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YUNUS SOCIAL BUSINESS CENTRE  
- UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE -

# YOUTH AND SOCIAL BUSINESS

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# CONTENTS

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- |            |      |   |
|------------|------|---|
| <b>01.</b> | P. 3 | Foreword  |
| <b>02.</b> | P. 4 | Youth and<br>Social Business  |
| <b>03.</b> | P. 5 | Phase 1.<br>Theoretical<br>Classes  |
| <b>04.</b> | P. 6 | Phase 2.<br>Inspirational meeting<br>and development of a<br>Social Business idea |
| <b>05.</b> | P. 7 | Phase 3.<br>Participation to<br>the call for ideas                                |
| <b>06.</b> | P. 8 | Results   |



# FOREWORD

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The economic crisis started in 2008 highlighted the need to re-think the organization of the whole society.

The understanding that the economic model pursued up to now is not always successful encouraged the emergence of innovative solutions oriented to a more sustainable economy.

In particular, one of the most critical consequences of the economic crisis has been the increase of youth unemployment. In Italy, the unemployment rate among people (15–24 years old) reached 42,7% in 2014 from 20,4% back in 2007 (Istat, 2015).

The percentage of young people (15–34 years old) not engaged in education, employment or training, the so-called NEET, reached 24% in 2014 from the 13.7% in 2007 (Istat, 2015).

Going beyond the numbers, one of the most severe consequences of the economic crisis has been the loss of self-confidence among young people, their decreasing trust in the future and in the possibility to realize their dreams and project of life.

Thus, it seems crucial to create activities and solutions in order to promote and encourage the engagement of young people in economic development, creating the conditions for their flourishing and the expression of the added value they can bring to society.

Starting from these considerations, the Yunus Social Business Centre University of Florence (YSBCUF) decided to consider young people among its priorities of intervention creating the project “Youth & Social Business”. “Youth & Social Business” is an educational project implemented in high-schools with the specific purpose to encourage the development of their own initiative and to increase their self-confidence by giving them the opportunity to play an active role in the society.



# YOUTH AND SOCIAL BUSINESS

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The aim of the project "Youth & Social Business" is twofold:

- A. to teach high-school students the basics of Social Business
- B. to develop a proactive attitude in the youth in order for them to successfully tackle the socio - environmental problems they face in everyday life

The project is divided in 3 phases:

1. Theoretical classes
2. Inspirational meeting and development of a Social Business idea
3. Participation to a call for Social Business ideas





# PHASE 1. THEORETICAL CLASSES

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In this phase the experts of the Yunus Social Business Centre University of Florence, together with their partner organizations, meet the high school students during their regular school schedule, in order to teach them the basics of Social Business.

The first lesson starts with some historical hints about Bangladesh and Nobel Prize Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus' life. After these preliminary information, the lesson focus on microcredit and its diffusion thanks to Yunus' engagement and the creation of the Grameen Bank. Then the students are then introduced to the concept of Social Business and to the Italian Social Enterprises.

Even if the lesson is theoretical, the YSBCUF's experts developed several solutions in order to make it participatory and interactive also through the use of visual and other multimedia tools. In addition to this, the experts make particular effort to encourage the students to ask questions and share comments.

The second lesson is a brainstorming facilitated by the YSBCUF's experts on the social or environmental problems surrounding the students. During this phase the students are encouraged to think about their society, to analyze it critically and to identify the main problems of their communities. The YSBCUF's staff during this phase collects in a list the main problems highlighted in each classroom, these lists are sent to the city's councilors responsible for social and youth policies.





# PHASE 2. INSPIRATIONAL MEETING AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL BUSINESS IDEA

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The second phase starts with a meeting with a social entrepreneur. The idea is to inspire the students, connecting them with some real experiences from their own territory. On one side this is made to increase youth awareness about what is surrounding them, on the other side it is useful to show businesses that are different from the traditional ones.

At this point of the educational project, the students are equipped with a theoretical background, a list of the problem of their city and one real example of Social Business. Now they are ready work on their own Social Business idea.

The planning phase starts with the explanation about what is the Business Model Canvas. During the fourth and the fifth classes, the students are divided into groups composed by 4/5 members and each group has to develop a Social Business idea starting from the list of problems identified during the second class.

In this phase the YSBCUF's experts act as mentors following the work of each group, answering to their questions and giving them some hints and advices in order to improve the students' proposals. The role of the experts is crucial since they have to encourage students' creativity providing also technical information to make the Social Business ideas feasible.





# PHASE 3. PARTICIPATION TO THE CALL FOR IDEAS

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The Social Business ideas elaborated by the students in the previous phase will participate to the call for ideas organized to award the best Social Business projects.

Each group of students provides a short video in which they present their Social Business idea. The video are published on the website of the YSBCUF where they can be voted. The winners of the contest are selected taking into account the popularity they had on the online vote and the mark received by the judges of the Commission composed by the representatives of the funding organizations and of the YSBCUF.

At the award ceremony all the students that took part to the educational project are invited as well as citizens, entrepreneurs and the councilor for youth and social policy of the City.

During the event the YSBCUF presents the main activities carried on in the framework of the educational project and the main results attained in terms of students' participation and the level of appreciation for the YSBCUF's experts and for the overall project.

The awards are decided by the funding organizations and the YSBCUF. Usually, the first prize is an international travel that gives to the students the opportunity to get in touch with Social Business models implemented abroad. Whenever possible, the students meet Nobel Prize Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus. The second prize is a national travel to visit national experiences of Social Business while the third prize is a voucher for the purchase of books.



# RESULTS

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The results presented in this section refer to the implementation of the educational program that took place in Pistoia within the framework of the Pistoia Social Business City Program from 2012 to 2014.

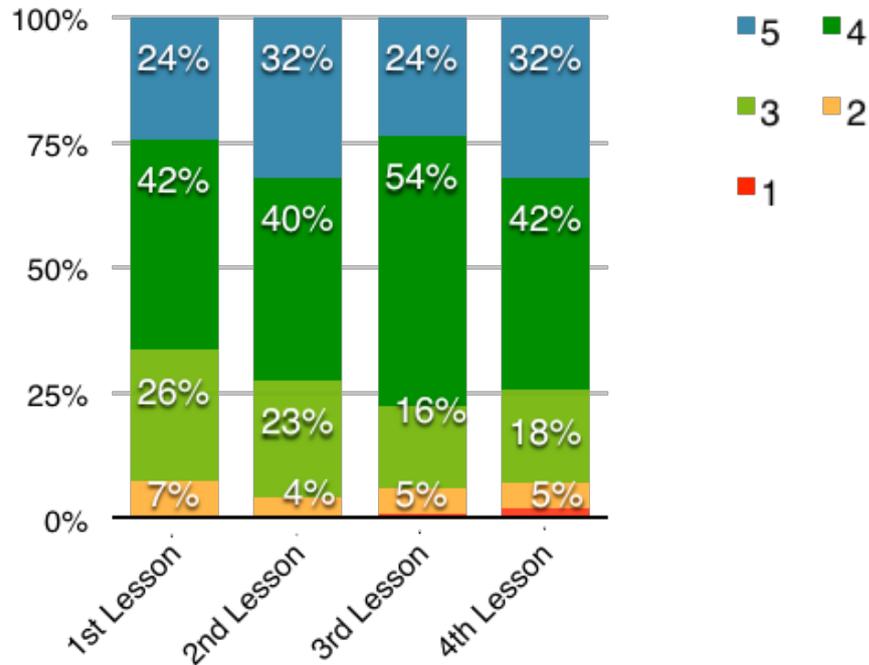
From 2015 a local actor the Social Business Lab Pistoia founded by the two local foundations (Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Pistoia e Pescia and Fondazione Un Raggio di Luce Onlus), decided to continue the educational project implementation, organizing the fourth edition of Youth & Social Business (2015-2016) with the collaboration of the Yunus Social Business Centre University of Florence.

In the last years the school of Pistoia welcomed favorably the educational project, demonstrating an increasing interest: the students that took part to the first edition (2012 - 2013) were 261, while the students involved in the current edition (2015 - 2016) are 550.

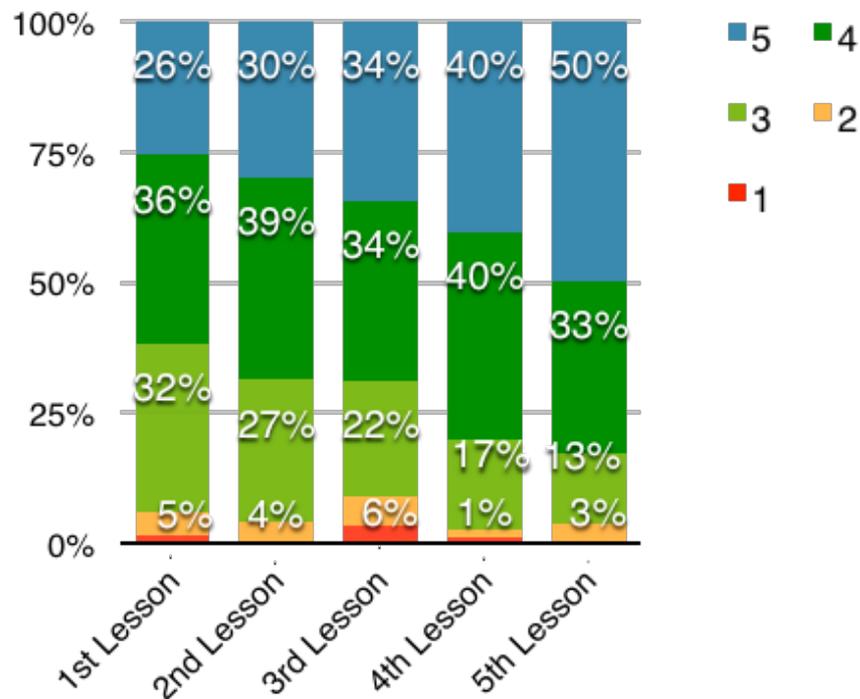
Before and after the implementation of the educational project Youth & Social Business, the students and professors attending the course had to fill in a questionnaire in order to give feedbacks on the activities carried on. Thanks to the questionnaire we were able to assess the level of appreciation for the project. The students were asked to rate from 1 to 5 (with 1 = completely unsatisfied and 5 = completely satisfied) the level of satisfaction for the whole educational project. As it is shown in Graph 1, the level of satisfaction for the lessons has been overall high for all the editions. Please note that the satisfaction assessment for the first edition (2012 - 2013) is made on four classes, since the fifth class was added only from the second edition.



## GRAPH 1A. OVERALL SATISFACTION 2012-2013

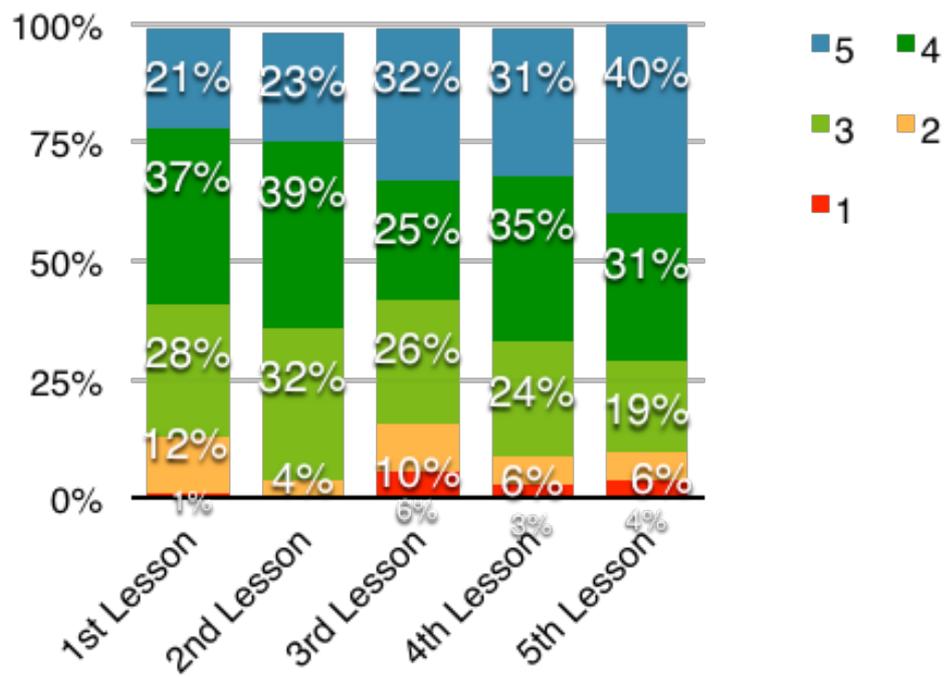


## GRAPH 1B. OVERALL SATISFACTION 2013-2014





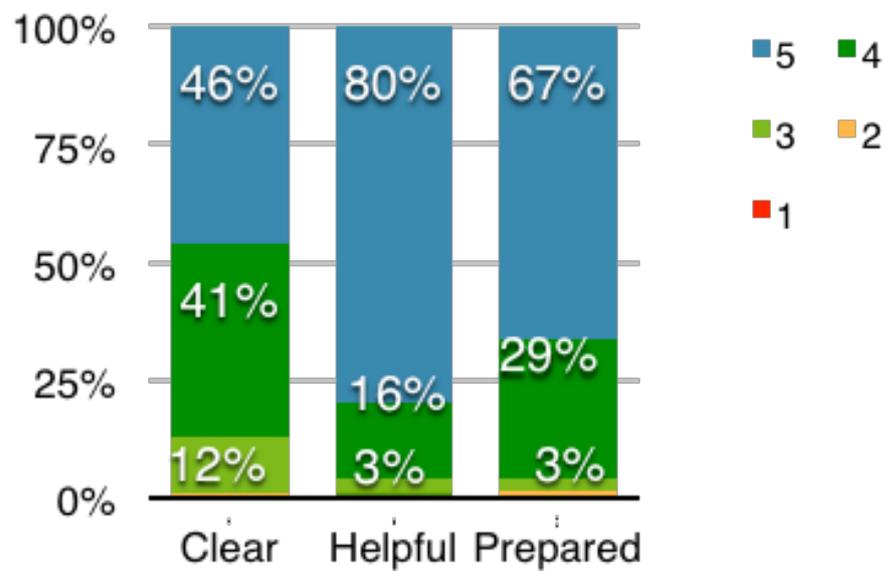
## GRAPH 1C. OVERALL SATISFACTION 2014 - 2015





The results highlighted also a very high level of satisfaction for the staff and the experts of the YSBCUF in terms of their clarity of exposition, helpfulness and availability, and preparation on the topics discussed in class (Graph 2).

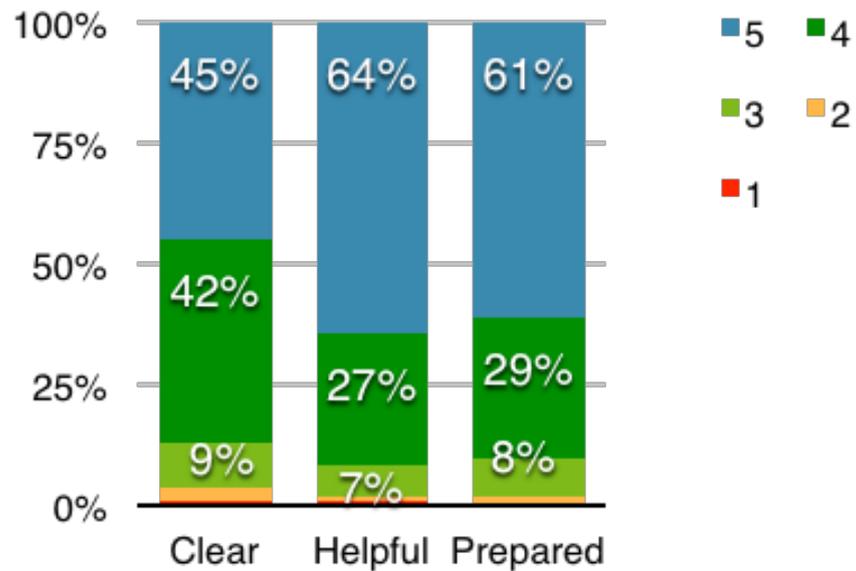
## GRAPH 2A. STAFF ASSESSMENT 2012-2013





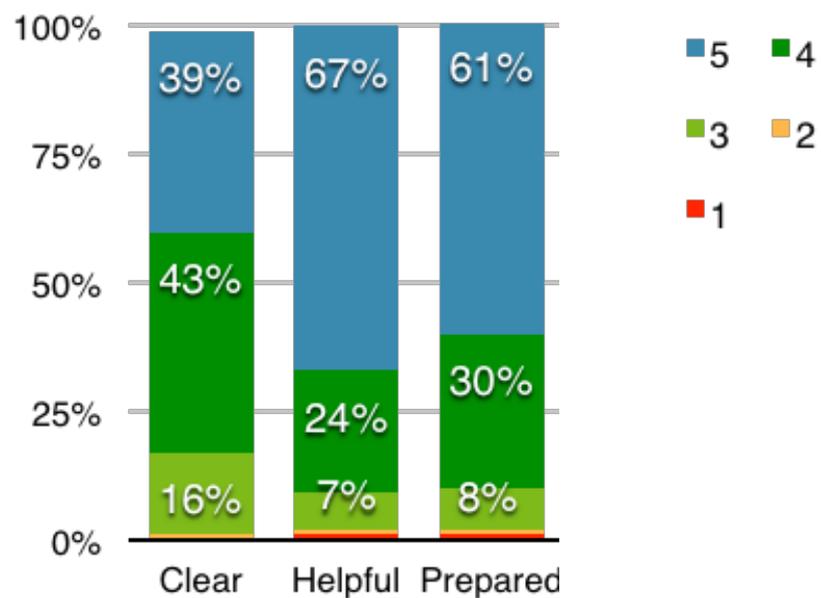
## GRAPH 2B.

### STAFF ASSESSMENT 2013-2014



## GRAPH 2C.

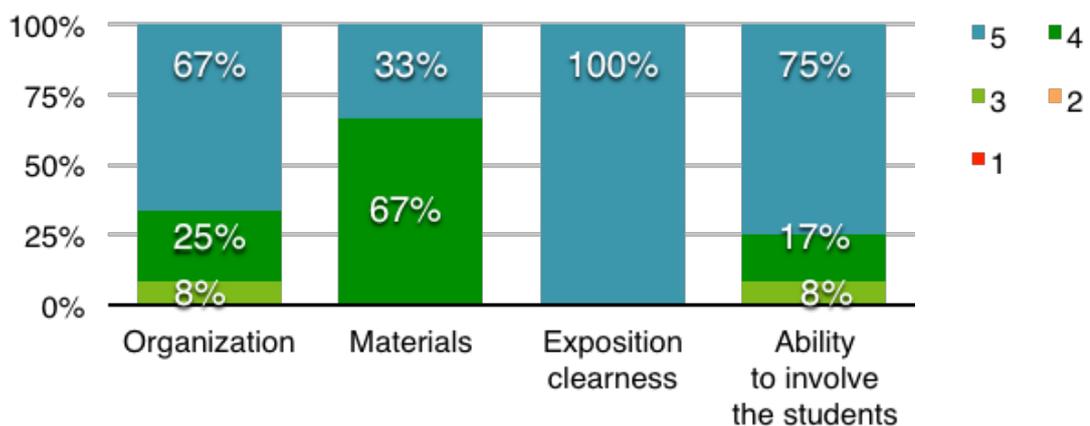
### STAFF ASSESSMENT 2014-2015





The YSBCUF, in order to have a complete feedback on the Youth & Social Business project, administrate a different questionnaire to the teachers engaged in the project with their class. The professors were asked to express their level of satisfaction for the general organization, the materials, the staff's clearness of exposition and the staff's ability to involve the students. The results collected for the three editions are shown in Graph 3.

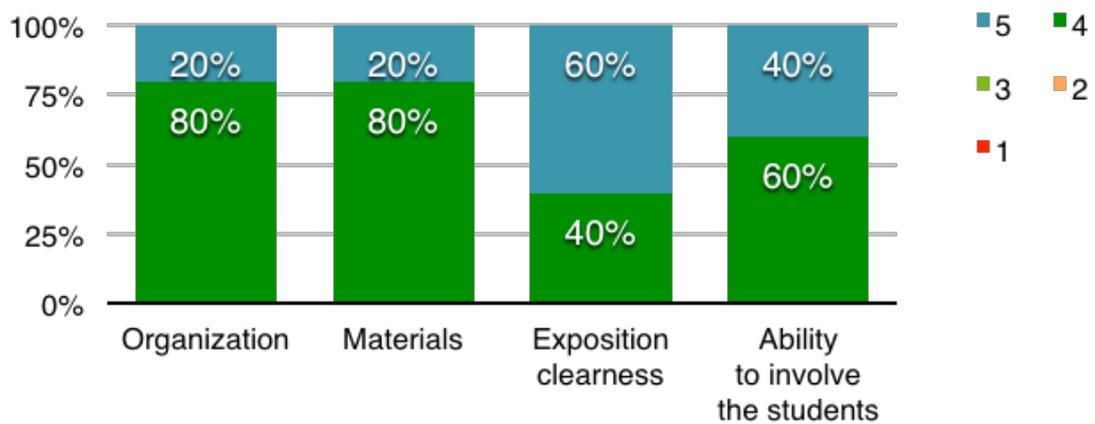
## GRAPH 3A. HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' EVALUATION ON "YOUTH AND SOCIAL BUSINESS" PROJECT 2012 - 2013





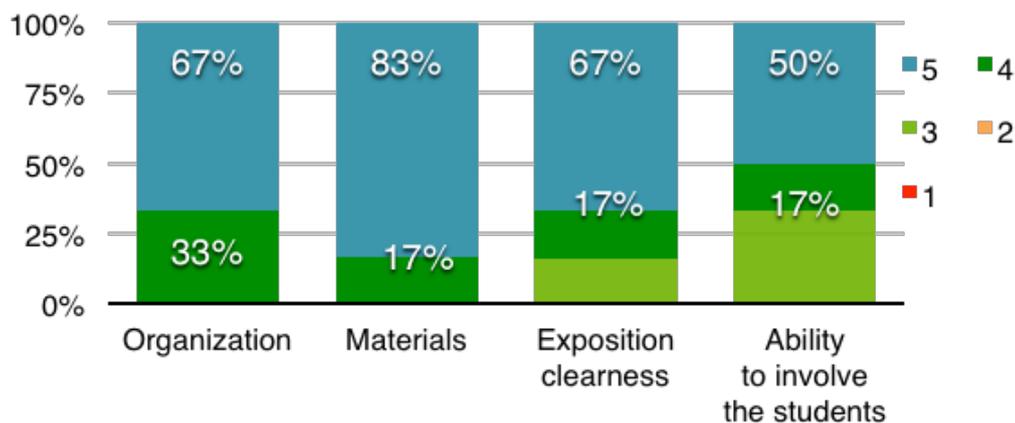
## GRAPH 3B.

### HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' EVALUATION ON "YOUTH AND SOCIAL BUSINESS" PROJECT 2013 - 2014



## GRAPH 3C.

### HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' EVALUATION ON "YOUTH AND SOCIAL BUSINESS" PROJECT 2014 - 2015



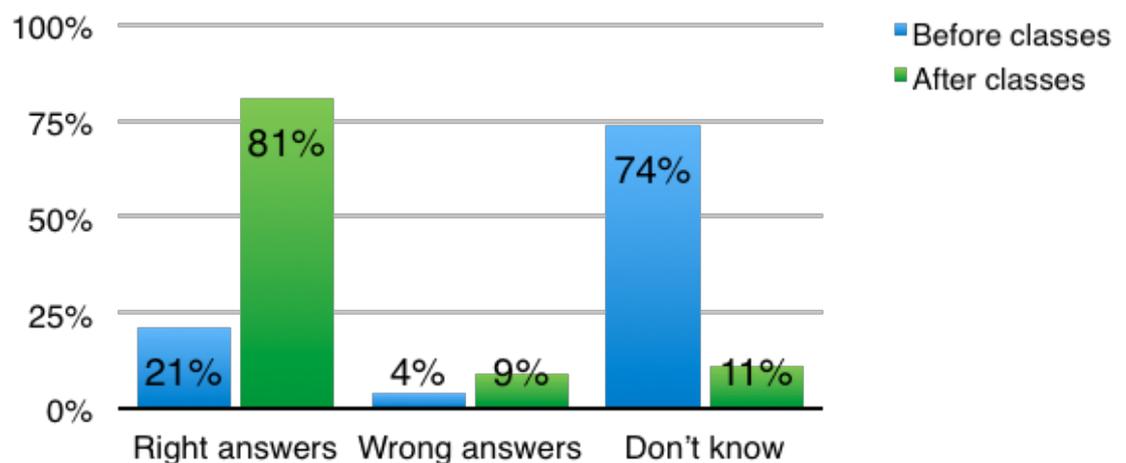


The questionnaires administrated to the students were used also to assess the effectiveness of the educational project in terms of acquired knowledge. This was made asking to the students some questions about Prof. Yunus, Microcredit and Social Business both in the before and after class questionnaires.

Graph 4 shows the comparison among the answers collected before the educational project implementation and after it.

## GRAPH 4A.

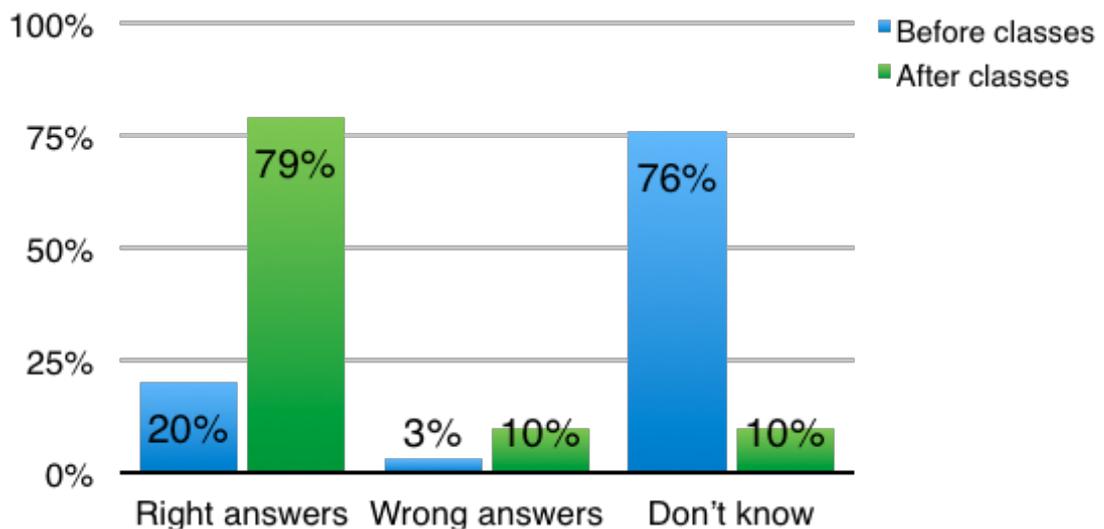
### RESULTS OF THE BEFORE AND AFTER CLASSES TEST 2012 - 2013





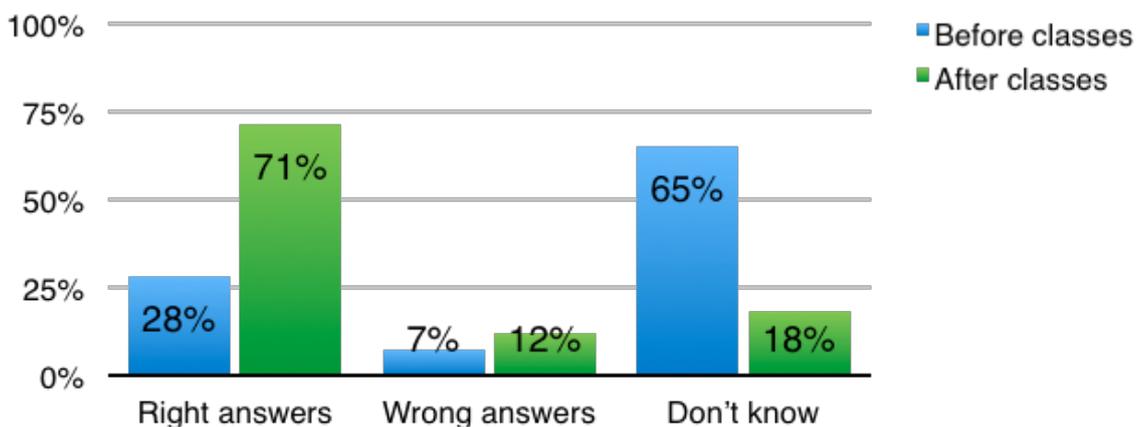
## GRAPH 4B.

### RESULTS OF THE BEFORE AND AFTER CLASSES TEST 2013-2014



## GRAPH 4C.

### RESULTS OF THE BEFORE AND AFTER CLASSES TEST 2014-2015

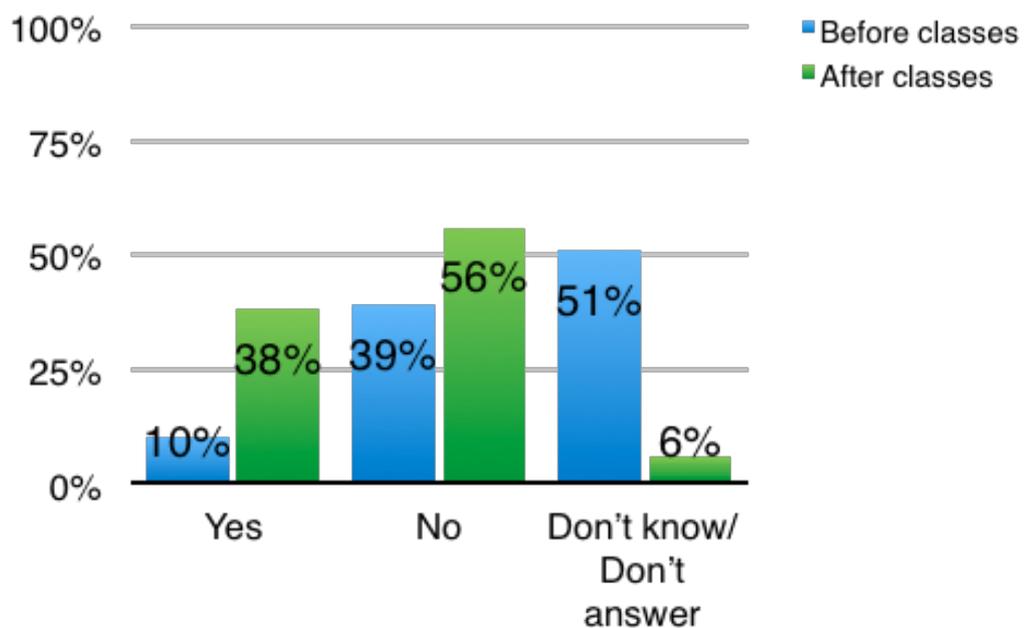




From the graphs above it is interesting to observe that in all the editions right answers increase largely, the wrong ones also increase but much less than the right ones, and the not answered questions decrease drastically. The before and after questionnaires were used also to evaluate if the implementation of the Youth & Social Business project had an effective impact on the students' propensity to become entrepreneur in the future. Graph 5 shows the answers to the question "Do you think you might become an entrepreneur in future?" collected during the three editions.

## GRAPH 5A.

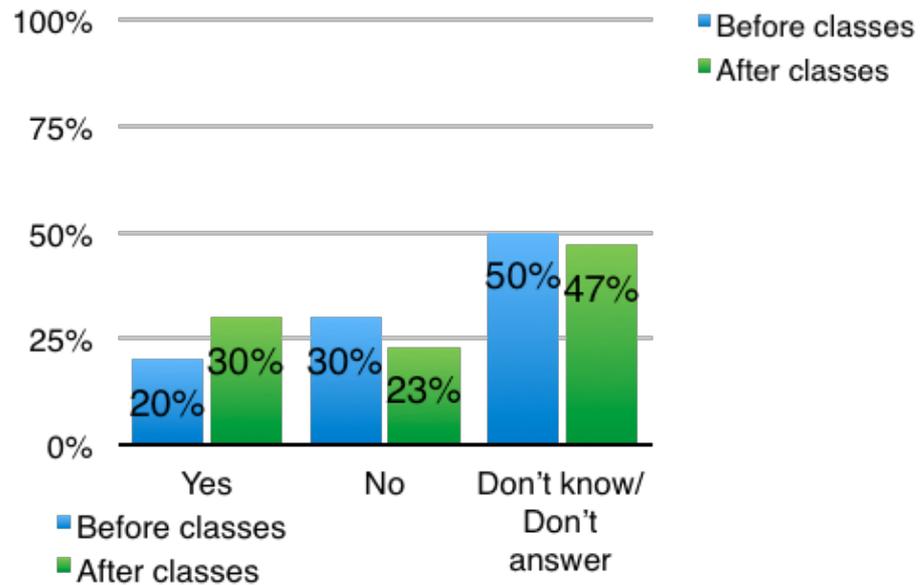
### ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: "DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR IN FUTURE?" (2012 - 2013)





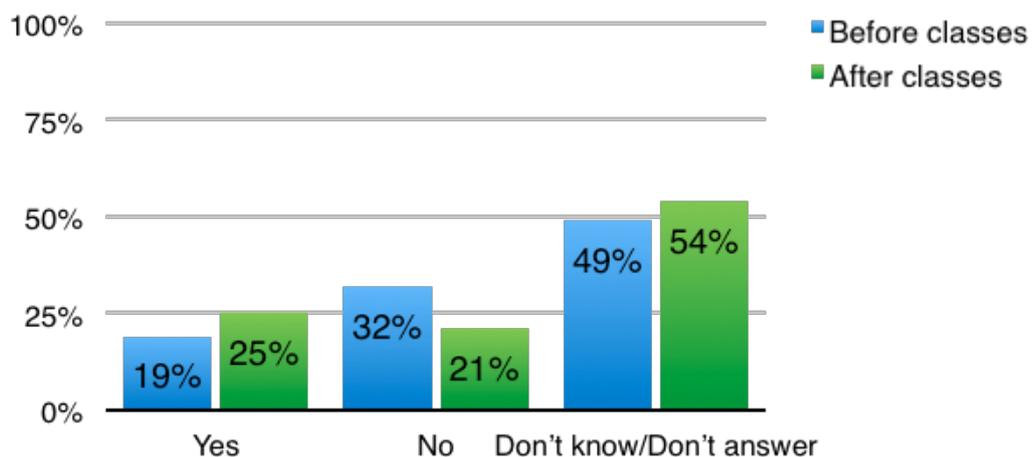
## GRAPH 5B.

ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: "DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR IN FUTURE?" (2013-2014)



## GRAPH 5C.

ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: "DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR IN FUTURE?" (2013-2014)





One year after the participation to the Youth & Social Business project, the YSBCUF administrated the same questionnaire to a sample of students randomly extracted among the participants of the previous edition.

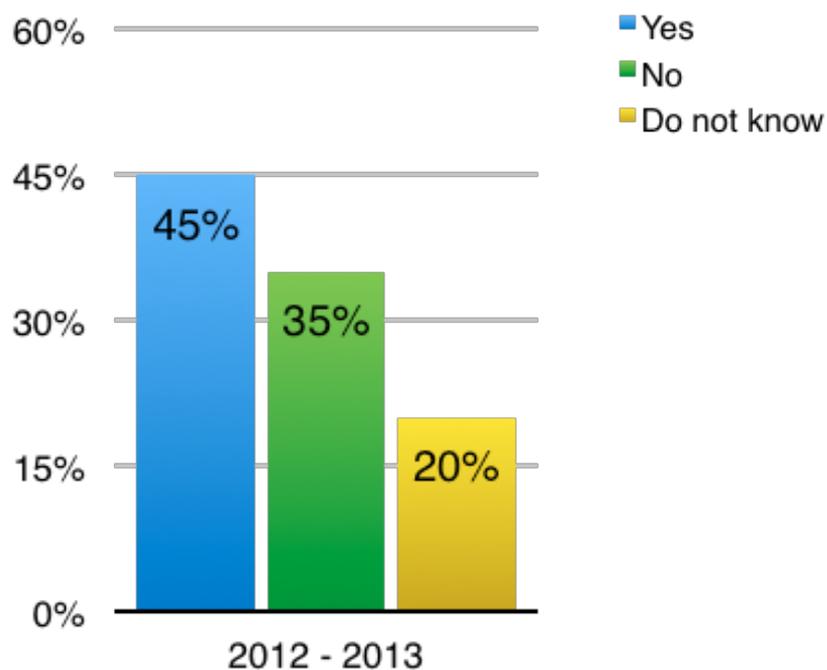
This administration was made to observe the variation in the students' propensity to become an entrepreneur one year after the project implementation.

Graph 6 shows the results collected in 2014 on the students of the first edition, and in 2015 on the student of the second edition.

## GRAPH 6A.

**ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: "DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR IN FUTURE?"**

**1 YEAR AFTER THE PROJECT Y&SB EDITION 2012 - 2013**

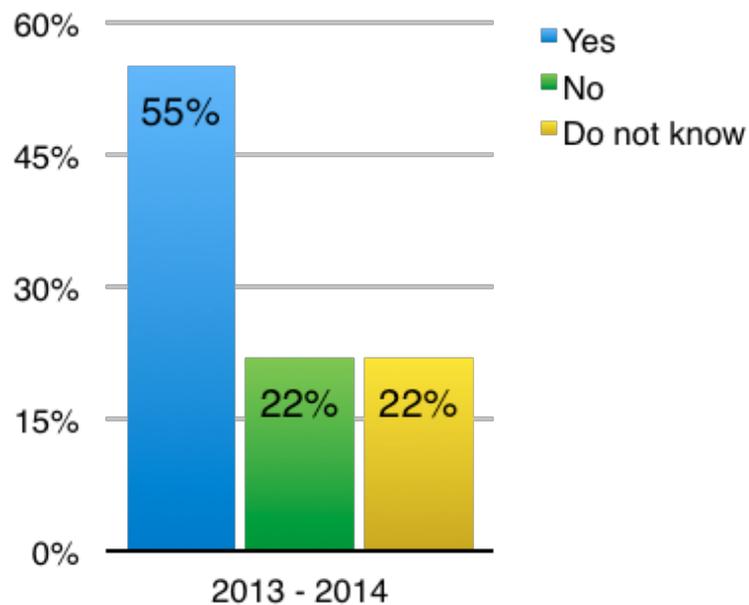




## GRAPH 6B.

ANSWER TO THE QUESTION: "DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR IN FUTURE?"

1 YEAR AFTER THE PROJECT Y&SB EDITION 2013 - 2014



It seems interesting to compare Graph 5a with Graph 6a and Graph 5b with Graph 6b. In the first case, based on the students that attended the edition 2012 - 2013, it is possible to observe that before the implementation of the educational project the students interested in becoming an entrepreneur were only 10%, after the implementation they were 38%, and one year after they increased again reaching 45%. Similar trend was registered among the students attending the edition 2013 - 2014 suggesting that the implementation of Youth & Social Business project may have a role arising youth interest in entrepreneurship.



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