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Harnessing Youth Potential: The YEC Project Final Conference

Held on October 21, 2021, the final conference of the Youth Employability Competences project offered a brief but packed schedule focusing on different aspects of employability, youth in the labour market and the project outcomes. The event was well attended by professionals from Europe and beyond in the fields of youth work, career guidance, academia and more.

After kicking off the event by learning about the backgrounds of everyone who joined, lead partner Ballymun Job Centre (Ireland) introduced the project and presented a video of members of the youth advisory board who shared their experiences and gave voice to the young people who participated in the project.



The final conference of the YEC project, October 21, 2021.

The external project evaluator, Finbarr Fitzpatrick, presented his findings on the impact, barriers, and enablers from utilizing advisory boards as a participatory method. Fitzpatrick identified a clear improvement in confidence and self-esteem among the young participants, who were treated as equals and co-owned the process. Both youth and employers in the



boards clearly gained a deeper understanding of what skills are required in today's labour market, why they are important and sought after and how to prove them.

We then welcomed keynote speaker Niall O'Higgins, a senior research specialist at the International Labour Organisation, who discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth unemployment. O'Higgins shared that young people, especially young women, have suffered much bigger falls in employment, translating into increased inactivity and NEET. He concluded by warning of the danger that short-term job (opportunity) loss will turn into long-term exclusion of young people from the labour market.

In the last session of the conference, participants selected a breakout room in which they could find out more about one of the intellectual outputs of the project.

For those who missed it, [click here](#) to check out the videos created for the event, offering a glimpse into our activities.

"By participating in the advisory board, I gained better communication techniques, a better understanding of the labour market, and a lot of confidence"

-Ana, participant of the Dublin youth advisory board

Next Steps

The project outputs are now being translated and designed, and will be made available, free of charge, to the public. This includes the **Methodological Guide**, the **Employability Competences Training Modules**, developed with the support of the advisory groups, the **Train the Trainer Programme**, and the **Competences Validation Guide**. All these will be packaged to allow users to pick and choose the content that best suits their needs. These materials can be found [on the project website](#) at the conclusion of the project.

We thank everyone involved in the project over the past two and a half years, particularly the young people who invested time and efforts participating in the advisory boards, along with the employers who kindly took part.

Partners of the YEC Project:



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