

The 2025 INEPS Congress, Paris: “Nouvelles Chances” Programs - four ways to find one’s own path



The 2025 INEPS Congress, held in Paris from April 7 to 11, brought together educators, program leaders, and researchers from eight countries — including Germany, France, Turkey, Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Portugal, and the USA. Participants represented a wide network of Productive Learning (PL) institutions such as IPLE (Germany), JOPO (Finland), PROTASI (Greece), and City-As-School (New York) as well as others-representing schools for students aged 10-22 years. Participants from organizations included *Schools in France, Finland, Greece, Germany, Lithuania, Turkey, City-As-School New York (USA), “PROTASI” for the primary prevention of addictive substances and proposal for a better quality in life (Greece),* Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (Lithuania), Food for the Hungry (USA), *Institute for Productive Learning in Europe (Germany), University of Aveiro (Portugal).*

The congress focused on the theme “Nouvelles Chances”, highlighting 4 alternative education models that re-engage students aged 15–22 who have disengaged from traditional schooling. Each of four Nouvelle Chances programs in the Paris region presented workshops on the following topics:

- “Art practices and perseverance at school”,
- “Learning in companies, learning with companies,”
- “How does the preparation of diplomas and certifications contribute to the reschooling process?”
- “Discovering the world and oneself”

The workshops included immersive visits, presentations, and collaborative sessions. In addition to the workshops and pedagogical exchanges, the congress combined cultural activities — including a visit to Halle Saint-Pierre, performances and local tours and meals to facilitate learning in an informal setting among the participants.

Key speeches and discussion groups tackled timely and critical topics such as student exchange using eTwinning; to use Productive Learning as a source for the prevention of addiction, leveraging out- of-school experiences to enrich school education. Partners from Lithuania summarized chances and challenges of the introduction of Productive Learning in their country. Colleagues from the organization, Food for the Hungry, contributed with experience concerning School Clubs as a gateway to learning, school returning, retention and excellence worldwide. Participants also engaged in open discussions about the network’s future, emphasizing its role in fostering collaboration, influencing policy, and developing alternative education models. The Congress concluded with renewed commitments to partnership, digital exchange, and collective growth, setting the stage for continued collaboration across borders in the years ahead.

Beyond the scheduled workshops and visits, the Congress served as a powerful reminder of INEPS's mission: to provide inclusive educational opportunities through practical, student-centered learning. Conversations highlighted the challenges of integrating Productive Learning within rigid educational systems, yet also showcased inspiring successes — from the long-standing JOPO model in Finland to creative arts-based initiatives in Greece and France.

Educators discussed the need for stronger digital cooperation, expansion of student exchanges, and the strategic use of AI to personalize learning experiences. As a result, several new partnerships were seeded, with plans for Erasmus+ projects, digital exchanges, and a commitment for the next INEPS congress to be held in Kiel, Germany. The Paris Congress reaffirmed that INEPS is not only a network, but an evolving movement committed to reshaping education through relevance, engagement, connection to the lives of students and cross-cultural collaboration.

Quotes:

"I was buoyed by the presence of such dedicated, creative and collaborative educators and NGO partners. Knowing that Productive Learning is an option globally for our youth means that we will be better equipped to create a more collaborative and functioning world." (Naima Freitas, CAS, New York City)

"I returned to Patras very satisfied and full of emotions from the INEPS Congress. The pictures, the colors, the spring smells of Paris, connected with the teachers, students, premises of the four Nouvelle Chances programs gave a strong push to our network. Due to your team dear Paris friends who took the responsibility and engagement to materialize a wonderful congress, the younger INEPSERS' passion and the elders' faith and stubbornness, we will manage to continue in prevention and PL, in alternative education and youth work ." (Angela Passa , PROTASI, Greece)

"The hospitality of the Nouvelle Chance classes offering insights into their creative practices anchored the conference in what it's all about: the art of activity based education" (Holger Mirow, IPLE, Berlin).

