

# Reforming Scotland: Entrepreneurial Mindset



## **Reforming Scotland: Entrepreneurial Mindset**

### **Sandy Kennedy**

Sandy Kennedy is the chief executive of Entrepreneurial Scotland and The Saltire Foundation.

Educated at Cambridge University he became a qualified lawyer with Ashursts in London specialising in private equity. He joined 3i, the venture capital firm, in 1996 and worked on a mix of traditional leveraged deals and tech venture capital. In 2000, he won the Chris Hill Prize for best overall MBA student at Strathclyde.

### **Reforming Scotland**

This is the latest in a series of individual contributions to the publication, 'Reforming Scotland', which aims to set out a possible vision for Scotland's future which can inform and influence the policy debate in the coming years. The contributions are by people from a range of different backgrounds and political perspectives who have looked at how policy could be reformed across a range of different areas and they represent the views of the authors and not those of Reform Scotland. They are published under the banner of our blog, the Melting Pot, since they are in keeping with the shorter pieces done by various people for this which can be found on our website [reformscotland.com](http://reformscotland.com)

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## About Reform Scotland

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Reform Scotland, a charity registered in Scotland, is a public policy institute which works to promote increased economic prosperity and more effective public services based on the principles of limited government, diversity and personal responsibility.

Reform Scotland is independent of political parties and any other organisations. It is funded by donations from private individuals, charitable trusts and corporate organisations. Its Director is Geoff Mawdsley and Alison Payne is the Research Director. Both work closely with the Advisory Board, chaired by Alan McFarlane, which meets regularly to review the research and policy programme.

## About The Melting Pot

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The Melting Pot is our guest blog page, where Scotland's thinkers, talkers and writers can indulge in some blue sky thinking. **The posts do not represent Reform Scotland's policies.**

## Reform Scotland's Advisory Board

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## Entrepreneurial Mindset

When we imagine Scotland as the most entrepreneurial society in the world – what would this feel like? How soon do we think this might be achievable? At Entrepreneurial Scotland (ES) we're engaging in many conversations in Scotland and across the world to bring this ambition closer and to explore what Scotland could look like as we make progress towards our goal.

At ES we envisage a society that really understands and values creativity. Where more people – especially young people - have the confidence to be innovative and challenge the status quo. A society that encourages individuals of all ages and backgrounds to be entrepreneurial whether they are starting a business or are ambitious to make a difference within our public services or third sector organisations. Evidence tells us that year by year more young people, including an increasing number of young women, are becoming drivers of economic activity around the world whether they are living in a mature or rapid-growth market.

We are determined therefore to make sure that people in Scotland have the same opportunity, encouragement and support to contribute to the country's future success across all sectors.

While Scotland has a strong reputation for the quality of its education, we have some way to go to close the gap in Total Early Stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA Rate) with other parts of the world. TEA measures the percentage of individuals aged 18-64 in an economy who are in the process of starting or are already running a new business. Scotland's TEA rate compares favourably with Ireland, Sweden and is ahead of France, Italy, Spain and Denmark but we need to do more to match the performance of countries such as Singapore, Australia, Canada and Qatar.

We believe Scotland can do it. At Entrepreneurial Scotland we're working hard to join the dots to accelerate Scotland's potential by connecting and collaborating with people who are already entrepreneurial, and can work with us to get more people **thinking and talking about entrepreneurialism**.

This work often starts with a conversation about what has inspired very successful, high profile business leaders who have started and grown their own businesses. Most of us will be able to think of examples of individuals that are in the public eye because they have come up with a compelling business idea and successfully converted this into a highly profitable business. And that is, of course, the traditional vision of what it is to be an entrepreneurial.

At ES we want to expand the popular perception, epitomised by popular TV programmes such as the Dragon's Den, as we believe it's only part of the story. We think there is a much bigger prize for Scotland if we can collaborate with others to build on that traditional image and create a broader more dynamic understanding of what it means to be entrepreneurial. Our approach expands the idea of entrepreneurialism beyond the business sector to build awareness and recognition of a broader group of people who have an entrepreneurial way of **thinking and of being**.

We describe this as an **entrepreneurial mindset**. And it's important because it has the potential to help Scotland to become more successful – socially and economically.

So, when we talk about the ES vision for Scotland, our vision includes everyone who has, or wants to develop, an **entrepreneurial mindset – whatever their role**, wherever they work. It includes ambitious individuals working in small, medium or large businesses, people committed to their careers in family businesses or international corporates and, importantly, it also includes those working in government, the public and third sectors.

We're proud that our members include globally successful international tech brands that have achieved "unicorn" status by achieving an estimated value of \$1billion plus. But they are just part of the story. We also benefit from being able to call on award-winning businesses who are scaling their businesses internationally and well-established family firms that are ensuring that the next generation is ready to lead and scale their businesses.

Our members are proof that being in Scotland makes sense. Some of the UK's best entrepreneurial leaders are operating successful multi-national businesses in and from Scotland.

But it's not just our businesses that are making an impact internationally.

Scotland's public sector and social enterprise leaders are at the forefront of developments in health, education and justice – helping Scotland to play an increasing role in the global stage and making a significant impact on our economy and society.

At ES we want to help Scotland's entrepreneurial leaders take things to another level. We want to help shine a light on the many brilliant individuals who are out there making a massive difference to the economy and society but who may not identify themselves as being entrepreneurial. They are just getting on with it because it's just who they are and what they do.

Scotland needs to identify, connect with and harness this talent in order to become the most entrepreneurial society in the world and we're working together with our members and partners to create the conditions to make that happen.

Scotland's First Minister has already embraced this ambition as a way to help deliver her aspirations for Scotland to become "a world-leading entrepreneurial and innovative nation".

And now, our growing membership networks are putting their weight behind it too – signing up to help each other build greater confidence within their organisations and sphere of influence so that together we increase the pipeline of ambitious, globally-minded people with the skills, experience and connections to turn our vision into reality.

We're doing that through many more conversations exploring what it means to be entrepreneurial. From our roots in the Leaders Exchange network (formerly the Entrepreneurial Exchange), we are inviting ambitious leaders from government, the public and third sectors to join our growing networks of business leaders where they will be able to share their experiences and benefit from global expertise that will be relevant to the challenges they are facing.

And we're evolving our highly-admired Saltire Fellowship programme that exists to develop a pipeline of the next generation of leaders - talented, ambitious, globally minded people who have the skills, mindset, connections and opportunities to start, scale or grow an organisation.

We're looking for the people who are keen to accept the challenge offered by the Fellowship either as an individual, as part of a team in growing enterprises or who are working in ambitious public or third sector organisations.

In Scotland, we have examples of brilliant people with an entrepreneurial mindset who are, for example, transforming our health services, successfully reducing violent crime, making communities safer and re-imagining the our cultural and sporting offer.

They are all equally ambitious to play their role in positioning the country as an innovative and entrepreneurially successful nation.

These creative and talented individuals need support and encouragement and at ES we're here to help them make the right connections to help them to take on even greater challenges.

We're keen to dig deeper into our understanding of entrepreneurial mindset and are continuing to hold conversations with members, partners and others to unlock Scotland's entrepreneurial potential.

One thing that makes our vision achievable is that we know that in Scotland we have the connections, scale and energy to work collaboratively towards a common goal.

We are able to put aside individual difference or preferences where this means we can share in the challenge of doing something good for Scotland.

It's not about who you are or where you come from...it's quite simply about focussing on a shared ambition, being generous with our time and expertise and being willing to share our knowledge and networks to secure a bigger prize.

The conversation is underway. We're keen for more people to engage with the discussion – what's stopping you?





