



Lifelong  
Learning  
Programme



# LABLEARNING

## MEDIA BASED EMPOWERMENT FOR DISENGAGED YOUTH



## THE LABLEARNING GUIDE COLLECTION



### NR 16

### Policy Paper

### What disengaged youth need

---

The LABlearning Guide Collection offers inspiration, tools and principles to establish empowermental media based learning facilities for disengaged youth.

The Guide Collection offers around 20 different guides, including the full collection of guide material. The media based learning initiatives are contributing to re-thinking learning and to the creation of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning opportunities for young people.

The LABlearning Guide Collection is synthesizing theory and practice from such approaches as media learning, game based learning, project based learning, entrepreneurial and community based learning. The Guide material emerges from extensive literature studies, the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network's 20 years of experience, as well as from LAB practice in Catalonia Spain, Holland, Italy and Denmark.



The LABlearning Guide Collection is produced by the Comenius LABlearning project 2011-13, funded by the European Commission. The material is openly available to all non-profit users. More information about the project and the partners on [www.LABlearning.eu](http://www.LABlearning.eu)



**Policy Paper**  
**What disengaged youth need**

The LABlearning project wish to send direct messages to member states and Commission educational policy-makers to encourage strong and urgent action towards offering 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and empowermental media laboratories for disengaged youth



*Responsible for the texts*  
Jan Gejel  
Stefano Kluzer  
Luca Botturi

*Responsible for final edition*  
Jan Gejel

Photos are from Catalan and Italian media labs

*LABlearning official contact*  
Mireia Masgrau  
[mireiamasgrau@gmail.com](mailto:mireiamasgrau@gmail.com)



Policy-maker!  
You really need  
to read this

---



.  
. . . **Policy Paper**  
**What disengaged youth need**

Dear policy-makers!

We know you are busy people, and we respect your efforts.  
Therefore our voice is clear, brief and direct.

**WHAT WE KNOW**

The new generations and their learning and work styles do not fit well with the traditional education system. An increasing mismatch is observed all over Europe.

What we sometimes forget is that the traditional education system does not fit well with the new labor markets either.

We know that an increasing number of young people belong to exclusion threatened groups, nowadays called disengaged youth, disadvantaged youth, NEET youth, including drop-outs, early school leavers and young people with poor educational outcomes.

We also know that adjustments to the education system is not enough, it will not work. It has been tried for decades, and there are few results from this adjustment strategy.

This is why we agree with the EU Commission's "We need to re-think education and learning".

Furthermore we know that throwing technology at these youth groups will not solve the problem either. The problem is lifestyles, learning styles and mentality, not technology in itself.

And therefore we agree with MIT Media LAB Mitch Resnick's "Access [to technology] is not enough".

Bottom line, we are talking about millions of young people in Europe not being able to contribute to their own lives or to European innovation and growth. Everybody agrees that Europe cannot accept and afford this.



**WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW, - OR DO WE?**

... is what to do about the increasing number of disengaged youth..  
At least we are not doing it.

Because, perhaps we do know. Experiments, research and projects along the last two decades point jointly towards: these young people need very different learning opportunities from traditional education. They need what we call 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and 21<sup>st</sup> century employment.

Open and explorative media laboratories are examples of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning with the capacity to re-engage and re-motivate even street youth, normally out of reach to formal education.

So, perhaps we sort of do know. We are just not doing it.

It can be estimated that 95% of educations in Europe are based on traditional industrial parameters and changing in turtle-like ways.

And the increasing budget cuts in education along with the increasing academification of education are not making the change processes easier.

The EU LABlearning project funded by the European Commission and similar initiatives have clearly demonstrated what works for these youth groups, documented in an extensive Guide Collection available from the project website.

The changes in education are urgent. Social reality is pushing forward at exponential speed, while education still discusses what to do at well-organized conferences.



You see the picture.

The cheetah at high speed, exponentially driving forward...

The turtle, surprised, "what happened?"...

Imagine what will happen in the next scenarios...

Pictures tell more than a thousand words sometimes.

What is needed is scaling up tremendously changes towards 21<sup>st</sup> century learning in the formal system and offering rich provisions of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, such as open media laboratories, in non-formal after-school settings.

The global Intel Computer Clubhouse Network has for 20 years demonstrated successfully how this can be done - in all sorts of communities and social contexts.

In Europe we need to learn from these 20 years of experience, and we need to go beyond after-school provisions and into the formal school system.

While oceans of academics in Europe are discussing learning theory, Intel Computer Clubhouse Network along with initiatives such as the EU LABlearning project have demonstrated in practice that these approaches work for disengaged youth.

We need fewer books and more practice.

The LABlearning project would like to support the European Commission's *re-thinking learning* mission.

We would like to do that by sending a number of clear messages to policy-makers in the member states and in the Commission.



.  
. .  
. . .

## POLICY MESSAGES

For national educational policy-makers

We encourage you to speed up 21<sup>st</sup> century learning in the formal education system, with a special focus on reaching disengaged youth

We encourage you to help schools and colleges in their efforts to make the educational processes more flexible to allow initiatives of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and in support of attracting and retaining disengaged youth

We encourage you to launch and fund systematic exploration of what 21<sup>st</sup> century learning means at different education levels and to sustain the results

We encourage you to help schools and colleges to mainstream the results of learning experiments for disengaged youth funded by the European Commission

We encourage you to fund 21<sup>st</sup> century learning ambassadors to speed up and support educational change in the different educational sectors, including in support of outreach to disengaged youth

We encourage you to celebrate strong and useful initiatives and to use them as demonstrations to other schools and colleges

We encourage you to support the establishment of non-formal open media laboratories in after-school settings (including evenings and weekends) for disengaged youth to help them build 21<sup>st</sup> century learning capacity outside the formal education system

Finally we encourage you to work closer with the European Commission in support of the implementation of the re-thinking learning mission



## For European educational policy-makers

We encourage you to pursue the re-thinking learning mission and to enforce the practical implementation through the European social and educational programs

We encourage you to make the European funding schemes more flexible towards experimentation and exploration to avoid the loss of freedom degrees as policies and priorities are transformed into Calls and funding procedures

We encourage you to ensure proper funding measures for special programs addressing the urgent needs of disengaged youth to build 21<sup>st</sup> century learning capacity and motivation- across the traditional sector programs and including formal as well as non-formal approaches

We encourage you to put pressure on the member states to remove obstacles to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning experimentation in the formal education system and to celebrate such initiatives among schools and colleges

We encourage you to put more focus on practical experimentation accompanied by field research and less focus on traditional academic research

Finally we encourage you to avoid the pressures of the “we must find new things to fund all the time to look modern and up to date” pitfalls: 21<sup>st</sup> century learning for disengaged youth should include funded experimentation and implementation for several decades; 95% of all European educations are not influenced by 21<sup>st</sup> century learning



- .
- .
- .

### . . . WHAT WE OFFER

The LABlearning resources offer the following services after the termination of the project:

*Collaboration with the Commission to form policy and funding measures for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning for disengaged youth*

*Counseling to the Commission, national educational authorities, to research groups and European networks on 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and media laboratories for disengaged youth*

*Collaboration with and counseling of European networks, projects and initiatives aiming to establish 21<sup>st</sup> century learning for disengaged youth*

For dialogues on these services, please contact directly  
Coordinator *Mireia Masgrau* on [mireiamasgrau@gmail.com](mailto:mireiamasgrau@gmail.com)

Co-coordinator *Jan Gejel* on [jan.gejel@skolekom.dk](mailto:jan.gejel@skolekom.dk)  
You will then be guided to the proper LABlearning resources persons or to resources in the LABlearning network.



- .
- .
- .
- .
- .

Much more on [www.LABlearning.eu](http://www.LABlearning.eu)

- .
- .
- .

The LABlearning consortium offers

**Counselling** on media laboratories for disengaged youth for national and European educational policy-makers

**Collaboration** on the establishment of media laboratories in formal and non-formal contexts for institutions and communities

**Training** in managing media laboratories for disengaged youth for teachers, mentors and youth workers

- .
- .
- .

The LABlearning consortium offers its services on non-profit basis and always links the media laboratories to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

Much more on [www.LABlearning.eu](http://www.LABlearning.eu)

- .
- .
- .

Front graphic: Lisbeth Stoettrup, sosuMedia Aarhus DK  
Illustration: Jan Gejel DK  
Photos: LABlearning Salt Catalonia ES

- .
- .
- .

# 21<sup>st</sup> century learning in action

·  
·  
·  
·  
·



## LABLEARNING



MEDIA BASED EMPOWERMENT  
FOR DISENGAGED YOUTH



Penja un video ▾



Experience the direct voices of the young people on



With English subtitles

·  
·  
·  
·  
·  
·  
·  
·  
·  
·  
·

The 37 minutes video **Joves i Futur** is created, designed and produced by young people in Salt-Girona Catalonia participating in the EU LABlearning project. Their work is much appreciated, as are their open statements in the video.

The project wishes to thank both the youth teams and the mentors working with them!

The video, other videos and 20 different LABlearning Guides are openly available on

[www.LABlearning.eu](http://www.LABlearning.eu)