Dear Readers,

change, change and even more change on the way!

Yes, Young Innovations Europe is already making waves thanks to you: thousands of readers and counting, ongoing exposure through consistent media coverage and – hopefully – countless young people inspired and empowered to make change happen.

A couple of months ago we decided to start offering young people like ourselves the chance to get involved and actively contribute to YIE. This resulted in a free, youth-run, online course on ‘How to become a journalist’, which attracted hundreds of applications. The participants are now ready to receive their certificates and have already started proposing ideas for articles soon to appear in this magazine.

A contest is also being planned for later this year, with a view to create even more opportunities to participate and help make YIE the instrument young people truly need and refer to in order to make change happen across Europe. Keep reading then, information will be available shortly on our website.

Last but not least: we believe that young people are the most untapped resource on Earth when it comes to contribute to real change, both locally and nationally. And why not, even internationally. We would thus love to hear from you. Let us know whether YIE has been of any help, whether it has inspired you to take action and how useful it has been so far.

CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU…AND WE HOPE THAT YIE MAY HELP TOO!

www.younginnovationseurope.org

If you want to get involved, tell us about an innovation or for general enquiries, please send an email to: info@youthactionforchange.org
The Youth Food Movement (YFM) is a network of young farmers, cooks, artisans, and activists all aiming to contribute to the improvement of the food industry.

Driven by the desire to protect and promote all so-called ‘good’, ‘clean’ and ‘right’ products, this diverse set of people has attached itself to the philosophy of Slow Food, the movement born in Paris in 1989 and now with over 83,000 members in 122 countries.

The food should taste good; it should be produced in a clean way that does not harm the environment, animal welfare or our health; and food producers should receive fair compensation for their work, say the proponents of the movement.

YFM supports local and regional food systems based on the principles of justice and sustainability. Ultimately this leads to the promotion of fair and sustainable agricultural systems for both the producer and the consumer, recovering traditional techniques and strengthening local economies.

But what does ‘good, clean and right food’ mean in practice?

Good food is all about ensuring that good food tastes are maintained by choosing raw materials and production methods that do not undermine the naturalness of food. For the food to be clean, the environment must be respected. The whole cycle, including farming, animal husbandry, processing, marketing and consumption should be overhauled to produce a sustainable system. As an example, consumption should protect ecosystems and biodiversity while protecting the health of consumers and producers.

Right food – Pangea and Terra Madre

So what about ‘right’? Well, social justice must be pursued through the creation of decent working conditions and the generation of adequate rewards, says YFM, and through the practice of solidarity and respect for diverse cultural traditions.

The YFM is a platform for its members to exchange national information, experiences and ideas, and YFM runs a number of important projects.

YFM organizes ‘Pangea’, a project offering mentorship in sustainable and traditional production and cultivation methods to help encourage young people create alternatives to the industrialization of the food system.

Enthusiastic students, young farmers, and cooks are placed in short-term apprenticeship positions with producers, chefs, fishermen, brewers, and winemakers who are skilled in sustainable, artisanal production and cultivation methods.

Producers enjoy the experience of mentorship and receive help with their work. In return, apprentices learn rare and invaluable experiences relating to food philosophy and cultural identity.

YFM is also in charge of the International Terra Madre Youth Network, made of a collection of mostly student-led antennas which consider the social and environmental impacts of the food industry. In 2008 over 1000 youth delegates, producers, cooks, and academics came together to create the greatest Terra Madre meeting yet.

These young people from around the world have pledged their commitment to drive change within their own communities.

The YFM needs you!

The YFM is open to all young people who want to make a change in the food sector. Membership is a symbolic commitment to take action in your community.

From organizing workshops where good, clean, and fair food is prepared and shared in public spaces, to changing school cafeteria sourcing practices, to local and sustainable products, YFM members have made a difference.

Many have confronted agribusiness to demand change to production methods and workplace standards; some have even adopted a chef for their school. The ideas and methods are diverse and plentiful.

Eating healthy food is great for the mind and body and can also become a social activity, bringing people together to discuss important topics.

Giusy Proietti

Giusy is 28 years old and Italian. She studied Law at University La Sapienza in Rome and is passionate about international dynamics, whether political, economic or cultural.
Even if entrepreneurship is not always off the radar for youth, it seems like a daunting task and one so challenging that it discourages many. There are big questions: how does one find investors, how does one advertise, and how can one find customers? However, it is also true that today, more than ever before, investors are looking to focus on green, sustainable initiatives that contribute to social change and help communities and localities develop. European governments are renewing efforts for young entrepreneurs. There is even an Erasmus programme for young entrepreneurs aiming to help them acquire the skills needed to run small and medium-sized businesses.

A bright idea from Estonia

As in all businesses, there is no single way to becoming a successful young entrepreneur. But it is important to remember there are great examples to follow. One such success story is that of Karoli Hindriks, whose company, Good Mood, aims to make people’s lives safer: ONE REFLECTOR, ONE LIFE.

The story of Heatuju maaletooja OÜ or Good Mood is like a little fairytale” says Karoli Hindriks, Estonia’s youngest public inventor. What started as a high school project became a patented invention, won the ‘Best Student Company’ prize and has created opportunities for Estonian needleworkers. But more than all that, it is has helped make Estonia a safer place.

Hindriks is credited with two outstanding social innovations: pedestrian reflectors and knitted items using reflective thread. Soft pedestrian reflectors come in an endless variety of shapes and sizes and can be hung from clothing. Companies can have their logo printed on them, friends can order reflectors with funny messages as gifts, or you can have your own ideas turned into reality by the designers at Good Mood.

The knitting range includes hats, mittens, scarves and leg warmers, in an attempt to turn fashion into safety for those long winter nights.

When asked why one should invest in Good Mood, Karoli Hindriks replies: “The idea of our product is to combine safety with fun – pedestrian reflectors are made to look cooler and trendier than what has been available up to now. It is a great business: with each product that we sell, we make the world a slightly safer place for somebody”.

Do you want to employ your creativity, challenge yourself, earn a living and change the world, all at the same time?

Have you ever considered starting a business of your own where you could do all this? Perhaps not, because according to a Eurostat report only 4% of European youth between the ages of 15 and 24 are self-employed.

Good Mood
info@goodmood.ee
www.goodmood.ee

Young Inventors International
www.younginventors.org
YII helps university students develop skills and networks to bring new ideas to the market

European Patent Office
www.epo.org
Information to register your invention

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs
www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu
Offers many opportunities for young entrepreneurs
Consulting

When practice makes perfect.

by Meryl Westlake

Testing the maxim that practice is as useful an educative method as theoretical learning, the now widely respected and established agency brought together a group of entrepreneurial spirits determined to turn ideas into reality whilst strengthening their career prospects.

Before, volunteer placements gave students the opportunity to gain experience, but as the economic downturn reduces opportunities and unpaid internships become unrealistic, so the prospects for initiatives like ConQuest are strengthened.

ConQuest is first of all a channel for theory indoctrination of business protocols that can sometimes reduce innovative thought. ConQuest has consulted on over 300 wide-ranging national and international projects in 11 years - ranging from food-market analysis to foreign-investment guidance.

And because ConQuest remains ‘not for profit’, it attracts big name firms looking to “working with passion.”

“experience in a pill”.

International Recognition

ConQuest has won the ‘excellence Award’ from the European Confederation of Junior Enterprises (JADE) on three occasions. It can also boast of the International Project Standard which JADE awards to international projects that are of the very best quality.

Such widespread recognition has propelled student-run consulting to the front of the agenda in Poland and ConQuest now finds itself amongst other student-led initiatives, including YPI and Consulex Law IT Consulting.

With Polish clients like Iglootech and Hanza’s, and the endorsement of institutions like Business Network International, it is unsurprising that Microsoft, Shell and Johnson & Johnson now do business with ConQuest. The endorsement of ConQuest by Siemens as a ‘partner worthy of trust’ sums up just how far this student project has come.

With continuing recognition of ConQuest’s innovation and professionalism the firm hopes to act as a beacon for young entrepreneurs willing to make a difference and attempt something new.

Meryl Westlake

An undergraduate degree in Literature steered Meryl towards an MSc in International Relations and thereby finding a practical way to consolidate two passions – communication and international affairs. Growing up in an international household gave birth to an obsession with travelling, adventure and eating the weirdest food on the menu. Working for the Agnis Trust has sparked her interest in conflict journalism and in cultural relations of all types. She currently lives in Nottingham, England.

European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs

www.yes.be

The association of young entrepreneurs throughout Europe, representing 40,000 members and focusing on the economic and social performance of young entrepreneurship in Europe.

YES Youth Entrepreneurship and Sustainability

www.yesweb.org

The YES Campaign strives to build the individual capacity of youth in order to create sustainable livelihoods and establish an entrepreneurial culture among young people.

Youth Business International

www.youthbusiness.org

A not-for-profit organisation that leads a global network of independent country initiatives helping young people start their own business.

Social Enterprise Europe Ltd.

www.socialenterpriseeurope.co.uk

Social Enterprise Europe Ltd provides services to develop and support Social Enterprise working with partners across Europe.
Many of us have thought about volunteering overseas. We all like to get our hands dirty helping those who need it most. It seems like such a simple goal, yet finding overseas volunteer opportunities can be a daunting process.

Most openings are available only to those with special skills and require you to volunteer for months at a time. If you do not have special skills and cannot give much time, short-term programmes can cost hundreds of euro a week. Although you really want to help, you cannot afford those kinds of costs. In the end, you are forced to dismiss the idea of volunteering overseas as unrealistic.

European Disaster Volunteers (EDV) does not think that volunteering is a naive dream reserved for a select few. EDV is a volunteer-driven registered charity that aids disaster-affected communities by providing relief and helping them achieve sustainable recovery.

There are no special skills required to volunteer with EDV. If you are over 18, have a solid work ethic and are willing to learn, you are qualified to work with us and led by skilled volunteer leaders, you can affect profound positive change in communities worldwide.

There is no fee of any kind to volunteer with EDV because no one should have to pay for the privilege of helping those affected by disasters. Volunteers working overseas will only be asked to pay their own travel and living expenses so that EDV can use donor money exclusively for projects. Living costs are kept as low as possible.

Empowering communities at home and abroad

EDV focuses on community-based, long-term disaster recovery. Volunteers work on projects ranging from rebuilding permanent homes to removing the mud from floods, to arts programmes to ease the stress of children. These programmes engage volunteers and meet the needs of the affected communities.

While strengthening the communities EDV partners with, these projects also change the volunteers who make them possible. They challenge volunteers to test the boundaries of what they are capable of achieving and remind us that the limits to our abilities tend to be self-imposed.

On deployment volunteers live in a community of international volunteers and work alongside affected communities, gaining first-hand insight into issues affecting the developing world. While volunteers might give up some creature comforts (hot showers and a private room, for example), the opportunity to be accepted into a new culture and live with people from all over the world is an invaluable opportunity to learn and grow.

Acknowledging our global impact

Volunteers working with EDV gain unique insights into the issues at work every day in the developing world. The end goal is that volunteers will take that social awareness home with them when they leave their projects and become agents of positive social change in their own communities.

Special emphasis is placed on the link between climate change and disaster. There is mounting evidence that climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of weather-related disasters. The effects of climate change also weaken communities, making them less able to resist and recover from disaster.

The sad irony of climate change is that the communities who have contributed the least to the problem stand to suffer the worst from its effects. Developing nations have emitted few greenhouse gases, yet they are already suffering droughts, floods, water shortages and increasing food insecurity as a result of climate change.

It is up to us to recognise that climate change has its roots in our hometowns and that what we do at home resonates worldwide. We all need to make a commitment to becoming better global citizens by curbing emissions and living responsible, sustainable lifestyles. Together, we can reduce climate change’s impact on communities half a world away.

Take action

EDV is a relatively new organisation, but it is run by long-term volunteer leaders who have years of experience in Thailand following the 2004 tsunami and Peru after an 8.0 earthquake in the city of Pisco. In both of these disaster zones, EDV founding members donated thousands of man-hours as volunteer leaders, and each has a unique story about how volunteering changed their lives.

The executive director, Andrew Chaggar, is a survivor of the 2004 Asia tsunami. The disaster nearly took his life and it took him seven months to recover from his injuries. As soon as he was able he returned to Thailand, eventually leading a team of volunteers who constructed 37 permanent homes for tsunami survivors.

The rest of the founding members have built schools for children who had been spending their school days in tents, cleared rubble to provide safe spaces for temporary houses, and constructed homes for families who lost loved ones in the 2008 Peru earthquake.

The experience as volunteer leaders is what motivated each of them to found EDV, being continually inspired by what volunteers can achieve.

Volunteers do not just drive projects overseas; they drive the organization as a whole. EDV volunteers run EDV’s fundraising events and are currently redesigning the organization’s website, among other jobs. So if you’re interested in working with EDV but cannot leave home, there is still a lot you can contribute to.

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Putting Green Entrepreneurship First

by Arnaud Houdmont

Despite the efforts currently underway to address the world’s most pressing sustainable development related issues, it is clear that tomorrow’s leaders will inherit huge challenges.

ACTORS SUCH AS GOVERNMENTS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND NGOs CANNOT TACKLE THESE CHALLENGES ALONE, AND ALTHOUGH THE LAST FEW DECADES HAVE SEEN AN EVOLUTION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR TOWARDS MORE ACCOUNTABILITY, CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICIES IMPLEMENTED BY LARGE COMPANIES DON’T GO FAR ENOUGH. TIME HAS COME FOR INDIVIDUALS, ENTREPRENEURS, COMMUNITIES AND GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS TO SHOW THE WAY.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen in December 2009 illustrated a lack of political will. To put it mildly, last year ended on a rather sour note in terms of ecology. Some might be claiming victory, but in the end – whether you believe climate change is a real issue or an elaborate scam – leaders in Copenhagen agreed on a compromise that will do nothing to meaningfully address the issue. It does nothing to please the sceptics either.

Nevertheless, we’re in 2010 now and regardless of our lackluster leaders, some individuals and companies are pushing the boat out and going full steam ahead with green initiatives. These entrepreneurs are not limiting themselves to addressing only ecological issues, but instead are joining forces to turn environmental and social challenges into business opportunities.

In light of the inability of governments and large corporations to meaningfully address the present social and environmental challenges, Generation Europe Foundation believes that today’s entrepreneurs and tomorrow’s decision-makers will pave the way for a more sustainable future. As these entrepreneurs are indispensable for the development of a more sustainable and equitable economy, and because they constitute a primary source for progress and innovation, it is imperative to take measures to empower them.

This is exactly what GEF intends to do.

Generation Europe Foundation...

Since 1995 Generation Europe Foundation (GEF) has been educating and empowering young people to be better informed about their rights and responsibilities as European citizens in a fast-changing world. GEF is committed to helping young Europeans shape their future and to facilitating mutual understanding among policy makers, decision-makers and tomorrow’s leaders. Young people are invited to join the GEF community which functions as a two-way communication platform where young people can interact, discuss and promote their ideas with each other and with public and corporate policy & decision makers. By communicating their views to the relevant stakeholders GEF ensures that their opinions are heard and taken into account so as to have a positive impact in society.

...and the Summit

By bringing together young people, entrepreneurs, policy-makers, non-profit organisations, the private sector and academia, the 2010 GEF Youth Summit on Green Entrepreneurship will facilitate dialogue and provide a platform for concrete support and orientation for today’s and tomorrow’s green entrepreneurs.

The Summit will take place under the Belgian Presidency of the European Union, with support from the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry. At the Summit and during the pre-Summit activities - including online research, workshops, discussions, a business competition and a cyber election - stakeholders will look specifically at how green entrepreneurship can contribute to tackling some of the most pressing problems of employment and sustainable development in Europe and beyond.

From the overarching perspective of young people, the Summit will focus on exploring the structures and mechanisms in place to help today’s green entrepreneurs flourish and prepare tomorrow’s green business leaders. In this respect, the aim is to come up with a vision of where we should be in 20 years and what concrete steps need to be taken now to reach that objective.

This will be done through in-depth exploration of two strands:

Enhancing youth employability through the spirit of entrepreneurship: this strand of the event will focus on whether education today is equipping young people with adequate skills and training to become successful green entrepreneurs, inspirational leaders and change makers.

Fostering an enabling environment for green enterprises: here, the focus will be on supporting existing entrepreneurs, how suited and supportive are policies at local, national and EU level, to the creation and development of enterprise, in particular green enterprise? What other structures and mechanisms are available to support the incubation and growth of such initiatives?

By building on existing initiatives and finding synergies between different actors in the field of green entrepreneurship, the summit aims to broker partnerships between green entrepreneurs, provide a platform for young people to express their views and present policy makers with the opportunity to engage with as many stakeholders as possible, with a view to promoting green entrepreneurship through improved policies.

The Process

Based on their participation in a series of online activities that will be organised in the months leading up to the Summit, 80 young people will be invited to Brussels on 8-10 December for the final event. Their selection will be based on points earned from their pre-Summit participation as well as a cyber election.

As part of the online activities, a business plan competition will be launched in the summer, which will reward excellent ideas and business plans of young people.

Shortlisted projects will be presented to a panel of business ‘angels’, investors and experts, giving these young entrepreneurs the opportunity to secure funding for their projects. During the process, all contestants will have access to mentoring and business coaching.

Young people from across the world aged 21 and under are invited to participate in the online activities, contribute to the research and hand in their plan for a green business!
Why going beyond Europe?

Today’s world is plagued by multiple crises, all interconnected in a way or another: a billion people without access to clean drinkable water, gradual depletion of natural resources owing to a growing population of seven billion people, climate change knowing no geographical boundaries.

Even if the consequences of these events are already visible, it goes without saying that the real bill will be paid by future generations.

‘What needs to be done?’

This was the question on which a group of committed enthusiasts focussed while drafting the project. Their answer was ostensibly simple: empower young people as future stakeholders and decision-makers in an increasingly interconnected world. Simultaneously, an understanding grew that global challenges required global action. The project subsequently became known as ‘Beyond Europe - perspectives for tomorrow’s world’.

In order to empower young people to tackle global challenges the project follows four major objectives:

• raising awareness
• stimulating participation
• encouraging multiplication
• cherishing diversity and a truly intercultural work environment

The way ahead

Current efforts underway are manifold. At the heart of an ambitious agenda is the achievement of the millennium Development Goals (mDGs). Case Study

Trips to India in June, South Africa in September and a conference in the Netherlands in November will assemble European, Indian and South African students to take up global challenges and focus on the MDCs. At the same time, global challenges such as climate change and energy will be addressed in so-called ‘One World Conventions’ in Europe, drawing together students for discussion and action. Youth exchanges with partners from Egypt and Palestine will address the issues of migration and inter-faith dialogue.

Furthermore, sustainability and new conflicts will be at the heart of conferences assembling European and US students. In more than a dozen events the project will bring together students from very different backgrounds and world regions to discuss, understand and develop further initiatives in light of global challenges.

Beyond Europe is the flagship project of AEGEE-Europe in the years 2010/11. Its aim is to empower young people in and outside Europe to tackle global challenges. The project website: www.beyondeurope.eu
There is a Muslim population of approximately 2 million in the United Kingdom, out of which roughly a quarter are young people. The hardships that the minority group’s young people deal with in everyday life may not seem apparent at first glance.

However, Mohammed Mamdani, who experienced alienation and isolation during his adolescence in the UK, was the first to raise awareness of the issue and take action in founding Muslim Youth Helpline (MYH).

Early in August 2001, with just a couple of pencils and sheets of paper, his father’s material support in the form of a telephone line and a great passion to make a difference and help his Muslim peers, 18-year-old Mohammed Mamdani launched MYH in the UK. The first year of MYH’s existence was named as a pilot year, during which Mamdani trained fourteen new peer counselors and made a strong foundation for the charity’s further development. Subsequently, after more than a year, in December 2002, MYH started functioning as an official service and was moved from Mohammed’s bedroom to its first office in Wembley Park. After one more year Mohammed extended MYH’s working hours, established a toll-free phone line and started paying its employees.

The story so far

In order to involve and support youth even more constructively, in October 2004 the new sister-website muslimyouth.net was created, the first Britain’s guidance for Muslim youngsters in the country. The site is run entirely by young people in order to promote direct cultural communication, cooperation and support. This MYH branch project lets young people learn more about various Muslims communities and their issues within the country.

The unique idea and a huge youth involvement in MYH did not go unnoticed. MYH has received several awards, including: the AOL Innovation in the Community Award 2003, National Council for Voluntary Youth Services Young Partners Award 2003, Phillip Lawrence Award 2003, Muslim News Community Development Award 2003, Muslim News Award for Excellence in Community, Investors in People Award, 2005, Community Care Award 2005, to name but a few.

Today MYH is a successful registered charity that provides sensitive services to Muslim youth living in the UK. It has dozens of trained male and female volunteers, who are well prepared to actively respond to clients’ inquiries via telephone, internet and regular mail. In order to avoid a generation gap or unfair judgment, all youth volunteers are 18-30 years old. “In all our work we aim to work to the highest standards of professionalism and integrity and employ the Islamic etiquettes of tolerance and non-judgment in dealing with all issues faced by young people”, says one of the volunteers.

Lending a hand

MYH is funded by various charities, private sponsors, government departments and donations from individuals. Every single intervention is of great importance since MYH is able to help over 30% of all those Muslims in need. Anyone who would like to make a donation is welcome to visit MYH’s website and do so.

Another way for young people to support MYH is to become a volunteer worker, or in other words, a helping hand for those who, in the challenging years of youth, are most in need of moral support through a compassionate conversation. MYH operators can save a life by convincing a fellow peer that suicide is not the answer to overcoming their misfortunes and helping them to see that life is very precious and beautiful in spite of the lows. In this way, MYH is a perfect place for young motivated people to grow and develop themselves.

“We work to promote peer support and provide young people with training and skills that will stay with them throughout their lives and have an impact on the wider community and society around them. We also hope to nurture the leadership skills of young people by putting them in positions of responsibility and decision making”, a representative of MYH declares.

Resource Box

Muslim Youth Helpline
www.myh.org.uk
info@myh.org.uk

Create your own helpline
www.childhelplineinternational.org
Despite having a children’s focus, these guidelines can help create any helpline

Get Funded
www.unaocyouth.org
Grants and support for youth-led dialogue activities from the UN Alliance of Civilizations