

Entrepreneurial Support Body at the Algerian University: From the House of Entrepreneurship to the Center for Entrepreneurship Development

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Abstract:

This study aims to highlight the significance of entrepreneurial support in Algerian universities, starting with the establishment of the Entrepreneurship House in partnership with the National Agency for Youth Employment in 2007. In 2023, it was transformed into an Entrepreneurship Development Center in collaboration with the Ministry of the Knowledge Economy and Start-ups. This transformation seeks to revitalize entrepreneurial thinking among students with a new approach, address previous challenges and obstacles, and implement comprehensive programs that benefit all stakeholders while contributing to local and national development in the future.

Keywords: Support, House, Entrepreneurship, Center, University, Entrepreneurship Development.

Jel Classification Codes : L26 ; M13 ; I23 ; M51.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid and profound changes affecting the Algerian economy have led to the emergence of small and medium enterprises and projects, increasing researchers' interest in entrepreneurship and business creation due to their growing significance in the national economy.

To address the challenges faced by project holders and entrepreneurs in establishing their businesses, various measures and procedures were implemented. Among these was the creation of entrepreneurial support structures within Algerian universities.

Entrepreneurial support in the university environment is a highly effective and essential system for fostering the entrepreneurial spirit among students with innovative ideas, guiding them through the process of business creation. This initiative began with the establishment of the House of Entrepreneurship, initially as an expression of civic commitment. Over time, it evolved into a driving force for university talent, relying on the expertise of its supervisors and the professionalism of its partners in business creation and development. Additionally, it seeks support from public authorities to contribute to building a sustainable economy that ensures long-term national stability.

Ultimately, this initiative led to the transformation of the House of Entrepreneurship into the Center for Entrepreneurship Development across all national universities, providing new momentum to entrepreneurial thinking and support mechanisms.

Based on the above, we raise the following problem statement:

How can entrepreneurial support in Algerian universities be enhanced by transforming the Entrepreneurship House into an Entrepreneurship Development Center?

We aim to verify or refute the following hypothesis:

Transforming the Entrepreneurship House into an Entrepreneurship Development Center will enhance support mechanisms in Algerian universities by expanding partnerships and regulatory frameworks.

Study Objectives:

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This study aims to examine how entrepreneurship in Algerian universities has been influenced by the introduction of new laws, the adoption of information and communication technology, and its involvement in the process of change, as well as the expansion of support for project holders and institutions.

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Study Importance:

The significance of this study lies in highlighting the supervisory administration's commitment to developing support structures in Algerian universities. This is reflected in the establishment of the Center for Entrepreneurship Development, which replaces the House of Entrepreneurship across all national universities. This transformation introduces a new approach, fosters innovative thinking, and implements modern management methods.

Thus, the study is divided into the following sections:

1. Entrepreneurial support at the university: Concept, components, stages, bodies.
2. House of Entrepreneurship: Concept, tasks, and objectives.
3. Center for Entrepreneurship Development: Concept, objectives, tasks.
4. Fundamental differences between the House of Entrepreneurship and the Center for Entrepreneurship Development in Algerian universities.

2. Entrepreneurial Support at the University: Concept, Components, Stages, Bodies:

Support is associated with a process that operates to move a person from one state to another and impact his decision-making, as well as helping idea holders transform their ideas into actual projects.

‘**André Letowski**’ defined the profession of support as follows: "The mobilization of structures, communications, and time to address the multiple challenges encountered by enterprises, and striving to adapt it to the culture and personality of the creator. (Marbach, 2003, p. 43)

Entrepreneurial support is defined as a dynamic process of developing and fostering business projects, particularly small enterprises in the establishment or early stages of operation, to enable their survival and growth. This process includes providing financial and technical assistance, along with other necessary facilities or support. (Goudjil, 2009, p. 8)

It encompasses various types, including moral support, technical support, informational support, technological support, administrative support, financial support, and more.

Accordingly, entrepreneurial support at the university refers to all the services provided by entities established at the university level, including support, advice, training, and guidance, financing, and entrepreneurship education. These services aim to assist graduate students in establishing their own enterprises and projects.

The elements of **entrepreneurial support** include: (Goudjil, 2009, p. 77)

- **Advice and training network:** Providing training and advisory services in an institution’s area of specialization, along with guidance on the implementation process.
- **Logistical support:** Some support and accompaniment bodies provide premises for the institution's activity for a specific period with easy conditions and lower cost, in addition to offering the advice they need.
- **Financial support:** These bodies are specialized in solving the problem of insufficient funds to begin the activity.

The stages of **entrepreneurial support** include: (Boutoura, 2018, p. 156)

- **Reception stage:** This stage involves disseminating information, raising awareness, and guiding and redirecting project holders. The process begins with presenting and introducing the project, followed by initiating its design phase and gathering relevant information. The supporter then assists the entrepreneur in defining the nature of the product or idea chosen for the project, providing support tailored to the entrepreneur's specific needs.
- **Support stage:** As the project matures, the entrepreneur undergoes training in managerial and technical aspects. They receive support through the development of a feasibility study for the project, guiding them through its actual implementation. This includes assistance in preparing a business plan, providing financial support, and facilitating access to funding from external organizations.
- **Follow-up stage:** It includes all forms of support provided to the entrepreneur, equipping them with effective management tools, assisting in decision-making, and helping define their commercial strategy.

Regarding entrepreneurial support bodies at Algerian universities, we highlight the Business Incubator and the Center for Entrepreneurship Development.

- **University Business Incubator:** (Executive Decree No12-293, 2012). According to Article 11 of Executive Decree 12-293, the university business incubator is a structure dedicated to receiving and supporting innovative projects directly linked to research. It assists project owners in developing their ideas and demonstrating their long-term viability. Additionally, it provides support in the form of training, consultation, and financing, accompanying them throughout the process until the establishment of their enterprise.

Moreover, it is defined as a service under the supervision of the university and affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education, operating

under the General Directorate of Scientific Research and Technological Development. Its primary role is to support and guide university students, equipping them with the necessary scientific and professional competencies to become entrepreneurs. The incubator seeks to attract, nurture, and mentor individuals with creative and innovative ideas, helping transform these ideas into viable economic projects. Additionally, it serves as a foundation for promoting startups that generate significant profits, contributing to economic wealth creation and the diversification of exports.

The business incubator also supports projects during the transition from startup to growth stages of business development. It aims to provide initiators and experts with the necessary information for project success, assisting small business owners in overcoming challenges during the early stages. This support continues until the project reaches full implementation and successfully exits the incubation process.

- **Center for Entrepreneurship Development:** This body was introduced as an alternative to the House of Entrepreneurship in Algerian universities, which we will address further in the remainder of the article.

3. Entrepreneurship House: Concept, Tasks, and Objectives:

The term "House" conveys more than just a center or institute; it evokes the notion of a friendly, welcoming, and supportive environment—one that fosters values and culture. It serves as a resource hub for developing an entrepreneurial mindset and supporting the key stakeholders involved. (Moussaoui Abdenour, 2014).

The Entrepreneurship House encourages universities to gradually integrate entrepreneurial values into their objectives and provide students with the intellectual tools needed to embark on business creation. In this context, the Entrepreneurship House serves as a fundamental component of the support system, fostering a spirit of initiative and raising awareness about establishing new enterprises. (Moussaoui Abdenour, 2014)

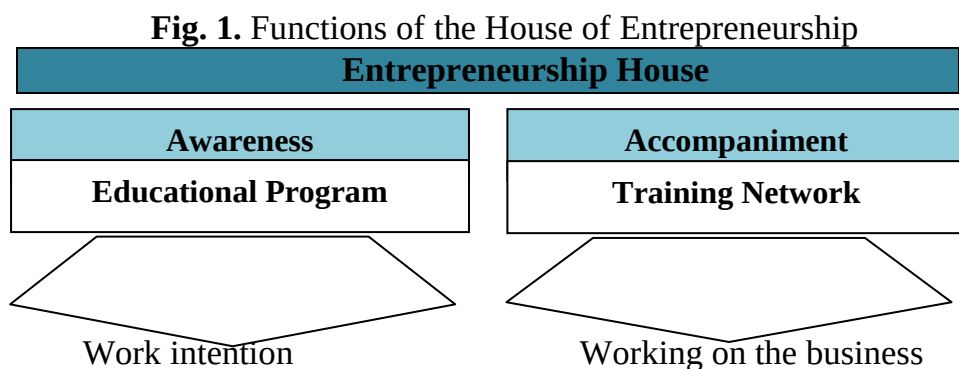
It has been defined as "the primary tool relied upon by the National Youth Employment Support Agency (ANSEJ) to educate students and

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introduce them to the world of work in partnership with the university." (The National Youth Employment Support Agency).

The Entrepreneurship House is "an entity based at the university, tasked with training and motivating students and researchers while providing them with initial support to establish a small enterprise within the framework of the National Youth Employment Support Agency (ANSEJ)." It was first established at Grenoble University in France in 2003 and later introduced in Algeria in 2007 at Mentouri University in Constantine.

Regarding its role, its primary function is to teach entrepreneurship, aiming to cultivate entrepreneurial intentions among students through awareness programs and the promotion of a self-employment culture. The core mission of the Entrepreneurship House lies in the pre-support stage, guiding and accompanying students and aspiring entrepreneurs in developing their project ideas.



Source: Jean-Pierre Boissin, 2003, p. 10.

The primary function begins with supporting the project idea. In addition to gathering educational resources, the Entrepreneurship House provides technical support for the initiator's project. The second key function is raising awareness. While its main objective is to cultivate entrepreneurial intentions among students and researchers, this entity must also play a role in shaping ideas and fostering projects through comprehensive support structures.

Fig. 2. Summarizes the Entrepreneurship House's role across all stages of the entrepreneurial process.

Fig.2. The process of organizing projects and work at the Entrepreneurship House.

Idea's Emergence Structuring Project	Project.....Implementation
Entrepreneurship House	Communicating with support structures includes: • Local initiative platforms. • Business incubators. • Contracting networks. • Chambers of commerce.

Source: J. P. Boissin, op cit, p1.

Objectives of the Entrepreneurship House:(Maaradj, 2016, p. 118)

- Activating the university's role in accompanying young people and students with consultations and field studies.
- Raising students' awareness of the values and principles of entrepreneurship as a fundamental mechanism for integrating them into the job market.
- Instilling a culture of entrepreneurship and develop their spirit of initiative.
- Offering an open space for students to engage with ANSEJ, CNAC, ANDI, ANGEM, etc.
- Enable them to acquire specific qualifications and skills associated with the entrepreneurial mindset.
- Accompanying young people to ensure the success of their projects through the university, facilitating their interaction with economic partners with the necessary and required expertise.
- Acting as a link between graduates holding degrees and the institutions supervising their financing.

Areas of Expertise of the Entrepreneurship House Resource Center:(Maaradj, 2016, p. 119)

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- Teaching skills to raise awareness among students and researchers, seeking to make entrepreneurial intentions explicit and clear.
- Project management skills to support project ideas and communicate with dedicated support structures.
- Research and entrepreneurship skills should be linked with training and development teams to raise awareness among faculty members.

Agreement and Activities of the Entrepreneurship House in Algerian Universities:

University students are more capable than others of establishing small enterprises. However, the success of these enterprises depends on their level of maturity in entrepreneurial thinking. To foster and enhance this mindset among students, the Entrepreneurship House was established in Algerian universities.

An agreement was signed between the General Directorate of the National Agency for Youth Employment Support (ANSEJ) and the university administration to benefit university students. This initiative aims to establish a dedicated space on campus to promote entrepreneurial thinking among young people, particularly university graduates, to help them create small enterprises. This step marks a tangible beginning in realizing the partnership between economic institutions and the university through guidance and consultation by specialists.

This advisory facility, a key component of the agency's mission, plays a vital role in organizing open days throughout the year to educate young people about state-established mechanisms for creating small enterprises, strategies for implementing productive investment projects, and the importance of guidance provided by the agency's experts and specialized university professors. This proactive approach aims to equip young people with the necessary skills to establish successful investment projects.

Main Activities of the Entrepreneurship House:(Maaradj, 2016, p. 120)

- Offering information and raising awareness among students and researchers during general-themed days.
- Organizing study days.

- Conducting training courses.

Hosting summer and/or autumn entrepreneurship-focused universities, featuring participation with ANSEJ partners, thematic roundtables, practical entrepreneurship workshops, business plan development, and a competition for the best business plan.

4. Center for Entrepreneurship Development: Concept, Objectives, Tasks, Programs:

As part of the university's commitment to engaging with the economic and social environment and implementing various partnership agreements between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Startups, and Small Enterprises, aimed at supporting and guiding university students with investment ideas, the Entrepreneurship House at the university has been transformed into the Center for Entrepreneurship Development.

The Center for Entrepreneurship Development (CDE): (Executive Decree No. 23-410, 2023) defines the Center for Entrepreneurship Development as a structure dedicated to welcoming and supporting students and graduates of higher education and scientific research institutions who are project holders, enabling them to transform their ideas into small enterprises. This definition is based on Decree No. 23-410 of 2023. During the National Conference for Entrepreneurial Students, held on July 13, 2023, at the International Conference Center, the official launch of the Centers for Entrepreneurship Development was announced as a replacement for the Entrepreneurship Houses in Algerian universities, which number 100 across various institutions. On November 20, 2023, the Center for Entrepreneurship Development was officially classified as a common research service by Executive Decree No. 23-410, supplementing Executive Decree No. 12-293 of July 21, 2012, which defines the tasks, organization, and functioning of common research services in scientific and technological fields.

In addition to organizing awareness activities to promote the spirit of entrepreneurship within the university environment, the Center for Entrepreneurship Development is responsible for providing training to

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enhance entrepreneurial skills. This includes fundamentals of entrepreneurship, strategic planning, business development, operational and resource management, enterprise creation, legal aspects, and growth strategies.

To achieve the objectives of the Center for Entrepreneurship Development (CDE), it undertakes the following tasks:

- Conducting several seminars and activities with an awareness dimension to attract students with investment ideas;
- Offering necessary consultancy to university students concerning entrepreneurial work;
- Organizing competitions and specialized training courses in the establishment of enterprises, enterprise management, the relationship between the enterprise and various related parties (shareholders, financiers, customers, suppliers, taxes, social security, etc.), financing methods, government support mechanisms;
- Coordinating with business incubators, the Center for Technology and Innovation Support, and the office linking the university to the economic and social environment to offer comprehensive services for different investment projects.

As for the objectives of the Center for Entrepreneurship Development (CDE), the center aims to achieve the following goals:

- **Informative/Awareness Goal:** Raising awareness among university students about the significance and benefits of entrepreneurship, fostering an entrepreneurial culture within the university environment.
- **Guiding Goal (Support):** Providing guidance to students in developing projects that align with their goals and aspirations.
- **Training Goal:** Ensuring comprehensive training in entrepreneurship to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge.
- **Economic Goal:** Contributing to national economic development by supporting the creation of wealth-generating projects.

The Center for Entrepreneurship Development's strategic plan primarily focuses on awareness and training programs.

- **Awareness Programs:** These programs aim to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset within the university community and include the following initiatives:
 - **Workshops and Lectures:** Hosting interactive sessions led by experienced entrepreneurs who share their successes, challenges, and practical advice on business creation. These events provide valuable insights and networking opportunities, allowing students to connect with potential mentors.
 - **Entrepreneurial Competitions:** Organizing competitions where participants pitch their ideas to a panel of experts. These challenges encourage creativity, assess the feasibility of business concepts, and provide funding opportunities for promising projects.
 - **Fairs and Exhibitions:** Showcasing local entrepreneurs and their success stories through dedicated exhibitions, inspiring students and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship.

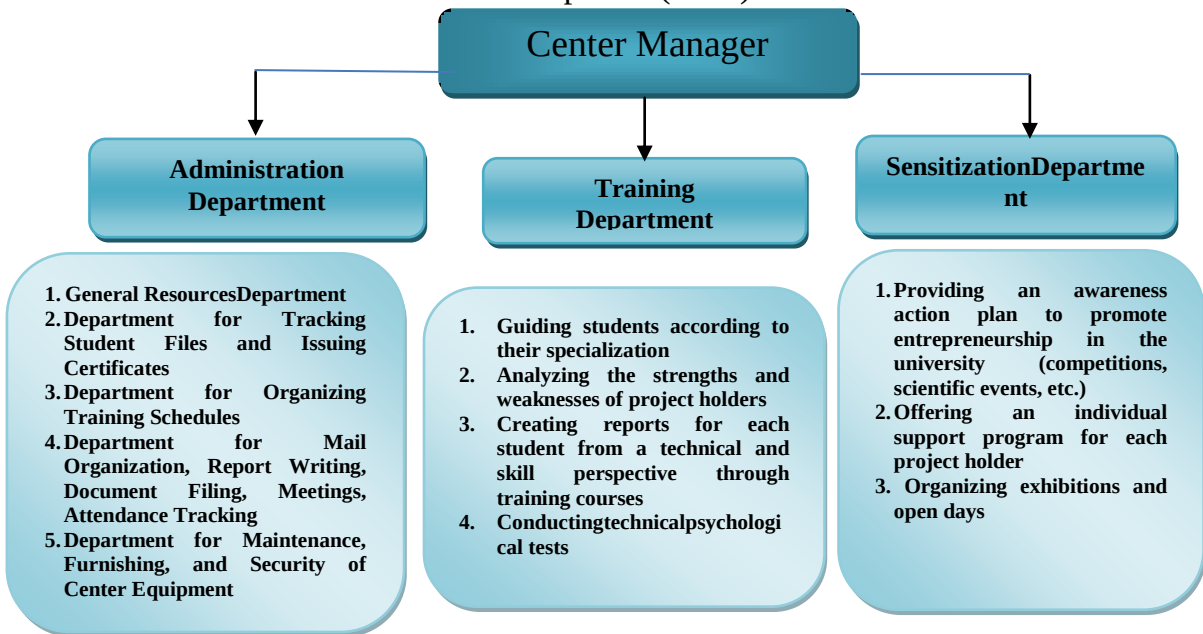
The Training Programs at the Center for Entrepreneurship Development include:

- **Gaining an In-Depth Understanding of the Entrepreneurial Process:** This training equips future university entrepreneurs with a comprehensive understanding of business creation, from idea conception to implementation. It covers key areas such as strategic planning, market research, financing, product or service development, operations management, and marketing.
- **Developing Business Management Skills:** Participants will master essential management principles, including financial management, human resources, operations, marketing and sales, and supply chain management. These skills will enable them to make informed decisions and effectively lead their businesses.

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- **Instilling Creativity and Innovation:** Entrepreneurship thrives on new ideas and innovative approaches. The training fosters creativity, encouraging participants to think differently and develop unique products or services that stand out in the market.
- **Understanding Legal and Regulatory Aspects:** Starting and running a business requires compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks. Future entrepreneurs will gain knowledge of key requirements such as business licenses, permits, contracts, intellectual property, and data protection to ensure legal compliance in their industry and country.
- **Developing Leadership and Team Management Skills:** Successful entrepreneurs must be capable of leading and motivating teams, delegating responsibilities, fostering collaboration, and resolving conflicts. This training focuses on building these leadership skills to create a productive and harmonious work environment.
- **Encouraging Strategic Thinking and Decision-Making:** Entrepreneurs need to develop a clear vision, anticipate challenges and opportunities, and make informed strategic decisions. This training provides the tools to analyze data, assess risks, develop business plans, and adjust strategies for sustainable growth.
- **Offering a Network of Professionals and Resources:** Entrepreneurship extends beyond business creation—it involves building a strong professional network. Participants will have opportunities to connect with industry experts, investors, and fellow entrepreneurs, gaining valuable insights, partnerships, and support.

Fig. 3. Organizational Structure of the Center for Entrepreneurship Development (CDE).



Source: Director of the Center for Entrepreneurship Development at Cherif Bouchoucha University Center, Aflou.

5. Key Differences between the House of Entrepreneurship and the Center for Entrepreneurship Development at Algerian Universities:

Table No. 01 outlines the key differences between the House of Entrepreneurship and the Center for Entrepreneurship Development.

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Table1.Differences between the House of Entrepreneurship and the Center for Entrepreneurship Development at Algerian Universities

Element	House of Entrepreneurship	Center for Entrepreneurship Development
Partnership	Between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security.	Between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Economy of Knowledge and Startups.
Establishment	From 2007 to 2023	From 2023 to the present
Concept	It is a flexible body that operates to raise awareness, train, and motivate final-year students and ensure their initial support to establish enterprises that add value to the national economy.	A structure for receiving and supporting students and graduates of higher education and scientific research institutions who have projects, with the aim of enabling them to realize their ideas and establish their small and start-up enterprises.
Tasks	Entrepreneurship education; awareness programs; fostering a culture of self-employment; organizing awareness activities and training sessions.	Coordinating with various front-line centers; providing consultation to students; organizing awareness activities and training sessions.
Objectives	Awareness; support; training	Information and awareness; guidance (support); training; positive contribution to the economy.
Functions	Accompaniment and awareness (initial support)	Accompaniment, awareness, and support
Location	University	University
Partners	The National Agency for Youth Employment Support (ENSEJ)	The National Agency for Entrepreneurship Support and Development, Business Incubator, Tax Directorate, Directorate of Trade and Export Promotion, National Employment Agency, Business Incubator, Technology and Innovation Support Center, Office for Linkage between the University and the Economic and Social Environment, University Student Clubs.
Target group	Students and researchers	Students and researchers
Management	Collaborative efforts between the university and the National Agency for Youth Employment Support (Ensej) - joint committee.	Collaborative efforts between the two ministries (University).
Works	From the emergence of the idea to structuring the project.	From the emergence of the idea to structuring the project to executing the project.

Activities	Offering necessary information, organizing workshops and training sessions, summer and/or autumn universities.	Personal and sustainable coaching, organization of awareness activities, study days, specialized training workshops, competitions, consultancy services, ...
Classification	///	A joint research department
Slogan		

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the information provided above.

An analysis of the key components highlighted in the table above reveals that the transformation of the House of Entrepreneurship into the Center for Entrepreneurship Development at Algerian universities has given this institution a new dimension. This shift includes fostering startup and small enterprise creation, expanding its mission and objectives, diversifying activities, and establishing new and varied partnerships.

6. Conclusion:

As part of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research's efforts to support and enhance projects with social and economic significance, the ministry has adopted a policy aimed at strengthening communication and fostering closer ties between the university and its economic and social environment. This initiative seeks to establish a real and effective partnership that leverages science and knowledge to drive economic development at both local and national levels.

To support and assist university students with investment ideas, the Entrepreneurship Houses across universities nationwide have been transformed into Centers for Entrepreneurship Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Startups, and Small Enterprises. This transformation has led to several key developments:

- The House of Entrepreneurship has been restructured into the Center for Entrepreneurship Development, providing intensive training in entrepreneurship and facilitating access to funding for university project holders.
- The transformation aims to revitalize entrepreneurial thinking among students through a new approach that addresses previous challenges and obstacles.
- Trainers in the field of entrepreneurship receive specialized training in coordination with the International Labour Organization, equipping them to pass on this knowledge to students.
- A comprehensive program has been developed, featuring training by university professors, supervision and support from ANADE agency experts, and partnerships with investors in the field.
- The organizational structure of the Center for Entrepreneurship Development is more streamlined and flexible compared to the House of Entrepreneurship. Each center is managed by a director and supported by administrative staff, trainers, ANADE representatives, and both private and public investors.

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