

**EU YOUTH CONFERENCE  
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**BACKGROUND DOCUMENT**

**Cycle 3, Phase 3 of the Structured Dialogue with Young People  
“Social Inclusion of Young People”**

Compilation

These results are based on the reports of the consultations of National Working Groups in all 28 EU Member States and of the International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations (INGYOs). According to the reports, more than **15,000 young people**<sup>1</sup> participated directly in the structured dialogue during this third phase on the theme of social inclusion of young people. **10** International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations organised consultations and contributed with inputs to this phase of structured dialogue. In addition, more than **700 experts and public authorities** in the field of youth, education, employment social affairs and economy took part in the discussions with young people.

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<sup>1</sup>Data indicated in the reports submitted by National Working Groups. Taking into account that 4 National Working Groups have not indicated any concrete figure, the actual number of young people involved in this phase of structured dialogue is higher.

## GUARANTEE Equal Learning Opportunities for All

### WORKSHOP 1: QUALITY EDUCATION

Young people across the EU consider that the current education systems fail to guarantee equal learning opportunities for all young people. They believe that it is utmost necessary to reform the education systems in order to tailor education to the individual needs, interests and talents of each learner.

Young people want quality education that provides them with knowledge, competences and values, gives them a broad training, makes them discover and develop their talents and interests and leaves them the choice to plan their own educational path. It is widely agreed that practical learning should become a more dominant part of education and young people should have access to non-formal education in schools.

#### *Recommendations*

#### **Reassess the education system**

- ⤴ Develop a National Strategy on Education to provide for high-quality, long-term oriented education and ensure symmetry between education and employment. This strategy should be set up by Education and Employment Ministries together with the education providers and employers.
- ⤴ State should invest more in the public school system, including also in extracurricular optional activities.
- ⤴ *Divergent views*: some reports call for adapting education to the demands of the labour markets and the current job opportunities available *while others* call for more emphasis to be placed on "learning for life", including a civic education and values that prepares youth for all aspects of adult life.
- ⤴ Promote education focusing on real career opportunities based on a register of professions.
- ⤴ Revise both the content and process of education in order to strengthen the emphasis on practical learning, both in terms of focus and time dedicated, and enrich learning with real-world problem-based projects to enable students to apply what they learn into practice.
- ⤴ Replace the value judgement of educational tracks with an education system centred on the needs, talents and interests of the individual learner.
- ⤴ Replace the one-size-fits-all methodologies with a plurality of methods tailored to individual learners and shift the focus from teaching content to teaching *'how to learn'*.
- ⤴ *Divergent proposals*: Some proposals call upon tailoring education to the individual needs of each learner *while others* call for ensuring same basic education for all students in all schools, or else, a basic competence learning for responsible independent life.
- ⤴ Reform the education system focused excessively on results and certification with a formation oriented on competences, interdisciplinary skills, and values, such as cooperation and solidarity.
- ⤴ Young people should be empowered to take an active part in decision-making processes on shaping learning activities, especially in the creation of the curriculum and deciding on the teaching methods. School student councils' representatives should be granted the right to vote in the school boards.
- ⤴ Enable students in secondary schools to choose the focus of their studies by selecting classes in accordance with their interests and customising subjects to their interests and skills.
- ⤴ Create more opportunities for personalised training within schools and universities.
- ⤴ Introduce language and digital skills development at all levels of education.
- ⤴ Member States should increase funding for exchange and international education programmes in order to allow more diverse young people to fully benefit from the experiences that mobility programmes provide.
- ⤴ Develop a flexible system to fit together secondary/higher education with employment to allow students with a job to combine their work and studies, for example by distance (e-) learning or personal study plans. This should also allow an easier transition from the labour market back into the education system to enable those who start working before/after completing secondary education to return to school.

#### **Improve practical learning in educational processes**

- ⤴ Integrate more practical learning – 'activity-based classes' – in all educational tracks/processes in schools, vocational training and universities so that students can acquire practical skills.
- ⤴ Integrate practical work-related experiences – internships, traineeships and apprenticeships – as mandatory training into curricula from secondary school onwards in order to offer young people a first contact with the labour market.
- ⤴ Include general information about the labour market in the curricula of all educational tracks. This can be done by introducing more courses about the mechanisms of the labour market and the employment legislation as well as information on the current and future demanded professions in the labour market and

about the different sectors of economy and various employers.

- ⤴ Introduce life-long career guidance and individual planning in elementary, secondary and higher education to inform young people about all possibilities and opportunities in education and employment.
- ⤴ Introduce financial literacy (e.g. accountancy) in courses in schools and universities in order to provide young people with the important financial literacy skills.

### **Guarantee equal opportunities of education for all young people**

- ⤴ Governments should recognise the right to education for all people regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- ⤴ Governments should provide free education at all levels.
- ⤴ Specific policies should be put into place to combat bullying of students, particularly bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- ⤴ The state should improve financial support to cover the study-related costs (textbooks, training material, etc.), in particular to young people with fewer opportunities.
- ⤴ Increase the number of social and high-performance scholarships.
- ⤴ Improve supporting infrastructure, namely access to affordable means of transport.
- ⤴ Secure a safe learning environment in schools where diversity is utterly respected.
- ⤴ Ensure flexible study paths and flexible learning environments.
- ⤴ Promote distance learning through online educational programmes.
- ⤴ Promote wide access to pre-school facilities for children with migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds as well as for those from disadvantaged families.
- ⤴ Improve access to individualised learning offers, including individualised activities and more tailor-made trainings in non-formal education that should be subsidised by the state, wherever possible.

### **Improve teaching and learning support**

- ⤴ Encourage setting up of school study groups as a means to access learning fitted to individual needs.
- ⤴ Improve student support in schools by introducing student assistants in classes to support the teachers.
- ⤴ Improve quality counselling and guidance in schools, including mentor training.
- ⤴ Reduce class sizes and increase the number of teachers / educators to facilitate individualised learning.
- ⤴ Improve access to educational materials by digitisation of educational processes – as a way to simplify and integrate them – and the use of digital platforms.
- ⤴ Encourage a better involvement of parents in the education of their children through strengthening the relation school-parents.
- ⤴ Ensure high quality training of teachers and educators in general and in particular on individualised learning processes, who should be incentivised to acquire skills and provide adequate support to students. The teaching profession should be better promoted through financial and social recognition.
- ⤴ Provide specialised support and additional classes for young people at risk of dropping out from school.
- ⤴ Focus the learning processes on strengthening the motivation of learners.

### **Access of young people to more and diverse extra-curricular activities**

- ⤴ Make the school a meeting space away from home for young people (not just a place where they are formally educated) by inviting social work and youth organisations in schools.
- ⤴ Include more and broaden the range of extracurricular activities in schools (sporting, cultural activities, social work) to enable all young people to access and increase their extra-curricular experiences.
- ⤴ Introduce “non-formal education” time in schools – unscheduled time in between or after the planned educational and learning activities – to give students the chance (in terms of time and permission) to participate in non-formal education activities to develop soft and transversal skills. For example, include the participation of young people in youth organisations in the afternoon school activities.
- ⤴ Encourage students to carry out non-formal educational initiatives in schools with a view to developing their sense of initiative and their ability to take action.
- ⤴ Present good practices of projects and campaigns from youth organisations in schools in order to motivate young people to get engaged and volunteer in youth activities to acquire initial work experience and gain practical skills and 'skills for life'.

### **Synergies between formal and non-formal education**

- ⤴ Mainstream non-formal education in school and promote the same recognition (at social and formal level) as for formal education. Promote learning environments where formal and non-formal education methods

interact and enrich each other, such as volunteer schemes or projects of non-formal education in classes.

- ⤴ Foster the inclusion of non-formal learning environments for young people in lifelong learning strategies.
- ⤴ Schools/universities should enhance cooperation with non-formal education providers, in particular enter partnerships with youth organisations to ensure learning opportunities for all young people.
- ⤴ Develop an education system that enables young people to become aware of the benefits of different learning processes and experiences – formal, informal and non-formal education.

### **Recognition and validation of non-formal education**

- ⤴ Secure the official validation and social recognition of non-formal education and informal learning, including the acquisition of skills and competences through youth work activities, volunteering, youth-led initiatives, etc. by ensuring their official certification.
- ⤴ The experiences gained in extracurricular projects, including volunteering service, internships, international mobility projects, should be recognised in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).
- ⤴ All competences and skills acquired in formal as well as non-formal education should be recognised in the curriculum and integrated in the national qualifications systems or records.
- ⤴ Put in place a skill validation system to ensure the certification of all skills and competences acquired in different learning settings (formal, informal or non-formal education) through the implementation of a *'skills passport'* or *'competences portfolio'* as common methodology of validation across the EU.
- ⤴ Competences and skills gained through non-formal education and informal learning should be recognised by employers.

#### *Good practices*

- ⤴ **In Denmark**, the Ministry of Education along with the formal education providers have granted access to youth organisations into formal education institutions. This access is not only restricted to afterschool activities but also includes access in the classroom to take part/complement learning provided on specific subjects. In addition, an upcoming reform of the Danish primary school system will include so-called 'activity-lessons' focused more on alternative forms of learning in order to provide equal learning opportunities to students. Furthermore, Denmark presents a good practice in the tool developed by the Ministry of Education that is 'My Competences Portfolio' that documents the competences acquired both in formal and non-formal education.
- ⤴ **In Austria** and South Tyrol, *aufZAQ* certifies training courses for people who do extracurricular child and youth work. This way, the BMWFJ, the Austrian provincial youth departments and the Department for Youth Work in South Tyrol confirm that the certified trainings are high-quality non-formal education offers.
- ⤴ **In Slovenia**, PUM - Project Learning for Young Adults, is a certified non-formal education programme for young people who dropped out of school, who lack different experiences/skills or who have difficulties to get a job. The programme successfully supported early school leavers to reintegrate into society through non-formal education.
- ⤴ **In Ireland**, SOLAS is the new Further Education and Training Authority responsible for funding, planning and co-ordinating training and further education programmes. SOLAS works closely with a wide range of stakeholders including learners, employers, Education & Training Boards, Government departments, state bodies, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Institutes of Technology (IOTs) and representative organisations, to build an integrated pathway to work for learners.
- ⤴ **Youthpass** is a tool for participants in projects that were funded within the scope of the Youth in Action programme to describe their experiences and skills or competences gained in the youth projects.

## **FACILITATE Young People's Transition to Employment**

### **WORKSHOP 2: QUALITY TRANSITION**

Across the EU, young people agree that the lack of professional experience is the most common reason why they cannot enter the labour market. According to them, it is important to receive practical training while they are still in education, hence the creation of more opportunities for quality internships and apprenticeships is essential. Notably, most young people, experts and public authorities in Europe agree that internships should not be construed as an opportunity for employers to replace full-time jobs, but should be real opportunities that enable young people to apply what they have learned and acquire practical skills and competences.

Young people's access to employment can be much facilitated by strengthening the connection between the world of education and the world of work through cooperation between education providers and employers.

## *Recommendations*

### **Securing quality of internships and apprenticeships**

- ⤴ European governments, EU institutions and social partners should establish a binding legal framework for quality internships and apprenticeships to ensure that placements are based on a legal contract, have a clear educational focus and concrete objectives for personal and professional development, are remunerated on the basis of a decent minimal wage and have adequate social security and protection.
- ⤴ State should penalise the practice of substituting a full-time job with an internship or apprenticeship as well as the practice of unpaid internships, which some reports call for banning them.
- ⤴ State should restrict by law the maximum number of interns per employer as well as the maximum number of internships for the same person to prevent 'covered-up employment'.
- ⤴ State should provide fiscal and administrative incentives to employers that offer quality internships to young people.
- ⤴ Implement a label or recognition, across sectors, for the employers that offer quality internships.
- ⤴ Raise awareness among employers of the importance of ensuring quality of internships. For example, the Ministry of Labour could annually award the best practices in offering quality internships / apprenticeships as a means of public recognition.
- ⤴ Employers should provide a real allowance and/or reimburse the related costs (accommodation, food, transport, etc.) to all interns to ensure they have decent living conditions during the internship.
- ⤴ State should simplify the procedures incumbent upon companies/administrations that wish to pay their interns a remuneration above the minimum internship wage.
- ⤴ State should increase the number of scholarships for interns, in particular providing financial support to young people with fewer opportunities to cover their costs related to the internship.
- ⤴ Interns should be informed about their rights during the internship, both online and in local structures.
- ⤴ Promote quality mentoring for individualised support for interns by incentivising interns' mentors in companies through rewards or remuneration.
- ⤴ Create a database of internship offers that respect quality criteria based on an assessment system guaranteed by the state.
- ⤴ Put in place a systematic assessment of the internships through regular checking visits to prevent the misuses by employers, in particular in the private sector.
- ⤴ Establish agencies (at local, regional and/or national level) to monitor and evaluate the internships and apprenticeships offered by employers, from a pedagogical point of view in terms of effectiveness for the interns' learning and development.
- ⤴ Encourage skills certification and ensure monitoring during and at the end of the internship or apprenticeship, through evaluation tests that verify the actual skills learned.
- ⤴ Certificates should be awarded after the successful completion of the internship and apprenticeships programme.
- ⤴ Encourage employers to offer a working contract to young people at the end of their internship.

### **Better connection between the world of education and the world of work**

- ⤴ State should encourage and support the development of sustainable partnerships between education providers and employers, including in creation of tailored trainings and internships / apprenticeships.
- ⤴ Internships or apprenticeships should be based on a real tripartite agreement between the school, employer and the intern, which should include the rights and responsibilities of each of the three parties.
- ⤴ Ensure adequate training for tutors in schools and for mentors in companies/institutions on quality requirements concerning the recognition of acquired skills through the internships.
- ⤴ The role of the school/university should be reinforced during the period of the internship through ensuring intern support, dialogue with the intern's mentor during placement and assistance in devising and implementing a support plan for interns, etc.
- ⤴ Schools, universities and providers of non-formal and informal learning should invest more in building the cooperation with employers and entrepreneurs by creating, promoting and supporting more opportunities for exchange and meetings between employers, entrepreneurs and young people, such as joint activities of schools and companies, to facilitate direct contact with representatives of various employment sectors.
- ⤴ Education providers, the employment sector, public employment services and social security services should work together to provide individualised information, guidance and counselling to young people to facilitate their transition between education to the labour market.

### **Access to quality internships and apprenticeships**

- ⤴ Create more internship programmes for certified small and medium enterprises where young people can have the chance to be trained in different sectors of the economy.
- ⤴ Employers should significantly increase the number of corporate scholarships.
- ⤴ Schools /universities should provide assistance to students in finding a suitable internship.
- ⤴ Ensure that internship and apprenticeship opportunities are available to young people from secondary school onwards, thus not only to graduates of universities.
- ⤴ Simplify the procedures for the recruitment of interns.
- ⤴ Schools / universities should increase opportunities for practical work-experiences during studies.
- ⤴ Set up a national Youth Portal to promote easily accessible information regarding internships, apprenticeships, training and funding programmes to all young people.
- ⤴ Establish centers for exchange of information and experiences about internships / apprenticeships and employment experiences within schools and universities.
- ⤴ The EU should revise the 'Visa Directive' – Directive on Conditions of Entry of Third-Country Nationals for the Purposes of Research, Studies, Pupil Exchange, Remunerated and Unremunerated Training, Voluntary Service and Au-Pairing – in order to enhance opportunities for young people outside of the EU.

### **Better training**

- ⤴ Ensure the access to a free, public and quality vocational education and training (VET).
- ⤴ Adjust VET offers to the labour market demands while including a strong component of training in entrepreneurship, such as how to start up a business.
- ⤴ Enhance the quality of vocational education and training and improve its social recognition by reviewing and updating the programmes, promoting innovation and development of structures in vocational education and training and foster better local provision of vocational training places by mobilising companies and enterprises.
- ⤴ Promote the dual training in vocational education and training.
- ⤴ Promote links and transfers between the different training options.
- ⤴ Encourage and support young people in schools / VET / universities to follow periodic practical training legally certified. Universities and schools should conduct more practical trainings.
- ⤴ Encourage the developing of the apprentice system to allow an alternative way into employment.
- ⤴ Create more training opportunities for young people who completed education and are in employment.
- ⤴ The full range of training opportunities available to young people should be better promoted in formal education, VET and non-formal education as well as via media and online via social media.
- ⤴ Develop specific plans in terms of up-skilling and training for young people with disabilities.

### **Youth Guarantee**

- ⤴ All Member States should commit to the full implementation of the Youth Guarantee with enforcement possibilities for young people to claim their right to a job, training or further education. The Youth Guarantee should not be a 'quick fix' that get young people in a vicious circle of precarious jobs, temporary jobs, internships and periods of unemployment, but should be developed as long-term and continuous investment in quality jobs, education and training.

### **More job training for young employees**

- ⤴ Employers should invest more in professional training and up-skilling of young employees in view of providing adequate training for all jobs and opportunities for professional development for all employees.
- ⤴ Employers should be encouraged and supported financially to train their young employees / interns who are still studying in universities or vocational schools.
- ⤴ Employers should be encouraged to provide training to young applicants whose profile corresponds to the job but who lack a skill, rather than giving preference to someone with a more experienced profile.

#### *Good practices*

- ⤴ As part of the *Priorité Jeunesse* plan, the **French government** has encouraged '*vocational sandwich courses and learning*' by granting vocational training internship status to young people doing vocational sandwich courses in linked work and training centres (*CFA*) that make the system more flexible and the creation of the student card for students doing vocational sandwich courses that improves the status of trainees. In addition, the French Government will soon (early 2014) present to the parliament an implementation decree structuring internships, which will define the minimum amount of training, the nature of the tasks offered to interns and extend the payment obligation to interns.

- ⤴ **In Denmark**, the Employers' Reimbursement System is a system where all employers, both public and private, contribute financially to continually creating practical work-placements (internships, apprenticeships) in companies. The companies that do create these practical placements are then reimbursed by the Employers' Reimbursement System and thus helping to preserve the VET system.
- ⤴ As part of the **Austrian** Youth Strategy, the National Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres developed a quality internships checklist in cooperation with the social partners. It serves as initial information to prepare for, accompany and evaluate internships. It gives an overview of the daily practice, subdivided into preparatory phase, time during the internship, and follow-up phase, learning experience, benefit to one's individual educational and professional career/company, remuneration and legal tips.
- ⤴ JobBridge is the National Internship Scheme **in Ireland** that provides work experience placements for interns for a 6 or 9 month period. The aim of the National Internship Scheme is to assist in breaking the cycle where jobseekers are unable to get a job without experience, either as new entrants to the labour market after education or training or as unemployed workers wishing to learn new skills. The Scheme provides for up to 8,500 work experience placements in the private, public, voluntary & community sectors. As of February 2013, 25,754 people have participated in the JobBridge programme.

## **SECURE Quality Employment for Young People**

### **WORKSHOP 3: QUALITY JOBS**

As well as facing obstacles in their access to employment, young people across the EU confirmed that they face obstacles in their working conditions. Precarious contracts, low salaries, short-term contracts, lack of choice in their careers, young people face a '*trial by fire*' from the moment they enter the world of work. There is an urgent need to take concrete actions to ensure equal treatment of young people in the labour market and to provide adequate solutions that promote quality employment for young people. Notably, such solutions should necessarily include job creation measures and more '*on the job training*' for young employees provided by employers.

#### *Recommendations*

### **Regulating the conditions of the labour market**

- ⤴ Member States should ensure that the legal framework prevents the discrimination of young people in the labour market on the grounds of age and implement legal measures to sanction employers who discriminate against young people.
- ⤴ Member States should legislate or update the equality policy and devise an action plan that should include reviewing the policies for: recruitment, selection and promotion, training, pay, benefits and other conditions, bullying and harassment; and should set up a communication strategy to publicise it among employees.
- ⤴ National legislations should eliminate gender pay gap and recognise and prevent glass ceiling, giving equal opportunities to all workers.
- ⤴ The EU should monitor the implementation of the Employment Directive, with a special emphasis on young people and those who are part of another vulnerable/minority group, such as LGBT young people.
- ⤴ The European Commission should undertake research to define the current landscape regarding access to employment and job retention for young people, with data analysed according to Article 19: grounds of sex, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, and sexual orientation.
- ⤴ The EU Member States should safeguard the freedom of all EU citizens to move freely for work, study and/or setting up a business in any other EU country.
- ⤴ State should prohibit special dispensations for young people and include young people in ordinary law.
- ⤴ For each law benefiting employment in general, the government should implement a specific impact clause for young people.
- ⤴ Include clauses in the collective bargaining agreements ensuring non-discrimination and transparency in recruitment and promotion of young people.
- ⤴ Governments should prohibit and penalise the misuse of self-employment as a "less expensive" method of employment by employers.
- ⤴ Governments should abolish or restrict the fixed-term contracts and encourage open-ended contracts.
- ⤴ Creation of more opportunities of part-time jobs should be encouraged.
- ⤴ State should develop an active policy of reconciliation of family and professional life in the work environment by putting in place flexible work hours, working from home, adequately regulated medical and parental leave, with special emphasis on equal opportunities between women and men.

### **Ensure decent work for all**

- ⤴ Governments should develop a national framework for quality jobs.
- ⤴ Promote the recognition of youth rights at European level, in particular the right to employment.
- ⤴ The EU should establish a Single European Contract.
- ⤴ The EU should introduce a minimum wage across the EU and minimum social rights for workers to guarantee decent living conditions for all EU citizens and to ensure that it is adequately applied.
- ⤴ Governments should ensure the adjustment of wages to the actual cost of living with the aim of a more inclusive labour market.
- ⤴ Reduce the retirement age and provide incentives for early retirement, especially in the public sector, in order to enable the replacement with young employees.

### **Prevent discrimination against young people at work**

- ⤴ Employers should put in place “*equal pay for work of equal value*” policies.
- ⤴ Put in place “*name and shame*” practices for employers that discriminate against young people.
- ⤴ Encourage young people to join a trade union so as to defend their rights as workers.
- ⤴ Encourage and promote awareness raising activities on supporting and offering equal treatment to young people within private and public employers.
- ⤴ Set up a system to monitor the conditions of young people in employment and particularly whether/how they are being discriminated against in the workplace and disseminate the results through media.
- ⤴ Employers should inform new recruits in written about their rights as soon as they start the job.
- ⤴ Inform, raise awareness and train young people in employment law, and more generally concerning their rights in the workplace, so that young people can identify and challenge any exploitation they may be victims of. Schools, youth organisations, trade unions and all spaces for young people all have their role to play in the education of employment rights.
- ⤴ Create programmes to support young people who are discriminated at work, such as through a web portal where they can make a complaint to the authorities.
- ⤴ Identify good practices of combating and preventing of discrimination against young people in the labour market at national and European level and promote such exchange of practices among Member States.
- ⤴ The employers should clearly communicate their organisation’s age discrimination policy by posting it on bulletin boards on the company intranet. The policy should include harassment definitions, remedies, consequences, reporting procedures, grievance processes, and anti-retaliation language.

### **Create more quality jobs for young people**

- ⤴ Governments should set up a national policy for the creation of new jobs.
- ⤴ Member States with the most severe budgetary difficulties and higher rates of youth unemployment should rely on increased financial recourses under existing EU funds, such as the European Social Fund, the Structural Fund and Cohesion Fund in the 2014-2020 Multi-Annual Framework.
- ⤴ State should simplify the administrative procedures for the creation of new jobs.
- ⤴ State should attract and increase domestic and foreign investment in key sectors of the economy, such as IT, engineering, medicine, transport or where there is a large number of graduates.
- ⤴ Government should devise a national action plan aimed at enhancing productivity and stimulating public investments in strategic sectors, where the employment of young people should also be promoted.
- ⤴ State should foster the creation of new sources of employment, notably in the green economy, research and innovation sector, social economy and solidarity fields of work.
- ⤴ State should provide administrative and fiscal incentives to employers, including SMEs, to employ young people, such as tax relief or social security contributions relief in order to make young workers more attractive on the labour market.
- ⤴ State should introduce subsidised jobs for young people, in which the costs of employing the young person are partially covered by the state from public financing. For example, the state should introduce ‘*wage subsidy jobs*’, covering part of employee’s salary for employers that employ young people who have been unemployed for more than a given period of time (e.g. 6 months).
- ⤴ Put in place a national programme that promotes recruiting young people in the public sector.
- ⤴ Continue and improve the funding for Research & Innovation to promote a change in the production model leading to job creation with a positive social and sustainable impact.
- ⤴ Employers should take up their part of the responsibility to create jobs for young people by investing in a long-term vision on the employment of young people.



- ⤴ Increase employment in the non-governmental sector.
- ⤴ Employers should be educated to understand the benefits of employing young people through state initiatives and through sharing good practices among employers.

### **Facilitate access to quality employment**

- ⤴ State should consolidate policies regulating private employment agencies.
- ⤴ Public employment services should develop a tailored approach for reaching out to young people, including by providing training opportunities, developing an information campaign online and offline and by cooperating with youth organisations. An individualised support should be provided to young people in finding employment.
- ⤴ The EU should create or develop European Employment Services (EURES network) in each EU country.
- ⤴ State should support all organisations that provide youth with assistance in finding a work placement.

### **Revision of practices by employers**

- ⤴ Employers should recognise internships as well as volunteer and youth work as professional experience and should recognise the skills and competences acquired through such experiences.
- ⤴ All employers should adopt a fundamental revision of the recruitment procedures and ensure that recruitment should be on the principle of skills and competences fitting the job instead of qualifications previously obtained. This is possible by implementing and promoting the European Skills Passport where employers find evidence of the skills acquired by young people through non-formal education.
- ⤴ Employers should implement the anonymous CV system to ensure a non-biased, fair recruitment.
- ⤴ Employers should facilitate as much as possible the application and recruitment procedures, such as fulfilment of documents, CV preparation, interviews, etc.
- ⤴ Employers should focus promotions and training on skills and potential to avoid any age discrimination.
- ⤴ A regular dialogue between employers and young people (students, jobseekers, employees) should be established to discuss mutual expectations.

#### *Good practices*

- ⤴ From July 2010 to July 2013, **Lithuania** applied social security contributions relief to employers when employing someone on a first-time employment contract, for which the employer's social security contributions were reduced from 31% to 7.7%. This measure was not limited to young persons, but applied to all people with no previous work experience. As of August 2013, social security contributions relief to employers were replaced with 'support for the first job' financed through the EU funds – partial compensation of the salary of the first-time employee: the employer pays all social security contributions for the employee but a fixed part of the salary of the employee is reimbursed.
- ⤴ As part of the *Priorité Jeunesse* plan approved in February 2013, **the French Government** has decided to take action to prevent discrimination against young people in the labour market due to their age or other grounds (gender, background, home, etc.) For this, a *testing policy* concerning access to training, accommodation, internships and leisure pursuits will be implemented during 2014 as part of the experimentation fund for young people. In addition, France will implement the *emplois d'avenir* [jobs for the future], which aims at improving access to jobs for youth with limited or no qualifications, with financial contribution from the state. The government forecasts the creation of 150,000 jobs by the end of 2014.
- ⤴ **Austria** implements a '*basic support*', which is a temporary wage subsidy for companies that give employment to a young person. The young person could be employed either within the scope of a recognised training as an apprentice or as an intern or as a career starter. In Austria, experience has shown that wage subsidies form one of the most effective methods of creating new jobs.

## **ENHANCE Inter-Generational Solidarity**

### **WORKSHOP 4: DIALOGUE AND LEARNING BETWEEN GENERATIONS**

Young people across the EU as well as experts and public authorities believe that strengthening the dialogue and solidarity between generations is important in achieving social cohesion and social justice. Inter-generational learning should be better promoted at work, in the community and in wider society. Through mentoring systems at work, young people can learn from the knowledge, skills and expertise of their more experienced colleagues and become better involved in the labour market. Through volunteering-based projects in the community, young and seniors can interact, dialogue and learn from each other while providing mutual support. The key element of the mutual support between generations is reciprocity.

## *Recommendations*

### **Enhance interaction between generations at work**

- ⤴ Employers should be encouraged to develop mentoring systems so that young employees can receive training, guidance and mentoring from more experienced employees (generational handover). The mentors should be given the resources to put forward quality support for their mentees.
- ⤴ Employers should ensure that all new recruits in their company have a mentor that can convey the experience and the culture of the workplace.
- ⤴ Encourage employers to pair young and more experienced employees together on projects so they can learn from each other.
- ⤴ Encourage the establishment of working communities with a socially diverse composition, including middle-aged people with families, young people new in the labour market and senior workers before retirement.
- ⤴ Set up additional support initiatives and systems for young people who are self-employed to receive mentoring from experienced self-employed people and senior entrepreneurs.

### **Set up programmes to stimulate inter-generational solidarity**

- ⤴ Establish an inter-generational structured dialogue on all relevant societal matters in order to develop a culture of mutual understanding and respect and dialogue between generations.
- ⤴ Promote and support inter-generational programmes, projects and platforms to provide opportunities for young people and seniors to meet and exchange ideas and learn from each other.
- ⤴ Create specific funding lines within the EU funds – such as Lifelong Learning Programme – and within the budget of the national / regional / local government to support inter-generational learning.
- ⤴ Set up inter-generational solidarity programmes based on volunteering between young, adult and senior people, for example involving seniors as employees or volunteers in schools, children's care services or youth centres to help teachers/ educators / youth workers offer more one-on-one care and support.
- ⤴ Educational institutions should promote inter-generational programmes by encouraging volunteering of senior people in schools and offering community service requirements for high-school students.
- ⤴ Introduce (compulsory) mentoring and coaching systems accessible by all young people, including those not in employment, so they can learn from the experiences of senior people.
- ⤴ State should encourage cross-generational housing projects. Such initiatives enable the seniors to feel less isolated while young people to benefit from accommodation free of charge or at a reduced rent fee.
- ⤴ Create public campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of solidarity between generations.
- ⤴ Develop media campaigns that reflect young people's positive actions so as to improve the image of young people in society.
- ⤴ Civil society organisations should be encouraged to take up the role of bridging the intergenerational gap by organising joint events of people of different generations and promoting mutual volunteering among young and senior people in society.
- ⤴ The pension system should be equal and just for all generations.

### **Increased interaction between generations in the community**

- ⤴ Create and promote more informal learning opportunities and other initiatives for interaction between young people and seniors, such expeditions, trips, local markets, traditional crafts, etc.
- ⤴ Create more meeting places for people of all ages such as establishing multifunctional centres as a common space for inter-generational initiatives and activities of local communities.
- ⤴ Avoid segmenting community activities and projects on age-based criteria.
- ⤴ Create a network for the promotion of cooperation and interaction between generations through the sharing of ideas, knowledge and experience.
- ⤴ Create opportunities for more joint activities of young people and seniors by establishing more interest clubs, community of volunteers and/or informal groups in community.
- ⤴ Promote mentoring between seniors and young people also at community level.

## *Good practices*

- ⤴ **In France**, "generation contract" was introduced following the negotiation that took place between the social partner organisations at the end of the Grande Conférence Sociale of July 2012 that aims to promote permanent employment for young employees who are supported by an older mentor who will keep his/her job until retirement.

- ⤴ **In Latvia**, the local government supports various projects for inter-generational learning, such as training courses for seniors created by Lattelecom or through theatre evenings where both seniors and young people meet such as in the municipality of Cēsis.
- ⤴ **In the German-speaking community of Belgium**, there is an initiative of retired business people who help young people with their questions and problems concerning entrepreneurship. The Business Solutions Counsellors (BSC) are active pensioners who worked formerly as managers in the finance, tax or legal sector and who provide consulting to young entrepreneurs sharing their knowledge and experience.

## **CREATE Conditions for Full Inclusion of Young People in Society**

### **WORKSHOP 5: ACTIVE INCLUSION**

According to those consulted, full inclusion of young people in society cannot be achieved without creating the conditions for them to access social rights and to have a decent living. Access to sports and culture were other two areas highlighted as important for the social inclusion of young people.

By far the most widespread agreement among young people across the EU was on the importance of the youth participation in civic and democratic life. In order to have young people participating in all fields of society, they need to be listened to and empowered to participate in the development of policies concerning them as well as be better represented in decision-making structures and processes.

### *Recommendations*

#### **Access to wellbeing**

- ⤴ Guarantee equal access to health-care for all young people.
- ⤴ Include comprehensive health education in schools.
- ⤴ Guarantee free access for all young people to a basic package of health-care and inform young people of the preventative medical examinations that can be carried out free of charge.
- ⤴ Ensure careful monitoring of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including regular check-ups.
- ⤴ Promote an integrated package dedicated to health education and sex education for young people.
- ⤴ Develop a set of measures for family planning awareness dedicated to young women, in particular targeting young women from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.
- ⤴ Develop national programmes and awareness-raising campaigns for young people on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

#### **Access to social rights**

- ⤴ Ensure the compliance with of children's rights.
- ⤴ Safeguard the right to housing for all: services to facilitate access to housing should address more diverse life situations of youth, such as flat sharing or dormitories at the workplace/university. Such services should be made available to enable youth to reach traineeships, apprenticeships or further education.
- ⤴ Provide support for young parents, such as parental leave, and encourage companies to create company crèches to promote a better work-life balance.
- ⤴ Put in place schemes to prevent and reduce as much as possible the inter-generational transmission of poverty.
- ⤴ Establish the right to lifelong education and training to enable fluidity between work and education.
- ⤴ Reduce the legal obstacles for asylum seekers in order to ensure the social inclusion of all young people.

#### **Ensure conditions for living with dignity**

- ⤴ Ensure support programmes for disadvantaged young people at risk of social exclusion, including youth with disabilities, from specific ethnic groups, those with a migrant background, early school leavers etc.
- ⤴ Provide transport assistance to young people, both financial and practical, such as by developing the public transport network, and more practically, through assistance with obtaining driving licence, free / discounted use of public transport, etc.
- ⤴ Youth services, social services and formal education institutions should work together with young people and their families to prevent social exclusion of young people.
- ⤴ Provide training and guidance to parents in how to support the development of their children.
- ⤴ Promote a cross-sectorial responsibility across all institutions whose policies have a direct or indirect impact on young people, including education policy (school, university, vocational training), labour market, social, health, justice, interior, regional and urban policies.
- ⤴ When planning and developing the living environment, hence during the city planning, the creation of socio-

economic differences between different areas of the city should be avoided.

#### **Access to sports**

- ⤴ Ensure free access to all young people to practice sports by providing more sport facilities and attracting young people to sports through specific campaigns.
- ⤴ Ensure access of young people with disabilities to sports by providing appropriate conditions of access, including youth centers adequately equipped.
- ⤴ Expand a network of sports centers, clubs and leisure facilities, administered either by public or private entities, to engage youth in more diverse leisure activities.

#### **Access to culture**

- ⤴ Invest in facilities / centres for young people to spend their leisure time (sports, arts, educational activities).
- ⤴ Ensure young people's access to cultural activities by offering discounts to young people.
- ⤴ Stimulate young people's interest in harnessing local cultural traditions, including training in traditional crafts.
- ⤴ Put in place special measures to facilitate access to culture for youth in rural areas: caravans and films, village libraries, local NGOs developing cultural projects, etc.
- ⤴ Encourage inter-cultural education through cross-border youth-exchanges and training courses.
- ⤴ Promote youth participation in the EU mobility programmes by facilitating European and international mobility of young people.

#### **Access to information and support services**

- ⤴ Provide personalised services to young people for a specific, individualised plan of aid, support and socio-economic monitoring. Personalised services should be provided by a contact adviser who can liaise with other professionals: social workers, psychologists, social and family counsellors.
- ⤴ Reassess the support services so that young people are more effectively informed and advised concerning their rights, access to education, training, careers, accommodation, healthcare, culture, leisure pursuits and community involvement.
- ⤴ Improve the information and advice services provided online and extend the opening hours of the support centres to include young people's free time.
- ⤴ Carry out information campaigns at places where young people are, such as festivals, concerts and other youth-friendly settings.
- ⤴ Carry out specific information and awareness campaigns targeting disadvantaged groups of young people, aiming at combating prejudice, discrimination and exclusion.

#### **Promote volunteering and youth participation in society**

- ⤴ Strengthen the general framework concerning youth organisations and associations and provide them with support given their important role in the social inclusion of young people and in helping them acquire skills for participation in democratic life and in the labour market, among others.
- ⤴ Promote the establishment of local youth councils in all municipalities, which should be recognised and involved as partners in decision-making bodies.
- ⤴ Strengthen political representation of young people at all levels, including in political parties, in the parliaments, in the government, in trade unions, etc.
- ⤴ Create more opportunities for young people to participate in policy- and decision making in the areas that concern them directly while expanding and strengthening the existing practices and structures of youth participation.
- ⤴ Support the creation and participation of ethnic (cultural, religious, linguistic) minority youth NGOs and ad-hoc advocacy groups as well as organisations for young people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, which should be consulted by the municipalities and involved in the assessment of policies impacting on their communities.
- ⤴ Include representatives of ethnic minority or migrant backgrounds in political parties and political campaigns and develop political issues and agendas that reflect their interests.
- ⤴ Promote volunteering and civic participation in the community, for example by creating competitions and awards for young volunteers to recognise their contribution to the community and to wider society.

## **BOOST Entrepreneurship of Young People**

### **WORKSHOP 6: YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Young Europeans consider that entrepreneurship does not only translate in business creation, but is much broader and includes an entrepreneurial mindset of realising an idea, taking initiative and the capacity of developing a project. This entrepreneurial mindset is acknowledged as indispensable not only for those wishing to start up and run their own business but also for those seeking employment or a professional career, and should thus be promoted at all stages of education within a framework of lifelong learning. Youth-led initiatives play a key role in providing young people with entrepreneurial skills and competences.

Facing the increasing pressure to create a business, a vast majority of the young people consulted stressed that entrepreneurship should not be the solution to cover up the endemic youth unemployment. Although many young people are ambitious and have an entrepreneurial mindset, the number of businesses set up by young people remains low as *"many don't dare to start a company because they are afraid of going bankrupt"*.

#### *Recommendations*

### **Develop young people's entrepreneurial skills**

- ⤴ Provide entrepreneurship education from an early age to all students, in all types and at all levels of education through a *mainstreamed* approach across curricula within the framework of lifelong learning, with the objective that all young people develop an entrepreneurial mindset, which involves the knowledge, skills and attitudes to generate and implement creative ideas, to be self-confident, autonomous and proactive, to plan and execute projects.
- ⤴ Entrepreneurship education should also involve more specific training on business creation and project development and management (project-writing, fundraising, taxation system, national and EU legislation on setting-up of enterprises) through introducing a specific subject in the curricula dedicated to entrepreneurship, so that students who wish to become entrepreneurs can gain all necessary skills.
- ⤴ Create university laboratories specialised in the creation of start-ups.
- ⤴ Introduce business simulations programmes and mini-enterprises competitions in schools and universities.
- ⤴ Encourage young people to create real projects, preferably international projects in partnership with other universities/schools or youth organisations. Create conditions and incentives for implementing such extracurricular projects.
- ⤴ Identify the most innovative educational practices centred on the acquisition of key skills related to entrepreneurship within or outside the school curriculum and encourage education providers to apply these practices in order to boost students' creativity and innovative thinking.
- ⤴ Schools/universities should promote meetings between students and entrepreneurs.
- ⤴ Promote cooperation of schools with local entrepreneurs and start-ups by inviting them to classes to share their experience to young people.
- ⤴ Local banks/financial institutions should organise in cooperation with schools/universities courses and summer camps where young people could gain the necessary financial competences.

### **Role of youth organisations in developing young people's entrepreneurial skills**

- ⤴ Entrepreneurial education should not be limited to schools and universities, but should be made accessible to all young people through free entrepreneurship courses or training programmes to develop young people's entrepreneurial skills outside of the formal education system, for example in youth centres, youth organisations and projects within Youth in Action.
- ⤴ Youth organisations should be recognised as providers of entrepreneurial skills through non-formal education. The entrepreneurial skills and mindset that young people gain through engagement in youth-led initiatives and activities of youth organisations should be widely recognised.
- ⤴ Raise awareness among students of existing youth organisations where they can develop their entrepreneurial skills by implementing concrete projects.
- ⤴ Improve financial support to youth projects and youth initiatives given their important contribution to developing young people's entrepreneurial skills.
- ⤴ Provide training to youth workers on how to work with young people on entrepreneurial and project development skills and competences.

### **Reduce administrative burdens for business creation**

- ⤴ EU Member States should review the administrative burdens for business creation in cooperation with the

business sector in order to identify existing burdens and possible solutions to ease these burdens.

- ⤴ Simplify and reduce the administrative procedures for setting up an enterprise by putting in place clear, simple and unambiguous regulations.
- ⤴ Speed up the process of registration and obtaining permits.
- ⤴ Improve the assistance for creating a business by making information accessible and easily available for young people, for example by creating a youth-friendly info pack and setting up a website where all necessary legal and financial information about setting up an enterprise can be found in a user-friendly language as well as online support services and e-consulting.
- ⤴ Government together with municipalities should create information networks in all country to provide information, training and support to young entrepreneurs.
- ⤴ Ensure free counseling and legal advice to young entrepreneurs.
- ⤴ Set up 'one-stop shop' agency where young people can receive all information and assistance in preparing the documentation needed to set up a business.

### **Improve access to finance for setting up a business**

- ⤴ Develop a public investment fund for micro-credit to start-ups of young people.
- ⤴ Develop an investment guarantee system supporting young entrepreneurs.
- ⤴ State and banks should collaborate to facilitate and ensure more flexibility in access to credit/micro-credit for the creation of new businesses by young entrepreneurs, such as low or interest-free loans. Equal access to credit / microcredit should be secured, including for young people with fewer opportunities.
- ⤴ Ensure more flexible and easier access to EU funding and governmental financial support to young entrepreneurs. Extra financial support should be provided to young people who start up a social enterprise.
- ⤴ Municipalities should provide direct financial support to as many of young people's projects that present potential of a sustainable business. For example, municipalities should fund the best business ideas through calls and competitions to give the chance to young entrepreneurs to acquire initial capital.
- ⤴ Develop and promote the process of crowd-sourcing and crowd-funding for accumulation of initial capital.
- ⤴ Increase access of young people to all information about micro-grants for start-ups by establishing a database of available grants or funding donors for start-ups.
- ⤴ Develop a training programme for accessing funding / micro-credit for young entrepreneurs who want to set up a business.
- ⤴ Create an online network of business angels who can provide funding to young entrepreneurs who need capital to set up their business.
- ⤴ Stimulate public-private partnerships (PPPs) such as financing of youth projects or enterprises by municipalities, schools and businesses.

### **Improve security and stability for young entrepreneurs**

- ⤴ Reassess the self-employment system to make it a real introduction to creating a business, in particular allowing for a margin of error for people creating their business, and reduce taxation levels for self-employed young people.
- ⤴ Ensure tax reliefs or other fiscal incentives to young people setting up a business, such as lower VAT, lower taxes for employing staff, etc.
- ⤴ Ensure social security and protection or insurances for young entrepreneurs.
- ⤴ Establish co-working centres where self-employed people can rent offices at a reduced fee or on hour basis for their work and meetings and which can also serve as a meeting place for young people interested in developing an entrepreneurial project with peer support and collaboration in start-ups.
- ⤴ Implement sponsorship systems for young entrepreneurs so that they benefit from the experience and expertise of entrepreneurs who are already established.
- ⤴ Invest in entrepreneurship infrastructure by creating easily accessible start-up hubs, spin off and business incubators and accelerators to serve as meeting places for collaboration and to offer needed support to project initiators from the creation of the business until up to three years hence providing a guarantee during the setting up phase.
- ⤴ Put in place a comprehensive support system for training, supporting, advising and mentoring young entrepreneurs, including a network of counsellors and mentors in order to reduce the vulnerability of enterprises in the first years from start up.
- ⤴ Promote existing support / guidance mechanisms for entrepreneurs among young people.
- ⤴ Ensure personalised support for young entrepreneurs by the authority that finances the project.
- ⤴ Set up programmes for stimulation of micro-enterprises of young entrepreneurs.

- ⤴ Develop coaching and mentoring programmes with local successful entrepreneurs who can provide ongoing support and guidance to young entrepreneurs from the start-up to the running of the newly established business and can serve as entrepreneurial role models.
- ⤴ Encourage the establishment of partnerships between enterprises to avoid excessive fragmentation of small companies.

### **Encourage youth entrepreneurship**

- ⤴ State should develop policies to promote youth entrepreneurship through cross-sectorial cooperation between national, regional and local authorities, youth organisations and social partners. Local strategies should be jointly developed by local authorities and local youth councils with youth from the local area.
- ⤴ Promote an exchange of good practices among EU Member States concerning policies for business creation.
- ⤴ Support and promote junior enterprises.
- ⤴ Develop and encourage awareness-raising campaigns that promote entrepreneurship of young people, including national information campaigns to popularise the EU Programme of Erasmus for young entrepreneurs.
- ⤴ Increase financial support to organisations that promote entrepreneurship among young people.
- ⤴ Ensure financial support for creating web platforms that promote entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education opportunities for young people.
- ⤴ Set up a support system for youth-led initiatives, both collective and individual initiatives, such as regional plans or local committees for assistance with projects, including provision of practical support in developing a business plan or in application for grants or funding for projects.
- ⤴ State should support and subsidise youth creativity and innovation in creative industries, such as advertising, visual arts, performing arts, research and development, software, etc.
- ⤴ Promote, support and reward performance of young talents and scientific and technical innovation among young people.
- ⤴ Improve information about existing support mechanisms to support projects of young people.

#### *Good practices*

- ⤴ **In France**, the *Pass'entrepreneur numérique* (digital entrepreneur pass) is a website that hosts regional support networks that provide assistance to young entrepreneurs before, during and after the creation of the business plan. Moreover, a pilot project for entrepreneurs of the future will be held from 2014 onwards to assist business creation projects, specifically based on the Youth Guarantee.
- ⤴ **In Lithuania**, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Ministry of Finance implement the project "Entrepreneurship promotion fund" to promote business development and entrepreneurship training, with the goal of creating conditions for young people to start micro and small enterprises. This measure includes granting credit and partial financing of loan interest as well as training and consulting and assistance in preparing and implementing business plans for business start-ups.
- ⤴ **In the Czech Republic**, the South Moravian Innovation Centre (JIC) is an agency that creates a favourable environment for innovative business by supporting collaboration between industry, R&D institutions and public administration bodies to help early-stage businesses to grow, create jobs and compete on the market. Moreover, StarCube Brno is a good example of startup accelerator, offering practical workshops, mentoring, opportunities of collaborating in international teams and specific support for hardware startups.
- ⤴ The Investment and Development Agency of **Latvia** holds a yearly competition "Bowl of Ideas", in which innovative business ideas are rewarded with funding and mentoring in developing a business plan.
- ⤴ **In the German-speaking community of Belgium**, the council for urban marketing of the city of Eupen organises the "Open your store in Eupen city" where young people can present their business plans. The most innovative and developed ideas are chosen to be implemented, offering young entrepreneurs different advantages during the first year: rent fee reduction, free consulting on marketing and finances.
- ⤴ **The Danish government** created in 2010 a strategy for the inclusion of entrepreneurship in primary and secondary education as well as tertiary education to help young people develop an entrepreneurial mindset and set of skills. The strategy is based on 3 initiatives: a) build earlier initiatives in formal education system, b) create the Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship that helps young entrepreneurs with support and guidance, c) create a cross-ministerial partnership to develop entrepreneurship in several different sectors.
- ⤴ According to **OBESSU**, in *Romania* and *Finland*, entrepreneurship education has been introduced in school curricula, which has been supported by representatives of school students in the countries.

- ⤴ **In Austria**, the *Gründerservice* is organised as a 'one stop shop', i.e. one central point of contact for business founders that offers the registration online of a trade or business and comprehensive information.
- ⤴ **In the Netherlands**, starting entrepreneurs receive a subvention for the first year of their business, in order to ensure a financially secured start-up period. The system is regulated by the municipalities.
- ⤴ **In Slovakia**, Junior Achievement is a programme that helps to provide young people business, economic and financial education through practical trainings, hence offering the students the opportunity to run their first real business in a student company. The organisations cooperates with elementary, secondary schools and universities and so far, more than 838 schools and 21,505 students took part in the programme.
- ⤴ **In Sweden**, 'Youth business' is a programme for secondary-school students, who can get the help and support they need to get their own company going. There is no risk of losing any type of capital, as they are not allowed to invest their own money into the company. The students get help from teachers, entrepreneurs and mentors in the entire process, this includes financial aid, marketing help and guidance.
- ⤴ **In Estonia**, the NGO Ärikatel ("Business kettle" in English) is a youth-led organisation that aims to encourage youth who wish to start up a business to invest and educate themselves. Ärikatel makes expensive trainings from professionals available for very discounted price for youth and organise seminars and workshops. Over 3 years, 4000 young people have participated in the programme.
- ⤴ The **Government of Croatia** adopted a strategic policy "Learning Entrepreneurship 2010-2014" which builds upon the synergy between stakeholders in education, economy, labour market and civil society. In 2014-2015 civic education will be introduced into primary and secondary schools and one of the modules will be devoted to entrepreneurship.
- ⤴ The Young Enterprise Programme is **the UK** largest business and enterprise charity that helps a wide range of young people learn about business creation in the classroom. The programme, very easily accessible to students, aims to inspire and equip youth to learn and succeed through enterprise via "learning by doing".
- ⤴ **In Ireland**, a Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) programme has developed a specific Business Volunteer Programme (BVP). This endeavours to link each entrepreneurial project with a business mentor. The mentors can be employees from large corporations or SMEs as well as individual entrepreneurs or local businesses. This business mentoring role is seen as a significant advantage in supporting and inspiring young people through their entrepreneurial endeavours.
- ⤴ **In Luxembourg**, a group of young volunteers created an association – *Etcetera.asbl* – that designed a website to present various professions, to inform about micro-finance opportunities and provide tailored counseling on projects.

## **ENCOURAGE Entrepreneurship with a Positive Social Impact**

### **WORKSHOP 7: SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Young Europeans believe that entrepreneurship can have a positive social impact through creating synergies among projects and finding alternative, innovative solutions to social problems, hence creating added value for the economy as well as for the inclusion of young people in society.

While traditional businesses are concerned mainly with financial gains, social enterprises are also concerned with environmental and social impact. Therefore, it is widely acknowledged that businesses set up by young people in the green economy, social and solidarity sector, research and innovation and development, should be better promoted to raise awareness of the social and socially responsible entrepreneurship.

#### **Youth entrepreneurship can have a positive impact on social inclusion of young people to:**

- ⤴ Create more employment opportunities for young people.
- ⤴ Higher level of entrepreneurship leads to more flexible and diverse labour market, which is more open to young people and their skills and competences.
- ⤴ Ensure autonomy of young people, both the young entrepreneurs and the young employees they employ.
- ⤴ Enhance professional and personal development and growth.
- ⤴ Develop key transversal and practical skills and competences that boost employability.
- ⤴ Offer recognition of the value and importance of the skills acquired through non-formal education.
- ⤴ Stimulate creativity of young people and inspire innovation, which involves the development of innovative solutions to problems faced by youth and other people.
- ⤴ Nurture ability to adapt quickly to new technologies.
- ⤴ Promote involvement of young people in social activities through the participation in the given projects.



- ⤴ Promote opportunities for meeting, sharing and building projects together.
- ⤴ Strengthen networks, cooperation and exchange of experience through peer learning and peer support.
- ⤴ Produce social capital.
- ⤴ Support environmental sustainability.
- ⤴ Promote active participation and inclusion of young people in society.
- ⤴ Provide an example that young people can achieve their potential and thus can serve as role models and stimulate other young people to take up a proactive role in creating a positive change through their ideas.
- ⤴ Increase feeling of worthiness, personal satisfaction and social acceptance.
- ⤴ Increase social consciousness of young people.
- ⤴ Contribute to community development.
- ⤴ Increase social cohesion by promoting the cooperation among different social sectors and actors to develop and maintain a given business activity.

### *Recommendations*

#### **Structure and support to young people with fewer opportunities or in remote areas**

- ⤴ Set up incentive-based plans for disadvantaged youth and young people who live in remote areas to motivate them to set up an enterprise.
- ⤴ Extend any investment guarantee system supporting young entrepreneurs to young people with fewer opportunities and those living in remote areas.
- ⤴ Ensure additional financial support to young entrepreneurs who establish new businesses in remote or rural areas.
- ⤴ Support the creation or maintenance of certain sectorial industry in remote regions, having an energising and development effect in a region.
- ⤴ Facilitate the proximity of employment and services to the inhabitants of a group of villages through sharing resources, infrastructures, public administrations, etc.
- ⤴ Improve infrastructure in the area, in particular by ensuring a good public transport network, which is a basic condition for starting a business.
- ⤴ Provide incentives and simplify procedures to set up a business in remote areas.
- ⤴ Create partnerships between public employment services, support services and micro-finance providers in training, support and assistance programmes to help young people with fewer opportunities and those living in remote areas to start up a new business.
- ⤴ Develop business training programmes for young people with fewer opportunities and those living in remote areas, in particular training for young farmers to motivate them to set up their own farm or develop social farming. Such programmes should include training in devising and implementing European projects in the region through European funds for agriculture, fisheries, forestry, European Social Fund, etc.
- ⤴ Ensure free-of-charge internet access for young people with fewer opportunities, especially those living in remote areas.
- ⤴ Improve access of young people with fewer opportunities to youth information centres and to youth clubs.

#### **Specific actions to promote entrepreneurship with a positive social impact**

- ⤴ Create a national programme to promote and support social enterprises set up by young people.
- ⤴ Government should prioritise the creation of green jobs and co-operatives and thus should subsidise the employment of young people in these sectors.
- ⤴ Adapt the legislation in order to help young entrepreneurs set up an enterprise that brings positive social impact.
- ⤴ Increase European funding for new businesses based on their innovation and social impact.
- ⤴ The EU should create a grant scheme for green youth entrepreneurship.
- ⤴ Ensure special fiscal incentives for businesses with zero environmental impact, those offering new “green” jobs as well as for enterprises with a positive social impact.
- ⤴ Ensure financial and administrative support to enterprises of young people in the sphere of culture, education and ecology, in particular enterprises that deal with the recovery of recycled material for the creation of new products.
- ⤴ Ensure special fiscal incentives to enterprises that achieve standards of sustainability, such as by implementing energy-saving measures, recruiting local people, working with local contractors, etc.
- ⤴ Develop grant schemes for small and medium social enterprises and social economy projects targeted at disadvantaged young people.
- ⤴ Stimulate projects aimed at eco-tourism and organic farming.

- ⤴ Develop an educational toolkit on social entrepreneurship and community involvement intended for teachers of secondary school students.
- ⤴ Youth organisations should develop a support process tool for the creation of solidarity projects for better involving young people in the community.
- ⤴ Develop the concept of social impact of youth entrepreneurship.
- ⤴ Support and promote crowd funding and other innovative ways to seek credit for social projects.
- ⤴ Promote the values of sustainable entrepreneurship by encouraging youth entrepreneurs to measure the performance of their enterprises in terms of their environmental and social impact. Provide free consulting to enterprises to improve their economic and environmental performance.
- ⤴ Promote the cooperation between enterprises through the establishment of working groups on national level to promote such collaborative processes.
- ⤴ *Divergent views*: while most proposals call for promoting co-operatives as a way to share resources and expertise and collectively set up a business, *some reports* pointed out that co-operatives do not always promote youth entrepreneurship due to the difficulties and judicial complications.
- ⤴ Encourage and reward joint initiatives between different youth organisations, such as the set up of youth villages.
- ⤴ Promote the use of abandoned public goods or confiscated buildings for the creation of new businesses.

### **Promote good practices and peer-learning**

- ⤴ Promote social and socially responsible entrepreneurship.
- ⤴ Encourage better showcasing of the achievements of young people as entrepreneurs through sharing success stories via media and social media.
- ⤴ Set up a 'Social Impact Award for Young Entrepreneurs' to reward successful social enterprises of young people in order to recognise their achievements and raise public awareness of the value of these enterprises to wider community and to society.
- ⤴ Create a network of local projects and enterprises set up by young people.
- ⤴ Create national and international web platforms for peer-learning among young entrepreneurs to exchange information, experience and know-how, such as an online platform for developing partnerships in the programme of Erasmus for young entrepreneurs.

#### *Good practices*

- ⤴ **In France**, a webzine dedicated to raising young people's awareness of the Social and Solidarity Economy was created in June 2013. This webzine presents events, news, portraits and experiences, plans, structures and initiatives linked to the Social and Solidarity Economy and aims to encourage young people to set up / participate in such initiatives.
- ⤴ **In Lithuania**, in some rural areas, young entrepreneurs gathered together communities of villages involving young and senior citizens and established small agricultural enterprises.
- ⤴ **In Italy**, Ecopunto (Enna) is an example of social enterprise. Ecopunto is a pick-up point for waste sorting created in collaboration with the municipality of the city but managed by a cooperative of young people that volunteer in the community. Another innovative enterprise is NCO Restaurant (San Cipriano D'Aversa – CE), which researches and develops ways of both processing and sales of local products including those from land confiscated from organised crime, as well as service pizzeria, restaurant and catering services, with the added value of employing disadvantaged young people.
- ⤴ **In Latvia**, several local governments have established project competitions for young entrepreneurs to reward the best business ideas. A good example is Cēsis, where the competition rewards business ideas that promote the cultural richness of the region. In addition, the Soros Foundation Latvia organises yearly forums for young social entrepreneurs, in which examples of good practice are shared.
- ⤴ **In Greece**, a good example of business set up by young entrepreneurs is the newly established sector of snail farming. After initial research in the country, it was revealed that in specific areas of Greece there is huge potential for snail farming as well as a grand demand for it in Europe. In addition, through the “spill-over” process, the success of snail farming sector resulted in the creation of new businesses, affecting other sectors of the economy. As a result, young people set up companies that export snails in Europe.
- ⤴ **In the French-speaking community of Belgium**, “Jobyourself” is an NGO that supports the activities of two cooperatives in Brussels: “Bruxelles Emergences” and DEBUuT SPRL. Their mission is to guide everyone, notably unemployed people, to start their own project or create their own jobs in a secure environment in which they learn how an enterprise starts and works.
- ⤴ **In Denmark**, a good practice is Denmark’s Design to Improve Life Challenge, which is a project where

young people from primary and secondary education from the entire country participate with innovative projects and ideas that bring solutions to Denmark's climate-change challenges. This project, created in cooperation with four ministries, resulted in numerous projects including the award-winning Drainage Tile that is designed to help Copenhagen cope with increasing amounts of downpour.

- ⤴ **In Austria**, OTELO (Open Technology Laboratory) is a good example of giving people an open space for creative and technical activities. OTELO is a model that realises this idea in non-urban areas with the help of free basic infrastructure, low-threshold communal space and small labs – so-called nodes.
- ⤴ **In the Netherlands**, the Dutch National Youth Council carries out the project '*I am great*' which encourages young people to develop local projects of their own to contribute to the community. Young people (up to 24 years old) whose projects are accepted, receive grants to implement their project as well as the support and materials needed. Through this project, almost a hundred young people organised activities in 2013, like a visit to a museum with a group of disadvantaged youth, activities in a retirement home etc.
- ⤴ **In Estonia**, ENTRUM programme, which is funded by the country's electricity company, is a start-up incubator. Every year more than 500 young people from rural areas are given trainings and mentoring from the best professionals during the course of several months.
- ⤴ **Croatia** has a long tradition of students' cooperatives: the National Association of Students' Cooperatives has more than 360 members and some cooperatives are more than 50 years old. Students' cooperatives work in primary and secondary schools and most of them focus on traditional crafts, agricultural production and manufacturing of decorative objects.
- ⤴ **In Ireland**, *Young Social Innovators* (YSI) encourages, motivates and creates new opportunities for young people to actively participate in programmes such as the 'Social Action Programme', 'Communities of Social Innovators Programme', Explore Social Innovators Programme and the Social Innovation Fund. So far, over 65,000 young people (57% of secondary school students) took part.
- ⤴ **In Luxembourg**, *4Motion* is an educational non-profit organisation with the mission of triggering social change based on the values of cooperation, solidarity and inclusion. 4Motion develops educational tools, advocacy and training designed to challenge stereotypes and prejudices, fight against exclusion and discrimination and to promote civic engagement, and assists young people with their social projects.