes a training ground for responsible agency. They learn that opportunities exist everywhere—and that they are capable of stepping into them.

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This bridge between protected environment and real-world action is one of Montessori's greatest entrepreneurial gifts. It builds confidence, adaptability, and the courage to explore the unknown.

The environment as the first entrepreneurial teacher

Entrepreneurial adults often describe childhood moments when they felt capable, trusted, or inspired. In Montessori, these moments are not accidents—they are the natural result of an environment designed for purposeful action.

It supports children in discovering that they are active agents in their community and in the world. And with this understanding, they grow into adults who can imagine, create, collaborate, and bring meaningful ideas to life.

The Montessori prepared environment is not just a place to learn. It is the child's first entrepreneurial ecosystem— a place where purpose, creativity, and initiative take root.

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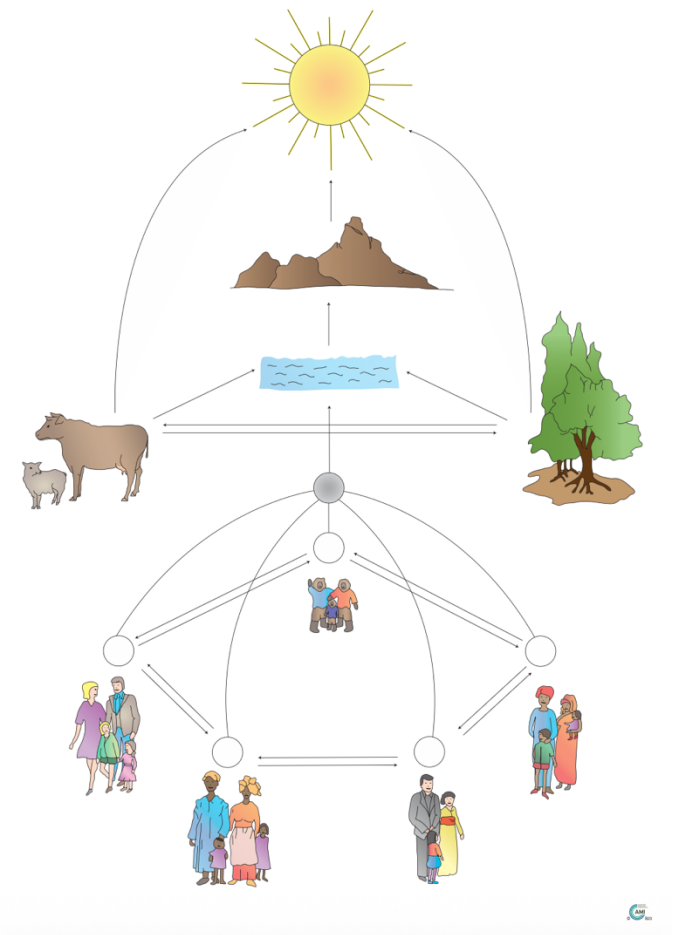
Building understanding how humans create value

In Montessori Elementary, entrepreneurship begins long before a child ever hears the word. It grows from a deep understanding of how humans meet their needs, work together, and create value for one another. This understanding is not taught through abstract definitions—it is built slowly, through stories, materials, and real observations of the world. When children see how people collaborate to bring even the simplest item into their hands, they begin to grasp the essence of an economic system: humans working together to create value that no one could produce alone.

We begin with the **Interdependencies Chart**, a key Montessori lesson that gently opens the child's eyes to the web of relationships that sustains human life. It shows that farmers need tools made by metalworkers, and that metalworkers rely on miners, and miners on engineers, and engineers on teachers who once taught them to read and think. This chart becomes a living map of human collaboration. It is often the child's first glimpse into the idea that value is not created in isolation—economic systems are networks of people supporting one another.



From there, the exploration becomes more concrete. Children are invited to follow the journey of a single product. *Where does our bread come from?* What seems like a simple question becomes a rich investigation: wheat fields, millers, bakers, drivers, shopkeepers, designers of

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packaging, producers of tools, manufacturers of trucks. As children trace this chain, they gain a new respect for the invisible hands that make everyday life possible. They start to see that value is created not just by one person, but by many people working together with intention, skill, and effort.

Another doorway into economic understanding comes through storytelling. Montessori guides often share the tale of **"barter to the use of money,"** helping children imagine early humans trading goods—firewood for grain, cloth for tools—and the challenges that arose when needs didn't match. Through stories of ancient shells, metal coins, paper notes, and today's digital transactions, children step into the long human effort to simplify exchange. They see how money evolved to solve real problems: storing value, facilitating trade, helping societies grow. And they also realize that money today is often invisible—an idea, a number on a screen—raising new questions about what value truly is.

These lessons spark natural conversations. *What is money? Who decides what things are worth? Why do some things cost more than others? Can value be created without money?* Children begin to see that value can also come from time, attention, and care. Helping a classmate, preparing a snack, or contributing to a community project becomes part of their economic understanding. The idea emerges that we can "exchange" not only goods, but service—an hour of help, an act of kindness, the willingness to contribute.

Through these stories, explorations, and discussions, Montessori children develop a grounded, human-centered view of the economy. They understand that behind every object is a network of real people; that exchange began as a way to meet community needs; that money is a tool humans invented and continue to reinvent; and that value can be measured in many ways—not only in currency, but also in contribution.

This foundation prepares them to engage with the world as future creators and contributors. They learn that entrepreneurship is not just about business; it is about understanding how humans work together to bring ideas to life and improve one another's lives.

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Practicing initiative, planning, and collaboration

Entrepreneurial skills do not appear suddenly in adolescence or adulthood—they are built slowly, through countless small experiences in daily life. In the Montessori Elementary environment, these skills are woven into the fabric of everyday routines. Children learn to take initiative, plan their actions, and collaborate with others not because they are instructed to do so, but because the environment requires it, invites it, and rewards it.

In the Children's House, materials are presented neatly on trays, complete and ready for use. But in Elementary, the world expands—and so does responsibility. When a child decides to conduct a geography experiment, for example, nothing is pre-assembled. They must look around the room, identify the tools they need, locate the materials, and gather them independently: basins, sand, water pitchers, measuring tools, cloths, maps. This simple act of preparation becomes a lesson in **resource mobilization**—a cornerstone of entrepreneurial action.

This pattern repeats everywhere: science investigations, geometry constructions, art projects, research work. Each task invites the child to survey their environment, anticipate needs, collect supplies, and maintain their workflow. Over time, they develop an intuitive sense of planning: *What do I need? Where will I find it? Who might help me? How can I keep my project going?* These early habits form the roots of project management and strategic thinking.

Equally essential is the skill of **working with others**. In Montessori Elementary, almost all lessons are given in small groups. The adult introduces a key idea, and then children are encouraged to continue the work together—co-researchers exploring the same universe of knowledge. The classroom itself supports this social learning, with large communal tables where ideas, tools, and responsibilities are naturally shared.

Through these collaborative experiences, children learn to communicate, negotiate, listen, and compromise. They discover that others can be resources, partners, and co-

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creators. They experience the joy—and sometimes the challenge—of building something together. These early experiences with teamwork lay the foundation for the cooperative mindset needed in future entrepreneurial ventures.

Perhaps one of the richest opportunities for practicing initiative and planning comes through **Going Out**, a fundamental component of the Elementary experience. Here, children step beyond the classroom to explore museums, interview specialists, gather natural materials, or visit local shops. But these excursions do not simply happen. The children must initiate the process, determine their purpose, and organize every detail.

Consider something as everyday as stocking the classroom snack table with fresh fruits and vegetables. The children first survey the class to learn what items are preferred. They then compare prices online or in local shops, calculate budgets, plan the timing of the trip, and arrange transportation. After purchasing the food, they take responsibility for ensuring it is eaten and not wasted. Through this process, they grapple with real questions: *How much should we buy? Is this price reasonable? How do we divide our time? What if something goes wrong?*

These experiences cultivate decision-making, financial literacy, time management, and responsibility—all within a meaningful, real-world context.

Through daily rituals, group work, and excursions into the community, Montessori Elementary children practice the essential skills that support entrepreneurship. They learn that ideas require action, that planning supports success, and that collaboration makes work richer and more joyful. By the time they reach adolescence, they carry within them not only the knowledge of how to initiate and organize, but the confidence that they can.

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Story from the classroom

Entrepreneurs in St. Casimir Fair

In the days leading up to the St. Casimir Fair, the Elementary students eagerly prepared their handmade products—bracelets, bookmarks, mini–story books, artwork, and even bags of warm popcorn. But the fair wasn't just about crafting; it became a full entrepreneurship project woven into their classroom work.

Each student or small team rented a table from the school, learning right away that running a business comes with costs. Practical planning followed: those selling popcorn checked if they needed electricity, others counted how many bags or labels were required, and everyone discussed fair pricing based on time, effort, and materials.

On the day of the fair, the school transformed into a cheerful marketplace. Children welcomed visitors, used their own marketing ideas—signs, posters, special offers—and practiced giving change. Some products sold quickly, others needed extra advertising, and the students observed it all with curiosity.

After the fair, they gathered to evaluate their experience: Which marketing strategies worked? What was their most successful product? What would they change next time?

Finally, they faced the most meaningful decision—what to do with their earnings. In recent years, the students chose to donate their profits to Ukrainian children, a generous choice that showed how entrepreneurship can also nurture empathy and social responsibility.

Through this simple school fair, the children gained real-life experience in planning, budgeting, creativity, reflection, and giving.

Montessori Akademija, Lithuania

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Cultivating Purpose, Empathy, and Responsible Agency

Cultivating entrepreneurial competence in the Montessori Elementary classroom is inseparable from nurturing a deep sense of purpose, empathy, and responsible agency. These qualities grow not through abstract instruction, but through daily lived experience within a community where each individual matters and each action has meaning.

In Montessori Elementary, the Great Stories lay the foundation for this moral and emotional development. They invite children to contemplate the laws that govern the universe, the long history of life's adaptation, and the unique human gifts of imagination, intellect, and love. From the beginning, children are encouraged to see themselves as part of a much larger narrative—one in which their choices and contributions shape both their community and the wider world. This understanding of belonging naturally awakens empathy and a sense of responsibility.

Purpose and care are practiced through concrete, meaningful activities. Children tend the classroom environment, polish shelves, dust materials, garden, and care for animals—small acts that communicate that the world depends on their attention. This sense of stewardship expands beyond the classroom when children engage with the local community, such as visiting elderly care homes, offering their time, presence, and kindness. These experiences strengthen the understanding that their actions can bring comfort, joy, and connection to others.

Responsible agency also takes shape through the Elementary child's growing initiative. Children choose their work, plan projects, and begin their day by deciding how they will spend their time. Their motivation comes not from external demands but from an emerging inner drive. This habit of initiative becomes the seed of entrepreneurial spirit—the ability to see possibilities, take action, and follow through with intention.

Group work plays a significant role in forming purpose-driven collaboration. The 6–12 child is naturally social, and the classroom becomes a living space where teams form, leaders emerge, and roles are negotiated. This mirrors early human cooperation—

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collaboration was essential for survival and remains essential for innovation. Through this “social laboratory,” children practice teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution, developing the interpersonal competence needed to create value with others.

During the sensitive period for morality, children are actively shaping their ethical framework. Conflicts, class meetings, and restorative practices help them learn fairness, accountability, and empathy. These real-life experiences teach an essential entrepreneurial truth: creating value means serving others responsibly and acting with integrity. Ethics becomes not a lesson delivered by the adult but a lived experience shaped through community problem-solving.

Daily community contributions further deepen their sense of agency. Classroom jobs, helping a peer, planning a Going Out, or preparing something for the collective good transforms children from passive participants into active contributors. They begin to see that their actions have impact—that they can improve their community, respond to needs, and make life better for others. This mindset forms the foundation of social entrepreneurship, where the goal is not personal gain but meaningful contribution.

Virtues such as courage, perseverance, integrity, responsibility, and collaboration are not just discussed but practiced. Children use them to navigate academic challenges, social dynamics, and long-term projects. These virtues support the development of character strengths essential for entrepreneurship: resilience in the face of setbacks, courage to explore new ideas, honesty in decision-making, and responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions.

Cosmic Education strengthens this further by revealing humanity’s long arc of contribution. Children come to understand that human beings have shaped the world through curiosity, creativity, and cooperative labor. The idea of “supernature”—the human-made world—helps them recognize that they too are creators with the power to influence the future. This understanding nurtures a profound sense of purpose: their work matters, and their choices have significance in the unfolding story of humanity.

In contrast to the Children’s House, where work supports personal development, Elementary children work to serve the community. They maintain shared spaces so others can function well, create research materials for their peers, or teach a new skill

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to someone who needs help. This shift marks an important developmental step: the desire to contribute to the well-being of the group. They experience that their efforts create real value—an essential insight for future entrepreneurial thinking.

Finally, Going Out and long-term projects connect classroom learning with authentic societal needs. When children test local water quality, organize a donation initiative, or grow and share food, they learn that knowledge gains meaning when applied to real life. They discover that ideas must be transformed into action to create impact—an understanding at the heart of responsible entrepreneurship.

Even the rotating system of classroom jobs, where small groups become “experts” and pass their knowledge to the next team, reinforces responsibility, continuity, and shared ownership. Children learn that sustaining order, beauty, and functionality requires ongoing, organized effort. They begin to value service as meaningful work and understand that long-term success depends on stewardship, not just initial enthusiasm.

Through these experiences, Montessori Elementary students cultivate not only empathy and purpose but also the responsible agency that empowers them to become future innovators, collaborators, and compassionate leaders who create value for their communities and the world.

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Into the action: nurturing balance and self-direction

Developing entrepreneurial competence in the Montessori Elementary classroom requires more than practicing initiative or understanding economic interdependence. It also involves cultivating the capacity for self-direction, strategic planning, and balanced decision-making—skills firmly aligned with EU entrepreneurship competencies such as self-awareness, mobilizing resources, planning and management, and learning through experience. Montessori pedagogy supports these competencies not through external control, but through structures that help children understand themselves, manage their responsibilities, and take ownership of their learning journey.

The Work Diary: Self-Management and Accountability

One key tool is the work diary. Children record what they have worked on, note the balance across different subjects, and observe patterns in their interests, strengths, and efforts. This is not a system of teacher surveillance—it is a practice of self-knowledge. As Montessori notes, “The work diary helps the child to develop good work habits… awareness of organisation of time… balance between presentations and independent work.”

Here, children learn the entrepreneurial competence of self-management: monitoring their own work, assessing what still needs attention, and making intentional choices. Entrepreneurs must be their own managers—this daily habit builds precisely that capacity.

Individual Conferences: Co-Creating the Learning Path

Regular teacher–child conferences deepen this reflective process. These moments are not checklists of compliance but collaborative development meetings. Children bring their work, express the challenges they have encountered, reflect on their interests, and help determine next steps.

Through this process, children practice strategic thinking, a key entrepreneurial skill: evaluating their current position, identifying resources they need, articulating a

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direction, and taking responsibility for their development. They learn that their learning journey is something they actively shape—not something handed down to them.

To-Do Lists Versus Deep Choice: Balancing Requirements and Passion

A crucial entrepreneurial ability is learning to balance external expectations with intrinsic motivation. In the classroom, children must meet curricular requirements and complete essential tasks, but they also have extensive freedom to pursue personal projects and areas of deep interest.

This dynamic mirrors real entrepreneurial judgment: managing priorities, meeting obligations, and still creating space for innovation and passion. Children learn that discipline and creativity are not opposites—they are partners in meaningful work.

From "When and How" to "Why and What If": Growing Intellectual Independence

The transition from the Children's House to Elementary further supports this developmental trajectory. While Casa children receive precise presentations, Elementary children receive the "keys to exploration"—broad, inspiring lessons meant to spark further inquiry. After a multiplication lesson, the child creates their own problems; after a Great Lesson on civilizations, they choose what they want to research.

By age 12, Montessori emphasizes that children "should be able to use their minds and give reasons for behavior, opinions and ideas." This ability—independent reasoning, questioning, generating ideas—is central to entrepreneurial innovation. The elementary environment encourages children not only to follow instructions but to think critically, ask "Why?" and imagine "What if?"

Through these practices, Montessori Elementary students build the internal structures necessary for responsible, balanced, self-directed work. They learn to plan, monitor themselves, evaluate progress, make informed decisions, collaborate with mentors, and act with purpose. These are not only academic skills—they are life skills that prepare children to navigate complexity, pursue meaningful goals, and take entrepreneurial action in the world with clarity, confidence, and ethical grounding.

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Envisioning Possibilities: Imagination as the Engine of Innovation

Imagination is not an ornament in the Montessori Elementary classroom—it is a tool of reasoning, abstraction, and creative problem-solving. While the child in the Children's House builds understanding through the hand, the Elementary child increasingly understands through the mind that can imagine what cannot be seen. This developmental shift is essential for entrepreneurial competence, where the ability to imagine possibilities, envision solutions, and design what does not yet exist forms the core of innovation.

Imagination as a Pathway to Understanding

In daily work, imagination becomes the bridge between concrete experience and abstract thought. Through stories, experiments, and open-ended exploration, the child travels through time to meet ancient civilizations, descends into the Earth to understand geological processes, and pictures mathematical relationships far beyond what their hands can physically manipulate.

The prepared environment deliberately nourishes this power. The Great Stories invite the child into a universe filled with unanswered questions and unfolding mysteries. Materials and lessons offer keys, not closed systems: they point toward possibilities rather than dictating procedures. Children are regularly encouraged to ask "What if?"—and to pursue their answers through research, experimentation, and creation.

This is precisely the entrepreneurial competence of creativity and vision: the capacity to look beyond present reality, imagine alternative futures, and explore them with curiosity and confidence.

Imagining What Does Not Yet Exist

Entrepreneurs transform imagination into value through purposeful action. Montessori children learn this connection early. Each time they design an experiment, create a model, write a play, or plan a Going Out experience, they practice the essential skill of turning an idea into something real—something that can be shared, tested, improved, and used by others.

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Montessori understood this deeply. She noted that humanity arrived on Earth not with the sharp claws or instincts of other species, but with something far more powerful: three gifts that make human progress possible.

- A mind that can imagine what is not yet there,
- A heart capable of caring and connecting with others,
- And hands that build, create, and transform the environment.

These three gifts represent the essence of human innovation—and they mirror the EntreComp vision of entrepreneurship as the capacity to turn ideas into action that creates value for others.

Integrating Mind, Heart, and Hand

In Montessori education, imagination does not float freely; it is grounded in purpose, guided by ethical awareness, and directed toward meaningful work. The Elementary environment cultivates all three human gifts in harmony:

- The mind stretches outward, forming hypotheses, imagining systems, and crafting new solutions.
- The heart provides motivation, empathy, and the awareness that ideas must serve others.
- The hand gives form to imagination—building models, conducting experiments, writing presentations, or planning community projects.

This integration prepares children not only for academic abstraction, but for the kind of creative and responsible agency that defines entrepreneurial thinking. It shows them that ideas are powerful not because they are clever, but because they can be transformed into meaningful action.

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A Child as a Citizen of Future World: creator and contributor

"The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind."
—Maria Montessori

Entrepreneurship in Montessori education is not a narrow preparation for business—it is the cultivation of a way of being in the world. It equips children with the mindset, capacities, and moral orientation needed to become problem solvers, creators, and contributors throughout their lives. Montessori education helps them grow into individuals who can imagine a better future and take meaningful action to create it.

A Developmental Journey Toward Contribution

Across the developmental planes, Montessori education follows a clear human trajectory: from constructing oneself to contributing to society. Each stage deepens the child's ability to think independently, act purposefully, and take responsibility for their place in the world.

6–12 years: The Reasoning Explorer

In the Elementary years, the child becomes a thinker—capable of questioning, reasoning, imagining, and understanding how complex systems work.
Key achievement: "I can think for myself."
Project work, collaborative research, Going Out, and community responsibility all lay the foundation for initiative, planning, leadership, and meaningful action.
The child discovers both their independence and their interdependence with the wider world.

12–18 years: The Social Newborn

During adolescence, the young person begins to construct social and economic independence.
Key achievement: "I can contribute and stand on my own."

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Montessori Erdkinder programs, micro-economies, and farm work give adolescents the direct experience of creating value through real work—balancing resources, responding to community needs, solving practical problems, and learning from the consequences of their choices.

18–24 years: The Age of Spiritual and Moral Independence

In early adulthood, the individual seeks deeper purpose and the freedom to act upon it.
Key achievement: “I can give back and shape the world.”
This is where the seeds planted in childhood—initiative, empathy, imagination, and resilience—become the compass for responsible adulthood.

The Capacities Our Future Needs

Creativity, innovation, problem-solving, risk-taking, initiative, responsibility, and resilience—these are the competencies the EU describes as essential for entrepreneurship. They are also the qualities Montessori education nurtures organically from early childhood onward. But entrepreneurship, in the Montessori sense, extends far beyond starting a business:

- It includes social entrepreneurship, where ideas address real human and environmental needs.
- It includes intrapreneurship, the ability to innovate within teams, organizations, and communities.
- It includes cultural entrepreneurship, the creation of meaning, beauty, and shared understanding.
- And it includes community building, where individuals work together to improve collective life.

Montessori children grow up understanding that work is not merely a personal pursuit—it is a contribution to the ongoing creation of our shared world.

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A Hope and a Promise

When Montessori wrote that the child is both hope and promise for humanity, she was describing precisely this: a future shaped by individuals who know how to imagine better possibilities, collaborate with others, solve complex problems, and act responsibly for the common good.

A child who grows in such an environment does not wait for adulthood to become a citizen—they practice citizenship every day through the choices they make, the responsibilities they take, and the care they show for others and the Earth.

These are the citizens of the future world:
innovators with imagination, leaders with empathy, and creators who understand that their work can—and must—serve the whole human family.

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How Entrepreneurship is visible in Montessori Elementary classroom?	
Essential knowledge	
Different contexts and opportunities for turning ideas into action in personal, social and professional activities and understand how these arise	Children choose personal projects, participate in Going Out experiences, and collaborate on community initiatives such as classroom events, snack preparation, or environmental projects. They see how ideas can create value beyond themselves.
Planning and managing of projects, including processes and resources	Children organize experiments, research projects, or presentations: they gather materials, allocate time, coordinate with peers, and follow steps from conception to completion.
How the economy works	Through stories from barter to modern money, tracking product journeys (e.g., where bread comes from), and class discussions on trade, supply, and resource interdependence.
Social and economic opportunities and challenges facing an employer, organisation or society	Children explore micro-economies, community service projects, or simulations of collective work that require resource management, collaboration, and understanding of social needs.
Being financially literate: managing personal finance, savings, investment and borrowing	Planning classroom purchases (snacks, materials), calculating budgets for Going Out activities, comparing prices, evaluating cost vs. benefit of projects.
Ethical principles	Daily life in the classroom, collaborative work, community rules, restorative justice practices, discussions on fairness, honesty, and responsibility.
Their own strengths and challenges	Regular self-reflection in work diaries, individual conferences with teachers, identifying areas of interest, skills they wish to improve, and strategies for growth.
Core skills	
Use their imagination within creative processes and innovations	Designing experiments, inventing models, creating research presentations, proposing new ways to approach projects, “What if?” questions driving inquiry.
Think strategically and problem solve	Planning steps for Going Out trips, resolving conflicts during group work, adapting projects when resources or information are limited.
Manage projects: plan, organise, manage, lead and delegate	Children lead small groups, assign roles, sequence activities, track progress, and ensure collaborative projects reach completion.

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Make financial decisions relating to cost and value and estimate the cost of turning an idea into a value-creating activity	Budgeting for classroom needs, planning purchases for science experiments, evaluating materials needed for art or geography or other projects.
Plan, put in place and evaluate financial decisions	Reviewing spending outcomes, checking that purchases met needs without waste, reflecting on the impact of resource use.
Cope with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk as part of making informed decisions	Taking responsibility for Going Out trips, experiments that may fail, or group projects with unpredictable outcomes, learning to adapt and revise plans.
Work autonomously	Selecting work, gathering materials, completing independent projects, pursuing self-chosen research topics.
Collaborate with others	Small group work, teaching younger students, peer review, co-leading projects, negotiating turns on scarce materials.
Identify their own strengths and limitations	Reflection in diaries, teacher conferences, peer feedback, setting goals based on past experiences and challenges.
Attitudes (students value)	
Taking initiative	Choosing projects, volunteering for classroom tasks, proposing new ideas or experiments, etc.
Being proactive and forward-looking	Anticipating what materials are needed for a project, planning steps ahead for experiments or Going Out activities.
Courage and perseverance in achieving objectives	Completing long-term projects, persisting after errors in experiments, tackling challenging research questions.
Being motivated and determined	Following personal interests in extended projects, consistently caring for classroom and community responsibilities.
Others' ideas	Listening to peers, integrating feedback, adapting projects based on suggestions, participating in group decision-making.
Empathy and taking care of people and the world	Classroom jobs, gardening, caring for animals, community visits, and service-based projects.
Being responsible and ethical	Maintaining shared spaces, using resources mindfully, honesty in recording experiments and financial decisions, fairness in group work.

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