



## Teachers need better tools and methods to help fight youth unemployment

In too many European countries, youth unemployment rates have skyrocketed. 85 million young people were unemployed in the EU-28 in 2015. In July 2016, 17.5% of Belgian youth between 20 and 24 years of age are unemployed and not enrolled in school, according to figures published by the European statistics agency Eurostat. This is also the average in Europe. In Italy, it rose to 31.1% and 26.1% in Greece. The welfare of communities not only depends on employability, but also on social inclusion. In a society where employment is a prerequisite to social life and recognition, young people are on the front line when crisis hits the labour market.

Fighting youth unemployment has become an urgent priority for Europe, both at national and regional level. Reforming the education system and improving the link between education and the labour market is more pressing than ever. School systems are struggling to adapt to the pace of change in terms of skills and competences required to get a job or start a business. Our schools must now play a stronger role in preparing students to become active citizens and embrace professional challenges.

The European ambition that “every young person should have a practical entrepreneurial experience before leaving compulsory education” (Tibor Navracsics, 2015) is still far from reality in most countries. While entrepreneurship is recognised as a transversal skill, and the European Commission has emphasised the need to embed entrepreneurial skills and competences in all sectors and levels of education, entrepreneurial mind-sets and skills still need to be effectively built through hands-on, real-life experiences and project work activities. To that end, high quality content and tools focused on entrepreneurial competences should be offered to teachers and introduced in schools across every subject (e.g. short brainstorming method for generating ideas, full day activity like innovation camps or full year course guide for mini-companies).

The role of the teacher is evolving towards a more entrepreneurial approach, embracing cooperation with people outside the classroom, including entrepreneurs. Broadening schools’ horizons requires teachers to feel comfortable in such partnerships and intermediary roles. They also need to understand the benefits and be prepared to work this way. Most teachers are new to entrepreneurship education, and as in any jobs, they need good tools and methods to achieve quality education and to measure the progresses. These tools should be practical and a part of a progression model that primary, secondary and vocational schools can incorporate in their educational programmes. The [Virtual Guide to Entrepreneurial Learning](#) with its collection of tools and methods from many European countries is a good example of a quality support instrument for teachers.

Research has shown that investing in entrepreneurship education at school requires a different way of teaching. It notably suggests that teachers do not necessarily provide students with the answers, but help them to research and identify the right questions and find the best answers. Entrepreneurship education can easily fit any subject or age level, from the discovery of the circulation of money within a community to the development of a complex business plan. Promoting and facilitating access to high quality and well-tested tools and methods will certainly ease teachers’ effort to consider entrepreneurship education, ultimately increasing its impact and uptake.

Thousands of effective tools and methods for entrepreneurial learning are already used in European schools every day. The [Innovation Cluster for Entrepreneurship Education project](#) aims to systematise what has been developed so far, and promote it in one platform for entrepreneurial teachers in search of good ideas and examples.

Learn more: [www.icee-eu.eu](http://www.icee-eu.eu) - <http://innovation-clusters.icee-eu.eu/>