



## **European Creativity and Innovation Challenge (ECIC)**

Final Report

Public Part

## Project information

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## Executive Summary

We are living in a knowledge economy which will demand from young people a more sophisticated blend of soft and hard skills. Now more than ever we need innovation, new solutions, creative approaches and new ways of operating. We are in a challenging territory and need people in all sectors and of all ages who can “think outside the box” to identify and pursue opportunities in new and paradigm-changing ways.

European Creativity and Innovation Challenge aim was to put ‘innovation and creativity’ in the spotlight through a partnership between **15 partners** and **23 associated partners** from **13 European countries** (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey). The network proposed to organise a **Creativity & Innovation Challenge** for **vocational school students, aged 15-18**, in selected countries which encouraged them to use their skills in enterprising and innovative ways, ultimately increasing their employability and entrepreneurial flair.

The aim of the project was to raise awareness of entrepreneurship education as a driver for innovation and creativity showing how education and business can work together in motivating young people. This was done through a **network of various stakeholders** which engages private and public sector employees in a real ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ (community engagement) activity.

The goal was to stimulate **7,800 students’** innovative abilities and creative ideas putting them in contact with **390 business volunteers**. This was done through **78 national challenges** and **3 European Innovation & Creativity Challenges** that would give students a learning experience that they would not otherwise have at their age. At the end of the implementation period almost **10,000** students took part in more than **100** National Challenges, supported by almost **1,500** volunteers.

The project ran for 3 years. The well-established **approach** included 5 steps: partners’ meeting and training of trainers; National Creativity & Innovation Challenges; selection of the best national solutions; web platform and online competition; European Creativity & Innovation Challenge.

The **project milestones** were: setting up of the methodology to implement Creativity and Innovation Camps; organisation of National Camps with 100 students each from different vocational schools; business associated partner in each country was asked to come up with a ‘problem’ that the students had to solve; teachers and business volunteers worked together to help the students solve the challenge; the winning team of each country was selected to take part in the yearly European Creativity and Innovation Challenge; ECIC website and ECIC Web2 platform for cooperation online – main tool to connect students online prior to the European Challenge.

The programme was very successful and therefore attractive for students and teachers. All targets established at the beginning of the project were met with high margins: almost 10,000 students, in more than 100 National Events, **1,500 volunteers**, almost 1,000 teachers and 865 vocational schools took part in the project. More than **300 private companies and public authorities** sponsored the activities at local and at European level. **The well-established methodology of Creativity and Innovation Challenges** is now a core activity in several JA-YE initiatives at European, National and local level.

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# 1. Project Objectives

The European Creativity & Innovation Camp (ECIC) aim was to put "innovation and creativity" in the spotlight through a partnership between 15 organisations and 23 associate partners in 13 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey).

The network organised a series of Creativity and Innovation Challenges for vocational school students in selected countries. 78 events were planned to foster young people's problem solving and innovation skills. Students were given a specific challenge to solve within a limited period of time. The link between business and education helps students to develop skills that are relevant to the workplace and allows them to apply their academic learning in a real-life context.

The main aims of the network were to:

- Raise awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship education as a driver for innovation and creativity
- Show how education and business can work together to promote innovation and creativity as well as motivate and inspire young people
- Engage employees from the private and public sector in a real 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (community engagement) activity; an innovative approach to making the Lisbon Agenda 'a reality'
- Demonstrate how leveraging Europe's diversity (involving young people from different countries for example) enhances innovation

In addition, the project objectives were:

- Stimulate young people's innate innovative abilities and creative ideas
- Encourage 7,800 vocational school students to work in mixed teams in order to solve a real problem
- Bring young people in contact with people from business and public sector (role models) in order to learn more about what companies and organisations do and the challenges they face, engaging 390 business volunteers throughout the 3 year project
- Give students a learning experience that they would not otherwise have at their age;
- Motivate students to succeed and achieve new things
- Provide new interactive, learning-by-doing teaching tools to 390 teachers

The project brought specific benefits to its beneficiaries. **Teachers** could in fact take advantage of high quality materials and training, constant access to support and assistance, access to experts from the business community. They could also interact with their peers from other European countries via the project website as well and learn new teaching techniques that could help them improve their quality of teaching and motivate students to succeed and achieve new things. **Students** explored personal responsibilities in setting up a creative and innovative solution. They had the possibility to work closely with **business people** as mentors. They learnt how to organise themselves, make decisions, find solutions on their own and work together with their counterparts in other countries to come up with project solutions.

The main skills the project brought to the students are: creativity and innovative thinking, teamwork, critical thinking, decision making, communication skills, drawing conclusions, formulating an argument, shaping an idea into a project, negotiating, organisational skills, presentation, situational analysis, technology, social and cultural competences.

## 2. Project Approach

ECIC is a programme for vocational school students. During the project lifetime we had 3 academic cycles. Each year more and more national Creativity and Innovation Challenges were organised in order to bring more and more teachers and students into the programme.

The consortium was following a 5-steps approach in running the project (see next figure):

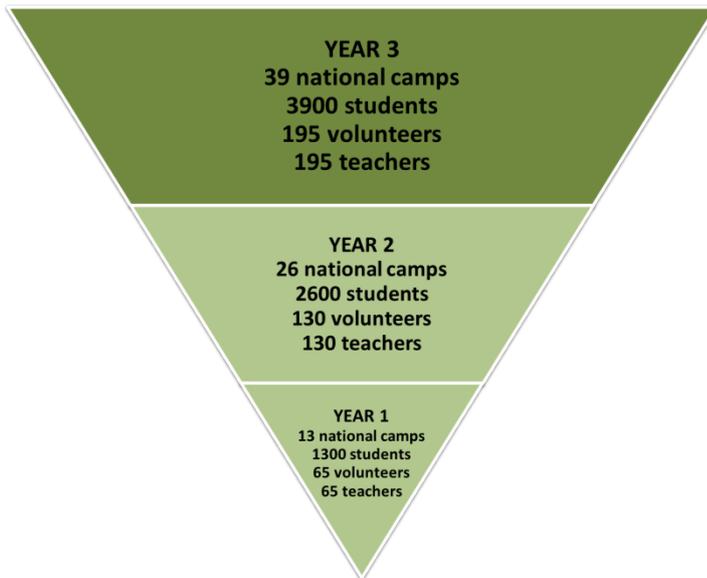


**Figure 1: Project Methodology and Overall Targets**

The project ran over a period of 3 years. The circle describes the activities that had been foreseen for every year of implementation:

1. **Partners' meeting & Training of Trainers (ToT):** meeting of the partners to learn and discuss the project implementation. JA-YE Europe provided the core content and curriculum, best practice and training of trainers. The project kick off meeting took place in Madrid on 2-4 December 2009. All partners took part in the meeting to set up the basis for the project's implementation.
2. **National Creativity & Innovation Challenges:** national partner organisations worked closely with their education authorities in order to obtain access to vocational schools and select teachers. In the first year of implementation each partner had to reach 5 schools and 100 students. Each partner was tasked to organize a minimum of 6 events over the course of the project. Each local partner worked with private or public sector partners to design the challenge and provide mentoring. The national partners trained teachers and volunteers prior to the event. They had to come up with a 'problem' that the students had to solve (a real problem that the business is presently facing or a speculative one). In the national Challenge the students had 24h to solve the challenge in mixed teams of 5 and then had to present their pitch in front of a jury.

The 6 national camps were distributed over a period of 3 years according to the following scheme:



National Implementation: all partner countries implemented their first National Creativity & Innovation Challenge in spring 2010. Two partner countries, Italy and Spain, implemented their National Challenges already in November 2009 as pilot actions. All other 11 Challenges took place in the second semester of 2009/2010 scholar year. Two national Challenges were foreseen for the second year of implementation and they took place in the course of the entire scholar year 2010/2011 (from October to April)<sup>1</sup>.

Figure 2: Targets for the 3 years of implementation

- 3. Selection of the best national solutions:** In the first year the winning team from each country (13\*5) went on to prepare for the live competition face-to-face.
- 4. Web platform and online competition:** using Web 2.0 techniques the network created an online community of “creators and innovators” where students and teachers interacted with each other get access to different creativity and innovation tools and worked together to develop a business idea to solve a common challenge. The platform was set up during the first year of implementation and in the second and third year the Web 2 tool was used for the online competition. Prior to each European Creativity & Innovation Camp students were randomly distributed in teams of 5. They got to know their teammates online and worked together in international teams to prepare for the face-to-face challenge. When they registered they received the sector for the challenge and were encouraged to get to know more about that sector before the finals.



Figure 3: Social Innovation Camp online platform

- 5. European Creativity & Innovation Challenge:** The European event took place every year in spring in Brussels and gathered together students, teachers and/or business volunteers. At the event students were given the new challenge which they had to solve within 24 hours and present their final pitch to a jury, mixed in international teams. The team members therefore had never met each other before and had to

<sup>1</sup> For information on the main results of the national challenges see next session.

adapt fast in order to work best together as a team. The events started with a session of brainstorming/idea generating (and ice-breaking) techniques and exercises. After the warm up, they were given a challenge. Once the teams knew the challenge they moved into the next phase which was thinking through how to transform their ideas into reality; consulting with the Volunteer Experts from EuroChambres and other business partners (GE, HP and Intel) available in order to figure out how to actually achieve it. Teams prepared a presentation and a business concept within 24 hours and made their final presentations to a jury.

### Overall coordination of the network

The consortium of 15 partners was coordinated by JA-YE Europe. On a national level 13 national partners were responsible for the activities within the countries. JA-YE Europe organised face to face meetings with coordinators every year to assess the results of the project and prepare the plan for the next year. These meetings were very important because they allowed us to look back at the year passed and see how the project developed; moreover they were also useful to assess the results and make a plan for the future.

The following scheme describes the overall coordination structure and the stakeholders on a national level involved by the partners at different levels.

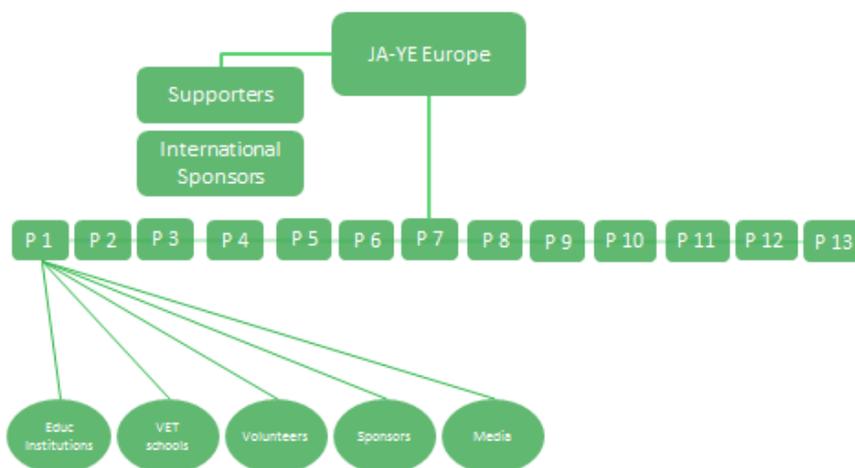


Figure 4: The network structure

On a national level partners interacted with various stakeholders: they promoted the programme through education institutions that can also be a channel to identify VET schools. They worked closely with sponsor companies and organisations from the business world and local chambers of commerce to identify volunteers and to set up the business challenge for the national events. They promoted the project activities through national and local media.

### Evaluation strategy

The main objectives of the evaluation plan were:

- Offer quality education to teachers and students
- Ensure success and sustainability of the project
- Increase potential for investment from public and private sector donors
- Assess the development of the programme at local level.

The coordinator and each partner were performing internal evaluations every year. These evaluations gathered together the results of the students' evaluations done at the end of each national event and of the European Challenges<sup>2</sup>. A final evaluation was implemented during the last year of implementation of the project. The evaluation was coordinated by the partner JA Bulgaria in cooperation with JA-YE Europe. The impact of the project was evaluated using a series of stakeholder questionnaires and assessment forms pre and post programme which were completed by students, teachers and business volunteers. In the final report we looked at the final evaluation questionnaire provided to all students participating in the ECIC Final Camps in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The consortium used a set of quality metrics such as the number of contact hours, access to a mentor from the business world and frequency of communication between the partners.

### **Dissemination and exploitation strategy**

In addition to the steps of the implementation phase, **dissemination activities** and **exploitation of results** were key for the success of the project. The consortium has therefore put a great deal of effort into dissemination and exploitation of results at every level from the grassroots up to the national level and to the European level. This was done with a view to optimising the added-value of the project, strengthening its impact, transferring it to other contexts, and integrating it in a sustainable manner into the broader European context.

Dissemination and exploitation activities were identified as key milestones for the project. Why? Because only by promoting the results of such a project, by showing teachers, educators and local authorities of such educational programme, we were able to increase the number of beneficiaries and support the sustainability of the programme after its completion.

The dissemination and exploitation of activities worked on three levels:

- **Consortium level** – sharing best practices, learning from each other
- **National level** – promotion in schools, to the Ministry of Education and Economy, local media coverage for the national events, business sector, etc.
- **European level** – promoting the results to other stakeholders

The main dissemination activities at European level were done through the website, social media and media outreach. A complete description of the main dissemination products is provided in the next section.

Mainstreaming, multiplication and sustainability were the key aspects of the exploitation strategy and the consortium has fulfilled its tasks in this area with great success:

- **Mainstreaming** - transferring the successful results of the programme and of the students to appropriate decision-makers in regulated local, regional, national or European systems. This was done during face-to-face meetings presenting the results of the project as well as via press articles, newsletters and the website. Press articles, press releases, and television broadcasting covered all national events and the European events. On a national and local level, partners also set up a series of activities to ensure the mainstreaming and sustainability of the project such as: an integration plan in national and local policy; a strategy to attract national institutions to support these types of projects; a pre and a post programme assessment. The success of this programme and, in particular, of the Innovation Camp methodology lead JA-YE Europe to mainstream this pedagogical method into several of its existing programme and projects at European level. The same path was followed by several

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<sup>2</sup> Some quotes and information about the evaluations of the two European events are available in the next section.

of the consortium's partners. More information about the sustainability of ECIC in the future and the mainstreaming of its activities are provided in the next sections.

- **Multiplication** - convincing other JA-YE Members to be involved in the programme and convincing teachers and business volunteers to spread the word and convincing students, the individual end-users, to apply the results of the programme in their real life actions and to offer mentorships to their younger colleagues were the main actions for multiplication of results. ECIC partnership included 13 countries but, since the first year of implementation, other countries have joined the partnership and took part in different phases of the activities. During the first ECIC European Challenge we hosted experts from JA California who came to Brussels to see the students in action. They showed great interest in replicating this project in the USA. We hosted Russian students' and teachers' delegation as well. During the second ECIC European Challenge, from 18-20 May 2011, we hosted students' and teachers' delegations from Cyprus and Russia. These countries were not official partners of the ECIC consortium, but students were eager to take part in these events, to work in multinational teams, to practice English language, to build new solutions and to face new challenges. One national partner, JA Bulgaria, implemented its own methodology in delivering Innovation Camps. In the 3 years of implementation they reached more than 2,100 students, representing 22% of all students. The partner developed an excellent peer strategy targeting the national network of vocational secondary schools. One of the pillars of the strategy was to raise awareness of the National Creativity & Innovation Challenge during the Global Entrepreneurship Weeks in 2010 and 2011.
- **Sustainability** - the consortium consisted of a series of permanent and professional infrastructures, which remain and were wholly dedicated to generating the resources (human, financial and technical) necessary to sustain the project. Regular publication and communication of results through conferences, the media and websites were raising awareness and assisting local partners in securing potential supporters as well as accessing new schools. On a European level we managed to secure three partners HP, GE (General Electrics) Foundation and Intel and each national partner was encouraged to find local supporters. At the same time in the last year Blackberry joined by supporting national camps in Italy and Spain. The results of those camps has led the partner to further support and expand the programme to 12 new countries globally Mexico, Argentina, Columbia, South Africa, Nigeria, UAE, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Thailand, Italy, Spain, China and Sweden. This assures the continuity of the programme in the coming years. Microsoft was also a local partner in several national camps. Their support was constant year after year and now they want to explain this to new countries and help sustain the project now that the grant is over.

Not only have we raised the number of the countries involved in the project but also the number of students participating was higher than the initial target<sup>3</sup>. The project is highly sustainable after completion of the activities because its innovative methodology is already embedded in several projects at European and national level.

### **The added value of the project**

The project represented a kind of missing link in the evolution from more traditional educational approaches to newer more student-centred experiential learning methods. It nicely bridged our need to move towards grading people in their knowledge as well as their experience. It is not about revolutionising education, it is about moving it forward with the times. Post-industrial era education strategies were not designed for the kind of society and international economy we have today and will have tomorrow.

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<sup>3</sup> See next session for information on outcomes and results.

The results of the project are highly exploitable in several European countries via the JA-YE network and its partners. One of the consortium main objectives was to replicate the project in other countries and outside the consortium and encourage other countries to join the network. This has already happened in Russia and Cyprus who have joined the project after its start-up and now its expansion to Asia, Africa and Latin America.

**Innovative character**

The Creativity and Innovation Challenge is a “learning-by-doing” concept which promotes innovative thinking and the improvement of work and life skills. Students work closely with business people as mentors to bring solutions to real business challenges. Students must organise themselves, make decisions, find solutions on their own and work together with their counterparts in other countries to come up with creative and innovative solutions. The project was designed to challenge students’ ability to find viable solutions as well as heighten their awareness of other cultures and attitudes both in business and in communication. They used the IT platform to learn about new tools and methods of idea generation and to get in contact with peers from other countries. Using web 2.0 technologies, such as the Social Innovation Camp online platform (See point 4 of the methodology) they could interact with their teammates as well as consult with business volunteers and learn more about the subject matter. Thanks to this tool, students could meet virtually before the event and already start to create ideas and get ready for the European Challenge.

### 3. Project Outcomes & Results

The consortium managed to exceed the expected quantitative results for the period. The main outcomes described below:

- The following table provides the main results for the 3 years of implementation. **Overall the project impacted 9877 students (127% of the overall goal). The target for teachers (390) and business volunteers' participation (390) was already exceeded in the first two years of implementation. More than 1000 teachers (259%) and 1500 business volunteers (389%) took part in the programme.**

	Students	Volunteers	Jury members	Total volunteers	Schools	Teachers	Solutions	Sponsors	National challenge
Year 1	1254	122	77	199	130	147	312	39	13
Year 2	3828	374	203	577	302	360	764	91	43
<b>Year 3</b>	<b>4795</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9877</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>1516</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>1010</b>	<b>1745</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>115</b>
%*	<b>127%</b>	<i>n.r.**</i>	<i>n.r.</i>	<b>389%</b>	222%	<b>259%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<i>n.r.</i>	<b>149%</b>
Overall target	7800	<i>n.r.</i>	<i>n.r.</i>	390	390	390	1500	<i>n.r.</i>	78

\*\**n.r.* Not relevant

- The [European Creativity & Innovation Challenge](#) website and [the Social Innovation Camp Online](#) platform
- 3 European Creativity & Innovation Challenges were implemented in 2010,2011 and 2012
- 2 new countries (Cyprus and Russia) joined the project and took part in the European Creativity & Innovation Challenges in 2010 and 2011
- Training and classroom materials for teachers and business volunteers
- Dissemination material on a National and European level (see *Dissemination paragraph*)

#### Main outcomes on a National level

Every National Camp involved minimum 5 schools and 100 students: 115 national camps took place and overall 9877 students from 864 schools participated. National partners used different procedures to select schools and students. Some of them focused on specific areas such as Denmark (South West of Jutland), Norway (Dokka, Lillehammer, Hamar and Gjøvik), Italy (Lombardia and Lazio regions) and Bulgaria (Sofia and surroundings); others set up specific criteria such as vocational schools with special classes on Economic and Business Administration (Estonia) or all vocational schools in the region (Belgium – Flanders). Some partners worked with schools already in their network while others, such as Slovakia and Czech Republic, involved new vocational schools for this specific project. The collective results gathered from national coordinators show that it is very important to have an official recognition from National Authorities, such as Ministry of Education, to get access to schools (Greece, Spain) and for results' dissemination.

The choice of each National Challenge was, in most of the cases, linked to the national contexts and to the current needs in terms of innovation. Some countries focused on social inclusion problems such as unemployment (Norway, Greece and Spain) or education (Czech Republic, Turkey and Denmark). Others focused on specific topics such as innovative solutions for food or social problems (Estonia and Romania), for health problems (Belgium - Flanders, Turkey), retail companies on the web (Portugal, Romania), while others focused on specific geographic areas and environment, challenging students in finding innovative solutions to reduce pollution (Italy and Spain) or to improve quality of life in city areas

(Bulgaria). Several challenges were also about creating services or marketing strategies for sponsors companies (Romania, Italy, Spain, etc..)

### **Main outcomes of the European challenges**

The first European Innovation & Creativity Challenge (also called Social Innovation Camp) took place in Brussels on 25-26 May 2010: 61 students from 14 countries participated. Students started with a session of brainstorming/idea generating (and ice-breaking) techniques and exercises. They were divided in international teams consisting of 5-6 students. After the students warmed up, they were given a challenge – the challenge of this first year was:

*“If you are given a chance to start a social enterprise to address a societal challenge, what would you do? Explain: the product or service your business would offer, the challenge it would tackle and how technology could help you achieve your goal.”*

The winning team ‘Creatology’ developed the concept of an automated agricultural system they called the ‘ATARO’. Their concept was a self-contained box which includes earth, vegetable seeds, nutrients and a complex system of electronic sensors to monitor growth and minimise the need for human intervention<sup>4</sup>. The ‘Creatology’ team was made up of students from Spain, Norway, Belgium, Romania and Bulgaria.

99 Students from 15 countries were involved in the second European Social Innovation Camp on May 18-20, 2011, Brussels. The students, aged 15-18 from vocational secondary schools representing 15 countries (the 13 partner countries plus Cyprus and Russia) were given the following challenge:

*“You are in the position to present a project to companies and governments that will result in reducing the rate of youth unemployment by 50%. Come up with a product, a service or a strategy that will attract major companies and governments to invest in solutions, to better prepare students for employment and to attract them to be more engaged in addressing social challenges for a better future”.*

Among 20 ideas, the winning team Social Achievers Corporation (SAC) developed a project to decrease unemployment of early school leavers and young unemployed. The SAC team was made up of students from Belgium, Czech Republic, Norway, Portugal and Spain.

The third European Creativity & Innovation Challenge took place in Brussels on 21-23<sup>rd</sup> May 2012. 74 students from 13 European Countries were involved helped to solve the challenge by 26 volunteer experts and 8 jury members. The challenge they had to solve was:

*“Europe’s strategy is to become the most competitive region in the world. In order to achieve this goal Europe is in need of more innovative entrepreneurial solutions that respond to the latest global issues. The application of science, technology and mathematics plays a critical role in building entrepreneurship. Come up with an innovative product or service that will improve Europe’s competitiveness in the world and will have a positive impact in society.”*

Among 15 ideas the winning team developed the concept of “GLORING” (global ring) with a chip that will contain all the necessary information and data substituting an identity card and a wallet hence facilitating everyday life. The Gloring team was made up of students from Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Norway and Turkey.

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<sup>4</sup> A summary of all winning solutions is available in the “Catalogue of the Best Solutions 2010” 2011 and 2012

**Figure 5. Awards ceremony of the 2012 European Social Innovation Camp**



### Dissemination outcomes

Dissemination products were produced by all partners at national level and at European level. Media coverage of all events was guaranteed by the partners as well as exploitation of the results. We realised several publications: a detailed [brochure](#) with the description of the project, its main objectives and targets and the “[Catalogue of Best Solutions 2010](#)”, [2011](#) and [2012](#). The catalogues contain the best national solutions from the 13 partners’ countries and the best solutions of the Social Innovation Camps.



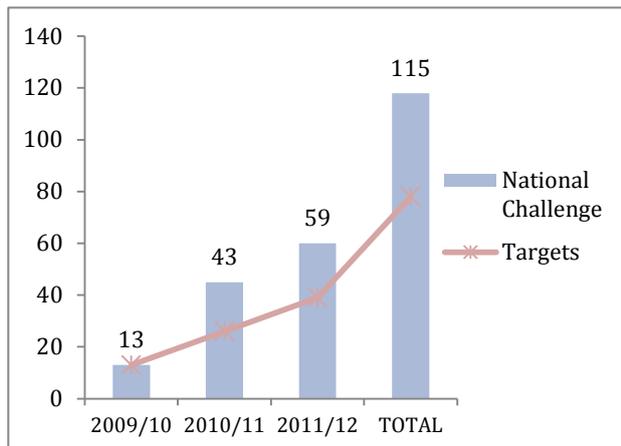
**Figure 5: Dissemination products 2010 – 2011 - 2012**

The other dissemination products at European level are:

- The project website, <http://ecic.ja-ye.org>, which contains useful information about the competitions and all dissemination materials from previous events. In the website is also available a Media corner with publications, press releases, evaluations and statistics about the project and the calendar of all events.
- For the purpose of the online competition the consortium created [the Social Innovation Camp Online](#) platform.
- European competitions [videos](#), available on JA-YE YouTube channel and on the ECIC website. 52 official videos of National Challenges<sup>5</sup>.
- The ECIC newsletter. The newsletter is distributed through a mailing list of 2000 contacts at European level and through 13 national mailing lists. 9 essays have already been distributed so far.

<sup>5</sup> The national videos are available on the partners’ websites.

### Breakdown of outcomes and results

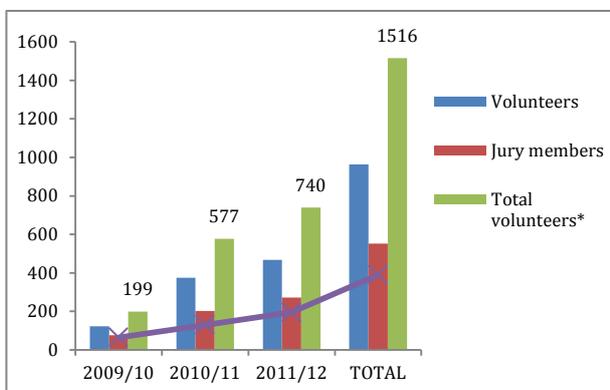
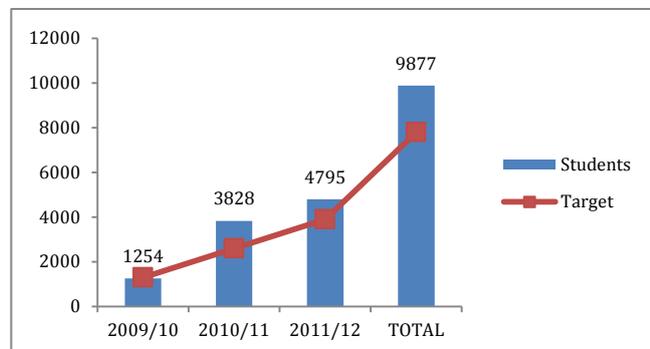


Over the three years of implementation more than 100 national challenges were implemented in the 13 participating countries. This number is much higher than the initial target of 79 foreseen by the project. All countries implemented the 6 challenges they were supposed to do and few countries realised more than that such as Spain (which organised 5 challenges in the last year of implementation, with a total of 10 challenges) or Bulgaria that applied the Innovation Camp model into individual school, realising 37 Challenges in the three years.

#### The Bulgarian Model

To reach out students in vocational schools throughout the entire country, JA Bulgaria set up an innovative methodology for delivering innovation camps. In this last year of implementation the first round of camps was implemented in 19 schools around the country. They were locally coordinated by teachers in the respective school with the active support of the ECIC project manager for Bulgaria. The schools were included in the initiative on the basis of their interest, availability of active and committed teachers, and availability of the necessary technical equipment. The 19 initiatives were also strategically scheduled within the Global Entrepreneurship Week 2011. Its host for Bulgaria was Junior Achievement Bulgaria for the fourth year in a row. The first round was included also an online individual competition for all interested students. The winning teams of the schools camps and the individual competition finalists were selected to take part in the national final.

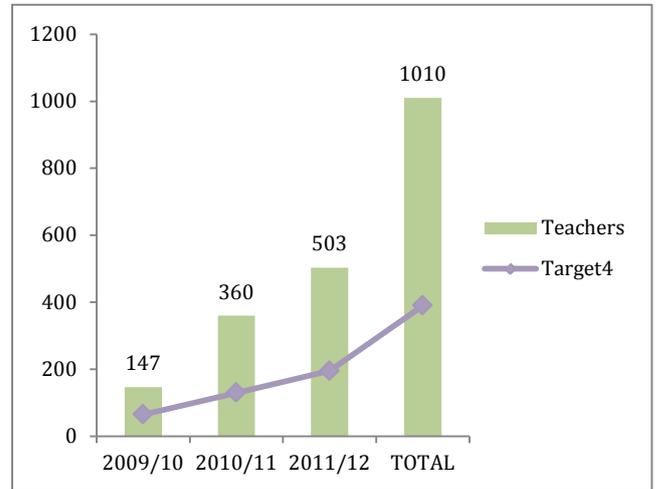
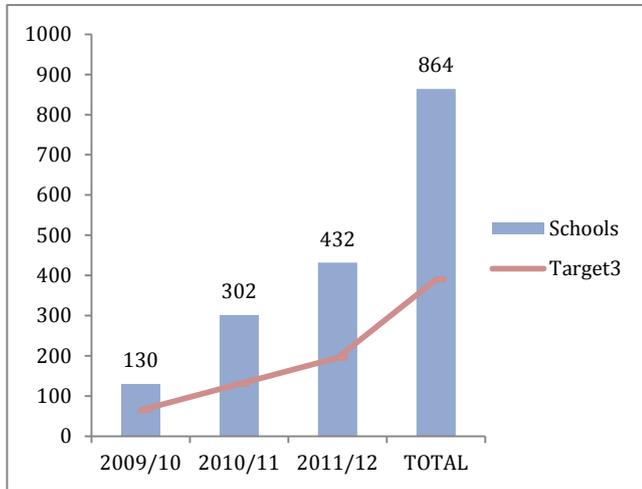
Over these 3 school years ECIC involved almost 10,000 from across Europe: 1,250 in the first year, 3,800 in the second year and almost 5,000 in the third year, showing a growing interest in the programme. The target of 7,800 was highly surpassed in the last year of implementation.



390 business volunteers were targeted for this programme but more than 300 sponsors at national level and 3 main sponsors at European level signed up to support ECIC activities and more than 1,500 volunteers coming from the business, public administration, academia and social partners took part in the initiatives: around 1,000 as business advisors for the students and 500 executives and jury members

The other actor which is crucial for the success of the programme are vocational schools and teachers. As shown in the next figure, almost 900 schools signed up for ECIC during these 3 years. The results were much higher than the initial target of 390 schools.

The same result can be seen also when looking at teachers' participation which reached 1,000 in the last year (see next figure).



### Results from the final evaluation

The ECIC approach foresaw yearly evaluations at country level performed after each event by our national coordinators and a final evaluation realized by JA Bulgaria in cooperation with JA-YE Europe and gathers together the main results from the evaluations of the 3 European Innovation & Creativity Challenges. 230 Students from the 13 participating countries took part in the European Finals<sup>6</sup>. Out of these 230, 54 replied to the final evaluation in 2010, 76 in 2011 and 61 in 2012.

The main outcomes from the evaluation (short term outcomes) are:

- Overall participants feel very positive about their experience with ECIC, with **more than 80% indicating they would highly recommend this initiative to a friend**. This was mainly due to the way in which the programme had enabled students to develop their communication, teamwork and problem solving skills.
- **ECIC participants have a keen interest in knowing about other cultures** and they felt that the programme, through multi-cultural teamwork has improved their interest in this area.
- More than **95% of participants** in the two last year of implementation have stated that **this experience motivated to learn and achieve more in their careers**.
- **More than 1,500 business volunteers took part in ECIC activities as business advisors or jury members**. Students felt that it was very important for them to meet with people coming from the world of work and that the support of business mentors facilitated the ideas generation and finding of solutions to the challenges

### Long Term Impact:

The findings are telling us that students taking part in our programmes have: greater appreciation of their skills and the opportunities available to them after leaving school, better

<sup>6</sup> Out of these 230, 54 replied to the final evaluation in 2010, 76 in 2011 and 61 in 2012

future earnings; are more passionate about their jobs, more successful in their careers, more likely to get involved in voluntary work and twice as likely to start a business. Overall, alumni felt that this experience made them develop their skills in an innovative way and they feel more confident in thinking about starting their own business when they will finish their studies. Our teachers said that the programme helped their students in gaining confidence in creating and presenting their ideas and it was a great stimulation for students and could help reducing drop-outs. Experience like ECIC help teachers to use more innovative teaching methods and give students a real working experience to put in practice their theoretical knowledge.

The following figures present the most common words used by students in the evaluation



## 4. Partnerships

The ECIC network brought together a broad selection of professionals and resources that complement each other. The consortium contained 15 partners from 13 countries. JA-YE Europe, the coordinator, represents Europe's largest network of entrepreneurship education providers, working with over 150,000 business volunteers and 80,000 teachers and delivery programmes to over 3 million students across 38 European countries every year. JA-YE was managing the project from its headquarter in Brussels and was responsible for the training-the trainers session and the overall coordination of the national events together with the European Innovation Camp. JA-YE Europe was also responsible for the consolidation and dissemination of the results.

The other partners JA-YE Europe, JA-YE Norway, JA Romania, VLAJO, JA Bulgaria, JA Slovakia, JA Estonia, JA Greece, JA Portugal, JA-YE Italy, JA Spain, JA Turkey, YE Denmark, JA Czech Republic are all experts in entrepreneurial education in their country. They were responsible for the local implementation of the programme and organising national delegations for the European event. They were also responsible for the consolidation and dissemination of the results at local and national level.

The 15<sup>th</sup> partner was EUROCHAMBRES, the European Network of Chamber of Commerce. As a Network EUROCHAMBRES was offering networking' and 'awareness' support on the ground in the 13 partnering countries and promoting the project's activities through its network. EUROCHAMBRES also encouraged business people to get involved as volunteers or judges in the national and European events.

Several networking activities were organised to provide the cross-fertilisation that lied at the heart of the idea behind the project and also generated the concept of a group culture for the partners. Networking activities were designed to enhance the co-ordination and co-operation of the consortium.

The consortium had 7 main networking activities not including management, such as:

1. Network Progress Meetings organized for sharing ideas and best practices (one per year + the Kick off Meeting).
2. IT platform – website to connect teachers and volunteers as well as students
3. Electronic newsletters – to share best practice
4. European Creativity and Innovation Challenge that take place every year. The Challenge, beside its main aim was also an opportunity for partners, students, teachers, business volunteers as well as external stakeholders to meet, share ideas and best practice and celebrate students success
5. Structured and non-structured online communication
6. Training and induction for trainers, teachers and business people
7. 115 National Creativity and Innovation Camps

Three main private sector partners have supported the project: Hewlett Packard ([HP](#)), General Electric Foundation ([GE Foundation](#)) and [Intel](#). The European events were also sponsored and supported by other partners: in 2010 [EUROCHAMBRES](#), [CSR Europe](#) and [EurActiv.com](#) and in 2011 and 2012 EUROCHAMBRES and EurActiv.com.

All national partners have involved one or more private partners in their national events as sponsors or supporters.

### **The experience of working together**

Management, information, communication and exchange of ideas were always a great challenge in a consortium of this size. The partners said that the cooperation within the consortium has been an enjoyable and productive experience. This positive expertise was transferred to other partners who joined the project later (in the occasion of the European Innovation Challenge). Partners have shown interest and commitment in the project and used all networking activities to share ideas and to build a shared commitment and approach to ECIC.

### **Geographical coverage**

The large geographical coverage of this consortium was an important success factor for the project. Our beneficiaries took full advantage of this coverage. Students and teachers enjoyed working in such an international environment and they had the opportunity to learn different cultures and understand the diversity.

### **Partnerships with other international organisations**

The project has received positive feedback and interest from other organisations. 2 new organisations joined the project in the first year and a half of implementation: JA Cyprus and JA Russia in the occasion of the European Innovation Challenge. During the first ECIC we also hosted experts from JA California (USA) who came to Brussels to see the students in action. They showed great interest in replicating this project in the USA.

## 5. Plans for the Future

The project was on schedule in its implementation and it was completed according to the plan. The impact of the project was quite high seen the interest expressed by vocational schools and sponsors in supporting the activities at national and European level.

The programme was so well received by JA-YE member organisations and after the first year of implementation, it has been agreed that this methodology would become a core activity of JA-YE programmes and would be used in several other programmes.

At the moment 24 organisations in Europe are running Innovation Camps (IC) in different contexts and in all age levels (elementary, middle grades, secondary and university/graduate), reaching more than 81,000 students in 2011-2012<sup>7</sup>. This number is increasing every year which proves the interest to organize more activities like this.

The consortium discussed several actions to include the IC methodology into JA-YE core programmes such as the Company Programme by organising a camp throughout the school year to encourage students to apply in other JA-YE programmes. Another possible activity would be to use the Bulgarian model and implement IC as a school activity or to run the camps in sponsors companies offices to give students the possibility to have a creative and innovative experience in a real working environment.

Several projects at European level use the IC methodology as one of their core activities. One of this is the [Global Enterprise Project](#) (GEP). The project is implemented by JA-YE in partnership with [European Schoolnet](#) and the [European Round Table of Industrialists](#). 18 of the major European industries are supporting the project and providing business volunteers. GEP aims to promote greater understanding and awareness among young people about globalisation, entrepreneurship and the skills they need to succeed in the global economy through classroom activities and National and International Camps focusing on international cooperation. During the 3-year initiative, 40,000 young people from 20 countries, between the ages of 15 and 18, will have the opportunity to try their hand at enterprise, learn valuable entrepreneurial skills and apply their knowledge in new ways.

Another international programme using the IC methodology is the STEM Innovation Camp. The Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Innovation Camp is an initiative developed through a partnership between Research in Motion (RIM) Blackberry and Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Europe. The programme will run in 14 countries and aims at reaching 1,000 secondary school students.

In the STEM field another JA-YE programme is using the IC methodology: [Sci-tech Challenge](#). Sci-tech Challenge is designed to motivate students, aged 15-18, to consider Maths, Science, Technology (MST)-oriented careers, raise their awareness of the importance of their MST skills and how they can be applied in enterprising ways to tackle the challenges of tomorrow and is implemented by JA-YE in 9 countries in partnership with ExxonMobil.

Thanks to the support of the European Commission the Innovation Camps are now among most successful activities of the JA-YE network.

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<sup>7</sup> This number includes also the 5,000 from ECIC

## 6. Contribution to EU policies

**LLP-Obj-e** The Creativity and Innovation Challenge was a fresh educational approach that nurtures entrepreneurship by motivating young people to be inventive. They competed in a positive way through a motivational learning-by-doing experience. The participants explored the many new career opportunities that modern business offers, particularly in the areas of science and technology. Teaching entrepreneurship involving volunteers from the business sector naturally bred creativity and innovation. Students loved to be creative and they need guidance and encouragement in how to take initiative with their ideas. The possibility to participate in national and international Creativity and Innovation Challenges and to work with students and business volunteers from other countries was daunting but motivating at the same time. We all know that entrepreneurship in education is not just about running a business. It is about creativity, self-realisation, learning new things, leadership, taking risk, business and e-skills, financial literacy, ethics, citizenship and employability. Through this project students enhanced those all-important transversal skills which cut horizontally across all sectors and vertically across all jobs from entry level to chief executive officer.

**LLP-Obj-a** The project aimed to train teachers in vocational schools in student-centred teaching methods such as learning-by-doing, interactive learning, group work, deductive reasoning, IT-enhanced content in order to ensure that the educational experience provided to students is as attractive, relevant and effective as possible. It also connected educators across borders giving them opportunities to share and bring more ideas into the classroom.

**LLP-Obj-I** Through the project, students gained practical essential life-skills by interacting and cooperating with others. They came to appreciate the diversity and benefits of doing business across European cultures. They developed new skills such as working as a team, leadership, making presentations, planning, financial control, taking responsibility and the need for commitment to quality and social responsibility. The Creativity & Innovation challenges they took part in were also aimed at raising their awareness on social innovation and social inclusion topics at local and European level such as, sustainability, inclusion, employment and unemployment, etc.

**LLP-Obj-f** The project targeted students from a diverse set of backgrounds and cultures. Such education tends to promote social cohesion as attracts “all types” of students, whether they are disadvantaged or not. Moreover, it encourages young people to use their initiative, to take action, and become more responsible for their own future (active citizenship); it raises awareness about cultural differences and encourages multiculturalism.

**LLP-Obj-c** Through enterprise activities, a taste of the engine that propels the busy world around them, we encouraged young people to see the relevance of what they were learning day after day, feel confident in their own creativity and abilities, and try thinking about things that they perhaps have never considered before. They applied what they were learning in school to their own projects. In this way we make education more attractive to young people and at the same time it improves the quality of teaching.

**LEO-Sp Obj-a** The project offered learning-by-doing method of teaching which has the power to motivate and raise self-esteem and confidence. By interaction with business people it also exposed young people to what large and small businesses really do and what job opportunities they offer. Without motivation and a real sense of how the world works, young people often make poor education choices; they don't understand why maths or science or languages are so important to their future prospects.

**LEO-Sp Obj-b** The project was a product of input from both educators and businesspeople. This partnership was what will ensure that the content never sleeps, is always up to date, relevant, and infused with the dynamism that we associate with entrepreneurship. This kind of participation brought many more businesses in touch with the next generation and ensure that young people have a much more realistic view of what business is all about. The project also required that the Ministries work together.

Among LLP Horizontal policies this application addresses:

**REF LEO-Net-2:** The project leveraged on a good practice model that was already tested in Norway and Romania to involve the other 11 European countries in this project. The model enforced each partner to link the VET schools and enterprises in a very motivational activity for students which will increase their creativity and innovation. After the beginning of the project 2 more countries had joined: Cyprus and Russia.

**CulDiv** The project gathered together partners from 13 different countries, therefore different cultural backgrounds and different languages. The partners learnt to work with each other, to understand each other, to communicate across language barriers. At the same time students from vocational schools learnt how to appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity.

Complementarity with other policies:

**ENTR** One of the most powerful elements of this project was the engagement of business people as volunteers, experts, judges, coaches and mentors. Working with business people directly students had the possibility to foster an understanding of the world of work and a spirit of entrepreneurship through the principle of "Learning by Doing". They were able to develop their interpersonal as well as problem-solving skills and learnt to work under very tight deadlines.

**ET2020**

- a. Ensuring more and more young people from vocational schools had access to entrepreneurship education.
- b. Ensuring that the educational experience provided was attractive and relevant. Student-centred activities which were highly interactive and involve a lot of external input were greatly appreciated by students.
- c. Creating an open learning environment where young people were free to pursue their education and personal development in creative ways.