

Varaždin County, Croatia



## Academy for Entrepreneurship

### Keyword(s):

**entrepreneurship, financial sustainability,  
continuing training opportunities,  
non-formal adult education**

### Introduction:

Pucko Otvoreno Uciliste Varazdin (POU VZ) is a publicly owned education entity in the City of Varaždin in Varaždin County. It works with the city, civil society organizations (CSO) and other institutions (schools, social services, etc.) to manage programs that enhance civic participation, local development, and democratic processes. POU educates CSO representatives, volunteers, students, public servants, entrepreneurs etc. so that they can organize actions that address specific themes. Most of the participants are adult persons attending training and development programs. One of them is Academy for Entrepreneurship (AfE) which was launched by POU VZ in 2018. It is a free non-formal educational program for entrepreneurs from the Varaždin area.

### Main challenge:

How to encourage entrepreneurship in the city of Varaždin and beyond as nowadays entrepreneurs need professional help in business management, human resource management, business communication, but also opportunities to expand business through internationalization, use of available funds and transformation of businesses due to COVID-19 pandemics. How to use non-formal education in order



to help and create successful entrepreneurs, enable their further development, and encourage competitiveness and sustainability within the market.

### **Timing:**

Ongoing as of 2018. For the fourth year in a row POU VZ is organizing a free education for entrepreneurs from the area of the City of Varaždin. The public call is open one time a year.

### **Objective**

The basic principles of the Academy of Entrepreneurship include providing assistance and support to entrepreneurship by spreading entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, involvement of successful local and regional entrepreneurs in the teaching process, encouraging starting a private business (start-up entrepreneurs) and keeping young people in the city of Varaždin, encouraging the competitiveness of entrepreneurs by adopting the latest knowledge and skills, networking of local and regional entrepreneurs, flexible, up-to-date and tailor-made approach in designing and implementing programs tailored to the needs of entrepreneurs and social responsibility and sustainability in approach and business.

### **Target groups**

Attendees come from a wide variety of business segments: IT, finances, creative industries, beauty sector, real estate, family business, healthcare, construction, trade etc.

### **Geographical range**

The program is intended for entrepreneurs from the city of Varaždin and the surrounding area in order to strengthen their sustainability in the market and encourage entrepreneurship.

### **Stakeholders and partners**

The Academy of Entrepreneurship was created as a complementary program of education for adults, but also children and youth, and is not aimed exclusively at entrepreneurs, but also at all those who want to develop their entrepreneurial mindset and learn to apply entrepreneurial knowledge and skills in everyday life and work. It is for this reason that the Academy is not called the Academy for Entrepreneurs, but for entrepreneurship, and the story we want to build and tell is about creating proactive, successful and satisfied citizens.

### **Strategy / materials**

Through 150 teaching hours in 9 modules, participants complete their journey in developing their own businesses and improve their entrepreneurial knowledge in

the field of economics, business value systems, business model, finance, accounting, budgeting, marketing, GDPR, funding sources, business transformation , digital transformation, communication, sales, negotiation and design thinking/design sprint.

### **Resources**

The program "Academy for Entrepreneurship 4.0" is financially supported by the City of Varaždin.

Participation in the program is completely free for participants and is achieved by applying to the Public Invitation, which is published once a year.

Participants are selected by an Expert Commission consisting of two lecturers and a POU Director.

10 to 15 participants are selected annually.

### **Compliance with SDG's**

Yes, with SDG 4 - ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

### **Innovation(s)**

One of the basic principles of the Academy of Entrepreneurship is the win-win-win principle, which means that all stakeholders involved in the process of designing and implementing our education must benefit from the education process itself; students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, and new private and business acquaintances lecturers gain relevant experience and new references as lecturers and network with business students and other lecturers. The Academy gets the opportunity to achieve its far-reaching goal - to become a reference point for education. It is precisely this synergy between students, lecturers, and Academy, that makes our program different and special. Upon this synergy many friendships and business cooperation are eventually developed.

### **Evaluation**

To this date, about 30 students have attended this program. At the moment, 4th edition is taking place and a total of 12 participants were enrolled from the Varaždin area.

### **Success parameters**

We are constantly trying to ensure progress and innovative and modern approach within the education of entrepreneurs. Soon we will be launching our Alumni Club with the aim of networking among our students and further strengthening their knowledge and skills in the domain of entrepreneurship.

The Academy has also segmented programs throughout different topics such as finances, accounting, taxes, marketing, people's skills etc. It also prepares numerous commercial lectures, workshops, modules, through new advanced programs of the Academy.

### **Concluding remarks**

We want to continue in providing help and support to entrepreneurs through the exchange of knowledge, skills and experiences in order to create a stimulating entrepreneurial environment on the local community level and beyond. Due to the constant changes in society, which include new technologies and new ways of working, informal educations, such as ones offered by the Academy of Entrepreneurship, are ideal source of the latest knowledge and skills important within the world of entrepreneurship, that can easily and quickly be adaptable to market needs.

### **Website/Facebook profile of the initiative:**

<https://azp.hr/>

<https://www.facebook.com/pouvarazdin>

[https://azp.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Akademija-za-poduzetnistvo-4\\_0\\_e\\_brosura.pdf](https://azp.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Akademija-za-poduzetnistvo-4_0_e_brosura.pdf)

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