

Breakfast Sessions Final Report



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Executive Summary

Purpose of the Final Report

This Breakfast Sessions Final Report is part of **Work Package No. 2 – YouLead Compass Tuning** – of the YouLead project, which aims to improve entrepreneurial skills through innovative digital tools, integrate these tools into youth worker training, and promote active citizenship and entrepreneurship among young people.

This document provides a comprehensive analysis of the data collected (interviews and discussions) during the YouLead Breakfast sessions held in each partner country of the project.

This report has been developed to consolidate, analyse, and present the findings emerging from a series of breakfast sessions focused on youth entrepreneurship across partner countries. It aims to provide a comparative overview of key challenges, opportunities, and best practices identified during these sessions. By summarizing participant feedback, highlighting transferable approaches, and outlining actionable recommendations, the report supports a shared understanding of how to more effectively engage young people in entrepreneurial activities.

The document is intended for stakeholders involved in youth entrepreneurship programming—such as policymakers, educators, trainers, and youth organizations—seeking to enhance their strategies and interventions. The report also contributes to the broader objectives of the project by offering evidence-based insights that can inform future actions and collaborative initiatives at national and European levels.

Brief Overview of the breakfast sessions

As part of the YouLead project, a series of Breakfast Sessions were organized across six partner locations—Austria, France (Toulon and Corsica), Greece, Ireland, and hosted jointly with local stakeholders—to engage young entrepreneurs, youth workers, experts, and key ecosystem actors in open, informal dialogues. These sessions, held in inclusive and welcoming settings over breakfast, aimed to identify common challenges faced by aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs, explore practical solutions, and promote innovative learning methods to support youth entrepreneurship. Each session brought together a diverse mix of participants, from disadvantaged youth and emerging entrepreneurs to experienced founders and institutional stakeholders. Through a blend

of personal storytelling, group discussions, interactive tools, and structured activities, participants shared insights on barriers such as access to funding, self-confidence, bureaucracy, and skill development. The sessions also served as valuable networking opportunities and laid the groundwork for future collaborations, while informing the co-creation of tailored support tools—including the YouLead Serious Game—for empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs across Europe.

Key findings

Identified Challenges

1. Lack of entrepreneurial knowledge and practical skills:

- Lack of knowledge on entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurial knowledge gaps
- Insufficient entrepreneurial education
- Formal education not providing practical business skills
- Education on resilience and the realities of entrepreneurship

2. Limited access to mentorship coaching and support systems:

- Lack of coaching to understand professional responsibility
- Limited availability of structured mentorship and guidance
- Absence of a structured follow-up system
- Lack of guidance and networking
- Lack of awareness of support systems

3. Financial and funding barriers

- Lack of financial support
- Government funding issues
- Lack of funding and financial support
- Difficult access to information on financing options
- Legal and financial uncertainty

4. Administrative and regulatory complexity

- Administrative and judicial processes
- Regulatory barriers
- Legal and financial uncertainty

5. Market access and business development challenges

- Having clientele
- Affordable tools for market research
- Market access
- Collaboration

6. Psychological and environmental barriers

- Fear of failure
- Lack of experience and resilience
- Importance of a growth-through-action mindset
- Geological location / limited access to resources

Opportunities and Trends

- **Digital tools and platforms** are increasingly accessible and effective in bridging support gaps, particularly for training and mentoring. Platforms like BPI France and the rise of digital entrepreneurship (e.g., e-commerce) lower entry barriers for young entrepreneurs.
- **Public and local ecosystem support** is expanding, with authorities, associations, and networks playing a growing role in facilitating collaboration, mentorship, and access to resources.
- **Equity-focused support** is a priority, with targeted initiatives aimed at young people from disadvantaged or priority neighborhoods, helping reduce systemic barriers to entrepreneurship.
- **Soft skills development** is essential, as participants emphasized the importance of communication, self-confidence, boundary-setting, and resilience—often more so than technical knowledge.
- **Interest in social and sustainable entrepreneurship** is rising, particularly among younger generations seeking to align business activities with environmental and social impact goals.

Best practices & Approaches

The analysis of practices across partner regions revealed a set of shared and convergent approaches to promoting green entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism, despite differing local contexts. Notably, several recurring themes emerged, including the use of collaborative learning models (e.g., peer mentoring and simulations), integration of entrepreneurship into formal education, and the emphasis on non-formal learning spaces such as youth centers and FabLabs. Furthermore, many regions, including

Dublin, Toulon, Thessaloniki, and Graz, adopted inclusive, person-centered approaches tailored to young people from diverse backgrounds, particularly those underrepresented in traditional education or employment. Digital tools and mentorship structures were also commonly employed to enhance accessibility and learner engagement. These shared practices suggest strong potential for transnational adaptation and scalability, supporting the development of a cohesive, EU-wide framework for green entrepreneurial education

Participant feedback

Feedback collected from all YouLead breakfast sessions reflected a high level of satisfaction among participants, including young people, youth workers, and local experts. The informal and welcoming format was widely appreciated for encouraging open dialogue and mutual trust. Attendees valued the quality of discussions, the relevance of the topics, and the opportunity to hear diverse perspectives and real-life experiences. Guest speakers were particularly well received, and the interactive nature of the sessions—whether through structured brainstorming or spontaneous exchanges—was cited as a key strength. Across all locations, participants emphasized the sessions' usefulness, inspiring atmosphere, and potential to foster future collaboration. Minor suggestions for improvement included enhancing the structure of speaker presentations, increasing participant diversity, and incorporating more digital or participatory tools to enrich engagement.

Main recommendations

Based on the collected feedback and recommendations from the YouLead Breakfast Sessions across Thessaloniki, Graz, Porto-Vecchio, Toulon and Dublin, several key strategic actions have emerged to enhance youth entrepreneurship support. These recommendations can be grouped under five main pillars:

1. Enhance Training and Education for Young Entrepreneurs and Youth Workers

Across all partner events, there was a strong call to strengthen entrepreneurship education through training programs tailored both to young entrepreneurs and to the youth workers supporting them.

- **Practical entrepreneurial** training should include real-life scenarios, financial literacy, business development, and the application of concepts through digital tools and simulations (as suggested in Thessaloniki and Dublin).
- **Training youth workers and facilitators** was emphasized in Porto-Vecchio and Dublin. These should focus on:
 - Navigating local and European support structures,
 - Personalized guidance and mentoring practices,
 - Financial coaching,
 - Use of digital tools (marketing, accounting, project management),
 - Leadership, emotional resilience, and personal development.

2. Develop Engaging and Experiential Learning Tools

The **YouLead Serious Game** was highlighted in Graz as a key innovative tool to simulate the entrepreneurial journey. Feedback stressed the importance of making such tools:

- Modular, emotionally engaging, and user-centered,
- Focused on realistic, open-ended scenarios rather than multiple choice,
- Rich in feedback loops, risk-taking opportunities, and personal progression,
- Reflective of emotional challenges (burnout, failure, resilience),
- Connected to real-life support (e.g., mentors, legal advisers, local networks).

This digital gamified approach complements traditional learning and can make entrepreneurship more accessible to those not thriving in formal education.

3. Strengthen Mentorship and Peer Networks

All events underscored the critical importance of **structured mentorship and long-term support**.

- Thessaloniki recommended formal mentorship programs linking youth to experienced entrepreneurs.
- Dublin and Porto-Vecchio emphasized creating peer-to-peer mentorship and follow-up systems to ensure sustained guidance and confidence building.
- Graz supported this by recommending features within the game that simulate guidance and networking situations.

4. Improve Access to Funding and Financial Navigation

A **frequent recommendation** was the need to demystify and improve access to financial resources:

- Thessaloniki proposed information sessions on funding (grants, investment tools).
- Porto-Vecchio emphasized equipping facilitators to advise youth on various funding models, from crowdfunding to loans.
- Dublin suggested training youth workers to help navigate financial systems and providing centralized access to resource directories.

5. Foster Inclusion and Public-Private Cooperation

Recommendations also included broader systemic improvements:

- Dublin encouraged **inclusive entrepreneurship**, advocating support for underrepresented youth (e.g. neurodiverse, minority communities).
- Participants recommended **collaboration between public and private sectors**, suggesting mentorship incentives and resource-sharing from businesses to foster a more inclusive and dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Methodology

Overview of the Breakfast sessions

The YouLead Breakfast Sessions aim to achieve the following clearly defined goals:

☐ **Collecting Insights:**

- Gather firsthand information and diverse perspectives on youth entrepreneurship.
- Understand the unique challenges and opportunities faced by youth, particularly those with fewer opportunities, in starting and sustaining entrepreneurial ventures.
- Identify practical needs and expectations to inform the YouLead Compass and future training methodologies.

☐ **Fostering Dialogue:**

- Create an open and inclusive environment that encourages meaningful conversations among participants.
- Facilitate brainstorming sessions to explore innovative solutions and practices in youth entrepreneurship.
- Allow youth workers, experts, and young participants to share experiences and learn from each other's viewpoints.

☐ **Building Networks for Youth Entrepreneurship:**

- Strengthen connections between youth workers, young entrepreneurs, and stakeholders.
- Encourage collaborations that can lead to mentorship opportunities, partnerships, and resource sharing.
- Lay the groundwork for a support system to empower youth entrepreneurship and foster community development.

To prepare and organize the Breakfast Sessions, all project partners were provided with guidelines developed by the activity leader, UCE. These guidelines included the following aspects:

- Venue selection
- Creating a welcoming setting

- Required materials and equipment
- Suggested duration
- Suggested agenda
- Session facilitation
- Practical tips

While these guidelines served as a common reference to ensure a coherent approach across countries, partners were encouraged to adapt them according to their local context, resources, and target audience. The aim was to maintain a balance between methodological consistency and flexibility.

The suggested agenda is included in this document in Annex 1.

Five breakfast sessions have been conducted in four project partner countries, as follows:

COUNTRY	CITY	PARTNER	DATE
AUSTRIA	Graz	Stmk	15 th April 2025
FRANCE	Toulon	UCE	29 th April 2025
FRANCE	Porto-Vecchio	BGE	18 th March 2025
GREECE	Thessaloniki	FIFTY FIFTY & PYLON ONE	28 th February 2025
IRELAND	Dublin	F6S	28 th February 2025

The project's Greek partners — Fifty-Fifty and Pylon One — were the only partners required to conduct a joint Breakfast Session for Greece.

Process for Collecting and Synthesizing Data

The primary purpose of collecting data during the Breakfast Sessions was to identify the key challenges faced by aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs across different regional contexts. By engaging participants in informal, open discussions, the goal was to capture firsthand insights into the barriers they encounter—ranging from structural and regulatory issues to personal and psychological obstacles.

This data collection process was designed to inform the development of more targeted and relevant support mechanisms, capacity-building tools, and policy recommendations that respond directly to the real needs of emerging entrepreneurs.

While project partners were provided with a common set of guidelines to support the implementation of the workshops and data collection, they were encouraged to adapt these to their local context. The main objective was to create an inclusive and welcoming environment where all participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences, challenges, and knowledge—ultimately facilitating open dialogue and the collection of valuable, context-sensitive data.

To collect data, project partners were encouraged to use digital and interactive tools such as Miro, Slido, Google Form and Mentimeter to make the process more engaging and participatory, enabling participants to contribute in real time. However, the data collected during the sessions was primarily qualitative, consisting of participants' personal insights, shared experiences, and identified challenges.

The Breakfast sessions mobilised the following target group:

- **Youth Workers:** Identify and invite 7-10 youth workers with experience in entrepreneurship training or youth engagement.
- **Youth with Fewer Opportunities:** Engage 5-7 youth participants interested in entrepreneurship, ensuring diversity and inclusivity.
- **Guest Speakers/Experts/Stakeholders:** Secure 8 relevant experts, such as entrepreneurs, business leaders, or policymakers, to provide varied perspectives.
- Local networks, partner organizations, and social media to reach potential participants.

After the completion of the Breakfast Sessions, all project partners completed a shared reporting template (Annex 2) to summarize the main insights from their workshops. These were submitted to the activity leader, UCE, who was responsible for synthesizing the findings and preparing a final consolidated analysis report.

Common structure of national reports

To ensure consistency across countries and facilitate meaningful comparison of the challenges identified, all project partners followed a shared structure and methodology for conducting and reporting on their Breakfast Sessions.

A detailed guide was distributed to all partners ahead of the national workshops. This guide provided:

- Instructions for organizing and facilitating the Breakfast Sessions,
- Key questions and prompts to guide the discussions,
- Suggestions for participant engagement, and
- Guidelines on how to document and report the outcomes.

In addition, partners were provided with a reporting template to record the main challenges identified, organize them thematically, and ensure alignment with the overall project goals. This structured approach helped to harmonize the data collection process across different national contexts and contributed to the reliability of the final synthesis.

A common template was proposed to capture the key insights, outcomes, and feedback from each YouLead Breakfast Session. It provides a structured way to document the session's activities, participant interactions, and the ideas generated, ensuring that all necessary data is collected to inform the YouLead Compass and future activities. The report should highlight locally relevant challenges and opportunities to contribute to tailored solutions. Each partner submitted its report to the lead partner (UCE) for analysis and integration into the broader YouLead Compass framework.

The Report template is included in this document in Annex 2.

Delivery and Setup of National Breakfast sessions

Graz, Austria

Room 466
by WKO Steiermark

The YouLead Breakfast Session was held on April 15th in Graz, at the Lendhafen venue. The event brought together 20 participants with diverse backgrounds. The session focused on identifying key challenges and barriers faced by both current and aspiring young entrepreneurs, developing initial solution strategies, and examining the role of innovative learning approaches in supporting entrepreneurial journeys.

To foster an informal and welcoming environment for open exchange and networking, breakfast and beverages were provided by a local catering service, creating a relaxed morning atmosphere. The session ran from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

The group of 20 attendees represented a wide range of perspectives and experiences, including:

- Young individuals interested in founding their own businesses
- Youth workers, primarily from the gastronomy sector, exploring the idea of starting their own ventures
- Emerging young entrepreneurs currently building their startups
- Experienced founders managing one or more established businesses
- Guest speakers, mentors, and industry experts with over 10 years of experience in founding and investing in startups



Additionally, representatives from Ideenbetriebwerk, a local startup and young entrepreneur support network, were present, contributing valuable insights from their organizational perspective.

This carefully curated mix of participants ensured a multifaceted exploration of the session's topics, allowing for a dynamic and thought-provoking discussion from multiple angles.

To ensure that a wide range of voices were heard—not just those of the invited mentors and experts—participants were intentionally given equal opportunity to share their insights, experiences, and questions. This decision helped balance the conversation and encouraged peer-to-peer learning.

Following the initial round of individual reflections, a short break was held, during which warm food was served and informal networking was encouraged.

After the break, the group moved into a more structured activity. Each participant was asked to fill out a short survey using a Likert scale, ranking which entrepreneurial challenges they perceived as the most significant barriers. This method provided a snapshot of the group's shared concerns and served as a launching point for deeper conversations.



Subsequently, participants were divided into small groups to engage in free-form discussions based on their personal experiences. These group dialogues fostered authentic exchange and the emergence of practical insights.

In the final 20 minutes of the session, the focus shifted toward digital tools and innovative learning methods, including feedback and recommendations on the YouLead Serious Game designed to support entrepreneurial education.



Toulon, France



Union des Couveuses organized the YouLead Breakfast Session on April 29, 2025, in cooperation with Petra Patrimonia (an adherent organization of UCE), in Toulon. The event brought together 16 participants, including 5 young professionals, 5 experts, and 6 young entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The session aimed to foster discussion, share experiences, and gather insights on the challenges and opportunities in youth entrepreneurship. It also explored innovative learning practices while promoting collaboration and networking among attendees.

The session began with a group tour and brief introductions from the participants. UCE then delivered a presentation of the YouLead project, providing an overview of its duration, context, objectives, key indicators, and the importance of European support for such youth-centered initiatives.

Following the presentation, young entrepreneurs working with the local couveuse described their business projects, outlining the nature of their ventures, their future goals, and current development efforts. One participant – a female entrepreneur who recently launched her business – shared her success story, offering practical insights to inspire and inform her peers. Her entrepreneurial journey was later used as a case study during group discussions, allowing participants to reflect and compare experiences.

Throughout the session, participants exchanged and discussed various innovative practices aimed at enhancing youth entrepreneurship education and support.



Porto-Vecchio, France



The "YouLead Breakfast Session" took place on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at the Cowork space in Porto-Vecchio, organized by BGE Corse. The event brought together around twenty participants, including key players in the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, such as youth workers (from the local mission, France Travail, The economic centre of the southern Corsican municipalities...), young entrepreneurs, as well as experts and guests specializing in entrepreneurship, representing institutions such as Petra Patrimonia, Adie, Société Générale, Banque Populaire, and the Cowork space team. Among the young people present, some were facing particular difficulties in their entrepreneurial journey.



The main objective of this meeting was to create a space for collective reflection, enabling discussions on the challenges, but also the opportunities, faced by young people in the field of entrepreneurship. Discussions focused on three main themes:

- Obstacles encountered by young entrepreneurs and possible solutions to overcome them
- Innovative teaching methods to strengthen entrepreneurship education
- Networking and collaboration opportunities with local players.

Initially scheduled to run from 9.30am to 12pm, the session was extended to 12.30pm, in view of the many exchanges and the participants' sustained interest in the subjects covered.

The session provided invaluable first-hand accounts and identified areas for improvement to better support young entrepreneurs in their projects. It also highlighted promising initiatives and paved the way for new collaborations between local players to strengthen support for youth entrepreneurship in Corse-du-Sud.

Thessaloniki, Greece



The YouLead Breakfast Session in Thessaloniki took place successfully at Pylon One's premises, bringing together 20 youth workers, guest speakers, and key stakeholders. The event was jointly organized by the project's Greek partners, Pylon One and Fifty-Fifty.

The session aimed to foster discussions on youth entrepreneurship, share best practices, and promote networking opportunities among participants. The attendees included 20 youth workers, all professionals with experience in entrepreneurship training and youth engagement.

In addition, several guest speakers and experts—including entrepreneurs, business leaders, and policymakers—contributed valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in youth entrepreneurship. The presence of stakeholders from local NGOs and educational institutions further enriched the discussions and ensured a diverse exchange of perspectives.

Throughout the session, participants shared and explored innovative practices that could strengthen youth entrepreneurship education.

The event served as a platform for experience-sharing, aiming to identify effective educational methodologies and tools to support young entrepreneurs in their development.

The session also emphasized network building, encouraging collaboration, mentorship opportunities, and the exchange of best practices within the local and regional entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Dublin, Ireland



On February 28, 2025, Dublin, Ireland hosted the YouLead Breakfast Session, organized by F6S with the support of TCube - Coworking and Event Venue. The event brought together 19 participants, including four young entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds and three entrepreneurs who shared their inspiring success stories.

The session aimed to foster discussion, share experiences, and gather insights on the challenges and opportunities in youth entrepreneurship. It also explored innovative practices in youth learning while promoting collaboration and networking among attendees.

Among the speakers was Dr. Wendy Oke, who shared her powerful journey. Having moved to Ireland at the age of four, she faced racism and bullying in school but never saw being a Black woman as a barrier to entrepreneurship. She believed in her business idea, tirelessly sought funding, and secured investment because her product was strong, financially viable, and met a market need. She highlighted how emerging markets can streamline bureaucracy, particularly in sectors like childcare.

Jason O'Connell followed with his remarkable story of transformation. Coming from a background of drug and alcohol addiction, he turned his life around after securing a €10,000 grant to start his own business.

Alp Türkmen also shared his experience, recounting how he left Turkey at 14 and saw university as both an escape and an investment, as higher education in Ireland was free. He built his company independently and now dedicates 20% of his time to giving back to the community.



Key Insights and Findings: Challenges and Opportunities in Youth Entrepreneurship

Common Challenges Identified across partner countries

The completion of the Breakfast Sessions in different locations led to the identification of the following main challenges in entrepreneurship, classified under six overarching topics that capture all the points raised by participants from the different cities:

Lack of entrepreneurial knowledge and practical skills

Across several sessions, young participants expressed uncertainty around core business concepts, indicating that traditional education does not sufficiently equip them with the tools needed to start and manage a venture. They highlighted a need for more experiential learning, peer exchange, and exposure to real-life entrepreneurial pathways. This gap was particularly evident in the absence of confidence in areas such as business planning, marketing, and financial literacy.

Limited access to mentorship coaching and support systems

Participants in nearly all locations emphasized the importance of personalized guidance but noted that access to mentors and entrepreneurial role models remains limited. While guest speakers were appreciated, young people called for longer-term coaching relationships and structured programs to accompany them throughout their entrepreneurial journey. This lack of ongoing support contributes to feelings of isolation and discouragement.

Financial and funding barriers

Difficulties in accessing initial funding or seed capital were repeatedly raised. Youth shared that bureaucratic procedures for grants or loans are often unclear or inaccessible, and private investment options are rare at early stages. Moreover, financial risk aversion and lack of collateral were common deterrents, especially among those from less privileged backgrounds.

Administrative and regulatory complexity

Navigating the legal and administrative requirements to start a business was seen as overwhelming, particularly for first-time entrepreneurs. Participants described complex procedures, lack of tailored information, and slow response times from institutions. These obstacles often delay or prevent young people from formalizing their business ideas.

Market access and business development challenges

Once ventures are launched, many youth entrepreneurs struggle with reaching customers, building networks, and scaling their ideas. There were repeated calls for more local visibility opportunities, structured networking events, and support in areas like digital presence and strategic partnerships. This difficulty in accessing markets limits business sustainability and growth.

Psychological and environmental barriers

Participants across partner locations reported that fear of failure, lack of confidence, and limited encouragement from their immediate surroundings significantly hinder their entrepreneurial ambitions. These psychological barriers are often reinforced by environmental factors, such as the absence of visible role models, limited access to supportive infrastructure like co-working spaces or innovation hubs, and community attitudes that tend to favor traditional employment paths over self-employment. Together, these internal and external constraints create a discouraging atmosphere that weakens entrepreneurial motivation and perceived feasibility among young people

Opportunities and Trends observed in sessions

Based on the partner inputs from the YouLead Breakfast Sessions, several key opportunities and trends in youth entrepreneurship have emerged across different European regions. These observations offer valuable insights for developing more effective, inclusive, and future-oriented support strategies:

1. Growing Importance of Digital Tools and Platforms

Across multiple sessions (Porto Vecchio, Toulon, Thessaloniki), there is a clear trend toward the use of digital platforms for training, mentoring, and entrepreneurial support. Platforms like BPI France, and broader access to online learning tools, are helping bridge gaps in access to resources—especially for young people in underserved areas. In Thessaloniki, digital entrepreneurship and e-commerce were highlighted as lowering entry barriers, suggesting a continuing shift toward virtual business models that align with younger generations' digital fluency.

2. Strengthening of Local and Public Support Ecosystems

In Porto Vecchio, Toulon, and Thessaloniki, participants emphasized the increasing involvement of local authorities, networks, and associations in providing structured support—through funding, mentorship, or incubators. These partnerships not only enhance access to opportunities but also foster collaboration across sectors. Dublin echoed this point with the call for corporate mentorship programs, suggesting a cross-sector trend in mobilizing public-private ecosystems to support youth.

3. Targeted Support for Underrepresented and Disadvantaged Youth

Both French sessions (Toulon and Porto Vecchio) spotlighted specific interventions targeting youth from priority neighborhoods—including support for training, financing, and mentorship. In Dublin, success stories from entrepreneurs overcoming racial or socio-economic barriers reinforced the need for tailored approaches that reflect diverse lived experiences. This points to a broader trend in youth entrepreneurship policy: equity-focused interventions that reduce systemic access inequalities.

4. Emphasis on Soft Skills and Personal Development

The Graz session highlighted the central role of soft skills such as self-confidence, negotiation, boundary-setting, and communication. Participants noted that success

often depends more on these capabilities than on technical expertise. Real-life examples—from dealing with difficult clients to setting pricing boundaries—emphasized the need for entrepreneurship education to include personal development, resilience training, and reflective learning. Dublin echoed this with its call for education around the realities and emotional resilience needed for the entrepreneurial journey.

5. Rise of Social and Sustainable Entrepreneurship

The Thessaloniki session pointed to increasing interest in purpose-driven entrepreneurship, where young people pursue ventures aligned with social and environmental values. This trend, especially among Gen Z, suggests a growing demand for support frameworks that integrate sustainability, ethics, and impact measurement into traditional business education.

Key Insights and Findings: Best Practices for Engaging Youth in Entrepreneurship

Shared practices mentioned across partner countries

These practices were consistently highlighted across multiple cities and reflect common strategies for enhancing youth entrepreneurship:

Practice / Solution	Description	Countries/Cities Mentioned	Application Method	Target Group
Collaborative Learning Models	Peer mentoring, simulations, and teamwork	Thessaloniki, Porto Vecchio, Graz	Group projects, simulations	Youth, entrepreneurs
Digital Platforms / Online Communities	Online networks and tools for learning & mentoring	Thessaloniki, Porto Vecchio, Dublin	Apps, social platforms, forums	Youth, entrepreneurs
Integration into Education Systems	Embedding entrepreneurship into schools/universities	Thessaloniki, Porto Vecchio, Toulon	Curricular and extracurricular activities	Students, youth
Mentorship and Role Models	Structured mentoring or informal community mentoring	Thessaloniki, Porto Vecchio, Dublin, Toulon	Programs, peer-to-peer networks	Underrepresented youth, aspiring entrepreneurs
Inclusive, Person-centred Approaches	Support tailored to diverse backgrounds (e.g. gender, cultural)	Dublin, Toulon, Thessaloniki	Individual mentoring, community organizations	Migrants, women, ethnic minorities
Practical Entrepreneurial Training	Focus on real-world application of entrepreneurship	Thessaloniki, Porto Vecchio, Graz	Business simulations, internships, workshops	Youth, VET students

Use of Non-Formal Education Spaces	Learning beyond classrooms: libraries, youth centers, FabLabs	Toulon, Dublin, Thessaloniki	Creative labs, youth clubs, maker spaces	NEETs, young adults
Multi-Stakeholder Ecosystem Support	Public-private collaboration for youth entrepreneurship	Graz, Porto Vecchio, Toulon	Partnerships with chambers, NGOs, schools	Local youth and entrepreneurs

Innovative practices unique to a country but with potential for transfer

These innovations are locally rooted but show strong potential to be replicated elsewhere:

Country	Unique Practice	Description	Why It's Transferable	Potential Challenges
Austria (Graz)	Flexible Company Model (FlexKapG)	Legal structure for easy, low-risk entrepreneurship	Can reduce legal hurdles in other countries	Requires legal/policy reform
Ireland (Dublin)	Targeted support for underrepresented groups (e.g., Irish Travellers)	Uses community-based outreach, trusted reps	Promotes inclusion in all countries with underserved communities	May require deep cultural understanding
France (Porto Vecchio)	Entrepreneurial Mobile App	Centralizes guides, mentorship, funding info	Scalable digital tool, especially in mobile-first regions	Requires initial dev resources, regular updates
Greece (Thessaloniki)	Digital Serious Games	Simulated, gamified entrepreneurial learning	Engaging tool for skill development	Development cost and localization

Approaches that showed positive impact on youth motivation or skill development

These strategies directly improved youth engagement, confidence, or practical competencies:

Country	Approach	Observed Impact	Skills developed/Motivation boosted	Delivery format
Greece, Thessaloniki	Gamified Learning (Digital Serious Games)	Increased engagement in entrepreneurship education	Problem-solving, decision-making, creativity	Online games, simulation tools
Greece, Thessaloniki	Storytelling / Case Studies	Inspired youth through relatable success stories	Motivation, leadership vision, confidence	Talks, media, videos
Greece, Thessaloniki	Hybrid Education Models	Bridged gap between theory and practice	Business acumen, adaptability, soft skills	Blended learning programs
Dublin, Ireland	Personalized Education Approaches	Boosted self-efficacy among youth with diverse backgrounds	Confidence, resilience, adaptability	Individual mentoring, tailored workshops
Porto Vecchio, France	Financial Literacy Training	Empowered youth with financial planning skills	Cash flow, budgeting, risk awareness	Workshops, online modules

Feedback on session effectiveness

Participant feedback across sessions

Across all partner locations, feedback on the YouLead breakfast sessions was overwhelmingly positive, confirming both the effectiveness of the format and its resonance with young participants, youth workers, and local stakeholders. Participants consistently highlighted the value of an informal, welcoming setting, which fostered open dialogue, trust, and meaningful exchanges. This atmosphere encouraged participants to speak freely about their experiences, challenges, and aspirations, resulting in rich and dynamic discussions.

The sessions were praised not only for their organization and structure but also for the quality of the contributions from both speakers and attendees. In particular, guest speakers and experts were seen as crucial to the success of the events, offering practical advice and relatable stories that helped demystify entrepreneurship and inspired further exploration. The sessions were also perceived as inclusive and interactive, creating a space where diverse perspectives could be heard and respected.

Feedback from participants in Graz and Porto-Vecchio, gathered through structured evaluation forms and live impressions, showed exceptionally high satisfaction scores across all indicators, including atmosphere, relevance of the topic, and opportunities for exchange. In Thessaloniki and Dublin, verbal and written feedback echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing the importance of storytelling, peer learning, and community building.

The sessions were not only informative but also empowering: young participants felt seen and heard, while youth workers and experts expressed motivation to continue supporting youth entrepreneurship in more engaging, human-centered ways.

Tools or methods that were particularly well received

Several specific methods and tools used across the sessions were particularly appreciated by participants. The informal breakfast format, combined with careful attention to the layout of the space, catering, and atmosphere, played a key role in establishing a comfortable and collaborative environment. In Porto-Vecchio, the use of Post-it-based brainstorming and active facilitation techniques encouraged collective reflection and allowed all voices to be heard.

In Thessaloniki, participants responded positively to the presence of inspiring guest speakers and proposed the integration of more interactive digital tools, such as live polls and digital brainstorming platforms, in future sessions to further increase participation and engagement. Graz and Dublin also demonstrated the usefulness of real-time feedback tools, such as QR code-linked evaluation forms, which not only supported structured reflection but also reinforced the participatory ethos of the sessions.

These practices underscored the importance of a well-designed, inclusive methodology that balances structure with informality, encourages interactivity, and leverages both analog and digital tools to amplify youth voices.

Suggestions for improving future breakfast sessions or youth engagement activities

These are direct or indirect participant ideas to enhance future editions:

Thessaloniki:

- Use more interactive digital tools to boost engagement.

Graz:

- Minor improvements to speaker briefings.
- No major content-related criticisms.

Porto-Vecchio:

- Invite more young people to broaden perspectives and input.

Dublin:

- Add structure to storytelling from speakers.
- Include policy voices (e.g., Department of Enterprise and Trade).
- Encourage diversity among participants.
- Add breakout groups/roundtables
- Include alumni youth to share their journeys.

Annexes

Annex 1- Suggested Agenda

Welcome & Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Host's Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to the YouLead project and its objectives. ● Brief overview of the Breakfast Session's goals and agenda. ➤ Participant Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quick round of introductions from all attendees (name, role, background). ● Emphasize the importance of diverse perspectives in discussions. 	15 minutes
Ice-Breaker Activity : Activity: "Entrepreneurial Journey"¹. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants share their personal entrepreneurial experiences or aspirations in a quick, engaging manner (1-2 sentences each). 	10 minutes
Guest Speaker/Expert Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Key insights on youth entrepreneurship, challenges, and opportunities. ➤ Best practices in training young people for entrepreneurship. ➤ How innovative learning tools (like Digital Serious Games) are being applied in youth entrepreneurship training. ➤ Q&A : questions from the audience to foster deeper understanding and exchange. 	30-40 minutes
Interactive Discussion & Brainstorming	40 minutes

¹ / aims to create a comfortable atmosphere and establish initial connections between participants

<p>➤ Discussion Topics (Facilitated by the Host):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges: What are the biggest barriers to youth entrepreneurship in your region? • Opportunities: What are the untapped opportunities for youth entrepreneurship? • Innovative Practices: What strategies or tools have you seen work in entrepreneurial education for youth? • New ways to support youth entrepreneurship. • Most relevant skills / soft skills/competences to be developed by the youth entrepreneurs <p>➤ Group Brainstorming:</p> <p>➤ Break into small groups (5-7 people) for focused brainstorming on key topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use flip charts or digital boards to capture ideas. • Each group shares their ideas and insights with the broader session.² 	
<p>Feedback on the Session:</p> <p>➤ Participants provide feedback on the session's content, format, and discussions via quick surveys or open discussion :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What key takeaways can participants apply in their own work or communities? • What solutions or ideas from the session resonate most with them? 	20 minutes
<p>Networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to connect with each other and guest speakers for future collaboration. • Provide time for one-on-one discussions or group chats. • Host's Closing Remarks: 	15 minutes

² Use sticky notes, digital polling, or whiteboards for capturing ideas.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank participants for their contributions and active participation. • Recap the session's outcomes and explain the next steps for integrating insights into the YouLead Compass framework. • Encourage participants to stay in touch and continue the conversation beyond the session. 	
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Annex 2- Report Template

Report template	
Session Overview: (max 0,5 page)	<p>A brief description of the session, including the date, location, and names of the organisation represented by key participants (youth workers, youth participants, guest speakers, experts, etc.).</p> <p>Provide also breakdown of the participants including the number of attendees, their qualification and their roles in the session.</p> <p>Remind the session objectives (for ex : "The objectives of the session were to gather insights into the challenges and opportunities in youth entrepreneurship, explore innovative practices in youth learning, and foster collaboration and networking among participants."</p>
Key Insights and Findings: Challenges and Opportunities in Youth Entrepreneurship (1 pages)	<p>Highlight the main challenges faced by youth entrepreneurs, as discussed by participants (ex : funding, lack of mentorship, limited entrepreneurial education, etc)</p> <p>On the flip side, summarize the opportunities identified during the session, such as emerging markets, digital tools, or community support.</p>

Key Insights and Findings: Innovative Practices and Solutions (1 pages)	Capture any innovative methods, practices, or ideas discussed that could improve youth entrepreneurship education. This could include digital tools, mentoring models, or specific educational programs that have been successful in other contexts.
Key Insights and Findings: Best Practices for Engaging Youth in Entrepreneurship (1 pages)	Based on the guest speakers' insights and participant feedback, outline best practices for engaging youth in entrepreneurship education. This will offer insights for the Compass tuning activity where best practices can be selected for analyse procedure
Feedback on the Session's Effectiveness: (0.5 pages)	Provide a brief overview of participant feedback on the breakfast session itself. This could include qualitative feedback on the effectiveness of the format, session structure, and discussions. (evaluation questionnaire)
Recommendations: (0.5 pages)	Suggest the implementation of specific training modules that could help youth workers better support young entrepreneurs.
Annexes	Attendance list Agenda Publication/Communication online around the breakfast session You could also include relevant audiovisual content (photos, videos, participant quotes) that was captured during the session. This can enhance the report and provide visual evidence of the discussions and activities that took place.



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