

## Youth Partnership

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Partnership between the European Commission  
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



**Chairmanship of the Czech Republic**  
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## Symposium

# 'Youth Policy Responses to the Contemporary Challenges Faced by Young People'

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### **Pillar 3: ACTIVITY and Occupation** **Theme 5: Learning and training** **Teasers**

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## What are we talking about?

This theme looks into aspects such as the role of formal and non-formal education as means for **supporting young people's personal and professional development**. It also covers the theme of training for specific purposes, such as young people's **preparation for the labour market**.

The practices that could be analysed here are a mentoring programme for people with disabilities, in order to develop their competence for the job market, and a programme from Finland on reforming schools so that they promote physical activity.

## Entrepreneurial Learning

There is a high policy consensus that Europe needs more **entrepreneurs, more innovation and more high-growth SMEs**. As nearly 99% of all European businesses have fewer than 250 employees, there is high consensus that SME are the 'true back-bone' of economy. They employ two thirds of the total private employment, generate about 58% of the EU's turnover and have the highest increase in job creation ([Eurostat, 2015](#)). Youth policies promote the idea that education (from primary school to university and beyond) needs to stimulate the entrepreneurial mindsets of young people. A major trend has been for many youth organizations to start providing trainings in entrepreneurship for young

**What are the competences needed by those providing such training?**

**What are the implications of this trend for the notion of youth work?**

**How is youth work transforming itself?**

**What are the advantages and the tradeoffs for youth organizations to engage in the provision of entrepreneurial training?**

people.

## Vocational Education and Training

Europe has a large diversity of national systems **of vocational education and training (VET)**: from initial education, to adult education; from short-term trainings to tertiary education. A large part of VET includes school-based secondary education involving young people of 15-17 years old (grade 9-11) with the aim of providing work-related training. The [Copenhagen Declaration](#) (2002) on enhanced European cooperation in VET, affirmed the commitment towards (i) improving the quality of training, (ii) improving the quality of teachers, trainers and other professionals in the sector and for (iii) making courses more relevant to the labour market. This commitment was later reinforced in the [Bruges Communiqué](#) (2010) and the [Riga Conclusions \(2015\)](#).

Yet, in many European countries, the following limitations apply to school-based secondary VET:

- VET schools cannot keep the pace with the **fast technological progress**. Equipment and curricula is rapidly becoming outdated (and expensive);
- When providing training themselves, employers tend to focus on very specific skills that may not ensure **transferability** in other workplaces;
- In many countries VET has a **poor reputation**;
- The **changing economic climate** makes employers less able to contribute at training provision;
- Young people are asked to make decisions about the future job, at a **very early age**;
- The strong focus on manual work and technology is often at the expense of learning about **society, culture and civic life**.

There is a move towards reforming VET across Europe. In many states, the number of young people in VET is expected to increase in the next years.

**Who is, in your view, the VET system, for?**

**Can states ensure young people are not enrolled in VET out of lack of options?**

**Are you aware of any positive examples of practice?**

**How would you comment the idea that 'innovation takes place at higher level than the one young people in VET are at; their main role would be to execute correctly the routine operations'?**

## Right to Education

The Europe 2020 strategy confirms a 2003 target of Member States to reduce **early leavers from education and training** to less than 10 % of all 18-24 year old. However, in 2011, around one person with disabilities<sup>1</sup> in four was an early school leaver, compared with 12.4 % of those without a disability ([Eurostat](#)).

The European Union's ET2020 Working Group on Schools Policy (2014-15) on its priority theme 'early school leaving' argued that a 'whole school approach' to early school leaving is needed. It created an online '[European Toolkit for Schools for inclusive education and early school leaving prevention](#)' which offers concrete ideas for improving practice. Whilst an important part of the current practice goes, inevitably, towards supporting young people with disabilities and informing teachers, a major barrier is still the prejudice the non-disabled young people and parents, hold. These are especially potent when the school environment is permeated by an ethos of performance and competition.

**Intersectional discrimination** refers to the multiple systems of domination in regard to overlapping social identities: for instance, a minority girl with disabilities living in remote rural area. The concept was theorized during the 90s by the North American Black activist Kimberlé Crenshaw and in Europe discussed with reference to women from ethnic minorities, especially Roma ([Bello, 2008](#); [Kocze with](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Disability is defined as 'a basic activity difficulty (such as sight, hearing, walking, communicating)'.

[Popa, 2009](#)). Crenshaw generated the now well-known 'Traffic Intersection Metaphor' (1995, 2003) in order to reflect the how gender, race, class and other categories intersect and generate oppression. Marginalized women are situated at the crossroads, where several categories (traffic lines) intersect.

Unfortunately, many training and mentoring programmes targeted at young people with fewer opportunities actually reach the 'more advantaged from the disadvantaged' (e.g. Roma university students; otherwise advantaged young people from rural areas, unemployed graduates etc). In the same time, the highly disadvantaged young people that need such programmes the most are left without support (e.g. young people with disabilities from rural areas, girls with disabilities leaving care, homeless young women etc).

**Are you aware of any concrete examples of practice that work toward influencing prejudicial views on disability among the non-disabled young people and their parents? How do they work?**

**To what extent would you see a risk for youth work, as well, to reinforce pre-existent social divides, by engaging the most resilient young people?**

(or 'Empowering the powerful' according to [Coussee et al, 2009](#))

**How can youth work reach 'the hard to reach' young people in a meaningful way? Are you aware of good examples of practice in non-formal education/ youth work that were successful in reaching the 'hard to reach' young people?**