



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: NEW WAYS FORWARD

International Conference | 5th November 2014 | Auditorium 2

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

Context

Youth employment has been a major concern in many developed countries, particularly since the onset of the economic crisis, and in Portugal youth unemployment has persistently stayed above 35% for the past 3 years, peaking above 40% at the height of the economic crisis.

The international conference “Youth employment and social entrepreneurship: new ways forward”, within the scope of the Cidadania Ativa Programme, aimed at highlighting the importance of social investment and social entrepreneurship as tools to foster youth employment, to discuss how to make these tools more effective, to exchange views and experiences between policy makers and experts on the ways forward.

The conference also highlighted how the EEA Grants are already contributing to improve the employability of young people, and in this regard, a set of 21 projects supported by the Cidadania Ativa Programme was presented. These were recently selected under the field of intervention of “Youth employability and inclusion”, and will receive support totalling close to € 2.1 million.

Below we present the main conference conclusions. About 150 participants attended the conference during the course of the day, joined by a further 90 interested parties online, originating from civil society, the State, private sector and academia.



Opening session

Artur Santos Silva, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, underlined the need to foster social innovation and entrepreneurship as part of the response to the challenge presented by current youth unemployment levels, stressing that approximately 130 000 young people are currently unemployed, corresponding to an unemployment rate of about 35%, and referring to the importance of recent phenomena, such as the large number of young Portuguese people emigrating to other countries and the large number of NEETs (young people who are currently not in education, employment or training).

In light of this, he considered it important to provide young people with skills that are better suited to the labour market, by strengthening secondary education and vocational training, as well as continuing to reduce levels of early school leaving in Portugal. Unquestionably, the State will play a fundamental role in this process, and only with a robust economic recovery will it be possible to significantly lower youth unemployment, notwithstanding the important complementary role that civil society can play. At the same time, it is fundamental that civil society should take on new responsibilities in this area, namely through partnerships with the business world, thereby contributing to innovative and more effective solutions.

He concluded by stating that the governments of Portugal and the donor countries recognised civil society's potential for creating appropriate conditions for the employability of young people through a 50% reinforcement of the Cidadania Ativa Programme, which will be used entirely to address this problem. New services and skills need to be developed in Portugal, with the promotion of pilot schemes that can generate employment. At the same time, the 21 new projects funded by the Cidadania Ativa Programme in support of the employability and inclusion of young people have already created great expectations in this regard, as far as the continuation of the EEA Grants in this particular area is concerned.

Ingvild Stub, the State Secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, considered the conference to be timely, and highlighted the participation of a broad range of interested stakeholders, and the need for the social sector to work with the private sector in creating new employment opportunities, through social investment, innovation and entrepreneurship. She asked participants to consider the question of how, in view of the new programming period, the EEA Grants can best be used to improve the circumstances of young people in Portugal and in Europe as a whole.

She stressed the fundamental role played by the Internal Market, to which Norway also belongs, in creating growth and jobs, further underlining that increased competitiveness and growth is one of



Artur Santos Silva

He is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation since 2012, being previously a non-executive trustee. He is also Chairman of the Board of Directors of Banco BPI and Partex Oil & Gas (Holdings) Corporation.

He was Deputy Governor of the Bank of Portugal and Secretary of the Treasury in the 70's. Later, under his initiative, the Portuguese Society for Investment was created, the first private financial institution after the revolution of April 1974, which would become the first Portuguese private bank (BPI).

He held many positions including Chairman of the National Commission for the Commemoration of the Centennial of the Republic and President of the General Council of the University of Coimbra. He graduated in Law and completed the Stanford Executive Program.



Norway's five priorities in its strategy for cooperation with the European Union, with the question of youth employment being a very important consideration in this context.

She further stressed the importance of policies and actions that prevent young people from becoming ever more excluded from the labour market. The transition from education to the labour market has to be facilitated through close cooperation between actors. In the next programming period, Norway intends to focus the intervention of the EEA Grants more on the NEETs and young people from particularly vulnerable groups, by significantly increasing the support given to traineeships, entrepreneurship, innovation and the promotion of mobility in the labour market.



Ingvild Stub

The State Secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2013, representing the Conservative Party, she has taken different positions in the political sphere including political advisor for the Conservative Party Parliamentary Group and head of information for the European Movement in Norway.

She holds a Master of Science in EU Policy Making from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a Master in Political Science from the University of Oslo.

Pedro Mota Soares, the Portuguese Minister of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security, referred some of the recent figures showing a fall in unemployment in Portugal, which, nonetheless, still remains at very high levels. 200 000 new jobs were created in the last six quarters, and a broad social dialogue between the government and its partners has been essential in achieving this result. He then went on to mention that the government had introduced important measures in terms of



Pedro Mota Soares

Portuguese Minister of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security on the 19th Constitutional Government (since 2011).

Elected Member of Parliament during the 10th parliamentary term (2005-2009), he served as Leader of the Democratic and Social Centre - People's Party (CDS-PP) Parliamentary Group, and previously, as Deputy Parliamentary Group Leader. He was Chairman of *Juventude Popular*, CDS/PP's youth organisation (1996-1999), Secretary-General of the CDS/PP party (2002-2005), CDS/PP party's Deputy Leader and Vice-Chairman of the European Young Conservatives.

unemployment benefits, microfinance and the promotion of employment. The Portuguese economy and the labour market are recovering, but there is still a long way to go. For the future, he highlighted the European Youth Guarantee Initiative, under which Portugal will be provided with funding amounting to €1 300 million.

He further stressed the importance of creating solidarity networks that focus on people in need. Public investment in innovative solutions and new answers for solving the country's social problems, increasingly provided by civil society actors, will make it possible to work in partnership on tackling structural problems with specifically directed responses, which, in many cases, are better than the ones that are offered only by the public services. In conclusion, social enterprises play a vital role that must continue to be stimulated, in order to create a more sustainable future for Portugal.



Setting the scene: new approaches to job creation

Stéphane Carcillo, a Senior Economist at the OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, spoke about the challenges facing inactive and unemployed young people in Europe and Portugal. The NEETs are today an important challenge at both the national and the European level: it should be stressed that 80% of these young people have not completed a higher education course and that 40% have had no more than nine years of school education. Many of them come from disadvantaged households or have parents with low academic skills. In many cases, they lack the basic skills needed to start their own businesses, or even to seek employment. Such circumstances represent a major obstacle to social mobility.

An important conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that it is essential to intervene with children at preschool and primary school age. The development of basic skills, as well as behaviours and motivations that favour integration, will have a huge impact on the future of children living under such circumstances. Their well-being can greatly benefit from innovative school curricula, support at school (including vocational training), flexible learning and vocational guidance programmes, and preventive health programmes relating to risk behaviour. Another of the main challenges is to identify and intervene in the area of young people at risk, and, to be able to do this, it is important to invest in quality training and to make sure that such interventions reach those who need them, through the involvement of schools and families.

As far as the Youth Guarantee initiative is concerned, he considered that it is useful for young people who have dropped out of school, but stressed that its successful implementation will depend on the quality of local actions, and that, for this reason, it is fundamental to create robust local partnerships and to ensure that any strategy includes interventions with young children.

Rocio Nogales, the managing director of the EMES European Research Network, spoke about the role of civil society in the promotion of employment through innovative approaches. She underlined the importance of creating forums for debate and the exchange of ideas on this theme, in order to disseminate best practices and develop a concept that 20 years ago was not yet even spoken about.

Many young people are among the long-term unemployed (jobless for over a year), which is profoundly serious for all those who find themselves in such circumstances, as well as for their families and communities. There are many different approaches to this problem, at the level of public policies, but the long-term sustainability of such approaches is not always guaranteed; and, today, initiatives designed to promote youth empowerment and the development of entrepreneurship that come out of the communities themselves are an increasingly common approach for meeting the social needs created by the endemic problem of youth unemployment.



Stéphane Carcillo

Senior Economist at the Social Policy Division of the OECD, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, where he works primarily on youth policies and social programmes. Research Fellow in the Department of Economics at Sciences Po (Paris) and at IZA Bonn. He was previously an advisor to the French Minister for the Economy, Finance and Employment and an economist in the Fiscal Affairs Department at the International Monetary Fund. Published many research papers on the impact of labour market institutions and employment policies. He is the co-author, with Pierre Cahuc and André Zylberberg, of the second edition of *Labour Economics* at the MIT Press (2014).



While pointing out possible paths for future development, she stressed the emergence of a new stratum in the economy, with a different set of values to those that are generally associated with economic activities and are embodied by new types of social enterprises with innovative characteristics. At the same time, social innovations are not exclusive to civil society, since they are also created by the public and private sectors. Recently, the social innovations implemented by the public authorities have attributed an ever greater role to the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders in the design and implementation of solutions for social needs, by encouraging participatory processes and empowering the aforementioned stakeholders.



Rocio Nogales

Managing Director of the EMES European Research Network since 2004. In charge of preparing and coordinating international research projects, international research conferences, PhD Summer Schools and international partnerships. She has done consultancy and advisory work for international organizations like the OECD and the UNDP on various topics related to resource mobilization for social enterprises; to social enterprises in emerging countries; to the contribution of social enterprises to employment creation; and to social enterprise training and teaching. Member of the Experts' Group on Social Entrepreneurship from the European Commission (GECES). Prior to EMES she worked in the cultural non-profit sector.

1st Panel: Inducing innovative partnerships between private sector and civil society

Jose Francisco de Conrado, the President of MicroBank (Spain), spoke about the activity of his institution, which is a leader in this area at the European level and has already granted roughly 300 000 micro-loans worth €1 700 million since 2008, in the context of a serious social and economic crisis in Spain. By granting credit to entrepreneurs, it promotes employment and economic development, and this activity has already had a remarkable social impact: it is estimated to have helped in creating or preserving over 125 000 jobs.



José Francisco de Conrado y Villalonga

President of MicroBank, the social bank created within the "la Caixa" bank to channel its microcredit activity. He was also behind the setting-up of the Financial Circle of the Balearic Islands, him being its general secretary, and the ABD Executives Association in the Islands, in which he is the Deputy Chairman. Former Executive Manager of "la Caixa" Community Projects and General Manager of "la Caixa" Foundation. Doctorate Cum Laude in Law.

He has always been involved with the cultural life of the Balearic Islands, having held office as Minister of Culture in its Regional Government. He also served as the Delegate of the Spanish Heritage Organisation (in charge of the restoration of the Almudaina Royal Palace). Member of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes.

He considers that the fact that there are countless entrepreneurs interested in starting their own business through recourse to a small loan has made microfinance extremely relevant for economic development. Typically, those who most seek microcredit are young entrepreneurs and university students with a business idea: These are entrepreneurs who are financially excluded from the traditional credit system, small entrepreneurs and micro enterprises, and families in material difficulties. 92% of European companies are small, and this group employs roughly 2/3 of the labour force, so that it is very important to satisfy their needs. He stressed that 30% of MicroBank's clients are aged between 18 and 35 years, this being the most common age group, many of whom are unemployed. It is also a viable activity: the percentage of borrowers who default on their loans is only 2.14%.



He concluded that microcredit is very relevant today. Large European institutions, such as the European Investment Fund, the Council of Europe Development Bank and the European Investment Bank, all recognise this fact and support MicroBank's activity. Among its partners are central and local public bodies, universities and business schools, professional associations and NGOs.



Katinka Greve Leiner

Director of Ferd Social Entrepreneurs since its establishment in 2009, she is also a board member at The Scientist Factory, The Change Factory and Den Sociale Kapitalfond (the Social Capital Fund in Denmark). Former Vice President of Innovation Norway (the governmental body on industrial development), heading Strategy and Communication, she was in charge of the Entrepreneurship area when Innovation Norway was established in 2002.

Previously a Communications consultant and head of Public Affairs at Burson-Marsteller Norway, she has also been a Political Advisor for the Labour Party's Parliamentary group, and senior engineer in the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate.

She concluded by stating that the considerable success that has already been achieved is a good illustration of the value that proximity to the market has for social entrepreneurship. Research shows that the Norwegian State has already saved roughly €1.4 million through each young person who, under the scope of the projects supported by FERD, has successfully completed the transition from education to the labour market or who has returned to studying.

Ingeborg Lykseth, the CEO of Lyk-z & Daughters (Norway), presented her organisation's social project, which is one of those supported by FERD: FROG Online Identity. FERD's recognition and financial support made it possible for this social entrepreneur, with 20 years' experience of working with children and young people at risk in various companies, to broaden her range of activities. Lyk-z & Daughters will soon be working with young people in Spain, where they will concentrate on long-term unemployed young people.

The project uses an online teaching platform. The methodology used provides the young people who are supported in this way with better opportunities to make the choices that are most suitable for their future. These young people, aged between 16 and 30, are trained over seven weeks with the aim of empowering them and providing them with the confidence and motivation to return to education or to join the labour market.



Ingeborg Lykseth emphasised the importance of replicating results: the training of young trainers who in turn train more young people makes it possible to rapidly reach a large number of beneficiaries. At the same time, each young person benefits from contacting with the young people who have already been trained, since these serve as a source of inspiration and motivation. Another factor that was stressed as critical for the development of a successful social entrepreneurship project was the importance of having a good plan of activity from the outset.



Ingeborg Lykseth

Social Entrepreneur, founder and manager of lyk-z & daughters in Norway, whose mission is to assist youths who have dropped out of school or the work-life to find their inherent qualities and unique abilities, and with this quickly return to school and work. She has been involved in several major projects in and outside Norway.

A trained psychiatrist, she has extensive experience with innovation, business development and entrepreneurship. She is also a lecturer, a process manager and coach. In 2012, she was named the Social Entrepreneur of the year in Norway, and received the prestigious Paul Harris Fellow award by Rotary International in June 2014, in recognition for her important work for young people.

Kevin Munday, Investment Director at Impetus – the Private Equity Foundation (United Kingdom), presented the venture philanthropy model which Impetus uses to approach the problem of youth unemployment. The most promising organisations working in this area are carefully selected, according to a set of 17 criteria. What Impetus looks for is efficient performance and scalability to reach the largest possible number of beneficiaries.

After this, the selected organisations are targeted and supported in order to better serve those in greatest need among children and young people, by helping them to obtain an education and enter the labour market. Measurable objectives are established for their performance in successive stages,

seeking to progressively increase the level of performance of each of the projects. Impetus’s services include management support, the pro bono provision of skills, and long-term financing.



Kevin Munday

Investment Director at Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation, and founding Director of ThinkForward, a London-based programme providing young people with long term and intensive support to ensure that they make a successful transition from school to work. ThinkForward is currently being incubated in Impetus, which is a leading proponent of venture philanthropy in UK.

He was namely Deputy Chief Executive of the UK’s National Council for Voluntary Youth Services and Chair of the British Youth Council. In 2008, he was named by The Guardian newspaper as one of the ‘Future 500’ leaders in public life, and in 2011 as one of the UK’s top 100 Social Entrepreneurs by Striding Out.

In the projects supported, great emphasis is given to early intervention and the prevention of early school leaving. It is also crucial that the skills transmitted and the needs of the labour market should be well adjusted to one another. “ThinkForward” is a good example of a supported project, tackling youth unemployment in London and already extending to 1 100 disadvantaged young people, with 14 trainers. It has a “support network”, which includes potential employers and specialised trainers who offer the possibility of individualised coaching. Equally important is a battery of quantified results, “payable” according to the number of successes. The programme’s ambition is to extend the project to cover the whole of the United Kingdom.



2nd Panel: Fostering social entrepreneurship



António Silva Mendes

Director for Education and Vocational Training at the Directorate-General Education & Culture in the European Commission. Responsible for the policies and the programme in the fields of school and adult education, vocational training as well as the general coordination and implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme.

He studied mechanical engineering at the University of Lisbon and was professor there for 10 years. Then he became director at the Ministry of Industry in Lisbon. He began his career at the European Commission in 1990 in DG Enterprise, where he took part in international negotiations. In the late 90's he moved to DG Human Resources and the Paymaster Office, before arriving at DG Education & Culture as Resources Director in 2006.

He considered that multisectoral measures will be needed, operating in close partnership with the business world in order to find new responses to the crisis, as well as to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in Europe. He also said that today Europe lags far behind the USA and China in this matter. Among the Commission's main initiatives relating to youth employment, he highlighted the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

António Miguel, the Coordinator of the Laboratory of Social Investment, highlighted the fact that social problems are extremely expensive for society, requiring both financial and non-financial resources, as well as a combination of innovative and traditional measures. Social innovation frequently occurs when either public or private financing is scarce and it is often made more difficult when the most relevant actors use most of their time and resources in fundraising activities, in detriment to the effective implementation of social projects.

Social problems are complex and require transversal and multidisciplinary solutions. In the last decade,

António Silva Mendes, the Director for Education and Vocational Training at the Directorate-General for Education & Culture in the European Commission, considered that the conference represented a good opportunity for discussing the best investment opportunities in providing a better education for the future. He considered that a better education does not automatically mean more jobs, given the current size of the problem – in Europe today, there are 26 million unemployed, many of them with low qualifications.

He underlined the significant misalignment between skills and opportunities in the labour market, which is also a geographical phenomenon, commonly known as the “brain drain”. He highlighted the Commission's new priority, not only to increase the number of jobs available in the European Union, but also to reform the education systems with a view to facilitating the transition from school to work, identifying and promoting the technical and entrepreneurial skills that are most needed in today's world.



António Miguel

He coordinates the Laboratory of Social Investment, a joint initiative of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship. Previously he was an analyst of social investment at the Social Finance UK, where he worked on international projects, notably in Canada, by supporting the development of Social Impact Bonds. He worked for two years at the first Social Impact Bond in Peterborough, acting on the ground with social organizations and investors, and with other Social Impact Bonds that promote youth employability.

He is an invited Professor of Microfinance and Innovative Social Finance Instruments at NOVA SBE; has a Master of Science in Business Administration from Católica Lisbon and a certificate in Corporate Finance from Chartered Institute for Securities and Investment.



the ever greater dialogue between the private, public and social sectors has encouraged the growth of innovation and social entrepreneurship. At the same time, a growing number of young people wish to work in organisations with a positive impact on society, and believe that organisations should reach beyond simply financial objectives.

He further stressed that social innovation initiatives should be based on the same premises as a start-up in the private sector, also highlighting the fact that social innovation is not an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, and that many interesting ideas and projects are being developed in Southern Europe, mentioning a number of examples in Portugal.



Debbie So

Programmes & Innovation Lead at Impact Hub Islington, and Co-Founder of Hub Youth Academy. Responsible for co-founding the Library Lab in 2011, a pop-up learning and upskilling accelerator, and since 2012, for the management of Impact Hub Islington, the first in a global network of co-working spaces focused on small businesses, freelancers, and entrepreneurs devoted to social entrepreneurship. She is also the co-founder of Hub Youth Academy, an accelerator for young entrepreneurs between 18-25 years old, which was shortlisted for the Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) Inspiring Youth Enterprise Award 2014.

She trained in Corporate Social Responsibility and Urban Design and later studied Sustainable Cities and Urban Planning.

Debbie So, responsible for the management of Impact Hub (United Kingdom), presented a global community of more than 60 co-working spaces, focusing on small companies, freelancers and entrepreneurs dedicated to social entrepreneurship, with 7 000 members in five continents, which has had great success in bringing together young talents and providing them with the skills needed to create businesses.

The work undertaken with these young people includes a seven-week "boot camp" with a year-long follow-up period during which ideas are exchanged over the Internet. Part innovation laboratory, part business incubator, and part community centre, Impact-Hub offers its members an ecosystem of resources, inspiration and opportunities for collaboration.

She gave as an example of one of the innovative projects produced by Impact-Hub the transformation of the traditional British red telephone booths into solar-powered charging stations for telephones, tablets and PCs.

3rd Panel: Sharing best practices over the EEA Grants

Luís Madureira Pires, the Manager of the Cidadania Ativa Programme at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, presented the results of the call for applications to support the employability and inclusion of young people, launched in March 2014, following the 50% reinforcement of funding awarded to the Cidadania Ativa Programme through the allocation of the entire EEA Grants reserve for Portugal. This call for applications was the largest one made by the Programme, with its corresponding field of intervention only having been created at the beginning of the year, in order to respond to the alarming situation of youth unemployment in Portugal.



Luís Madureira Pires

With a degree in Economic Sciences, he was part of the negotiating team for the accession of Portugal to the European Community since 1979. Between 1986 and 1995 he held the positions of Deputy Director General and then Director General for Regional Development and was responsible for managing the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund and for coordinating the implementation of EU structural funds in Portugal.

Since 1995 he is a consultant in regional planning and development and in EU Structural Funds, both in Portugal and in seven countries of Eastern Europe. He was a consultant of the Portuguese Administration, the European Commission, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme.

Since 2013 he is managing the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's Cidadania Ativa Programme, funded by the EEA Grants.

There was great interest in this call, with the demand for funding being over six times greater than the amount actually made available. 21 projects were chosen from a total of 149 applications, with the respective contracts currently being negotiated. Priority was given to choosing pilot projects that were genuinely innovative.

From the interest shown in this and other calls made by the Programme and from the high quality of many of the other applications, it can be concluded that a programme dedicated to NGOs with the characteristics of the Cidadania Ativa Programme is ideally suited to the needs and expectations of civil society in Portugal.

Luís Madureira Pires briefly presented the 21 projects relating to youth employability and inclusion, which involve capacity building for employability (8 projects), youth entrepreneurship (5 projects), and social and professional inclusion (8 projects). Some of these projects, directly involving a total of 71 bodies, are already beginning to be implemented.

All of these projects necessarily included the signing of a partnership agreement between different bodies, or, in other words, the promoter (which had to be an NGO) was obliged to establish links with other NGOs, private companies and/or public bodies. In many cases, these partnerships are indispensable for the implementation of a project – for example, when they involve internships in a business environment. He therefore concluded that the obligation to set up a partnership was essential for ensuring the quality and potential impact of the applications presented in the various calls organised by the Programme in 2013 and 2014.

Anabela Pedroso, President of CAIS Portugal, presented her organisation's CAHO project, which is supported by the Cidadania Ativa Programme under the scope of the calls launched in 2013 in the field of intervention "Promoting democratic values", and which is currently in progress.

This is one of several projects selected in 2013 with an impact on employability. The project has 368 beneficiaries, people in highly problematic situations marked by long-term unemployment and/or early school leaving, and it includes empowerment and awareness raising sessions, with



Anabela Pedroso

Specialist in Public Administration (PA) and e-Government, she is a Special Adviser at Deloitte Consulting, and the president of Cais since February 2013. She was president of the Subud Solidarity Association, which works in the education and support to children and young people at risk in Amadora.

She spent her entire career at PA until her retirement in 2010, participating in innovative projects and the introduction of new technologies in PA. Involved in cross-cutting modernization activities since 1996, she presided over the development of some of the most iconic projects in the area of administrative modernization ever carried out in Portugal. In 2009 she received the Best Leader Award in the category of PA. In 2010, she was named by TeK.sapo.pt as one of the five most influential women in Portugal in ICT.



guidance and monitoring of the participants, and training sessions for volunteers. CAIS is an organisation based on a broad cooperation network, with 21 companies supporting its projects. 2/3 of the organisation's income comes from this support, which greatly reduces its dependence on public subsidies.

She stressed that both small and large organisations are needed to tackle the serious social problems affecting Portugal, and that only through partnerships can a significant impact be achieved. By working with people in the field, CAIS has also seen that the unemployed want to contribute to the community and to be a part of it. The key to success with such people is their empowerment and continuous guidance.

Ingrid Schulerud, Ambassador of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke as a representative of the donor countries. She considered that the conference made it possible to underline the great potential of civil society in this matter and spoke about youth employability as a priority for the EEA Grants' next programming period.



Ingrid Schulerud

Currently responsible for overall policy planning and strategic dialogue with the sixteen Beneficiary States under the EEA and Norway Grants. The current granting period has a total budget of 1.78 billion Euros.

She has since 1988 worked in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with responsibilities connected to the Baltic States and Central Europe, bilateral relations, human rights, civil society funding and good governance issues.

She has served at the Norwegian Embassy in Budapest as Attaché and Embassy Secretary, and has held several positions in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

She stressed that the question of unemployment will not be solved through the support granted by the donor countries, but instead by the European governments and institutions, which are responsible for implementing measures that will provide a sustainable solution for this problem. Nevertheless, the EEA Grants can help to overcome the crisis by supporting good ideas. She also said that the complex question of unemployment calls for a variety of solutions. It is possible to help governments find new measures, establish partnerships and promote dialogue between institutions and sectors. The OECD has vast experience in this field and can be a strategic partner for the next programming period.

Ambassador Schulerud stressed the importance of close cooperation between schools and the private sector in supporting the process of transition from school to the workplace, seeking innovative solutions and adjusting skills to the actual needs that young people will have in their professional lives. In the next programming period, there will be a new area specifically dedicated to employment: while today there are specific areas for NGOs, innovation, grants, etc., in the future there will be more crossovers, with integrated and flexible solutions being encouraged when programmes and calls for applications are being designed. There will be programmes specifically dedicated to the employability and inclusion of young people.

As far as the calendar for the next round of grants is concerned, she indicated that it is still too early to know when this will start, since negotiations with the EU are still in progress regarding the overall framework. However, it is likely that specific negotiations with each country will begin next spring. In the case of youth employment, she challenged stakeholders to "think outside the box" and come up with innovative solutions and approaches to this vast economic and social problem.



Closing session

Isabel Mota, a member of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Board of Trustees, thanked all the conference participants for their presence. She mentioned that on that same day some encouraging statistics had been published showing a modest reduction in unemployment in Portugal. Yet, despite this, she considered it necessary to continue tackling this social scourge. The timing of this conference was, she said, extremely opportune.

She highlighted in particular the remarkable capacity demonstrated by civil society organisations for establishing partnerships in order to meet the extraordinary challenge of youth unemployment.

Among the key ideas for the day, she stressed the need for the private sector to become more involved in the problem and to stimulate the implementation of solutions in partnership with educational structures. Education continues to be the main response for solving the problem of youth unemployment.

More transversal and integrated solutions will also be needed to overcome such a complex challenge as that of the employability of young people. Aiming at simply mitigating the phenomenon of unemployment will not be enough. All stakeholders need to contribute, and the Portuguese government will invest in innovation and social entrepreneurship, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy.

Economic growth is the basis for the creation of employment in any country, but civil society plays a very important role: it contributes to innovative solutions and provides quality responses that are better adjusted to people's needs, thanks to its proximity to local communities. This is particularly true with regard to the support given to the less fortunate.

Finally, she stressed that it is important to measure the impact of the different initiatives, and that the Gulbenkian Foundation will also play a role in this process. Addressing the representatives of the donor countries, she underlined that the Foundation is very interested in continuing to invest in social projects with the potential to create employment.

The Gulbenkian Foundation considers social innovation to be a priority and seeks as much as possible to strengthen the efforts currently in progress, entering into dialogue with all stakeholders in order to find innovative solutions for this immense social problem.



Isabel Mota

A member of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Board of Trustees since 1999, she was also Administrator at Partex Oil and Gas Corporation (until 2007) and is currently a member of the Partex Oil and Gas (Holdings) Corporate Supervisory Committee.

She is a member of the Jury of the Jacques Delors Award, of the COTEC-BPI Innovation and Entrepreneurship Award, and of the Lisbon Catholic University Career Award. She is a member of the Portuguese Honorary Orders Council and also serves as an advisor to the Economic and Social Council of Portugal.

She served as Secretary of State for Planning and Regional Development in the XI and XII Constitutional Governments, with responsibilities over the negotiations on the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds for Portugal (1987-95). Previously, she was Deputy Director General of the Office for Foreign Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Finance and Counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Portugal in Brussels. She has a degree in Finance.