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**Youth Policies in European Countries and their  
Potential for Social Innovation**

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# Chapter 1: Introduction and Comparative Perspective

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## 1. Introducing the SociEtY project

The aim of the SociEtY research project is to improve the quality of life of disadvantaged young people through social innovation. Specifically it seeks to:

- Improve the quality of life of disadvantaged young people through social innovation;
- Identify opportunities to reduce inequalities; and
- Extend and build knowledge and tools for the ultimate policy goal of a ‘good life for all’.

The project explores how young people aged 15-24 live in different European countries today; and examines what can be done to create social and institutional opportunities which will better enable them to live the lives they have reason to value. Using Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (1985, 1990, 1992, 1998) as a framework, the project develops a broad knowledge base to foster socially innovative policymaking. The Capability Approach is centred on the freedom and opportunity individuals have to make choices that they value. The Capability Approach focuses upon the potential ability of the individual to achieve a *functioning* (an outcome such as having a job) that they value in the context of the wider environment in which they are embedded, rather than looking at an individual's outcomes (Walker and Unterhalter 2007). So in order to assess an individual's *capabilities* to make choices that they value, the *resources* (goods and services, for instance a suitable training course) a person has access to, as well their *conversion factors* (individual characteristics and the wider social environment that may support them such as a supportive peer group), need to be taken into account (Bonvin and Moachon 2008, Bonvin and Orton 2009, Lindsay and McQuaid 2010).

Employing quantitative and qualitative methods SociEtY builds knowledge on how existing policies and social practices of networks of social support tackle the problems faced by disadvantaged young people; how far, and in what ways, young people's ideas, experiences, aspirations and voices can be included in policymaking; and how social innovation can link these two issues, leading to social inclusion and to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The aim of SociEtY is to enable an innovative and structured dialogue where every

participant has equal opportunities to voice their concerns in order to improve the personal and professional situation and perspectives of disadvantaged young people in society.

## 2. Aims and objectives of Work Package 3

The focus of Work Package 3 is on the national (and where appropriate regional) youth policies, and particularly the participation of young people, in the areas of **employment, education and lived experiences**. Work Package 3 analyses the socio-political context within which realistic decisions are made.

The Work Package adopts the following understanding of youth policy:

*“the purpose of youth policy is to create the conditions for learning, opportunity and experience which ensure and enable young people to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to be actors of democracy and to integrate into society, in particular playing an active part in both civil society and the labour market” (Siurala, 2005: 16).*

‘Lived experiences’ refers to either policies supporting young people’s wider social and personal situations where processes of social integration are crucial, or which emerge (bottom up) in informal settings/outside traditional forms of organisation/mobilisation. Education and employment refers to policy areas which try to organise the ‘system integration’ of young people or where problems of ‘system integration’ come to dominate. While this separation of social/systems integration has its limitations it does serve as a useful heuristic tool for our research.

Where possible the focus is on the 15-24 years age group, but it is recognised: that in some contexts youth policy may be aimed at other age groups (e.g. 15-29 years); that policy that significantly affects youth may be aimed at the whole population; and that it can also be analytically useful to consider different stages separately e.g. 15-18 years, 19-23 years and 24-29 years.

The specific Work Package 3 *objectives* are:

### **1. To identify and evaluate relevant existing youth policies in relation to disadvantage and analyse how inequalities are defined and measured in each partner country.**

This wide ranging objective addresses and identifies (particularly in their consistency with a Capability Approach perspective): existing youth policies at the EU, national and regional level; how the Europe 2020 targets to tackle poverty/social exclusion are addressed; how combating inequalities and poverty is built into policy making and implementation; what are the main instruments (monetary resources, public services, social rights, training programmes, management tools etc.) and measures; what is seen as the main level for intervention (the family, kindergarten, school, communities etc.); how policy has changed in response to the economic crisis; how, and along what dimensions, youth disadvantage and inequality are defined, measured and evaluated; and the national variations in the “social construction” of statistical data in the field of poverty and exclusion in relation to young people.

Results from this analysis are presented in Chapters 6 to 16.

**2. To identify which actors are responsible for the development and delivery of policy and what the relationship is between the state and various actors.**

In line with the Capability Approach Work Package 3 seeks to identify the degree to which actors and stakeholders (such as the private sector, civil society, interest organisations, third sector and public sector and end users) are involved in the development and delivery of national and regional policy; since it is argued that capability friendly policy should reflect a capability for voice among these actors and embrace a plurality of views. The focus here is on multi-level policy making at the national and regional level in order that the relevant setting for local policy development and implementation can be established.

Results from this analysis are presented in Chapters 6 to 16.

**3. To identify social innovation and the role of social innovation in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy** (i.e. both top down public policy innovation, which is driven by institutions; and bottom up approaches including the use of local pilots to test out national policy ideas) in different European Social Models (actors, level of social innovation etc.) and how social innovation is encouraged by and harnessed in the policy making process. In identifying the situations and preconditions for social innovation, the specific arrangements which lead to negative/positive (non) innovative policies are also identified.

**4. To analyse the differing socio-economic conditions within which the different policies operate**, through longitudinal analysis of key statistics from EU-SILC and EU LFS data, as well as other datasets, from a Capability Approach perspective.

Results from this analysis are presented in Chapters 2 to 5.

### **3. Methodology**

Below is an outline of the research methods adopted in the (i) quantitative and (ii) qualitative elements of Work Package 3. The individual chapters provide further details of the methods used.

The overall analysis for this Work Package is based on a Common Framework for Policy Analysis, drawing on a set of common questions (see Table 1) developed by the Edinburgh Napier University (UK) and Johannes Kepler University of Linz (Austria) teams.

**Table 1: Summary of the common research questions**

National definitions (policies of defining youth disadvantage and inequality) - What are the definitions and who decides?
Policy making and implementation - How are different voices included in the policy process?
Policies, instruments and levels of intervention - What are the characteristics of the main policies?
Evaluations - What are the criteria for policy evaluation?
Areas of non-intervention - Who covers gaps in support?
Policies and the crisis - What are the effects of the crisis on youth?
Social innovation and the role of social innovation in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy - What are the characteristics of social innovation and how is it supported?

**(i) Quantitative element of Work Package 3: Analysis of secondary data on inequality and disadvantage of young people**

A secondary data analysis, using EU-SILC and EU LFS as well as other datasets was used to expand the informational basis and to clarify the picture of existing inequalities and policies with regard to youth in general, and youth and transition in particular countries.

Results from this analysis are presented in Chapters 2 to 5.

**(ii) Qualitative element of Work Package 3: Literature review and collection of available national data; and analysis of the main strategies to support vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and identification of possibilities of social innovation within European social models**

The focus of the qualitative element of Work Package 3 was on the national (and where appropriate regional) youth policies (both those policies relating explicitly or implicitly to disadvantaged youth, and those who do not consider explicitly disadvantaged youth), and particularly the participation of young people. Partners focused on one of the three policy areas (employment, education and lived experiences) but also provide a general context of the other two policy areas, as well as considering the cross cutting dimension of participation.

There were two parts to the methodology for this qualitative element.

- (a) Literature review and collection of available national data (with a particular focus on certain social groups, dimensions of vulnerability etc.)

Partners analysed the available knowledge and national discussions about vulnerable youth and policies designed to tackle the issue of inequality and disadvantage of young people. This provides a contextual overview, with a strong emphasis on recent developments during the economic crisis, about the social situation of youth; and the scope of vulnerable youth using available data, analysis and research, as well as their opportunities for voice and participation. The focus is on an identification and collection of data and information on the national and regional Informational Basis of the Judgement of Justice in relation to vulnerable youth (what is defined as vulnerability in a certain national context; how (if) participation of youth is encouraged or what are the barriers to this; how is social

innovation defined by policy makers etc. The Informational Basis of the Judgement of Justice (IBJJ), introduced by Sen (1990), refers to the information on which a judgment is made. For example what perspectives and information are seen as valid and relevant when setting youth policy, and how are decisions reached e.g. top down processes, inclusive and deliberative processes.

- (b) Analysis of the main strategies to support vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and identification of possibilities of social innovation within European social models

Partners analysed the general framework of policies to support young people using policy and documentary analysis and expert interviews (mainly face-to-face, and approximately 30-60 minutes in length) at the national and regional (where appropriate) levels by each partner (involving 10-15 interviews of national level policy makers and practitioners in the public and third sectors in each country e.g. government ministers; civil servants; regional government; and local views on national and regional policies from youth workers, training/education providers; citizens' bodies and youth organisations). In total 159 experts were interviewed.

Through the policy evaluation partners assessed whether youth policy can be regarded as innovative in line with IBJJ and whether it is approached in a participative manner. A particular focus is on the varying forms through which innovatory measures and strategies to tackle new problems emerge in different European social models. Partners reflect and comment (i.e. add to our understanding developed in the initial scientific framework) on the connections and/or disparities between the stakeholder's perceptions of social innovation and the theoretical understandings developed earlier in the research.

Results from the qualitative element of Work Package 3 are presented in Chapters 6 to 16.

## **4. Common themes and comparative perspective**

There are some common themes that emerge from the results presented in the chapters.

### **4.1 The socio-economic context**

The first chapters (Chapters 2 to 5) presented in this report analyse the differing socio-economic conditions within which the different policies operate, through longitudinal analysis of key statistics from EU-SILC and EU LFS data, from a Capability Approach perspective. This quantitative research set out to investigate participation in three important areas; in education, the labour market, and the social and political sphere.

The chapters provide valuable **insights into the capability enhancing resources and valued outcomes of young people across Europe**. Chapter 2 examines educational participation and achievement among young people (aged 16-29) across Europe, and the factors associated with these outcomes at the individual, family, neighbourhood and national level. Education is an important resource to improve an individual's functionings and enable them to exist materially (Otto & Ziegler, 2006). The authors of the chapter hypothesise that young

people's capacity to access education and to succeed is restricted or enhanced by a number of conversion factors. To examine this, the analysis draws upon EU-SILC micro-data, and macro level indicators from Eurostat and the OECD. **The chapter highlights the inequalities across Europe and for different groups of young people, in terms of young people's capability to pursue, and achieve in, education.** The capability to pursue and succeed in education can be limited by personal and household circumstances, and by the policy and economic conditions in the country in which they live, particularly among 16-18 year olds – although cross-national differences in participation do not necessarily seem to correspond with the extent to which these macro level conditions might be thought to enhance or diminish educational capabilities. Certain groups of young people are particularly disadvantaged: in particular young men, and also migrants and those with poor health.

Young people's participation in the labour market is a key political priority across Europe, especially since the economic crisis. The chapters have addressed trends in youth unemployment across Europe since the crisis and have raised questions about the normative assumptions that underpin the way in which this issue is conceptualised. Chapter 3 highlights that **most studies of youth unemployment have focused on the national or individual level, neglecting within and between country regional differences.** As such, within country differences and opportunities for the sharing of good practice between regions that are in different countries may be missed. Analysis of the Eurostat online database, the OECD online database and the World Development Indicators show that throughout the crisis, overall the EU-15<sup>1</sup> countries have experienced increased youth unemployment. Some polarisation between countries has emerged, with Germany reducing youth unemployment between 2007 and 2013, whereas in Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy rates have increased. **Noticeable intra-national regional differences and cross-country regional similarities were present in 2007, and regional dispersion on the whole increased throughout the crisis.** Those regions that had high levels of youth unemployment before the crisis experienced worsening trends, whereas those who had low levels continued to perform better.

The analysis also **raises questions about the normative assumptions behind the labour market benchmarks endorsed at the European policy making level,** and arguably also those used at the national and regional government level. Much of the focus in policy to tackle youth unemployment is on the headline employment rate indicator and the need to increase employment rates. As such, the focus is on employability rather than developing the capabilities of unemployed youth. **Little, or no attention, is paid to the capability to do jobs that individuals have reason to value** (Bonvin and Farvaque 2006). In Chapter 4 the Capability-unfriendly Job Index (CaUJI) is put forward as a way in which to develop our understanding of the complex effects of the crisis on the position of young people in the labour market. The CaUJI is a composite index of five different aspects<sup>2</sup> of employment, affecting both employment relations and work itself, based on information available in the EU-LFS. The CaUJI highlights that **the quality of employment decreased between 2006 and**

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<sup>1</sup> Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup> Involuntary temporary contract, involuntary part-time, involuntary working time, unpaid overtime working hours and looking for another job.

**2012 in Europe.** There are however, important differences across Europe in the way in which the prevalence of capability-unfriendly jobs has developed. Attention in particular can be drawn to Germany, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Poland, Estonia and Romania, where there has been a growth in the employment rate and a decrease in CaUI during the 2006 to 2012 period. These seven instances are in contrast to the rest of Europe where job quality has worsened.

The chapters also highlight how previous measures and assessments have focused on youth disadvantage and inequality from a market centred and one dimensional perspective, that does not take account of the wider contexts of young people's lives. **The need to take account of the context of the wider environment in which young people are embedded is central to the Capability Approach** (Walker and Unterhalter 2007). The final quantitative chapter (Chapter 5) considers the importance of moving beyond a univariate approach to understanding the experiences of disadvantaged young people in Europe. The chapter investigates the educational attainments, social and political participation and employment prospects of young people in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK. Using 2011 data from the Eurostat online database and the Flash EuroBarometer survey "Youth on the Move" (No 319a), Chapter 5 shows that **there is diverse multi-dimensional socioeconomic performance within the nine countries, as well as regional similarities across countries.** It is shown that socioeconomic development is complex, with economic performance measures such as GDP not necessarily consistent with, or providing insight into, other measures such as those related to public health. Young people also need to be considered as a distinct group, as their experiences may not necessarily follow those of the aggregate socioeconomic scenario. **The inter-relationship between young people's labour market, educational, social and political participation also varies between socio-economic contexts,** thus the potential corrosive influence of outcomes cannot be isolated from the wider context.

The analysis presented in Chapters 3 to 5 have **shown the importance of both context and individual characteristics for participation, and the way in which context mediates the impact of individual characteristics.** Both are also important for understanding the impact of the economic crisis on young people's participation, which has varied across countries. It is also notable that the clustering of countries identified in these analyses, with respect to the outcomes of interest, challenges the conventional clustering based on European social or welfare state models. This may be due to the impact of the economic crisis, although convergence between regimes had already been observed prior to the crisis. Links can arguably be made here with the observation of convergence/similarity in the qualitative work presented in Chapters 6 to 16.

An implication of this work is **the need for a dataset that will allow us to examine, down to the regional level, the inter-connectedness of the spheres of educational, employment and political and social participation, from a capabilities perspective.** This would mean the inclusion of information not only on outcomes and characteristics, but on opportunities, and the extent to which outcomes are chosen and valued. The research indicates a need to think not only in terms of quantity but also of the quality of participation, and suggests the need to re-evaluate the appropriateness of current European targets, which focus on quantity. While these chapters help to identify relevant conversion factors, the extent to which they

can reflect on capability sets is limited. These qualitative aspects are investigated in Chapters 6 to 16.

## 4.2 Youth policy and policy understanding of disadvantage

In most countries **youth is not always a distinct national government policy area**. The qualitative reports highlight that youth policy is often fragmented, covering multiple policy areas and political levels. Policies relevant for youth and addressing youth disadvantage are covered in areas such as employment, education, family policies, and social assistance policies. While 'explicit' youth policies are mainly concerned with participation, open youth work and extracurricular activities, many other domains that directly affect the living conditions of young people (e.g. VET, unemployment, youth and child-welfare, social assistance) seldom adopt a specific 'youth' stance. Fragmentation is increased even further by the fact that some policy fields that are relevant for young people are decentralised others are centralised (e.g. in the UK some policy areas are not devolved to the Scottish Government. Other examples can be found in Denmark etc.). The reports highlight that further integration of policy areas to ensure coherence and stability is needed.

Where there is integration of youth policy, **there are two different types of integration**. There is horizontal (between different policy areas) and vertical (between the different administrative government levels) integration. Switzerland is an example of particularly low vertical and horizontal integration; compared to some of its neighbouring countries like France or Germany. Switzerland neither has a federal 'child and youth welfare law' covering many different aspects (as is the case in Germany) or a specific youth transversal policy like the 'priorité jeunesse' (as is the case in France).

**Cooperation and coordination between different institutions or levels of government does not seem to be very well developed** (e.g. in Italy, Switzerland) – although in some countries one central actor/institution (e.g. the Public Employment Service) can be identified. In terms of the different stakeholders involved, it appears that the extent to which employers are willing to take responsibility for the organisation of the transition of young people into VET and (stable) employment seems to be crucial for the overall position of young people. Also in countries with a dual system of VET the willingness of employers to train young people is less and less guaranteed, amounting to varied search strategies in these countries to tackle a looming crisis of the VET system. There are however, some examples of joined up policy work in the different countries, such as the 'case-management schemes' used in Switzerland, although inter-institutional cooperation still largely depends on the good will of local actors.

In terms of addressing youth disadvantage, the reports provide insights into the way in which disadvantage has been defined in policy. It is highlighted in all of the countries that **there are difficulties in creating one coherent or common definition of disadvantage** and that multiple measures are used. There are however remarkable convergences in the factors of disadvantage that are highlighted in policy and/or by stakeholders in the reports which can be seen in the following list. Also in some countries youth as such has become a disadvantage e.g. in participation in the labour market.

- Lack of adequate education, low skills, lack of language skills
- Migrant background
- Result of dropping out/being excluded from standard path
- Social exclusion and unemployment
- Family problems
- Strong policy focus/emerging focus on those not in employment, education or training (NEETs) in many countries
- Youth as 'dangerous class'.

Thus even though the concrete situation of disadvantaged groups of young people might differ considerably between countries, disadvantage is nevertheless associated with the same social factors. This convergence of factors of disadvantage reveals that while institutional variation might explain differences between countries concerning the sheer numbers of disadvantaged young people, deeper structural processes concerning race, class and gender are also at work.

**The predominant understandings of disadvantage often focus on individual and family attributes and an emphasis on deficits predominate.** In many countries individuals and their families are often ascribed the responsibility, by for example the state, politics, society, media, for their situation, rather than disadvantage being caused by wider socio-economic or institutional factors. Unemployment/'worklessness', economic inactivity, poverty and low educational levels are only one dimension of the problems experienced by families and young people. Notwithstanding the vast differences between the European countries concerning the different forms of responsabilisation of individuals and their families, the dominance of methodologically individualist approaches to disadvantage predetermine the level and scope of political interventions. Thus, it comes as no surprise that hardly any countries mention demand side measures to raise employment levels among youth or the expansion of social services and monetary transfers. Rather the focus of policies is geared towards correcting educational deficits, behavioural problems etc.

Against this background of a trend towards individual responsabilisation it comes as no surprise that the reports also highlight that, in some national contexts, **responsibility for disadvantage is not always taken by the state; and tackling inequalities and poverty among the youth may not be a priority in all countries.** Families and charities are assumed to take responsibility instead. For example family responsibility may be reinforced through cost containment measures in unemployment insurance particularly at the expense of young people (e.g. in Switzerland). As such the reports raise the important question of 'who is responsible for young people? Is it the state, the family or the market?

In Spain and Romania in particular there is a need to increase public expenditure of youth policy and policies affecting young people. The research also highlights in many of the countries the needs of some 'groups' of young disadvantaged people are not recognised and adequately addressed in youth policy. Groups of young people cited by participants in this research include young people who grow and grew up in care, young offenders, and asylum seekers. There may of course be other groups of young people whose needs are not being adequately addressed.

**Programmes and measures to address youth disadvantage are often framed within a school-based and employment-centred transition regime.** In the majority of the countries education, training or employment are framed as the route out of poverty (e.g. Austria, Germany, Denmark, Scotland, Netherlands, Belgium, Romania, Switzerland). There is a strong focus in these programmes on education and training (human capital formation) and employability skills and developing a work ethic (being punctual, being reliable, etc.). As such, policies target individuals and their abilities, competencies and willingness to train and work. This seems to be coherent with a social investment policy approach at first sight; nevertheless there are doubts if simply providing education might create new jobs (e.g. Nolan 2013). Furthermore, more long-term studies of the effect of these strategies to tackle youth disadvantage are desperately needed as the structural causes of unemployment, low educational levels etc. remain. Thus, doubts can be raised about whether these policies reintegrate young people into the stable employment or whether they are forming part of emerging institutional regimes which are stabilising precarious employment in increasingly dualised welfare regimes.

The policy responses generally do not seem to take into account that achievements of young people in the labour market and in formal education rely on a wide diversity of factors, some of which lie beyond the sphere of formal education and job training. As such it seems that disadvantage is not always understood from an intersectional or cumulative perspective; and does not seem to take into account of subjective factors e.g. motivation, ability to project oneself in the future, capacity to aspire, etc. Multiple disadvantages and young people's opportunities may be missed because of the ways in which statistics on disadvantage are categorised and collated. Hence, a multidimensional evaluation of youth disadvantage is lacking in many countries.

It also seems from the findings of the research that **disadvantage is not seen as an effect of economic and labour market crisis.** Still lacking, is a public discourse about the role of socio-economic and political constraints of opportunities. Supply side oriented measures dominate discourse and policies. No country reported economic growth measures to improve demand for young people in the labour market. In most countries there are no systematic policies to raise incentives for companies to employ young people, to adapt work and training processes, to train trainers etc. Some examples are given in the Austrian, Italian and Scottish reports, but these seem to be the exception. Austria's 'training guarantee' can be argued to be a positive example of a youth guarantee scheme, the likes of which do not exist in other countries with dual apprenticeship systems ( e.g. Switzerland and Germany). The ways in which inequality is reinforced by the education system (e.g. identified in Austria, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Switzerland) is not recognised; as well as a public discourse about the discriminatory practices of the educational system and the labour market. This acts as a barrier to many young people finding work. There also seems to be gaps between what educational systems are producing as outcomes and demand in the labour market (e.g. in Romania).

### **4.3 Participation in policy making and implementation**

**In some countries there is a lack of institutional or formal forms of participation or participation is not incentivised** (e.g. in France and Italy) and in the Spanish report it is even

reported that youth councils are being closed. **In other countries there are well-developed participation policies or networks of organisations** (e.g. in Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Scotland) which provide a range of channels of participation and representation of young people. However, the highly formalised aspects of these structures of participation and representation do not foster, wider participation of youth in general and vulnerable youth in particular. Participation, where it occurs, occurs through narrow channels (e.g. political participation via traditional channels of parties, unions etc.) and on adult's terms, rather than necessarily the terms of young people. However, it seems obvious that these forms of participation are not able to include and address the situation of vulnerable youth in an adequate way.

Nevertheless the range of activities and measures to secure some participation of youth is quite diverse. There are a range youth specific political platforms e.g. youth parliaments. There may be champions (such as elected representatives, ombudsmen/mentors) and mechanisms (such as consultation processes) through which youth can participate and have voice in policy making processes. At the meso-level programmes may take feedback from young people. However, no country reported systematic attempts to create more informal ways of participation for young people in policy, programmes and measures, or in community life. **Generally it seems that only 'organised' youth/those who are engaged in educational or political structures have voice.**

These findings lead us to pose a set of questions, some of them also highlighted in the theoretical and conceptual work of the SociEtY project (Bonvin, 2013; Ley 2013), that will need to be addressed in the further empirical work of SociEtY.

- How inclusive are current participatory processes, and do they privilege certain voices?
- How attractive are participatory processes to disadvantaged youth?
- Do current participatory processes allow, and give weight and significance to, alternative voices and modes of expression?
- Under what conditions does participation take place?
- Are decisions really made within such participative processes? Is being given voice the same as having your voice heard and acted upon?
- Do current participatory processes operate only on a symbolic level, who do they represent, and to what extent do they influence government agendas?
- What are the ethical concerns needed to take into account, when giving voice to disadvantaged youth in policy making (and participatory research) in order to balance between anonymity of the disadvantaged youth and at the same time giving them an individual voice?

#### **4.4 Social innovation**

The research findings identify that **social innovation is not a term that stakeholder necessarily engage with**. Those who use the term/are familiar with it provide broad definitions about change and meeting un-met needs. Social innovation was seen as both a top-down and bottom-up process across the case studies. However, in particular the bottom-up approaches remain very narrow and piece meal. **Different goals are connected to the use of this concept**. From a top-down perspective social innovation: may be a

buzzword that signals reforms and reconfigurations of welfare policy, contracting out/tendering out to non-state actors etc. From a bottom-up perspective it is used when trying to influence agenda setting, bringing in civil society agenda, demanding legitimation for social experiments, fostering social norms and cohesion such as goals of economic efficiency and competitiveness etc. Social innovation may be used as a 'bypass strategy' (Obinger 2005) for a lack of regulation by central state (e.g. in Switzerland). Social innovation can also be understood as 'federalist experientialism' i.e. policy learning happening through spreading new knowledge about appropriate social policies, fostering peer-review mechanisms and up-scaling locally implemented innovative policies.

**So far no example of a general shake up of the educational and transition system in European countries** could be found even though youth are among the groups affected most by the crisis and the subsequent cuts in social policy. Where there have been reforms and new policies implemented, for example in Denmark, questions can be raised about whether these are socially innovative changes.

**Some examples of policy innovation were given**, as well as funding streams. Top-down examples of social innovation are identified in Belgium, Switzerland, Romania, Germany and Scotland. Local level and bottom-up social innovation are identified in Denmark, Italy, Switzerland and Scotland. However, in particular the bottom-up approaches often remain very narrow and piece meal. There is also a lack of a systemic (i.e. government wide) innovative approach in government at a national level. Social innovation and/or good practice often cited as happening at the local level. This was especially the case in decentralised countries where there are local stakeholders and citizenship initiatives; whereas other countries had more top-down innovation. This raises concerns about the long-term institutionalisation and funding of socially innovative policies; as well as questions about the scaling up of innovative practice. In addition a strong path dependency in youth policies can act as a barrier to political innovation. The third sector was often identified as a key driver in social innovation. As such third sector organisations and advocacy organisation can be framed as key actors in revealing the 'new social needs' of young people. Other questions about social innovation, include the risks of social innovation. **Could social innovation be used as a call to the third sector and civil society to deal with problems previously dealt with by the state?**

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# Chapter 2: Educational Outcomes Across the EU

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## 1. Abstract

This report examines educational participation and achievement among young people (aged 16-29) across Europe, and the factors associated with these outcomes and the individual, family, neighbourhood and national level. Taking a capabilities approach, education is conceptualised as a capability enhancing resource and valued outcome, with young people's capacity to access it and to succeed restricted or enhanced by a number of conversion factors. Micro data from the EU Survey of Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) is used, along with macro level indicators from Eurostat and the OECD, to explore variation between countries and over time, and the factors associated with participation and the achievement of qualifications. Macro-level similarities between countries' approaches to education are explored with factor and cluster analysis, and descriptive analysis and logistic and multilevel regression modelling is used to explore associations between the outcomes and conversion factors of interest. The analysis confirms a number of ways in which young people's capability to pursue, and achieve in, education may be limited by their personal and household circumstances, and by the prevailing policy and economic conditions in the country in which they live. Young men, migrants, and those with poor health face particular barriers in education, and material factors and family background continue to play a role in shaping educational opportunities. There is also evidence of some role of macro level policy and economic factors in shaping participation, although cross-national differences in participation do not necessarily seem to correspond with the extent to which these macro level conditions might be thought to enhance educational capabilities.

## 2. Introduction

This report examines educational participation and achievement among young people (aged 16-29) across Europe, and the factors associated with these outcomes and the individual, family, neighbourhood and national level. This section presents the theoretical background to the research and the questions that will be explored in the analysis. In the remainder of the report: Section 3 outlines the methods and data used; Section 4 presents the findings; and Section 5 summarises and discusses these findings.

### 2.1 Background

Across Europe, a large number of young people are neither engaged with the labour market nor in education (NEET). In 2011, spurred by the financial crisis, this figure reached 13% of 15-24 year olds and 20% of 25-29 year olds – a total of 14m young people (Eurofound, 2012). Education has a substantial impact on an individual's chances of being NEET; those

with low levels of education are three times more likely to be NEET than those with tertiary education, and more than twice as likely than those with secondary education (Eurofound, 2012).

Education has become a major political issue at the European level. The European Union has expressed concern in particular about the impact upon growth and jobs of early school leaving, and insufficient tertiary attainment, and aims in its Europe 2020 strategy to bring the former below 10% and the latter above 40% (European Commission, 2013). Ball (2008) points out that education is framed in a political and ideological discourse that promotes education and learning as essential to the achievement of a model of economic productivity and competitiveness and thus contributes to the resolution of the problems of contemporary capitalist systems.

The introduction of austerity measures across European countries has had an impact on education budgets; many countries had budget deficits in 2010 and 2011, and a reduction in education spending was seen in most of these (European Commission, EACEA, & Eurydice, 2013). Such reductions were achieved by a number of measures, including: freezing teachers' salaries; closing or merging institutions; reducing renovation or maintenance; cuts to IT facilities and special educational support programmes; restricting the amount of, or eligibility criteria for, student support; and requiring additional parental financial contributions (European Commission et al., 2013).

In 2008 Europe entered a severe financial recession, which for several countries still persists in 2014. It is of interest to investigate the effects of this recession on attitudes to education. Rampino and Taylor (2012), using the British Youth Panel component of the British Household Panel Survey, investigated the relationship between business cycles and attitudes to education in the UK. They investigated which of two propositions occurred in times of recession: "attitudes may become more positive if young people perceive that an economic downturn reduces the opportunity costs of educational attainment"; or "if an economic downturn is perceived as reducing the expected future returns to investing in skills, then a recession will have a negative impact on the educational aspirations of young people". They found a statistically significant correlation between unemployment rates and educational attitudes, suggesting that high unemployment leads to a positive view of schooling. However, this reduces when family specific factors are controlled for. At times of unemployment, positive attitudes to education are more likely among children with highly educated parents and less likely for children of low qualified parents.

## **2.2 Education policies, inequalities and capabilities**

Education systems have been characterised in different ways in the literature. They can be differentiated not just by expenditure, but also how the prevailing education policy determines what the money is spent on, and how education is structured. The underlying ideology by which resources are deployed via education policy causes differentiation among the student population and how they interact with work and society.

Several authors such as Esping-Andersen (1990) and Abrantes (2008) link education to different welfare regimes. Regimes frequently referred to are the social-democratic,

observed in Sweden, Finland and Denmark; the liberal, typified by the system in the UK, and according to Pedroso (2008) also found in Poland, Slovakia, Cyprus and the Baltic countries; and the conservative regimes of France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Luxemburg. To these Ferrera (1996) adds the Southern regime, represented by Spain, Greece and Italy. Veloso and Estevinha (2013) have analysed the nature of education in these four regimes, and concluded that “there are few differences between welfare regimes in the organisation of education systems in Europe and the types of policies adopted between 2005 and 2009” and “homogeneity is visible in the indicators analysed and highlights a convergence of education policies”. They point out that this has been the purpose of EU policy guidance and this has led to “some convergence of normative-ideological assumptions underlying the organisation of education systems”.

Other attempts to classify education systems have done so according to their institutional features (e.g. length of time at different stages of education, and the way in which vocational streams are provided alongside academic ones) and the way in which the structure of the labour market shapes these characteristics (Beblavý, Thum, & Veselkova, 2011). However, they have also been examined through the lens of equality, considering the role of education policies in structuring students’ opportunities, and facilitating social mobility, or, alternatively reproducing social stratification (Beblavý et al., 2011; Montt, 2010; Schlicht, Stadelmann-Steffen, & Freitag, 2010).

The capabilities approach provides a framework for considering education, opportunities and equalities. Education is a key resource in structuring individuals’ opportunities to live the lives they value, and the capabilities approach provides a way of analysing upfront the differences in the ability to convert these resources into functionings (Otto & Ziegler, 2006). The capabilities approach moves beyond a human capital approach to understanding the benefits of education, which sees people as commodity producers, and education in terms of improving people’s functioning as economic actors. This is not the same as having the capability to lead the life one values, although the capability to participate in the processes is important, in order to be able to exist materially, which is a prerequisite for higher order valued functionings (Otto & Ziegler, 2006).

For most nations, education has been a key feature of policies to combat social exclusion, and is perceived critical to building human capital (Becker 1982). Muller and Karle (1993) observe that “societies have developed different early solutions to career preparation and the early solutions have influenced later adaptations”. Alvers (2008) notes that the lack of educational qualifications is the main variable that explains unemployment and insecurity. However, the capability approach moves beyond the notion of understanding education as a tool to enhance human capital; it conceives of it as empowering not just labour market outcomes but all dimensions of life, and demands equality of access of education to all groups, regardless of likely labour market attachment (Robeyns, 2006).

Educational qualifications may not necessarily enhance two people’s capability sets in the same way; other conversion factors may limit the extent to which education can benefit an individual. For example, in the UK, those who attended an independent (fee-paying) school before university are more likely to get a job after obtaining a degree than those who attended a state school (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2013). Ethnic

minority school pupils are also less likely to receive university offers from prestigious universities than comparably qualified white pupils (Boliver, 2013).

The capabilities approach holds that the functionings that an individual has reason to value will depend on their preferences. Some young people who are not in education or employment may well have opted out of these activities, to pursue a something else they value more. However, those seeking work, alongside other vulnerable subgroups such as young carers and the sick or disabled, form the largest subgroup within the NEET population (Eurofound, 2012). Those who are excluded from the labour market or education report lower levels of well-being than those who are not. The European Quality of Life Survey found that unemployed and inactive young people rate their wellbeing as comparatively low, and are more likely than others to feel socially excluded and lonely, to have a lack of social support, and to have lower levels of mental well-being (Eurofound, 2014). Therefore, it is reasonable to conceptualise the pursuit of education and employment as a valued activity for the most part.

### **2.3 Questions and hypotheses**

This analysis will consider variation in young people's educational participation and achievement across European countries, and the extent to which these outcomes are shaped by factors at different levels, from the individual to the state. This section sets out the broad research questions and hypotheses.

Three main questions are addressed in this research:

***Q1. How does participation in education among 16-18 year olds vary between countries; how has it varied over time; and what factors are associated with the participation of this age group in education?***

***Q2. How does participation in education among 19-29 year olds vary between countries; how has it varied over time; and what factors are associated with the participation of this age group in education?***

***Q3. How does low educational attainment among 19-29 year olds vary between countries; how has it varied over time; and what factors are associated with the low educational attainment?***

Considering these phenomena from a capabilities perspective, we might consider the ways in which young people's capabilities may be enhanced or diminished, such that they are empowered to choose education or prevented from doing so by the conversion factors that moderate their ability to move from resources to functionings. These conversion factors operate at the level of the young person themselves, the immediate environment in which they find themselves, and the wider macro level environment. It can be hypothesised that:

***H1: The likelihood of participation or achievement in education depends on individual level conversion factors – such as gender, migration status, and the prior attainment of***

*qualifications – which may limit individuals’ capacity to choose education where this is a valued outcome.*

*H2: The likelihood of participation or achievement in education depends on environmental conversion factors at the household and neighbourhood level – such as household income, parental characteristics and neighbourhood characteristics – which may impose different limits on two otherwise similar individuals.*

*H3: The likelihood of participation or achievement in education depends on macro level conversion factors – such as the prevailing policy and economic environment – which may enhance or diminish the capability to pursue education of two otherwise similar individuals from similar backgrounds.*

### **3. Methods**

This section will describe the data with which these questions were investigated, and the methods used to analyse this data.

#### **3.1 Data**

##### **3.1.1 Micro level data**

The primary source of data used in the analysis was the European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), for the years 2005, 2008 and 2011. EU-SILC provides data on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions in the European Union (Eurostat, 2013). The EU-SILC database consists of data collected by cross-sectional and longitudinal sample surveys within each country (of which there are now 31 in the study), and coordinated by Eurostat. There are two types of data available:

- Cross-sectional data pertaining to fixed time periods, with variables on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions, and
- Longitudinal data pertaining to individual-level changes over time, observed periodically – usually over four years.

Information on social exclusion and housing conditions is collected mainly at the household level, while information pertaining to labour market, education and health is obtained for individuals (over the age of 16) within the households. The EU-SILC variables used in the analysis and their definitions can be found in Table A2.1 of Appendix 2.

Although the EU-SILC dataset as a whole is large (around half a million respondents in total), country-level sample sizes of 16-29 year olds vary, from 1,700 to 7,000 (see Table A1.1 Appendix 1).

EU-SILC data has been used by many researchers studying the economic and social condition of Europeans, for example: research by Van Kerm and Alperin (2013) on inequality, growth and mobility in pre-recession Europe; Mäki et al. (2013), in an investigation of how education effects life expectancy across Europe; Arcanjo et al. (2013),

reporting on child poverty and benefit reform; and van der Wel, et al. (2010) who have studied European inequality and well-being.

The data does have some shortcomings for comparative analysis. The survey is not a fully harmonised survey; different questions are asked in different countries, and data collection and sample design differ across Europe. A detailed description of these features of the dataset can be found in Wolff et al. (2010).

The EU-SILC data is used in this analysis to provide micro data relating to participation and performance in education, and individual capabilities, across Europe.

### **3.1.2 Macro level data**

Data at the national level was also obtained, in order to add some contextual information to the micro level data, and to try to identify patterns at the cross-national level, and potential explanations for these patterns.

This data was obtained from statistics published by Eurostat and the OECD. Data from Eurostat was obtained through the Eurostat statistics database (Eurostat, 2014), specifically the databases on: education and training (edtr); research and development (research); high-tech industries and knowledge intensive services (htec); information society statistics (isoc); employment and unemployment (t\_employ); government expenditure statistics (gov\_a\_exp); population (populat); and income and living conditions (ilc).

Data was also used from the OECD *Education at a Glance* series (OECD, 2013a), alongside statistics from the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* study (OECD, 2010, 2013b), as well as data obtained through the OECD's statistics database (OECD, 2014).

Definitions of the macro level variables used in the analysis can be found in Table A2.2 in Appendix 2.

## **3.2 Methods**

Macro level variables were first of all used to identify clusters of countries. 24 of the macro level variables were combined into eight factors, using factor analysis with varimax reduction. These factors then were used in hierarchical cluster analysis, applying Ward's method to put the EU countries into homogenous groups. Participation and attainment in education in each cluster was compared.

These clusters were then used in the micro-level analysis, along with variables at the individual, household and neighbourhood level. The EU-SILC micro level data was explored through descriptive statistics to understand: how participation and achievement in education varies between countries and has varied over time (2005 to 2011); and the associations between participation and attainment and variables at the individual, household, neighbourhood and national level. Some descriptive analysis was also conducted at the subnational level, comparing participation and achievement between regions within selected countries.

A multivariate approach was then used to identify which factors remained significant after controlling for others. Binary logistic regression was used to build models of participation and achievement, incorporating explanatory variables at the different levels explored previously. Binary logistic multilevel models (Snijders and Bosker, 2012; van der Wel et al., 2010; Schlicht et al., 2010) were also used, which incorporated macro level variables reflecting the variation between countries, to understand explicitly what impact that these factors might have on educational participation and achievement.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Macro level influences on educational participation and outcomes

To summarise the macro level influences on education outcomes, factor analysis was performed on 24 macro level variables, for the 27 EU countries, (no data was available for Croatia and so it has been excluded from this part of the analysis). This resulted in seven factors, representing three concepts: education spending; education performance;; orientation to science, technology and research; and ICT infrastructure. This process is summarised in Table 4.1.1.

The seven factors represent macro level features that are potentially important in understanding education outcomes. *Education spending* can be used as an indicator of a government's commitment to education, while *Education performance* is a measure of the effectiveness of policy implementation. A country's *ICT infrastructure* indicates both the investment that a government has made in promoting this and the ICT capabilities of individuals and households. The extent to which a country is *science and technology orientated* is both an indicator of educational capabilities, and could also be considered a proxy for a country's cultural attitudes towards education, as a country that does not value education will not produce the highly-skilled workforce required for these industries.

Other macro level variables are also used to reflect the economic conditions facing young people in each country. These are: (the logarithm of) GDP per capita; the rate of youth unemployment (15-24 year olds); the proportion of the population that is aged 15 to 24 years; and the level of income inequality in 2010 (this variable was considered important by Beblavý et al., 2011).

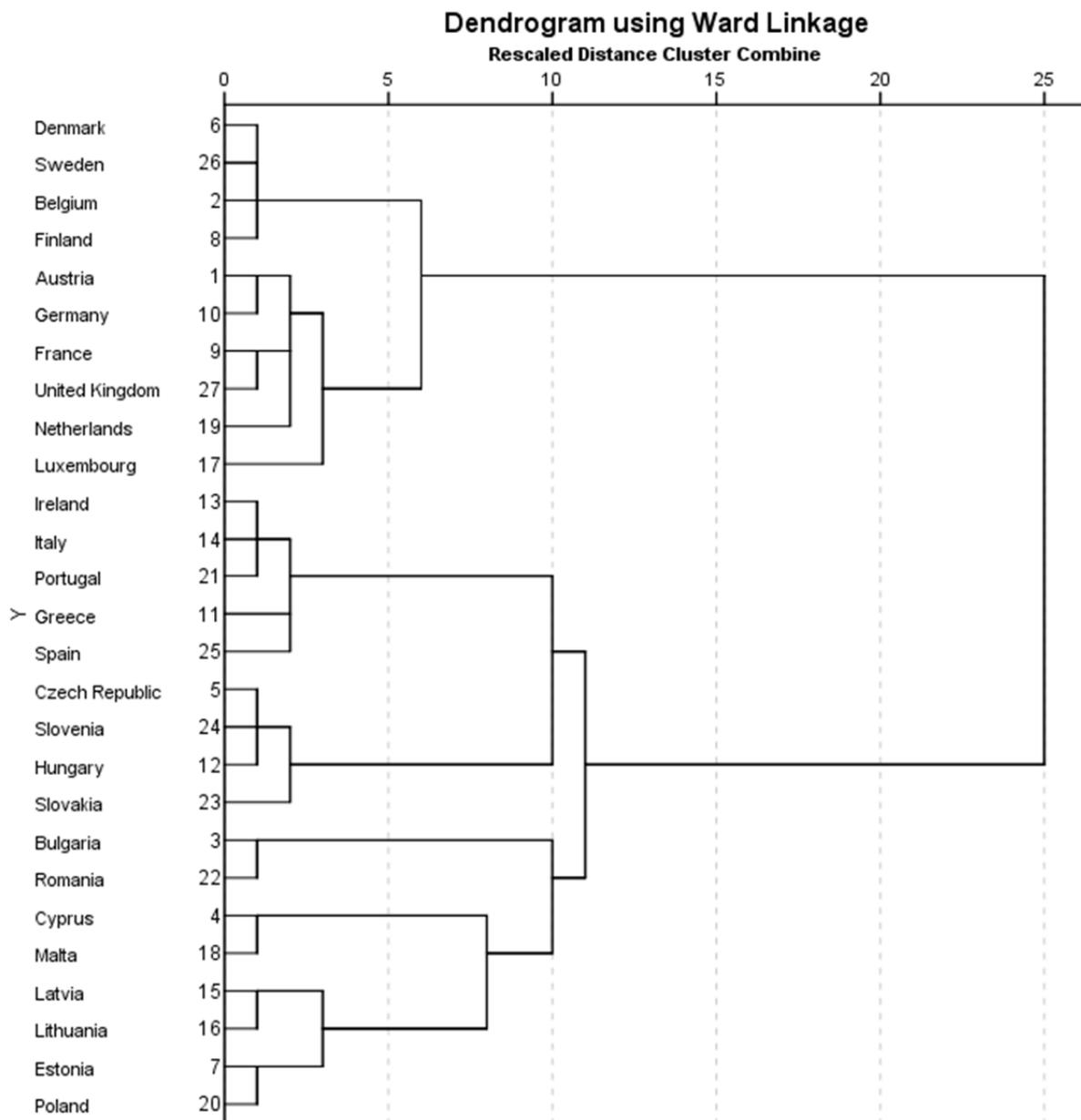
These seven factors and four variables were used to classify the 27 EU countries, by applying hierarchical clustering using Ward's method, and closeness was measured by a square Euclidean distance between countries. This yielded three groupings, as depicted in the dendogram in Figure 4.1.1.

**Table 4.1.1: Measures and factors representing macro level influences on education**

<b>Measure and Factor Name</b>	<b>Constituent Variables</b>	<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure*</b>
<b><i>Education performance and Inputs to Education</i></b>		
Education performance	Mean scores in mathematics, reading and science (mean taken of 2009 and 2012 OECD PISA data); reading performance of pupils 2009.	0.827
Expenditure on Education	Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil compared to GDP per capita at secondary level; Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil compared to GDP per capita at tertiary level; Public spending on education as a percentage of GDP 2008.	0.671
Exposure	School expectancy years of pupils 2009; Pupil to teacher ratio at primary level 2009.	0.500
<b><i>ICT Infrastructure</i></b>		
ICT infrastructure	Internet users per 100 people; Broadband and Internet subscriptions per 100 people; Broadband penetration rate in 2010.	0.642
<b><i>Science and Technology Orientation</i></b>		
Science Orientation	R&D researchers per million people 2010; R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP 2010; Human resources in science and engineering as a percentage share of active labour force 2010; Graduates in science and engineering 2010 in R&D.	0.659
Science orientation	Science graduates per 1000 of population aged 20 to 29, 2009; Doctorate students in science and technology as a percentage of the population aged 20 to 29.	0.500
Technology Orientation	Employment in high and medium-high-technology manufacturing as a percentage of total employment; employment in high and medium-high-technology services as a percentage of total employment.	0.985

\* This is a measure of the coherence of the variables and values greater than 0.5 are acceptable.

Figure 4.1.1: Clustering of EU countries



How each cluster performs on the factor scores is displayed in the Spider Diagram shown in Figure 4.1.2.

The first cluster, **Northern Europe**, is composed of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden and the UK. From Figure 4.1.2, it is apparent that GDP per Capita and investment in ICT is high in these countries. Expenditure on education is also high, as is “student exposure” (low pupil teacher ratio and long expectation of years in education), and education performance is good. Countries in this cluster have low youth unemployment and have an ageing population.

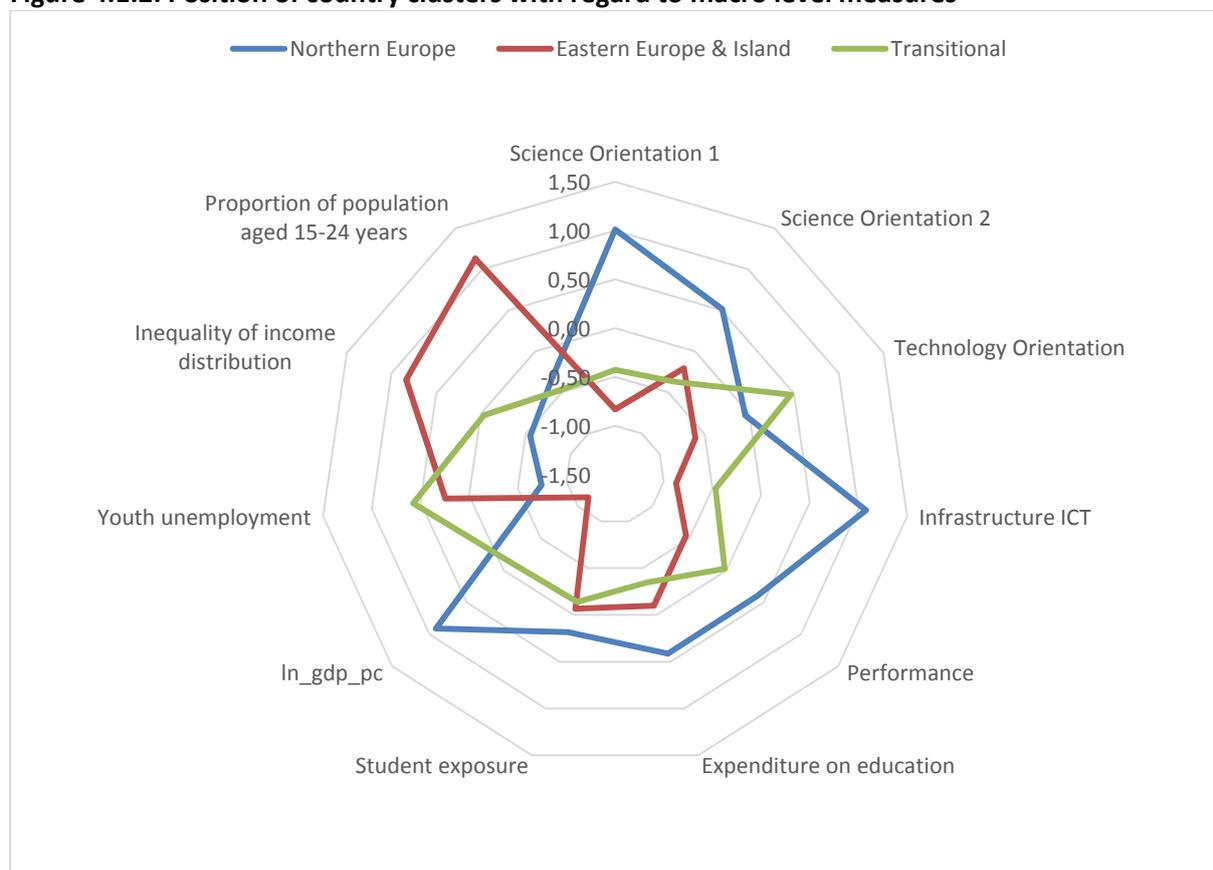
The second cluster, **Eastern and Island Economies**, is composed of the Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Cyprus and Malta. These countries have a youthful

population, but high income inequality, fairly high youth unemployment and low GDP per capita. ICT infrastructure and science orientation is also low.

The third cluster, **Transitional** countries, represents two types of economy: those which have suffered greatly in the recession (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain); and those which are emerging economies (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia). For this cluster science orientation is low, but technology orientation is high. Income inequality and youth unemployment are high.

These groups are rather different to the clustering of regimes argued for and reviewed by Esping-Andersen (1990), and reviewed by Veloso and Estevinha (2013). The **Northern European** cluster identified here includes the countries designated as Social-democratic by the Esping-Andersen classification, and half of those in the Continental group. The other half of the Continental group – Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the Czech Republic – appear in the **Transitional** cluster in this analysis. Most of the countries in Esping-Andersen’s Central and Eastern Europe group appear in the **Eastern and Island** cluster here, but Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia now appear in the **Transitional** group. Of the countries classified by Esping-Andersen as liberal, the UK is in the **Northern European** cluster, but Ireland is in the **Transitional** group, as a consequence of the recession. Perhaps this disruption of traditional clusters is a consequence of a shock effect of the economic downturn on regimes, which Veloso and Estevinha (2013) argue were already converging.

**Figure 4.1.2: Position of country clusters with regard to macro level measures**



How participation varies across the clusters by different age groups is shown in Table 4.1.2. Participation in education is lowest in the Northern European countries for all age groups, but especially 16 to 18 year olds. Participation is highest for those aged 25 to 29 years in the Transitional economies.

The distribution of highest academic qualification obtained for those aged 25 to 34 years is shown in Table 4.1.3. The Northern European countries have the highest proportion holding tertiary education qualifications, and those in the Transitional economies have the highest rates of holding upper secondary qualifications. The proportion of 25 to 34 year olds that have no more than lower secondary qualifications is low in all clusters, but is highest for those countries in the Transitional economies cluster.

**Table 4.1.2: Participation in education, by country cluster and age, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

Cluster	Participation in education (%)		
	16-18 year olds	19-24 year olds	25-29 year olds
Northern Europe	86.9	48.8	17.8
Eastern Europe & Island	91.4	54.3	11.4
Transitional	90.3	55.9	18.0
All 27 Countries	89.2	53.3	16.4

**Table 4.1.3: Highest academic qualification of 25-29 year olds, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

Highest Academic Qualification (%)	Cluster			Total
	Northern Europe	Eastern Europe & Island	Transitional	
Never been in education	0.0	0.4	0.7	0.4
Primary or pre-primary	2.9	3.8	2.8	3.1
Lower secondary	8.4	10.0	14.6	11.6
Upper secondary	43.9	44.9	47.1	45.6
Post-secondary non-tertiary	4.6	4.0	3.4	3.9
Tertiary	40.2	36.8	31.4	35.4
Sample Size	9001	6741	13002	28744

Table 4.1.4. shows the correlation at the national level between the macro level variables and two outcomes: the rate of participation in education, for the age groups 16 to 18 years, 19 to 24 years and 25 to 29 years; and the percentage of those aged 19 to 29 whose highest level of education is less than upper secondary. The correlations are low and most are not significant. ICT infrastructure does have a positive correlation with participation in education for those aged 16 to 24 years.

**Table 4.1.4: Pearson correlation coefficient of the correlation between macro level variables and educational outcomes**

Macro variable	Participation in Education			Lower upper secondary education (19 to 29 years)
	16 to 18 years	19 to 24 years	25 to 29 years	
GDP per capita (logged)	.370*	.330*	-.053	-.095
Proportion of those aged 15 to 24	-.094	-.132	-.156	-.070
Youth unemployment rate	-.094	.022	.170	-.057
Income inequality	-.237	-.126	.114	-.016
Science Orientation 1	.335*	.191	-.025	-.192
Technology Orientation	.099	.039	-.043	.016
ICT Infrastructure	.574***	.429**	-.067	-.174
Education Performance	.244	.279	-.024	.047
Science Orientation 2	.081	-.044	.135	-.186
Expenditure on Education	.171	.163	-.126	-.251
Student Exposure	.019	.069	-.121	.031

\*\*\* Significant at 1% level, \*\* Significant at 5% level, \* Significant at the 10% level

## 4.2 Participation in education among 16-18 year olds

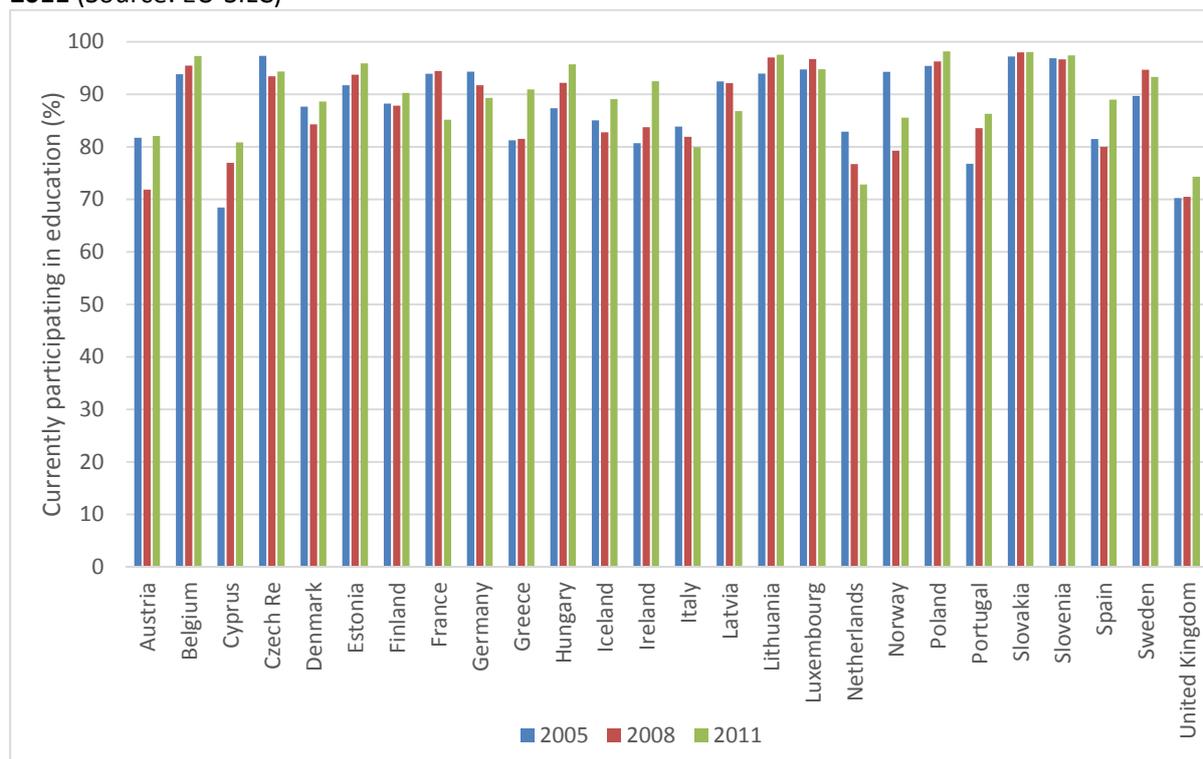
This section considers whether young people are staying on to attend upper secondary school.

### 4.2.1 Participation between countries and over time

The proportion of 16-18 year olds in education in 2011 across all 26 countries<sup>3</sup> was 85.8%, a slight decrease from 87.2% in 2005. There are considerable differences in participation between countries (Figure 4.2.1), from near universal participation in Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Lithuania and Belgium, to over a quarter not participating in the UK and the Netherlands.

<sup>3</sup> These are the 26 countries in the dataset for which data is available at all 3 time points – 24 of the EU countries, plus Iceland and Norway.

**Figure 4.2.1: Percentage of 16-18 year olds participating in education, by country, 2005, 2008 and 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)



Some relatively modest changes in participation occurred over the period, but there is no clear direction of change that might indicate a Europe-wide recession effect. A decrease in participation over the period can be seen in a number of countries (France, Germany, Italy, Latvia and the Netherlands), while others saw some increase (Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Spain and the UK).

#### 4.2.2 Individual and family level conversion factors

There are a number of factors at the individual and household level that could influence whether a 16 year old leaves or stays in education. The decision to stay on might be shaped by whether the individual successfully gained qualifications at the lower secondary level. Relevant barriers could also exist due to gender, or to not being born in the country of residence. At the family level, those who come from households with more resources might be expected to be more likely to stay on in school; they are less likely to have to leave to seek work, and potentially more likely to be encouraged to stay in education. At the neighbourhood level, the perceived ‘pleasantness’ of the area is used here as a proxy for area deprivation; those from more disadvantaged neighbourhoods may be less likely to stay on in education. Population density is also included here, as those in more densely populated areas may be closer to a school (or alternatively, they may have more opportunities to work, and therefore be more likely to choose to leave). Table 4.2.1 summarises these factors, and shows their bivariate associations with participation in education at the level of the whole sample.

Chi square tests of significance were performed for each association, and suggested the following factors as significant predictors of being in education; being female, being born in

the country of residence, living with at least one parent, not living in a low income or materially deprived household, and having at least one parent with upper secondary level qualifications. However, it should be noted that these are bivariate associations; the regression model in Section 4.2.4 will provide a more useful indication of the predictors of participation in education.

**Table 4.2.1: Percentage of 16-18 year olds participating in education, by individual, household and neighbourhood characteristics, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

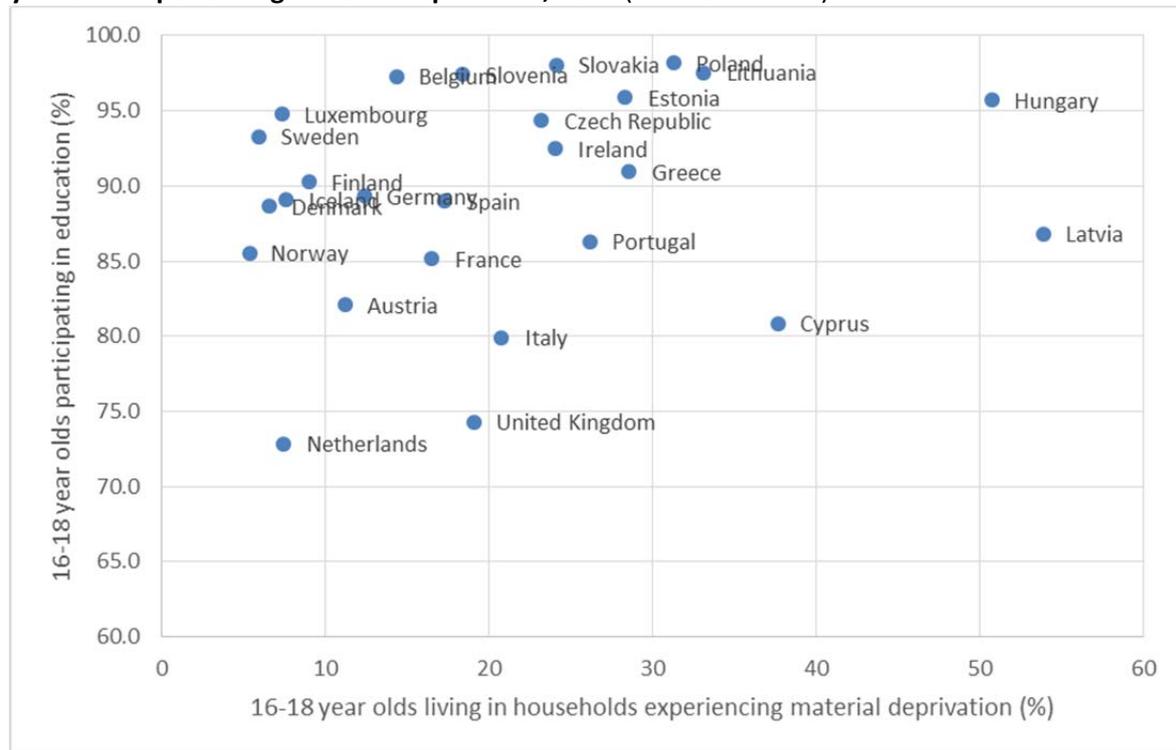
Characteristic	In education (%)	p-value
<b>INDIVIDUAL LEVEL</b>		
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	83.9	<0.001
Female	88.0	
<b>Born in country of residence</b>		
Not immigrant	86.3	0.009
Immigrant	78.9	
<b>Lower secondary qualifications</b>		
Yes	86.4	p=0.853
No	86.8	
<b>General health</b>		
Good (or very good)	86.4	0.012
Not good	80.5	
<b>FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD</b>		
<b>Lives with parents</b>		
Yes	86.2	<0.001
No	73.0	
<b>Household type</b>		
Living with couple parents	86.5	0.104
Living with single parent	84.0	
Other/not living with a parent	83.7	
<b>Material deprivation</b>		
Yes	81.4	<0.001
No	86.7	
<b>Lowest income quintile</b>		
Yes	82.8	<0.001
No	87.2	
<b>At least 1 parent in professional occupation</b>		
Yes	87.7	0.105
No	85.5	
<b>At least 1 parent has upper secondary qualifications</b>		
Yes	87.4	<0.001
No	79.5	
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD</b>		
<b>Lives in unpleasant area</b>		
Yes	84.8	p=0.1998
No	86.3	
<b>Degree of urbanisation</b>		
Densely populated	86.1	p=0.4357
Intermediate	85.6	
Thinly populated	87.5	

Note: p-values obtained from chi-square tests of association. Bold indicates significance ( $p < 0.05$ ).

At the country level, there is no straightforward relationship between these explanatory variables and participation in education. Shown in Figure 4.2.2 is the relationship between the proportion of 16-18 year olds experiencing material deprivation, and the proportion of 16-18 year olds participating in education, at the country level (i.e. each dot represents one

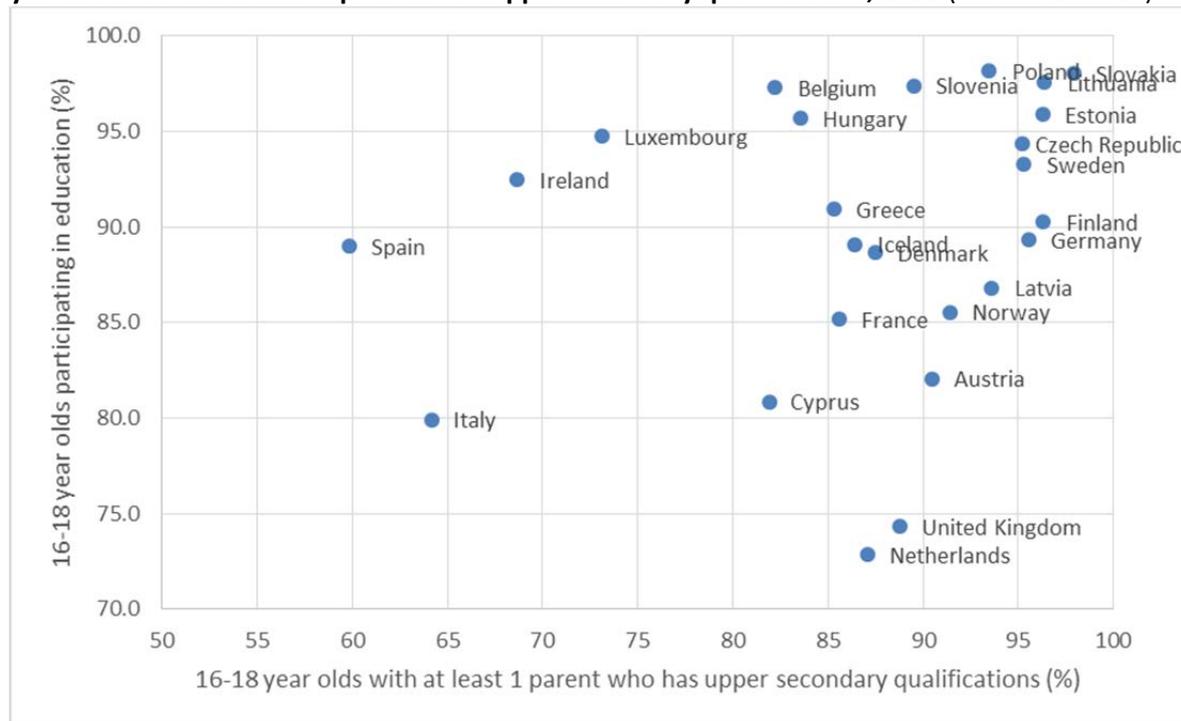
country in the sample). There is a loose cluster of low deprivation, high participation countries, but high participation is found across all levels of deprivation. None of the most deprived countries show low educational participation, but low participation is found in some of the least deprived countries, such as the Netherlands.

**Figure 4.2.2: Percentage of 16-18 year olds participating in education against percentage of 16-18 year olds experiencing material deprivation, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)



Similarly, when the cross-national association between educational participation and parental qualifications is considered (Figure 4.2.3), there is no straightforward pattern. Although for the most part countries cluster in a high participation/high parental qualification area, there are notable exceptions. For example, in the Netherlands, 87% of 16-18 year olds have at least one parent with upper secondary qualifications, but only 73% of this age group are participating in education; this could result in this generation being less likely than their parents to hold qualifications. The situation is similar in the UK, and also applies to some extent to Austria.

**Figure 4.2.3: Percentage of 16-18 year olds participating in education against percentage of 16-18 year olds with at least one parent with upper secondary qualifications, 2011 (Source: EU-SILC)**

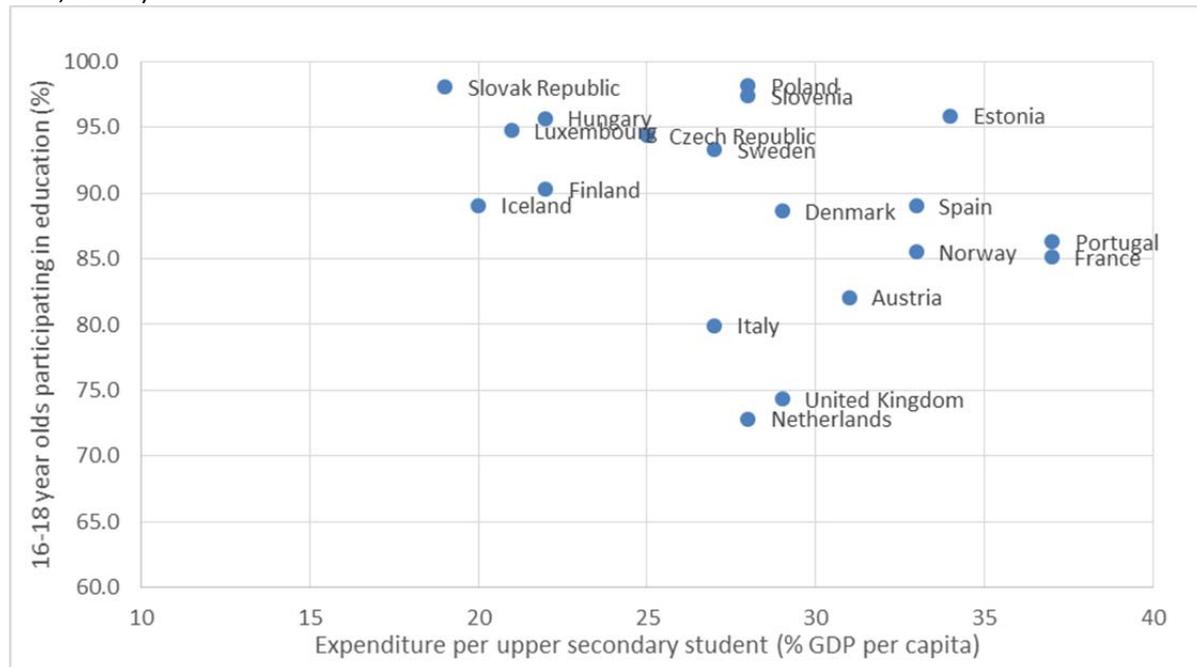


#### 4.2.3 Policy and macro level conversion factors

There are a number of aspects of the way in which secondary schools are structured and funded that might be associated with whether 16 year olds leave school or continue to participate in upper secondary education. Most of the countries in this sample have a school leaving age of 16 or younger, meaning that participation is not compulsory for most of the age group of interest. Thus, participation is something that must be both feasible and chosen; in the language of capabilities, it must be within the individual’s capability set, but whether it is a chosen functioning depends on that individual’s own values and preferences. The education system has a dual role to play in this; to provide something of value, something worth staying in education for, but also in shaping, through education itself, the personal values that shape the decision to participate.

Expenditure on education is a starting point for understanding of the kind of investment that a country is choosing to make in its students. Shown in Figure 4.2.4 is the association between participation in education and expenditure per upper secondary student, as a percentage of GDP per capita. It is clear from this that there is no obvious positive correlation between expenditure and participation. None of the lower spending countries have low participation rates, but a number of the higher spending countries do.

**Figure 4.2.4: Percentage of 16-18 year olds participating in education against government expenditure per upper secondary student as a percentage of GDP per capita, 2011** (Sources: EU-SILC, OECD)



Note: Some countries omitted due to missing data on expenditure.

Other potentially relevant indicators that can perhaps act as a proxy for investment in education are the number of teaching hours, and the ratio of staff to students. The compensation of upper secondary teachers relative to other graduate occupations is also potentially indicative of the value that a country places on education, and of the extent of the desire to attract graduates with skills that would be in demand elsewhere. However, a similarly weak and counterintuitive relationship was found between participation and these variables (see Figures A1.1 to A1.3 in Appendix 1). Countries that would appear to invest the most on these measures do not necessarily have the highest participation rates.

There are other macro-level factors that can shape the decision to participate. Weak labour demand – as manifested by high youth unemployment rates – may make prolonging education more appealing. More specifically, the structure of compensation in the labour market may play a role; if there is little difference between the predicted earnings of someone with and without upper secondary education, participation may be less likely. However, neither of these variables seem to have these effects (see Figures A1.4 and A1.5 in Appendix 1). Several countries have an under-25 unemployment rate of around 10%, but educational participation in these countries ranges from 73% in the Netherlands to 89% in Germany. Furthermore, although there is wide variation in the earnings premium to upper secondary education, from 7% to 39%, this does not seem to be related to participation among 16-18 year olds.

#### 4.2.4 Predicting participation among 16-18 year olds

The above factors can be entered simultaneously into a regression model, in order to establish which predictors remain significant, controlling for other factors. In Table 4.2.2 the results of two models are presented, the first of which incorporates the personal and

neighbourhood factors outlined above, and the second of which also includes a grouped country variable based on the clusters identified in Section 4.1 (with non-EU countries Iceland and Norway incorporated into the Northern Europe cluster).

These results suggest a significant impact of gender, with the odds of young women participating around 40% higher than those of young men. Being born in a different country has a significant negative effect on participation in model 1 (as indicated by an odds ratio less than 1), although this disappears in model 2 after the country cluster variable is introduced. Success at lower levels of secondary school does not appear to be associated with the decision to attend upper secondary schooling. The impact of health was found to be significant, and having good health appears to increase the odds of participation by around half, although the impact is smaller once country cluster is accounted for.

Low income and material deprivation exert a negative impact on the likelihood of attending school, although income is significant only before entering the grouped country variable; after this variable is introduced, income is not significant, but material deprivation becomes significant. Regardless of whether the model includes the country cluster variable, having a parent in a professional job, or who has at least upper secondary qualifications, are both significant predictors of participation, and the impact of these variables is very similar in the two models. Household type itself is less important; young people living with both parents were no more or less likely to participate in education than those in single parent households. Those living in areas subjectively rated as less pleasant are less likely to participate, but the degree of urbanisation was not found to be significant.

The country cluster variable itself shows significant differences between clusters. The odds of participation relative to the Northern European countries are 85% higher in the Eastern and Island economies, and almost 70% higher in the Transition countries. The addition of the country variable improves the predictive power of the model only slightly, and it is still not very high, suggesting only weak predictive power for the model overall (it only explains roughly 4% of the variation in participation).

**Table 4.2.2: Logistic regression model predicting participation in education among 16-18 year olds, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	exp(B)	p-value	exp(B)	p-value
Female	1.444***	(0.000)	1.438***	(0.000)
Not born in country of residence	0.725*	(0.015)	0.803	(0.103)
No lower secondary qualifications	0.839	(0.160)	0.810	(0.095)
Good (or very good) health	1.570***	(0.000)	1.483***	(0.001)
Household type				
<i>(Ref = Lives with couple parents)</i>				
<i>Lives with single parent</i>	1.015	(0.860)	1.081	(0.375)
<i>Other</i>	1.172	(0.169)	1.044	(0.711)
Household experiences material deprivation	0.863	(0.062)	0.741***	(0.000)
Household in lowest income quintile	0.859*	(0.041)	0.888	(0.114)
At least 1 parent in professional occupation	1.270**	(0.005)	1.279**	(0.004)
At least 1 parent has at least upper secondary qualifications	2.058***	(0.000)	2.189***	(0.000)
Lives in unpleasant area	0.829**	(0.008)	0.838*	(0.013)
Degree of urbanisation				
<i>(Ref = Densely populated)</i>				
<i>Intermediate</i>	0.932	(0.393)	0.942	(0.476)
<i>Thinly populated</i>	1.124	(0.140)	1.012	(0.880)
Country group				
<i>(Ref = Northern Europe)</i>				
<i>Eastern and Island</i>			1.856***	(0.000)
<i>Transitional</i>			1.694***	(0.000)
N	11287		11287	
Log likelihood	-3449.6		-3418.8	
chi <sup>2</sup>	222.9		284.4	
p (chi <sup>2</sup> )	<0.001		<0.001	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0313		0.0399	

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients; p-values in parentheses (\* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001)

Estimating the same model using the 2005 data (Table A1.2 in Appendix 1) suggests that some of the effects identified here may have weakened in recent years; the coefficients on gender, and parental characteristics are smaller in 2011. However, the impacts of household income and material deprivation were not found to be significant in 2005. The coefficients on the country variable in 2005 suggest that differences between the clusters have enlarged since 2005.

#### 4.2.5 Multilevel analysis

A multilevel model was also estimated, and this is presented in Table 4.2.3. This model is a binary logistic model, with the variables at the individual level supplemented with macro level variables that might shape educational participation. These macro variables were the factors developed in section 4.1 along with other country characteristics which might reflect

the education culture, notably the proportion of the population who are aged 15 to 24, income inequality, the rate of youth unemployment and the natural logarithm of GDP per capita.

**Table 4.2.3: Multilevel model of participation in education among 16-18 year olds** (Source: EU-SILC, Eurostat, OECD)

Variable name	Coef.	Std.error	Odds ratio
<b>Micro level variables</b>			
Female	0.374	0.067	1.454**
Not born in country of residence	-0.112	0.141	0.894
Has lower secondary qualifications	0.362	0.134	1.436**
In good (very good) health	0.508	0.121	1.662**
Household in lowest quintile	-0.215	0.077	0.8067**
Finding it difficult or very different	-0.186	0.088	0.831**
Household materially deprived	-0.332	0.095	0.717**
Lives in unpleasant area	0.028	0.071	1.028
Parent is professional or managerial	0.318	0.088	1.374**
Parent has upper secondary qualification	0.631	0.088	1.8794**
<b>Macro level variables</b>			
GDP per capita	0.298	0.789	1.347
Youth unemployment rate	0.028	0.019	1.028
Income inequality	-0.167	0.195	0.846
Proportion 15-24	0.534	0.151	1.706**
Science orientation 1	0.678	0.506	1.970
Science orientation 2	-0.600	0.351	0.549
Technology orientation	0.451	0.221	1.570**
Performance of education system	-0.187	0.171	0.829
ICT Infrastructure	-0.233	0.287	0.792
Expenditure on education	-0.569	0.181	0.566**
Student exposure	0.120	0.191	1.127
Variation explained	44.4%		

Notes: \*\* indicates significance at the 5% level

Being female, having lower secondary qualifications and being in good health have a positive and significant association with participation in education. There is also a significant positive association between participation in education and having a parent who is in a professional or managerial job, and with a parent who has at least upper secondary qualifications. Not participating in education is associated with relative and absolute measures of household poverty; being in the lowest income quintile, finding it difficult to get by, and being materially deprived all have odds ratios of less than one.

Among the macro variables, the only factors which show a significant and positive association with being in education are the proportion of the population aged 15-24, and technology orientation (the amount of employment in knowledge intensive sectors). Surprisingly, expenditure on education has a significant negative association with participation.

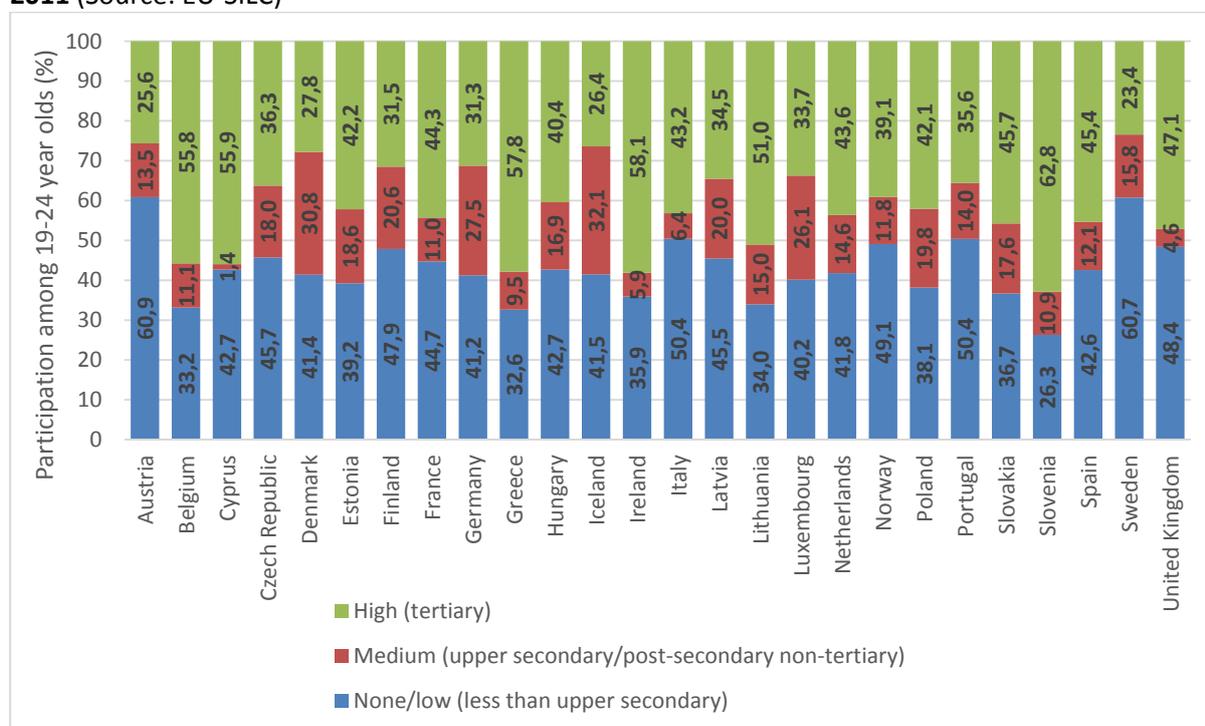
However, the multilevel model did not fit well, and leaves a significant amount of variation between countries unexplained (55.6%). The model is also very sensitive to the addition and removal of variables.

### 4.3 Participation in education among 19-29 year olds

#### 4.3.1 Participation between countries and over time

This section explores what proportion of 19-29 year olds participating in education, and at what level, and the factors potentially associated with this participation. The rate of participation in education among 19-24 year olds at three levels<sup>4</sup> is presented in Figure 4.3.1. In some countries, a substantial proportion of 19-24 year olds are undertaking medium level education – around a third in Denmark and Iceland – while in other countries such as Greece and the UK, this level of participation is unusual for this age group.

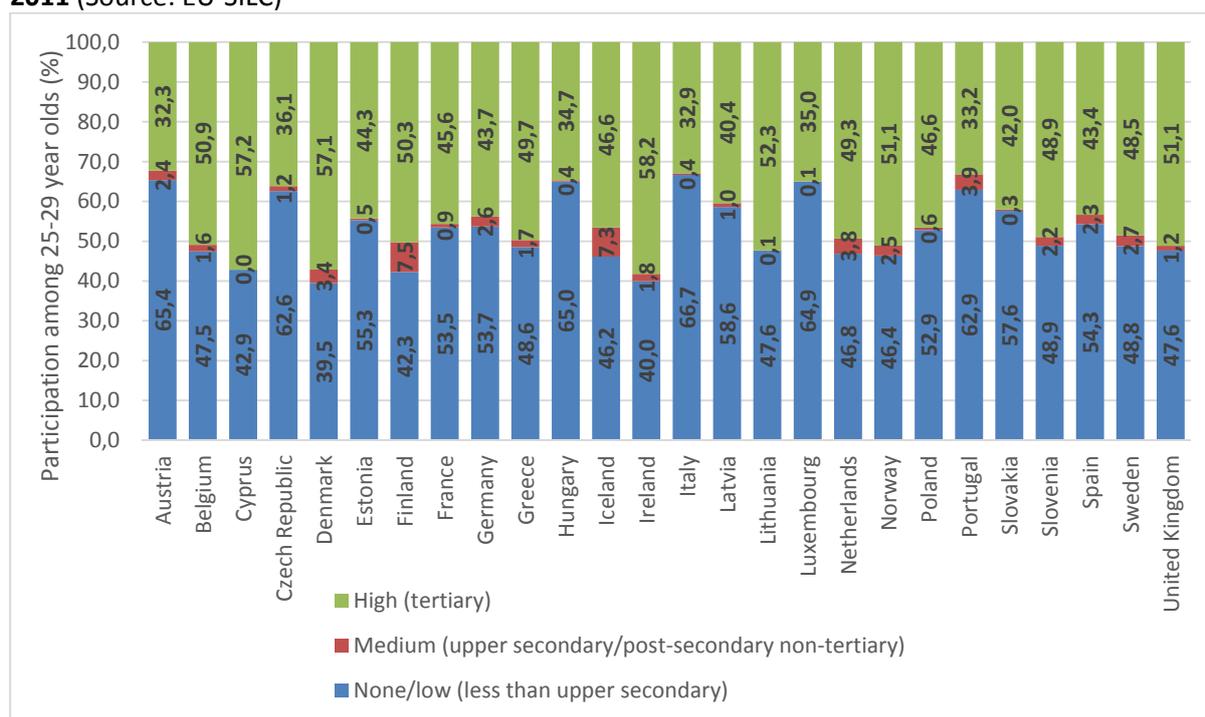
**Figure 4.3.1: Participation in education among 19-24 year olds, by level of education and country, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)



Participation at the medium level is relatively less likely in all countries among the 25-29 age group (Figure 4.3.2). In most countries, around half of this age group are either participating in or have obtained tertiary education. However, in a few countries this is as low as a third – Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Romania.

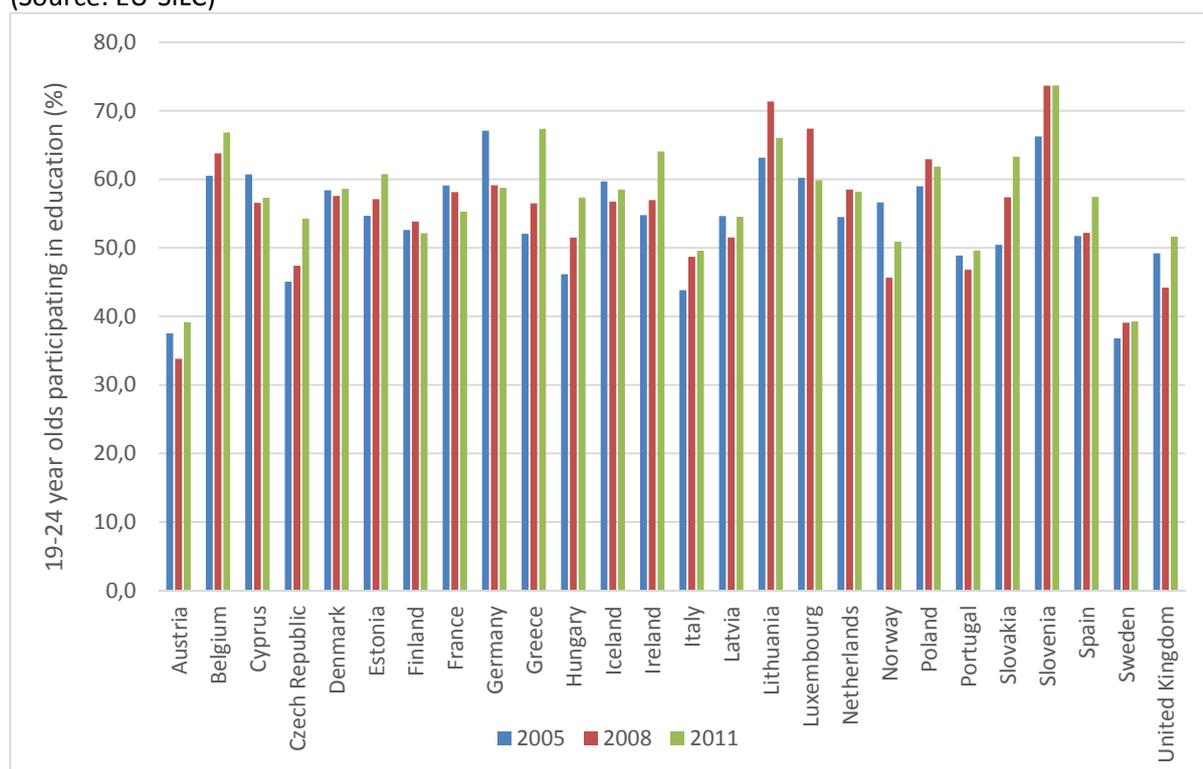
<sup>4</sup> Note that the ‘high’ category also includes those who have already obtained a degree; although they are not currently participating, it would give a misleading picture of educational capabilities to group them with the ‘none or low’ category.

**Figure 4.3.2: Participation in education among 25-29 year olds, by level of education and country, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)



Participation is more likely to have increased over time than decreased, although there is no universal pattern in this regard across the countries. Figure 4.3.3 shows the proportion of 19-24 year olds participating at any level over three time points. Many countries seem to have experienced an increase in participation over this time period – Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden. However, participation has fluctuated or fallen in other countries. A similarly mixed picture can be seen in the 25-29 age group (see Figure A1.6 in Appendix 1).

**Figure 4.3.3: Participation in education among 19-24 year olds, by country, 2005, 2008 and 2011**  
(Source: EU-SILC)



### 4.3.2 Individual and family level conversion factors

The bivariate associations between participation in at least a medium level of education (i.e. upper secondary or higher), and a number of personal and household characteristics are presented in Table 4.3.1. The gender gap observed among 16-18 year olds is still present, and considerably wider, at around 10 percentage points. Those born in another country, and those who do not have good health, are also less likely to participate. Participation among those who have failed to gain lower secondary qualification is extremely low among 19-24 year olds, and virtually non-existent among 25-29 year olds. Those in the 19-24 year old age group who have formed a household with a partner are less likely to participate than those living alone or with other adults, and those who have formed a household with children are even less likely. Among the 25-29 age group, less than half of those still living with parents are participating in education; participation in this group is much more likely among those who have left home, although those with children still have a lower participation rate.

**Table 4.3.1: Percentage of 19-24 and 25-29 year olds participating in education, by selected characteristics, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

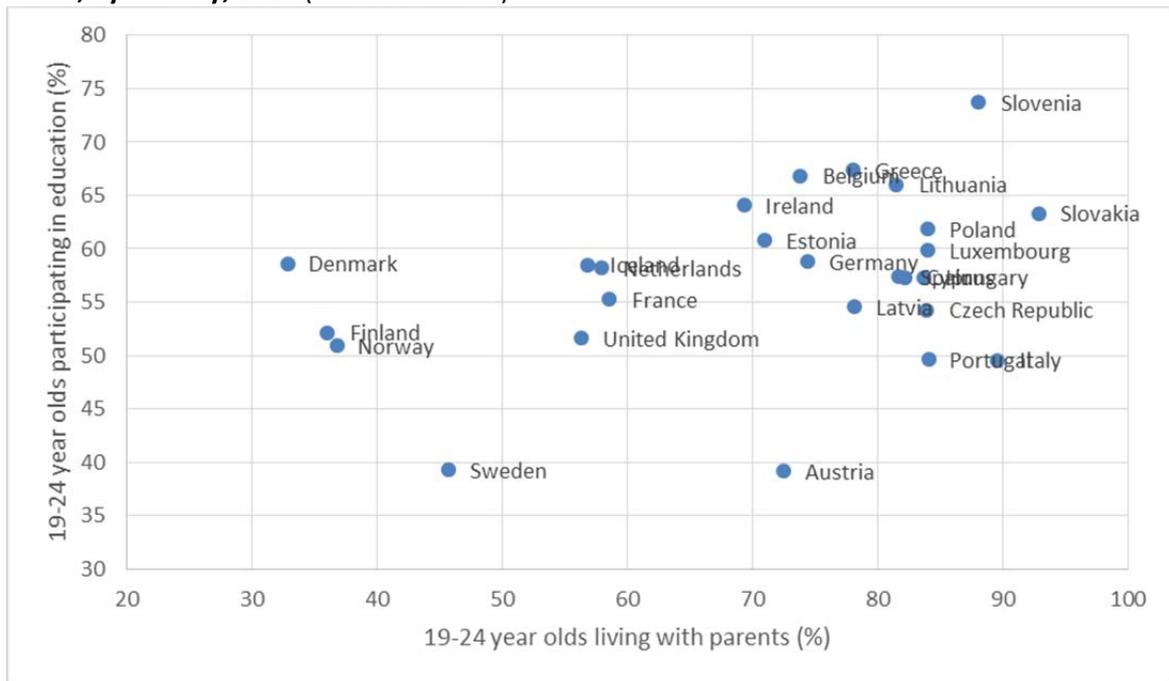
Characteristic	19-24		25-29	
	In education (%)	p-value	In education (%)	p-value
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	50.7	<0.001	41.5	<0.001
Female	60.8		50.0	
<b>Born in country of residence</b>				
Not immigrant	56.2	0.005	46.9	<0.001
Immigrant	48.9		38.3	
<b>Lower secondary qualifications</b>				
Yes	57.2	<0.001	47.7	<0.001
No	6.1		0.2	
<b>General health</b>				
Good (or very good)	57.2	<0.001	47.5	<0.001
Not good	42.1		29.8	
<b>Life course stage</b>				
Living with parents	58.5	<0.001	46.8	<0.001
Living alone	64.8		57.0	
Living with a partner, no children	44.5		56.8	
Living with other adults	66.1		60.0	
Formed own single or couple parent household	18.9		28.4	
Other	40.3		30.7	

Note: p-values obtained from chi-square tests of association. Bold indicates significance ( $p < 0.05$ ).

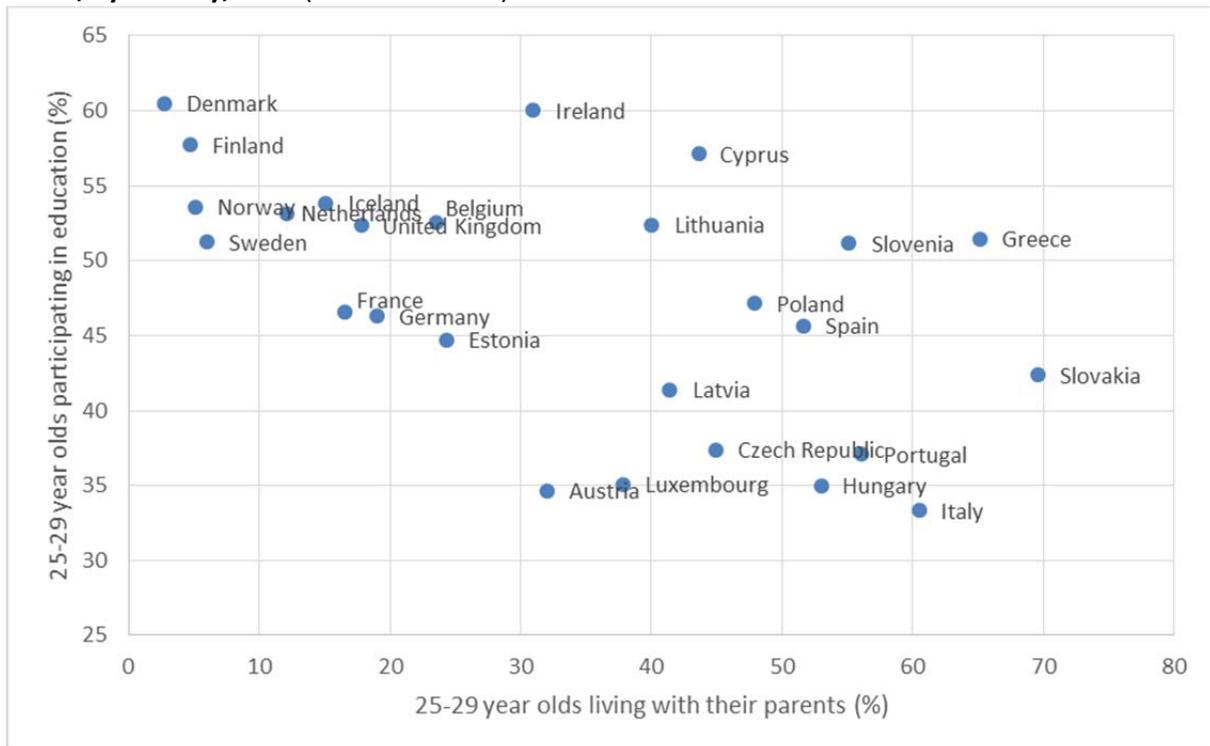
Unlike the previous analysis of the 16-18 year old age group, it is not possible to link these patterns of participation to parental characteristics, as over a third of this group are not living in the same household as their parents, and therefore there is no data on their parents. For this reason, it is also difficult to establish the link between participation in education and household income, as a young person participating in tertiary education may appear to have an extremely low household income if they are not living at home, but this does not necessarily reflect their level of financial security.

However, the relationship between home leaving and participation in education is more complex at the country level (Figure 4.3.4). There is considerable variation in the proportion of this age group who are still living at home from 58.6% in Denmark to 92.9% in Slovakia; however, the difference in participation between these two countries is less than 5 percentage points. On the other hand, there is a considerable difference in participation rates between, for example, Belgium and Austria, despite having similar proportions of this age group living with their parents. A negative gradient is clearer for the 25-29 year old age group (Figure 4.3.5); in general countries where a large proportion of this group are living with their parents have lower participation rates among this group.

**Figure 4.3.4: Percentage of 19-24 year olds participating in education against percentage living at home, by country, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)



**Figure 4.3.5: Percentage of 25-29 year olds participating in education against percentage living at home, by country, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)



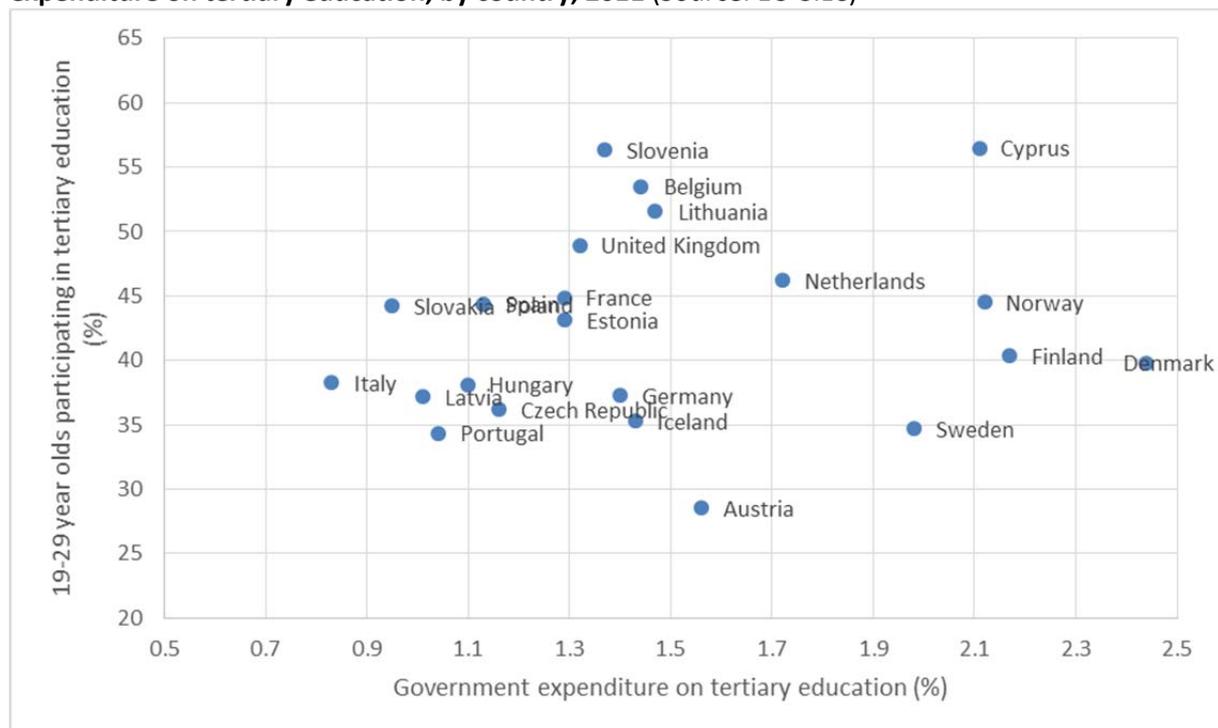
There is a negative association between family formation and educational participation among 19-24 year olds at the cross-national level (see Figure A1.7 in Appendix 1). There is no individual country that seems to particularly facilitate learning among those in this age group who have formed a household with children, suggesting that this remains a barrier. Conversely, for the 25-29 age group, the association becomes positive (Figure A1.8 in

Appendix 1), suggesting some differentiation between countries in the degree of ‘success’ of the youth transition. Countries such as Ireland, Iceland, the UK, and Sweden have both high rates of participation and family formation, while others, such as Italy, Hungary and Portugal, have lower levels of both.

### 4.3.3 Policy and macro level conversion factors

Since the financial crisis in 2008, expenditure on tertiary education has remained stable across the EU as a whole, although it has fallen in some countries, both those with previously high expenditure (Austria, Cyprus, Spain, and the Netherlands) and those with previously low expenditure (Bulgaria, Latvia, Czech Republic and Italy) (European Commission, 2013). However, there is little association at the cross-national level between government expenditure on tertiary education, and the proportion of 19-29 year olds who participate in it (Figure 4.3.6). No country manages to achieve high participation with low expenditure, but those who spend the most (the Nordic countries) have quite similar or even lower participation rates to those who spend a medium amount (such as the Netherlands, the UK and France).

**Figure 4.3.6: Percentage of 19-29 year olds participating in tertiary education against government expenditure on tertiary education, by country, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

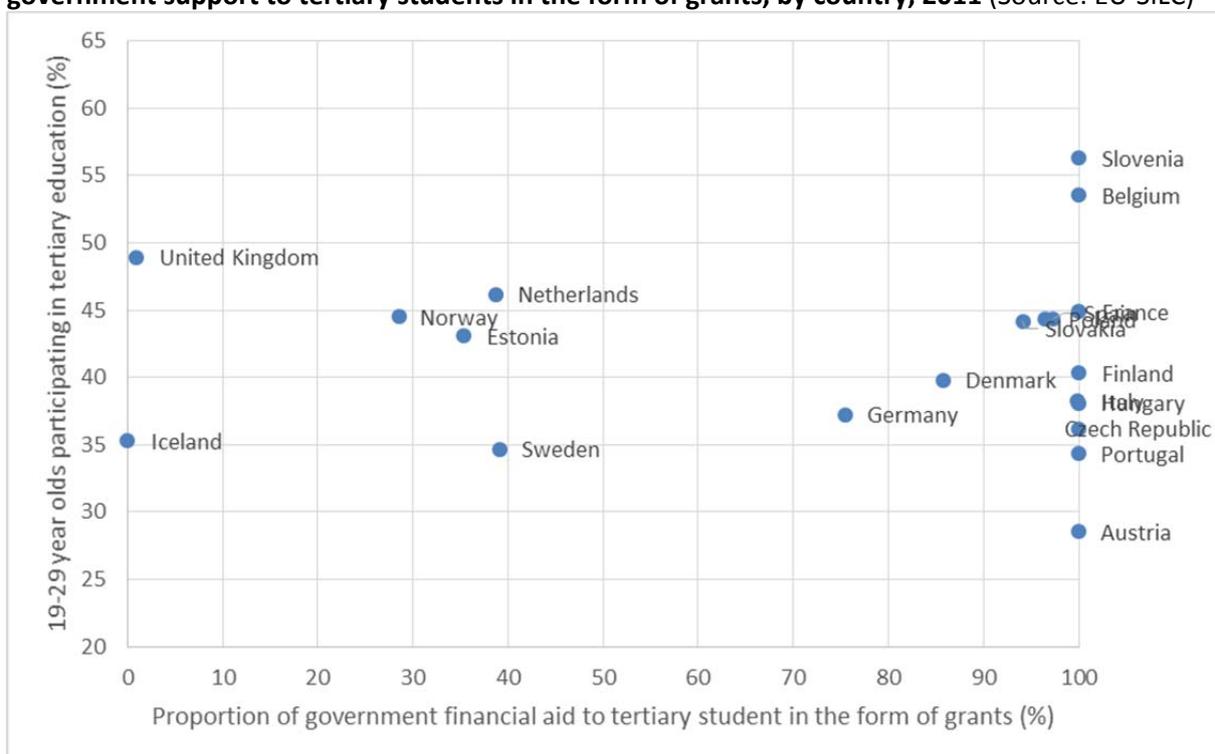


Note: Some countries omitted due to missing data on government expenditure. Figure for participation in tertiary education includes those who are not currently participating but have gained a degree.

A more interesting variable from a capability perspective might be the way in which the tertiary education system is funded; for example, there are huge variations in the public-private split in tertiary funding, from over 90% public (in Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway) to 75% privately funded in the UK (European Commission, 2013). Fees payable by students vary from zero in the Nordic countries to over €5000 per year in Estonia, Lithuania, Slovenia and the UK (Eurydice, 2013). Systems that rely on high levels of private

funding may discourage or hinder participation among those from poorer backgrounds. Another potentially relevant dimension is the way in which a government chooses to fund tertiary students; whether they offer support in the form of grants, or in the form of loans to be repaid on graduation. Allowing a student to participate in education without incurring debt might be thought of as more capability enhancing. However, there is no association between the proportion of financial aid provided in the form of grants, and participation in tertiary education (Figure 4.3.7). Many countries offer support on a fully non-repayable basis, but participation levels vary widely between them. A fuller understanding of the extent to which governments enhance students' capabilities to participate in tertiary education would need to consider a number of variables around fee levels and generosity of support.

**Figure 4.3.7: Percentage of 19-29 year olds participating in tertiary education against proportion of government support to tertiary students in the form of grants, by country, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)



Note: Some countries omitted due to missing data on government expenditure. Figure for participation in tertiary education includes those who are not currently participating but have gained a degree.

As with the younger age group considered above, the prevailing economic conditions may affect whether 19-29 year olds choose to prolong their education. However, this does not appear to be the case; among 19-24 year olds, there is a very weak positive association between the unemployment rate of this group and educational participation, and for 25-29 year olds there is none at all (Figures A1.9 and A1.10 in Appendix 1).

#### 4.3.4 Predicting participation in education among 19-29 year olds

Logistic regression models were used to identify significant predictors of educational participation among 19-24 year olds (Table 4.3.2) and 25-29 year olds (Table 4.3.3).<sup>5</sup>

**Table 4.3.2: Logistic regression model predicting participation in at least upper secondary level education among 19-24 year olds, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	exp(B)	p-value	exp(B)	p-value
Female	1.985***	(0.000)	1.990***	(0.000)
Not born in country of residence	0.719***	(0.000)	0.724***	(0.000)
Good (or very good) health	1.780***	(0.000)	1.800***	(0.000)
Life course stage (Ref = Living with parents)				
<i>Living alone</i>	1.032	(0.551)	1.015	(0.789)
<i>Living with a partner, no children</i>	0.467***	(0.000)	0.457***	(0.000)
<i>Living with other adults</i>	1.082	(0.282)	1.075	(0.324)
<i>Formed own single or couple parent household</i>	0.121***	(0.000)	0.118***	(0.000)
<i>Other</i>	0.370***	(0.000)	0.365***	(0.000)
Country group (Ref = Northern Europe)				
<i>Eastern and Island</i>			1.064	(0.075)
<i>Transitional</i>			0.915**	(0.002)
N	29475		29475	
Log likelihood	-18989.2		-18977.0	
chi <sup>2</sup>	2062.6		2087.0	
p (chi <sup>2</sup> )	<0.001		<0.001	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0515		0.0521	

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients; p-values in parentheses (\* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001)

The coefficient estimates for the 19-24 age group found women to be almost twice as likely as men to participate in education. Being born in another country was also found to have a significant negative impact on the odds of participation of around 25%. Good health had a significant positive impact. The negative association between family formation and participation in education is confirmed here, with those who are living with a partner or who have formed their own single or couple parent family much less likely to participate. The addition of a country variable, grouped as before, does not alter these results. It also suggests a slightly higher probability of participation among those in the Northern European countries compared to those in the Transitional cluster, but no significant difference between Northern Europe and the Eastern and Island cluster. This is interesting given the differences in participation between these clusters shown in Table 4.1.2, which suggested that participation was lowest in the Northern European cluster. These regression results suggest that the apparent differences may be due to differences in individual characteristics

<sup>5</sup> The variable 'lower secondary qualifications' had to be dropped from these models, as reliable estimates could not be produced due to the small number of cases who participate without having such qualifications.

within these countries, and that once these are controlled for, the probability of participation is in fact highest in Northern Europe.

In the 25-29 age group, being female, born in another country, and having good health are even stronger predictors of participation. In contrast to the 19-24 age group, living with a partner and no children is a positive predictor of participation, or given this variable includes those who have already obtained a degree, and indicator of having participated in education and subsequently formed a family. However, forming a single or couple parent household still has a strong negative association with participation. The addition of the country variable does not change the impact of these individual and family level characteristics very much. The variable itself, as for the 19-24 age group, suggests a higher level of participation in the Northern European cluster relative to the Transitional cluster, but no significant difference between the Northern Europe and Eastern and Island clusters.

The predictive power of both of these models, as suggested by the pseudo-R squared values, is fairly low – explaining around 5% of the variation for 19-24 year olds and 7% for the 25-29 year olds – and is not improved a great deal by the addition of the country variable.

**Table 4.3.3: Logistic regression model predicting participation in at least upper secondary level education among 25-29 year olds, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	exp(B)	p-value	exp(B)	p-value
Female	2.063***	(0.000)	2.099***	(0.000)
Not born in country of residence	0.658***	(0.000)	0.647***	(0.000)
Good (or very good) health	2.257***	(0.000)	2.325***	(0.000)
Life course stage (Ref = Living with parents)				
<i>Living alone</i>	1.574***	(0.000)	1.368***	(0.000)
<i>Living with a partner, no children</i>	1.389***	(0.000)	1.206***	(0.000)
<i>Living with other adults</i>	1.338***	(0.000)	1.251**	(0.004)
<i>Formed own single or couple parent household</i>	0.398***	(0.000)	0.351***	(0.000)
<i>Other</i>	0.476***	(0.000)	0.449***	(0.000)
Country group (Ref = Northern Europe)				
<i>Eastern and Island</i>			0.950	(0.213)
<i>Transitional</i>			0.673***	(0.000)
N	23309		23309	
Log likelihood	-15016.7		-14934.1	
chi <sup>2</sup>	2071.7		2236.8	
p (chi <sup>2</sup> )	<0.001		<0.001	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0645		0.0697	

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients; p-values in parentheses (\* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001)

Estimating the same models using the 2005 data (Table A1.3 in Appendix 1) shows a very similar substantive picture, with minor differences between the coefficients. The impacts of gender and health were weaker in 2005, while the impact of country cluster was stronger.

### 4.3.5 Multilevel analysis

For the 2011 data, micro and macro level variables were brought together for modelling the participation of 19 to 24 year olds and 25 to 29 year olds in education. These models are displayed in Tables 4.3.4 and 4.3.5 respectively.

**Table 4.3.4: Multilevel model of participation in education among 19-24 year olds** (Source: EU-SILC, Eurostat, OECD)

Variable name	Coef.	Std. error	Odds ratio
<b>Micro level variables</b>			
Female	0.541	0.025	1.718**
Not born in country of residence	-0.060	0.059	0.942
Has lower secondary qualifications	1.603	0.103	4.968**
In good (very good) health	0.341	0.048	1.406**
Household in lowest quintile	0.087	0.030	1.090**
Finding it difficult or very different	-0.278	0.031	0.757**
Household materially deprived	0.475	0.034	1.608**
Lives in unpleasant area	0.163	0.027	1.177**
Living situation (ref. live with parents)			
Lives alone	0.099	0.060	1.104
Lives with a partner no children	-1.257	0.061	0.285**
Lives with other adults	-0.007	0.075	0.993
Formed own single or couple parent household	-2.174	0.095	0.114**
Other	-0.818	0.055	0.441**
<b>Macro level variables</b>			
GDP per capita	-0.168	0.414	0.845
Youth unemployment rate	-0.006	0.011	0.994
Income inequality	-0.041	0.121	0.960
Proportion 15-24	0.167	0.090	1.182
Science Orientation 1	0.524	0.258	1.689**
Science Orientation 2	-0.397	0.190	0.672**
Technology Orientation	0.006	0.135	1.006
Performance of education system	-0.046	0.094	0.955
ICT Infrastructure	-0.173	0.171	0.841
Expenditure on Education	-0.404	0.106	0.668**
Student Exposure	0.002	0.094	1.002
Variation explained	47.5%		

Notes: \*\* indicates significance at the 5% level

Many of the micro level variables remained significant after incorporating the macro level variables. Thus, even controlling for differences between countries on a number of relevant macro level influences, there is still a significant positive association between participation in education and gender, health, and household income, and living alone. However, living with a partner, having children and other living arrangements had a negative association with the likelihood of participating in education.

Only three of the macro level variables appear to be significant. This suggests little influence of the choices of governments, or of the prevailing economic conditions, on the participation of those aged 19 to 24 in education. Two of the macro level variables associated with science orientation are in contradiction to one another, and suggest promoting research and development while reducing numbers in science and engineering education. Again, surprisingly, expenditure on education is significantly associated with a lower likelihood of participation. There remains significant unexplained variation between countries (52.5%).

**Table 4.3.5: Multilevel model of participation in education among 25-29 year olds** (Source: EU-SILC, Eurostat, OECD)

Variable name	Coef.	Std. error	Odds ratio
<b>Micro level variables</b>			
Female	0.237	0.037	1.267**
Not born in country of residence	-0.030	0.075	0.970
Has lower secondary qualifications	1.763	0.229	5.830**
In good (very good) health	0.294	0.070	1.342**
Household in lowest quintile	0.337	0.051	1.401**
Finding it difficult or very different	-0.278	0.051	0.757**
Household materially deprived	-0.253	0.059	0.776**
Lives in unpleasant area	0.280	0.039	1.323**
Living situation (ref. live with parents)			
Lives alone	-0.143	0.065	0.867**
Lives with a partner no children	-0.614	0.059	0.542**
Lives with other adults	0.111	0.093	1.117
Formed own single or couple parent household	-1.460	0.069	0.232**
Other	-0.718	0.079	0.488**
<b>Macro level variables</b>			
GDP per capita	-0.259	0.315	0.772
Youth unemployment rate	-0.019	0.008	0.981**
Income inequality	0.103	0.091	1.108
Proportion 15-24	0.046	0.069	1.047
Science Orientation 1	0.845	0.195	2.328**
Science Orientation 2	-0.450	0.143	0.638**
Technology Orientation	0.227	0.102	1.255**
Performance of education system	0.096	0.073	1.101
ICT Infrastructure	-0.313	0.131	0.731**
Expenditure on Education	-0.120	0.081	0.887
Student Exposure	0.000	0.072	1.000
Variation explained	48.7%		

Notes: \*\* indicates significance at the 5% level

The results of the multilevel modelling for 25 to 29 year olds are similar to those of 19 to 24 year olds (Table 4.3.5), in that micro level analysis explains most of the variation. Science orientation has similar effects to those for 19 to 24 year olds, although in this case technology orientation was also found to be significant, and positively associated. Stronger

ICT infrastructure appears to be negatively associated with participation in education; perhaps this gives greater employment opportunities, making it less likely that education is pursued. Again a significant amount of variation in participation in education remained unexplained (51.3%).

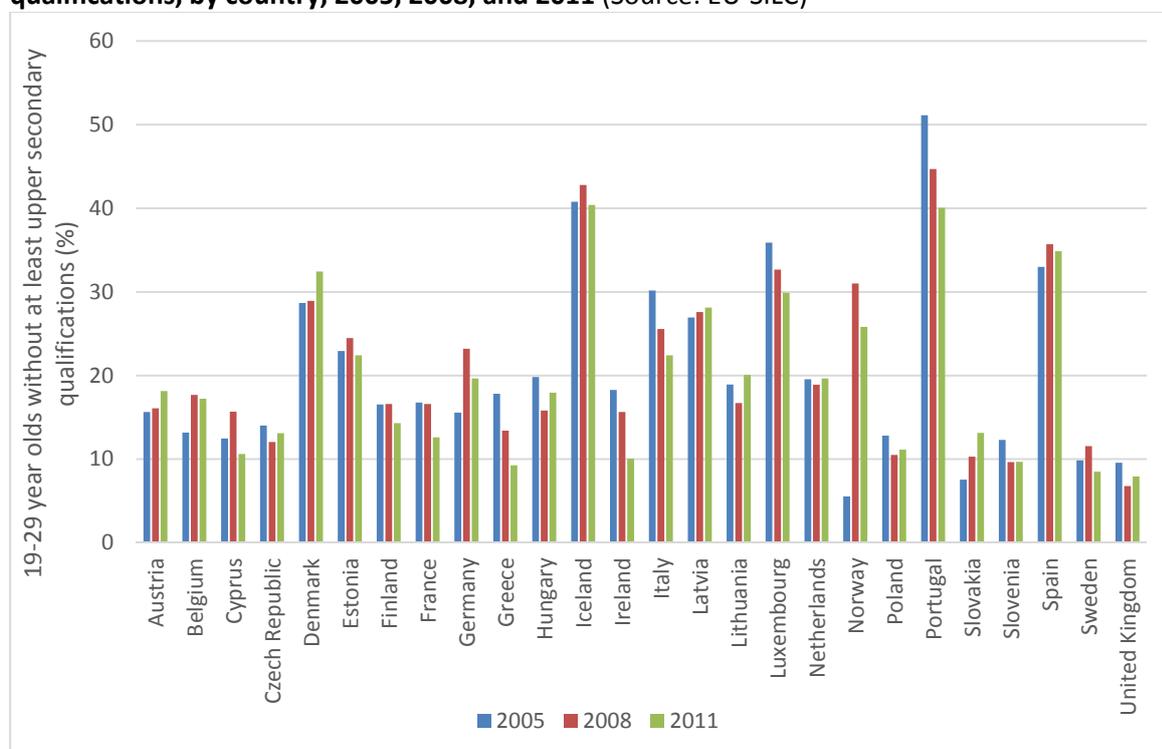
#### 4.4 Achievement in education among 19-29 year olds

This section considers the factors associated with the failure to achieve qualifications. It looks at the proportion of the 19-29 age group who have failed to obtain at least upper secondary qualifications, and considers the personal and environmental factors that might be associated with this outcome.

##### 4.4.1 Comparison between countries and over time

Overall across the 26 countries, there has been a very slight decrease in the proportion failing to gain upper secondary qualifications – around 1.5 percentage points. However, at the country level, change over time has varied (Figure 4.4.1). Some countries – such as Greece, Italy and Portugal – have seen a decrease in the proportion failing to attain upper secondary qualifications, while a slight increase has been seen in others – such as Austria, Belgium and Spain. However, the overall patterning of countries has not changed substantially over the time periods; some countries (such as Denmark, Iceland, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain), have consistently higher rates of failing to gain qualifications, while others have a consistently low rate (e.g. Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK).

**Figure 4.4.1: Percentage of 19-29 year olds who have not gained at least upper secondary qualifications, by country, 2005, 2008, and 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)



#### 4.4.2 Individual and household level conversion factors

A number of factors at the individual and household level appear to have an impact on the probability of not holding qualifications (Table 4.4.1). Young men are notably less likely than young women to have obtained qualifications – the proportions are 15.7% and 20.0% respectively. Even sharper are the disparities experienced by immigrants and those with poor health; those born in their country of residence and those with good health are almost twice as likely to have obtained qualifications.

There seem to be two scenarios associated with not gaining qualifications; living at home with parents, and having children. For the former category, it would seem that failing to leave home and set up an independent household – either with a partner, with other adults, or by oneself – is associated with being less likely to have qualifications. The causality in this scenario probably runs in both directions, with living at home both representing a lack of personal capabilities to make a successful transition to adulthood, but also a lack of qualifications making it difficult to leave home. For the second group, those who have formed their own household with children, this could represent a conscious choice of family formation over education, or it could be that the education system does not facilitate the successful completion of education whilst raising children.

**Table 4.4.1: Percentage of 19-29 year olds who have not gained at least upper secondary qualifications, by selected characteristics, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

Characteristic	Did not gain qualifications (%)	p-value
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	20.0	<0.001
Female	15.7	
<b>Born in country of residence</b>		
Not immigrant	16.5	<0.001
Immigrant	30.3	
<b>General health</b>		
Good (or very good)	16.7	<0.001
Not good	28.0	
<b>Life course stage</b>		
Living with parents	20.2	<0.001
Living alone	10.2	
Living with a partner, no children	8.6	
Living with other adults	12.9	
Formed own single or couple parent household	23.2	
Other	26.1	

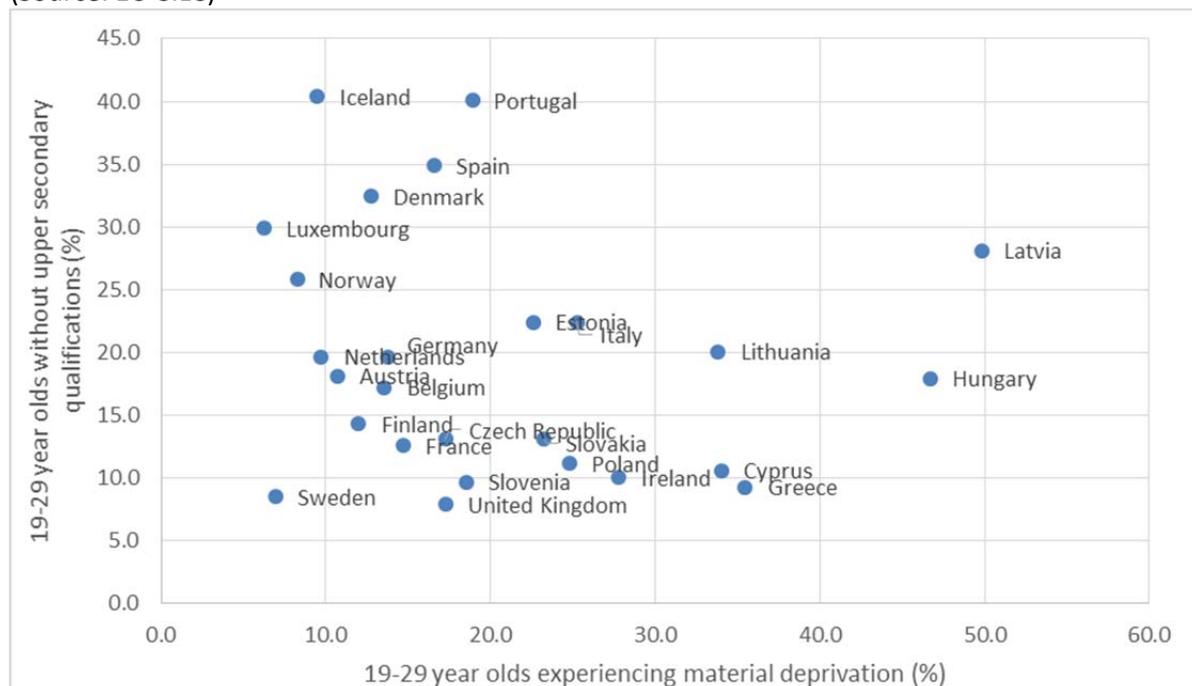
Note: p-values obtained from chi-square tests of association. Bold indicates significance ( $p < 0.05$ ).

#### 4.4.3 Policy and macro level conversion factors

The relationship between a lack of qualifications and material deprivation is likely to flow in both directions; those with the fewest resources will be least likely to successfully complete education, and the failure to gain qualifications will in turn limit the ability to earn enough

to meet material needs. However, there is little relationship between deprivation and qualification holding at the country level (Figure 4.4.2); there are countries in which relatively high proportions of 19-29 year olds experience deprivation which have lower rates of failing to gain qualifications than much less deprived countries. For example, over a third of this age group in Greece report material deprivation, but less than 10% fail to gain at least upper secondary qualifications – conversely, Iceland has extremely low deprivation, less than 10%, but over 40% of this age group have not gained qualifications.

**Figure 4.4.2: Percentage of 19-29 year olds who have not gained at least upper secondary qualifications, against proportion of 19-29 year olds experiencing material deprivation, 2011**  
(Source: EU-SILC)



No relationship was found either between the proportion of GDP a country spends on education and the proportion of 19-29 year olds who obtain qualifications (see Figure A1.11 in Appendix 1). Although education expenditure requirements will vary between countries depending on demographic factors, this measure might be taken as an indicator of how much of its resources a country is prepared to dedicate to educating its young people. However, high spending countries are not necessarily the most successful in terms of educational outcomes; Sweden and Norway both spend a similar and relatively high amount, but the proportions of 19-29 year olds failing to gain qualifications in these countries are 7.9% and 25.8% respectively.

The role of social stratification within the education system as a barrier to obtaining qualifications was considered using information from the OECD’s PISA study – a variable showing the proportion of variation in PISA scores between schools in each country that can be attributed to socio-economic differences between the schools. A high proportion might indicate a high degree of social stratification within the education system, which might hinder the capabilities of the poorest students to succeed. However, there is no association at the cross-national level between this variable and the proportion of 19-29 year olds who have failed to gain qualifications (see Figure A1.12 in Appendix 1).

One factor that does appear to make a small difference is the stage at which selection is introduced into the education system. Early ‘tracking’ (selection into ability streams) and grade retention (requiring pupils to repeat school years if they do not perform at the required level) have been identified as characteristics of education systems that are associated with early school leaving (European Commission, 2013) and inequalities in achievement (OECD, 2012). If pupils are segregated into a lower-ability stream at an early age, this may hamper their educational trajectory, and they may fall short of their potential. Thus, a country that selects in this way might see a lower proportion achieving qualifications because their capability to do so has been hampered by early selection. The practice of selection can also exacerbate the impact of existing stratifications on educational outcomes, as it is students from the most disadvantaged groups that are most likely to be placed in the lower streams. Displayed in Table 4.4.2 is the average proportion failing to obtain qualifications across countries that select before the age of 16, and across those that do not. This proportion is slightly lower in countries that do not select, lending some weight to the argument that this type of selection disadvantages those who are not selected into higher-ability streams.

**Table 4.4.2: Percentage of 19-29 year olds who have not gained at least upper secondary qualifications, by whether the educational system selects before the age of 16, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC, OECD)

	<b>Countries that select before the age of 16</b>	<b>Countries that do not select before the age of 16</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Austria</li> <li>• Belgium</li> <li>• Czech Republic</li> <li>• Estonia</li> <li>• Germany</li> <li>• Greece</li> <li>• Hungary</li> <li>• Ireland</li> <li>• Italy</li> <li>• Luxembourg</li> <li>• Netherlands</li> <li>• Slovakia</li> <li>• Slovenia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denmark</li> <li>• Finland</li> <li>• France</li> <li>• Iceland</li> <li>• Norway</li> <li>• Poland</li> <li>• Spain</li> <li>• Sweden</li> <li>• UK</li> </ul>
<b>19-29 year olds who have not gained at least upper secondary qualifications (%)</b>	18.7	16.0

#### 4.4.4 Predicting the proportion of 19-29 year olds without qualifications

Entering a number of individual and household level variables into a logistic regression model (see Table 4.4.3) confirms the patterns suggested by the bivariate associations above. Young women are significantly less likely to not have at least upper secondary qualifications, while the odds of having no qualifications are almost twice as high for immigrants, and less than half for those with good health relative to those with poor health. Those least likely to

have gained qualifications are those who have formed their own household with children, followed by those who live with their parents.

The addition of the grouped country variable does not have much impact on the coefficients, and adds to the predictive power of the model, although this remains fairly low at around 4%. The coefficient estimates on this variable suggest that, controlling for the individual and household factors, those in the Transitional economies are more likely than those in Northern Europe to have failed to gain qualifications. There is no statistically significant difference between the Northern Europe and Eastern and Island clusters.

**Table 4.4.3: Logistic regression model predicting 19-29 year olds not holding qualifications, 2011**  
(Source: EU-SILC)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	exp(B)	p-value	exp(B)	p-value
Female	0.651***	(0.000)	0.649***	(0.000)
Not born in country of residence	2.176***	(0.000)	2.173***	(0.000)
Good (or very good) health	0.491***	(0.000)	0.483***	(0.000)
Life course stage (Ref = Living with parents)				
<i>Living alone</i>	0.451***	(0.000)	0.472***	(0.000)
<i>Living with a partner, no children</i>	0.418***	(0.000)	0.438***	(0.000)
<i>Living with other adults</i>	0.731***	(0.000)	0.744***	(0.000)
<i>Formed own single or couple parent household</i>	1.294***	(0.000)	1.342***	(0.000)
<i>Other</i>	1.344***	(0.000)	1.366***	(0.000)
Country group (Ref = Northern Europe)				
<i>Eastern and Island</i>			0.963	(0.264)
<i>Transitional</i>			1.190***	(0.000)
N	52454		52454	
Log likelihood	-24445.0		-24411.1	
chi <sup>2</sup>	1879.3		1947.2	
p (chi <sup>2</sup> )	<0.001		<0.001	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0370		0.0384	

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients; p-values in parentheses (\* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001)

Estimating the same model using the 2005 data produces a very similar set of coefficients (Table A1.4 in Appendix 1). The coefficients on the country cluster variable suggest a narrowing gap between the Northern European and other country clusters.

#### 4.4.5 Multilevel Analysis

Using the 2011 data, the micro level variables were combined with macro level variables to produce a multilevel model of low educational attainment among 19 to 29 year olds. The model is presented in Table 4.4.4.

**Table 4.4.4: Multilevel model of not holding qualifications among 19-29 year olds, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC, Eurostat, OECD)

Variable name	Coef.	Std. error	Odds ratio
<b>Micro level variables</b>			
Female	-0.604	0.042	1.829**
Not born in country of residence	0.434	0.068	0.648**
In good (very good) health	-0.635	0.062	1.887**
Household in lowest quintile	1.083	0.049	0.339**
Finding it difficult or very different	0.434	0.051	0.648**
Household materially deprived	0.804	0.054	0.448**
Lives in unpleasant area	-0.093	0.044	1.097**
Living situation (ref. live with parents)			
Lives alone	-0.251	0.093	1.285**
Lives with a partner no children	-0.060	0.076	1.062
Lives with other adults	-0.159	0.123	1.172
Formed own single or couple parent household	-0.725	0.057	0.484**
Other	0.522	0.070	0.593**
<b>Macro level variables</b>			
GDP per capita	-0.112	0.765	1.119
Youth unemployment rate	-0.014	0.020	1.014
Income inequality	0.411	0.223	0.663
Proportion 15-24	-0.204	0.167	1.226
Science Orientation 1	0.168	0.477	0.845
Science Orientation 2	-0.266	0.352	1.305
Technology Orientation	-0.042	0.250	1.043
Performance of education system	-0.065	0.175	0.937
ICT Infrastructure	-0.160	0.318	1.174
Expenditure on Education	0.369	0.197	0.691
Student Exposure	-0.130	0.174	1.139
Variation explained	41.5%		

Notes: \*\* indicates significance at the 5% level

The micro level variables confirm the effects of gender, immigration, health, household income and life course stage presented above. None of the macro level variables are significant. After fitting this model a significant amount of variation remains between countries is unexplained (58.5%).

#### 4.5 Differences in participation and achievement at the sub-national level

The data allows some exploration of participation and achievement at the sub-national level, although the small sample sizes at this level mean that analysis of small age groups (such as 16-18 year olds) is not possible. Shown in Figure 4.5.1 is the proportion of 16 to 29 year olds participating in at least upper secondary level education at the national and NUTS1

regional level for selected countries.<sup>6</sup> The degree of intra-regional variation in participation varies by country, from very little in Austria to considerably more in France, Spain and the UK.

A similar pattern can be observed for regional variations in the proportion of 19-29 year olds who have failed to obtain (at least upper secondary) qualifications (Figure 4.5.2).<sup>7</sup> Austria shows the least intra-regional variation, while the greatest variation is found in Belgium and Spain.

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<sup>6</sup> Confidence intervals for these estimates can be found in Table A1.5 in Appendix 1; note that the relatively large size of these intervals mean that all results concerning regional variation should be interpreted with caution.

<sup>7</sup> See Table A1.6 in Appendix 1 for point estimates and confidence intervals.

Figure 4.5.1: Percentage of 16-29 year olds participating in education, by country and region, 2011 (Source: EU-SILC)

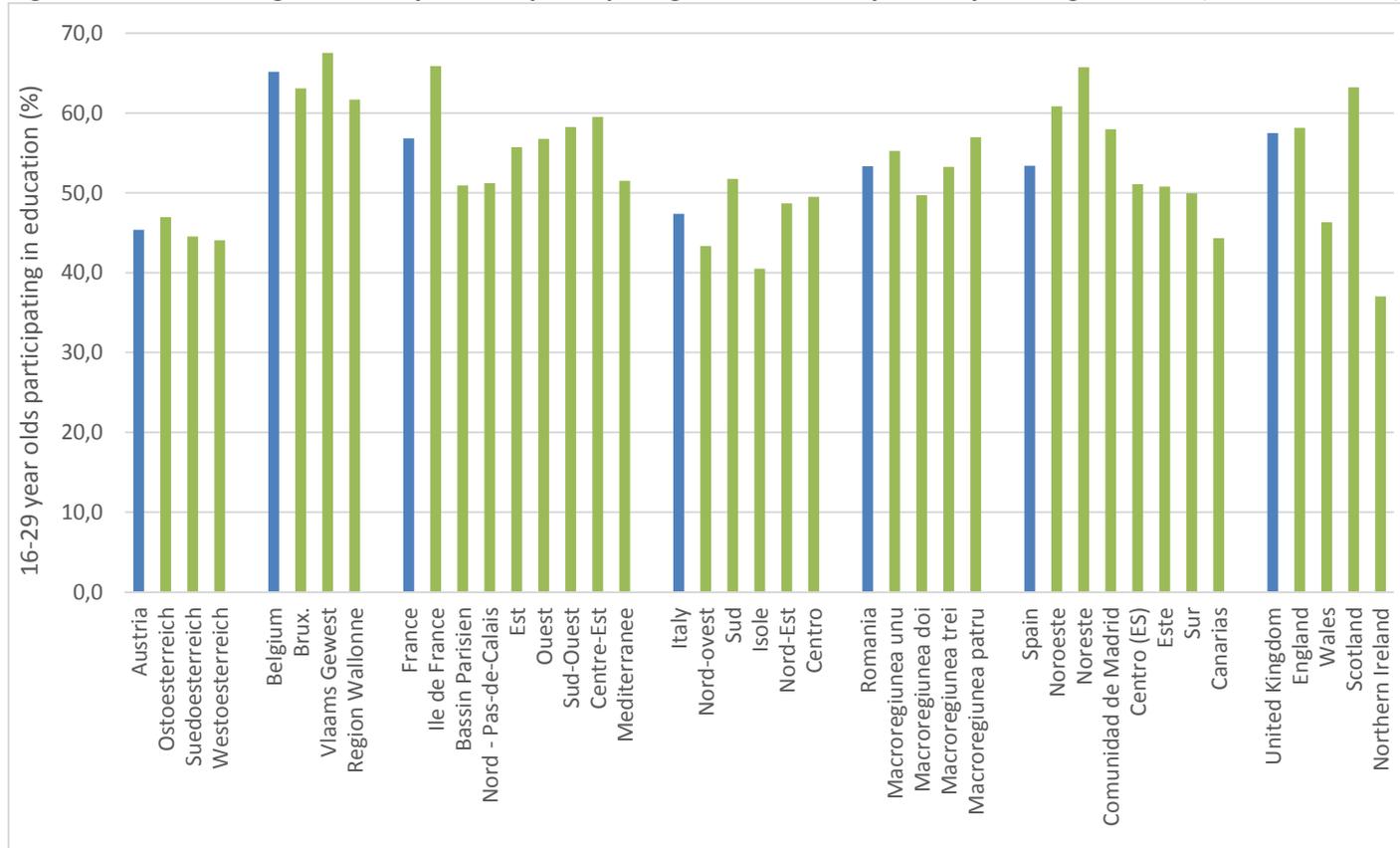
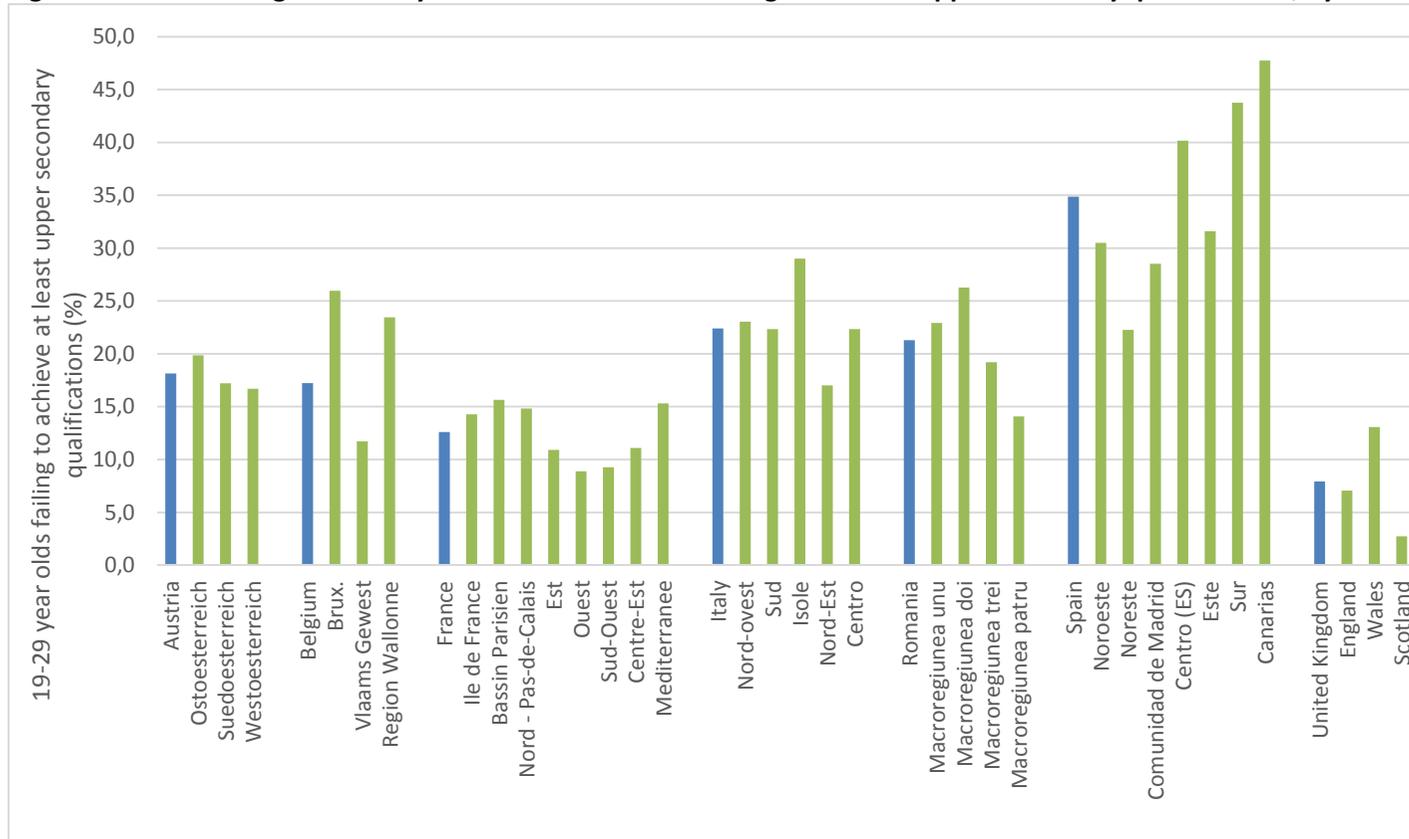


Figure 4.5.2: Percentage of 16-29 year olds who have failed to gain at least upper secondary qualifications, by country and region, 2011 (Source: EU-SILC)



Note: Northern Ireland omitted; estimate too unreliable.

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

This report set out to consider educational participation and achievement across Europe, and the factors associated with these outcomes. Education was conceived of as a capability enhancing resource and valued outcome; however, both access to education, and the extent to which education itself is capability enhancing, is mediated by a number of conversion factors at the individual, household, neighbourhood and national level. Furthermore, these conversion factors, and indeed education itself, can shape the preferences that determine which outcomes an individual values and chooses.

The research focused on three outcomes: participation in education among 16-18 year olds; participation in education among 19-29 year olds; and low educational attainment among 19-29 year olds. It was hypothesised that the likelihood of these outcomes – whether they are both feasible and valued – would depend on the individual's own resources and conversion factors. These hypotheses were tested using a combination of micro level data from the EU-SILC database, and macro level data collected from statistics published by Eurostat and the OECD.

### Macro level influences on educational participation and outcomes

The aim of the analysis was to include as many of the EU-SILC countries as possible; therefore an important first step was to find a simplified and coherent way to introduce country-level conversion factors into the analysis. A large number of macro level indicators that might have an impact on participation and achievement in education were reduced to seven factors using factor analysis. These factors were used with some measures to reflect the national economies to form clusters of countries with similar macro level features. Three clusters were identified:

- A **Northern European** cluster, with high GDP, good ICT infrastructure, strong educational performance and high expenditure on education, but an ageing population;
- An **Eastern and Island Economies** cluster, with a youthful population, but high income inequality and youth unemployment, and low GDP and science orientation;
- A **Transitional Economies** cluster of countries with emerging or damaged economies, characterised by low science orientation but high technology orientation, and high income inequality and youth unemployment.

Comparing patterns of educational participation between these clusters, it was suggested that participation is lowest in the Northern Europe cluster for the 16-18 and 19-24 age groups, but lowest in the Eastern Europe and Island cluster for 25-29 year olds. Those in the Northern Europe cluster were most likely to have gained at least an upper secondary level qualification.

### Participation in education among 16-18 year olds

There was little evidence of any noticeable trend in participation over time (2005 to 2011), or anything that could be interpreted as a 'recession effect'. Participation in education

among this age group was found to be particularly low in the Northern European cluster, relative to the others. This is something of a paradox. Firstly because these countries should fare relatively well on the personal and household characteristics that were found to be associated with participation, such as health, material deprivation, and having parents with qualifications. However, significant differences between country clusters also persist after controlling for differences in factors such as health and deprivation.

Secondly, this low participation is despite high levels of government investment in education and a generally high scientific and technical orientation. In fact, the analysis failed to detect an association between government investment and participation in education. There is also little evidence that other potentially relevant macro level factors such as high youth unemployment influence whether 16 year olds stay on in education. Multilevel modelling did not find many of the expected macro level differences between countries to be associated with participation, although it did suggest positive association with the technological orientation of a country. Surprisingly, expenditure on education was associated with a lower likelihood of participation in education.

It is also worth noting that there is a substantial gender gap in participation, which is much more likely among young women, even after controlling for a range of micro and macro level factors.

### **Participation in education among 19-29 year olds**

For this age group, again it was difficult to identify any notable trends in participation over time, or pinpoint any kind of recession effect. The regression models again suggested a strong role of individual and household level factors in predicting participation. Again, a substantial gender gap emerged, and immigration and poor health were identified as factors associated with a lower likelihood of participation. One association that stood out was between participation and family formation; the odds of participation among those who have formed their own single or couple parent household are much lower than those who stay at home, or live alone or with other adults. This could suggest that the two are not compatible, i.e. that participation in education is not in the capability set of those with children). However the association could equally be spurious, i.e. driven by a third variable – in this case perhaps social stratification making both early childbearing more likely and educational participation less likely. It could also indicate differences in the choices made by young people, with some choosing family formation over education.

Differences were found to exist between country clusters after controlling for individual and household factors, with those in the Northern Europe cluster this time found to be more likely to participate than those in Transition countries. Multilevel modelling suggested that a country's science orientation could play a role in influencing educational participation, although again an unexpectedly negative relationship was found between educational participation and expenditure.

### **(Low) achievement in education among 19-29 year olds**

The final part of the analysis focused on who fails to gain (at least upper secondary) qualifications, and why. The differences between country clusters were found to be modest, with those in Transitional economies showing slightly higher odds of failing to gain qualifications than those in Northern Europe. None of the macro level variables used in the multilevel model were found to be significantly associated with failing to gain qualifications. In this case, it was the micro level factors that emerged as the relevant predictors of low achievement. Gender, migration, health, household income and life course stage all had similar effects to those found on participation.

### **Implications for the Capabilities Approach**

This analysis has identified (or confirmed, from previous research) a number of ways in which young people's capability to pursue, and achieve in, education may be limited by their personal and household circumstances, and also by the prevailing policy and economic conditions in the country in which they live. Young men, migrants, and those with poor health face particular barriers in education, and material factors and family background continue to play a role in shaping educational opportunities. There is also clearly some role of macro level policy and economic factors in shaping participation, particularly among 16-18 year olds (who are perhaps most susceptible to what the school system empowers them to do). However, it is not clear why some affluent countries, which appear to invest heavily in and value education, are experiencing such low rates of participation among the 16-18 age group.

The capabilities approach stresses the role of preferences as well as constraints in determining outcomes, but this analysis cannot contribute much to our understanding of why young people are choosing or not choosing to participate in education. And although it can identify relevant conversion factors, it can only speculate as to the impact that these actually have on capability sets. This 'black box' is where the qualitative aspect of this work package can shed light.

## Appendices

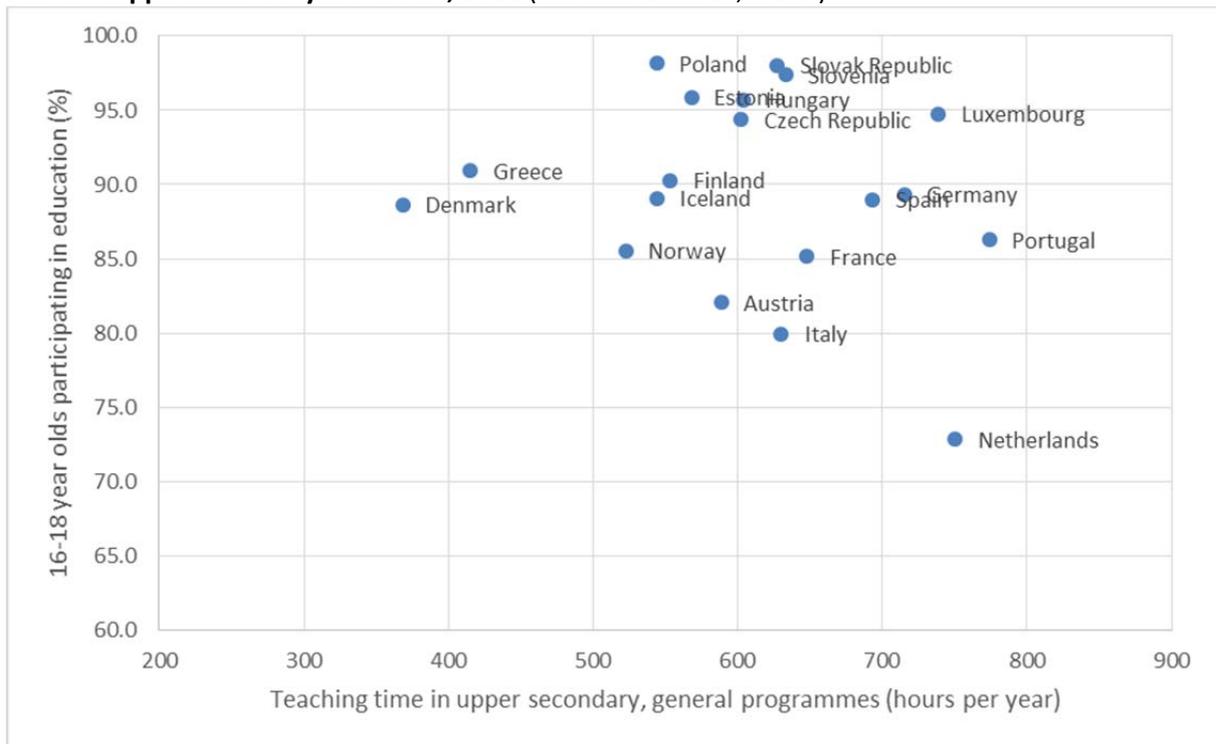
### Appendix 1: Additional tables and figures

**Table A1.1: Sample sizes (respondents aged 16 to 29) in the EU-SILC data**

<b>Country</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2011</b>
Austria	2,026	2,018	2,076
Belgium	2,012	2,473	2,148
Bulgaria	N/A	1,931	2,654
Croatia	N/A	N/A	2,671
Cyprus	2,313	2,065	2,415
Czech Republic	1,873	4,479	3,216
Denmark	2,256	2,101	1,934
Estonia	2,595	2,872	2,732
Finland	5,157	4,568	3,911
France	3,934	4,181	4,146
Germany	4,392	3,764	3,421
Greece	2,476	2,601	1,926
Hungary	3,130	3,917	5,247
Iceland	2,000	1,898	1,977
Ireland	2,477	1,927	1,545
Italy	8,062	7,137	6,331
Latvia	1,735	2,345	2,633
Lithuania	2,221	1,825	1,921
Luxembourg	1,818	1,803	2,379
Malta	N/A	1,807	2,131
Netherlands	3,241	3,264	3,534
Norway	2,869	2,510	1,945
Poland	9,872	7,335	6,019
Portugal	2,217	1,825	2,048
Romania	N/A	2,973	2,560
Slovak Republic	3,790	4,086	3,646
Slovenia	6,777	6,639	6,023
Spain	6,310	5,848	5,155
Sweden	2,927	3,365	2,965
Switzerland	N/A	2,452	2,644
United Kingdom	4,045	3,100	2,780
<b>Total</b>	<b>92,525</b>	<b>99,109</b>	<b>96,733</b>

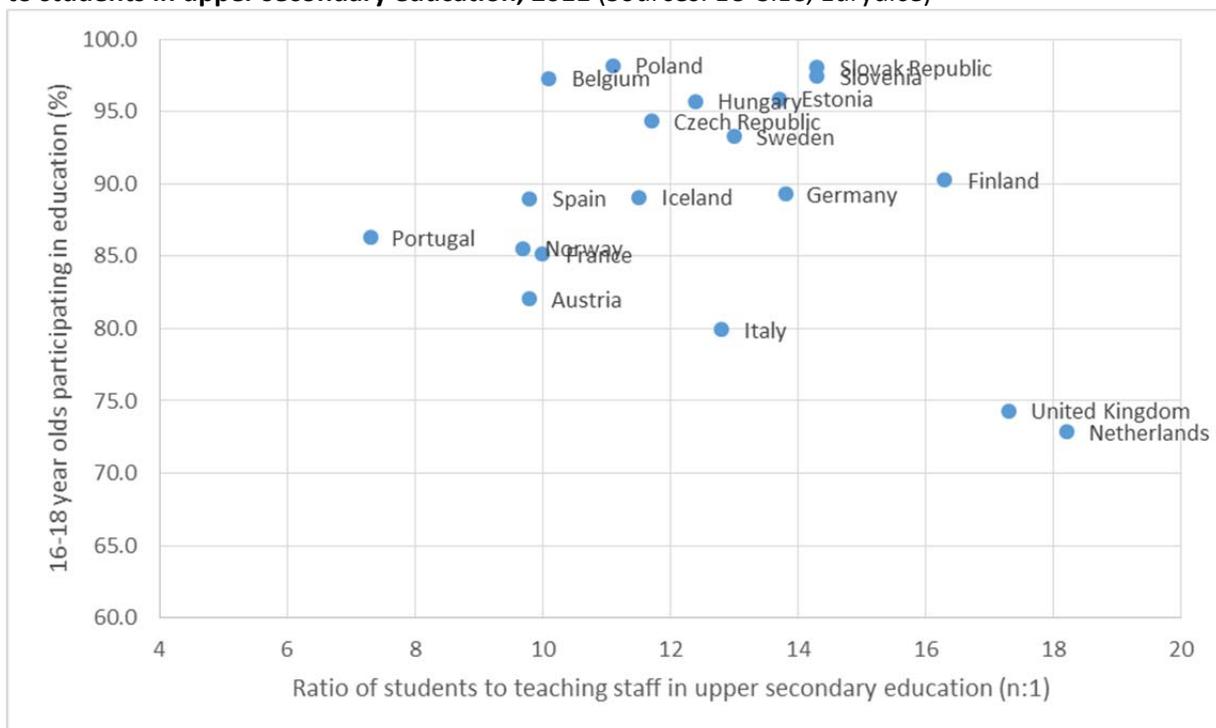
Notes: N/A = data not available

**Figure A1.1: Percentage of 16-18 year olds participating in education against annual teaching hours in upper secondary education, 2011** (Sources: EU-SILC, OECD)



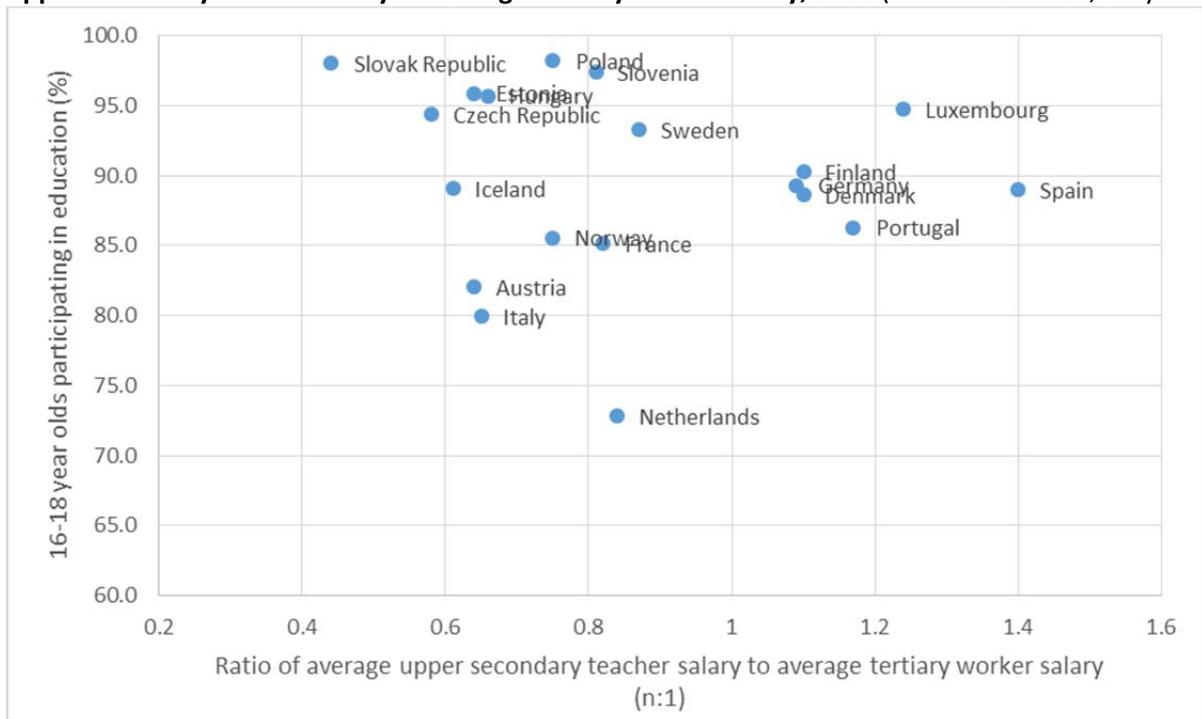
Note: Some countries omitted due to missing data on teaching hours.

**Figure A1.2: Percentage of 16-18 year olds participating in education against ratio of teaching staff to students in upper secondary education, 2011** (Sources: EU-SILC, Eurydice)



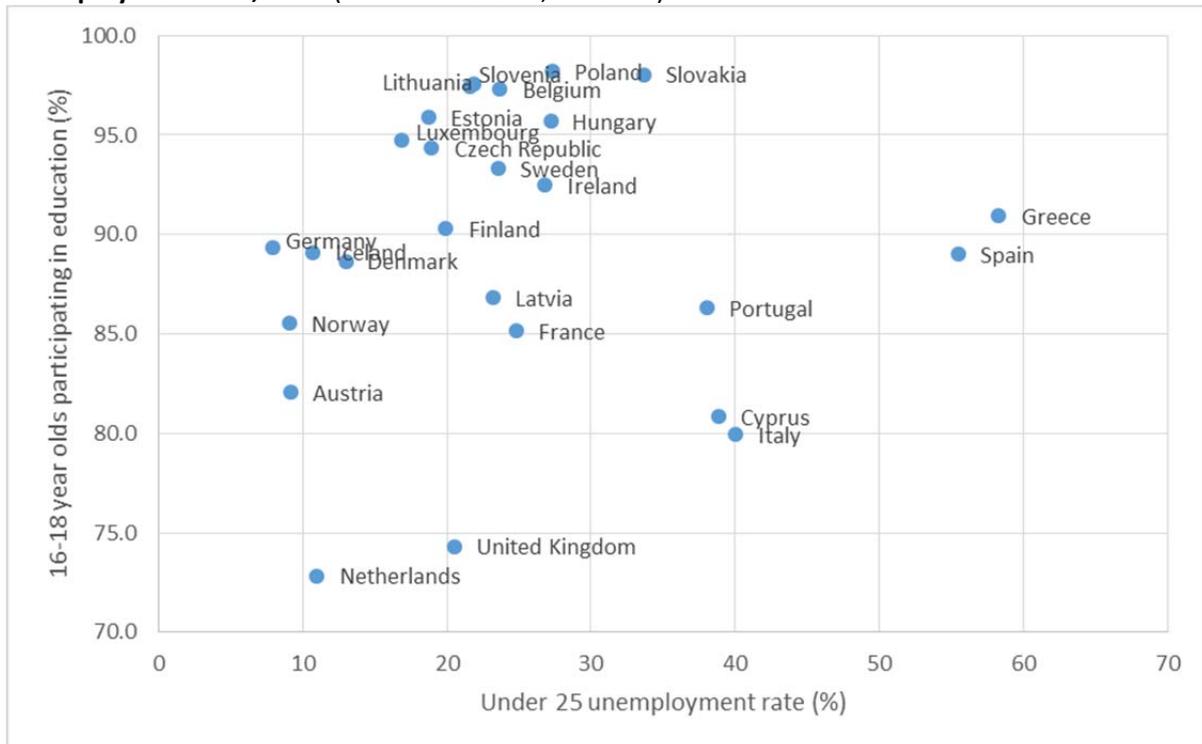
Note: Some countries omitted due to missing data on staff to student ratios.

**Figure A1.3: Percentage of 16-18 year olds participating in education against ratio of average upper secondary teacher salary to average tertiary worker salary, 2011 (Sources: EU-SILC, Eurydice)**



Note: Some countries omitted due to missing data on salaries.

**Figure A1.4: Percentage of 16-18 year olds participating in education against under 25 unemployment rate, 2011 (Sources: EU-SILC, Eurostat)**



**Figure A1.5: Percentage of 16-18 year olds participating in education against relative earnings of those with and without upper secondary education, 2011 (Sources: EU-SILC, Eurostat)**



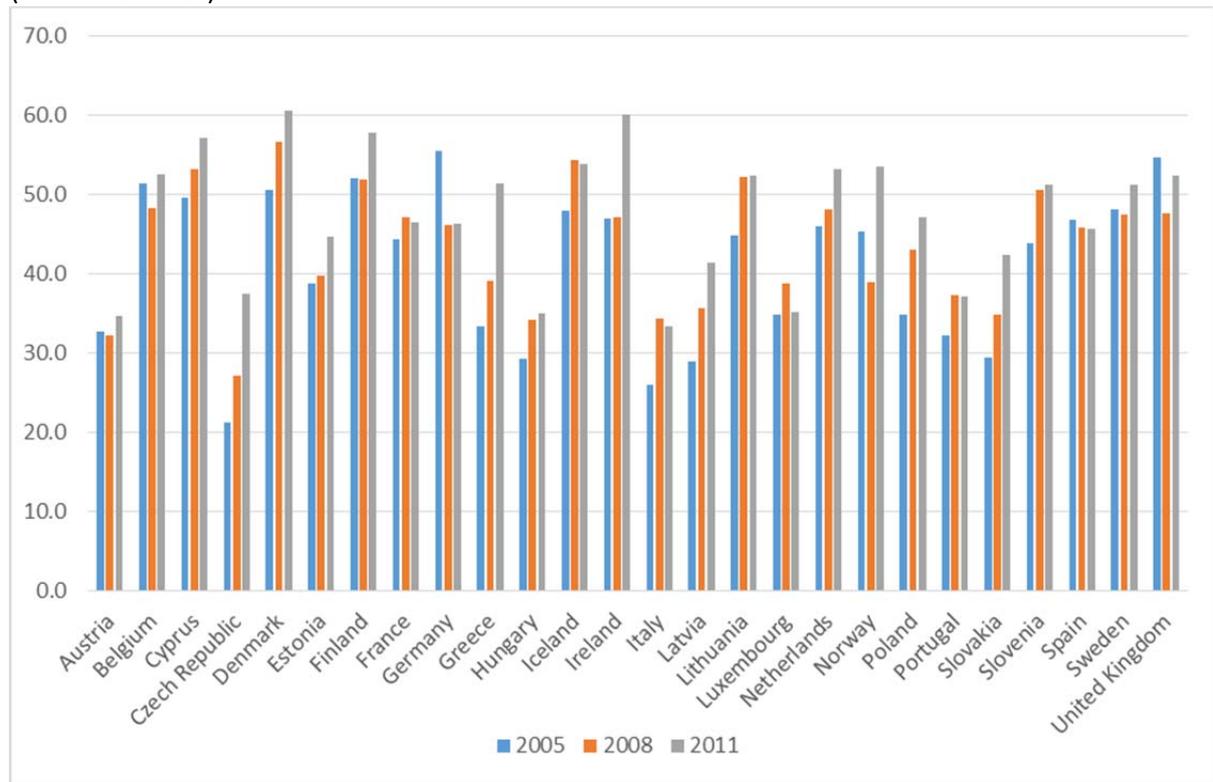
Note: Some countries omitted due to missing earnings data.

**Table A1.2: Logistic regression model predicting participation in education among 16-18 year olds, 2005** (Source: EU-SILC)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	exp(B)	p-value	exp(B)	p-value
Female	1.571***	(0.000)	1.569***	(0.000)
Not born in country of residence	0.712*	(0.040)	0.774	(0.128)
No lower secondary qualifications	0.760*	(0.029)	0.733*	(0.014)
Good (or very good) health	1.325*	(0.024)	1.330*	(0.022)
Household type				
<i>(Ref = Lives with couple parents)</i>				
<i>Lives with single parent</i>	1.043	(0.662)	1.072	(0.472)
<i>Other</i>	0.672***	(0.000)	0.590***	(0.000)
Household experiences material deprivation	0.963	(0.642)	0.850	(0.066)
Household in lowest income quintile	0.916	(0.282)	0.936	(0.417)
At least 1 parent in professional occupation	1.589***	(0.000)	1.575***	(0.000)
At least 1 parent has at least upper secondary qualifications	3.009***	(0.000)	3.035***	(0.000)
Lives in unpleasant area	0.756***	(0.000)	0.757***	(0.000)
Degree of urbanisation				
<i>(Ref = Densely populated)</i>				
<i>Intermediate</i>	1.247*	(0.022)	1.248*	(0.023)
<i>Thinly populated</i>	1.325***	(0.001)	1.254**	(0.008)
Country group				
<i>(Ref = Northern Europe)</i>				
<i>Eastern and Island</i>			1.394***	(0.000)
<i>Transitional</i>			1.491***	(0.000)
N	9894		9894	
Log likelihood	-2887.4		-2878.0	
chi <sup>2</sup>	333.7		352.5	
p (chi <sup>2</sup> )	<0.001		<0.001	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0546		0.0577	

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients; p-values in parentheses (\* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001)

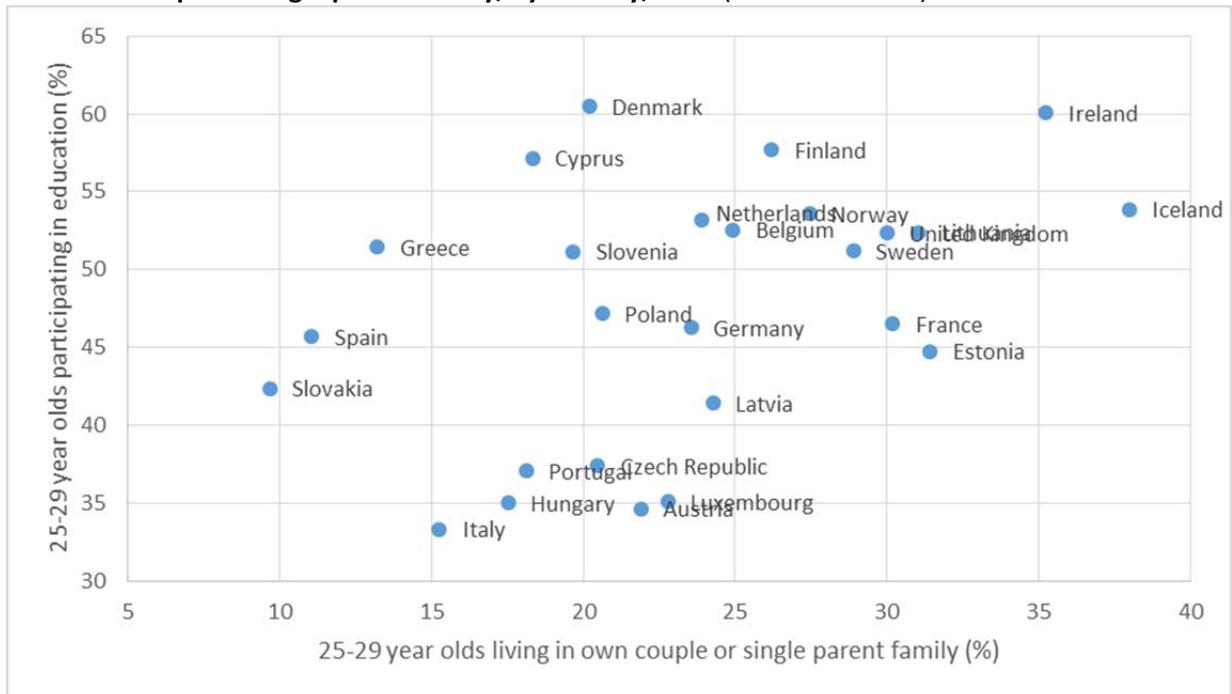
**Figure A1.6: Participation in education among 25-29 year olds, by country, 2005, 2008 and 2011**  
 (Source: EU-SILC)



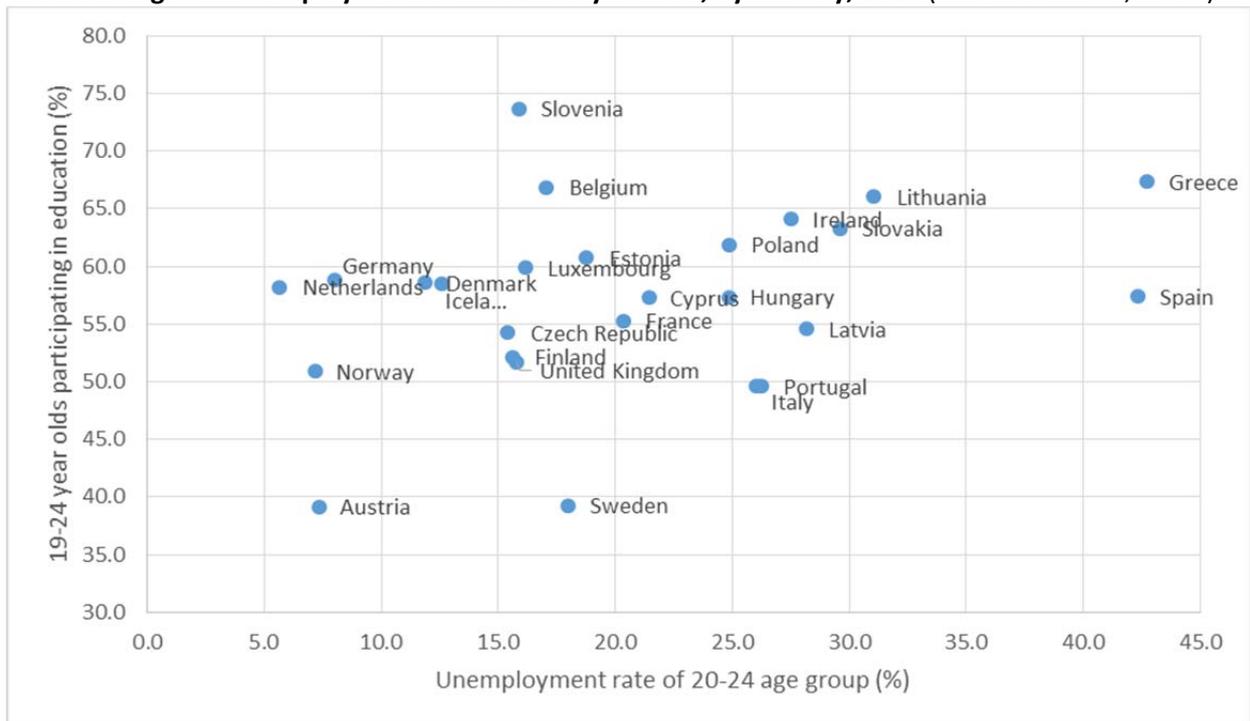
**Figure A1.7: Percentage of 19-24 year olds participating in education against percentage living in their own couple or single parent family, by country, 2011 (Source: EU-SILC)**



**Figure A1.8: Percentage of 24-29 year olds participating in education against percentage living in their own couple or single parent family, by country, 2011 (Source: EU-SILC)**

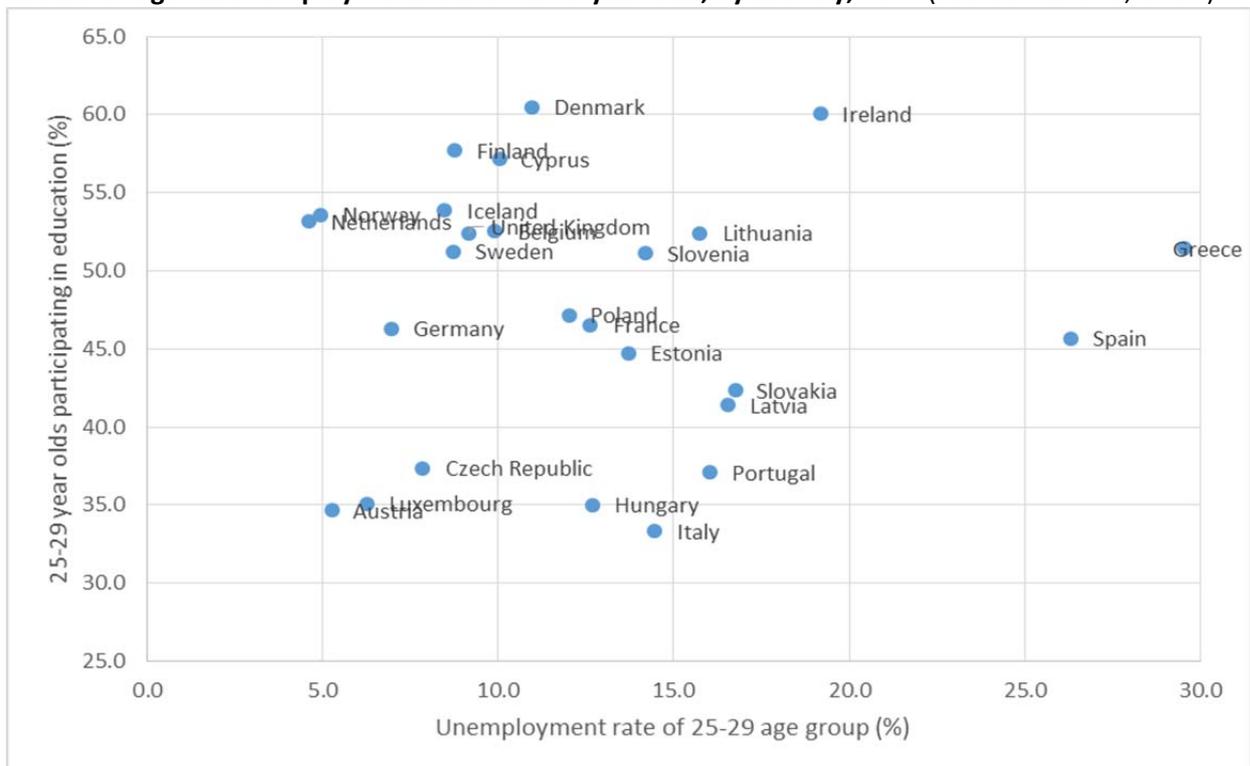


**Figure A1.9: Percentage of 19-24 year olds participating in at least upper secondary level education against unemployment rate of 20-24 year olds, by country, 2011 (Source: EU-SILC, OECD)**



Note: Unemployment rate is for 20-24 year olds as this is the age group available in the data published by the OECD.

**Figure A1.10: Percentage of 25-29 year olds participating in at least upper secondary level education against unemployment rate of 25-29 year olds, by country, 2011 (Source: EU-SILC, OECD)**

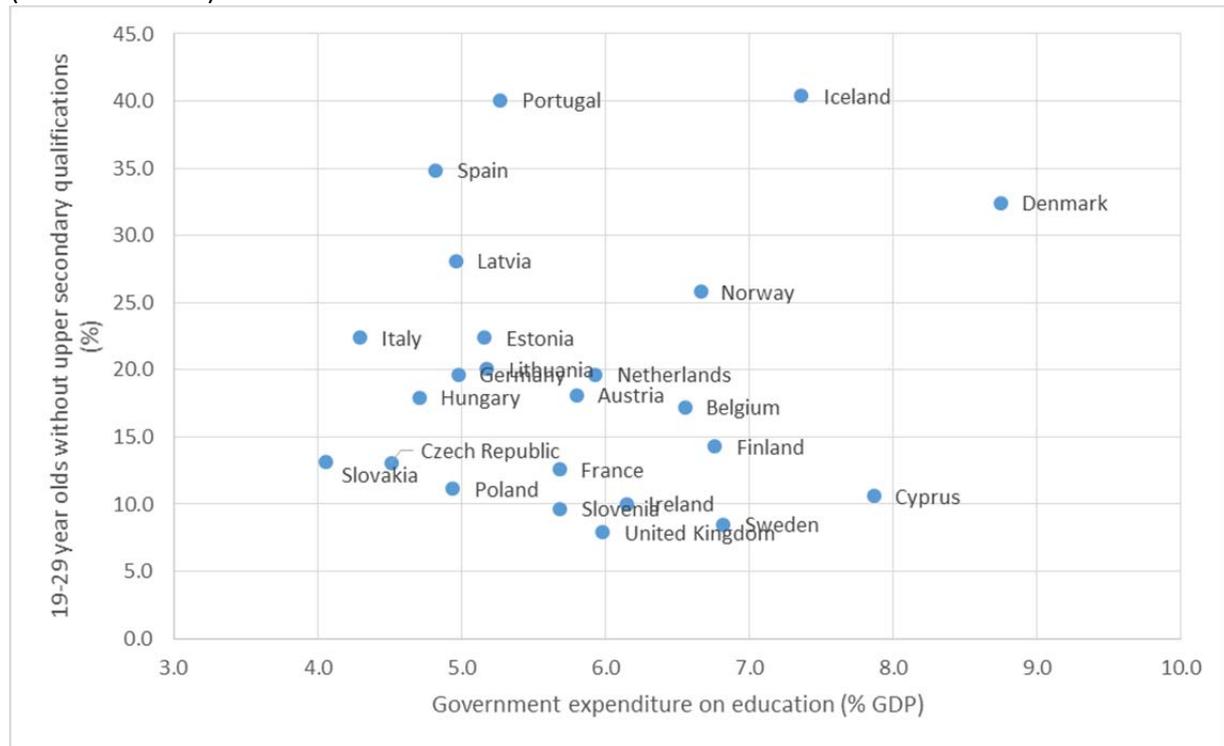


**Table A1.3: Logistic regression model predicting participation in education among 19-24 and 25-29 year olds, 2005 and 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

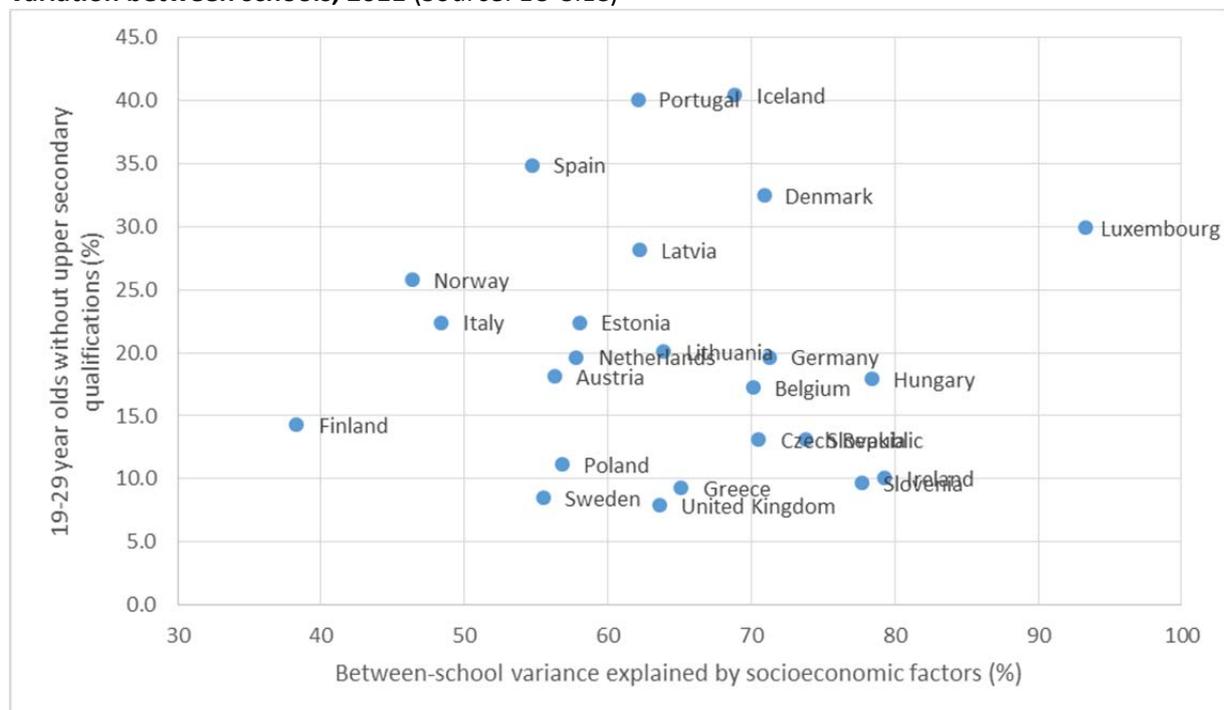
Variable	19-24		25-29	
	2005	2011	2005	2011
Female	1.876***	1.990***	1.775***	2.099***
Not born in country of residence	0.679***	0.724***	0.746***	0.647***
Good (or very good) health	1.813***	1.800***	1.987***	2.325***
Life course stage (Ref = Living with parents)				
<i>Living alone</i>	1.044	1.015	1.231***	1.368***
<i>Living with a partner, no children</i>	0.448***	0.457***	1.073	1.206***
<i>Living with other adults</i>	1.422***	1.075	1.507***	1.251**
<i>Formed own single or couple parent household</i>	0.116***	0.118***	0.342***	0.351***
<i>Other</i>	0.521***	0.365***	0.532***	0.449***
Country group (Ref = Northern Europe)				
<i>Eastern and Island</i>	1.018	1.064	0.651***	0.950
<i>Transitional</i>	0.664***	0.915**	0.490***	0.673***
N	33591	29475	26094	23309
Log likelihood	-21833.7	-18977.0	-16229.0	-14934.1
chi <sup>2</sup>	2638.5	2087.0	2336.1	2236.8
p (chi <sup>2</sup> )	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0570	0.0521	0.0671	0.0697

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients (\* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001)

**Figure A1.11: Percentage of 19-29 year olds who have not gained at least upper secondary qualifications, against government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, 2011**  
 (Source: EU-SILC)



**Figure A1.12: Percentage of 19-29 year olds who have not gained at least upper secondary qualifications, against between-school variance in PISA scores explained by socio-economic variation between schools, 2011**  
 (Source: EU-SILC)



**Table A1.4: Logistic regression model predicting 19-29 year olds not holding qualifications, 2005**  
(Source: EU-SILC)

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	exp(B)	p-value	exp(B)	p-value
Female	0.669***	(0.000)	0.661***	(0.000)
Not born in country of residence	2.060***	(0.000)	2.093***	(0.000)
Good (or very good) health	0.514***	(0.000)	0.508***	(0.000)
Life course stage				
<i>(Ref = Living with parents)</i>				
<i>Living alone</i>	0.445***	(0.000)	0.491***	(0.000)
<i>Living with a partner, no children</i>	0.507***	(0.000)	0.551***	(0.000)
<i>Living with other adults</i>	0.680***	(0.000)	0.679***	(0.000)
<i>Formed own single or couple parent household</i>	1.179***	(0.000)	1.271***	(0.000)
<i>Other</i>	1.066	(0.101)	1.054	(0.178)
Country group				
<i>(Ref = Northern Europe)</i>				
<i>Eastern and Island</i>			0.928*	(0.015)
<i>Transitional</i>			1.470***	(0.000)
N	59603		59603	
Log likelihood	-29345.7		-29144.2	
chi <sup>2</sup>	1807.4		2210.4	
p (chi <sup>2</sup> )	<0.001		<0.001	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0299		0.0365	

Notes: Exponentiated coefficients; p-values in parentheses (\* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001)

**Table A1.5: Point estimates and confidence intervals of regional variation in 16-29 year olds participating in at least upper secondary education, 2011 (Source: EU-SILC)**

Country	%	95% CI	Region	%	95% CI
Austria	45.4	[42.72,48.03]	Ostoessterreich	47.0	[42.55,51.41]
			Suedoessterreich	44.5	[38.95,50.24]
			Westoessterreich	44.0	[40.1,48.06]
Belgium	65.2	[62.23,67.97]	Brux.	63.1	[53.62,71.61]
			Vlaams Gewest	67.5	[63.49,71.33]
			Region Wallonne	61.7	[57.15,66.03]
France	56.8	[54.29,59.34]	Ile de France	65.9	[60.55,70.81]
			Bassin Parisien	50.9	[45.36,56.47]
			Nord - Pas-de-Calais	51.2	[45.5,56.87]
			Est	55.7	[50.41,60.9]
			Ouest	56.8	[50.91,62.43]
			Sud-Ouest	58.3	[52.41,63.88]
			Centre-Est	59.5	[53.64,65.11]
			Mediterranee	51.5	[45.17,57.81]
Italy	47.4	[45.62,49.16]	Nord-ovest	43.4	[39.72,47.06]
			Sud	51.7	[48.3,55.16]
			Isole	40.5	[34.88,46.36]
			Nord-Est	48.7	[44.99,52.39]
			Centro	49.5	[46.01,53]
Romania	53.3	[50.05,56.6]	Macroregiunea unu	55.3	[48.53,61.8]
			Macroregiunea doi	49.7	[43.38,56.04]
			Macroregiunea trei	53.3	[47.12,59.29]
			Macroregiunea patru	57.0	[50.13,63.55]
Spain	53.4	[51.19,55.57]	Noroeste	60.8	[55.62,65.81]
			Noreste	65.7	[60.35,70.72]
			Comunidad de Madrid	58.0	[51.22,64.44]
			Centro (ES)	51.1	[46.24,55.91]
			Este	50.8	[46.61,54.94]
			Sur	50.0	[44.79,55.11]
			Canarias	44.3	[33.63,55.58]
United Kingdom	57.5	[54.55,60.37]	England	58.1	[55,61.22]
			Wales	46.3	[32.81,60.38]
			Scotland	63.2	[53.13,72.28]
			Northern Ireland	37.0	[23.69,52.67]

**Table A1.6: Point estimates and confidence intervals of regional variation in 19-29 year olds not obtaining at least upper secondary qualifications, 2011** (Source: EU-SILC)

Country	%	95% CI	Region	%	95% CI
Austria	18.1	[15.86,20.67]	Ostoessterreich	19.86	[15.92,24.48]
			Suedoessterreich	17.22	[13,22.45]
			Westoessterreich	16.7	[13.66,20.26]
Belgium	17.2	[14.84,19.91]	Brux.	25.97	[19.14,34.2]
			Vlaams Gewest	11.72	[8.985,15.14]
			Region Wallonne	23.46	[19.55,27.87]
France	12.6	[11.2,14.14]	Ile de France	14.27	[10.62,18.89]
			Bassin Parisien	15.65	[12.42,19.54]
			Nord - Pas-de-Calais	14.83	[10.85,19.95]
			Est	10.92	[7.939,14.84]
			Ouest	8.889	[6.536,11.98]
			Sud-Ouest	9.267	[6.667,12.74]
			Centre-Est	11.1	[7.958,15.27]
Italy	22.4	[20.7,24.22]	Mediterranee	15.31	[11.16,20.64]
			Nord-ovest	23.04	[19.54,26.97]
			Sud	22.34	[19.25,25.77]
			Isole	29.01	[22.46,36.57]
			Nord-Est	17.01	[14.39,19.99]
Romania	21.3	[18.31,24.64]	Centro	22.34	[18.89,26.21]
			Macroregiunea unu	22.92	[16.16,31.43]
			Macroregiunea doi	26.27	[21.03,32.28]
			Macroregiunea trei	19.21	[14.14,25.55]
Spain	34.9	[32.58,37.24]	Macroregiunea patru	14.08	[9.664,20.07]
			Noroeste	30.5	[26.19,35.19]
			Noreste	22.27	[17.54,27.85]
			Comunidad de Madrid	28.52	[22.19,35.82]
			Centro (ES)	40.17	[35.29,45.24]
			Este	31.6	[27.44,36.07]
			Sur	43.76	[38.06,49.64]
United Kingdom	7.9	[6.241,10.02]	Canarias	47.74	[37.64,58.03]
			England	7.067	[5.315,9.34]
			Wales	13.08	[5.923,26.45]
			Scotland	2.743	[1.28,5.783]
			Northern Ireland	52.29	[29.07,74.56]

## Appendix 2: Definitions of variables used in the analysis

**Table A2.1: Micro level variables used in the analysis**

Variable	Description
In education	Currently participating in an educational program (“an array or sequence of educational activities, which are organised to accomplish a pre-determined objective or a specified set of educational tasks”), on a full-time, part-time or correspondence basis. Any formal education (predetermined format; provided by an educational institution; structured; leads to a qualification) – can include modules, and vocational on-the-job training where this is part of a dual programme and leading to a qualification. For ‘participation in tertiary education’, this is defined as participation at ISCED <sup>8</sup> level 5 or 6.
Obtained qualifications	Educational attainment of a person is the highest level of an educational programme the person has successfully completed, by obtaining a certificate or diploma where there is certification, or where there is no certification, full attendance or acquired competences to access the upper level. Upper secondary qualifications are those at ISCED level 3. Lower secondary qualifications are those at ISCED level 2.
Sex	Male or female
Migration status	Defined as migrant if not born in current country of residence.
Good health	Where self-perceived general health is classified as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ (rather than ‘fair’, ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’).
Lowest income quintile	Household income is in the lowest quintile (within own country).
Professional occupation	Current (or most recent for previously employed) occupation in category 11 to 24 of ISCO-88 <sup>9</sup> classification.
Material deprivation	A household is classed as materially deprived if they cannot afford 3 of the following: to keep their home warm; to face unexpected expenses; a meal with protein every second day; one week’s holiday away from home per year; a colour TV; a washing machine; a car; and a telephone.
Area unpleasantness	A respondent is classed as living in an unpleasant area if they experience any of the following: noise from neighbours or the street; pollution, grime or other environmental problems; crime, violence or vandalism in the area.
Degree of urbanisation	An area is densely populated if it contains more than 500 inhabitants per square km; intermediate if it contains more than 100 but less than 500 inhabitants per square km; and thinly populated if it contains less than 100 inhabitants per square km.
Family type	Respondents classified according to whether they live: with both of their parents; with one of their parents; not with any parents.
Life course stage	Respondents classified according to whether they live: with their own parents (and potentially siblings, other relatives, or other household members if applicable); alone (no other adult or child household members); with a partner (and no children or other adults); with other adults (not their own parents); in a single or couple parent household (with their own children, and a partner if applicable, but no other adult or child household members); or some other arrangement.

<sup>8</sup> For information about the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), see <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-standard-classification-of-education.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> For information about the ISCO-88 classification, see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco88/>

**Table A2.2: Macro level variables used in the analysis**

Variable	Description	Year	Source
GDP per capita	GDP per capita (2005 PPP \$)	2011	OECD (2014)
GDP growth rate	Real GDP growth rate (Volume)	2010	Eurostat (2014)
Inequality of income	Inequality of income distribution	2010	Eurostat (2014)
Population aged 15-24 years	Proportion of population aged 15-24 years	2010	Eurostat (2014)
Population growth	Population annual growth (%)	2010-2015	Eurostat (2014)
Urban population	Share of the population in 'predominantly urban' areas (rural population is <20%) (% population)	2012	Eurostat (2014)
Spending on health	General government expenditure on health (% GDP)	2010	Eurostat (2014)
Spending on education	General government expenditure on education (% GDP)	2005-10	Eurostat (2014)
Spending on tertiary education	General government expenditure on tertiary education (%GDP)	2011	Eurostat (2014)
Spending per upper secondary student	General government expenditure per upper secondary student (% GDP per capita)	2010	OECD (2013)
Reading score	Mean score of 15-year-old students in PISA - reading	2009	OECD (2010)
Math score	Mean score of 15-year-old students in PISA - mathematics	2009	OECD (2010)
Science score	Mean score of 15-year-old students in PISA - science	2009	OECD (2010)
Socio-economic variation in PISA scores	Between school variance in PISA mathematics scores explained by socio-economic variation between schools (%)	2012	(OECD, 2013b)
Lifelong learning	The percentage of the population registered in lifelong learning	2010	Eurostat (2014)

Youth unemployment 15-24	Unemployment rate (% ages 15-24)	2005-11	Eurostat (2014)
Youth unemployment 20-24	Unemployment rate (% ages 20-24)	2011	OECD (2014)
Youth unemployment 25-29	Unemployment rate (% ages 25-29)	2011	OECD (2014)
R&D Expenditure	Government R&D Expenditure (% of GDP)	2005-10	Eurostat (2014)
R&D Researchers	R&D Researchers (per million people)	2002-10	Eurostat (2014)
Personal computers	Personal computer use (per 100 people)	2002-09	Eurostat (2014)
Internet users	Internet use (per 100 people)	2010	Eurostat (2014)
Broadband users	Fixed broadband Internet subscriptions (per 100 people)	2010	Eurostat (2014)
Telephone users	Fixed and mobile telephone subscribers (per 100 people)	2010	Eurostat (2014)
Broadband penetration rate	Number of dedicated, high-speed (at least 144 Kbit/s) connections per 100 inhabitants	2010	Eurostat (2014)
Doctorate students	Doctoral students (ISCED level 6) in science and technology fields (% of the population aged 20-29)	2009	Eurostat (2014)
High-tech employment in manufacture	Employment in high- and medium-high-technology manufacturing sectors (% of total employment)	2008	Eurostat (2014)
High-tech employment in service	Employment in knowledge-intensive service sectors (% total employment)	2008	Eurostat (2014)
Internet access	Households who have Internet access (any form) at home (% households)	2010	Eurostat (2014)
Pupil and teacher ratio (primary)	Ratio of teaching staff to pupils in primary (ISCED 1) education	2009	Eurostat (2014)
Pupil and teacher ratio (upper secondary)	Ratio of teaching staff to students in upper secondary (ISCED 3) education	2011	Eurostat (2014)

School expectancy	Expected years of education over a lifetime	2009	Eurostat (2014)
Teaching hours	Teaching time in upper secondary school (ISCED 3) general programmes (hours per year)	2011	OECD (2013)
Teacher compensation	Ratio of average upper secondary teacher salary to average tertiary educated worker salary	2011	OECD (2013)
Earnings premium to secondary education	Earnings of 25-64 year olds without upper secondary education relative to those with (with=100)	2011	OECD (2013)
Tertiary expenditure as grants	Proportion of government expenditure on financial aid to tertiary students that is paid in the form of (non-repayable) grants (%)	2011	Eurostat (2014)
Selection before age 16	Whether an education system introduces selection of pupils before the age of 16	2010	OECD (2012)

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# Chapter 3: Youth Unemployment within and across the countries of the EU15 throughout the Economic Crisis

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## 1. Abstract

This study provides empirical evidence on youth unemployment inequalities, trends and convergence dynamics across the EU-15 countries and regions, before and during the economic crisis. A series of descriptive investigations reveal that before the crisis, there were widespread low average levels of youth unemployment and inequality was mostly found within countries. Throughout the crisis, a conspicuous macro-regional average rise in youth unemployment occurred, although each country had a distinct path. By 2013 a polarization dynamic emerged whereby a group of Southern/Mediterranean European regions had reached acutely high levels of youth unemployment, while a few countries were resilient to the crisis and Germany reduced its youth unemployment rates. Both intra-national and cross-country dispersion in terms of youth unemployment rates generally increased. Further, most countries and regions that started off with lower rates kept performing better than those that began with higher rates, so that overall macro-regional  $\beta$ -convergence did not occur apart from in Germany.

## 2. Introduction

The integration of young people in the labour market has become a key political priority across the European Union, particularly since the 2008 economic crisis has had hard repercussions on youngsters' job prospects. The ILO estimates that the countries of European Union, Canada and the United States experienced the highest annual increase of youth unemployment rates between 2008 and 2009 (O'Higgins, 2010). In 2014, in the EU-28, more than one in five young Europeans on the labour market cannot find a job and in some countries, as Greece and Spain, it is one in two (European Commission, 2014). Generally, youth unemployment rates tend to be twice as high as those of adults (Quintini et al. 2007). The urgency of tackling youth unemployment, together with its associated risks of social alienation, is vividly depicted by the call for policy instruments to avoid having a "lost generation" of youth.

The seriousness of the situation, which makes it a particularly important subject of analysis, is that the consequences of loss of work-experience early on in life are known to often be profound and long-lasting, especially for low-skilled disadvantaged youth (Scarpetta et al. 2010). As young people remain unemployed they tend to lose the educational advantage they may have developed, they forgo qualifying on-the-job training and experience

(O'Higgins, 2010) and may have detrimental psychological and physical health effects. They are also more at risk of social exclusion and alienation. It is further known that youth unemployment tends to translate into additional repeated unemployment spells and lower earnings over the entire life cycle (O'Higgins, 2010; Ellwood, 1982; Arumpalam, 2001).

Importantly, youth unemployment rates significantly differ across European countries (Quintini et al. 2007), as well as regions (Taylor and Bradley, 1997; Elhorst, 2003; Perugini and Signorelli, 2010; Mohl and Hagen, 2011). The European Commission estimates a gap of over 50 percentage points between the member state with the lowest rate of youth unemployment in 2013, Germany, and the highest, Greece (European Commission, 2014). This occurs notwithstanding the fact that the European Cohesion Policy has the holistic aim of promoting "economic, social, and territorial, cohesion among Member States" (Art. 3(3) TEU) and that parts of the European Social Fund expenditures are directly aimed at reducing regional disparities in the employment sector (O'Higgins, 2010).

While youth unemployment has acquired increased political, social and academic attention throughout the recession, European cohesion and regional inequality is still predominately analysed exclusively in terms of income growth and income per-capita differentials. Although income accounts for an important and easily comparable aspect of economic development, it does not capture relevant labour market inequalities (Mohl and Hagen, 2010). Sound reasons for assessing European cohesion also in terms of youth unemployment rates include the fact that a component of the European Cohesion policy and of the European Social funds are directly aimed at reducing regional disparities in the employment sector (Mohl and Hagen, 2010). Further, the unemployment rate is considered to be a viable indicator to assess an area's socio-economic balance and to designate regional funding (Elhorst, 2003). Reducing regional unemployment disparities may also enhance national output and produce social benefits related to reduced geographical inequalities and depressed regions (Taylor, 1996). Moreover, the considerable variation in unemployment rates between regions within countries is indicative of a valuable source of information for investigating the causes of unemployment (Taylor and Bradley, 1997). Also Elhorst (2003), in a detailed review of studies on regional unemployment differentials, affirms that the magnitude of unemployment disparities amongst regions within countries is almost as large that amongst countries, and that macro-economic studies focusing on between-country differences have not provided complete explanations of regional differentials. Finally, understanding within-country inequalities and cross-country regional similarities in youth labour market opportunities, is also relevant for evaluating the need for tailored and context-specific policies, as structural, institutional and cyclical determinants may vary across both national and regional contexts, as well as across pre-determined welfare states categorizations (Sapir, 2006).

Furthermore, the majority of studies analysing youth unemployment also focus on the national-level or micro-individual level, not accounting for relevant within and between country regional differences (Bernal-Verdugo, 2012; Scarpetta et al., 2010; Quintini et al. 2007; O'Higgins, 2010; Blanchflower and Freeman, 2000; amongst others). While the literature that has addressed regional unemployment differentials, has not fully explored the effects of the latest financial crisis (see Elhorst 2003 for a comprehensive literature

review; or Perugini, 2010; Perugini and Signorelli, 2007; Marelli, 2004 and 2007; Hagen and Mohl, 2011).

The objective of this paper is to contribute to filling this gap in the literature. To this end, the study provides empirical evidence on youth unemployment inequalities, trends and convergence dynamics across the EU-15 countries and regions, before and during the economic crisis. Within and between country absolute and relative levels of youth unemployment, as well as changes ongoing throughout the crisis, and convergence or divergence patterns are explored.

### **3. Methods**

The analyses presented in this paper are carried out for a sample composed of the EU-15 countries and associated 82 regions<sup>10</sup>, for a pre-crisis year (2007) and two years in which to see the first (2011) and subsequent effects of the on-going crisis (2013).

The reasons for which data was selected for year 2007 is that it could depict the situation before the crisis, assuming that the economic recession officially began in 2008. Likewise, 2013 was chosen for being the most recent year for which regional data was available. Finally, the goal was also to assess some of the preliminary effects of the crisis and to capture if there were any diversified trends throughout the crisis, thus data for 2011 was also selected.

Further, the focus has been kept on the EU15 both for reasons of data availability, as well as because it is the most consolidated and comparable nucleus of European countries. Also, it is the group of countries in the EU where mobility has been first promoted and thus, at least theoretically, the free and unconditional movement of labour across borders could bring youth unemployment rates to equilibrium. Additionally, NUTS-level data was utilized in order to capture regional youth unemployment. The choice of the optimal NUTS level of analysis was determined by a compromise between territorial specificity and reliable statistical data. Ultimately, NUTS level-1 data were selected, apart for those countries, such as Denmark, Portugal and Ireland, for which this level still represented the entire nation. For the latter, following Pirani (2005), we selected NUTS level-2 information. Table I in appendix 1 includes a complete list of countries and respective regions taken into consideration.

Finally, the focus of the investigation is on youth unemployment rates, for which data is drawn from the Eurostat online database<sup>11</sup>. The European Commission's definition of young people as those belonging to the age group of 15-24 year olds is applied. Although quite

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<sup>10</sup> Note that the NUTS level-1 regions of France include also Overseas Departments, "Départements d'Outre Mer". However, this region was not included in the analyses, it is not part of the sample of 82 regions under investigation.

<sup>11</sup> Eurostat, as the statistical office of the European Union, gathers data from national statistical offices and provides comparable and harmonized datasets for the European Union. It offers information on a number of different topics: such as the economy, finance, population demographics and social conditions, amongst others. Annually, EUROSTAT also releases data relative to sub-national levels of analysis – NUTS levels 1, 2 and 3.

narrow, this definition is considered to be most adequate for comparisons across time and regions (Perugini, 2010; O'Higgins, 2003).

The descriptive analyses explore youth unemployment, in terms of youth unemployment rates, across the EU15 before and throughout the crisis. The magnitude of youth unemployment, together with changing patterns and trends, are first investigated from an aggregate European perspective, then focusing on a national and cross-country analysis, and finally a more detailed intra-national and inter-national regional-level investigation is carried out. A series of graphical representations and choropleth maps are used to illustrate the changing distribution of youth unemployment rates within and across countries of the EU15.

Further, an analysis of the standard deviation of intra-national, inter-regional, youth unemployment rates allows capturing changes in national  $\sigma$ -convergence ongoing throughout the crisis; and a similar cross-country analysis allows capturing cross-country  $\sigma$ -convergence across the EU-15. The notion of  $\sigma$ -convergence is drawn upon the literature studying European cohesion (see for example, Sala-i-Martin 1995 and Monfort, 2008) whereby "when the standard deviation tends to fall over time, such a result indicates that the differences of the per capita income between regions in absolute terms decrease with the passage of time, which is an evidence of convergence...on the other hand, divergence implies that the standard deviation of the series in terms of per capita income increases over time" (Marques and Soukiazis, 1998). However, in this case, the concept is redefined as the fall of dispersion in terms of youth unemployment rates, instead of per capita income, across regions within one country, or across countries within the EU15.

Following,  $\beta$ -convergence is also descriptively explored, as done by Rodriguez-Pose (1999), through the use of a two-way scatter plot of youth unemployment change versus initial average youth unemployment rate. Again, the concept of  $\beta$ -convergence (Solow, 1956), denoting a process whereby entities that were relatively disadvantaged improve faster than those that were relatively advantaged (Sala-i-Martin, 1995; Perugini, 2010), determining a catching-up dynamic (Monfort, 2008), is tailored to the study of youth unemployment and merely descriptively investigated. In this case, a relatively greater reduction in youth unemployment rates in the regions recording higher rates in 2007, determines a positive  $\beta$ -convergence. On the other hand, if the regions starting with relatively higher youth unemployment rates also have a higher growth-rate,  $\beta$ -convergence is not occurring.

## **4. Results**

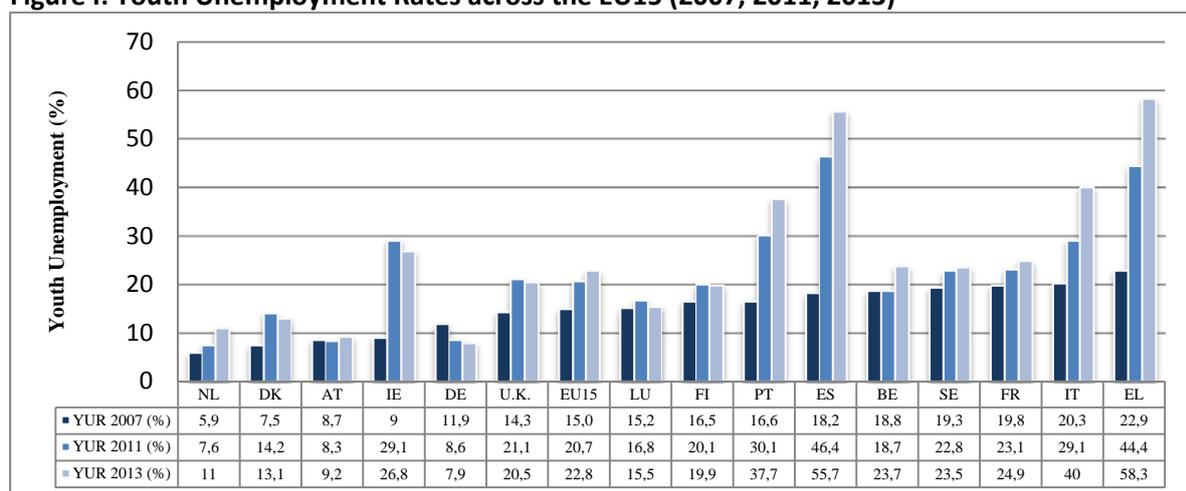
### **4.1 Overview of national and cross-country youth unemployment**

Youth unemployment in the EU15 increased substantially throughout the crisis. In 2007 the average youth unemployment rate was of 15 per cent; by 2011 it had increased by 5.7 percentage points, reaching a value of 20.7 per cent. In the second part of the crisis considered, from 2011 to 2013, it kept escalating, although less so – finally recording a mean value of 22.8 per cent. However, this aggregate EU-wide perspective masks important inequalities or similarities that may be present both between countries (inter-nationally) as well as within countries (intra-nationally or inter-regionally).

From an inter-national or cross-country perspective, in 2007 the Netherlands recorded the lowest average youth unemployment rate across the EU15. Along with the latter, Denmark, Austria, Ireland, Germany and the U.K. positioned themselves under the EU15 average rate of 15%. On the contrary, Luxemburg, Finland, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Sweden and France ranged from having youth unemployment rates just over this macro-regional average rate to a maximum of five percentage points above it. Italy and Greece alone had slightly higher values: respectively of 20.3% and 22.9%. Appreciably, overall, in 2007 the youth unemployment rates were quite contained.

This scenario remarkably changed throughout the crisis. In 2011, the EU15 average increased to 20.7 per cent and although the lowest youth unemployment rate documented was just 1.7 percentage points higher than that of 2007 (denoting a value of 7.6 per cent still detained by the Netherlands), the highest rate was now much higher: 46.4 per cent, associated to Spain. In fact, Spain noticeably shifted from having a youth unemployment rate within a +5 percentage points range from the EU15 average, to being the most disadvantaged<sup>12</sup> – recording the highest absolute increase, of 28.2 percentage points. Greece and Ireland also had marked increases of approximately 20 percentage points. However, while Greece was already recording relatively higher youth unemployment rates, Ireland went from having one of the lowest rates, well below the EU15 average, to a soaring value of 29.1 per cent. Overall, in 2011, the countries recording youth unemployment rates over 5 percentage points above the macro-regional average were, respectively: Spain, Greece, Portugal, Italy and Ireland. Conversely, the U.K., Sweden and France had rates over the EU15 average but below 25% and Finland, Belgium and Luxemburg now positioned themselves below the 2011 macro-regional average, although their youth unemployment rates did not decreased since 2007<sup>13</sup>.

**Figure I: Youth Unemployment Rates across the EU15 (2007, 2011, 2013)**



<sup>12</sup> In this paper the terms advantaged and disadvantaged are meant in terms of relatively higher and relatively lower youth unemployment rates.

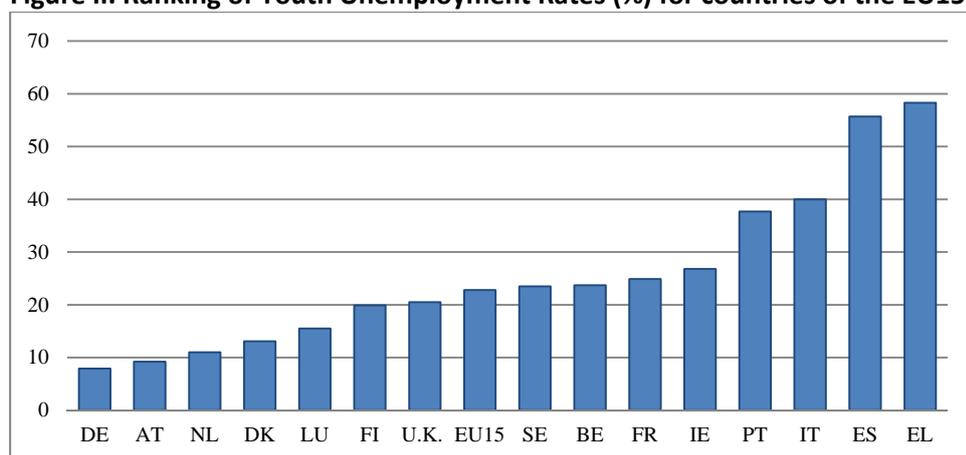
<sup>13</sup> Please note that this is possible since the overall EU15 average value was higher in 2011 than in 2007 and other countries are performing relatively worse.

Notes: The exact values of the average Youth Unemployment Rate (YUR) per country and per year are reported in the table beneath the graph. The chart is ordered in ascending order for pre-crisis youth unemployment rates, meaning rates in 2007.

Source: EUROSTAT, authors' elaboration.

By 2013, the EU15 average youth unemployment rate reached 22.8%, recording an increase of 7.8 percentage points from the 2007 pre-crisis scenario. Now, Germany, instead of the Netherlands, had the lowest youth unemployment rate, while the highest rates (of over 5 percentage points above the 2013 macro-regional mean) were recorded respectively by: Greece, with a value as high as 58.3 per cent, Spain (55.7%), Italy (40%) and Portugal (37.7%). Below these extremes, but still above the EU15 yearly average, stood: Ireland (26.8%), France (24.9%), Belgium (23.7%) and Sweden (23.5%). On the contrary, the U.K. repositioned itself below the EU15 mean as before the crisis, although now having a rate of 6 percentage points higher<sup>14</sup>. The overall ranking for youth unemployment rates in 2013 is illustrated in Figure II. Noticeably, Ireland had a marked change in relative ranking position from 2007 to 2013: it went from being the country with the fourth lowest youth unemployment rates before the crisis, to being one with the highest rates in 2013.

**Figure II. Ranking of Youth Unemployment Rates (%) for countries of the EU15 in 2013**

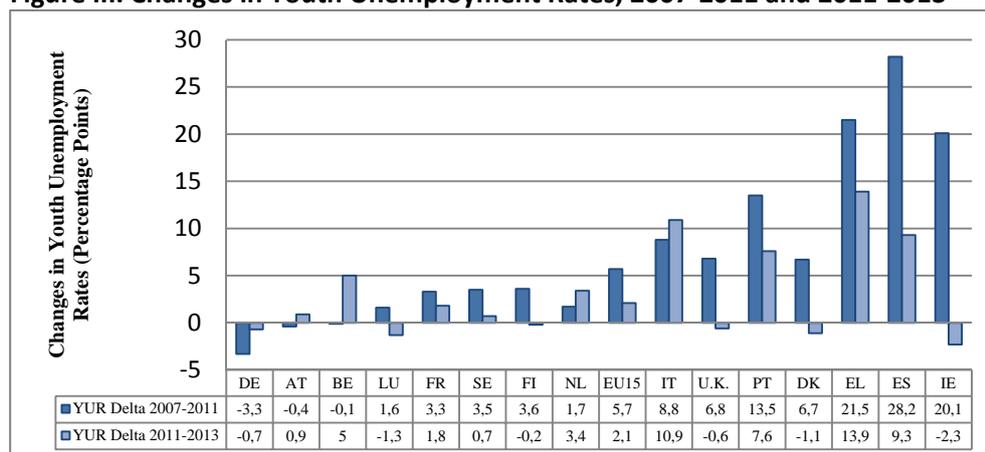


Source: EUROSTAT, authors' elaboration.

Focusing more in depth on the changes in youth unemployment (represented in Fig. II and Table I), over and above the average rates and relative ranking, only one country across the EU15 reduced its youth unemployment rates both in the first phase of the crisis considered (2007 – 2011) as well as in the second (2011 – 2013): namely, Germany. The latter first recorded a decrease of 3.3 percentage points (the largest relative decrease, of 27.7%) and then of 0.7 points (a relative decrease of 8.1%). In contrast, in Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy, youth unemployment rates kept rising to a higher extent than the EU15 average rise. Thus, in this sense, a marked polarization occurred throughout the crisis between these two groups of countries: Germany that recorded continuously declining youth unemployment rates, and Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy – the renowned Mediterranean countries of the EU15 – with persistently rising rates.

<sup>14</sup> Please note that the rise in youth unemployment in the U.K. while having a relatively better ranking than in 2011 and a higher rate than in 2007 is possible given that the overall EU15 average value was higher in 2013 and other countries are performing relatively worse.

**Figure III. Changes in Youth Unemployment Rates, 2007-2011 and 2011-2013**



Notes: Changes in youth unemployment are measured in terms of differences in percentage points, reported on the y-axis. Graph is order in ascending order based on the data for the first period, 2007-2011. Source: EUROSTAT, authors' elaboration.

More specifically, the EU15 average increase from 2007 to 2011 was of 5.7 percentage points and of 2.1 percentage points from 2011 to 2013. In the first phase, the steepest absolute increase was registered in Spain, with a rise of 28.2 percentage points (a relative increase of 154.95%). Spanish youth unemployment rates further increased from 2011 to 2013 by 9.3 percentage points (relatively: by 20.04%), therefore recording an overall worsening of 37.5 percentage points throughout the crisis and tripling its youth unemployment rates, reaching a national average of 55.7 per cent, as aforesaid.

From 2007 to 2011, also Greece, Ireland and Portugal recorded increases over five percentage points higher than the EU15 average rise, and relative increases of respectively: 94%, 223%, and 81%. Italy, the U.K. and Denmark had lower although still above average increases. In contrast, Finland, Sweden, France, the Netherlands and Luxemburg had below-average increases and distinctively, Belgium, Austria and Germany managed to reduce their youth unemployment rates, respectively by 0.1 percentage points (a relative decrease of 0.5%), 0.4 percentage points (a relative decrease of 4.6%) and of 3.3 percentage points (a relative decrease of 27.73%),

**Table I. Absolute Youth Unemployment Rate (YUR) and absolute and relative changes in YURs.**

Country	Relative 2007-2011 (%)	Delta	Relative 2011-2013 (%)	Delta
DE	-27.73		-8.14	
AT	-4.60		10.84	
BE	-0.53		26.74	
LU	10.53		-7.74	
FR	16.67		7.79	
SE	18.13		3.07	
FI	21.82		-1.00	
NL	28.81		44.74	
EU15	38.00		10.14	
IT	43.35		37.46	
U.K.	47.55		-2.84	
PT	81.33		25.25	
DK	89.33		-7.75	
EL	93.89		31.31	
ES	154.95		20.04	
IE	223.33		-7.90	

Note: The countries are ranked in ascending order for relative changes in the first period of the crisis: from 2007 to 2011.

From 2011 to 2013, a new group of countries managed to reverse the trend of rising youth unemployment rates. In fact, Ireland now reduced its rates by 2.3 percentage points (a relative decrease of 7.9%), Luxemburg by 1.3 percentage points (a relative decrease of 7.74%), Denmark by 1.1 (a relative decrease of 7.75%), Germany by 0.7 (a relative decrease of 8.14%), the U.K. by 0.6 (a relative decrease of 2.84%) and Finland by 0.2 percentage points (a relative decrease of 1%).

In summary, throughout the economic crisis the EU15 scenario markedly changed in terms of youth unemployment rates. Overall, there has been a conspicuous macro-regional average rise in youth unemployment, although each country had a distinct path. Particularly noticeable was the polarization that emerged between a group of Mediterranean countries (Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy) that recorded prominently rising youth unemployment rates and Germany, which conversely, progressively reduced its youth unemployment. Together with Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Denmark managed to always keep their rates below the yearly EU15 average. Noticeably, in the first period of the crisis, youth unemployment rates in Ireland had one of the most substantial relative increases, of over 220%. This rise brought Ireland from being one of the relatively best performing countries to one of the worst. However, Ireland, differently from Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy, managed to start reversing this trend in the second phase of the crisis, from 2011 to 2013, recording a relative decrease of 7%. Together with Ireland, Denmark, Luxemburg, the U.K. and Finland also first had rising youth unemployment rates that by 2013 began decreasing. Presumably, in time, diverse structural conditions unequally managed to respond to the

crisis beyond the initially contingent affects, as shall be further investigated in the second part of the analysis reported in this paper.

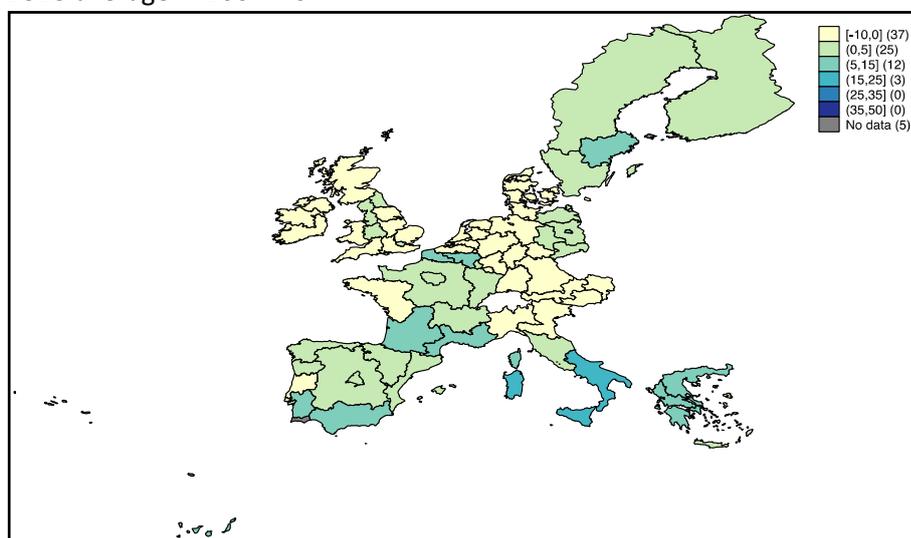
## 4.2 Overview of regional youth unemployment: intra-national and cross-country

Analyses that are done exclusively at the European or national aggregate level can mask important within-country differences as well as cross-country similarities. Indeed, noticeable intra-national, inter-regional differences and cross-country regional similarities in youth unemployment were present before the crisis and continued to exist, with relevant changing characteristics, throughout the recession.

Figures IV, V and VI illustrate the EU15 scenario in terms of regional patterns of youth unemployment rates. The ranges are fixed around the EU15 average of 2007, which was 15%, so that changes relative to a pre-crisis scenario can be more markedly seen and across-time comparisons can be made relative to a stable benchmark. Also, coherently with the cross-national description reported above, the ranges were constructed to reveal: areas with below macro-regional average youth unemployment rates, regions having rates equal to the EU15 average up to a maximum of five percentage points above it, followed by those that record higher rates delimited in 10 percentage points increases up to 35 percentage points above the EU15 average of 15%, and then all those having rates above that, which means recording youth unemployment rates above 50%.

**Figure IV. Youth Unemployment Rate, 2007**

EU15 average in 2007 = 0



Notes: The colour legend refers to ranges of youth unemployment rates taking the EU15 2007 average value of 15% as zero/reference. The number of regions included in the cluster/range is in brackets. Data source: EUROSTAT; authors' elaboration.

The choropleth maps reveal that before the crisis, 75% of regions either recorded below average youth unemployment rates (37 regions out of 82) or just up to 5 percentage points above the it (25 out of 82). No regions recorded youth unemployment rates higher than 25 percentage points above the EU15 average. Importantly, the majority of countries had

regions positioning themselves in different range-groups of youth unemployment rates and similarities across nations were also widespread<sup>15</sup>.

Table II, consistent with the choropleth maps, indicates that in 2007 the countries that had all regions recording below average youth unemployment rates were: the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark and Ireland. However, this range also included regions spread across six other countries, namely regions belonging to: the U.K., Germany, Italy, Belgium, Portugal and France.

The next range, grouping countries centred around the EU15 average, included regions pertaining to seven different countries: again, some regions belonged to the U.K., Germany, Italy and France, but also to Spain, Portugal and Sweden. The one region constituting Luxemburg and the only region of Finland for which there was data also belonged to this range.

Following, regions recording youth unemployment rates ranging from 20% to 30% (thus, from five to 15 percentage points over the macro-regional average) span across six countries – Portugal, Sweden, France, Germany, Spain and Belgium – all of which had regions also in one or more of the other ranges. On the other hand, all Greek regions were concentrated in this range.

Finally, the highest youth unemployment rates were registered in Southern and Insular Italy and in one Belgian region. Overall, it is evident that there are plenty of intra-national differences as well as inter-national regional similarities.

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<sup>15</sup> Similar trends are shown by Marelli et al. (2012) with reference to EU-27, NUTS-2 level.

**Table II. Distribution of regions across ranges of YURs in 2007, 2011 and 2013**

EU15 average in 2007, 15% = 0

<b>2007</b>		
<b>Range</b>	<b>All regions from the same country</b>	<b>Not all regions</b>
<15% (-10 – 0)	NL, AT, DK, IE	UK, DE, IT, BE, PT, FR
15% < 20% (0 < 5)	LU	UK, DE, IT, PT, FR, ES, SE, FI
20% < 30% (5 < 15)	EL	DE, PT, SE, FR, ES, BE
30% < 40% (15 < 25)		IT, BE
40% < 50% (25 < 35)		
> 50% (> 35)		
<b>Total number of countries represented</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2011</b>		
<b>Range</b>	<b>All regions from the same country</b>	<b>Not all regions</b>
<15% (-10 – 0)	NL, AT	DE, DK, BE
15% < 20% (0 < 5)	LU	DE, DK, UK, FR, IT
20% < 30% (5 < 15)	SE	UK, FR, IT, BE, PT, IE, FI
30% < 40% (15 < 25)		FR, PT, IE, BE, ES, EL, IT
40% < 50% (25 < 35)		ES, EL, IT
> 50% (> 35)		ES, EL
<b>Total number of countries represented</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2013</b>		
<b>Range</b>	<b>All regions from the same country</b>	<b>Not all regions</b>
<15% (-10 – 0)	DE, AT, NL, DK	
15% < 20% (0 < 5)	LU	UK, FR, BE, FI
20% < 30% (5 < 15)	SE	UK, FR, IE, IT
30% < 40% (15 < 25)		FR, IE, IT, BE, PT
40% < 50% (25 < 35)		PT, EL, ES
> 50% (> 35)		PT, IT, EL, ES
<b>Total number of countries represented</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>

Notes: The ranges in brackets take the EU15 average for the year 2007, a value of 15%, as the as the reference value so that EU15 average in 2007 = 0.

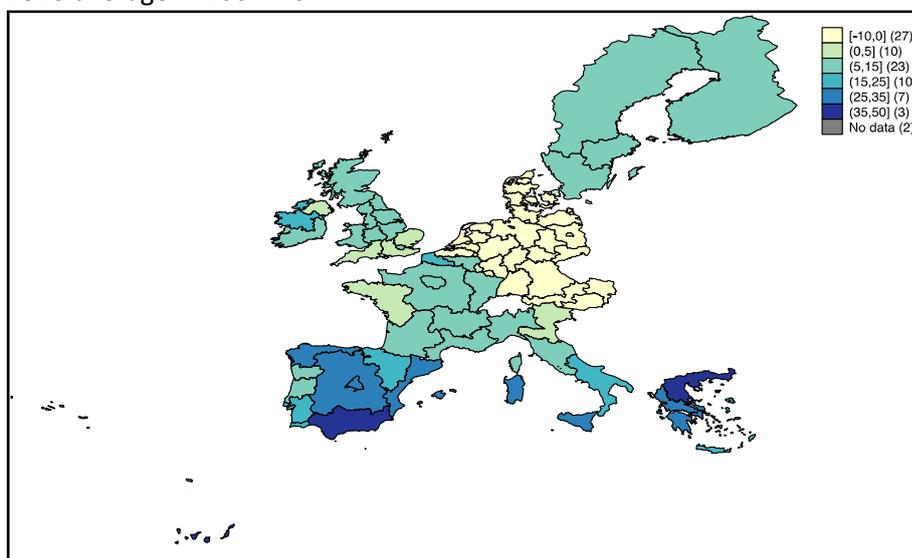
In 2011, with the crisis on going, the intra-national and inter-regional patterns across the EU15 noticeably changed. Only two countries now had all their regions concentrated in the range below the pre-crisis average, namely: Austria and the Netherlands. However, most of Germany's regions also fell within this range and the only one region that did not, Bemen, recorded youth unemployment rates just slightly above the EU15 pre-crisis average. Similarly, Denmark had a region, Sjælland, right on the 15% threshold and another, Hovedstaden, slightly above it. One Belgian region also placed itself below the pre-crisis average value.

In the range spanning from the pre-crisis average value of 15% to 20%, there were regions belonging to the U.K., France and Italy, in addition to the aforementioned German and Denmark regions. Luxemburg, as a one-region country, also fitted in this range. Youth unemployment rates stretching from 20% to 30% were recorded in regions again across France, the U.K. and Italy, but also regions belonging to Belgium, Portugal, Ireland and Finland. Sweden was the only country with all regions concentrated in this range.

Some regions belonging to France, Portugal, Ireland, Belgium, Spain, Greece and Italy also recorded youth unemployment rates ranging from 30% to 40%. Further, Spain, Greece and Italy also had regions falling into the threshold of rates going from 40 % to 50%. The highest range, reaching rates of over 50%, meaning above 35 percentage points higher than the pre-crisis average value, again included regions from Spain and Greece.

**Figure V. Youth Unemployment Rate, 2011**

EU15 average in 2007 = 0

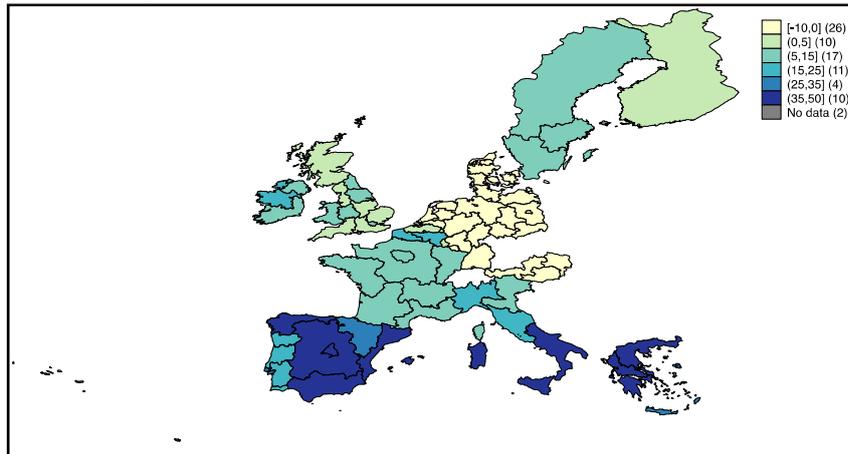


Notes: The colour legend refers to ranges of youth unemployment rates taking the EU15 2007 average value of 15% as zero/reference. In brackets, the number of regions included in the cluster/range. Data source: EUROSTAT; authors' elaboration.

In 2013, four countries managed to have all regions recording youth unemployment rates below the pre-crisis average of 15%, namely: Germany, Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands. Luxemburg, as a country constituted by only one region, had a youth unemployment rate situated in the range spanning from 15% to 20%, together with regions from Belgium, the U.K., France and Finland. Sweden had all regions concentrated in the 20% to 30% range, together with regions again from France and the U.K, but also from Ireland and Italy. In turn, Ireland, Italy, France and Belgium together with Portugal also had regions with youth unemployment rates in the range of 15 to 20 percentage points higher than the pre-crisis average. Portugal, together with Spain and Greece, further had regions in the 40% to 50% range. Southern and Insular Italy, as well as a Portuguese region and a series of Spanish and Greek regions reached the highest youth unemployment rates, ranging from 50% and above.

**Figure VI. Youth Unemployment Rate, 2013**

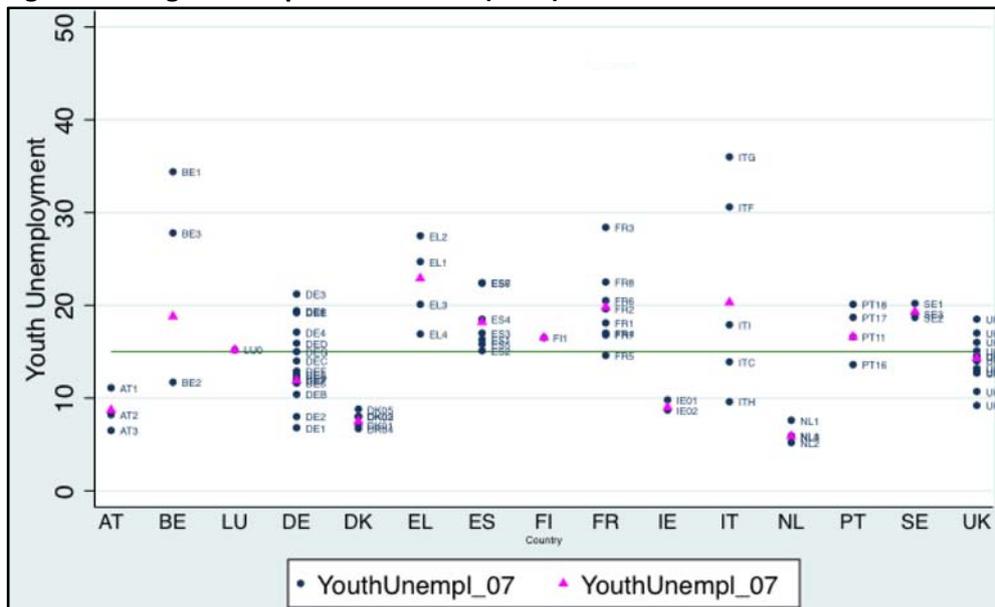
EU15 average in 2007 = 0



Notes: The colour legend refers to ranges of youth unemployment rates taking the EU15 2007 average value of 15% as zero/reference. In brackets, the number of regions included in the cluster/range. Data source: EUROSTAT; authors' elaboration.

In order to summarize and better understand the extent and patterns of intra-national cross-regional convergence and divergence, as well as cross-country regional similarities, figure VII illustrates regional dispersion for each EU15 country in 2007.

**Figure VII: Regional Dispersion in YURs (2007)**



Data source: EUROSTAT; authors' elaboration.

Note that regional dispersion was particularly high in Italy, Belgium, Germany, France and Greece. For example, North-East Italy was one of the best performing regions in the EU15, with a youth unemployment rate similar to the country average rates of Ireland, Denmark and Austria; instead, North-West and Centre Italy recorded rates respectively just below and just above the EU15 average of 15%; and Insular and Southern Italy recorded two of the highest youth unemployment rates, well above the EU15 aggregate average value. Belgium, too, had one of the worst performing regions as well as a region with a mean youth

unemployment rate below the EU15 average, closer to the rates recorded in German and Austrian regions. Germany, in turn, had regions both below and above the EU15 aggregate average. Overall, regional similarities across countries, as well as intra-national dispersion were clearly present.

Throughout the crisis, regional dispersion across the countries of the EU15 importantly varied. The measurement of the standard deviation of intra-national youth unemployment rates (reported in Table III), indicative of a decrease or increase of  $\sigma$ -convergence indicate that by 2013 the only two countries in which regional  $\sigma$ -convergence increased were Germany and the Netherlands. Conversely,  $\sigma$ -convergence decreased in Austria, Greece, Spain, France, Sweden, Ireland, Portugal and the U.K – although starting from and varying by very different extents. Italy, Belgium and Denmark had minimum changes in the extent of overall regional dispersion.

The renewed scenario of intra-national regional dispersion of youth unemployment rates in 2013 (represented in Figure VIII), reveals the aforesaid increased absolute levels of youth unemployment as well as the decreased  $\sigma$ -convergence in the vast majority of countries (all apart from Germany and the Netherlands). Similarities across countries are also noteworthy. For example, certain regions of Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal had very similar levels of youth unemployment – as possibly expected, since they belong to the Mediterranean countries particularly hard hit by the crisis. However, within Italy, Central Italy recorded rates similar to those of Brussels-Capital Region of Belgium, and North-West and North-East of Italy recorded even lower values, more in line with those of certain French and Irish regions. Further, France, the U.K., Belgium and Sweden had both regions recording youth unemployment rates below the EU-15 average, as well as regions registering above-average rates. Finally, several regions across countries had youth unemployment rates closer to the national average rates of other countries.

**Table III. National and Regional Yearly Youth Unemployment Rates (YURs) and Intra-national dispersion in terms of Standard Deviation (S.D.) (2007, 2011, 2013)**

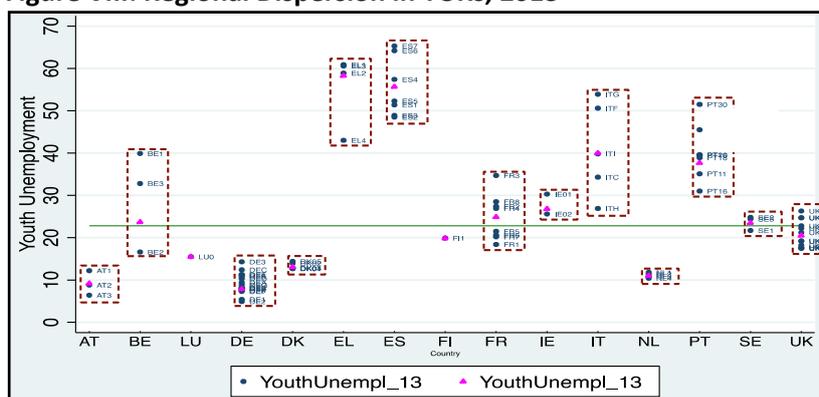
Country	YUR 2007 (%)	YUR 2011 (%)	YUR 2013 (%)	Regions & Intra-National Standard Deviation (S.D.)	YUR 2007 (%)	YUR 2011 (%)	YUR 2013 (%)
Austria	8.7	8.3	9.2	Ostösterreich	11.1	11.9	12.2
				Südösterreich	8.2	5.6	8.8
				Westösterreich	6.5	6.3	6.4
				S.D.	1.90	2.82	2.38
Belgium	18.8	18.7	23.7	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Brussels			
				Hoofdstedelijk Gewest	34.4	35.3	39.9
				Vlaams Gewest	11.7	12.7	16.6
				Région wallonne	27.8	25.2	32.8
				S.D.	9.53	9.24	9.75
Germany	11.9	8.6	7.9	Baden-Württemberg	6.8	5.7	5.4
				Bayern	8.0	5.4	4.9
				Berlin	21.2	13.4	14.3
				Brandenburg	17.1	12.5	11.2
				Bremen	:	15.7	:
				Hamburg	11.6	6.8	7.5
				Hessen	11.9	8.5	8.2
				Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	19.4	10.5	10.8
				Niedersachsen	12.1	9.5	8.0
				Nordrhein-Westfalen	12.5	9.8	9.4
				Rheinland-Pfalz	10.4	9.4	8.0
				Saarland	14.0	10.3	12.4
				Sachsen	15.9	10.2	10.3
				Sachsen-Anhalt	19.2	14.0	11.3
				Schleswig-Holstein	12.9	9.2	7.3
Thüringen	15.0	8.2	8.8				
S.D.	4.00	2.78	2.48				
Greece	22.9	44.4	58.3	Voreia Ellada	24.7	50.4	60.9
				Kentriki Ellada	27.5	41.5	58.9
				Attiki	20.1	43.2	60.6
				Nisia Aigaiou, Kriti	16.9	39.2	43.0
				S.D.	4.09	4.19	7.46
Spain	18.2	46.4	55.7	Noroeste (ES)	16.3	40.3	51.4
				Noreste (ES)	15.1	36.2	48.5
				Comunidad de Madrid	17.0	41.1	48.9
				Centro (ES)	18.5	45.0	57.4
				Este (ES)	15.8	46.8	52.3
				Sur (ES)	22.4	53.5	64.2
				Canarias (ES)	22.4	50.8	65.3
				S.D.	2.82	5.65	6.49

Country	YUR 2007 (%)	YUR 2011 (%)	YUR 2013 (%)	Regions & Intra-National Standard Deviation (S.D.)	YUR 2007 (%)	YUR 2011 (%)	YUR 2013 (%)
Finland	16.5	20.1	19.9	Manner-Suomi	16.5	20.1	19.9
				Åland	-	-	-
				S.D.	-	-	-
France	19.8	23.1	24.9	Île de France	18.1	19.2	18.4
				Bassin Parisien	19.6	23.1	27.4
				Nord - Pas-de-Calais	28.4	31.1	34.7
				Est (FR)	17.0	20.6	26.9
				Ouest (FR)	14.6	18.9	21.5
				Sud-Ouest (FR)	20.5	23.2	20.6
				Centre-Est (FR)	16.8	20.4	20.2
				Méditerranée	22.5	24.9	28.5
S.D.	4.01	3.74	5.17				
Italy	20.3	29.1	40.0	Nord-Ovest	13.9	22.2	34.3
				Sud	30.6	39.2	50.6
				Isole	36.0	42.7	53.9
				Nord-Est	9.6	19.7	26.9
				Centro (IT)	17.9	28.9	39.8
				S.D.	10.05	9.08	10.04
Luxembourg	15.2	16.8	15.5	Luxembourg	15.2	16.8	15.5
				S.D.	-	-	-
Netherlands	5.9	7.6	11.0	Noord-Nederland	7.6	8.8	11.8
				Oost-Nederland	5.2	7.3	11.4
				West-Nederland	5.9	7.8	10.9
				Zuid-Nederland	5.9	7.1	10.4
				S.D.	0.88	0.66	0.53
Sweden	19.3	22.8	23.5	Östra Sverige	20.2	21.5	21.7
				Södra Sverige	18.7	22.8	24.8
				Norra Sverige	19.1	25.6	24.4
				S.D.	0.63	1.71	1.38
U.K.	14.3	21.1	20.5	North East (UK)	16.0	21.7	26.3
				North West (UK)	15.1	23.9	19.2
				Yorkshire and The Humber	14.0	23.5	22.8
				East Midlands (UK)	14.5	20.7	18.2
				West Midlands (UK)	17.0	24.2	24.7
				East of England	12.7	17.7	17.5
				London	18.5	24.2	24.7
				South East (UK)	12.8	16.1	17.7
				South West (UK)	10.7	16.5	17.5
				Wales	14.5	25.2	21.2
Scotland	13.2	21.7	19.2				

Country	YUR 2007 (%)	YUR 2011 (%)	YUR 2013 (%)	Regions & Intra-National Standard Deviation (S.D.)	YUR 2007 (%)	YUR 2011 (%)	YUR 2013 (%)
				Northern Ireland (UK)	9.2	19.5	22.2
				S.D.	2.46	3.04	3.03
Denmark	7.5	14.2	13.1	Hovedstaden	7.1	15.4	12.7
				Sjælland	8.0	15.0	13.9
				Syddanmark	8.0	14.2	12.8
				Midtjylland	6.7	12.5	12.7
				Nordjylland	8.8	13.9	14.4
				S.D.	0.74	1.01	0.71
Ireland	9.0	29.1	26.8	Border, Midland and Western	9.8	32.8	30.3
				Southern and Eastern	8.7	27.8	25.6
				S.D.	0.55	2.5	2.35
Portugal	16.6	30.1	37.7	Norte	16.6	28.5	35.1
				Algarve	-	37.0	39.5
				Centro (PT)	13.6	26.3	31.0
				Lisboa	18.7	33.2	45.5
				Alentejo	20.1	32.2	38.9
				Região Autónoma dos Açores (PT)	-	-	39.6
				Região Autónoma da Madeira (PT)	-	39.1	51.5
				S.D.	2.45	4.45	6.20
Cross- Country S.D.	5.08	11.36	15.17				
(Percentage Points)							

Overall, throughout the crisis intra-national  $\sigma$ -convergence in terms of youth unemployment rates decreased in most countries, although to different extents and starting from diverse levels of regional dispersion. While, across the EU15, the dispersion in average national youth unemployment rates markedly increased (as indicated by the values of cross-country standard deviation reported in Table III).

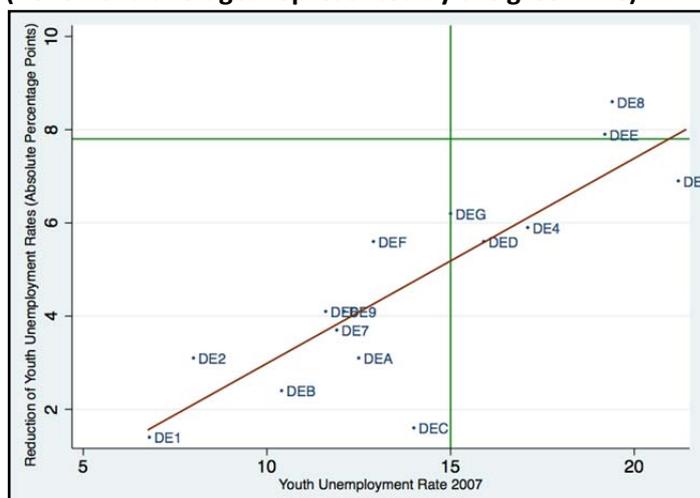
Figure VIII: Regional Dispersion in YURs, 2013



Data source: EUROSTAT; authors' elaboration.

However, an analysis of  $\sigma$ -convergence does not reveal whether the regions that were most disadvantaged in terms of youth unemployment rates before the crisis, decreased their rates to a greater extent than those that started off with lower rates, coherently with the notion of  $\beta$ -convergence. A series of graphical exploratory descriptive analysis, inspired by the work of Rodriguez-Posa (1999), indicate that  $\beta$ -convergence increased exclusively in Germany, as all regions decreased their youth unemployment rates and the regions that had higher rates before the crisis, mostly regions from former "Eastern Germany", decreased their rates to a greater extent than those that were initially better off (as represented in Figure IX).

**Figure IX. Changes in Youth Unemployment across Regions of Germany, 2007-2013.**  
(EU15 2013 averages represented by the green line)



Notes: The values on the y-axis are absolute reductions in youth unemployment rates, so that a lower value indicates a smaller reduction/improvement. The fit line is indicative of a positive relation between starting levels of youth unemployment and decreases in the latter, thereby: regions with lower youth unemployment rates in 2007 had smaller reductions by 2013 than those starting off with higher levels of youth unemployment. This is indicative of a positive  $\beta$ -convergence dynamic.

Source: Labour Force Surveys, 2007 and 2013. Author's elaboration.

In all other countries<sup>16</sup>, youth unemployment rates mostly increased from 2007 to 2013 so that  $\beta$ -convergence did not occur. However in the Netherlands and Sweden, the regions that started off with lower rates had greater increments compared to the initially most disadvantaged regions. In particular, in Sweden the regions that were most advantaged in 2007 increased their rates to such a greater extent than those that were initially doing worse, that they overtook the average rates of the latter and caused an increase in intra-national regional dispersion. In contrast, the opposite of  $\beta$ -convergence markedly occurred in Austria, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Portugal and the U.K., where a polarization between regions starting with lower youth unemployment rates that increased their rates to a lesser extent than those initially most disadvantaged, was exasperated by the crisis.

In conclusion, throughout the crisis the EU-15 average youth unemployment rate increased, as it did in most countries within this macro-region. However, this was not the case for

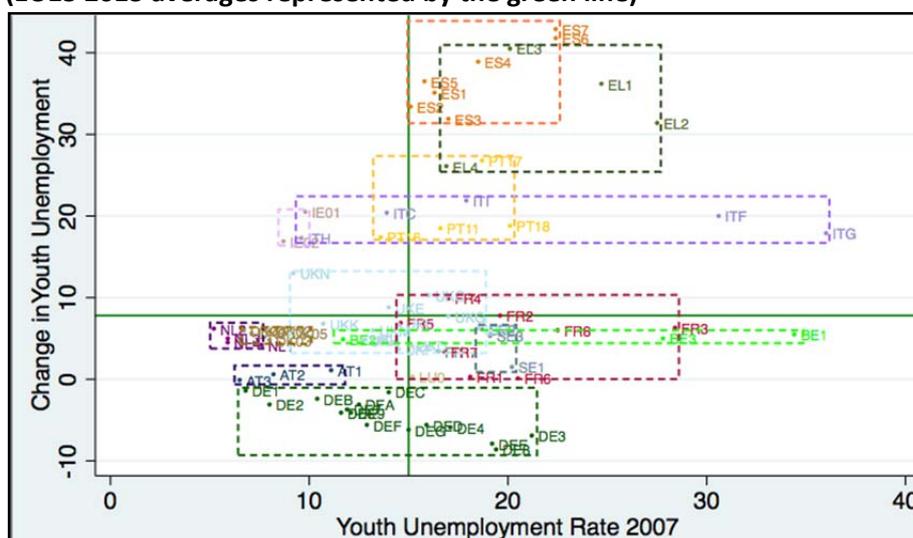
<sup>16</sup> Graphical exploratory and descriptive analyses to capture  $\beta$ -convergence, like the one represented in Figure VIII for Germany, were done for all countries. They are available upon request.

Germany, which instead kept gradually decreasing its youth unemployment rates. A series of other countries that had rising rates from 2007 to 2011, managed to reduce them by 2013, so that by 2013 a particularly disadvantaged nucleus of countries, with average youth unemployment rates that continuously increased throughout the crisis was concentrated in the Mediterranean area of the EU15, comprising: Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy.

However, important intra-national regional differences and cross-country regional similarities were also present and in most countries, regional dispersion of youth unemployment rates augmented throughout the crisis. In fact, only two countries, Germany and the Netherlands, increased their regional  $\sigma$ -convergence. Further, an unequal polarization increased across most countries of the EU15, whereby the regions that started off with higher youth unemployment rates before the crisis worsened further than those initially advantaged. In fact, a positive  $\beta$ -convergence only took place in Germany.

Overall, at the European level, cross-national differences in youth unemployment rates increased throughout the crisis, thereby  $\sigma$ -convergence decreased in the EU15. Further, most countries that started off with lower rates kept performing better than those that began with higher rates, so that overall macro-regional  $\beta$ -convergence did not occur. Figure X, inspired by the works of Rodriguez-Pose (1999) summarizes these changes in national and cross-national convergence at the EU15 level.

**Figure X. Changes in Youth Unemployment, 2011-2013**  
(EU15 2013 averages represented by the green line)



Data source: EUROSTAT; authors' elaboration.

The polarization of regions in the lower-left and upper-right quadrants of figure IX is indicative of the fact that regions with youth unemployment rates below the pre-crisis EU15 average level in 2011 maintained this relative advantage or even registered improvements by 2013 – this is mostly the case of Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark and Luxemburg, but also of some regions from Belgium, the U.K. and France. On the contrary, the countries that had youth unemployment rates well-above the EU15 average before the crisis worsened, showing above-average increments in youth unemployment rates. Overall, at the European level this is indicative of a lack of beta-convergence and of an increase of divergence.

The graph also reveals those countries and regions, concentrated in the upper-left corner, which started off with relatively lower youth unemployment rates but increased them substantially, as is the case of Ireland, although not reaching the highest increments recorded. On the other hand, in the bottom-right quadrant of the graph, the countries and regions that had relatively high pre-crisis youth unemployment rates but managed to contain or even reduce them are represented. Former Eastern Germany fits in this quadrant as it decreased its regional youth unemployment rates; but also regions from Sweden, France, Belgium and the U.K. that had contained increments, below the European average increase.

Finally, the “boxes” represented in Figure IX give a broad idea of the levels of youth unemployment around which most regions belonging to a country tend to cluster (Rodriguez-Pose, 1999). Both the presence of regional clustering within a country, as well as cross-national similarities are noticeable, as the majority of “boxes” comprising within-national regions overlap to some extent.

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

This paper investigated youth unemployment within and across the countries of the EU-15 and the diversified impact of the 2008 economic crisis. In depth analyses explored European, national and regional patterns, inequalities and trends of youth unemployment, starting from a pre-crisis scenario (the year 2007), then looking at the changes that occurred throughout a first phase of the crisis (in year 2011) and finally investigating the latest scenario (focusing on year 2013).

Generally, the paper set out to contribute to the debate on European regional convergence and cohesion by analyzing it in terms of youth labour market differentials instead of GDP per capita and GDP growth, as it is typically done. This is particularly relevant, as youth unemployment has become a top priority on the agenda of the majority of European countries and for the European Commission itself, especially since it has surged throughout the recession, reaching record high levels in certain regions and undermining opportunities for many youngsters. Further, youth unemployment is often studied at the national level, however masking important within-country differences and relevant cross-country similarities. On the contrary, in this paper, descriptive investigations as well as analyses on the cyclical, institutional and structural determinants of youth unemployment and the impact of the crisis were explored accounting for both a national and regional level of analysis.

In summary, the study revealed that overall, before the economic crisis youth unemployment was largely contained across the EU15, recording an average value of 15%. However it increased substantially throughout the crisis. By 2011 the European mean youth unemployment rate had risen by 5.7 percentage points, reaching a value of 20.7 per cent; and from 2011 to 2013 it kept escalating, although less so – finally recording a mean value of 22.8 per cent.

The lowest national average youth unemployment rate in 2007 was recorded by the Netherlands, with a value of 5.9%, and the highest by Greece, which registered a rate of 22.9%. By 2011, the maximum level of youth unemployment had soared to a rate of 46.4%, now recorded by Spain. Overall, in 2011, the countries with youth unemployment rates over 5 percentage points above the macro-regional average were: Spain, Greece, Portugal, Italy and Ireland. In 2013, Germany, instead of the Netherlands, had the lowest youth unemployment rate, while the highest rates were recorded respectively by: Greece, with a value as high as 58.3 per cent, Spain (55.7%), Italy (40%) and Portugal (37.7%).

Throughout the crisis, only Germany reduced its youth unemployment rates both in the first phase considered (2007 – 2011) as well as in the second (2011 – 2013). In contrast, in Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy, youth unemployment rates kept rising to a higher extent than the EU15 average increase. Thereby, a marked polarization occurred throughout the crisis between Germany that recorded continuously declining youth unemployment rates, and Spain, Greece, Portugal and Italy – the renowned Mediterranean countries of the EU15 – with persistently rising rates. Between these two extremes, Ireland, Luxemburg, Denmark, Finland and the U.K., which first rising youth unemployment rates, managed to reverse this trend from 2011 to 2013.

The analyses presented in the paper, also revealed important within-country inter-regional differences and cross-country regional similarities in youth unemployment rates. It was found that before the crisis 75% of regions across the EU15 either recorded below average youth unemployment rates or just up to 5 percentage points above the it. No regions recorded youth unemployment rates higher than 25 percentage points above the EU15 average. Importantly, the majority of countries had regions positioning themselves in different range-groups of youth unemployment rates and similarities across nations were also widespread. In 2007, regional dispersion was particularly high in Italy, Belgium, Germany, France and Greece.

Throughout the crisis, regional  $\sigma$ -convergence increased in only in Germany and the Netherlands. Conversely,  $\sigma$ -convergence decreased in Austria, Greece, Spain, France, Sweden, Ireland, Portugal and the U.K – although starting from and varying by very different extents. Germany was the only country where  $\beta$ -convergence increased throughout the crisis, as all regions decreased their youth unemployment rates and the regions that had higher rates before the crisis, mostly regions from former “Eastern Germany”, decreased their rates to a greater extent than those that were initially better off. In all other countries, youth unemployment rates mostly increased from 2007 to 2013 so that  $\beta$ -convergence did not occur. The opposite of  $\beta$ -convergence markedly occurred in Austria, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Portugal and the U.K., where a polarization between regions starting with lower youth unemployment rates that increased their rates to a lesser extent than those initially most disadvantaged, was exasperated by the crisis.

Overall, at the European level, cross-national differences in youth unemployment rates increased throughout the crisis, thereby  $\sigma$ -convergence decreased in the EU15. Further, most countries that started off with lower rates kept performing better than those that began with higher rates, so that overall macro-regional  $\beta$ -convergence did not occur.

In conclusion, the analyses presented in this paper provide useful, detailed and contextualized information for better tailoring policies at the regional, national and European level so to enhance young people's labour market opportunities and the capacity of structural institutions to be resilient to the ongoing crisis. This is evermore important, given the renowned consequences for young people of a prolonged period unemployment, underemployment or inactivity that can undermine autonomy and self-esteem and leave some youngsters permanently disadvantaged with a low-income profile, poor job experience and lack of social protection in their adult and elderly life. Even in the (unlikely) case of a fast and sustained economic upturn it will take time to translate economic growth into stable and adequate jobs and livelihood opportunities with the obvious risk of generating what has been already labelled as a "lost generation". Understanding within and between country specificities and similarities is fundamental in order to better shape, replicate and implement effective policies.

## Appendix 1

**Table I. Sample of selected EU15 countries and associated regions**

<i>Country EU-15</i>	<i>Country Label</i>	<i>Regions 82 NUTS-level regions</i>	<i>Regional Label</i>
Austria	AT	Ostösterreich Südösterreich Westösterreich	AT1 AT2 AT3
Belgium	BE	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest Vlaams Gewest Région wallonne	BE1 BE2 BE3
Germany	DE	Baden-Württemberg Bayern Berlin Brandenburg Bremen Hamburg Hessen Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Niedersachsen Nordrhein-Westfalen Rheinland-Pfalz Saarland Sachsen Sachsen-Anhalt Schleswig-Holstein Thüringen	DE1 DE2 DE3 DE4 DE5 DE6 DE7 DE8 DE9 DEA DEB DEC DED DEE DEF DEG
Greece	EL	Voreia Ellada Kentriki Ellada Attiki Nisia Aigaiou, Kriti	EL1 EL2 EL3 EL4
Spain	ES	Noroeste (ES) Noreste (ES) Comunidad de Madrid Centro (ES) Este (ES) Sur (ES) Canarias (ES)	ES1 ES2 ES3 ES4 ES5 ES6 ES7
Finland	FI	Manner-Suomi Åland	FI1 FI2

<b>Country</b>	<b>Country Label</b>	<b>Regions</b>	<b>Regional Label</b>
France	FR	Île de France	FR1
		Bassin Parisien	FR2
		Nord - Pas-de-Calais	FR3
		Est (FR)	FR4
		Ouest (FR)	FR5
		Sud-Ouest (FR)	FR6
		Centre-Est (FR)	FR7
		Méditerranée	FR8
Italy	IT	Nord-Ovest	ITC
		Sud	ITF
		Isole	ITG
		Nord-Est	ITH
		Centro (IT)	ITI
Luxembourg	LU	Luxembourg	LU0
Netherlands	NL	Noord-Nederland	NL1
		Oost-Nederland	NL2
		West-Nederland	NL3
		Zuid-Nederland	NL4
Sweden	SE	Östra Sverige	SE1
		Södra Sverige	SE2
		Norra Sverige	SE3
United Kingdom	UK	North East (UK)	UKC
		North West (UK)	UKD
		Yorkshire and The Humber	UKE
		East Midlands (UK)	UKF
		West Midlands (UK)	UKG
		East of England	UKH
		London	UKI
		South East (UK)	UKJ
		South West (UK)	UKK
		Wales	UKL
		Scotland	UKM
Northern Ireland (UK)	UKN		
Denmark	DK	Hovedstaden	DK01
		Sjælland	DK02
		Syddanmark	DK03
		Midtjylland	DK04
		Nordjylland	DK05
Ireland	IE	Border, Midland and Western	IE01
		Southern and Eastern	IE02

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<b><i>Country</i></b>	<b><i>Country Label</i></b>	<b><i>Regions</i></b>	<b><i>Regional Label</i></b>
Portugal	PT	Norte	PT11
		Algarve	PT15
		Centro (PT)	PT16
		Lisboa	PT17
		Alentejo	PT18
		Região Autónoma dos Açores (PT)	PT20
		Região Autónoma da Madeira (PT)	PT30

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## **Chapter 4: Mapping Capability-Unfriendly Jobs of Young Europeans Before and During The Crisis**

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CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON QUALIFICATIONS

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### **Abstract**

This article investigates the capability approach as an alternative and normative framework to assess the labour market performance of young Europeans being employed. In this

perspective, what matters is not the employment rate indicator but the enhancement of young people's real freedom to choose an employment they have reason to value., i.e. the capability for work. The article seeks to contribute to this aim by creating a Capability-unfriendly Job Index (CaUJI). The investigation is based on the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS). Taking a period prior to the economic crisis of 2008, the empirical analysis leads to three main types of results: first, it highlights important differences across countries, with different regimes of capability-unfriendly jobs in Europe; second, it emphasizes the overall impact of the crisis on the capability-unfriendly jobs of the young Europeans even if the overall incidence of the crisis varies significantly across countries; third, it supports the hypothesis that, in general, a decline in the employment rate is associated with an increase in "capability-unfriendly" jobs, even if results display variations across countries.

## 1. Introduction

The Lisbon strategy, launched in 2000, called for creating "more and better jobs" in Europe. The target in terms of more jobs was that the European Union should have 70% of the working age population in employment. A decade later, despite the fact that the EU27 fell short of achieving its stated objectives, the Europe 2020 policy set a new high-level target for increasing the employment rate to 75% by 2020 for the 20-64 age group. The objective of "more jobs" addresses something which is clear and in principle measurable through the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS). Hence, a lot of attention is paid to the data published in the Labour Force Survey, focusing on the headline employment rate indicator. Five years after the beginning of the financial crisis, and four years into the Europe 2020 Strategy, the employment rate keeps deteriorating. Employment levels declined sharply with the onset of the economic crisis so that, between 2008 and 2013, the overall employment rate in the EU28 fell by 1.9 percentage points (Eurostat, 2014). Youth unemployment is a particularly important issue in the Europe 2020 strategy which points out the importance of policies to foster young people's entry into the labour market. The guideline 7 of the Europe 2020 Strategy addresses a clear call for greater participation of youth (European Commission, 2010). When we compare the level of employment, youth have in the past been, and clearly are still, more affected than the whole population. Over the 2008-2013 period, youth employment decreased hugely by more than 5 percentage points, whereas total employment for the age-group 15-64 decreased by 1.9 percentage. Youth are clearly one of the most disadvantaged groups according to the large decrease in employment rate.

Hence, the current European employment debate mainly focuses on the need to increase employment rates, particularly for youth. The focus on quantitative aspects of employment are in line with the desire to raise employment rates, which lies at the heart of the European strategy (Salais, 2006): it sees work as the ideal functioning, without taking into account the nature of work and employment quality or the person's specific circumstances (i.e. his or her physical, psychological or other ability to work, to balance work and family life, etc.). This perspective therefore views employment policies from the angle of adapting the individuals to labour market requirements and issues related to quality of life or work are left aside. Hence, the "quality" aspect of employment has undergone no real development or practical operational application with the European Employment Strategy although job quality became a relevant dimension from the Laeken European Council in 2001 onwards

(Muñoz de Bustillo R. et al. 2009). In the light of this fact, the paper will critically examine the central place of the employment rate and will propose lines for possible alternatives to be taken in order to further bring back the quality dimension in the European employment debate toward the capability perspective.

The capability approach, developed among other by the Indian economist and Nobel prize Amartya Sen (1992, 1999) has contributed to renew the debates worldwide on inequality and poverty (Sen, 1992), human development (1999) and social justice (2009). Its influence reaches far beyond academic audiences. It has shaped the work of the United Nations Development Program and its human development index (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2011), and the most recent Poverty and Wealth Reports by the German Government (Arndt and Volkert, 2011), not to mention the search for alternative GDP measures initiated by France's President Sarkozy (Stiglitz et al., 2009). Although originally conceived for developing countries, the capability approach is now used to address a whole range of issues in post-industrial countries as well, such as gender (Nussbaum, 1999; Robeyns, 2008, 2010), education (Saito, 2003; Otto and Ziegler, 2010) and poverty (Schokkaert and Van Ootegem, 1990; Brandolini and D'Alessio, 1998; Vero, 2006; Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni, 2007). Over the last decade, it has also been progressively extended to the study of work and employment. First adopted in this area as a yardstick against which to assess European labour market policies (Salais and Villeneuve, 2004; Formation Emploi, 2007), it has subsequently proved a robust tool for studying flexicurity and activation policies (Bonvin and Orton, 2009; Verd and Vero, 2011), New Public Management indicators (Salais, 2006; Vero et al., 2012) and corporate policies (Zimmermann, 2004, 2011; Abbatecola et al., 2012).

The capability approach focuses on the enhancement of people's capabilities, i.e. their real freedom to choose a life they have reason to value. It then suggests an alternative yardstick to assess labour market outcomes and policies. Capabilities aim at giving an actual content, beyond its formal aspects, to the concept of freedom. One of the specificities of the approach is thus to combine a descriptive assessment prospect of the freedom to act with a normative prospect which makes the equal distribution of this freedom a principle of justice (Sen, 1999b). As regards the labour market, this entails that the yardstick against which the impact of public policies should be evaluated is what Bonvin and Farvaque (2006) suggest labeling the "capability for work" or their real freedom to choose the job or activity they have reason to value. Such a shift makes a major difference and the aim of this article is to highlight the scope of this shift.

The paper is articulated as follows. In Section 2, the notion of capability will first be used to challenge the employment rate on which the European debate has been focusing, and to explain the shift of emphasis involved by the idea of capability for work. Our purpose is here to examine the normative assumptions of the headline indicator endorsed at the European policy-making level. Section 3 analyses the long-term trends in youth employment rate across Europe and describe how these trends have been radically altered by the onset of the recession. In section 4, we will propose a Capability-unfriendly Job Index (CaUJI), a composite Index of different aspects affecting both the employment relation and the work itself based on information available in the Labour Force Survey. Section 5 presents

empirical evidences related to the CaUJI before and during the crisis and discuss the findings in terms of country profiles and country clusters.

Section 6 analyses whether the employment rate is or not positively correlated with the various dimensions composing the CaUJI. The issue at stake is to analyse whether the value of the quantitative indicator related to the employment rate moves in the opposite direction or in the same direction than the qualitative results related to the CaUJI over the period 2006-2012. Section 7 concludes by analyzing how far the capability approach contribute to a different picture than the employment rate and conduct a critical review of the existing data sources for the promotion of a Capability for Work Index (CaWI).

## **2. Background**

Our purpose is here to examine the normative assumptions behind the labour market benchmarks endorsed at the European policy-making level. What reasoning do they hold and what values do they reveal? How useful are they in enhancing our way of understanding the problems and obstacles that young people meet during their entry on the labour market? How effective are they in improving our concrete knowledge of these barriers, in making visible their real freedom to choose the life they has reason to value, i.e. their capabilities? Drawing on an epistemological analysis founded on Amartya Sen's capability approach and in particular on his key idea of 'informational basis' of judgement, this section identifies the normative thread of the indicators promoted in the work field by the European commission, which gives employability precedence over capability.

### **2.1 On employment rate: European policy trends and debates**

The Lisbon Strategy employment targets were a 70% employment rate for the overall population, to be reached by 2010. These targets are not calculated in full-time-equivalent employment, whatever task is taken into account whatever its duration, the number of hours worked per week, the status, etc. (in short, its quality) providing it is considered as a "job" by the statistical source used, National or European. Three employment rates appeared nevertheless in the list of the indicators used: by sex, for the 15-24 year-olds, long term unemployment (12 months and beyond). In early 2010, the European Commission launched a new strategy for the next decade, the Europe 2020 Strategy, to support recovery from the crisis and to set out where the EU wants to be by 2020. Despite the failure to achieve the Lisbon Strategy targets, the Europe 2020 strategy formulated a new ambitious employment rate target of 75% to be reached by 2020. The new employment rate target (formulated for the EU as a whole) refers to the adult population (20-64 years) only, thereby avoiding conflict with the education goal.

### **2.2 The normative assumptions behind the employment rate**

Indicators are often pictured as neutral or scientific tools insofar they are "evidence-based" (Vero et al. 2012). Although indicators can provide valuable information, they also have limitations: they are inextricably rooted in a number of implicit normative choices and selections, embedded with values. In consequence, what is measured is what matters, what

is cared about. Clearly not all indicators are similar. What they have in common is simplifying complex situations.

The work of Amartya Sen enables us to grasp the normative thread of quantitative indicators thanks in particular to the key idea of ‘informational base of judgement’ (IBJ). This *“identifies the information on which the judgment is directly dependent and – no less important – asserts that the truth or falsehood of any other information cannot directly influence the correctness of the judgment. The informational basis of judgement in justice thus determines the factual territory over which considerations of justice would directly apply”* (Sen 1990:11).

Hence, indicators cannot be regarded as a reflection of the world; They provide a partial picture by selecting a specific informational basis, at the expense of other possible bases. In so doing, they also contribute to reconfigure the situation observed in the direction of standards and values that lie behind them. Indeed, even when they are based on objective and irrefutable information, they convey value judgments, often overlooked or taken for granted, on the relevance of the information selected, at the expense of other facts considered as inappropriate. Sen means this necessary bias of indicators through the concept of 'positional objectivity' which highlights the fact that, given the position of the observer, he tends to favour a perspective on the reality observed to the detriment of other points of view. There is therefore no absolute objectivity, in scientific knowledge nor in ethical reasoning. The design of what is an adequate description or a valuable functioning (a way to be or behave) depends on the position or the situation of the observer.

What is more, the selection of the informational basis of judgment has not only descriptive effects (insofar as it focuses on a specific mode of description of reality), it also exerts effects of transformation of this reality. In fact, with indicators, emphasis is also placed on the relationship between description and prescription. Describing situations means making choices and attracting the attention of public decision-makers and public opinion to the issues regarded as most important. Devising indicators is not merely aimed at describing what exists or analysing practices; it is first and foremost a policy move connected with a prescriptive dimension. It is therefore necessary to ask ourselves about the normative and informational foundations of the labour market indicators through the lens of Sen’s epistemological principles. Our intention, then, is to shed light on the normative logic underlying the employment rate.

According to Robert Salais, ‘the upheaval introduced by the capability approach relates to the choice of the yardstick against which collective action (policies, legislation, procedures) should be devised, implemented and assessed. For Sen, the only ethically legitimate reference point for collective action is the person, and specifically his situation as regards the amount of real freedom he possesses to choose and conduct the life he wishes to lead’ (Salais, 2005: 10). This perspective sets out an ambitious way forward for public policy-making, which is not merely about enhancing people’s employment rates but first and foremost about promoting their real freedom to choose the life they have every good reason to lead, and notably their capability for work is *“the real freedom to choose the work one has reason to value”* (Bonvin and Farvaque 2006).

## 2.3 The truth behind the headline employment rate indicator

This European trend to increasing employment rates lies at the heart of the European strategy: it sees work as the ideal situation for everyone, without taking account of work and employment quality or the person's specific circumstances (i.e. his or her physical, psychological or other ability to work, to balance work and family life, etc.).

The target in terms of employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of persons aged 20 to 64 in employment by the total population of the same age group. The indicator is based on the EU Labour Force Survey. The survey covers the entire population living in private households and excludes those in collective households such as boarding houses, halls of residence and hospitals. Employed population consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.

However, there is a significant shortcoming surrounding this employment rate since "work" means any work for pay or profit during the reference week, even for as little as one hour. Given that the Eurostat Labour Force Survey definition of employment is just one hour of work in the reference week, the increase in both the number of people employed – and the employment rate – fails to tell us much about the substance of this employment and whether or not it allows people to meet the work they have reason to value. Notwithstanding, it is equally true that being into work is always interpreted positively, without considering the quality of the job in question.

Although the topic of employment quality was incorporated into the European Employment Strategy (EES) in the second half of 2001 (through the 10 Laeken indicators, see European Commission, 2001), it gradually disappeared in the wake of the 2001–2002 recession. There followed, as from 2003, a gradual revision of the EES, putting the 'quantity' of employment ahead of its 'quality' and 'refocusing priority on growth and employment'. Flexicurity, at first only one of the 10 employment quality topics, became a key aspect of EMCO's thinking. By introducing a more dynamic dimension into the analysis, it helped to place employment quality on the back burner and enforce acceptance of the idea that a poor-quality job is worth more than no job at all. In actual fact, from a synchronic perspective, employment quality at a given point in time appears to be a central issue, whereas from a dynamic angle a bad job may be justified because it can represent a springboard towards lasting integration into the workforce (Bonvin and Vielle 2008, Bonvin 2012, Vero et al. 2012).

Hence, the employment rate therefore views employment from the angle of adapting to labour market requirements without considering quality of life or work, i.e. the casualization of labour, including involuntary temporary contract, involuntary part-time with very low hours work or involuntary working hours with very high hours work, unpaid overtime, reduced access to social security benefits, etc.

## **2.4 From the “employment rate” as target in terms of “more jobs” to the capability for work in terms of “better jobs”**

Moving over to a capability approach-inspired vision of employment quality would entail a number of developments. First the employment quality issue would need to be integrated into a synchronic and dynamic perspective, referring back to ‘an analysis of the scope of working and living possibilities offered by inclusion in employment’ (Salais and Villeneuve, 2004: 287). Moreover, by contrast with the normative foundations of the employment rate, the capability approach emphasizes the two essential dimensions of real freedom: empowerment (opportunity development), which enables people to acquire the resources of freedom, and respect for process freedom, which enables them to remain in charge of their own choices. Should one of these two dimensions be lacking, the goal of developing capabilities is missed.

Assessed in this light, the employment rate appears doubly deficient. On the opportunity side, it aims above all to develop employability in the sense of increased adaptability to labour market requirements. Besides, the way in which employment rate is valued indicates a firm belief in the notion of activation: any progress towards work represents progress. Such a conclusion seems much less clear-cut if we refer to the capability approach: does a very insecure, poorly paid job really enable the development of the capabilities of an unemployed person? It might certainly do so in some cases, but not in all. From a capability standpoint, this question requires a more nuanced answer for which the employment rate allows no scope.

On the process side, to regard the resumption of employment as a sine qua non precondition for enjoying a certain degree of performance on the labour market is to restrict the free choice of the persons concerned. By establishing a hierarchy of the various possible labour market situations (being employed is better than being inactive, etc.), the Europe 2020 strategy forces national and regional political authorities and beneficiaries alike to comply with this hierarchy and make it a fixed part of their daily practices and customs. Otherwise, the Member States will find themselves with bad marks and the beneficiaries will be threatened with penalties or suspension of their rights.

By looking at school-to-work transitions through the lens of the employment rate, the European employment strategy makes access to security subordinate to the acceptance of labour market flexibility, which in itself significantly restricts freedom of choice. Free choice is acknowledged only inasmuch as the person goes along with the normative concept underpinning the indicator and is willing to adapt to labour market requirements.

Given all of these elements, the employment indicator appears too uniform to contend with the diversity of situations. This diversity makes it necessary to situate and contextualize issues of justice, also when defining the indicators to be used for evaluating public policies. Therefore, indicators should not give priority to one specific definition of what is a valuable situation on the labour market, over all others. From the perspective of the capability approach, all collective decisions and all performance indicators that do not leave scope for diversity and for the prospect of real individual freedom are open to criticism because they tend to impose the vision of those who design the indicators.

## **2.5 Long-term trends in youth employment rate across EU-28**

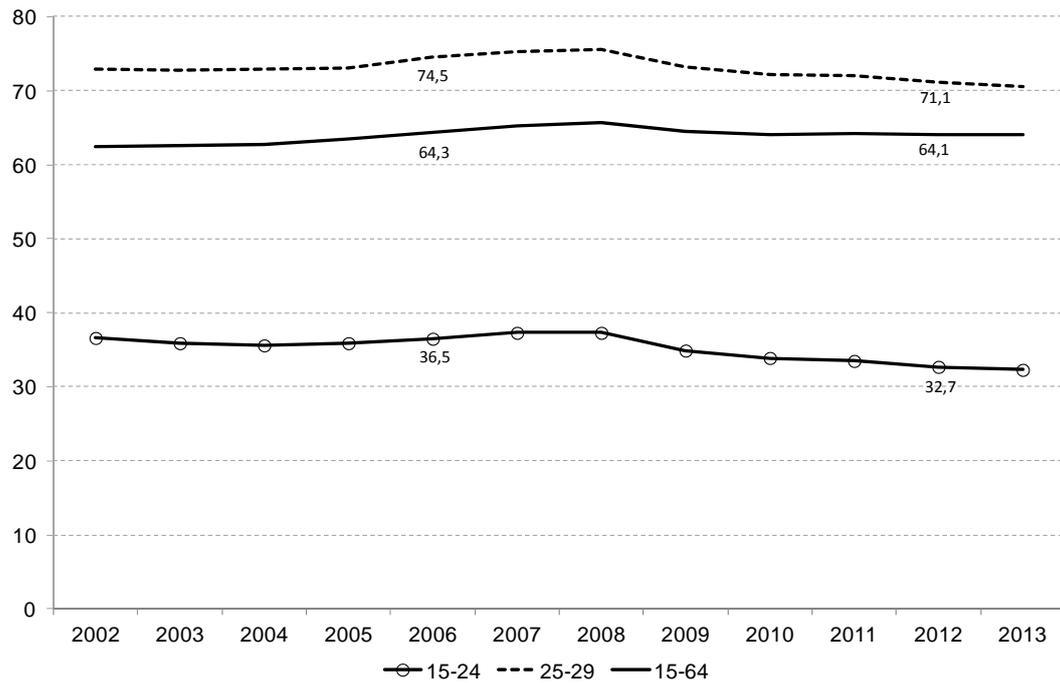
The message delivered by the European Union is that EU is working to reduce youth unemployment and to increase the youth-employment rate in line with the wider EU target of achieving a 75% employment rate for the working-age population (20-64 years). With the choice to focus over the reference period 2006-2012, this section sets out to assess and analyse the changing situation of younger European generations in the labour market using the employment rate, and as such it aims to compare in-crisis data with pre-crisis data.

### **2.5.1 Lower quantity of jobs for young people who have been hard hit by the crisis**

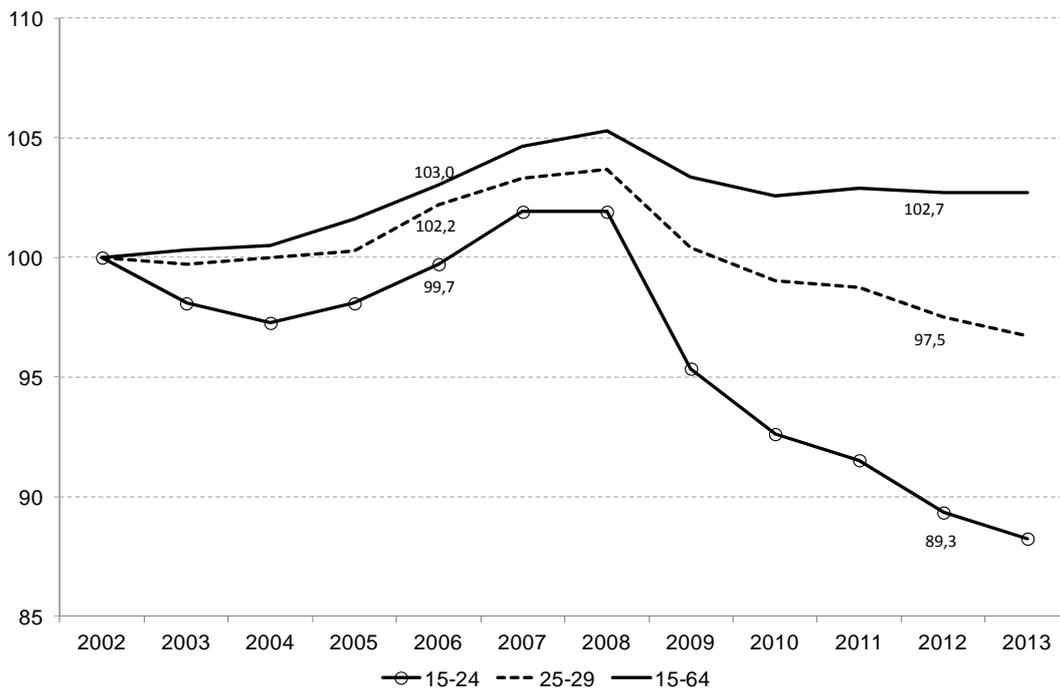
When looking at the employment rate indicator broken down by age, we observe a rather strong heterogeneity and it appears that persons aged 15 to 24 are less employed. In 2012, while the employment rate averages around 64.1% for 15-64 year-old category, it is 71.1% for those aged 25-29 and 32.7% for those aged 15-24 (Figure 1). Hence, the low employment rate of youngsters reflects partially a low participation rate in the work force due to the proportion of young people in education. Many of those 15-24 are still undergoing initial training. But there is also a large number of young people neither working nor studying. Increasing numbers of youth have given up looking for a job while the youth unemployment rate reached a high of 22.9 % in 2012, more than twice as high as the adult rate, and reached 30.3 % for low-skilled youth.

In an unequivocal manner, the current economic crisis weighs most heavily upon the young people. Over the 2006-2012 period, overall employment rates for young people under the age of 25 fell by almost 10.5% (from 36.5% to 32.7%) – thirty times as much as for the whole population (from 64.3% to 64.1%). Similarly youth unemployment is much more on the rise. The youth unemployment rate was more affected by the crisis: it increased by 32 % (from 17.4% to 22.9%) between 2006 and 2012, compared with an increase of 28% for the whole population (from 8.3% to 10.6%). Hence, young people have been particularly hard hit by the crisis.

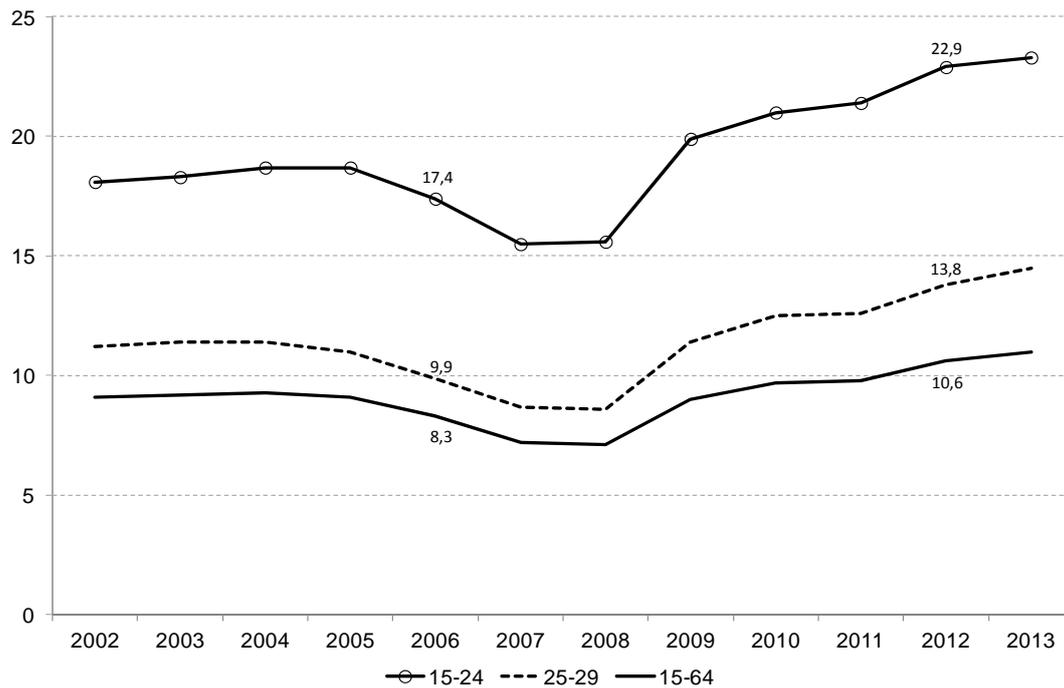
**Figure 1: Developments in employment rate over the 2002-2013 period in the EU-28 (Source: EU-LFS)**



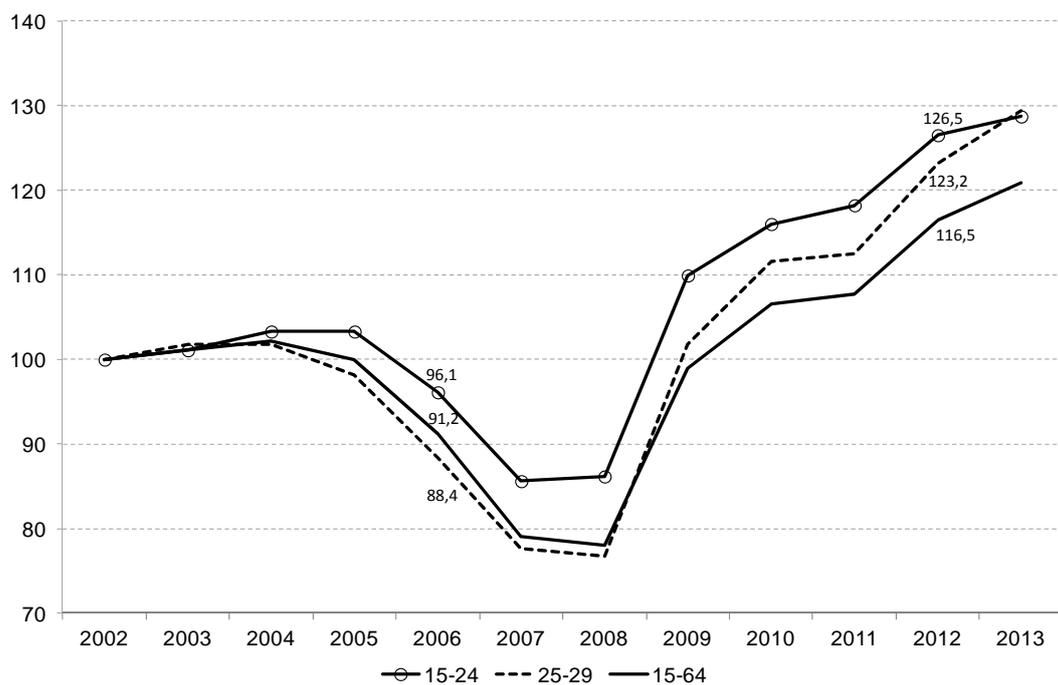
**Figure 2: Growth rate of the employment rate in EU-28 (in basis 100, reference year 2002) (Source: EU-LFS)**



**Figure 3: Developments in unemployment rate over the 2002-2013 period in the EU-28 (Source: EU-LFS)**



**Figure 4: Growth rate of the unemployment rate in EU-28 (in basis 100, reference year 2002) (Source: EU-LFS)**



### 2.5.2 Huge differences in 2012 employment rates in Europe

Yet the impact of the economic crisis on young labour markets put on show considerable variations from one country to another. Some countries have succeeded in keeping employment levels up and unemployment levels down while in the majority of countries,

the situation is particularly acute. Figure 6 shows how the employment rate is diverging in 2012.

In 2012, among youth aged 15-24 there are huge differences in employment rate in Europe, ranging from fewer than 20% in Greece (13.1%), Croatia (16.9%), Spain (18.4%), Hungary (18,6%), Italy (18.6%) to more than 50% in Iceland (65.4%), the Netherlands (63%) or Switzerland (61,7%). Different factors influence the youth employment rate, among them the structure and design of education systems (e. g. importance of apprenticeships versus university studies and the average duration of studies), the frequency with which work and studies are combined, as well as the labour market possibilities for youth (e.g. transitions between education and employment) that are also reflected in youth unemployment rates. Similarly, youth unemployment rate for those aged 15-24 varied from 8.1 % (Germany) to 55.3 % (Greece) in 2012. The situation is particularly acute in certain Member States. Greece and Spain (53,2%) had by far the highest youth unemployment rates in 2012 with levels higher than 50% whereas Germany together with Norway (8.5%) Austria (8.7%) and the Netherlands (9.5%) are actually among the best performers and the only countries with an unemployment rate lower than 10%.

### **2.5.3 The economic crisis displays considerable variation from one country to another**

Germany has been by far the most successful at creating jobs, with a rise in employment of 7.1% between 2006 and 2012. Albeit to a lesser extent Estonia, Poland, Austria have also seen their employment growing with a rise of 2.9%, 2.9% and 1.1% respectively.

With the single exception of these countries, the employment rate fell by 4.2 percentage points on average in EU-28 while the unemployment rate increased by 5.5 percentage points. Spain had by far the highest decrease in employment rates and the highest increase in unemployment rate.

Figure 5: The relationship between employment and unemployment rates in 2006

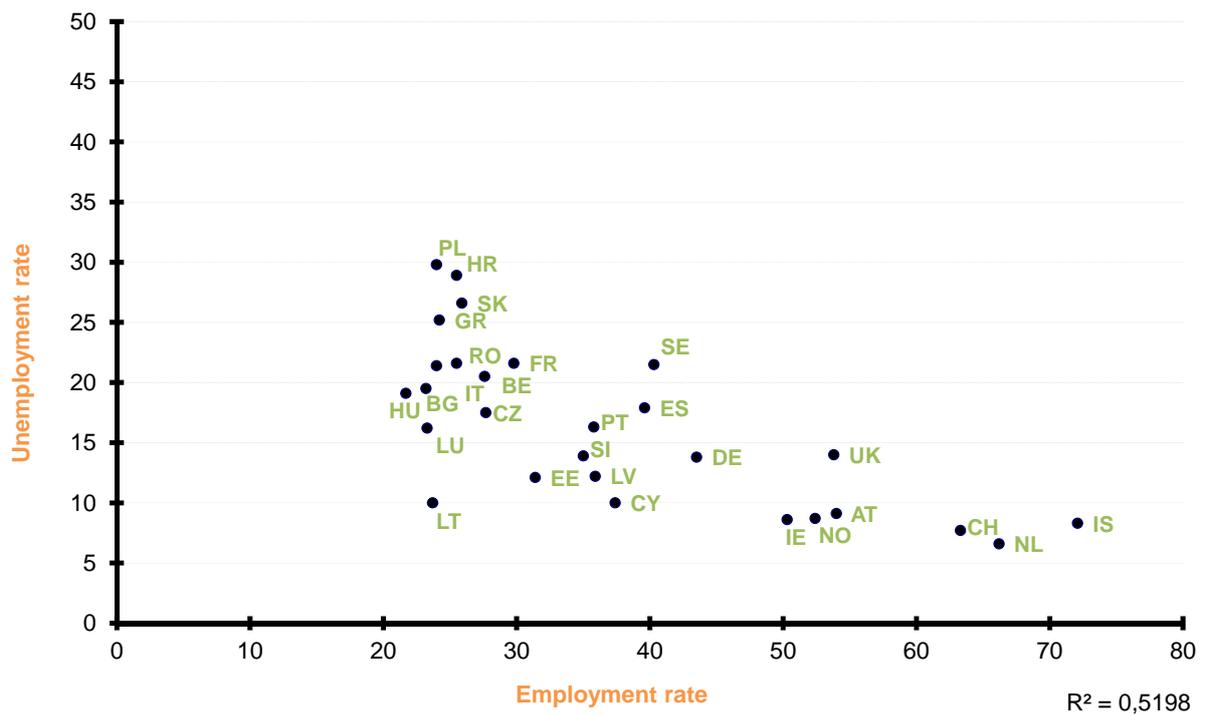
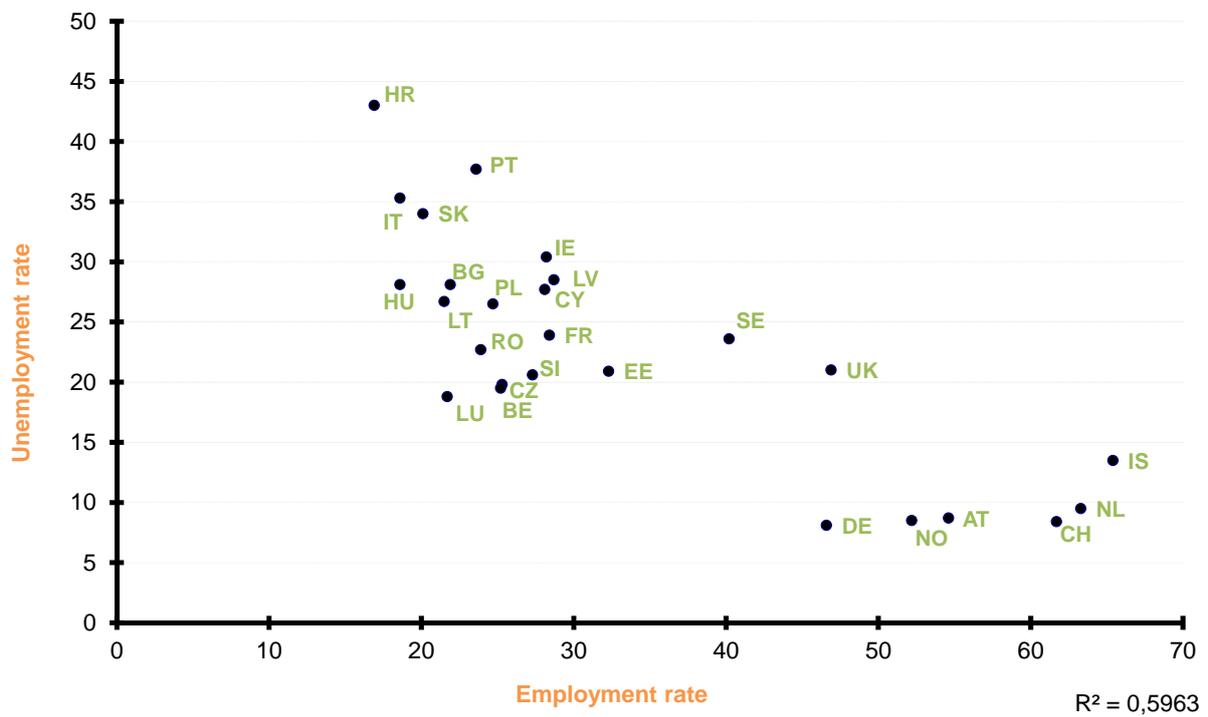


Figure 6: The relationship between employment and unemployment rates in 2012



## 4. Data and methods

As stressed in the previous part of the paper, the capability for work is a multidimensional concept. Since capability for work is a multifaceted phenomenon, the Index proposed is a composite index of different fields that capture different dimensions of the capability for work. However, translating empirically the capability for work is not an easy task. There are also practical problems due to data availability, among others. Hence, our ambition will be to propose a capability-Unfriendly Job Index (CaUJI).

### 4.1 Data availability: the LFS Survey

All indicators of the CaUJI are taken from the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS). It consists on a cross-sectional and household sample survey, coordinated by Eurostat. The database comprises observations on labour market participation and persons outside the labour force. The EU-LFS is the largest European household sample survey, providing quarterly and annual data on labour participation of people aged 15 and over and on persons outside the labour force. It covers residents in private households according to labour status : employment, unemployment, inactivity.

The EU-LFS currently covers 33 (participating) countries, providing Eurostat with data from national labour force surveys: the 28 Member States of the European Union, three EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland), and two EU candidate countries, i.e. the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey. Each quarter some 1.8 million interviews are conducted throughout the participating countries to obtain statistical information for some 100 variables. The sampling rates in the various countries vary between 0.2 % and 3.3 %.

The LFS is an important source of information on the situation and trends in the EU labour market. Most notably, it forms the basis for the monthly harmonised unemployment rate, one of Eurostat's key short-term indicators. Due to the diversity of information and the large sample size the EU-LFS is also an important source for other European statistics, e.g. education statistics or regional statistics.<sup>17</sup>

### 4.2 The selection of attributes or the relevant informational basis of judgment (IBJ)

As mentioned above, capability-friendly jobs are jobs that enable people to enjoy ‘the real freedom to choose the job one has reason to value’ (Bonvin, Farvaque, 2006). In this context, it is essential to define what a “valuable” employment is and what dimensions of work should be considered. This is a huge and complex question that encompasses a plurality of dimensions (or relevant informational bases of judgment). As mentioned by Bonvin (2012), “when viewed from the worker’s perspective, issues such as wage and benefit entitlements, working conditions (e.g. timetable, work organization, work content,

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<sup>17</sup> More information on the EU-LFS is available at the following address: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment\\_unemployment\\_lfs/introduction](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_lfs/introduction)

*possibilities for self-fulfillment, health, safety, pressure for productivity), available jobs (for example, are there enough jobs for all people wishing to work in a specific firm or sector?), and balance between work and life are all matter of crucial importance. Hence, for workers, the definition of what is a “valuable job” is not uniform; it varies according to time, space and specific circumstances of individuals”.* Thus a plurality of informational bases is available to define the substance of the capability for work and the capability approach does not advantage one option over the others, quite the contrary. It claims that the very process of defining the extent and substance of work is a matter of social choice that is must be dealt within a context-specific way, and not in absolute or universal terms (Bonvin, 2012).

### **4.3 Component indicators of the CaUI**

However, the current choice of dimensions (IBJ) is, on the one hand, based on author’s knowledge, not on social perceptions about which items are considered essential by the majority of the population, i.e. a consensus control. However as a first step, in the absence of such kind of information, frequency controls on existing data that informed us about the degree of penetration of the items in a country were taken as a weighting rule. On the other hand, the current choice of dimensions is based on data availability. Data limitations necessarily curtailed the choice of the dimensions involved in such an Index able to tackle the Capability for Work. When viewed from the Labour Force Survey the assessment of the capability-friendly jobs is quite limited. Hence, our ambition will not be to deal with a capability for Work Index, but it is preferable to set a lower, concrete and achievable objective, where the achievement is noticeable. For these reasons, the analysis focuses on the capability-Unfriendly jobs and their evolution over the period across member states. The following paragraphs will explain the composition and rationale of the different fields that are selected to assess the capability-Unfriendly Jobs.

The CaUI consists of five sub-indices, namely involuntary part-time, involuntary part-time work, involuntary working time, unpaid overtime working hours and looking for another job. Each indicator takes the form of simple ‘yes/no’ dichotomies where one corresponds to the worst and zero to the best performing situation.

- 1. Involuntary temporary contract:** It encompasses persons who had a temporary job, work contract of limited duration because he or she states that he/she could not find a permanent job. Non-standard forms of employment have been on the European policy agendas, partly in the belief that they increase the employment opportunities of groups such as the unemployed, women and low qualified. Temporary contracts are problematic in the perspective of the capability for work just when they are exercised involuntarily. Hence, only workers stating that the reason to work in fixed-term contract is due to the reason that they could not find a permanent job are taken into account. Thus only temporary employment contract that is clearly exercised involuntarily is considered a relevant dimension of the capability-unfriendly jobs.
- 2. Involuntary part-time contract:** This category includes persons who indicated that they would like to work full time but were working part time because of an economic reason, such as their hours were cut back or they were unable to find full-time jobs. In other words this sub-index considers only involuntary part-time. Voluntary part-time work is seen as contributing positively to the capability-unfriendly Jobs Index. The CA requires

that all people be adequately equipped to escape from the constraint of valueless work, either through the real possibility to refuse such a job (at an affordable cost, i.e. with a valuable alternative, be it a financial compensation or another job), or through the possibility to transform it into something one “has reason to value”. Thus, capability for work implies either a) capability not to work if one chooses to (via a valuable exit option, Hirschman 1990); or b) capability to participate effectively to the definition of the work content (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2006).

3. **Involuntary working time:** It applies to young person who don't have the opportunity to work the number of hours he or she wishes to work. It includes persons who wish to work less than the number of hours per week usually worked in total as well as persons who wish to work more. Involuntary working hours is seen as contributing positively to the capability-unfriendly Job Index<sup>18</sup>.
4. **Unpaid overtime:** Significant numbers of employees work more hours in the workplace than their contract stipulates. Such overtime work can either be paid or unpaid. The EU-LFS enables us to grasp this idea with the following item: “unpaid overtime in the reference week in the main job”. Overtime is conceived as influencing positively the capability-unfriendly job index in the case where overtime is unpaid. The rationale behind this is that persons who experience unpaid overtime working hours don't have the real freedom to receive compensation for flexible working times.
5. **Seeking work:** It applies to people who declare looking for a different job or an additional job for one of the following reasons: actual job is considered as a transitional job, seeking an additional job to add more hours to those worked in present job, seeking a job with more hours worked than in present job, seeking a job with less hours worked than in present job, wish to have better working conditions (e.g. pay, working or travel time, quality of work). Looking for a different or additional paid job or business may cover a wide range of activities, from looking through newspaper advertisements to actively writing to prospective employers and attending interviews. It represents something more than simply feeling dissatisfied with the present job but beyond the respondent deciding whether he or she was looking for work.

#### 4.4 The CaUJI (Capability-Unfriendly Job Index)

Multidimensional indexes are part of aggregative strategies aimed at providing better understanding of the extent, directions and degrees of change of a multi-faced phenomenon. (see, e.g., Deutsch & Silber (2005), Fusco (2005), Brandolini (2008) for reviews of this). The Capability-Unfriendly Job Index (CaUJI) forms part of this group and aimed at aggregating various indicators that capture different dimensions of job deprivation from the capability perspective.

This Index enables us to take an encompassing view of the multi-dimensional phenomenon of deprivation in terms of capability for work. It complements the unemployment rate or the employment rate by considering, at the same time, overlapping deprivations suffered by young people being in work and, in doing so, is useful to provide an overview of capability-

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<sup>18</sup> Non-response is observed for some countries. Another index excluding this sub-index was calculated as a sensitivity check. Conclusions are not affected.

unfriendly jobs on a cross-section and a time-series perspectives. Hence, it enables us to quantify the development of capability-unfriendly jobs before and during the crisis.

The approach to constructing the CaUJI is based on the five attributes mentioned above. Let  $\mu_{ij}$  denote the value of a particular deprivation item  $j \in (1,..5)$  for an individual  $i \in (1...n)$ .

The degree of capability-unfriendly job hold by the  $i$ -th individual with respect to a particular attribute ( $j$ ) is equal to 1 when the individual  $i$  faces the situation  $j$  and  $\mu_{ij} = 0$  otherwise.

The individual index of CaUJI ( $x_i$ ) is therefore established as the weighted average of the various dimensions included in the index. The individual index of CaUJI ( $x_i$ ) is viewed as a matter of degree, i.e. as a fuzzy measure<sup>19</sup>.

$$CaUJI(x_i) = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^5 \mu_{ij} w_j}{\sum_{j=1}^5 w_j}$$

We suggested that an overall Index of capability-friendly jobs, CaUJI, for the entire population can be calculated by taking the arithmetic mean of the  $n$  individual index of CaUJI ( $x_i$ ) as follows:

$$CaUJI = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n CaUJI(x_i)$$

where CaUJI can be interpreted as the proportion of young that belong to the fuzzy subset of people holding a capability-unfriendly job. On this basis a value can be assigned to each country in the range between zero and one for each indicator. Higher values represent relatively higher levels of capability-unfriendly jobs.

#### 4.5 Setting weights in multidimensional Index

Another crucial issue is the adoption of a weighting rule which gives relative importance of the various dimensions composing the individual Index of capability-friendly jobs. Putting together indicators of deprivation for individual items to construct a composite index requires decisions about the relative contribution of each item to the aggregate index. A number of different rules have been commonly used by practitioners and researchers to settle on the relevant weighting system. The first and simplest rule is 'equal weighting', but a number of alternative rules have been commonly used by scholars to establish the weighting rule (see Deutsch & Silber (2005), Fusco (2005), Brandolini (2008), Pi Alperin M-N, & P. Van Kerm, 2014 for reviews).

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<sup>19</sup> The Fuzzy Set theory has been originally developed by Zadeh (1965). This approach had been widely applied to poverty analysis by authors like Cerioli and Zani (1990), Chiappero Martinetti (2000), Costa (2002), Vero (2002), Deutsch and Silber (2005), among others.

A first family of weighting rules not considered here involves estimating the weights from first-stage multivariate models (e.g. factor analysis, or principal components analysis). The first stage models also allow grouping of items into 'dimensions' (see e.g., Callan et al. (1993), Whelan et al. (2001).) A second family of weighting rules is "frequency-based" where attribute weights are function of their sample mean. Desai & Shah (1988) or Cerioli and Zani (1990) suggested such a prevalence weighting. A third family of weighting rules is based on a double-weighting rule sensitive to both the relative frequency of items and the correlation among items (Vero & Werquin 1997, Vero 2006, Betti & Verma (1998), Betti et al., 2008, Pi Alperin, 2007, 2008).

Here, two weighting systems of attributes are being used for computing the CaUII, one based on Cerioli and Zani (1990) "frequency-based" rule and an alternative option based on the double-weighting rule being proposed by Betti and Verma (2008).

### **Cerioli & Zani (1990) weighting rule**

The fundamental goal of the weighting system promoted by Cerioli and Zani (1990) is to respect the frequency of job attributes in the weighting of the various dimensions of the capability-unfriendly job index. Hence, the importance of an attribute for the measurement of capability-unfriendly jobs depends on how representative it is of the community's working conditions.

$$w_j = \ln \left( \frac{1}{f_i} \right) = \ln \left\{ \frac{1}{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \mu_{ij}}{n}} \right\}$$

So, the lack of widespread characteristics of employment is definitively more important than the lack of rare dimension. By taking the logarithm, excessive importance is not given to unusual job attributes.

### **Betti & Verma (2008) weighting rule**

Betti & Verma (1998) (and subsequently Betti et al., 2008, Pi Alperin, 2007, 2008) adopted a more sophisticated double-weighting rule sensitive to both the relative frequency of items and the correlation among items. The correlation is taken into account so that two perfectly correlated items count as one and only two uncorrelated items fully count as two. To achieve this, Betti & Verma (1998) and Betti et al. (2008) defined item weights as the product of two components.

$$w_j = w_j^a \times w_j^b$$

with  $w_j^a$  being the coefficient of variation of  $\mu_{ij}$  acting similarly to the frequency-based weight described above.

$$w_j^a = \frac{\left[ \sum_{i=1}^n (\mu_{ij} - \bar{\mu}_j)^2 \right]^{1/2}}{\bar{\mu}_j n^{1/2}}$$

And

$$w_j^b = \left( 1 + \sum_{k=1}^5 \rho_{jk} I(\rho_{jk} < \rho_H) \right)^{-1} \left( \sum_{k=1}^5 \rho_{jk} I(\rho_{jk} \geq \rho_H) \right)^{-1}$$

where  $\rho_{jk}$  is the correlation between items  $j$  and  $k$  and  $I(.)$  is an indicator function evaluating to 1 if the expression in brackets is true and 0 otherwise.  $\rho_H$  is a pre-determined cut-off correlation level.

$w_j^b$  is the inverse of a measure of 'average correlation' of item  $j$  with all the other items. The larger is the average correlation with item  $j$ , the lower is the resulting weight for item  $j$ . In all cases, normalization to unity is achieved by setting

$$W_j = \frac{w_j}{\sum_{k=1}^5 w_k}$$

## 5. Results

The focus here is first on presenting and interpreting the results for each indicator composing the CaUI as well as for the CaUI. What can be learned from CaUI and its components?

### 5.1 More Capability-Unfriendly Jobs for young workers over the 2006-2012 period

**Involuntary part-time:** The appendix displays the data of involuntary part-time together with the intensity of use of part-time work in the member states: Four conclusions can be drawn from Tables 5 and 6:

- 1) First there are considerable differences in the use of involuntary part-time work in 2012 (from 77.2% in Netherlands to 3,6% in Bulgaria);
- 2) Second, there are also substantial contrasts in the incidence of involuntary part-time work in 2002: from more than 50% in Italy (73.9%), Romania (70.9%), Greece (64.8%), Cyprus (56.4%), Spain (56%) Hungary (51.8) to less than 10% in Netherlands (8.3%), Estonia (8.9%) Norway (9.1%).
- 3) Third, there seems to be no relation between the use of part-time work and how voluntary it is.

- 4) Fourth, involuntary part-time increased by more than two times in Ireland, France, United Kingdom, Iceland, Latvia, Slovakia whereas it has been halved in Germany, Croatia and it substantially decreased in Belgium, Luxembourg and Sweden.

**Involuntary temporary contract:** The appendix displays the share of temporary employment.

- 1) Once again, in 2012, we can observe notable differences with sizable proportion of young employees having temporary contracts in Spain (60%), Slovenia (61.2%), Poland (57.5%), Sweden (54%), Germany (52.9%), Portugal (52.4%) and France (52.1%). When evaluating this indicator, it is important to realize that permanent contracts can be of very different natures between different countries. In some countries, a permanent contract confers certain rights (in case of termination from the side of the employer), while in others (the UK for example), compensation is much lower, so that there is in practice not much difference between temporary and permanent employment. In addition, for young employees temporary contract reflects partially the educational system. As it is the case in Germany and Austria, the major reason for temporary employment among youth is training or education (in Austria and Germany as part of the dual education system), so that the young persons in question have a reasonable chance of moving on to a permanent job, this is much less problematic.
- 2) Second, there are also substantial differences in the involuntary temporary contract. In 2012, the level of temporary contracts is highest in Slovakia (86.7%), Czech Republic (78.8%), Cyprus (78.3%), Portugal (76.6%), Romania (76.1%), Spain (74.2%), Hungary (61.8%), Belgium (61.7%), Latvia (60.9%), Poland (56.3%), Greece (57.8%), while it is lowest in Switzerland (2.9%), Austria (3.1%), Germany (4.8%), Iceland (5.4%)
- 3) Third, generally speaking, involuntary temporary contracts increased in Europe over the 2006-2012 period, except in some countries like Austria, Germany, Luxembourg.

**Involuntary working time:** The appendix displays the share of young people looking for another job or an additional job in EU-28. Four conclusions can be drawn from the tables 5 and 6:

- 1) The share of involuntary working time is quite low compared to the other indicators. The highest level is observed in Switzerland (61.9%), Portugal (34.5%) and Romania (33.3%).
- 2) However, involuntary working hours in 2012 are on the rise in most countries of Europe. It increased significantly over the period 2006-2012 in Switzerland where the number of young employees who declare involuntary working time has tripled over the period.

**Seeking another job:** The appendix displays the young employees looking for another job or an additional job (Tables 5 and 6)

- 1) The share of young people looking for another job or seeking an additional job is on the rise in the majority of European countries in Europe. It has tripled in volume in Portugal, it increased 1.5 times in United Kingdom and Spain while it is decreasing in Austria, Germany, Norway, or Sweden among others.

**Unpaid overtime:** The appendix displays the results obtained in EU-28 concerning unpaid overtime (Tables 5 and 6).

- 1) First, it is interesting to note that unpaid overtime seems not to be a very current practice in Europe in 2012 (also not in 2006).
- 2) Second, the difference observed over the period is quite weak, except in Luxembourg where it is multiplied by three. There is also an increase in Switzerland, France, Greece, Norway, Portugal. But, in general, unpaid overtime seems to decrease over the period.

## **5.2 The financial and economic crisis was accompanied by a rise in capability-unfriendly jobs for young European workers**

Table 7 reproduces the data of the synthetic index CaUJI in 2006 and 2012 in the member states. We begin by examining the period since 2006 and some of the trends in CaUJI across Europe, as well as describing how these trends have been radically altered since the onset of the recession. We then show how the impacts of recession have been felt quite differently across member states, with some suffering much more substantial damage to their labour markets than others.

Two main conclusions can be drawn from the Table 7:

- 1) First, the quality of employment as measured through the lens of the CaUJI is decreasing over the 2006-2012 period in Europe.
- 2) Second, we can observe notable differences among countries: while the situation is worsening in the majority of the countries of the EU, the employment quality improved in Germany, Austria, Netherlands and Poland among others; However employment quality among young workers worsened particularly during the recession, in Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain, Switzerland, or Slovakia.

## **5.3 How does the current economic crisis affect the dual objective of more and better jobs?**

The European employment strategy seeks to create more and better jobs throughout the EU. It takes its inspiration from the Europe 2020 growth strategy. The aim of this section is to produce a comparative analyse of the trend in the employment rate of workers aged between 16 to 24 and the CaUJI. We first analyse the relationship between job quantity and job quality in all European countries. We then analyse the employment performance and the job quality through the lens of the CaUJI in each European country.

### **5.3.1 More and better jobs : is there a trade-off?**

We provide two figures, one representing the relationship of the CaUJI with the employment rate (Fig. 11), the other representing the relationship with the unemployment rate (Fig.12).

Our results reveal that the employment growth rate is correlated with the CaUJI growth rate: a higher growth rate of capability unfriendly jobs is associated (a lower employment

quality growth rate) with a lower employment growth rate while a lower level of CaUJI is associated with a higher employment rate.

Similarly, a higher level of unemployment rate is associated with a higher level of capability unfriendly jobs as measured through the lens of the CauJI and hence a negative relationship between the employment quantity and the employment quality.

Our empirical results tend to validate the positive link between job quality and job quantity.

Figure 7: Capability-Unfriendly jobs and Employment rates, 2006

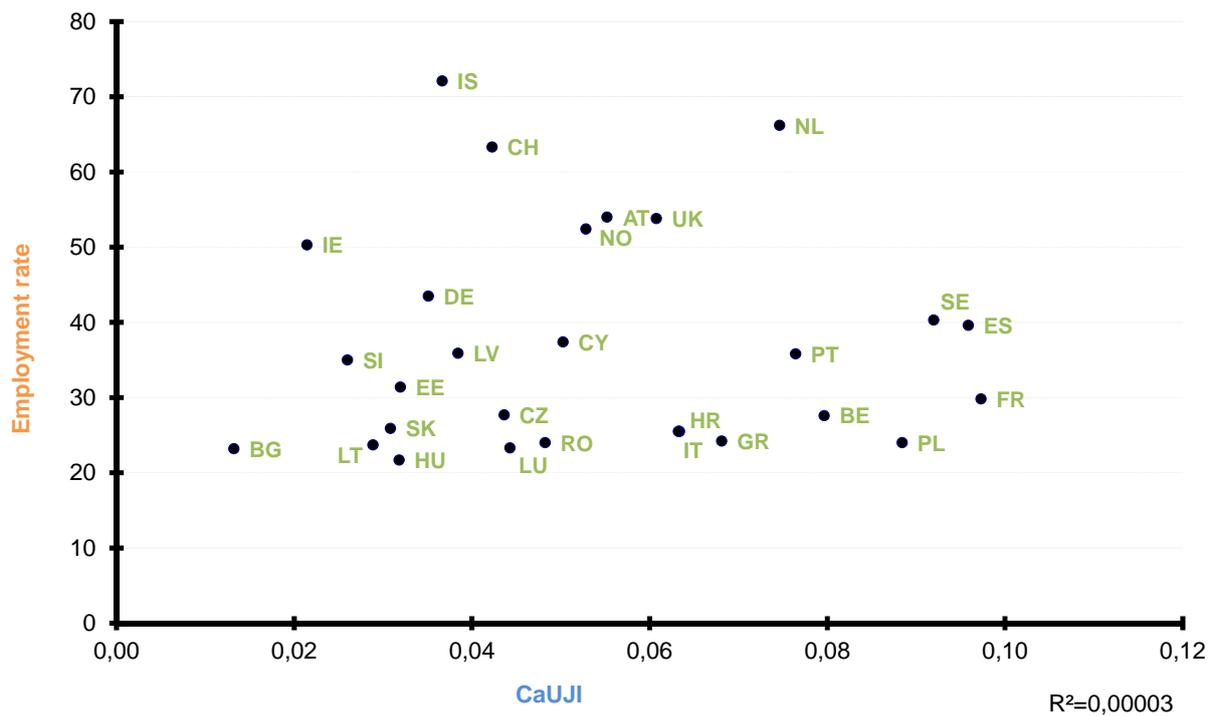


Figure 8: Capability-Unfriendly jobs and Unemployment rates, 2006

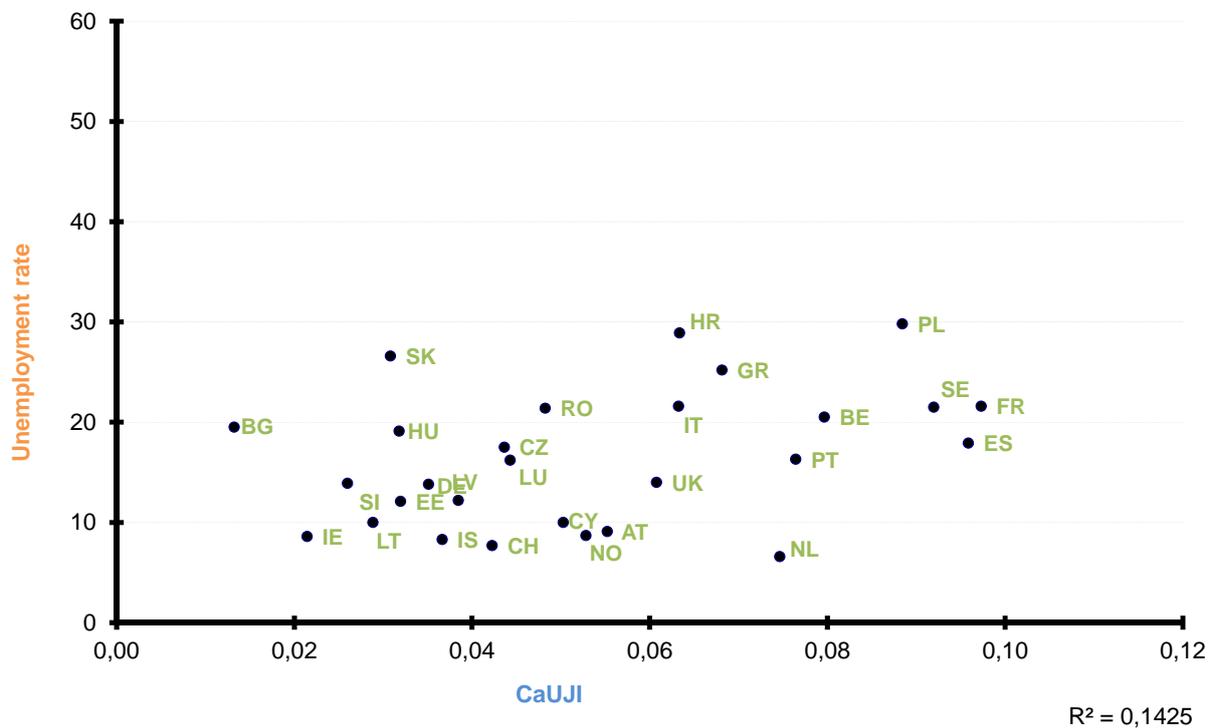




Figure 11: Relative growth of Capability-Unfriendly jobs and Employment rate, 2006-2012

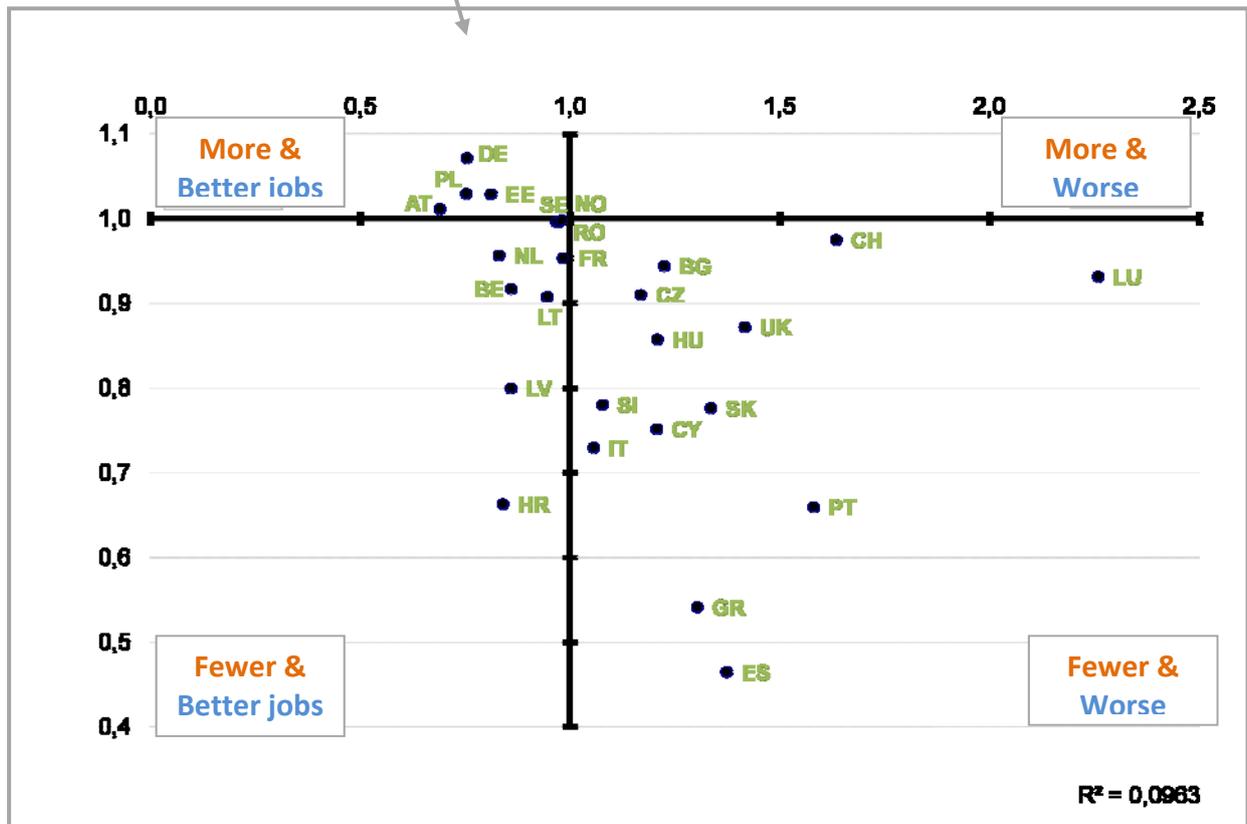
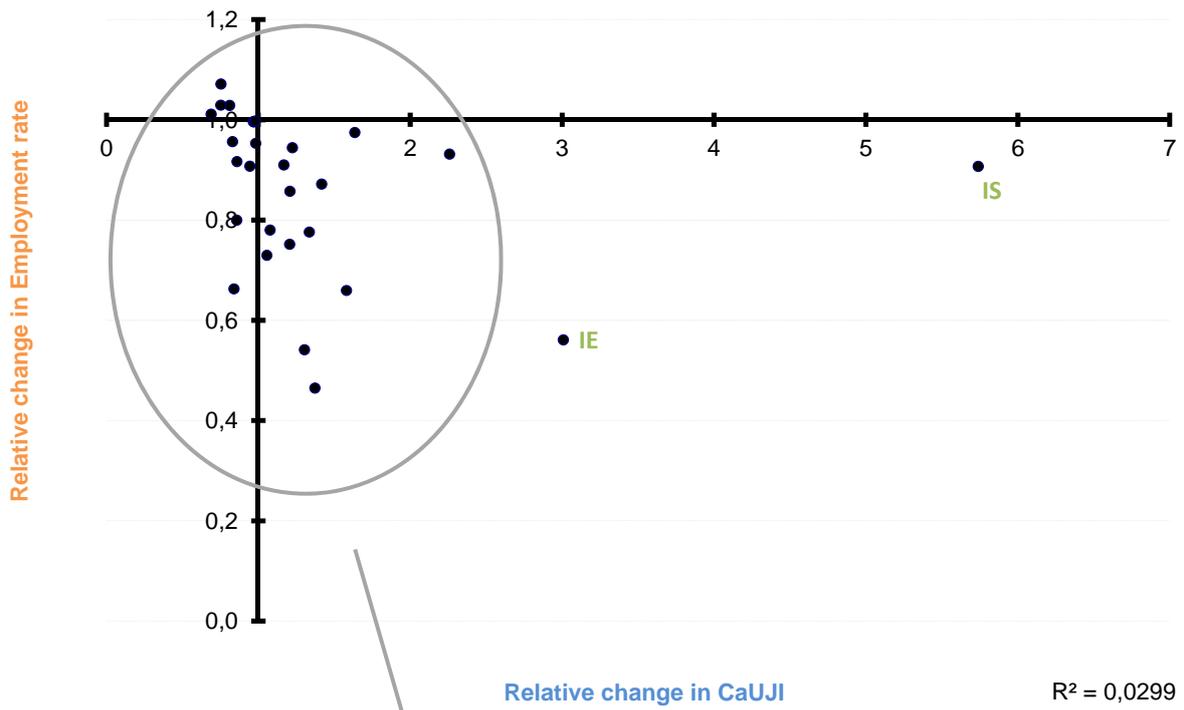
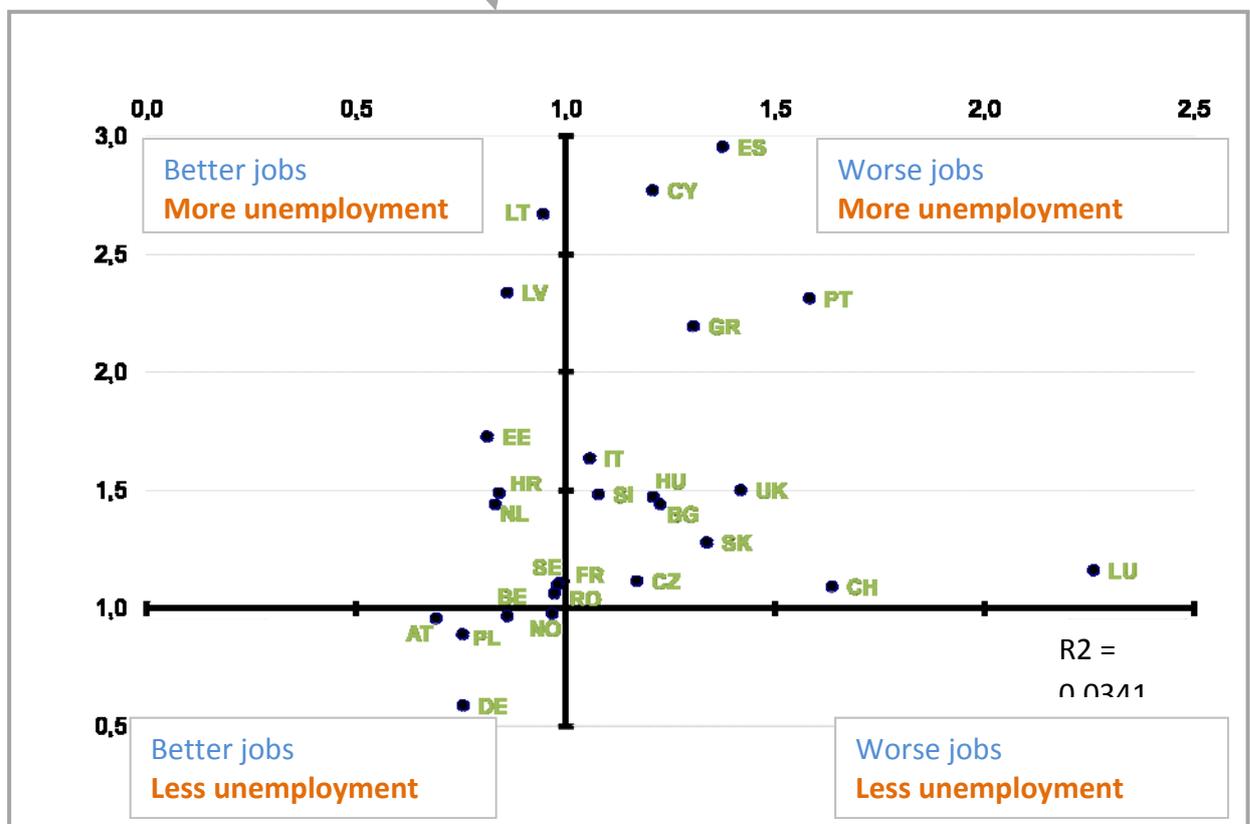
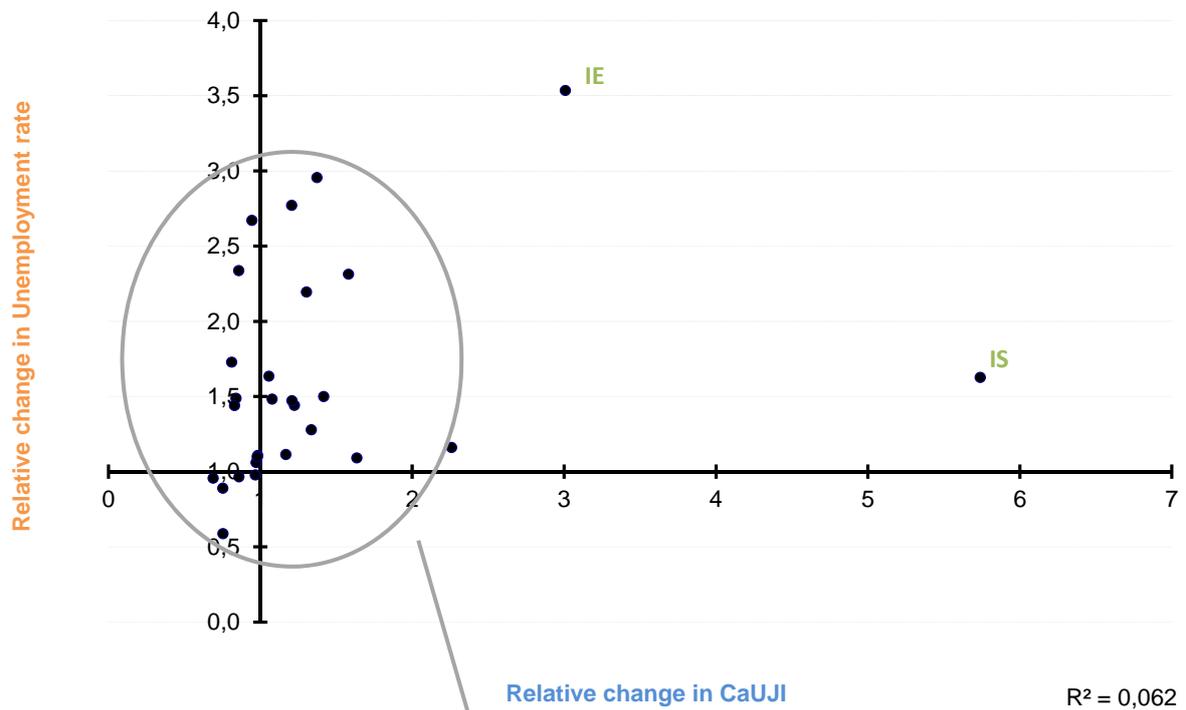


Figure 12: Relative growth of Capability-Unfriendly jobs and unemployment rates, 2006-2012



### **5.3.2 The economic crisis displays considerable variations from one country to another in quantity / quality trade-off**

Member states experience different challenge with regard to this objective of more and better jobs over the 2006-2012 periods. Figure 11 shows that very few countries have already attained the objective.

- In a first group, we find seven countries like Germany, Austria, Sweden, Norway Poland Estonia and Romania, and in which there in parallel is a growth in employment rate and a decrease in CaUJI over the 2006-2012 period, i.e an increase in terms job quality. With the exception of these countries, the situation has worsened over the period at least on one of the two indicators. Germany is the best performer in Europe in terms of employment rate increase while Austria is the best performer in Europe in terms of decline of capability-unfriendly jobs.
- In a second group, we find five countries, namely Netherlands, France, Belgium, Lithuania, Latvia and Hungary in which the employment rate falls (Latvia and Hungary were particularly hard hit by the crisis) while the quality of employment measured through the lens of CaUJI also tended to rise.
- The third and majority group of countries include countries that have the worst employment rate and CaUJI growth levels in the European Union. Within this group, Ireland appears to be the worst performer. It also includes UK, Portugal, Spain, Greece among others.

It is worth noting that there's not one country where the situation is improving in terms of employment rate while quality of employment as measured through CaUJI is decreasing. Comparing unemployment growth rate with that of CaUJI does not fundamentally change the analysis.

## **6. Discussion and conclusion**

The article emphasizes the difference that the capability approach makes when it comes to assessing the particular challenges faced by younger workers. By focusing on the 2006-2012 period, this paper sets out to assess and analyse the state of young people's labour market using a multidimensional Index of Capability Unfriendly Jobs (CaUJI). It is thus intended as one contribution to assess the progress made by Member states over the period beyond the headline indicators of employment rate or unemployment rate.

The CaUJI covers job quality issues in a multifaceted way and thereby helps to broaden the discussion on youth labour market performance by going beyond both unemployment rates and employment rates – at present the indicators that dominate the policy debates – while maintaining a quantitative approach.

The CaUJI has a number of advantages. It allows us to compare various dimensions of job quality between EU28 countries. All the data used are regularly updated, so that as new waves of data become available, the CaUJI also allows to track developments in terms of job quality over time for individual EU27 countries, for country clusters, and the EU as a whole.

The investigation is based on the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS). Taking a longer-term view, prior to the economic crisis of 2008, the empirical analysis leads to four main types of results.

- 1) First, it emphasizes the overall impact of the crisis on the capability-unfriendly jobs of the young Europeans even if the overall incidence of the crisis varies significantly across countries: the quality of employment as measured through the lens of the CaUJI is decreasing over the 2006-2012 period in Europe.
- 2) Second, it highlights important differences across countries, with different contrasted evolutions of capability-unfriendly jobs in Europe.
- 3) Third, it supports the hypothesis that, in general, a higher level of employment rate is associated with fewer “capability-unfriendly” jobs, even if results display variations across countries.
- 4) Fourth, it reveals that member states experience different challenges with regard to the objective of more and better jobs over the 2006-2012 periods : we find seven countries like Germany, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Poland, Estonia and Romania, in which there is both a growth in employment rate and a decrease in CaUJI over the 2006-2012 period, i.e an increase in terms of job quality. With the exception of these countries, the situation has worsened over the period at least on one of the two indicators. Germany is the best performer in Europe in terms of employment rate increase while Austria is the best performer in Europe in terms of decline of capability-unfriendly jobs.

Future research will be conducted using the Capability-unfriendly Job Index. The next step will consist in determining the individual and contextual determinants of job quality (as defined through the lens of the Capability Approach). This will be done by enriching EU-LFS data with macro and meso variables derived from other data sets, such as the Labour Market Policy database. The issue at stake is to understand the relative importance of the various levels (individual, regional, national), therefore multilevel models will be implemented.

# Appendix

## Table 1 - Employment rate for population aged 15-24

GEO/TIME	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Union européenne (28 pays)	:	:	36,6	35,9	35,6	35,9	36,5	37,3	37,3	34,9	33,9	33,5	32,7	32,3
Union européenne (27 pays)	37,1	37,3	36,7	36,0	35,7	36,0	36,6	37,3	37,4	35,0	34,0	33,6	32,9	32,5
Union européenne (15 pays)	39,9	40,5	40,5	39,8	39,6	39,9	40,4	41,0	40,8	38,0	36,9	36,5	35,4	34,9
Zone euro (18 pays)	36,3	36,9	36,7	36,3	35,8	36,3	36,9	37,7	37,5	34,9	33,6	33,4	32,0	31,4
Zone euro (17 pays)	36,3	36,9	36,8	36,3	35,8	36,4	36,9	37,7	37,5	35,0	33,7	33,4	32,0	31,4
Zone euro (13 pays)	36,6	37,2	37,1	36,6	36,1	36,6	37,2	38,0	37,8	35,2	34,0	33,7	32,3	31,6
Belgique	30,3	28,5	28,5	27,1	28,1	27,5	27,6	27,5	27,4	25,3	25,2	26,0	25,3	23,6
Bulgarie	20,5	21,1	20,5	21,3	22,3	21,6	23,2	24,5	26,3	24,8	22,2	22,1	21,9	21,2
République tchèque	36,4	34,4	32,4	29,8	27,7	27,5	27,7	28,5	28,1	26,5	25,2	24,5	25,2	25,6
Danemark	67,1	61,7	64,0	59,4	61,3	62,3	64,6	65,3	66,4	62,5	58,1	57,5	55,0	53,7
Allemagne (jusqu'en 1990, ancien territoire de la RFA)	46,1	46,5	45,4	44,0	41,3	41,9	43,5	45,4	46,6	46,0	46,2	47,9	46,6	46,8
Estonie	29,6	27,6	25,4	28,8	29,6	30,7	31,4	34,1	35,9	28,3	25,3	31,1	32,3	32,4
Irlande	48,1	46,8	44,9	45,4	44,8	48,7	50,3	50,4	45,9	36,9	31,5	29,5	28,2	29,0
Grèce	27,4	26,3	26,8	26,2	27,4	25,0	24,2	24,0	23,5	22,9	20,4	16,3	13,1	11,9
Espagne	32,2	33,6	34,3	34,5	34,8	38,5	39,6	39,2	36,0	28,0	25,0	22,0	18,4	16,8
France	28,2	29,3	29,9	30,6	29,3	30,2	29,8	31,0	31,3	30,3	30,0	29,5	28,4	28,6
Croatie	:	:	25,7	24,7	26,9	25,8	25,5	26,5	27,1	25,6	23,0	20,1	16,9	14,5
Italie	26,1	26,2	25,7	25,4	27,6	25,7	25,5	24,7	24,4	21,7	20,5	19,4	18,6	16,3
Chypre	36,7	39,0	36,7	37,5	37,3	36,7	37,4	37,4	38,0	34,8	33,8	30,1	28,1	23,5
Lettonie	30,3	29,0	28,8	32,7	29,7	32,6	35,9	38,1	37,0	27,5	25,4	25,8	28,7	30,2
Lituanie	26,7	22,6	25,2	23,6	20,6	21,2	23,7	24,8	26,0	20,6	18,3	19,0	21,5	24,6
Luxembourg	31,8	32,3	32,3	27,0	23,3	24,9	23,3	22,5	23,8	26,7	21,2	20,7	21,7	21,9
Hongrie	33,1	30,4	28,6	26,7	23,3	21,8	21,7	21,0	20,0	18,1	18,3	18,3	18,6	19,8
Malte	52,4	53,0	51,1	49,6	45,2	45,0	44,8	46,8	46,6	44,1	44,2	45,0	43,8	45,9
Pays-Bas	68,4	70,4	70,5	68,7	66,2	65,2	66,2	68,4	69,3	68,0	63,0	63,5	63,3	62,3
Autriche	52,5	51,4	51,8	50,6	49,9	53,1	54,0	55,5	55,9	54,5	53,6	54,9	54,6	53,8
Pologne	24,1	24,2	22,0	21,2	21,1	22,5	24,0	25,8	27,3	26,8	26,4	24,9	24,7	24,2
Portugal	41,1	42,3	42,2	39,0	37,1	36,1	35,8	34,9	34,7	31,3	28,5	27,2	23,6	22,3
Roumanie	34,0	32,7	29,1	27,3	28,0	24,9	24,0	24,4	24,8	24,5	24,3	23,8	23,9	23,5
Slovénie	31,2	30,3	31,1	28,6	33,8	34,1	35,0	37,6	38,4	35,3	34,1	31,5	27,3	26,5
Slovaquie	28,3	27,7	26,7	27,3	26,3	25,6	25,9	27,6	26,2	22,8	20,6	20,0	20,1	20,4
Finlande	45,4	46,2	44,8	44,3	43,3	40,5	42,1	44,6	44,7	39,6	38,8	40,4	41,8	41,5
Suède	36,9	46,2	44,0	43,4	39,5	38,7	40,3	42,2	42,2	38,3	38,8	40,9	40,2	41,7
Royaume-Uni	55,8	55,5	55,5	54,2	54,9	54,4	53,8	52,9	52,4	48,4	47,6	46,4	46,9	46,7
Islande	73,9	75,9	66,8	70,4	69,7	70,5	72,1	74,3	71,7	61,5	61,7	62,5	65,4	69,7
Norvège	58,7	58,1	57,0	56,1	54,9	53,4	52,4	54,5	57,3	52,6	51,4	50,8	52,2	51,8
Suisse	65,0	64,0	65,4	63,5	61,9	59,9	63,3	62,6	62,4	61,6	62,5	62,9	61,7	61,9
Ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine	:	:	:	:	:	:	14,4	15,2	15,7	15,7	15,4	14,4	15,5	16,2
Turquie	:	:	:	:	:	:	30,3	30,2	30,3	28,9	30,0	32,0	31,5	32,2

**Table 2 - Employment rate for population aged 25-29**

GEO/TIME	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Union européenne (28 pays)	:	:	72,9	72,7	72,9	73,1	74,5	75,3	75,6	73,2	72,2	72,0	71,1	70,5
Union européenne (27 pays)	72,8	73,1	72,9	72,7	72,9	73,1	74,5	75,3	75,6	73,2	72,2	72,1	71,2	70,5
Union européenne (15 pays)	73,6	74,1	74,1	73,8	74,2	74,3	75,4	76,0	76,0	73,6	72,7	72,4	71,3	70,5
Zone euro (18 pays)	72,3	72,7	72,9	72,7	73,3	73,1	74,5	75,1	75,1	72,5	71,5	71,2	69,9	68,6
Zone euro (17 pays)	72,3	72,7	72,9	72,7	73,2	73,1	74,5	75,0	75,1	72,5	71,5	71,2	69,9	68,6
Zone euro (13 pays)	72,3	72,8	72,9	72,7	73,3	73,2	74,5	75,1	75,1	72,6	71,5	71,2	69,9	68,5
Belgique	82,4	77,5	78,2	77,7	78,3	79,1	78,7	79,4	80,1	79,0	77,5	76,9	75,9	75,0
Bulgarie	59,3	59,7	59,7	61,2	64,3	65,1	68,3	72,6	75,0	71,0	66,8	63,9	63,7	61,4
République tchèque	72,8	72,0	73,7	74,0	71,6	73,0	74,0	75,3	75,8	73,4	72,4	73,6	72,3	74,6
Danemark	80,2	80,9	81,2	77,1	78,6	78,5	81,0	81,5	83,3	78,1	74,0	73,2	71,8	72,8
Allemagne (jusqu'en 1990, ancien territoire de la RFA)	75,7	75,0	74,0	71,7	70,1	69,8	71,8	73,4	74,8	74,6	75,6	77,4	77,6	77,6
Estonie	73,7	74,4	76,5	72,1	72,5	75,1	81,9	80,1	78,8	70,4	70,1	73,8	73,1	74,3
Irlande	84,0	83,6	82,3	81,3	81,7	82,1	82,5	82,5	79,7	72,1	69,1	66,3	67,7	68,5
Grèce	68,1	68,5	70,0	70,6	70,9	71,5	72,9	72,4	73,0	72,0	68,2	59,8	53,6	48,5
Espagne	69,5	70,7	71,4	72,8	74,2	76,1	77,5	78,6	75,2	68,0	65,6	63,9	59,8	58,1
France	76,0	77,1	77,0	76,8	77,3	77,3	78,1	78,1	78,8	77,2	76,8	76,0	74,9	74,6
Croatie	:	:	68,1	68,2	67,5	71,2	71,9	75,3	76,5	72,8	66,8	63,3	62,3	62,1
Italie	58,7	60,4	61,9	63,0	65,4	63,4	65,0	64,3	64,3	61,2	58,8	58,8	57,3	52,8
Chypre	83,3	84,5	86,5	83,2	85,6	82,4	82,8	83,7	81,8	80,0	79,9	79,3	74,4	71,4
Lettonie	69,9	72,5	74,1	73,9	76,0	74,5	77,9	78,4	79,9	68,3	69,3	72,1	74,4	76,3
Lituanie	75,8	72,8	74,3	77,8	76,4	79,6	80,7	79,1	77,3	74,8	69,1	73,5	75,7	77,3
Luxembourg	80,3	81,3	83,1	82,2	81,5	81,3	80,2	80,3	74,4	80,2	81,5	79,8	78,7	76,0
Hongrie	69,3	70,3	70,5	70,3	71,1	71,0	71,2	71,6	71,1	67,7	66,1	67,4	67,3	68,5
Malte	73,1	76,1	75,8	73,5	77,8	76,5	78,4	79,2	80,9	79,5	79,1	81,1	82,2	83,3
Pays-Bas	86,5	87,5	86,0	86,4	86,3	85,2	86,5	87,8	88,4	87,2	84,9	84,2	83,4	81,7
Autriche	79,9	81,1	80,8	79,9	79,5	80,6	80,5	80,6	80,8	80,8	80,5	81,3	82,5	81,4
Pologne	67,5	67,6	65,4	66,2	65,6	67,6	70,8	73,7	76,3	75,0	73,8	73,9	73,1	73,0
Portugal	83,3	82,2	82,5	80,2	80,0	78,3	78,0	77,2	78,7	77,6	74,8	74,5	71,0	67,9
Roumanie	75,0	74,7	71,8	71,2	70,7	69,5	69,5	70,0	69,2	67,4	67,5	68,3	67,8	67,4
Slovénie	81,0	82,3	82,0	78,7	80,6	79,8	77,5	80,6	82,9	77,6	75,7	74,8	72,9	70,7
Slovaquie	67,3	66,6	69,7	70,2	69,5	68,0	72,2	72,1	73,7	70,1	68,1	67,2	68,0	67,0
Finlande	74,6	76,6	77,2	75,4	74,6	76,9	77,2	78,4	79,3	75,4	75,3	75,7	74,8	74,7
Suède	75,1	79,2	78,7	78,1	76,4	76,9	78,2	80,1	80,6	77,3	76,1	77,9	77,2	77,6
Royaume-Uni	79,6	80,0	79,7	79,3	78,9	79,7	79,8	80,0	79,7	77,7	77,7	77,1	76,9	78,0
Islande	83,4	85,5	86,7	87,3	83,0	82,4	82,8	84,3	81,4	72,4	72,5	75,2	75,1	79,6
Norvège	82,5	82,1	82,6	78,7	78,6	79,3	81,8	82,8	83,7	82,5	79,0	79,6	80,0	78,9
Suisse	84,0	83,8	83,0	82,4	83,2	85,4	84,7	85,1	86,7	83,4	82,9	84,4	84,2	83,3
Ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine	:	:	:	:	:	:	41,3	43,5	46,0	48,3	47,9	46,8	45,7	45,9
Turquie	:	:	:	:	:	:	53,7	54,1	54,3	52,9	55,4	57,1	57,6	58,3

**Table 3 -Employment rate for population aged 15-64**

GEO/TIME	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Union européenne (28 pays)	:	:	62,4	62,6	62,7	63,4	64,3	65,3	65,7	64,5	64,0	64,2	64,1	64,1
Union européenne (27 pays)	62,1	62,5	62,4	62,7	62,8	63,5	64,4	65,3	65,8	64,5	64,1	64,3	64,2	64,2
Union européenne (15 pays)	63,2	63,9	64,2	64,5	64,6	65,3	66,1	66,9	67,1	65,8	65,4	65,5	65,2	65,1
Zone euro (18 pays)	61,1	61,9	62,3	62,6	62,8	63,6	64,6	65,6	65,9	64,5	64,1	64,3	63,8	63,5
Zone euro (17 pays)	61,2	62,0	62,3	62,6	62,8	63,6	64,6	65,5	65,9	64,6	64,2	64,3	63,8	63,5
Zone euro (13 pays)	61,3	62,1	62,4	62,7	62,9	63,7	64,7	65,6	65,9	64,6	64,3	64,4	63,9	63,6
Belgique	60,9	59,7	59,7	59,3	60,5	61,1	61,0	62,0	62,4	61,6	62,0	61,9	61,8	61,8
Bulgarie	51,5	50,7	51,1	53,1	55,1	55,8	58,6	61,7	64,0	62,6	59,7	58,4	58,8	59,5
République tchèque	64,9	65,0	65,5	64,9	64,1	64,8	65,3	66,1	66,6	65,4	65,0	65,7	66,5	67,7
Danemark	76,4	75,9	76,4	75,1	76,0	75,9	77,4	77,0	77,9	75,3	73,3	73,1	72,6	72,5
Allemagne (jusqu'en 1990, ancien territoire de la RFA)	65,3	65,7	65,4	64,9	64,3	65,5	67,2	69,0	70,1	70,3	71,1	72,5	72,8	73,3
Estonie	60,9	60,6	61,4	62,4	63,2	64,8	68,4	69,8	70,1	63,8	61,2	65,3	67,1	68,5
Irlande	64,5	65,2	65,1	65,1	65,5	67,6	68,7	69,2	67,6	61,9	59,6	58,9	58,8	60,5
Grèce	56,6	56,5	57,7	58,9	59,6	60,1	61,0	61,4	61,9	61,2	59,6	55,6	51,3	49,3
Espagne	56,1	57,7	59,0	60,1	61,1	63,6	65,0	65,8	64,5	60,0	58,8	58,0	55,8	54,8
France	61,7	62,7	62,9	63,9	63,3	63,7	63,6	64,3	64,8	64,0	63,9	63,8	63,9	64,1
Croatie	:	:	52,9	53,4	54,9	55,0	55,6	57,1	57,8	56,6	54,0	52,4	50,7	49,2
Italie	53,4	54,5	55,4	56,1	57,7	57,6	58,4	58,7	58,7	57,5	56,9	56,9	56,8	55,6
Chypre	65,4	67,9	68,5	69,2	69,4	68,5	69,6	71,0	70,9	69,0	68,9	67,6	64,6	61,7
Lettonie	57,4	58,9	60,5	61,7	62,2	63,3	66,3	68,1	68,2	60,3	58,5	60,8	63,0	65,0
Lituanie	59,6	58,1	60,6	62,8	61,8	62,9	63,6	65,0	64,4	59,9	57,6	60,2	62,0	63,7
Luxembourg	62,7	63,0	63,6	62,2	62,5	63,6	63,6	64,2	63,4	65,2	65,2	64,6	65,8	65,7
Hongrie	55,9	56,1	56,2	57,0	56,6	56,9	57,3	57,3	56,7	55,4	55,4	55,8	57,2	58,4
Malte	54,5	54,7	55,0	54,6	53,4	53,6	53,9	55,0	55,5	55,3	56,2	57,9	59,1	60,8
Pays-Bas	72,9	74,1	74,5	73,8	73,1	73,2	74,3	76,0	77,2	77,0	74,7	74,9	75,1	74,3
Autriche	67,9	67,8	68,1	68,2	66,5	68,6	70,2	71,4	72,1	71,6	71,7	72,1	72,5	72,3
Pologne	55,1	53,7	51,7	51,4	51,4	52,8	54,5	57,0	59,2	59,3	58,9	59,3	59,7	60,0
Portugal	68,2	68,9	69,2	68,2	68,0	67,5	67,9	67,8	68,2	66,3	65,6	64,2	61,8	61,1
Roumanie	64,2	63,3	58,6	58,7	58,7	57,6	58,8	58,8	59,0	58,6	58,8	58,5	59,5	59,7
Slovénie	62,7	63,6	64,3	62,5	65,6	66,0	66,6	67,8	68,6	67,5	66,2	64,4	64,1	63,3
Slovaquie	56,3	56,7	56,5	57,9	56,7	57,7	59,4	60,7	62,3	60,2	58,8	59,3	59,7	59,9
Finlande	68,1	69,1	69,1	68,7	68,3	68,4	69,3	70,3	71,1	68,7	68,1	69,0	69,4	68,9
Suède	71,1	74,4	74,0	73,6	72,4	72,5	73,1	74,2	74,3	72,2	72,1	73,6	73,8	74,4
Royaume-Uni	71,0	71,3	71,2	71,4	71,5	71,7	71,6	71,5	71,5	69,9	69,5	69,5	70,1	70,8
Islande	87,1	86,9	85,0	84,3	83,2	83,8	84,6	85,1	83,6	78,3	78,2	78,5	79,7	81,1
Norvège	77,9	77,5	77,3	75,6	75,3	74,8	75,4	76,8	78,0	76,4	75,3	75,3	75,7	75,4
Suisse	78,3	79,1	78,9	77,9	77,4	77,2	77,9	78,6	79,5	79,0	78,6	79,3	79,4	79,6
Ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine	:	:	:	:	:	:	39,6	40,7	41,9	43,3	43,5	43,9	44,0	46,0
Turquie	:	:	:	:	:	:	44,6	44,6	44,9	44,3	46,3	48,4	48,9	49,5

**Table 4 –Unemployment rate for population aged 15-24, 2001-2012**  
**% of active population 15-24**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
EU27	17,3	17,9	18,1	18,6	18,6	17,3	15,5	15,6	19,9	20,9	21,3	22,8
BE	15,3	15,7	19,0	17,5	21,5	20,5	18,8	18,0	21,9	22,4	18,7	19,8
BG	39,3	35,6	27,1	24,5	22,3	19,5	15,1	12,7	16,2	23,2	25,0	28,1
CZ	16,3	15,4	16,8	19,9	19,2	17,5	10,7	9,9	16,6	18,3	18,0	19,5(b)
DK	8,3	7,1	9,8	7,8	8,6	7,7	7,5	8,0	11,8	14,0	14,2	14,1
DE	7,8	9,3	11,0	13,0	15,5	13,8	11,9	10,6	11,2	9,9	8,6	8,1
EE	24,5	17,3	24,2	23,5	15,9	12,0	10,0	12,0	27,5	32,9	22,3	20,9
IE	6,2	7,8	8,1	8,3	8,6	8,6	9,0	12,7	24,3	27,6(b)	29,1	30,4
EL	28,0	26,1	25,7	26,5	26,0	25,2	22,9	22,1	25,8	32,9	44,4	55,3
ES	20,7	21,6	22,3	22,4	19,7(b)	17,9	18,2	24,6	37,8	41,6	46,4	53,2
FR	18,0	18,9	17,5	20,1	20,6	21,6	19,1	18,6	23,2	22,8	22,0	23,8
IT	27,8	27,1	26,8	24,6(b)	24,0	21,6	20,3	21,3	25,4	27,8	29,1	35,3
CY	8,2	7,7	8,9	8,7	13,9	10,0	10,2	9,0	13,8(b)	16,6	22,4	27,8
LV	22,9	25,6	17,5	19,3	13,6	12,2	10,7	13,1	33,6	34,5	31,0(b)	28,4
LT	31,6	20,4	26,9	21,2	15,7(u)	9,8(u)	8,2(u)	13,4(u)	29,2	35,1	32,2(b)	26,4
LU	6,3 (u)	7,0(u)	10,9	16,9	13,7	16,2	15,2	17,9	17,2	14,2	16,8	18,8
HU	10,7	11,4	12,9	14,4	19,4	19,1	18,0	19,9	26,5	26,6	26,1	28,1
MT	17,6	15,3	17,4	18,3	16,8	15,9	13,9	12,2	14,4	13,1	13,8	14,2
NL	4,4	4,6	6,6	8,0	8,2	6,6	5,9	5,3	6,6	8,7(b)	7,6	9,5
AT	6,0	7,2	7,5	11,0(b)	10,3	9,1	8,7	8,0	10,0	8,8	8,3	8,7
PL	39,2	41,6	41,4	40,1	36,9	29,8	21,7	17,3	20,6	23,7	25,8	26,5
PT	8,9	10,4	13,4	14,0	16,1	16,3	16,6	16,4	20,0	22,4	30,1(b)	37,7
RO	17,6	22,2(b)	19,5	22,3	20,2	21,4	20,1	18,6	20,8	22,1	23,7	22,7
SI	15,7	14,8	15,3	14,0	15,9	13,9	10,1	10,4	13,6	14,7	15,7	20,6
SK	38,9	37,7	32,9	32,8	30,1	26,6	20,3	19,0	27,3	33,6	33,2	34,0(b)
FI	26,6	28,2	27,8	27,5	20,1	18,7	16,5	16,5	21,5	21,4	20,1	19,0
SE	11,7	12,9	14,3	18,5	22,8(b)	21,5	19,3	20,2	25,0	24,8	22,8	23,6
UK	10,3	10,9	11,4	10,7	12,8	14,0	14,3	15,0	19,1	19,6	21,1	21,0

Note: b break in series; u unreliable data

Source: Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey, Eurostat table: ifsa\_urgan

Source: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/21\\_youth\\_unemployment.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/21_youth_unemployment.pdf)

**Table 5 –Components of the CaUI Index, population aged 15-24, 2012**

2012		Part-time	Share of involuntary part-time	Temporary contract	Share of involuntary temporary contract	Satisfaction with amount of working hours	Disatisfaction with amount of working hours		Satisfaction with amount of working hours for individuals working full-time	Satisfaction with amount of working hours for individuals working part-time	Look for another job	Did unpaid overtime hours	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (CZ)	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (BV)	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
							Wishes to work fewer hours	Wishes to work more hours								
AT	Austria	18,8	12,4	34,4	3,1	79,5	52,8	47,2	82,8	65,3	2,9	2,9	0,046	0,038	54,6	8,7
BE	Belgium	25,5	22,0	29,6	61,7	74,8	21,0	79,0	82,7	51,4	7,6	2,4	0,094	0,069	25,3	19,8
BG	Bulgaria	3,6	28,9	6,8	49,7	86,3	66,1	33,9	87,2	62,2	1,3	0,0	0,027	0,016	21,9	28,1
CH	Switzerland	22,0	10,9	50,3	2,9	38,1	82,0	18,0	36,7	43,2	10,1	1,6	0,109	0,069	61,7	8,4
CY	Cyprus	18,8	56,4	17,6	78,3	71,8	20,6	79,4	80,1	36,2	8,4	0,3	0,096	0,061	28,1	27,7
CZ	Czech Republic	11,9	19,6	23,6	78,8	85,0	71,3	28,7	87,1	69,1	5,3	1,7	0,069	0,051	25,2	19,5
DE	Germany	22,0	12,1	52,9	4,8	89,5	18,4	81,6	92,4	79,1	3,5	1,5	0,034	0,026	46,6	8,1
EE	Estonia	18,6	8,9	12,4	19,2	89,7	36,9	63,1	92,1	78,9	8,1	0,6	0,039	0,026	32,3	20,9
ES	Spain	41,4	56,0	59,5	74,2	66,8	15,0	85,0	83,3	43,3	16,6	1,5	0,196	0,132	18,4	52,9
FR	France	22,3	46,3	52,1	39,2	72,8	8,9	91,1	79,7	48,7	7,9	5,5	0,119	0,096	28,4	23,9
GR	Greece	19,4	64,8	18,5	57,5	68,8	34,1	65,9	78,9	26,6	8,5	5,1	0,114	0,089	13,1	55,3
HR	Croatia	5,6	15,8	41,3	43,8	91,3	1,3	98,7	93,3	56,1	17,3	0,4	0,079	0,053	16,9	43,0
HU	Hungary	9,7	51,8	21,6	61,4	80,5	13,9	86,1	86,1	28,9	2,7	0,0	0,060	0,038	18,6	28,1
IE	Ireland	48,0	32,2	33,6	30,6	68,1	26,6	73,4	80,7	54,5	4,5	1,2	0,099	0,065	28,2	30,4
IS	Iceland	48,2	12,5	31,8	5,4	100,0	-	-	100,0	100,0	15,6	32,0	0,147	0,210	65,4	13,5
IT	Italy	27,5	73,9	45,0	44,8	87,1	46,3	53,7	91,2	76,3	5,8	0,5	0,102	0,067	18,6	35,3
LT	Lithuania	15,4	18,0	8,9	39,5	83,5	14,6	85,4	86,9	65,0	3,3	0,8	0,040	0,027	21,5	26,7
LU	Luxembourg	20,9	19,4	35,7	28,3	70,7	23,9	76,1	78,0	43,2	12,4	8,4	0,112	0,100	21,7	18,8
LV	Latvia	14,6	29,6	9,3	60,9	77,1	18,7	81,3	81,0	54,3	4,3	0,0	0,054	0,033	28,7	28,5
NL	Netherlands	77,2	8,3	49,1	15,7	77,4	19,7	80,3	88,8	74,1	5,4	4,1	0,076	0,062	63,3	9,5
NO	Norway	56,0	9,1	27,2	22,6	83,6	53,2	46,8	88,3	79,9	13,5	1,6	0,073	0,051	52,2	8,5
PL	Poland	16,7	26,1	57,5	56,3	78,7	42,1	57,9	83,0	57,6	5,7	0,4	0,099	0,067	24,7	26,5
PT	Portugal	19,7	46,1	52,4	76,6	65,5	1,6	98,4	70,5	44,9	14,0	3,8	0,165	0,121	23,6	37,7
RO	Romania	17,8	70,9	3,2	76,1	67,7	17,4	82,6	79,3	14,3	3,8	0,3	0,077	0,047	23,9	22,7
SE	Sweden	48,3	34,2	54,0	44,8	73,0	11,8	88,2	86,3	58,9	14,5	0,9	0,137	0,090	40,2	23,6
SI	Slovenia	38,3	0,0	61,2	0,0	77,9	2,1	97,9	79,3	75,6	5,2	1,1	0,041	0,028	27,3	20,6
SK	Slovakia	7,3	47,7	17,1	86,7	88,0	48,3	51,6	92,8	26,6	5,1	0,9	0,058	0,041	20,1	34,0
UK	United Kingdom	39,2	28,0	13,9	34,7	77,7	12,8	87,2	89,4	59,5	15,5	5,6	0,107	0,086	46,9	21,0

**Table 6 –Components of the CaUI Index, population aged 15-24, 2006**

2006		Part-time	Share of involuntary part-time	Temporary contract	Share of involuntary temporary contract	Satisfaction with amount of working hours	Disatisfaction with amount of working hours		Satisfaction with amount of working hours for individuals working full-time	Satisfaction with amount of working hours for individuals working part-time	Look for another job	Did unpaid overtime hours	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (CZ)	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (BV)	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
							Wishes to work fewer hours	Wishes to work more hours								
AT	Austria	14,7	19,1	34,4	3,8	77,1	51,4	48,6	80,2	59,7	3,7	5,5	0,061	0,055	54,0	9,1
BE	Belgium	20,7	38,3	28,4	56,7	76,4	31,9	68,1	83,8	48,2	11,0	3,0	0,104	0,080	27,6	20,5
BG	Bulgaria	2,8	23,9	11,9	40,1	95,2	60,8	39,2	96,0	67,9	2,3	0,0	0,019	0,013	23,2	19,5
CH	Switzerland	22,0	14,6	48,5	0,0	81,9	48,2	51,8	93,0	42,5	18,4	0,0	0,067	0,042	63,3	7,7
CY	Cyprus	9,5	59,8	19,2	72,7	77,2	56,7	43,2	81,0	40,5	4,1	0,3	0,073	0,050	37,4	10,0
CZ	Czech Republic	3,9	19,0	17,6	69,0	85,8	80,5	19,5	86,2	74,8	3,5	2,4	0,053	0,044	27,7	17,5
DE	Germany	20,2	25,2	54,4	7,4	92,8	1,8	98,2	98,3	71,1	6,1	1,7	0,044	0,035	43,5	13,8
EE	Estonia	13,0	8,5	7,2	31,4	80,9	43,9	56,1	90,4	64,3	3,9	1,6	0,044	0,032	31,4	12,1
ES	Spain	21,6	32,9	59,4	60,5	78,4	33,4	66,6	83,7	59,1	10,2	1,8	0,126	0,096	39,6	17,9
FR	France	22,3	22,9	47,3	38,8	67,0	7,7	92,3	65,8	47,3	7,9	5,0	0,122	0,097	29,8	21,6
GR	Greece	13,3	47,7	18,8	55,7	73,8	69,1	30,9	77,7	48,4	7,7	3,1	0,089	0,068	24,2	25,2
HR	Croatia	8,7	32,8	33,1	51,3	88,4	0,6	99,5	92,2	48,2	21,5	0,0	0,091	0,063	25,5	28,9
HU	Hungary	4,7	35,0	16,2	58,5	81,0	15,1	85,0	83,2	35,8	1,7	0,3	0,047	0,032	21,7	19,1
IE	Ireland	24,3	9,8	16,9	6,4	91,8	17,5	82,5	94,6	83,1	2,2	1,5	0,026	0,021	50,3	8,6
IS	Iceland	30,5	5,1	31,3	2,2	77,6	24,8	75,2	80,2	71,6	13,2	0,0	0,059	0,037	72,1	8,3
IT	Italy	17,5	50,3	34,8	31,4	81,1	54,6	45,4	83,4	70,3	12,5	1,0	0,089	0,063	25,5	21,6
LT	Lithuania	9,0	20,1	9,6	56,5	82,5	23,0	77,0	85,9	48,3	2,9	0,6	0,042	0,029	23,7	10,0
LU	Luxembourg	8,8	27,8	32,6	37,1	95,7	15,4	84,8	97,4	78,2	5,9	2,7	0,050	0,044	23,3	16,2
LV	Latvia	8,8	13,8	13,8	16,8	61,9	30,4	69,6	62,9	52,0	5,2	0,0	0,065	0,038	35,9	12,2
NL	Netherlands	66,8	6,6	39,8	20,9	79,1	19,8	80,2	90,0	73,6	6,9	6,5	0,082	0,075	66,2	6,6
NO	Norway	53,3	10,9	30,2	23,3	82,8	49,7	50,3	86,0	79,9	15,2	0,5	0,078	0,053	52,4	8,7
PL	Poland	19,3	25,2	55,4	60,6	76,2	50,4	49,6	80,2	59,5	11,8	0,9	0,121	0,088	24,0	29,8
PT	Portugal	8,2	48,8	46,3	71,5	91,9	41,1	58,9	94,6	61,5	5,3	2,8	0,091	0,076	35,8	16,3
RO	Romania	16,1	63,8	3,0	67,6	68,1	20,3	79,7	77,8	17,4	3,1	0,6	0,074	0,048	24,0	21,4
SE	Sweden	42,0	40,7	50,5	42,5	77,6	17,1	82,9	88,3	62,7	12,2	1,0	0,128	0,092	40,3	21,5
SI	Slovenia	29,8	0,0	56,6	0,0	91,6	0,7	99,3	94,5	84,9	5,8	2,4	0,029	0,026	35,0	13,9
SK	Slovakia	3,3	10,8	13,2	75,0	89,2	56,2	43,8	90,0	64,0	2,8	1,2	0,039	0,031	25,9	26,6
UK	United Kingdom	35,7	12,7	11,6	22,6	83,1	13,8	86,2	90,7	69,5	10,9	4,7	0,071	0,061	53,8	14,0

**Table 7 –Change in CaUII Index from 2006 to 2012, population aged 15-24**

		2012				2006				Relative differences (2012 - 2006)/2006 (in %)				Relative differences 2012 / 2006			
		Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (CZ)	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (BV)	Employment rate	Unemployment rate	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (CZ)	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (BV)	Employment rate	Unemployment rate	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (CZ)	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (BV)	Employment rate	Unemployment rate	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (CZ)	Capability-unfriendly Jobs Index (BV)	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
AT	Austria	0,046	0,038	54,6	8,7	0,061	0,055	54,0	9,1	-23,8	-31,0	1,1	-4,4	0,8	0,7	1,0	1,0
BE	Belgium	0,094	0,069	25,3	19,8	0,104	0,080	27,6	20,5	-9,3	-14,0	-8,3	-3,4	0,9	0,9	0,9	1,0
BG	Bulgaria	0,027	0,016	21,9	28,1	0,019	0,013	23,2	19,5	39,1	22,5	-5,6	44,1	1,4	1,2	0,9	1,4
CH	Switzerland	0,109	0,069	61,7	8,4	0,067	0,042	63,3	7,7	62,3	63,5	-2,5	9,1	1,6	1,6	1,0	1,1
CY	Cyprus	0,096	0,061	28,1	27,7	0,073	0,050	37,4	10,0	31,4	20,7	-24,9	177,0	1,3	1,2	0,8	2,8
CZ	Czech Republic	0,069	0,051	25,2	19,5	0,053	0,044	27,7	17,5	29,9	16,9	-9,0	11,4	1,3	1,2	0,9	1,1
DE	Germany	0,034	0,026	46,6	8,1	0,044	0,035	43,5	13,8	-22,2	-24,5	7,1	-41,3	0,8	0,8	1,1	0,6
EE	Estonia	0,039	0,026	32,3	20,9	0,044	0,032	31,4	12,1	-11,0	-18,8	2,9	72,7	0,9	0,8	1,0	1,7
ES	Spain	0,196	0,132	18,4	52,9	0,126	0,096	39,6	17,9	55,1	37,4	-53,5	195,5	1,6	1,4	0,5	3,0
FR	France	0,119	0,096	28,4	23,9	0,122	0,097	29,8	21,6	-1,9	-1,6	-4,7	10,6	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,1
GR	Greece	0,114	0,089	13,1	55,3	0,089	0,068	24,2	25,2	28,5	30,4	-45,9	119,4	1,3	1,3	0,5	2,2
HR	Croatia	0,079	0,053	16,9	43,0	0,091	0,063	25,5	28,9	-13,2	-16,0	-33,7	48,8	0,9	0,8	0,7	1,5
HU	Hungary	0,060	0,038	18,6	28,1	0,047	0,032	21,7	19,1	28,8	20,8	-14,3	47,1	1,3	1,2	0,9	1,5
IE	Ireland	0,099	0,065	28,2	30,4	0,026	0,021	50,3	8,6	277,4	200,9	-43,9	253,5	3,8	3,0	0,6	3,5
IS	Iceland	0,147	0,210	65,4	13,5	0,059	0,037	72,1	8,3	146,8	474,0	-9,3	62,7	2,5	5,7	0,9	1,6
IT	Italy	0,102	0,067	18,6	35,3	0,089	0,063	25,5	21,6	14,2	5,7	-27,1	63,4	1,1	1,1	0,7	1,6
LT	Lithuania	0,040	0,027	21,5	26,7	0,042	0,029	23,7	10,0	-4,3	-5,5	-9,3	167,0	1,0	0,9	0,9	2,7
LU	Luxembourg	0,112	0,100	21,7	18,8	0,050	0,044	23,3	16,2	123,4	126,0	-6,9	16,0	2,2	2,3	0,9	1,2
LV	Latvia	0,054	0,033	28,7	28,5	0,065	0,038	35,9	12,2	-16,2	-14,1	-20,1	133,6	0,8	0,9	0,8	2,3
NL	Netherlands	0,076	0,062	63,3	9,5	0,082	0,075	66,2	6,6	-7,2	-16,9	-4,4	43,9	0,9	0,8	1,0	1,4
NO	Norway	0,073	0,051	52,2	8,5	0,078	0,053	52,4	8,7	-5,6	-3,3	-0,4	-2,3	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0
PL	Poland	0,099	0,067	24,7	26,5	0,121	0,088	24,0	29,8	-18,3	-24,7	2,9	-11,1	0,8	0,8	1,0	0,9
PT	Portugal	0,165	0,121	23,6	37,7	0,091	0,076	35,8	16,3	81,6	58,1	-34,1	131,3	1,8	1,6	0,7	2,3
RO	Romania	0,077	0,047	23,9	22,7	0,074	0,048	24,0	21,4	4,0	-2,8	-0,4	6,1	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,1
SE	Sweden	0,137	0,090	40,2	23,6	0,128	0,092	40,3	21,5	7,3	-2,0	-0,2	9,8	1,1	1,0	1,0	1,1
SI	Slovenia	0,041	0,028	27,3	20,6	0,029	0,026	35,0	13,9	40,5	7,8	-22,0	48,2	1,4	1,1	0,8	1,5
SK	Slovakia	0,058	0,041	20,1	34,0	0,039	0,031	25,9	26,6	48,4	33,6	-22,4	27,8	1,5	1,3	0,8	1,3
UK	United Kingdom	0,107	0,086	46,9	21,0	0,071	0,061	53,8	14,0	50,3	41,7	-12,8	50,0	1,5	1,4	0,9	1,5

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# Chapter 5: Multidimensional Youth Inequality across European Regional Clusters

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## 1. Abstract

This paper has a three-fold purpose: first, to identify patterns of multi-dimensional socio-economic development within and between countries of the EU15; secondly, to investigate inequalities in youth participation in education, the labour market and in society at large within and across these regional clusters; thirdly, to explore the context-specificity of “corrosive” and “fertile” interplays amongst young people’s outcomes. Cross-national regional clusters, homogenous along socio-economic characteristics, are derived through cluster analysis and young people’s multi-dimensional forms of participation are analysed and compared. Correlation analyses within clusters are used to explore the context-specificity of associations across young people’s outcomes. It is found regional clusters of socio-economic progress cut across country boundaries, as well as traditional social welfare categories. Young people’s labour market, educational, social and political participation varies considerably across socio-economic regional clusters. Young people’s labour-market, educational, social and political participation inter-relate amongst each other uniquely across socio-economic contextual clusters, revealing an important context-specificity of fertile and corrosive relations across outcomes and space for policy-interventions to limit cumulative disadvantages or enable virtuous cycles.

## 2. Introduction

Socio-economic development varies considerably across Europe. Inequalities are known to be present both across and within countries, and to have markedly increased throughout the latest economic crisis. Indeed, research focusing on European regional differences highlights that significant inequality is to be found at the regional level more than at the national level (Boldrin and Canova, 2001; Amendola et. al., 2004; Atkinson, 2002; amongst others). Further, a population subgroup that has been particularly hard hit by the economic crisis is young people. However, most of the pan-European analyses focusing on young people’s attainments, opportunities and lack of thereof, frequently compare and contrast statistics across countries or at the micro level, thus disregarding the regional dimension. This is a consequence of the policy targets of the European Union, traditionally addressed to the nation as a whole, an attitude confirmed by adopted common indicators – such as, Laeken indicators of poverty and social exclusion, and in particular those focusing on population sub-groups such as youth (European

Commission 2003), as well as the “EU indicators in the field of youth” of the European Youth Strategy (European Commission, 2011).

Furthermore, both regional inequalities and youth disadvantage tend to be measured and assessed on the basis of a market-centred, one-dimensional perspective. In fact, while the European Union places a strong emphasis on regional cohesion (Del Campo et al., 2007; Dupont and Martin, 2006) and dedicates extensive resources through the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, it measures, depicts and targets regional development only on the basis of GDP per capita. However, as such, it does not account for other important elements reflecting socio-economic development – as emphasised by Del Capo et al. (2007). Along similar lines of thought, youth disadvantage tends to be primarily discussed in relation to labour market opportunities and attainments (Choudhry et al, 2012; ILO, 2013; IMF, 2009). While, youth employment is clearly intrinsically and instrumentally important, young people participate in various aspects of society that should be taken into account when assessing their inequalities and disadvantages (Sen, 1999; Mascherini, 2012 amongst others).

This paper fits within the above-mentioned scenario and contributes to the current literature by exploring the following three research questions. 1) Which patterns of social and economic development within and across countries exist in Europe? In other words, how do regions cluster within and across nations along common lines of multi-dimensional socio-economic parameters? 2) How does youth participation in education, the labour market and in society at large, in terms of social and political participation, vary within and across these regional clusters? 3) Are the dynamics and the interplays amongst these relevant youth dimensions context-specific?

In order to respond to the first research question, patterns of regional socio-economic development across a selection of nine EU-15 countries are investigated. The countries were selected on the basis of data availability and representation in SocIEtY: “Social Innovation–Empowering the Young (SocIEtY) for the Common Good, European Commission 7<sup>th</sup> framework research program. However the countries selected also account for typically diverse European social models (Sapir, 2005): Denmark, from the Nordic model; the U.K., from the Anglo-Saxon model; France, Belgium, Austria and Germany typically belonging to the Continental model; and Spain and Italy from the Mediterranean model. Through the use of multivariate cluster analysis, NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics)<sup>1</sup> level-1 regions are grouped according to similar levels of multi-dimensional socio-economic development.

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<sup>1</sup> The NUTS classification has been developed by the European Union for statistical purposes. It is a hierarchical classification of territorial units whereby each Member State is subdivided into NUTS level-1 territorial units, each of which is subdivided into NUTS level-2 territorial units, which in turn are subdivided into NUTS level-3 territorial units. In the year 2011, the EU-27 was subdivided into 97 NUTS-1, 270 NUTS-2 and 1294 NUTS-3 units (EUROSTAT, 2011). While stability of the classification is a regulated priority, the EUROSTAT periodically reviews and updates the number of units within each NUTS-level classification.

Following, in exploring the second research question, we focus on youth inequality and attainments across European regional clusters. This paper contributes to the current literature by going beyond considering just youth unemployment and/or educational attainment, by investigating also the extent of their civic and political participation in diverse socio-economic regional contexts. This is particularly relevant as the European Union's 2020 Youth Strategy (2011) highlights that "young people's participation in representative democracy and civil society at all levels and in society at large should be supported" and it acknowledges social participation as an important form of non-formal learning (European Commission, 2012). While, political participation is a fundamental enabler for youngsters to be represented at the institutional level and not be passive agents of society, but contribute to its development (Mascherini et al. 2007). As Sen (1999) states: "what people can positively achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives. The institutional arrangements for these opportunities are also influenced by the exercise of people's freedoms, through the liberty to participate in social choice and in the making of public decisions that impel the progress of these opportunities". Thus, through the inclusion of these indicators of youth participation, the investigation focuses on young people's attainments or disadvantages as agents of society as a whole.

Finally, the third research question brings us to explore the context-specificity of the interrelations across young people's attainments or disadvantages. Correlation analyses are carried out across dimensions within socio-economic clusters, to observe whether there are significantly different patterns across regional socio-economic contexts. Further, this analysis allows identifying "corrosive" or "fertile" relations amongst these youth dimensions and how these may differ across diverse socio-economic circumstances. The notion of "corrosive disadvantages" is derived from Wolff and de-Shalit (2007), whereby disadvantage is intended as being both plural and dynamic, and corrosive disadvantages as those which accumulate/cluster amongst each other causing a vicious cycle of multiple disadvantages. It follows, that we intend "fertile" attainments to be those that positively accumulate forming a virtuous cycle of attainments. We assume that in diverse socio-economic regional contexts, disadvantages "corrode" and relate to each other differently. Thus, for example, an educational disadvantage in certain contexts may be corrosive to political participation, while it may not be in others; similarly, being neither in education, employment or training (NEETs) may be a corrosive disadvantage in certain contexts, delimiting other opportunities and attainments, but it may not be in others.

Ultimately, this paper contributes to the literature on the assessment of young people's social outcomes, opportunities and inequalities across Europe, as well as to studies exploring the influences played by diverse socio-economic regional contexts. From a policy perspective, it can inform both the targeting and tailoring of social policies aimed at youth, as well as of regional cohesion. In both cases, it does so from a multi-dimensional perspective. Further, through the exploration of context-specific dynamics of disadvantage, policies can be informed on where "corrosive" clustering of disadvantages should be targeted and where, on the other hand,

disadvantages have been successfully “isolated” from or have been positively “fertile” for other important social outcomes of young people.

### **3. Methods**

The analyses presented in this paper draw upon two data sources, EUROSTAT and the Flash EuroBarometer survey “Youth on the Move” (No 319a). Through the integration of information from these two data sources, a comprehensive dataset has been created, which includes multiple contextual socio-economic and youth-relative variables of interest for all NUTS level-1 regions in the nine EU-15 countries selected. The study focuses on year 2011 in order to capture an on-going crisis effect and scenario, which is known to have significantly influenced young people’s opportunities; as well as due to data limitations (especially with regards to young people’s social and political participation).

The choice of the optimal NUTS-level of analysis has been determined, as it typically is done (see Pirani, 2005 and Corrado et al. 2005, for example), by the compromise between the availability of reliable data for selected countries across all variables of interest, and the ability to capture the needed information with enough homogeneity of the territorial unit. The NUTS level-1 has it satisfied these criteria. In particular, a lower level of analysis would not have allowed us to have robust and recent enough data on young people’s social and political participation.

Data on the regional socio-economic contexts has been obtained from EUROSTAT’s online database. EUROSTAT, being the statistical office of the EU, gathers and analyses data from the various national statistical offices across Europe and provides comparable and harmonized datasets for the European Union. It offers information on a number of different topics: such as population demographics, economic well-being and growth, social conditions and finance, amongst others. Annually, EUROSTAT also releases data relative to sub-national levels of analysis – NUTS levels 1, 2 and 3. The contextual indicators selected for the purposes of this paper, amongst the ones provided at regional level by EUROSTAT, were intended to capture both demographic and socio-economic characteristics of 59 NUTS level-1 regions belonging to the nine countries selected (refer to Appendix 2 for a detailed list of countries and associated NUTS-1 level regions considered). As aforementioned, according to a multi-dimensional perspective of socio-economic development, this paper goes beyond focusing exclusively on the regional GDP/per capita by including a series of proxies for the regional educational, labour-market and health-related outcomes – Table 1 provides a list of the variables selected. Through means of multivariate cluster analysis, these contextual indicators are then utilized to derive clusters of regions presenting within-group similar levels of socio-economic development.

With regards to the variables of interest relative to young people’s attainments, indicators of education and labour market outcomes were also derived from the EUROSTAT database at the NUTS level-1. As for the last domain considered, namely that social and political participation, data was drawn from the Flash EuroBarometer survey “Youth on the Move” (No 319a)

conducted in 2011<sup>2</sup>. The survey presents data on a sample of approximately 1000 young people (aged between 15 and 30 years old) per country and gathers information centred on youngsters' participation in society. Being originally micro-level data, for each indicator of participation selected, the average value for each NUTS level-1 region was calculated and adopted. Table 1 presents a summary of the indicators used in the present study.

**Table 1: Selected contextual and youth-relative indicators**

	Data Source	Code
<b>Contextual Indicators</b>		
<i>Demographic Statistics</i>		
Infant mortality rates	Eurostat	Infant_mort
Life expectancy at birth	Eurostat	Life_exp
<i>Socio-economic indicators</i>		
GDP/head at current market prices, EU27 =100	Eurostat	Gdp_pc
Total unemployment rate, ages 15 and over (%)	Eurostat	Unempl
Long-term unemployment as a % of the total unemployment (%)	Eurostat	Long_unem
Population aged 25-64 with upper secondary/tertiary education (%)	Eurostat	High_educ
<b>Youth-Relative Dimensions</b>		
<i>Indicators of outcomes in education</i>		
Students in tertiary education as % of the population aged 20-24 (%)	Eurostat	Stud_enrol
Early leavers from education and training (%)	Eurostat	ELs
Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (%)		NEETs
<i>Indicators of outcomes in the labour market</i>		
Youth Unemployment rate (ages 15-29 as % of population ages 15-29)	Eurostat	Youth_unempl
Youth Long-term unemployment as a % of the total unemployment (%)	Eurostat	Youth_long_un
<i>Indicators of participation</i>		
Participation in either professional organisations; churches or religious organisations; recreational groups; charitable organisations (%)	Flash EB	Social_part
Voted at national elections within the last 3 years (%)	Flash EB	Political_part

The empirical strategy adopted follows a three-steps procedure. First, cluster analysis is used to form cross-national, NUTS level-1 regional clusters that are homogenous along socio-economic characteristics. Second, the average extents of young people's participation in education,

<sup>2</sup> The survey was carried out by telephone interviewing nationally representative samples of young people (aged between 15 and 30) living in the 27 EU Member States. The target sample size in all countries was about 1000 interviews in and a post-stratification weighting of the results was implemented to correct for sampling disparities, on the basis of important socio-demographic variables.

employment, social activities and politics are analysed, also looking at differences by gender, and compared across regional socio-economic clusters. Thus, recurrent inequalities within and between regional contexts are explored. Finally, correlation analyses are performed for each cluster, in order to explore fertile and corrosive associations across young people's outcomes and their context-specificity.

Cluster analysis has been used extensively across disciplines and it has also been adopted as an appropriate technique for classifying different types of administrative divisions (municipalities, regions, countries) in the European Union (Del Campo et al. 2008, Cziraky et al. 2006, Rován and Sambt 2003, Soares et al. 2003). It is an explorative data analysis tool for partitioning a set of observations into a distinct number of meaningful groups (or clusters), where the variability within groups is minimized and the variability between groups is maximized (Heggseth, 2013).

Subsequently to having performed the cluster analysis, we turn to analyse the multi-dimensional youth inequality within and across clusters. We do so by comparing mean values for young people's attainments across the three dimensions of interest: participation in education, employment and in social and politics. Where data is available, we also study gender differences within and across clusters. The analysis looks for repeated inequalities that can be assumed to be somewhat structural within and across clusters and dimensions, as well as by gender sub-groups.

Finally, within-cluster correlation analyses are performed across indicators of youth-relative dimensions. We observe both: 1) the significant corrosive and fertile relations across dimensions within each cluster, and 2) the interplays across dimensions to see if they are context-specific, meaning that they significantly differ across socio-economic regional clusters.

## **4. Results**

The descriptive statistics reported in Table 2 reveal the presence of noticeable socio-economic disparities between the selected European NUTS level-1 regions. In particular, amongst the contextual development indicators, the largest difference refers to the unemployment rate – recoding a ratio of 1:10 between the minimum value of 3%, documented for the Austrian region of Westösterreich, and the maximum of 29.7% in the Canary Islands (Spain). In fact, above 20%-levels of unemployment were reached only for Spanish regions, in the following order: Centre Spain (20.6%), Eastern Spain (21.4%), Southern Spain (29.6%) and the Canary Islands (29.7%).

Long-term unemployment and GDP per capita have a ratio of approximately 1:3 between the lowest and highest values. The lowest GDP per capita levels refer to the South of Italy and the South of Spain, while the highest values are to be found in the large metropolitan areas of Belgium (Région de Bruxelles-Capitale), Germany (Hamburg), France (Île de France) and the U.K. (London). A noticeable difference is also recorded with regards to the percentage of people with upper secondary or tertiary educational attainment: the minimum value, of 45.4%

recorded in Southern Spain, is below half of the population and the highest, 96% in Saxony (Germany), nearly reaches the full population sample of 25-64 years old. The lowest 10-ranking regions are all in Spain and Italy, and the highest ten are mostly in Germany with the exception of Südösterreich in Austria.

Finally, the healthcare indicators present a remarkable difference in infant mortality rates, with a lowest value of 2.3 and a highest of 6.5 per 1000 live births, and a delta of 5.5 years in life expectancy. With regards to life expectancy, the best performing 10<sup>th</sup> percentile unites regions of France, Spain and Italy and the lowest of Germany, U.K., Belgium and France.

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the key indicators**

	<b>Obs.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
<b><u>Contextual Indicators</u></b>					
Infant_mort	59	2.3	6.5	3.54	0.79
Life_exp	59	78.6	84.1	81.23	1.22
Gdp_pc	59	69	247	116.81	35.94
Unempl	59	3	29.7	9.30	5.60
Long_unem	59	18	59	40.87	9.19
High_educ	59	45.4	96	73.85	12.57
<b><u>Youth-Relative Indicators</u></b>					
Stud_enrol	59	35.9	123.6	58.89	16.47
ELs	59	5.2	32.2	14.54	5.73
NEETs	59	4.4	36.7	15.60	6.72
Youth_unempl	59	4.4	43.7	16.0	9.31
Youth_long_un	55	0.7	17.7	5.41	4.31
Social_part	56	27.31	77.87	46.40	8.37
Political_part	56	54.92	94.36	78.17	10.18

Important differences are also noticeable with regards to the dimensions of interest relative to youth. In particular, youth unemployment, with a mean value of 16%, records a dispersion ratio of 1:10, with a minimum value of 4.4%, recorded in Bayern (Germany), and a strikingly high maximum value of 43.7% in the Canary Islands (Spain). Regions in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands occupy the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile of unemployment rate, while those from Italy and Spain the highest. The dispersion ratio rises to 1:25 when considering long-term youth unemployment, but the absolute values are lower: with a minimum of 0.7% and a maximum of 17.7%.

Youngsters' enrolment in tertiary education records a markedly low minimum value of 35.9% in Yorkshire and The Humber (U.K.) relative to the highest value indicating full enrolment<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The highest value is actually of a 123.6% as "the ratio can be higher than 100% in regions with several tertiary education institutions (usually capital regions) which attract a large student population and a large number of students older than 20-24" (European Commission, 2012).

recorded for the region of Brussels (Belgium). Early school leaving (ESL) occurs with a ratio of 1:6 between the lowest values documented in Südösterreich (Austria) and the highest in Southern Spain. The sample mean ESL rate of 14.54% is well above the 10% target set by the European 2020 agenda. The phenomenon of young NEETs presents a mean value of 15%, with a dispersion ratio between the minimum and maximum values recorded of 1:8. The lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile includes regions from the Netherlands and Austria, while the highest groups regions from Spain and Italy (with the exception of Wales in the U.K.).

When it comes to youngster's civic participation, it is found that social participation records an average value of 46.4%, but has a range of 50 percentage points between a maximum value of 77.87% in Northern Ireland (U.K.) and a minimum of 27.31% in Hamburg (Germany). Political participation records a relatively high average of 78.1% and reaches a maximum value of 94.36% in Vlaams Gewest (Belgium); yet, it also presents a low minimum value of 54.92% documented for Southern West U.K.

The remarkable differences across the indicators selected are indicative of important within-Europe, within-States and across regional differences. The investigations in this paper turn to further capture and categorize these patterns through the use of cluster analysis.

#### **4.1 Multi-Variate Cluster Analysis**

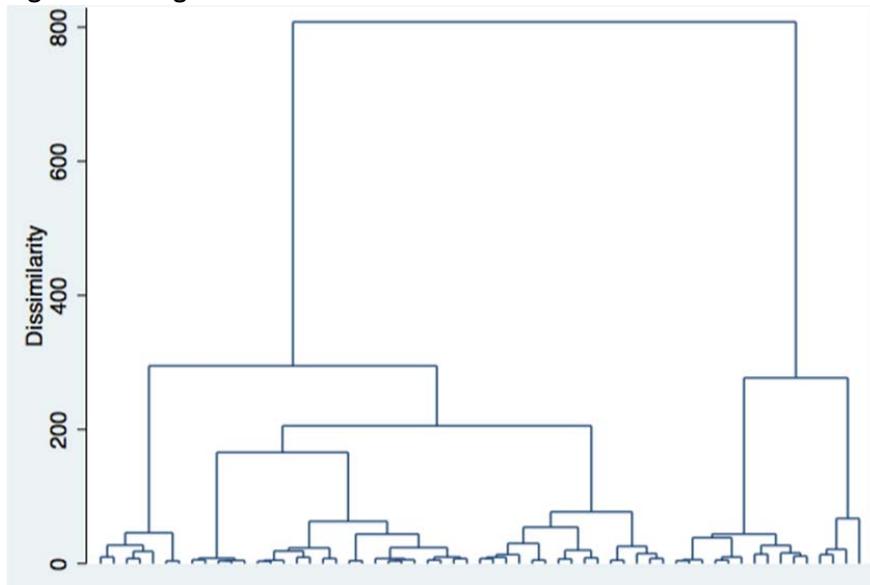
The multivariate cluster analysis presented in this paper was utilized to explore patterns of multi-dimensional socio-economic development within and across countries. In particular, the aim is to investigate the way in which regions cluster within and across nations along common lines of social and economic parameters.

The results of the agglomerative hierarchical clustering procedure, illustrated by the dendrogram<sup>4</sup> (Figure 1), suggest that the selected regions can be reasonably grouped into six clusters.

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<sup>4</sup> The dendrogram provides a visual analysis of the successive increases in the distances at which clusters are merged.

**Fig. 1. Dendrogram from Ward's minimum variance method**



Source: EUROSTAT, Authors' elaboration.

This positioning of the regions within clusters is fine-tuned through the use of a non-hierarchical *k*-means clustering method. The results from this two-step analysis match to a very large extent, with 96,6% of the regions belonging to identical clusters<sup>5</sup>. This is perfectly in line with the literature utilizing this methodology (see for example, del Campo et. al 2008). As custom, the fine-tuned clusters obtained from the *k*-means methodology are utilized from here on. Figure 2 depicts the derived regional clusters, presenting within-group similarities and between-group difference, through a colour-coded map.

Overall the clusters present different extents and characteristics of socio-economic performance: cluster 1, composed of mostly Southern European regions (from Spain and Italy), is the most disadvantaged from a standard economic and labour-market point of view, as well as with respect to educational attainment; however, it outperforms in terms of average years of life expectancy. Cluster 2 groups the Eastern regions of Germany, which outperform in terms of post-compulsory educational attainment, but have the highest long-term unemployment and lowest life expectancy levels. Cluster 3, unites regions mostly from the U.K., France and Germany, that perform well relative to unemployment rates and around sample averages in other respects, apart from recording relatively high infant mortality rates. Regions in Cluster 4 behave along average levels across indicators, but have noticeably below average unemployment rates. Cluster 5 outperforms in terms of the lowest levels of both regular and

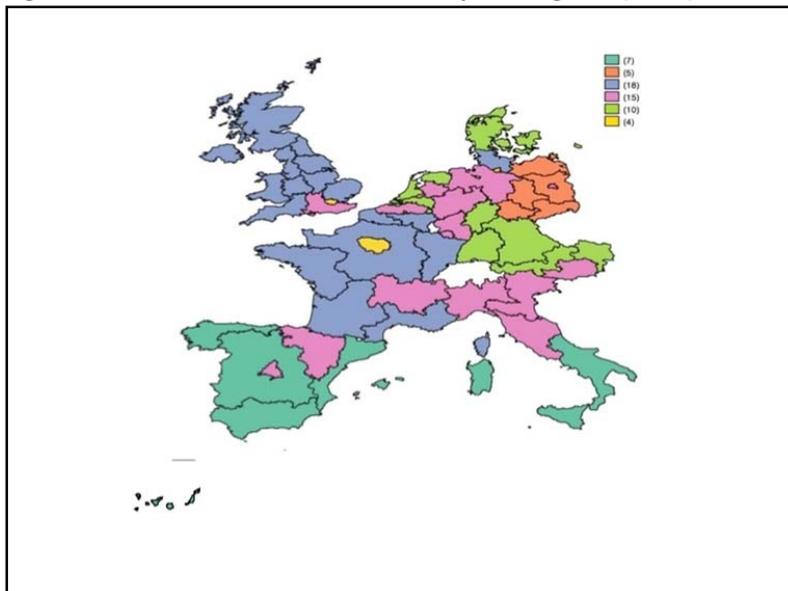
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<sup>5</sup> Only two regions were relocated to other clusters according to the results of the *k*-means analysis: Schleswig-Holstein (DEF) in Germany, which was assigned to the 4th cluster in the hierarchical procure and now belongs to the 3rd cluster; and Vlaams Gewest (BE2) in Belgium, originally belonging to the 5th cluster and now relocated to the 4th one.

long-term unemployment; yet, it registers the highest infant mortality rates. Finally, cluster 6 unites regions with the richest metropolitan areas.

A more in depth analysis of each regional cluster follows, yet, also from this general overview it is apparent that diverse socio-economic performance is recorded within countries and similarities are found both within and across countries at the regional level. Further, a multi-dimensional consideration of development provides additional information that is often not in line with the purely economic performance of the cluster. Both considerations contribute to corroborating the value-added of the analysis.

**Fig. 2. Socio-Economic Clusters of European regions (2011)**



Notes: The numbers of regions per cluster are indicated in brackets next to the colour-legend. The clusters are resultant of the K-means non-hierarchical clustering procedure.

Source: EUROSTAT database. Authors' elaboration.

Descriptive statistics per socio-economic contextual indicators across clusters are reported in Table 3. In order to provide reference values for a more detailed analysis per cluster, average values for the European 27 and for our sample of NUTS level-1 regions are also included<sup>6</sup>.

*Cluster 1* is comprised of seven regions belonging to Spain (5<sup>7</sup>) and Southern Italy (2). It performs well from a public health point of view, presenting below sample average, as well as EU27 average, mortality rates and the highest average years of life expectancy (82 years). However, cluster 1 reveals to be the most economically disadvantaged. It presents the lowest

<sup>6</sup> Please not that given that our selected countries are all part of the EU15, it would have been preferred to utilize the EU15 average statistic of each indicator. However, this data was not available. We therefore decided to utilize both the EU27 average values and that of the selected sample of NUTS level-1 regions.

<sup>7</sup> The number of NUTS level-1 regions per country within cluster is placed in brackets.

level of regional GDP and the highest levels of unemployment rates (20.84%) – noticeably above the 9.3% sample average and the 9.6% EU27 average. Notably, with a value of 49.24%, the percentage of population with post-compulsory educational attainment is strikingly low – well below the sample average of 73.85% and of 73.3% of the EU27. Importantly, neither all of Spanish nor Italian regions fit in this cluster: providing evidence for important within-State, as well as cross-national and cross-social models differences effectively captured at the regional level. To sum up, this cluster is renamed: ***“Most Economically Disadvantaged, but Higher Life Expectancy”***

*Cluster 2* groups five regions that make up for what used to be Eastern Germany (with the exclusion of the metropolitan area of Berlin) and which, interestingly, reveal to still perform along quite different socio-economic lines compared to the rest of Germany. This cluster records below sample and EU27 average levels of GDP (89.6% relative to the EU27 mean) and well below the mean GDP of the other clusters comprised of regions belonging to Germany – cluster 4 and 5, with respectively 118.8% and 148.27% relative average GDP. Cluster 2 also has below mean, both sample and EU27, levels of unemployment. However, it records the highest levels of long-term unemployed. Noticeably, with a value of 94.6, it has the highest percentage of population with upper secondary or tertiary education. This cluster is renamed: ***“Highest Post-Compulsory Educational Attainment”***.

*Cluster 3* is formed by 18 regions jointly encompassing the majority of the United Kingdom and of France, while also including a Belgian and German region. It presents a slight relative disadvantage with regards to the health-related indicators: recording mean infant mortality rates and years of life expectancy respectively above and below sample average, however both are marginally better (respectively below and above) than the EU27 average levels. On the other hand, this cluster generally performs along sample average values in terms of economic and labour market performance. This cluster will be renamed: ***“Average Socio-Economic Performance”***.

*Cluster 4* comprises 15 regions belonging to Northern Germany and Berlin, Centre and Northern Italy, South-Eastern U.K., the Eastern central region of France, the Western Netherlands, Southern Austria and Southern Belgium. It groups regions across countries that are relatively well-off, in terms of the multi-dimensional indicators considered. The average mortality rate recorded is below sample and EU27 average; the years of life expectancy are the second highest in the sample. The average GDP is 20.6 percentage points above the EU27 average and just over 3 percentage points above the sample mean. With a value of 7.37%, the mean unemployment rate is below both EU27 and sample average, while the long-term unemployment rate is in line with the sample mean. An average of 74% of the population have attained upper secondary or tertiary education – surpassing both the EU27 and the sample mean values, respectively of 73.3% and 73.85%. This cluster can be renamed to: ***“Well-Off European Regions”***.

*Cluster 5* unites 10 regions jointly from Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and Denmark. From a healthcare point of view, it presents a state of disadvantage with the highest

sample average infant mortality rates and below sample (although above EU27) mean years of life expectancy. However, in contrast, it records the second highest sample mean GDP – 49 percentage points above the EU27 average; and the lowest level of unemployment – with a score of 4.92% that is well below the sample and EU averages, respectively of 9.3% and 9.6%; and over 15 percentage points lower than the highest value recorded across the six clusters (recorded for cluster 1). It also holds the lowest long-term unemployment rate. This cluster will be labelled as regions with a **“High Labour Market Performance”**.

*Cluster 6* unites four regions encompassing the richest metropolitan areas – Hamburg in Germany, Île de France (where Paris is) in France, the region of Brussels in Belgium and of London in the U.K. This cluster performs particularly well from a purely standard economic point of view, recording the highest average level of GDP – that is over double that of the EU27. Yet, it records a level of unemployment over both sample and EU27 means, and an above average (both sample and EU27) mean long-term unemployment. It records slightly above average (both sample and EU27) higher education attainment levels, with a value of 76% of the population having completed upper secondary or tertiary education. From a healthcare point of view, the cluster marks slightly above average infant mortality rates and sample average (higher than the EU27 mean) years of life expectancy. This cluster is renamed: **“Richest Metropolitan Areas”**.

The aforementioned results from the multivariate cluster analysis provide evidence that socio-economic development varies across Europe, and that it does so not particularly at the national level but within and across nations, at the regional level. In fact, clusters of regions, highly similar in terms of multi-dimensional socio-economic development within clusters and diverse between them, are formed across countries. Furthermore, the results repeatedly indicate that the regional groups’ economic performance purely measured in terms of GDP per capita is not strictly in line with the extent of unemployment, and it is even less consistent with or indicative of the educational and public health attainments. Thereby confirming the value-added of a multivariate analysis that allows depicting the diverse contexts more comprehensively, on the basis of which to also potentially better tailor policies.

**Table 3: Descriptive socio-economic statistics per NUTS-1 level regional clusters (2011)**

	<b>Cluster 1</b> <i>“Most Economically Disadvantaged, but Higher Life Expectancy”</i>	<b>Cluster 2</b> <i>“Highest Post-Compulsory Educational Attainment”</i>	<b>Cluster 3</b> <i>“Average Socio-Economic Performance”</i>	<b>Cluster 4</b> <i>“Well-Off European Regions”</i>	<b>Cluster 5</b> <i>“High Labour Market Performance”</i>	<b>Cluster 6</b> <i>“Richest Metropolitan Areas”</i>	<b>EU27</b>	<b>Sample</b>
	Mean (Min – Max)	Mean (Min – Max)	Mean (Min – Max)	Mean (Min – Max)	Mean (Min – Max)	Mean (Min – Max)	Mean (Min – Max)	Mean (Min – Max)
<b>Infant_mort</b>	3.36 (2.8 – 3.7)	2.76 (2.3 – 3.7)	3.72 (2.7 – 5.8)	3.39 (2.5 – 5)	3.90 (2.9 – 6.5)	3.65 (2.7 – 4.1)	3.9 (1.9 – 10.6)	3.54 (2.3 – 6.5)
<b>Life_exp</b>	82.01 (81.2 – 83.1)	80.02 (79.4 – 80.8)	80.74 (78.6 – 83)	81.83 (79.8 – 84.1)	81.07 (79.9 – 82.2)	81.75 (80.8 – 83.7)	80.3 (73.5 – 84.1)	81.23 (78.6 – 84.1)
<b>Gdp_pc</b>	77.14 (69 – 95)	89.6 (87 – 93)	96.89 (79 – 108)	120.6 (113 – 134)	149.70 (150 – 165)	213.5 (194 – 247)	100 (15 – 320)	116.81 (69 – 247)
<b>Unempl</b>	20.84 (13.3 – 29.7)	9.28 (7.6 – 10.4)	8.7 (5.9 – 12.8)	7.37 (3.3 – 16.7)	4.92 (3 – 7.9)	10.12 (5.4 – 16.9)	9.6 (3.0 – 29.7)	9.30 (3 – 29.7)
<b>Long_unem</b>	46.08 (40 – 58)	54.96 (52.4 – 59)	38.13 (28.7 – 52.7)	40.97 (25.4 – 52.2)	33.07 (18 – 40.7)	45.6 (32.9 – 58.1)	43 (17.4 – 67.9)	40.87 (18 – 59)
<b>High_educ</b>	49.24 (45.4 – 53.2)	94.6 (93.1 – 96)	73.63 (66.3 – 87.5)	74.29 (58.8 – 86.1)	79.36 (70.4 – 87.1)	76.6 (67.3 – 85)	73.3 (21.2 – 96)	73.85 (45.4 – 96)

Source: EUROSTAT. Authors' elaborations.

## 4.2 Young people's attainments within and between clusters

The second research question addressed by this paper investigates how young people's participation and attainment in education, the labour market and in society at large, in terms of social and political participation, varies within and across diverse socio-economic European regional clusters. In fact, noticeable inequalities in young peoples' outcomes are recorded both within countries and between socio-economic regional clusters, as reported in Table 4.

The cluster of *"Most Economically Disadvantaged, but Higher Life Expectancy"* regions, records a repeated, potentially structural, disadvantage across youth dimensions of interest (relative to the other socio-economic contexts). In fact, this cluster records the highest average rates of early school leavers, with a mean value of 26.54% that is well above the 10% target set by the European 2020 agenda. The rate is even higher for males (30.94%). It also presents the greatest proportion of young NEETs, the highest levels of long-term youth unemployment and the average youth unemployment rate is also remarkably higher than that of other clusters. Importantly, the lowest levels of social and political agency are also recorded in this cluster.

On the contrary, the cluster of regions with *"High Labour Market Performance"* repeatedly outperforms the others in terms of young people's average outcomes. It records the lowest mean value of young NEETs (8.18%) and of youth unemployment (7.70%), with the average long-term youth unemployment being as low as 1.20%. This cluster also records the highest levels of social participation, with over 50% of youngsters involved in social organizations. The political participation rate is also high with 84.73% of youth having voted in the national elections in the last three years. Thus, it seems that within these regions, characterised by a high labour market performance for the general population, on average also young people actively participate more in the labour market as well as in society as a whole.

The cluster uniting regions with the *"highest post-compulsory educational attainment"* stands out for the exceptionally low average levels of early school leaving: with a rate of 9.74%, it is both below the European Commission's 2020 headline target of 10% and over 16 percentage points lower than the value of the worst-performing cluster. This finding relative to youth is particularly in line with the overall socio-economic context recording high levels of post-compulsory education. Nevertheless, and in contrast, it also holds the lowest mean levels of youth enrolment in tertiary education. Thus, we can presume that a high proportion of young people leave school after upper secondary education. This cluster also records the highest levels of political participation.

**Table 4: Youth's outcomes by cluster (2011)**

	<u>Cluster 1</u> <i>"Most Economically Disadvantaged, but Higher Life Expectancy"</i>	<u>Cluster 2</u> <i>"Highest Post-Compulsory Educational Attainment"</i>	<u>Cluster 3</u> <i>"Average Socio-Economic Performance"</i>	<u>Cluster 4</u> <i>"Well-Off European Regions"</i>	<u>Cluster 5</u> <i>"High Labour Market Performance"</i>	<u>Cluster 6</u> <i>"Richest Metropolitan Areas"</i>
<b>Stud_enrol</b>	62.83	46.1	48.12	64.43	64.11	82.52
<b>ELs</b>	26.54	9.74	14.54	13.69	10.33	13.3
Male ELs	30.94	10.72	16.25	15.63	10.74	14.92
Female ELs	21.91	8.66	12.77	11.82	8.22	11.7
<b>NEETs</b>	26.88	12.16	18.12	13.39	8.18	15.6
Male NEETs	27.57	11.64	16.89	12.56	6.81	15.2
Female NEETs	26.16	12.82	19.35	14.58	8.92	16.02
<b>Youth_unempl</b>	35.73	11.06	16.7	13.10	7.70	15.57
Male Youth_unempl	35.33	12.02	17.53	13.13	7.36	16.35
Female Youth_unempl	36.53	9.82	15.71	13.49	7.14	14.7
<b>Youth_long_un</b>	14.26	3.9	4.91	4.43	1.20	6.83
Male Youth_long_un	14.16	4.9	5.76	4.67	1.36	7.56
Female Youth_long_un	14.59	4.25	4.51	4.66	1.18	6.00
<b>Social_part</b>	39.76	43.94	47.08	47.28	52.52	39.70
<b>Political_part</b>	73.07	86.13	73.82	79.73	84.73	78.49

Source: EUROSTAT and the Flash EuroBarometer survey "Youth on the Move" (No 319a). Authors' elaborations.

In the cluster grouping regions with “*average socio-economic performance*”, although its overall regional socio-economic performance is along sample average levels, young people are relatively disadvantaged. It records the second lowest value of tertiary educational enrolment, the second highest value of ESLs, NEETs and of youth unemployment. It also registers low levels of political participation.

The group of relatively “*well-off European regions*” presents similar average values of youth performance to the cluster of regional “*average socio-economic performance*”. However, in well-off European regions we find higher tertiary school enrolment (64% versus only 49%) and slightly lower proportion of NEETs and youth unemployment rates.

Finally, the “*richest metropolitan areas*” stand out for recording significantly higher levels of youngsters’ enrolment in tertiary education. This is coherent with the literature (European Commission, 2012), which attests that capital regions tend to group several tertiary education institutions, attracting a large student population.

Thus, overall, a series of inequalities across youth dimensions occur across clusters. The results also highlight that young females are structurally disadvantaged with respect to young male across all clusters with regards to being NEET. Conversely, females record lower than male average levels of ESL across all contexts.

### **4.3 Context-specificity of inter-relations between young people’s attainments and disadvantages**

After having derived regional clusters along lines of socio-economic development and having explored youth inequalities within and across these contexts, the analysis focuses on revealing significant corrosive or fertile correlations within-clusters across young people’s participation in the labour-market, education and society as a whole. In so doing, the context-specificity of these interplays is also explored.

The results, presented in Table 5, indicate that in the cluster of “*Most Economically Disadvantaged, but Higher Life Expectancy*” regions, early school leaving, long-term unemployment and being neither in employment, education or training are corrosive disadvantages. They accumulate and aliment each other, causing situations of multiple disadvantages. On the other hand, student enrolment in tertiary education reveals to be a fertile achievement, negatively correlated with both NEET status and long-term unemployment.

In the regional cluster characterized by “*highest post-compulsory educational attainment*”, early school leaving is strongly significantly and positively correlated with youngsters’ NEET status and unemployment, as well as with youth long-term unemployment (although with a lower significance level). Further, NEET status is corrosively correlated with youth unemployment and long-term unemployment; and being unemployed is significantly related to long-term unemployment. However, importantly, these disadvantages do not seem to be

significantly impactful on the extent of youngster's social and political participation. Thus, in this socio-economic context, there may be effective policies in place that are able to isolate young people's inactivity in the labour market from affecting their agency in society and politics.

The cluster of regional "*average socio-economic performance*" presents a significant fertile correlation between students' enrolment in tertiary education and youth's political participation. On the other hand, early school leaving is significantly corrosive to youth political agency. Early school leaving is also highly significantly correlated with being NEET, in a corrosive manner. In turn, being NEET results being corrosively correlated to youth short and long-term unemployment. Finally, youth unemployment is significantly correlated to long-term unemployment, yet neither are significantly related to youngster's civic participation. Thus, in the socio-economic context represented by this cluster, educational attainment seems to be key to enhancing political participation and to avoid being NEET. Conversely, disadvantages on the labour market aliment each other, but do not corrode other forms of participation.

**Table 5: Correlation across young people's outcomes within regional socio-economic clusters (2011)**

	Stud_enrol	ELs	NEETs	Youth_unempl	Youth_long_un	Social_part	Political_part
<b>CLUSTER 1:</b>							
Stud_enrol	1.000						
ELs	-0.0976	1.000					
NEETs	<b>-0.6984*</b>	-0.1493	1.000				
Youth_unempl	-0.2868	<b>0.8918***</b>	-0.0515	1.000			
Youth_long_un	<b>-0.8373**</b>	0.0952	<b>0.9024***</b>	0.3134	1.000		
Social_part	-0.4373	0.1913	0.6046	0.0762	0.4594	1.000	
Political_part	0.2030	-0.0677	<b>-0.7803**</b>	0.0249	-0.5839	-0.5867	1.000
<b>CLUSTER 2:</b>							
Stud_enrol	1.000						
ELs	-0.6828	1.000					
NEETs	-0.5595	<b>0.9796***</b>	1.000				
Youth_unempl	-0.7162	<b>0.9657***</b>	<b>0.9673***</b>	1.000			
Youth_long_un	-0.2917	<b>0.8548*</b>	<b>0.9413**</b>	<b>0.8764*</b>	1.000		
Social_part	0.5417	0.1874	0.3155	0.0480	0.6452	1.000	
Political_part	0.3163	-0.7974	-0.8515	-0.7659	-0.8362	-0.1171	1.000
<b>CLUSTER 3:</b>							
Stud_enrol	1.000						
ELs	-0.2759	1.000					
NEETs	-0.0170	<b>0.7661***</b>	1.000				
Youth_unempl	0.2899	0.2227	<b>0.6714***</b>	1.000			
Youth_long_un	0.3103	0.2574	<b>0.5624**</b>	<b>0.8213***</b>	1.000		
Social_part	0.0933	0.1710	0.0450	-0.2860	-0.1786	1.000	
Political_part	<b>0.5071**</b>	<b>-0.4335*</b>	-0.3972	0.0529	0.1666	-0.1528	1.000

Notes: (1) \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 1% level, \*\* indicates significance at 5% level and \* indicates significance at 10% level

Source: EUROSTAT and the Flash EuroBarometer survey "Youth on the Move" (No 319a). Authors' elaborations

	Stud_enrol	ELs	NEETs	Youth_unempl	Youth_long_un	Social_part	Political_part
<b>CLUSTER 4:</b>							
Stud_enrol	1.000						
ELs	0.3911	1.000					
NEETs	<b>0.5354**</b>	<b>0.8111***</b>	1.000				
Youth_unempl	<b>0.8136***</b>	<b>0.7424***</b>	<b>0.7668***</b>	1.000			
Youth_long_un	<b>0.8408***</b>	<b>0.7906***</b>	<b>0.8404***</b>	<b>0.9295***</b>	1.000		
Social_part	<b>-0.6366**</b>	<b>-0.5534**</b>	<b>-0.7377***</b>	<b>-0.6720***</b>	<b>-0.8437***</b>	1.000	
Political_part	-0.3733	<b>-0.8152***</b>	<b>-0.5625* *</b>	<b>-0.7489***</b>	<b>-0.5502*</b>	<b>0.5267*</b>	1.000
<b>CLUSTER 5:</b>							
Stud_enrol	1.000						
ELs	0.1565	1.000					
NEETs	0.2643	<b>0.8905***</b>	1.000				
Youth_unempl	<b>0.7990***</b>	0.4765	<b>0.5940*</b>	1.000			
Youth_long_un	<b>0.7445**</b>	0.2197	<b>0.6800**</b>	<b>0.7929**</b>	1.000		
Social_part	<b>-0.6811**</b>	<b>-0.5908*</b>	-0.5246	<b>-0.8513***</b>	-0.4388	1.000	
Political_part	0.4299	-0.5186	0.2079	0.2248	-0.1523	-0.1713	1.000
<b>CLUSTER 6:</b>							
Stud_enrol	1.000						
ELs	<b>0.9853**</b>	1.000					
NEETs	0.7884	0.7536	1.000				
Youth_unempl	0.7219	0.6472	<b>0.9692**</b>	1.000			
Youth_long_un	<b>0.9933 *</b>	<b>1.0000***</b>	0.9258	0.9723	1.000		
Social_part	-0.2464	-0.3252	0.3756	0.4920	-0.6601	1.000	
Political_part	0.4830	0.3313	0.6312	0.7969	0.6086	0.4787	1.000

Notes: (1) \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 1% level, \*\* indicates significance at 5% level and \* indicates significance at 10% level.

Source: EUROSTAT and the Flash EuroBarometer survey "Youth on the Move" (No 319a). Authors' elaborations.

In the cluster of relatively *“well-off European regions”*, while presenting a context of generally good structural socio-economic conditions, young people seem to be particularly at risk of multiple forms of exclusion, and even tertiary education enrolment is unable to have a fertile effect on a series of labour-market and socio-political disadvantages. Further, and in contrast with the regional cluster of *“average socio-economic performance”*, disadvantages in the labour market corrode youngsters’ participation as agents of society at large. While, forms of social and political agency reveal to be important in fostering each other.

The group of regions with *“high labour market performance”* present corrosive relations between tertiary education enrolment and social participation, as probably education reduces time for extra curricular activities. However, enrolment in tertiary education is also significantly positively correlated with youth unemployment – although this may be a short-term substituting effect. Early school leaving is highly and corrosively correlated to being NEET and lacking social participation. In turn, NEET status correlates with both short and long-term youth disadvantage; and unemployment seems to be a corrosive disadvantage for long-term unemployment and social participation.

Finally, in the cluster of *“rich metropolitan areas”*, early school leaving has a strong corrosive correlation with long-term youth unemployment, as NEET status has it with short-term youth unemployment. However, none of the conditions of disadvantage considered seem to significantly effect youth political and social involvement.

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

This paper focused on analysing patterns of multi-dimensional inequality for youth within and across nine selected EU15 countries.

First, NUTS level-1 regions were clustered along similar levels of multi-dimensional socio-economic development, drawing upon indicators of healthcare, educational, labour market progress as well as purely economic growth. This allows for an innovative, cross-national and cross-welfare systems categorization of diverse European socio-economic contexts. The results of the multivariate cluster analysis provide evidence that socio-economic development noticeably varies across Europe, as well as within countries. Indeed, six clusters of diverse socio-economic contexts were formed and five of them grouped regions pertaining to more than one country (only the regions of Eastern Germany clustered together without territories from other countries, yet Germany itself had regions distributed along four clusters.). The clusters were renamed as follows: *“Most Economically Disadvantaged, but Higher Life Expectancy”*, *“Highest Post-Compulsory Educational Attainment”*, *“Average Socio-Economic Performance”*, *“Well-Off European Regions”*, *“High Labour Market Performance”* and *“Richest Metropolitan Areas”*.

These titles are clearly further illustrate the variety of socio-economic characteristics detected. Further, the results repeatedly indicate that the regional groups’ economic performance purely measured in terms of GDP per capita is not strictly in line with the extent of aggregate

unemployment, and it is even less consistent with or indicative of the educational and public health attainments. Thereby confirming the value-added of a multivariate analysis that allows depicting the diverse contexts more comprehensively, on the basis of which to also potentially better tailor policies.

Following, young people's multi-dimensional attainments or disadvantages within and across each socio-economic contextual cluster were investigated. The analysis reveals that young peoples' educational, labour market and civic participation markedly differ across clusters. Also, in some cases young people's outcomes are not strictly in line with those of the aggregate socio-economic scenario, confirming the fact that they constitute an important population sub-group, one that has been uniquely affected by the 2008 economic crisis, and that requires group-specific, contextualized, tailored policies.

It is found that in regions characterised by a high labour market performance for the aggregate population, on average also young people actively participate more in the labour market, but importantly also in society as a whole by being more socially and politically active. While in the cluster of economically deprived regions that however outperform in terms of health related outcomes, young people are relatively disadvantaged across educational, labour market, political and social forms of participation compared to other contexts. In relatively well-off and average performing regions, young people reveal below average attainments. The highest educational attainments are recorded in the rich metropolitan areas.

Finally, an analysis of inter-relations across young people's outcomes within contextual clusters, revealed the corrosive or fertile nature of forms of educational, labour market, political and social participation and their context-specificity, namely intersectionality. The analyses provided evidence for significant context-specific interplays across dimensions. There are socio-economic clusters in which youth disadvantages are "isolated", such as in the regions with *"average socio-economic performance"* where disadvantages on the labour market alight each other, but do not corrode other spheres of youth participation. While, there are situations in which disadvantages accumulate within and across forms of participation, as in the case of early school leaving in the context of *"well-off European regions"* that corrodes both labour market performance and social and political agency. However, one particularly cross-cutting corrosive disadvantage seems to be early school leaving: a positive, corrosive, correlation between early school leaving and young unemployment or NEET status persists across all cluster. However, depending on the socio-economic context, the corrosive influence of early school leaving is more or less isolated from influencing young people's social and political participation.

In conclusion, overall, this paper importantly contributes to the literature on measuring both development and attainments in terms of multi-dimensional outcomes. It feeds into the literature on European regional cohesion and categorization of socio-economic performance; as well as on that focusing on young people's attainments and disadvantages, which has particularly developed since the 2008 economic crisis. Finally, it highlights the role of inter-relations across spheres of attainments and the role of the socio-economic context and policies

for enabling virtuous relations and delimiting “corrosive” ones. Further analysis could build upon this work by integrating micro-level data so to be able to provide more statistically elaborate and significant analysis the dynamics hereby introduced.

## Appendix 2

**Table I: Sampled Countries and associated NUTS level-1 Regions**

Countries	N. Regions	Nuts-1 code	Nuts-1 Regions
Austria	3	AT1	Ostösterreich
		AT2	Südösterreich
		AT3	Westösterreich
Belgium	3	BE1	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale
		BE2	Vlaams Gewest
		BE3	Région wallonne
Germany	16	DE1	Baden-Württemberg
		DE2	Bayern
		DE3	DE2
		DE4	Berlin
		DE5	Brandenburg
		DE6	Bremen
		DE7	Hamburg
		DE8	Hessen
		DE9	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
		DEA	Niedersachsen
		DEB	Nordrhein-Westfalen
		DEC	DEA
		DED	Rheinland-Pfalz
		DEE	Saarland
		DEF	Sachsen
		DEG	Sachsen-Anhalt
Spain	7	ES1	Schleswig-Holstein
		ES2	Thüringen
		ES3	Noroeste
		ES4	Noreste
		ES5	Comunidad de Madrid
		ES6	Centro
		ES7	Este
United Kingdom	12	UKC	Sur
		UKD	Canarias
		UKE	
		UKF	
		UKG	
		UKH	
		UKI	
		UKJ	
		UKK	
		UKL	
		UKM	
		UKN	
Denmark	1	DK0	Denmark
France	8 <sup>27</sup>	FR1	Île de France
		FR2	Bassin Parisien
		FR3	Nord - Pas-de-Calais
		FR4	Est
		FR5	Ouest
		FR6	Sud-Ouest
		FR7	Centre-Est
		FR8	Méditerranée
Italy	5	ITC	Nord-Ovest
		ITH	Nord-Est
		ITI	Centro
		ITF	Sud
		ITG	Isole
Netherland	4	NL1	Noord-Nederland
		NL2	Oost-Nederland
		NL3	West-Nederland
		NL4	Zuid-Nederland
United Kingdom	12	UKC	North East
		UKD	North West
		UKE	Yorkshire and The Humber
		UKF	East Midlands
		UKG	West Midlands
		UKH	East of England
		UKI	London
		UKJ	South East
		UKK	South West
		UKL	Wales
		UKM	Scotland
		UKN	Northern Ireland

<sup>27</sup> We do not include France's "Départements d'Outre Mer".

# Technical Report

## 1. Introductory overview

### 1.1 State of the art

- ⇒ The measurement, assessment and potential targeting of economic and social inequality have been at the center of the political and academic debate throughout the latest European economic crisis;
- ⇒ To date, European analyses have predominantly taken the nation as principal unit of analysis. However, comparative studies across countries are of increasing importance, in order to understand how diverse policies, conditions and contexts can determine different outcomes. Further, within countries inequalities has also been emphasized. In fact, in comparative approaches the “regional” unit (i.e. a subnational administrative unit) has ample significance as unit of investigation as deep differences exist within nations, and these wide imbalances would be hidden under an exclusively aggregate analysis.
- ⇒ Youth represents one of the most vulnerable groups in today’s European societies.
- ⇒ So far, the literature has considered different and often overlapping domains of disadvantage and in particular youth disadvantage, but the main focus, both academically and politically, has by far been placed on the education and employment and on the links between the two.

### 1.2 Goal

- ⇒ Our main focus is on examining youth inequalities in the domains of education, employment and participation (social and political) across and within selected European countries before and after the crisis.
- ⇒ We want to study whether and to what extent the crisis has affected youth’s opportunities over time across different European countries and regions.
- ⇒ Inequality is framed in terms of opportunities as well as outcomes and it is investigated from a multidimensional perspective, which goes beyond the mainstream notion of inequality in terms of income. We also go beyond the spheres of employment and education, the interconnections of which have been extensively investigated, by including an analysis of youngsters’ social and political participation.
- ⇒ Finally, acknowledging the importance of the context one lives in, the analysis is carried out both at the national and at the macro-regional level (NUTS-1 level), controlling for relevant contextual factors that may act as “fertile” or “corrosive” conversion factors.

### 1.3 Challenges

- ⇒ Assessing the effect of the crisis requires longitudinal data, covering the pre and post (or ongoing) crisis period, thus including data that is as recent as possible, and with – ideally-repeated questions, which can be compared over time.
- ⇒ The need to adopt a multidimensional perspective orients our search toward multiple data sources, able to capture the complexity of the processes involving youth's opportunities deprivations, including their social and political participation.
- ⇒ To take into account the importance of the context one lives in and to avoid hiding the wide imbalances existing within countries, the data related to youngsters' multiple domains of disadvantages, as well as background information, ought to be disaggregated by regional (NUTS-1) level.

To recap, ideally, we would need a longitudinal and multifaceted dataset, continually collecting information over time on a variety of youth well-being domains and contextual indicators, measured at the national and regional unit.

However:

- ⇒ Up to date, most recent, data are often difficult to find and often are not available within the year of reference.
- ⇒ Harmonized longitudinal data is not equally available for all countries and on all the dimensions of interest to us [especially on social and political participation].
- ⇒ The majority of European statistics are still recorded only at the national level and certain fields are not addressed by NUTS-1 level information, or the latter is not statistically representative.
- ⇒ Moreover, since our focus is on a specific age group (youth aged 15-29), we need a sample size large enough to allow equally precise estimates across European countries, as well as comparisons between population sub-groups with respect to basic demographic variables, such as age.
- ⇒ Further, to measure inequalities of opportunities, over and above that of outcomes, we need to control for exogenous background, as parental educational achievement and socio-economic status, and demographic variables, as gender and ethnicity. Again, we need a large enough sample so to partition or control for these variables.

Unfortunately, such a rich, multidimensional and broad dataset does not exist.

### 1.4 Solution

- ⇒ First, we decided to focus on the latest year for which data are made available, in our case this happened to be year 2011. Even if the crisis was still ongoing, its effects were already substantial in 2011.

- ⇒ Second, we found a series of appropriate data sources to meet the methodological requirements specified above (e.g. longitudinal representative data on youth and context, disaggregated by national and regional level).
- ⇒ Third, we define a suitable methodology for integrating and harmonizing the data derived from these multiple statistical sources and measured at different administrative unit levels (e.g. national, macro-regional, regional)

## 2. Data sources

### 2.1 Introduction

- ⇒ **Contextual Data:** objective information accounting for the socio-economic context was drawn from Eurostat. [Eurostat provides the European Union with socio-economic and demographic statistics that enable comparisons between European countries and, most importantly for our purposes, regions.]
- ⇒ **Education and Employment Indicators:** with regards to the spheres of youth opportunities under examination, indicators of education and labour market outcomes were also derived from the Eurostat dataset.
- ⇒ **Participation Indicators:** As for the last domain of youth well-being considered – participation, both social and political –, because of data limitations across time and at NUTS-1 level (see sections 2.3 and 2.4 for further details), we use data from two different sample sources: the European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EUSILC) 2006 module and the Flash Eurobarometer on Youth Participation.

#### a) EUROSTAT

- *Macro-level dataset*
- *Type:* Panel
- *Regions:* all European Countries
- *Unit level:* Country, Region

#### *ij) Brief overview and selected indicators*

Eurostat gathers and analyses figures from the national statistical offices across Europe and provides comparable and harmonized data for the European Union in a number of different themes, such as population and social conditions, or economy and finance.

Among the contextual statistics available at regional level in Eurostat, we select indicators describing both demographic characteristics and socio-economic environment and referring to 2006 and 2011.

- ⇒ Demographic statistics include: the population density, the infant mortality rate, and the life expectancy at birth.
- ⇒ The socio-economic environment is assessed by: the gross domestic product (GDP) per inhabitant at current market prices, both in absolute level and as a percentage of the European average; three different unemployment rates (total, for women and for men), long term unemployment rate; and the percentage of population aged 25-64 with upper secondary or tertiary education.

Eurostat gathers information, disaggregated by gender and region, also about young people performances in education and in the labour market.

- ⇒ The indicators of educational outcomes selected are: number of students in tertiary education as percentage of the population aged 20-24, the percentage of early leavers from education and training - aged 18-24 -, the percentage of young people (aged 18-24) neither in employment nor in education and training.
- ⇒ The labour market attachment of young people is measured by different rates: the unemployment rate for youth in general (from age 15 to age 29) and for specific age groups (15-19, 20-24, 25-29), and the youth long-term unemployment rate (12 months or longer).

#### ***ii) Pros and cons***

- ⇒ Demographic statistics are almost complete for all the selected countries and NUTS-1 regions. The only exceptions are Italy and the United Kingdom.
  - As for Italy, in 2006 the three demographic indicators were not available for two NUTS-1 regions (e.g. Nord-Est and Centro). Therefore, these pieces of information are missing in our final dataset.
  - As for the United Kingdom, the indicators of population density and life expectancy at birth were available only at national level in 2011. However, Eurostat statistics referring to 2012 provide information about these indicators also for the UK regions. Therefore, data from 2012 are used to supplement missing information at regional level for UK in 2011.
- ⇒ Socio-economic statistics are complete for all the selected countries and NUTS-1 regions, both in 2006 and in 2011.
- ⇒ Despite the presence of few random missing observations for different NUTS-1 regions, statistics of young people performances in education and in the labour market are almost complete. The only significance exception is provided by Austria: both in 2006 and in 2011 the indicator of youth long term unemployment was not available for two NUTS-1 regions (e.g. Südösterreich and Westösterreich). Therefore, these pieces of information are missing in our final dataset.

⇒ Other useful information is not available at regional level. For example, the persistency of poverty risk, inequality of income distribution, or public expenditure in education or social benefits as percentage of GDP, are computed just at national level.

## **b) EUSILC**

- *Micro-level dataset*
- *Type:* Longitudinal/Cross-sectional
- *Regions:* EU member states
- *Target population:* all private households and their current members residing in the territory of the countries at the time of data collection<sup>28</sup>.
- *Unit level:* Individual/Household

### **i) Overview**

The European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) collects timely and comparable cross-sectional and longitudinal multidimensional microdata on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions since 2004. Two kinds of variables are collected in EU-SILC: the primary and secondary variables:

⇒ The primary variables are collected every year and refer either to households or to individuals (for person aged 16 and more). These variables are regrouped into domains:

- Basic data, housing, material deprivation, and income at household level.
- Basic/demographic data, education, health, labour and income at individual level.

⇒ Secondary variables are collected less frequently in the so-called ad-hoc modules, which include information either at household or personal level about specific topics. Over time, examples of the topics addressed are:

- 2013 module: Well-being
- 2011 module: Intergenerational transmission of disadvantages
- 2009 module: Material deprivation
- 2007 module: Housing conditions
- 2006 module: Social and Cultural Participation

### **ii) Selected indicators**

For our purposes, we select indicators on young people's participation in society from the 2006 EU-SILC ad hoc module on social participation. Different social and cultural activities were

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<sup>28</sup> Note that all household members are surveyed, but only those aged 16 and more are interviewed.

included in this module, which can be grouped into four dimensions: cultural participation, contacts with friends and family, informal help and participation in associations.

We focus on participation in associations and define a dichotomous indicator of social participation which takes value 1 if young people participate in at least one of the following: professional organisations; churches or religious organisations; recreational groups; charitable organisations; other groups and 0 otherwise. We also include, as a rough proxy of political participation, the indicators of participation in political parties or trade unions.

### **iii) Pros**

- ⇒ The samples of the EuSilc are designed for comparative analysis among national populations, and the sample size (between 11000 and 14500 respondents for each country) allows equally precise estimates for small and large countries, as well as comparisons between sub-groups with respect to basic demographic variables.
- ⇒ It includes information on the census region of respondents, classified at NUTS level, thus allowing us to describe the context in which individuals are embedded.
- ⇒ It provides huge amount of information at both individual and household level that can be used to control for different backgrounds.

### **iv) Cons**

- ⇒ Data on participation provided only by the ad hoc module in 2006. No up-to-date available information.
- ⇒ Indicator of participation in political party or trade union used as a proxy of youth involvement into the political life of the country. However, it is just a rough approximation - indicator of whether youth vote at the last election would have been preferred.

## **c) FLASH EUROBAROMETER**

- *Micro-level dataset*
- *Type*: Cross-sectional
- *Regions*: EU member states
- *Target population*: about 1000 individuals for each country, aged 15 and over
- *Unit level*: Individual

### **i) Overview**

The Flash Eurobarometer (EB) surveys regularly monitor the public opinion in the European Union member countries on special topics (Common Currency, EU Enlargement, Information Society, young Europeans' life) and special target group. Compared to the Standard Eurobarometer Series, the Flash surveys are much faster (usually the sample size is reduced to

500 respondents per country), providing results almost instantaneously, and are more suitable to the targeting of specific groups within the EU population.

## ii) Selected indicators

We derive indicators of social (same question as in EUSILC) and political participation (same question as in EUSILC as well as a question relative to participation in the national vote in the last 3 years) from two different Eurobarometer surveys dealing with different aspects of young Europeans life, such as membership of organisations and political participation in society:

- ⇒ the Flash EB survey “Youth Survey” (No 202) conducted in 2007 ;
- ⇒ the Flash EB survey “Youth on the Move” (No 319a) conducted in 2011.

Both the surveys were conducted by telephone interviewing nationally representative samples of young people (aged between 15 and 30) living in the 27 EU Member States. The target sample size in all countries was about 700 interviews in 2007 and 1000 interviews in 2011 and a post-stratification weighting of the results was implemented to correct for sampling disparities, on the basis of important socio-demographic variables.

## iii) Pros and Cons

- ⇒ Repeated questions on youth social and political participation allow for comparison over time.
- ⇒ Samples of youth are representative at the national level but **not** at the regional level

## 2.2 Integration methodology

In order to move from the data selected from each database to a unique matrix of data, we proceeded as follows:

- ⇒ We created an “id” variable where we listed each country and regions (NUTS-1 level) considered; and an associated “Nuts Level” dummy variable coded 0 for country level information and 1 for NUTS-1 level information. In addition, we kept aggregate information for EU27 and EU15.
- ⇒ From the two databases with micro data, EUSILC and Flash Eurobarometer, we calculated the national and regional means per indicator and extrapolated that value to include in our meso and macro level integrated database.
- ⇒ We integrated information from all databases in a unique excel file which was then imported into STATA12.
- ⇒ We ultimately ended up with an integrated aggregate database with information for years 2006 and 2011 relative to:

- 9 European countries + UE27 and EU15

- 59 NUTS-1 level regions
- 3 Demographic contextual indicators:
  - Population Density
  - Infant Mortality Rates
  - Life Expectancy at Birth
- 6 Socio-economic contextual indicators:
  - National GDP/capita at current market prices
  - National GDP/capita as a percentage of the EU15 average
  - People at risk of poverty rate
  - Unemployment rate (age 15 and over)
  - Long-term unemployment rate as a % of the total unemployment
  - Percentage of population aged 25-64 with upper secondary and tertiary education.
- 3 Indicators related to the educational dimension:
  - Students in tertiary education (ISCED 5-6) as a percentage of the population aged 20-24 years old
  - Percentage of Early School Leavers (ESLs) from education and training as a percentage of the population aged 18-24 years old.
  - Percentage of people aged 18-24 neither in employment, education or training (NEETs).
- 2 Indicators related to the employment dimension:
  - Youth (age 18-24 years old) unemployment rate.
  - Youth long-term unemployment rate as a percentage of the total youth unemployment.
- 1 Social participation indicator:
  - Participation in either professional organisations; churches or religious organisations; recreational groups; charitable organisations;
- 2 Political participation indicators:
  - Participation in political parties or trade unions.
  - Voted at national elections within the last 3 years

⇒ Table I summarizes the dimensions, variables, sources, and level of disaggregation achieved in our final matrix.

**Table I. Outcome – The MATRIX**

	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>By gender</b>	<b>By NUTS-1</b>
<b><u>Demographic statistics</u></b>			
Population density	Eurostat		x
Infant mortality rates	Eurostat		x
Life expectancy at birth	Eurostat	x	x
<b><u>Socio-economic indicators</u></b>			
National GDP at current market prices	Eurostat		x
People at risk of poverty rate	EuSilc		x
Unemployment rate (age 15 and over)	Eurostat	x	x
Long-term unemployment (12 months or more)	Eurostat		x
Population aged 25-64 with upper secondary/tertiary education	Eurostat	x	x
<b><u>Indicators of outcomes in education</u></b>			
Students in tertiary education as % of the population aged 20-24	Eurostat		x
Early leavers from education and training	Eurostat	x	x
Young people neither in employment nor in education and training	Eurostat	x	x
<b><u>Indicators of outcomes in the labour market</u></b>			
Youth Unemployment rate (age 15-29)	Eurostat	x	x
Youth Long-term unemployment as a % of the total unemployment	Eurostat	x	x
<b><u>Indicators of participation</u></b>			
Social participation	Silc (2006); Flash EB (2011)	x	x in 2006
Political participation	Flash EB (2007 and 2001)		

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# Chapter 6: Politics of Participation? Soft and Hard Policies in German Youth Policies

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## 1. Abstract

This paper focuses on the socio-economic political context and its implications on youth policies in Germany. For both topics, current policies are reviewed. After an introduction and explanation of the methods used in this investigation (chapter 3) and a demonstration how inequalities are defined and measured in Germany, the report focuses especially on youth poverty as a current issue as well as on the labour market position of young people (chapter 4). Concerning the policies, instruments and levels of intervention (chapter 5) disadvantaged youth are just partly tackled in social policy, labour market policy (especially the transition sector), educational policy and youth welfare. Though, there is no joint-up policy for disadvantaged youth as such, rather there is a tendency of specialization, juridification and targeting in particular policy areas. In this manner the political responsibilities for youth policy are not clear cut (chapter 6). Looking at the role of *social innovation* in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy (chapter 7) one can observe that social innovation was predominantly seen as an institutionally driven perspective, where new programmes and measurements were established and tried to tackle emerging social problems. But youth participation is now seen as the social innovation per se. Derived from the EU youth strategy, several policies in Germany occurred, where an independent youth policy was proclaimed and a broad focus on youth should be established. This paper analyses three main initiatives of this area on different levels.

## 2. Introduction

This paper focuses on the socio-economic political context and its implications on youth policies in Germany. It examines the issue of inequalities among youth with particular emphasis on “youth poverty” and “youth participation”. For both topics, current policies are reviewed. The analysis mainly concentrates on statistics and policies on the national and regional level.

In Germany, the political responsibilities for youth policy are not clear cut. While labour market policies are mainly conducted on the national level, school policies are a genuine task of the federal states; social policies and youth welfare in contrast are managed on the municipal level. Notwithstanding national politics have policy-making power concerning for example the conditions and ranges of social transfers/benefits; the municipalities have to

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<sup>29</sup> Kindly assisted by Kristina Purrmann

manage social services and deal with these target (targeted) groups. Additionally, on a European level, there are more and more socio-political initiatives so that several pilot programs are set up by the EU social funds (cf. Kompetenzagenturen, Jugendmigrationsdienst, Jugend stärken etc.).

But already on the local level, basic disagreement can be found between Youth Welfare Services, which are more oriented towards personal development and social integration, and job-orientated youth social work, where a shift towards employability can be observed (cf. Polutta 2005, Düker/Ley 2012).

In Germany, youth policies are focussing in general on the 15-27 years age group, but differ in (and within) different policy areas:

- While “youth welfare” (i.e. residential care) is mainly focussing on youth up to 18, a substantiation of a claim for assistance of young adults (18-21; “Junge Volljährige”) is required and is definitely less provided (see the abrupt de-clientification with the age of 18: Messmer/Hitzler 2011); “voluntary youth work” is generally provided until the age of 27 years.
- School attendance is mandatory until the age of 18. If young adults are leaving compulsory lower secondary school before the age of 18, they have to attend vocational school in the dual system or in pre-vocational training.
- In labour market policy a special focus is on young adults up to 25 (“U25”) and a lot of programmes and measurements are focused on this group.

Anyhow, a focus on age ranges is ambivalent. While poverty in the age of 20-25 is the highest in Germany and research shows the high interdependence of education, work and inertness (“Trägheit”) of poverty in the life course (see chapter 4), many policies and services have a strict perspective on (il)legitimate ages and normative ideas of transition from youth to adulthood. In this respect these policies are constructing youth as a social problem and as a social group.

Hence, the aim of the research project SociEtY is less about collecting descriptive information about young adults or specific subgroups, but rather analysing societal conditions of growth, which are shaped by forms of institutionalisation and situated conflicts (Scherr 2013).

In the next steps of research, the SociEtY project is especially looking at “local welfare systems” and analyse the bouquet of social, educational and urban policies in relation to young adults and how they affect and target the situation of youth (see Work Package 4). *Insofar this paper provides a holistic analysis of the situation of vulnerable youth on the one hand and youth policies (which are not always named as such) on the other hand. A concentration on special target groups within this analysis would not be sufficient, as “disadvantaged” is here perceived as a multidimensional and not as a policy related concept. Insofar the situation of vulnerable young people is not restricted to aspects of poverty, unemployment, or disadvantages in the educational system. Examining questions of vulnerability and inequalities among young people, always requires to look also at the constraints and enablements of the life young people want to realise, and at their access to*

objects, relationships and practices they appreciate and have reason to value. Insofar, poverty is not merely understood as material poverty, but as the absence of capabilities (cf. Otto/Scherr/Ziegler 2010: 150). In this perspective, educational and labour-market orientated interventions into the life of individuals are relevant to questions of inequality and vulnerability and thus to social justice.

### 3. Methods

This paper is *firstly* based on official statistics and reports about “youth relevant issues”, such as:

*On national level:*

- Poverty and Wealth Report on national level (BMAS 2013),
- National Report on vocational training (Berufsbildungsbericht; BMBF 2013),
- Social Code II. Basic social care for job seekers (SGB II, Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende; Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2013),
- Report on Children and Young People by the Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth explicitly focusing on the living conditions of children and young people in Germany (Kinder- und Jugendbericht ; BMFSFJ 2013).<sup>30</sup>
- In the frame of this report, several expertise - such as the one on development and structures of youth poverty (Groh-Samberg 2012) – were published,

*On regional level:*

- Social report of the city of Bielefeld (Lebenlagenbericht; Stadt Bielefeld 2013),
- Poverty and Wealth Report on regional level (North Rhine-Westphalia) (MAIS NRW 2012).

*Secondly*, documents from current youth policies and programmes were analysed, such as:

- the “structured dialogue”, a project initiated and funded from the European Commission bringing young people and politicians from the EU together,
- the nationwide „Centre for an independent youth policy“ which was established in 2012, designing an “Alliance for youth” for 2014 which aims at an Interministerial cooperation, the enforcement of participation, an image-campaign for young adults and new funding structures,

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<sup>30</sup> In every legislative period a new Report on Children and Young People (Kinder- und Jugendbericht) is published on behalf of the Federal Government and realised by a commission with scientific expertise in the topics of childhood and youth. The commission is gathering information on the living conditions of children and young people and reflects/evaluates political decisions and policies regarding children and young people throughout the legislative period. In the recent legislative period (from 2009-2013) the 14th Report on Children and Young People gives insights in the current living conditions of children and young people in Germany. An additional focus of the recent report is the impact of youth welfare services.

- a regional initiative from North Rhine-Westphalia called “Umdenken - Jungdenken” (“Rethinking – Youngthinking”), provided by the „Association of Youth Organizations“ (Landesjugendring), which established local youth forums,
- several programmes in the sphere of transition from school to work (such as the EU funded initiative “Jugend stärken”)
- two initiatives concerning youth poverty from two third sector organisations:
  - o „Aktiv gegen Armut“, IB für Würde und Teilhabe (Together against youth poverty, Internationaler Bund)<sup>31</sup>
  - o „Jugend(ar)mut“ from the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Katholische Jugendsozialarbeit (youth poverty/ youth courage; working group of catholic youth welfare)<sup>32</sup>

Thirdly, several telephone-based expert interviews delivered contextual knowledge for the policy analysis, such as:

National government policy makers	2
Regional government policy makers	2
Youth work organisations	1
Networks and membership organisations (sector bodies/agencies, campaigns, lobbying, networking, project work, awareness raising)	2
<i>total number</i>	7

## 4. National definitions

This chapter focusses on youth poverty and the (absence of) opportunities of young people on the labour market and their access to vocational training (see for detail Ley/Löhr 2012: institutional mapping in the EU research project WorkAble).

### 4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth

Poverty cannot be equated with social inequality. Youth poverty is somehow an aspect of social inequality “at the bottom”. The issue of wealth – as the top of material inequality – is a non-issue in public discourses. This also becomes apparent in the expert interviews. This observation hints at the tension of legitimate and illegitimate inequalities (Beuret/Bonvin/Dahmen 2013). Consequentially, the controversy about poverty and its (il)legitimate status is fought over in political and public arenas. Divergent actors compete for the explosiveness of statistical data and its societal pertinence. In recent times there was a public debate about the ‘polishing process’ of the current Poverty and Wealth Report (Butterwegge 2013a). As an opposing party, the German "Federation of Welfare Associations in Germany" (Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband; one of the biggest third sector organisations) criticises in its own poverty report the statistical foundation of actual poverty calculations and stresses the regional disparities of poverty (Der Paritätische Gesamtverband 2013). This indicates that not only youth (see Scherr 2013) but as well the construct of poverty (and its statistics and measurement) has to be analysed as a battlefield

<sup>31</sup> <http://internationaler-bund.de/mainnavigation/ib-gruppe/aktiv-gegen-armut/>

<sup>32</sup> [www.jugendarmut.info/](http://www.jugendarmut.info/)

Zinnecker 2005) where the societal (il)legitimacy is negotiated (see as well the analytical term of IBBJ, Bonvin 2009).

### **Measurement of poverty (risk) rates**

In Germany several institutions and ministries on national, regional and local levels publish reports on the living conditions of different sections of the population in Germany. The reports provide general information on topics such as demographic development, living conditions as well as differences in income and poverty risks (see chapter 2).

Most of the reports distinguish *poverty rates* and *poverty risk rates*. While the first term refers to numbers on actual poverty, the second one also considers persons who are at risk of being poor. Poverty risk rates are connected to the national median equalised disposable income (as it is quite common in the EU). If the available income for a person lies below the at-risk-poverty threshold of 60% of the national median equalised disposable income, the person is said to be at-risk of material poverty (for a single person household in Germany in 2012: 869 Euro). Theoretically, this poverty risk rate is actually a sign of wage dispersion. "Actual" poverty rates are then somehow equivalent to the dependence on social benefits (651 Euro including housing benefit). Due to the fact that these social benefits are not covering demands of the daily-life and their amount is a matter of party political and budgetary discussion (in fact they are currently in question if they are unconstitutional), it seems to be adequate to take the median as the better indicator for income poverty and speak about poverty rates in general and not about poverty risk rates.

On the national level, the *Report on Poverty and Wealth of the Federal Government - Living conditions in Germany* is issued by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (cf. BMAS 2013). The report is based on data from SOEP, EU-SILC and the 'Mikrozensus'<sup>33</sup> and deals with inequalities and opportunities of social mobility (especially intragenerational social mobility).

On the regional level, federal States are also publishing reports on poverty and wealth. While most reports divide the sections of the population in age groups, the *Social Report NRW – Report on Poverty and Wealth* works with a differentiation along "at-risk" groups. The report states that especially children and young people under the age of 18, older people, low qualified people, people with migration background and people with disabilities have a significant poverty risk (cf. MAIS NRW 2012).<sup>34</sup>

In contrast to these general reports, the *Report on Children and Young People (Kinder- und Jugendbericht)* by the Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth explicitly

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<sup>33</sup> The Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) is an annual survey, which is realized in Germany since 1984. The EU-SILC (European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) is a survey that is annually realized in European countries, the German sub study is called "Leben in Europa" and collects information from private households. The 'Mikrozensus' is the most extensive annual survey in Germany. In the Mikrozensus 1% of the population in private households is represented. The survey covers information on the economic and social conditions of the population in Germany.

<sup>34</sup> A detailed analysis and comparison to local statistics (Stadt Bielefeld 2013) will be done in Work Package 4.

focuses on the living conditions of children and young people in Germany (cf. BMFSFJ 2013).<sup>35</sup> The 14<sup>th</sup> Report on Children and Young people (*Kinder- und Jugendbericht*) regards the period from 2010 to 2012 and gives insights in the current living conditions of children and young people in Germany. Based on SOEP data, the commission attempts to describe and reflect poverty risks of children and young people. Additionally two expertises on youth poverty derived from this report (Groh-Samberg 2013, Krause et al. 2013) and gave a broad attention to the issue of youth poverty.

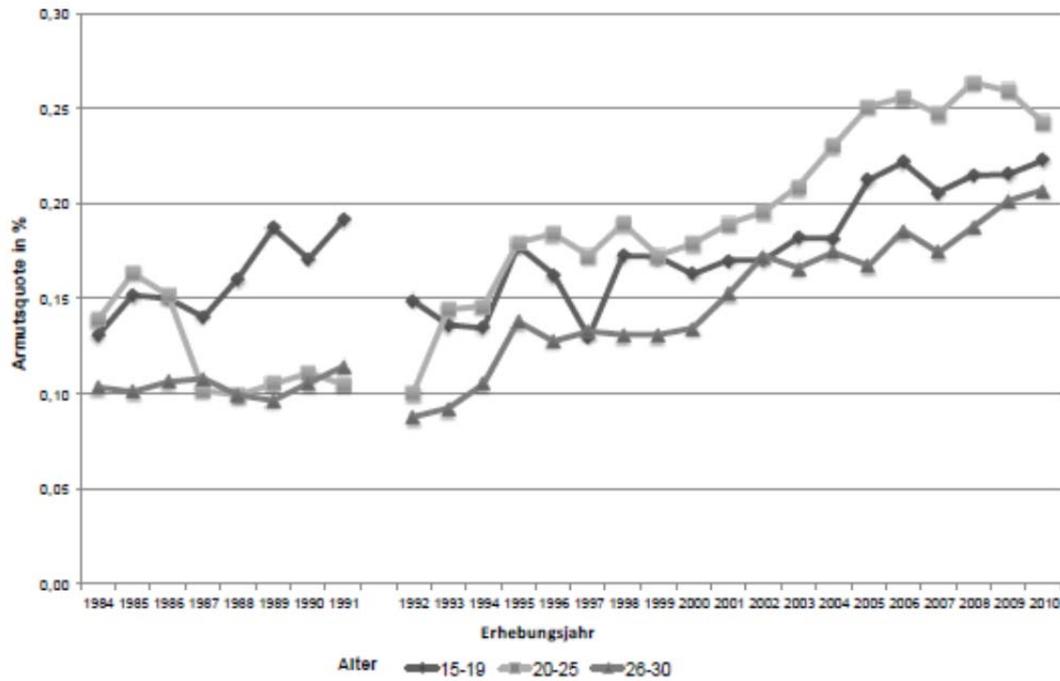
Nonetheless empirical data and deeper analysis on youth poverty is still a desideratum for research. While there was a main focus on child poverty (and as well “children at risk”) in the last years, a discussion about youth poverty remained a blind spot (but recently Plötz 2013). This disregard of a social problem could be ascribed firstly to the infantilisation of poverty images, distinguishing between a deserving and undeserving poor: While children are innocent and unblameable, the poverty of youth can already be read as self-inflicted. Secondly, it is harder to grasp youth poverty in a methodical way; it is oscillating between family poverty as well as juvenile challenges in transition periods. On the one hand young people might suffer from risk situations arising from their families such as social risks (parents’ labour market integration), financial risks (low family income incomes) or educational deprivation (parents’ lower education). On the other hand risk situations might occur in adolescence such as financial risks through insecure employment conditions, the foundation of a family or an own household. This indeterminableness of youth poverty becomes apparent in the age spans of different reports. While Krause et al. (2013) divide the group of children and young people in three age groups (childhood 0-10 years, youth 10-20 years and young adulthood 20-30 years), Groh-Samberg (2013) is taking 5-years-steps in order to differentiate the significant living conditions, risks and challenges in different phases of life.

### **Rates of youth poverty**

Anyhow, *poverty rates of the age group from 15 to 30 years – and particularly people between 20 and 25 years – are the highest in relation to all other age cohorts. Additionally they were rising fastest in the last 25 – and especially in the last 10 - years* (Groh-Samberg 2013: 30). While poverty rates of children are tending towards the total population average, the poverty rates of youth and young adults are above average (18,8% to 13% total population) and have constantly grown for the last 15 years (see figure 1, see for development of general, child and youth poverty, appendix 3).

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<sup>35</sup> In every legislative period a new *Report on Children and Young People (Kinder- und Jugendbericht)* is published on behalf of the Federal Government and realized by a commission with scientific/academic expertise in the topics of childhood and youth. The commission is gathering information on the living conditions of children and young people and reflects/evaluates political decisions and policies throughout the legislative period.



Quelle: SOEPv27, ab 1992 Gesamtdeutschland; eigene Berechnungen

Figure 1: poverty trends for youth and young adults from 1984 to 2010, cf. Groh-Samberg 2013: 13

Poverty rates of children until 14 years are about 15%; from 16-19 years it is already around 21% and increases in the age span from 20 to 25 years to the climax of nearly 29%. After that, poverty rates rapidly fall down und turn to the average of around 15%. However, quite alarming is the high path dependence of poverty in the life course, even if we take out the group of students with their specific phase of life-related poverty risks. The material risks in this sensitive transition phase are not without consequences for the on-going life course (Groh-Samberg 2013: 31).

Age Span	0-15	16-19	20-25	25-30
Poverty Rate	15%	21%	29%	15%

Figure 2 Youth poverty rates

### Risk dimensions of youth poverty

Youth Poverty can be analysed along different risk dimensions. Groh-Samberg (2013) differentiates *socio-demographic* (e.g. gender, migration background, region) and *socio-economic dimensions* (e.g. education background, labour market integration, highest level of qualification). Further dimensions are connected to the person's *social background and the parents' qualifications* (e.g. education, class position).

Groh-Samberg concludes (2013: 13-18; for detailed information see Appendix 3 table "Poverty risks according to risk dimensions"):

- **Women** have higher poverty risks in young adulthood (age of 20-25 years) and are more often affected by poverty in adolescence (age of 15-19 years) than men in the same age groups.
- **Migrants** from the first generation have extremely high poverty risks. Children and young people with a migration background have significantly higher poverty risks than other children and young people in the same age groups.
- In comparison to people in West Germany, people in **East Germany** have higher poverty risks since poverty rates in East Germany are constantly increasing.
- The **marital status** has a clear impact on poverty risks: Young people or young adults living in single households have the highest poverty risks.
- **Students** often have excessive poverty rates (in the age group from 20-25 years 20% of the persons are students). In contrast to other groups of the population these rates are equalised when the students finish their studies and get an employment.
- The **social background** is closely connected to poverty risks in younger age groups. These risks are equalised at the age of 26-30.
- The **completion of vocational training** is an important factor when regarding poverty risks. 43% of poor adolescents did not complete a vocational training.
- **People who are out of school, vocational training and studies** are the predominant group within poor young adults (about half of the 20-25 year old and over 2/3 of the 26-30 year old adults). About the half of these people are employed. 'NEETs' (*Not in Employment, Education or Training*) are increasing within whole youth poverty: from one tenth (15-19) to one quarter (20-25) to one third (26-30). Especially unemployed people and young adults with precarious employment are part of these groups and hit by poverty.

Not only income poverty but as well the *dependence from social benefits* among youth is above average. 534.000 young adults (15-24) depend on social benefits (Hartz IV), but less than the half is unemployed. While Germany has a relatively low youth unemployment (7,6%), the dependence from social benefits is higher. The national average is 8,8% but with strong regional disparities: western Germany 7,6%, eastern Germany 15,8%; and for example 5,1% in Munich, 19,2% in Berlin (Adamy 2012).

## 4.2 Labour market position of young people and problems at labour market entry

Not only in Germany the transition from schools into jobs is largely determined by its objective – namely by the job market and its access structures and cyclic capacity (cf. Walter/Walther 2007: 65ff.). *Referring to the dual system, the access to vocational training is the main dividing line on the labour market.*

In the current situation, the vocational training sector and the educational system in Germany are the main contexts determining the position of and conditions for vulnerable youth in the transition from school to work. This situation is characterised by three main problems (see for detail: Ley/Löhr 2012):

(a) The basis of the German transition sector, the general four-tier school system, has been repeatedly criticised for the early selection for secondary schools and the resulting **lack of**

**equal opportunities.** As a consequence, social inequalities are not compensated but reinforced in educational and vocational settings (cf. for example Solga/Rosina 2009).

(b) In the annual national reports, an “extended” definition of supply and demand on the vocational training market is advocated, which includes not only unplaced applicants but also young people who have started an alternative to an apprenticeship (e.g. vocational preparation measures, work experience etc.) but are still looking for a placement in vocational training. In 2012, the ratio has been 89,1 apprenticeship training positions for 100 applicants (cf. BMBF 2013), but again with strong regional disparities. For example the ratio in Bielefeld is 66 to 100. Thus, there is a lack of 200.000 training positions in Germany (Solga 2011a). Furthermore, according to a ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court from 1980, the constitutional right to free choice of employment is only guaranteed as of a ratio of 112.5 vocational training places per 100 applicants (cf. BVerfGE 55, 274). We argue that this constitutes a *systematic injustice*, the causes of which are to be found in the structure of the transition sector. This injustice severely limits the possible effects of institutional and pedagogical efforts.

(c) Furthermore, disadvantaged youths in particular are facing an increased risk of unemployment and poverty in later life (Solga 2011b). This is why Heike Solga coins the term of *„certificate poverty“*, where young people not exceeding a graduate in lower secondary education are in a vulnerable position as well as those 15% of young adults who cannot obtain a training position in the course of their transition process (cf. Solga 2011b: 415).

These three aspects – inequality in the school system, insufficient training positions on the apprenticeship market and the aspect of “certificate poverty” – are not only characteristic for the situation (and the expansion) of the transition sector, they are relevant to all efforts within this context. Again, the question arises if the established institutions and organisations reproduce inequalities rather than reducing them.

## **5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention**

As chapter 4 shows, *youth disadvantage* is predominantly understood in terms of ‘NEETs’ and subsequently nearly all programmes and measurements are framed within a school-based and employment-centred transition regime. *Youth poverty* is merely measured and evaluated as a high rate of dependence from social benefits. Young migrants are often seen as a relevant target group, but their opportunities are not acknowledged under structural conditions and barriers (i.e. institutional discrimination and spatial segregation). *Inequality among youth* is not perceived in a multidimensional and intersectional perspective and in addition often as a lack of individual aspirations and secondary virtues. Hence, *a multidimensional evaluation of youth poverty for policy making and social accounting, which goes beyond income quality, is still lacking.*

Since the 1980’s, formal educational standards continuously increased, while within the same time frame poverty risks and income inequality massively accumulated as well – more considerable than the average of all OECD states (vgl. OECD 2008, ILO 2008). *Nevertheless it became naturalised in public discourses that material inequality is a consequence of educational inequality.* Against this background one can observe the tendencies that people

affected by poverty – and especially parents of poor children – are ascribed the responsibility for their situation, while socio-economic and political constraints of opportunities lost sight. The empirical evidence, that unequal social and class positions retrieve again in formal opportunities having a “successful” educational career are being turned into their opposites.

Insofar, disadvantaged youth are just partly tackled in social policy, labour market policy (especially the transition sector), educational policy and youth welfare (Youth welfare in Germany not only integrates different forms of care - e.g. residential homes, foster families – but as well life-world orientated youth work, such as youth clubs, streetwork etc.). Though, there is no joint-up policy for disadvantaged youth as such, rather there is a tendency of specialization, juridification and targeting in particular policy areas.

But for instance, the policy area concerning the transition from school to work is an exception, in which the problem of young people without apprenticeship or employment has resulted in increased efforts to create structured local transition management (cf. for details Düker/Ley 2012). On a societal level and as a critical evaluation of all these policy efforts, a further fundamental question has to be raised:

- Is the (German) transition sector an institution of social mobility or is it merely about class-based allocation to status positions through pedagogical means (down, but not out)?
- Are young people provided with real opportunities and a perspective for a good life?

If valuable options and choices are effectively missing, the processual dimension of freedom within public and social work action turns out to be a chimer

## **5.1 What are the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?**

According to Kaufmann (2012: 1297ff) a differentiation of divergent forms of intervention in public action can serve for analysis of different policies, instruments, measurements in the national welfare regime:

1. Right-based interventions,
2. Economic interventions,
3. Ecological interventions and
4. Pedagogical interventions.

### **5.11 Right-based interventions**

Aim of right-based interventions is the arrangement of constitutional rights of social relations and the conservation of individual rights (claiming rights, complaining rights, participation rights, and protection rights). It becomes even trickier to analyse young adults’ legal status and citizenship when regarding youth in their phases of transition and we have to focus on other terms and conditions. Pais is arguing within a concept of “trajective citizenship” (2008) which is much more characterised by fluidity than by formalised rights and binding affiliation. Ruth Lister (2001) is therefore distinguishing between “citizenship as

status” (involving formal rights and obligations) and “citizenship as practice” (involving political participation in both formal and informal modes of politics and the responsibilities associated with unpaid forms of work in the home and community).<sup>36</sup> Anyhow, participation - in the sense of having a stake - in the phase of youth is floating between a status-related and responsibility-related concept. Although with the age of 18 young adults receive several formal rights (right to vote, possibility to make a driving license etc.) and are officially adults, *within social policy they are still attributed to their families and their income.*

### **5.12 Economic interventions**

Although economic interventions are much broader (i.e. tariff-, tax-, subvention policy) a particular focus on social benefits for young adults is revealing here. Parents are generally obligated for alimony until the age of 25 years of their “children”. Young adults won’t get their own social benefits (until they have not been employed); insofar a family will collectively receive social benefits (so called “Bedarfsgemeinschaft”: community of members of a household in need of benefit; ALG II: Social Code 2) and young adults are obliged to live at home (until there are no serious problems in living together). Insofar financial independence (from family) can only be realized by a job (and even no vocational training).

Furthermore those unemployed below the age of 25 are subjected to harsher sanctions than their older counterparts. In Germany sanctions in the Social Code II imply that recipients may have to live below the socio-cultural subsistence level for a period of three months, in general. Studies with young welfare recipients (Schreyer et al. 2012) show that their opportunities for societal participation are further restricted through sanctions. Food stamps that ought to attenuate hardship only safeguard the physical subsistence level and are considered as degrading. Young people who do not live with their parents can soon be confronted by energy supplies being cut off, their accommodation being taken away from them, as well as the risk of accumulating debts. A temporary abortion of contact with the job center, increased feelings of existential fear or paralyzing overstrain can result from sanctions (ibid: p. 213). Thus, the actually intended activation policy of young unemployed has harsh contrary effects.

Other than that mentioned, a new way of charity (charity shops, food banks, clothing banks etc.) is considerably increasing and comes along with a strict social policy where social benefits are boiled down, checked and are subject to certain regulations and contractualisation.

### **5.13 Ecological interventions**

As spatial segregation within urban and rural areas is apparent and becoming manifest, several local programmes occurred, which aim at an evaluation, re-arrangement and

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<sup>36</sup> “These conceptions reflect the two main historical citizenship traditions of rights-based liberalism and political participation-promoting civic republicanism, as well as a more recent, third, communitarian strand, which has provided the basis for a more generalised appeal to citizenship obligations and responsibilities.” (ibid: 95).

expansion of social services, entail structural and architectural projects (especially in cooperation with housing associations) as well as the strengthening of community work. But these policies and practices are concerning all inhabitants; *a particular focus on and the involvement and perspective of youth is lacking.*

For example in 2008 (and again in 2011) the municipality in Bielefeld initiated a programme called “Urban development & social balance” (Stadt(teil)entwicklung des sozialen Ausgleichs) in 4 urban areas. The selection was based on statistical indicators - from a small scale monitoring system out of 91 statistical areas - and focused especially on high rates of households in need of social benefits (especially families), unemployment, children (up to 6 years), elderly people and birth, single parents and migration. But the question has to be raised, if and how the political and discursive construction of the “disadvantaged area” fits with (the construction) the “disadvantaged youth” and their (excepted) needs for help.

#### **5.14 Pedagogical interventions**

Especially for young adults pedagogical interventions – seen as interventions into the life conduct of individuals - are at the core of the national welfare regime and insofar are relevant to questions of inequality and vulnerability and thus to social justice.<sup>37</sup>

As the German welfare regime (and its transition regime) can be classified as an employment-centred regime (Walther 2006) public services are concerning especially training programmes as a way out of poverty. Insofar the target group of this paper refers not only to young people not exceeding a graduate in lower secondary education, but with no (consecutive) following vocational training (apprenticeship) in the regular ‘dual system’. The dual system is still an influential and powerful institution<sup>38</sup>; it is regarded as the ‘silver

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<sup>37</sup>According to Yeheskel Hasenfeld’s organisational theory (1983), three modes of technologies in human service organisations can be distinguished: a) people processing, b) people sustaining and c) people changing technologies. People processing technologies attempt to confer a social label or public status on clients. The core technology of people-processing organisations “consists of a set of boundary roles which define the input of clients to the organization and mediate their placement in various external units” (Hasenfeld, 1983: 256). In the case of people sustaining technologies, it is attempted to prevent or retard deterioration in the personal welfare or well-being of clients; an example is the use of income maintenance programmes by municipal social services. People changing technologies aim directly to alter clients’ personal attributes to improve their opportunities and well-being. These technologies include especially pedagogical and social work interventions (as well as psychotherapy).

<sup>38</sup> The German ‘dual system’ combines on the job training with state-led vocational schools. Hence, the term ‘apprenticeship’ in the following refers to this specifically German way of vocational education and training (VET). Walter and Walther summarize five advantages of the dual system: (a) By involving companies, it is guaranteed that the training content has relevance for the labour market; (b) the high contribution margin results in relatively low youth unemployment by international standards; (c) the youth involved receive a training allowance and are covered by social insurance; (d) the high level of standardisation of the training courses and curricula adds recognition and validity to the acquired skills beyond the training facility; (e) the dual system is seen as prerequisite for the high productivity of German companies (cf. Walter/Walther 2007: 69). An exception to this is the growing number of school-based training courses, especially for occupations in the social, educational and health sectors.

bullet' for the transition from school to work. Nevertheless, the high share of young people in this dual training system has decreased markedly in the last decades. While in the past, dual training could absorb 80% of the total applicants, this has now gone down to 65%. Hence, this long-lasting and powerful institution is not the 'safe haven' for young people's transition anymore, but is becoming fragile and is increasingly being questioned.

In summary, a huge share of young people have no opportunity to comply to the normative demand for a smooth transitional trajectory (school – apprenticeship – labour market) which is still the model for the institutions in the system as well as for the young people themselves. The data given in Ley/Löhr (2012) show that the number of measures in the transitional system keeps expanding, that the partially qualifying measures of vocational preparation only marginally improve the chances of vocational training and that the poverty risk of this vulnerable group is particularly high. For a steadily growing number of young people the path from school leads through a multitude of institutionally structured qualifying measures "ending mostly in marginal jobs" (Braun et al. 2009, 961).

The concepts of the transition sector and its programmes represent one main strand of policy answers to youth unemployment and is characteristic for newer ways of dealing with this social problem in the German transition regime in that it is committed to 'steering from a distance'; both with respect to the local transition sector as well as with respect to the individual case, implying an emphasis on personal responsibility and a 'pedagogisation' of social services.

Following the relational perspective of the Capability Approach, vulnerable young people in this case study are regarded as disadvantaged in terms of their opportunities to live a life they have reason to value. These relations not only determine their position in the social order, but are the context in which aspirations, life plans and the ideas of what constitutes a 'good life' in general are formed. This perspective contrasts with the notion of social exclusion, in which young people are seen as being outside of the normative order and simply have to be realigned with societal demands. Rather, our approach starts from the assumption that people are always already implicated in societal relations, hence the aim is to "evaluat[e] processes of learning and acquisition as being embedded in broader social, cultural, economic and policy arrangements, while taking individual aspirations into account rather than dictating social benchmarks" (Otto/ Ziegler 2006, p. 274).

To sum up briefly, the main instrument(s) to tackle inequalities and poverty are narrowed to monetary resources. As the German welfare regime (and its transition regime) can be classified as an employment-centred regime (Walther 2006) public services are concerning especially training programmes as a way out of poverty.

## **5.2 Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programmes they are offered/the subject of?**

The question is whether the young adults have the capability for voice in (these) pedagogical arrangements. However, the restrictions of the available opportunities severely delimit what can be the object of negotiations and thus voice. The case study of the "WorkAble" project (Düker/Ley 2012) unveiled that young people in these institutions often

need to learn to adapt to the de facto possibilities on the job market and, more frequently, in the transitional system. The providers contend that the young people often are in need to learn to have a more “realistic” view on their future choice of employment. In this sense, the young person’s individual plan is influenced or even manipulated in a way not necessarily conducive to the beings and doings they have reason to value, as toning down one’s concerns to fit into (mostly disadvantaged) social positions is not the same as “choose[ing] between valuable alternatives or opportunities.” This paramount goal of capability enhancing policies - following Bonvin - “clearly contrasts with the call for adaptability (that often prevails in the field of welfare), where people are not allowed to choose freely, but are called to adapt their preferences to their social environment.” (Bonvin 2009: 3)

Concerning the issue of “indirect voice” and a system of “representatives” or spokesmen who are addressing young people’s demands and needs, there are at least two aspects to mention: Firstly, every municipality engages youth officers who are managing the resources and commodities of youth work on the one hand and are official contact persons for all youth relevant issues (especially concerning non-formal places and activities). Secondly, several regions are currently establishing independent ombudsmen in youth welfare, which serve as points of contact for young people. Here they get informed about their claiming and protection rights and can complain about existing incidents. (Urban-Stahl/Sandermann (2013), as one example see: <http://www.ombudschaft-nrw.de>)

### 5.3 Non-intervention

There are several areas where disadvantage is identified (but even not enough from research) and not addressed by government policy, such as:

- *unplanned discharge from measurements*: i.e. in residential care about 35% of the episodes end with an unplanned discharge from out-of-home-care (Tornow/Ziegler 2012); in vocational training about 25% young adults have an unplanned discharge (BMBF 2013: 35).
- *Young care leavers*: In almost all countries young people who grow up in care (e.g. residential homes, foster families) are disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of educational outcomes. In their educational careers they can often only rely on a limited extent of family support and depend on public infrastructure and services as well as on informal assistance. Almost all international studies show that these young people have to overcome many transitional barriers on their path to an independent adult life. This not only makes it difficult for them to enter working life; their attempts to achieve a financially independent lifestyle are also often precarious (Strahl/Thomas 2012).

The youth policy of many European countries – and of Germany too – has so far barely acknowledged the difficulties these groups of young people face with respect to their chances of making a successful transition to an independent life. Oddly enough, while transition management is a main strand in current policies, young persons who fail in the standard routes of institutions are getting even more vulnerable.

## **6. Policy making, implementation and participation**

Youth policy in Germany is characterised by a diversity of levels and responsibilities. In line with Germany's federal structure, youth policy is not only a matter for the national Government but also for the federal states, municipal authorities and voluntary child and youth service organisations in the framework of their partnership with public agencies.

In this manner the political responsibilities for youth policy are not clear cut. While labour market policies are mainly conducted on a national level, school policies are a genuine task of the federal states; social policies and youth welfare again are managed on the level of municipalities. Notwithstanding, national politics have policy-making power concerning for example the conditions and ranges of social transfers/benefits, the municipalities have to manage social services and deal with these target (targeted) groups. Additionally, on a European level, there are more and more socio-political initiatives so that several pilot programs are funded from the EU social funds (cf. Kompetenzagenturen, Jugendmigrationsdienst, Jugend stärken etc.).

There is quite a vibrant youth association work in Germany, which is established on the national, regional and local level. In every federal state, Regional Youth Councils (Landesjugendring) exist. These regional youth councils are associations of youth organisations actively working on regional level. They are made up of independent youth associations, such as: ecclesiastical organisations, trade union associations, those with humanitarian or socialist orientations, ecologically active ones, fostering traditions or committed to equal sexual orientations. Local Youth Councils are self-organised amalgamations of local youth associations, organisations and initiatives. Their goal is to represent young people's interests towards public, policy and administration, to help shape and back the general framework of youth (associative) work and to take a stand with regard to socio-political questions and questions relevant to youth. Youth councils represent the youth associations' demands towards the committees and institutions responsible for youth issues on a local level, especially in the so called youth welfare committees.

But we have to bear in mind that these councils are representing "organised young people" and disadvantaged young people are significantly less organised in those youth associations.

### **6.1 Who are the actors that are responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?**

Anyhow, in Germany one can observe the contradictory situation that municipalities predominantly have to deal with poverty and its surrounding social problems in a financial and professional perspective, but their local budgets are pruned and limited so that accompanying programmes are hardly build up. A national strategy or rather joint-up social policy concerning youth poverty as well as formal opportunities in the transition from school to work is missing.

In addition to this, it has to be stated that although social service organisations daily work with young poor clients, they know very little about structural conditions of youth poverty

and there is hardly any political advocacy, where the situation of young poor adults is brought up to policymaking. Only two (quite new) initiatives concerning youth poverty from two third sector organisations established an internal and public “image campaign” to uncover this social problem. They put a face to the voice by publishing a youth poverty monitor and several media (films, photographic exhibitions, fact sheets etc.).<sup>39</sup> While there was a big shift to a “no child left behind” policy in the last years, a visible youth (poverty) policy remained a blind spot.

## 6.2 Young people’s participation in policy making

Participation in terms of policy making is mainly understood as “being engaged”. In public and even in academic debates there are at least two shortcomings of participation (see for detail Ley 2013):

(1) Firstly, it is boiled down to the counterparts of *participation and non-participation* (as a “not yet”, “not enough”, “not suitable”) and young adults are therefore latent addressed as problematic and in need (of activation). Different actors are then calling for participation competences and the “learning to participate” appears as the silver bullet to actively shape the changing society (cf. Walther 2012a).

(2) Secondly, it is boiled down to *desired and requested modes and forms of involvement, attitudes and actions*: the emphasis of voluntary activities and civil engagement as well as the emphasis of “political interest” but mainly in the limits of the official, representative politics (cf. the medial discourses about the “disenchantment with politics”; The right to vote is beginning with 18.)

On a local governmental level youth parliaments often exist but without constitutional basis, competency and veto rights. Several social service organisations (i.e. residential care) have as well advisory boards where young adults can complain and raise up their voices but again without constitutional basis, competency and veto rights. But nowadays youth participation is treated as social innovation per se (see next chapter) when designing a modernised youth policy.

At least when looking at disadvantaged young adults, they are not seeing themselves in the position of demanding anything and remain sceptical and doubtful towards agents of social institutions. They tend to comply with the decisions and actions of state agents, at least on the surface. Moreover, they do not expect that institutions meet their needs and requirements. Insofar, a “sense of entitlement” (Lareau 2003) has to be institutionally enabled and subjectively enacted aiming at fulfilling young people’s self-conscious expectation that institutions and their agents respond to their needs and aspirations.

This ‘voice’ options are mainly available in the young adults’ relationship with local agents and professionals. Insofar, participation within the support process becomes crucial. This

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<sup>39</sup> (Aktiv gegen Armut, IB für Würde und Teilhabe [Together against youth poverty, Internationaler Bund]; Jugend(ar)mut from the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Katholische Jugendsozialarbeit [youth poverty/ youth courage; working group of catholic youth welfare])

does not only entail that multiple opportunities and aims are possible and made transparent in the support process, but also that youngsters are involved in the process of decision-making and perceive themselves as part of a working alliance.

There is even less evidence that programmes sufficiently involve young people in the development and implementation of the programmes. But nowadays, the centre for an independent youth policy tries to establish a mode of youth mainstreaming - so called "youth check" -, where every policy field has to adjust their laws with the interests of the young generation (see below). But the question has to be raised, if this mainstreaming comprises veto rights and the power to modify or even stop politics, which are contradictory to the interests of young adults.

## **7. Social innovation and the role of social innovation in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy**

Until now one can state that social innovation was predominantly seen as an institutionally driven perspective where new programmes and measurements were established with the aim to tackle emerging social problems. (The term of social innovation still remains as a "technical" concept of policy-design and policy making; a special attention to social movements and non-formal aspects "innovative problem-solving" is missing.) Governmental and non-governmental actors (third sector organisations, charity and social welfare organisations, trade unions etc.) are seen as the agencies for social innovation. Aspects of deliberative democracy (i.e. plebiscites, public hearings etc.) are not at the core of public action. But youth participation is now seen as the social innovation *per se*.

Derived from the EU youth strategy, several policies in Germany occurred where an independent youth policy was proclaimed and a broad focus on youth should be established. In the following three main initiatives will be highlighted on different levels: the "Structured dialogue" on the EU level, the "centre for an independent youth policy" on the national level and a regional initiative from North Rhine-Westphalia called "Umdenken - Jungdenken". It can be argued that these programmes represent one main strand of - participatively applied and politically regulated - policy answers to the situation of young adults, characteristic for newer ways of dealing with participation of young adults on the one hand and legitimising policy making the other hand.

### **The structured dialogue on the European level**

The Structured Dialogue (SD), a project initiated and funded from the European Commission, is an accompanying element of the EU youth strategy and is set up in every national regime. It aims at bringing young people and politicians from the EU together. The SD is coordinated by a National Working Group and a national co-ordination unit for the SD seated at the National Youth Council. One key component of the implementation in Germany is decentralised projects and activities conducted by actors at the local and regional level. Within the framework of these projects and activities, young people and political decision-makers convene to discuss selected (self-chosen and given priorities of the initiative) topics. To gather the results of the decentralised projects and activities as well as

to offer other interested young people – individuals as well as other groups – an access, an online procedure was developed. In a first phase, the ideas, suggestions and demands from young people all over Germany are compiled. These contributions are published immediately on a website for all interested ones to see. Compilation is followed by a second phase during which the participants themselves prioritise the inputs and thereby determine which content will feed into the compilation. For the purposes of this online procedure, a special tool – ePartool – was developed to offer young people low-threshold access to involvement. Both, individuals and groups of different sizes, can take part in the process. In addition to the European priority topics, the SD is also taking place in Germany on three national priority topics. These national priorities correspond to the three “theme corridors” on which the federal Government and the federal States (Länder) have focused the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy in Germany (The EU Youth Strategy named 8 broad fields of action, namely: Education, Employment, Creativity and Entrepreneurship, Health and Sport, Participation, Social Inclusion, Volunteering, Youth and the World; see for detail COM 2009.) These priorities are (a) Recognition of non-formal learning, (b) Transition from school to working life and (c) Youth participation.

To sum up briefly, this initiative tends to dissociate from the young adults’ perspectives (and perceptions) because the needs of young adults are observed from the EU perspective - somehow a bird’s eye view in this case - trying to bring all different national regimes together. At least for disadvantaged youth this horizon and the bureaucratic planning and development might be set to high, although youth-relevant issue(s) will be tackled and formed on this level.

### **The centre for an independent youth policy on a national level**

Secondly, the nationwide „Centre for an independent youth policy” (CIYP) was established in 2012; it is not directly deriving (as a blueprint) from the EU youth Strategy but has to be interpreted as the national adaption and to fulfil the action plan within the strategy. The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth set up this centre which is managing theme-based expert fora, expert fora to improve youth policy structures, and an accompanying involvement of young people. Similar to the structured dialogue, this initiative is based on a combination of offline and online methods. Insofar the perspectives of the young people themselves are taken into consideration systematically and in a participatory manner. The centre is aiming at an “Alliance for youth” in 2014, which should enforce an inter-sectoral/interministerial cooperation, the growth of political (e)Participation, an image campaign for young adults and new funding structures. The Ministry proclaims:

“Independent youth policy is directed to all young people and sees itself as a socially relevant future-oriented type of policy.

Independent youth policy places the youth phase in all of its diversity of individual life worlds, needs and capabilities at the centre of attention. Alongside family policy and the expansion of early child-hood opportunities, political responsibility for the life situation of youths must be increased. Good family policy, and the strengthening of early childhood education and care, constitute framework conditions which advance independent youth policy. The latter aims to ensure that the commitment of all of the players who support and promote young people achieves optimum results for Germany's youth. Young people should

be provided with the most equal 'starting opportunities' possible for leading a responsible and self-determined life and the aim is to create a climate of recognition and respect for the achievements of and the commitment shown by young people.

An independent youth policy which is understood in this way and correspondingly structured should be visible in an Alliance for Youth. In the medium term, the Alliance should be founded jointly with representatives of business, the media, science, the child and youth welfare services, as well as the formal education system and the young people themselves. The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and its political management is to assume the role of 'youth advocate'." (BMFSFJ 2012: 2)

The CIYP is as well focussing three big issues, which are again in line with the national theme corridors of the EU youth strategy

- a) *school and non-formal learning areas* [Schule und außerschulische Lern- und Bildungsorte],
- b) *Transition from school to working life* [Übergangsgestaltung von der Schule in die Arbeitswelt.],
- c) *Participation opportunities and occasions in the political and public sphere* [Beteiligungschancen und -anlässe im politischen und öffentlichen Raum].

Furthermore the CIYP developed three mission statements named (a) "fair chances", (b) "perspectives and confidence", (c) "reallocation of time and space resources". These three mission statements can be read in a Capability Approach perspective, but up to now they remain container concepts (where existing programmes are subsumed).

As the initiative is still coming from *and* figuring on the national level, it tries to establish different ideas and tools for the regional and local level, such as: a revitalisation of youth welfare committees, an introduction of child and youth reporting at municipal level and local alliances for youth.

The centre tries to develop and establish a concrete tool called "Youth Check". It should work as a guideline for divergent policy areas and ministers with questions such as "Does the action increase or alter the participation of young people to social benefits?" - and criteria such as "Access to resources and possibilities for participation" and "Effects of the action to the promotion of well-being of young people" (cf. Jugend für Europa 2013). *The essential question is, if this youth check is coming along with political power (i.e. veto rights) or if it remains a dead letter (which can easily be ignored).*

### **"Rethinking – Youngthinking" as an initiative on the regional level**

Thirdly a regional initiative from North Rhine-Westphalia called "Umdenken - Jungdenken" (Rethinking – Youngthinking) which was set of from the federal state and is provided by the „Association of Youth Organizations“ (Landesjugendring) seems to be interesting in this context. The „Association of Youth Organizations“ is by now announcing „open youth forums“ where young people can apply for –and includes insofar a bottom-up perspective, at least more than the other two projects. Young people can individually arrange the youth forums by themselves (getting in contact with politicians or keeping to themselves) and can establish their own issues and themes. While this process goes parallel with the above

mentioned (national) policy process, the initiative is now speaking about *intervening youth policy* instead of independent youth policy; this can be read as a distinction, but as well as a political positioning. This project ends with an official and public youth conference on the regional level, declaring the young adults' ideas and claims and trying to establish "local intervening polling stations" (Einmischungslokale).

As these three mentioned policy processes are still in action, it is hard to evaluate, if the high ambitions of reframing youth policy, reaching the local level and bringing the perspectives and needs of youngsters back in, will be scored. Furthermore these policies are mired in the ambivalence of taking all young people into account on the one hand and focusing relevant social problems and disadvantages on the other hand.

Moreover basic questions must be raised, if disadvantaged young adults are voiced in these situations (and if they are allowed and are able to can speak for themselves) or if these processes are characterised by creaming processes, where well-off youngsters argue for their particular interests. Social innovation in these projects can (and should be) read as an institutionally driven perspective as well as a bottom-up perspective, where young adults see blind spots, the misjudgement of social needs etc.

In line with these newer ways of dealing with youth policy, participation becomes omnipresent in public discourses and politically postulated and promoted. It is desirable on all levels and seems to be inherent good (for the person itself and the society). Participation is often seen as a means for other ends and vice versa. Finally it has to be questioned if these processes are more than "symbolic innovations" and give rise to the power of young people in policy making processes. Having the sharp criticism of Cooke/Kothari (2001) in mind, who put participation into question and discussed it as "the new tyranny", we should scrutinise why these projects arise today.

## **8. Discussion and conclusions**

This paper has shown two basic insights: *Firstly*, poverty rates of the age group from 15 to 30 years are the highest in relation to all other age cohorts. Further on when regarding the labour market position of young people, the access to vocational training (especially the dual system) is the main dividing line on the labour market and a transmission belt for reproducing social inequalities. Insofar the situation of young adults can be farthestmost described as vulnerable. *Secondly*, current efforts on different levels point to a re-framing of youth policy (discourses) where an independent youth policy is proclaimed and a broad focus on youth should be established. Several pilot programmes (on all levels) are participatively applied and politically regulated and seem to be characteristic for newer ways of dealing with participation of young adults on the one hand and legitimising and rearranging policy making on the other hand.

But two basic questions occurred during this analysis of the socio-economic political context and its implications on youth policies in Germany and will be restated in the forthcoming research steps:

- Do participation and participative attempts in policy making have a blind spot when regarding poverty and disadvantages? And the other way round:
- Do poverty and disadvantages have a blind spot while looking at modes, forms and phenomena of participation?

As the notion of the Informational Basis of the Judgements of Justice (IBJJ) points to the contingent selection of specific data or information which is used as the foundation for the construction of the addressees, the determination of the adequate content and purposes of policies, and finally ascertaining the evaluative yardstick for assessing the value and success of public action, the initiatives regarding the reframing of youth policy (chapter 7) can be read as the expansion of IBJJ, if they are taking the situation of vulnerable youth into account.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of key issues

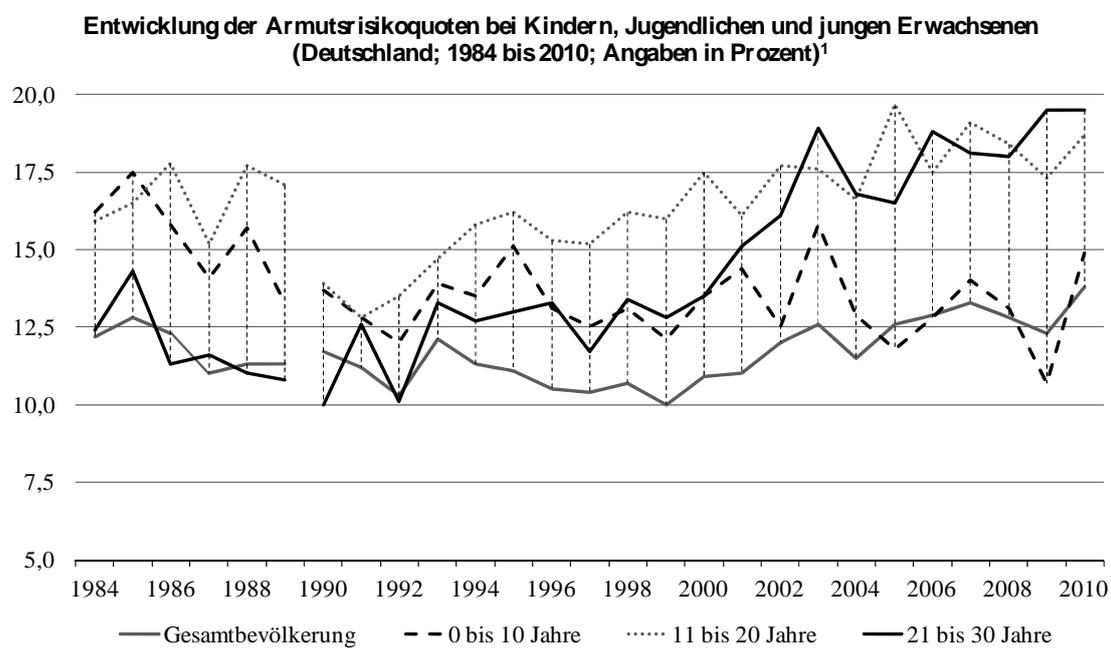
Key issues	How is this issue defined and which key terms are used to describe this issue
Youth policy	<p>While there was a big shift to a “no child left behind” policy in the last years, <b>a visible youth policy remained a blind spot.</b> (Disadvantaged) youth were only partly tackled in social policy, labour market policy (transition sector), educational policy, youth welfare (including youth work, i.e. youth clubs, street work etc.). Young adults are targeted in different manners up to 27 years.</p> <p>In 2012 a nationwide „centre for an independent youth policy“ (CIYP) was established which is designing a “Alliance for youth” for 2014 which aims at interministerial cooperation, eParticipation, Image campaigns as well as new funding structures.</p>
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	<p>Youth disadvantage is predominantly understood in terms of ‘NEETs’ and subsequently nearly all programmes and measurements are framed within a school-based and employment-centred transition regime.</p> <p>Youth poverty is merely measured and evaluated as a high rate of dependence from social benefits. Young migrants are often seen as a relevant target group, but their opportunities are not acknowledged under structural conditions and barriers (i.e. institutional discrimination and spatial segregation). Hence, <b>youth inequality is not perceived in a multidimensional and intersectional perspective and in addition often as a lack of individual aspirations and secondary virtues.</b></p>
Social innovation	<p>Social innovation is mainly perceived as a rearrangement of social services (delivery) and as new measurements and programs. The perspectives and voices of young adults are not systematically included. Furthermore it is rarely brought together with social movements.</p> <p>The centre for an independent youth policy (CIYP) tries to establish a mode of “youth mainstreaming”, where every policy field has to adjust their laws with the interests of the young generation.</p>
Participation	<p>Participation in terms of policy making is mainly understood as “being engaged”. It is often boiled down to desired and requested modes and forms of involvement, attitudes and actions: the emphasis of voluntary activities and civil engagement as well as the emphasis of “political interest” but mainly in the limits of the official, representative politics (the right to vote is beginning with 18). Youth parliaments exist on a local government level but without constitutional basis, competency and veto rights. On a regional level the „Association of Youth Organizations“ is by now announcing „open youth forums“ where young people can apply for.</p>
The Abilities of young people	<p>In General there are less terms to describe the abilities (or even capabilities) of young people but their lack of abilities/‘inabilities’. Regarding the German employment centred transition regime, it is much more orientated towards a human capital approach and there exist (bureaucratic) diagnostical terms of a “lack of apprenticeship entry maturity“ or “multiple placement handicaps”; they are based on ascriptions from the perspective of the labour market.</p>

	<p>Concerning participation it is predominantly boiled down to the counterparts of participation and non-participation (as a “not yet”, “not enough”, “not suitable”) and young adults are therefore latent addressed as problematic and in need (of activation). Different actors are then calling for participation competences and the “learning to participate” appears as the silver bullet to actively shape the changing society</p>
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## Appendix 2: Key government policies and programmes

Policy area	Policy or Programme	Description
Youth policy, participation	Structured Dialogue	The project was initiated and funded by the European Commission and is coordinated by a National Working Group and a national co-ordination unit for the structured dialogue seated at the National Youth Council. The main aim of the project is to bring young people and politicians together and to evoke discussions on youth-related issues. An online procedure for the project (realized through the ePartool) was developed in order to ensure low-threshold access for the young people and to have a platform where ideas and results from the decentralized projects and activities can be collected. <a href="http://www.strukturierterdialog.de/">http://www.strukturierterdialog.de/</a>
Youth policy, participation	Centre for an independent youth policy	The project was established by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in 2012 in order to organize theme-based expert fora, expert fora to improve youth policy structures, and to encourage an accompanying involvement of young people. The centre is aiming at an “Alliance for youth” in 2014, which should enforce an inter-sectoral/interministerial cooperation, the growth of political (e)Participation, an image campaign for young adults and new funding structures. The centre tries to develop and establish a concrete tool called “Youth Check” working as a guideline for divergent policy areas and ministers. <a href="http://www.allianz-fuer-jugend.de/">http://www.allianz-fuer-jugend.de/</a>
Youth policy, participation	Umdenken – Jungdenken (Rethinking – youngthinking)	The project is a regional initiative from North-Rhine-Westphalia which is set of from the federal state and provided by the „Association of Youth Organizations“ (Landesjugendring). They are offering young people the opportunity to organize so called ‘youth forums’ where youth-related topics and issues may be discussed. Since these youth forums are supposed to have a direct impact on the national policy process the term independent youth policy is replaced by <i>intervening youth policy</i> in this context. The project will end with an official youth conference on the regional level where the young people’s ideas are presented in public. <a href="http://www.umdenken-jungdenken.de/">http://www.umdenken-jungdenken.de/</a>

## Appendix 3: Statistical figures



<sup>1</sup> Monatliches Haushaltsnettoeinkommen, äquivalenzgewichtet; ab 1990 Gesamtdeutschland; bis 1997 getrennte Preisanpassung für Ost und West.  
Quelle: SOEP v27, Berechnungen nach Krause u. a. 2012

*Table 1 "Development of poverty risks of children, youth and young adults, cf. Krause et al. 2013: 19*

		Armutsriskien			Struktur der Armut (Spalten-%)			Struktur Gesamt (Spalten-%)		
		15-19	20-25	26-30	15-19	20-25	26-30	15-19	20-25	26-30
Total		21.8	25.5	19.9	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Geschlecht	Männer	19.5	21.7	21.1	48.9	41.9	45.8	54.7	49.3	43.2
	Frauen	24.6	29.3	19.0	51.1	58.1	54.3	45.3	50.7	56.8
Migrationshintergrund	keinen	18.0	24.6	18.7	62.1	72.9	71.8	75.0	75.6	76.5
	direkt	44.6	37.6	31.6	6.6	14.3	17.8	3.2	9.7	11.2
	indirekt	31.3	22.3	16.9	31.3	12.8	10.4	21.7	14.7	12.3
Region	Westdeutschland	20.5	22.8	17.9	81.8	71.7	72.7	87.0	80.1	80.7
	Ostdeutschland	30.6	36.3	28.2	18.2	28.4	27.3	13.0	19.9	19.3
Lebensform	Alleinlebend	58.5	59.7	28.6	3.6	42.6	42.2	1.3	18.2	29.3
	Paar ohne Kind	(36.9)	21.1	5.6	0.3	9.3	7.1	0.2	11.2	25.0
	Alleinerziehend	n.n.	73.3	62.0	0.9	5.0	13.1	0.2	1.7	4.2
	Paar mit Kind	n.n.	56.5	23.8	0.2	13.4	30.1	0.1	6.1	25.1
	bei Eltern	12.9	7.3	6.1	46.0	13.5	3.8	77.9	47.3	12.5
	bei einem Elternteil	52.5	26.6	19.4	49.0	16.2	3.8	20.3	15.5	3.9
Bildungsbeteiligung	Nicht in (Aus-)Bildung	37.3	24.5	16.3	11.0	48.2	68.5	6.3	50.2	83.4
	in Schule	20.3	17.2	n.n.	75.1	3.7	0.5	79.1	5.4	0.1
	in Berufsausbildung	18.7	21.9	29.0	12.0	19.9	5.2	13.7	23.2	3.6
	in Studium	49.3	34.0	39.6	1.9	28.2	25.8	0.8	21.2	13.0
Erwerbsbeteiligung	in Schule/Ausbildung	20.0	20.6	49.7	84.9	21.4	4.0	91.2	26.5	1.6
	NEW	31.5	25.6	26.3	5.7	7.2	11.4	3.9	7.2	8.6
	arbeitslos	56.8	57.6	51.8	4.8	18.8	22.7	1.8	8.3	8.7
	EW: prekär	28.2	34.3	33.3	2.6	15.7	19.2	2.0	11.7	11.5
	EW: mittel	(12.9)	13.1	10.6	0.2	7.5	11.7	0.3	14.7	21.9
	EW: höher	n.n.	3.0	3.0	0.0	1.3	5.3	0.1	10.5	34.8
	Studium	49.3	34.0	39.6	1.9	28.1	25.8	0.8	21.1	13.0
Höchster Bildungsabschluss	noch in Schule	20.1	25.9	25.6	72.3	21.8	6.5	77.2	21.5	5.0
	max. Hauptschule	37.7	42.8	36.0	16.4	16.7	15.1	9.3	9.9	8.3
	HauptSch+Ausbildung	(0.0)	25.0	19.0	0.0	10.0	12.6	0.5	10.2	13.2
	Realschule	16.3	18.2	30.4	8.3	7.6	7.0	10.9	10.7	4.6
	RealSch+Ausbildung	(45.2)	15.9	17.2	0.8	9.4	24.4	0.4	15.0	28.2
	(Fach-)Abitur	28.2	29.9	35.6	2.1	27.7	14.9	1.6	23.6	8.3
	(Fach-)Abitur+Ausbildung	n.n.	14.3	10.1	0.0	3.1	6.2	0.0	5.6	12.2
FH/Universität	n.n.	26.3	13.2	0.1	3.7	13.3	0.1	3.6	20.2	
Bildung der Eltern	max. Hauptschule	39.7	34.4	20.6	16.4	10.2	9.1	8.9	7.5	8.4
	HauptSch+Ausbildung	34.4	30.9	18.9	34.1	32.3	25.6	21.3	26.4	25.7
	RealSch+Ausbildung	19.7	22.3	18.5	33.9	30.1	31.9	37.1	34.2	32.9
	Abitur+Ausbildung	13.2	16.7	18.4	5.3	4.5	5.3	8.6	6.9	5.5
	Fachhochschule	3.9	16.3	21.0	1.5	4.7	4.7	8.1	7.4	4.2
	Universität	12.0	26.1	19.3	8.9	18.1	23.5	16.0	17.6	23.3
Klassenlage der Eltern	Obere Dienstklasse	4.9	17.0	13.5	3.3	9.6	9.9	13.8	14.3	14.0
	Untere Dienstklasse	8.6	24.2	18.4	7.1	14.9	15.8	16.8	15.6	16.4
	Einfache nicht.manuelle Berufe	19.8	25.3	29.5	9.3	8.8	13.3	9.5	8.8	8.6
	Kleine Selbständige	10.9	13.2	14.0	4.9	4.7	7.0	9.1	9.0	9.6
	FacharbeiterIn	24.8	28.6	18.8	29.1	29.2	26.2	23.9	25.8	26.8
	Einfache ArbeiterIn	34.9	31.2	21.8	46.4	32.7	27.9	27.0	26.5	24.5
Bezug von Sozialleistungen	nein	14.3	19.2	13.6	54.2	61.3	54.9	82.8	81.4	80.2
	ja	58.0	53.0	45.3	45.8	38.7	45.1	17.2	18.6	19.8

(..) = Fallzahlen unter 30; n.n. = Fallzahlen unter 10

Quelle: SOEPv27, gepoolte Wellen 2008-2010; eigene Berechnungen

Table 2 "Poverty risks according to risk dimensions, cf. Groh-Samberg 2013: 16

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# Chapter 7: The Socio-Economic Political Context for Addressing Youth Unemployment in Scotland

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## 1. Abstract

This chapter focuses on national level youth employment policy in Scotland. It provides a Capability Approach informed evaluation of current employment policy making in relation to disadvantaged youth (in terms of employment, education and lived experiences) by mapping current policy processes and social support measures. The findings presented highlight that as a result of a focus on evidence based policy making, the national informational basis of judgement with regards to disadvantage in the labour market is measured and understood in terms of objective factors, not taking into account subjective factors. The findings raise questions about young people's voice in the policy making. Policy does acknowledge the importance of 'meaningful' work. But how this is defined, and by whom, is not clear. Generally the way in which young people can realise their capability for voice in the development and delivery of government policy is through formal channels, however, those most disadvantaged may not always be heard because of barriers in the way that voices are sought. Social innovation appears to be a mechanism through which engagement and a capability for voice can be developed. However the participants generally felt that there was not a systemic innovative approach in government.

## 2. Introduction

This chapter focuses on national level youth employment policy in Scotland<sup>40</sup>. It provides a Capability Approach informed evaluation of current employment policy making in relation to disadvantaged youth (in terms of employment, education and lived experiences) by mapping current policy processes and social support measures. This chapter:

- Identifies and evaluates relevant existing employment youth policies in relation to disadvantage;
- Identifies which actors are responsible for the development and delivery of employment policy and what is the relationship between the state and various actors;

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<sup>40</sup> While the main focus is on employment policy, this chapter also considers policy areas related to education and the lived experiences of young people, as well as considering the cross-cutting dimension of participation. Where possible the focus is on policy aimed at those aged 15-24 years, but it is recognised: that in some contexts youth policy may be aimed at other age groups (e.g. 14-19 years); that it is essential to look at policies at aimed children; that Scotland has a school leaving age of 16 years and policy may focus on the post-school population; and that policy that significantly affects youth may be aimed at the whole population.

- Identifies social innovation and its role in the delivery and development of existing and new youth employment policy, and how social innovation is encouraged and harnessed in the policy making process.

The Capability Approach, developed by Sen (1985, 1990, 1992, 1998), is centred on the freedom and opportunity individuals have to make choices that they value. The Capability Approach focuses upon the potential ability of the individual to achieve a *functioning* (an outcome such as having a job) that they value in the context of the wider environment in which they are embedded, rather than looking at an individual's outcomes (Walker and Unterhalter 2007). So in order to assess an individual's *capabilities* to make choices that they value, the *resources* (goods and services, for instance a suitable training course) a person has access to, as well their *conversion factors* (individual characteristics and the wider social environment), need to be factored for (Bonvin and Moachon 2008, Bonvin and Orton 2009, Lindsay and McQuaid 2010).

This chapter is particularly focused on the development of three capabilities: work, education and voice. These capabilities have been defined by Bifulco (2012) as:

- The capability for education is the real freedom to choose a training/curriculum programme one has reason to value;
- The capability for work is the real freedom to choose the job/ activity one has reason to value;
- The capability for voice is *"the capacity to express one's opinions and thoughts and to make them count in the course of public discussion"* (Bonvin and Thelen, 2003).

The chapter also examines the national Informational Basis of the Judgement of Justice (IBJJ). The IBJJ, introduced by Sen (1990), refers to the information on which a judgment is made. For example what perspectives and information are seen as valid and relevant when setting youth policy, and how are decisions reached e.g. top down processes, inclusive and deliberative processes.

The next section presents the research methods; national definitions of disadvantage are then explored; policies, instruments and levels of intervention are then examined, followed by policy making, implementation and participation; and social innovation. The chapter ends with discussions and conclusions.

### **3. Methods**

The methodology had two components. Data collection was undertaken between May 2013 and March 2014.

#### **3.1 Literature review and collection of available national data**

Available data and national discussions about disadvantaged youth and policies designed to tackle youth unemployment were analysed. This provided a contextual overview of the

social situation of youth, with an emphasis on recent developments during the economic crisis, using available data, analysis and research, as well as their opportunities for voice and participation. The focus was on an identification of the national IJJ in relation to disadvantaged youth.

### 3.2 Analysis of the main strategies to support vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and identification of possibilities of social innovation

Here the general framework of current and recent policies to support youth employment was identified and analysed. While the focus was on youth employment policy, policy related to young people’s education and lived experiences were also explored. This analysis was designed to provide contextual knowledge and took in both Scottish Government and UK Government policies, as not all policy areas are devolved to the Scottish Government<sup>41</sup>.

In addition to this policy review, expert interviews (mainly face-to-face) were conducted with policymakers and practitioners to provide further insights. A range of organisations participated, reflecting different interests and (potential) contributors to the national IJJ in terms of policy development, design and delivery (Table 1).

**Table 1: Interview participants**

<b>Policymakers</b>	5
<b>Training and education providers</b>	2
<b>Employment support service providers</b>	3
<b>Citizen’s bodies</b>	3
<b>Youth work organisations</b>	1
<b>Think tanks (governmental and non-governmental)</b>	1
<b>Networks and membership organisations (sector bodies/agencies, campaigns, lobbying, networking, project work, awareness raising)</b>	3
<b>Total</b>	18

Verbal consent was taken from all of the participants who were told that they would not be identified in the research outputs and that any quotations used would be anonymised. An interview guide ensured that key areas were addressed but participants were free to expand on issues important to them. The interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of participants, or detailed notes were taken. All the audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim.

<sup>41</sup> The provision of employment services is currently reserved to the UK Government, while training for employment is a shared responsibility between the UK and Scottish Governments. Employment is also affected by a broad range of devolved policy areas, including education and health.

A 'thematic content analysis' approach was taken to analyse the transcripts using the core categories developed by the Work Package 3 leaders in the Common Framework for Policy Analysis. The qualitative analysis software NVivo 10 aided analysis.

## **4. National definitions**

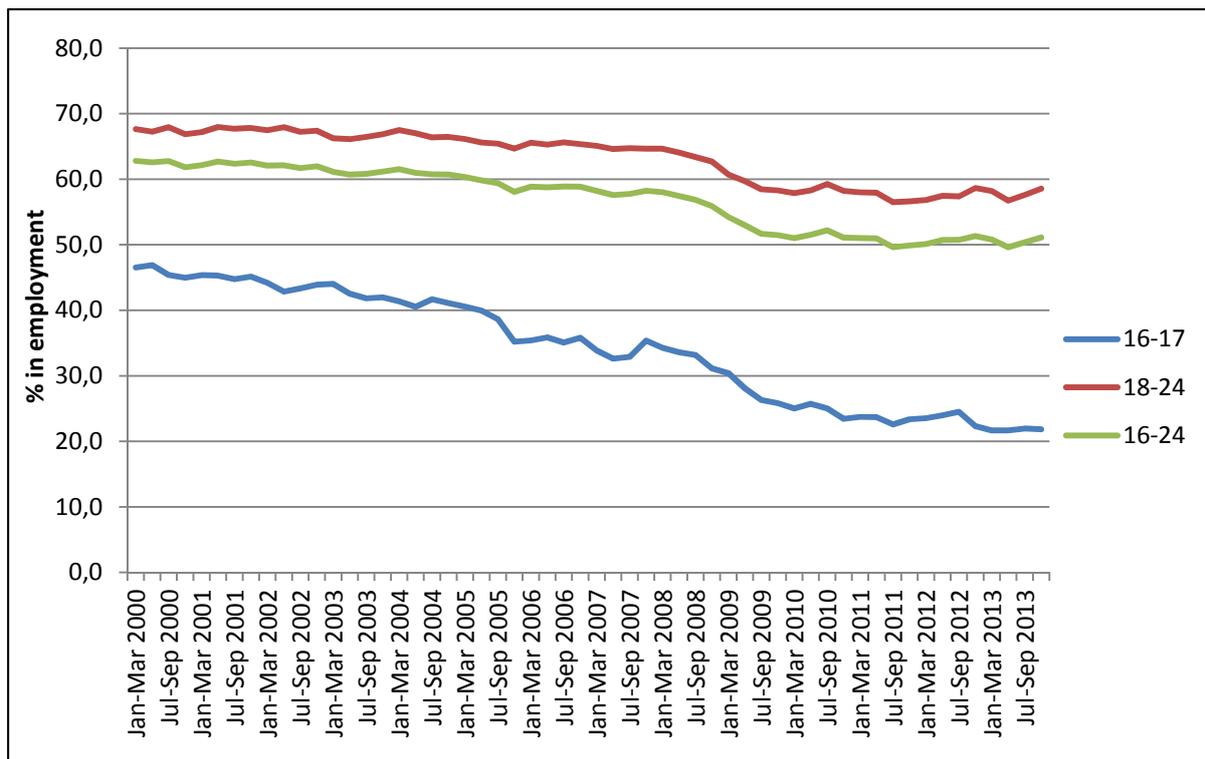
This section examines who are the disadvantaged youth in Scotland in relation to unemployment, what makes them disadvantaged and what informs this definition. It considers the opportunities that are available to young people in the labour market and the impact of the economic downturn.

### **4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth**

Since the economic downturn, youth unemployment has become a significant concern for the UK and Scottish Governments. In the UK the youth unemployment rate is the highest it has been since the 1980s (Office for National Statistics, 2012). However, while the economic recession has certainly had a negative impact on young people, even before the recession unemployment was an issue facing young people (see Figures 1 and 2) (see Appendix 1 for further figures which show that Scotland has generally performs better than the UK and the EU 27 in terms of youth employment and unemployment).

Figures 1 and 2 present the employment and unemployment rates in the UK for 16-17 year olds, 18-24 year olds and 16-24 year olds between 2000 and 2013. The employment rate of young people has decreased steadily over the period (Figure 1). For 16 to 24 year olds, the employment rate was 62.8% in January-March 2000 and 51.1% in October-December 2013, a fall of more than 11 percentage points.

**Figure 1: Employment rate of young people in the UK, 2000-2013**

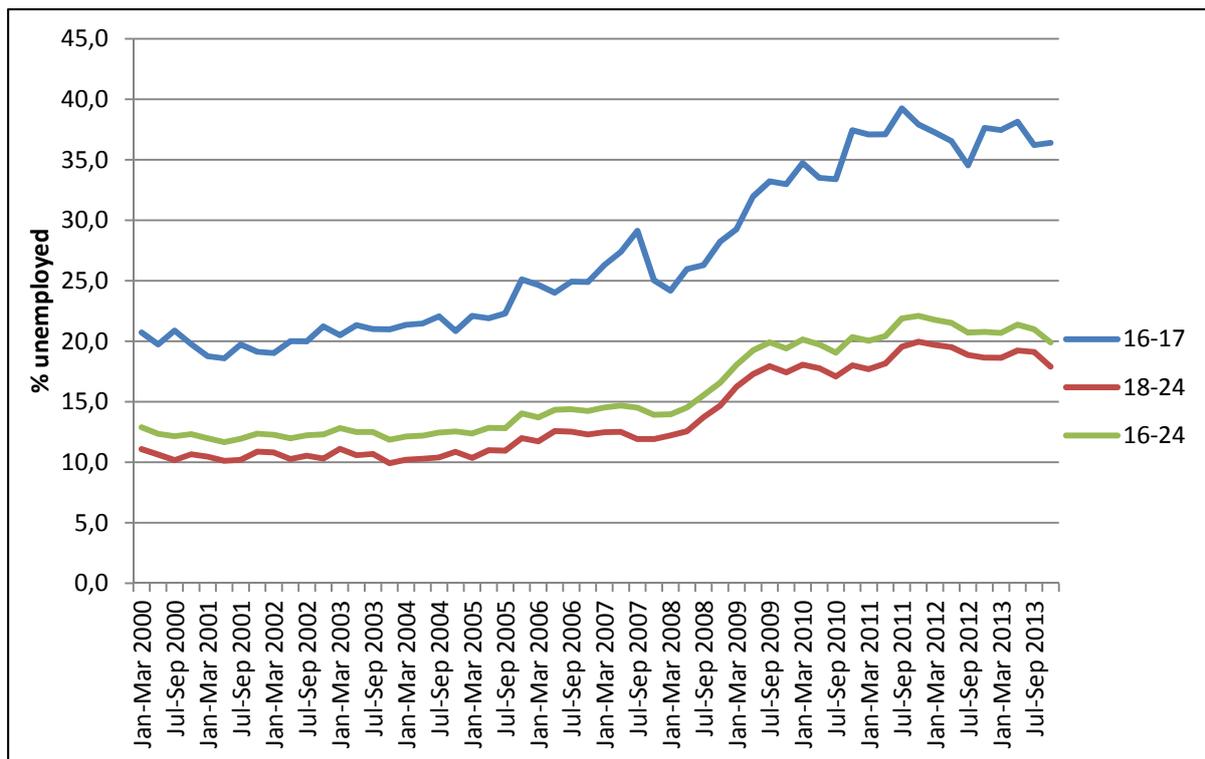


Source: ONS (2014a)

Note: rates are seasonally adjusted.

The unemployment rate has increased over the same period (Figure 2). For 16 to 24 year olds the unemployment rate was 12.9% in January-March 2000 and 19.9% in October-December 2013, an increase of 7 percentage points. The unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds peaked at 22.1% in October-December 2011.

**Figure 2: Unemployment rate of young people in the UK, 2000-2013**

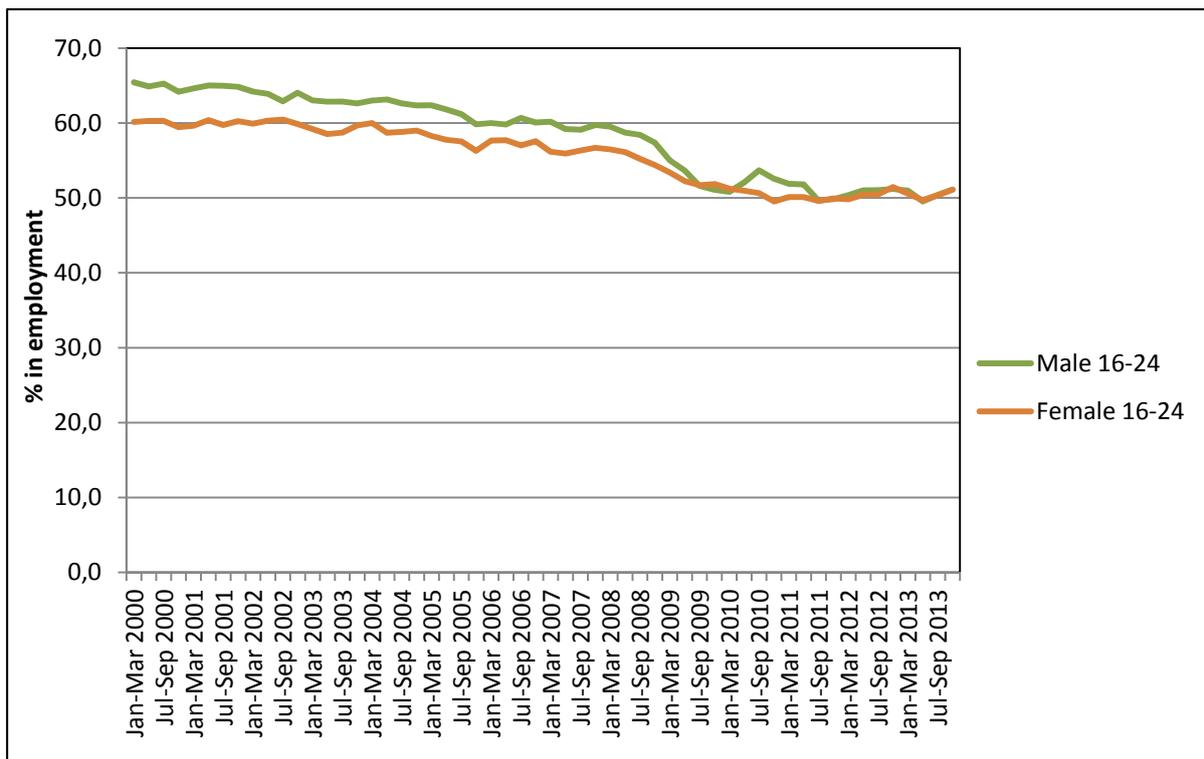


Source: ONS (2014a)

Note: rates are seasonally adjusted.

There are some gender differences in these youth employment trends. Employment rates fell for both males and females between 2000 and 2013, but young males have been hit harder, and employment rates have now converged where they used to be higher for males. But the overall pattern has not changed as young men are more likely to be unemployed and young women are more likely to be inactive (see Figures 3, 4 and 5).

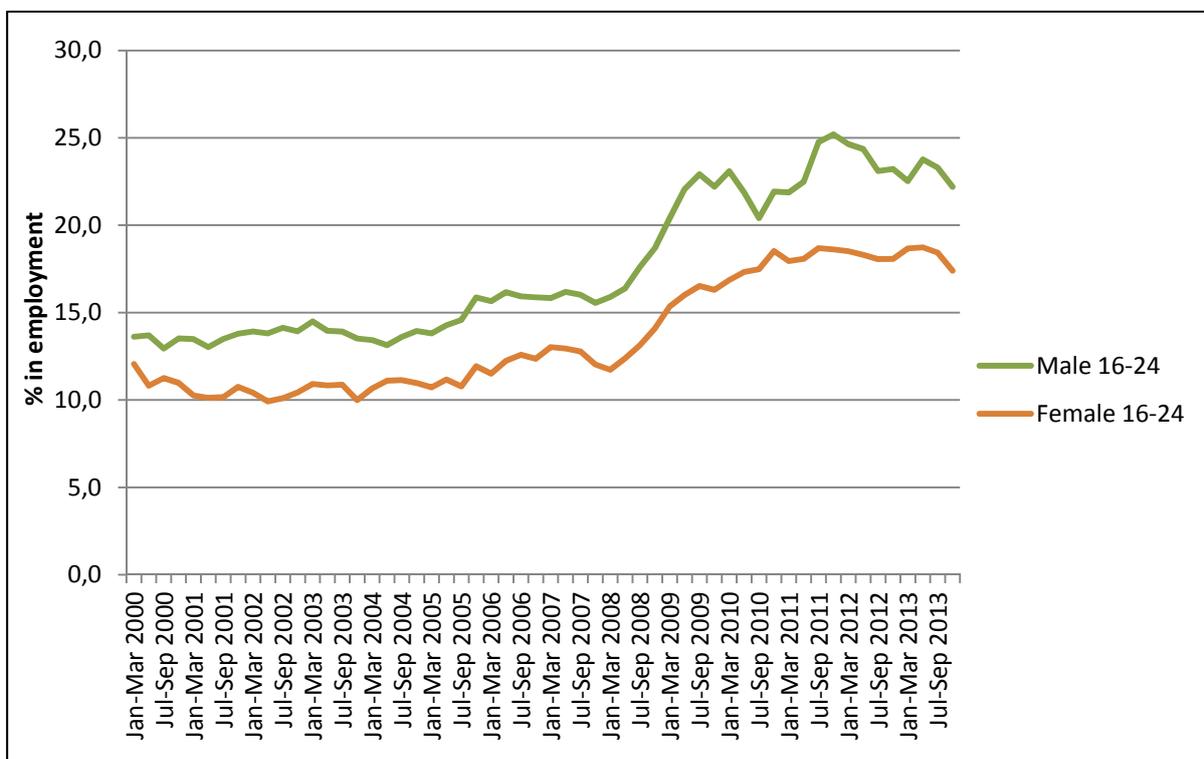
**Figure 3: Employment rate of young people in the UK by sex, 2000-2013**



Source: ONS (2014a)

Note: rates are seasonally adjusted.

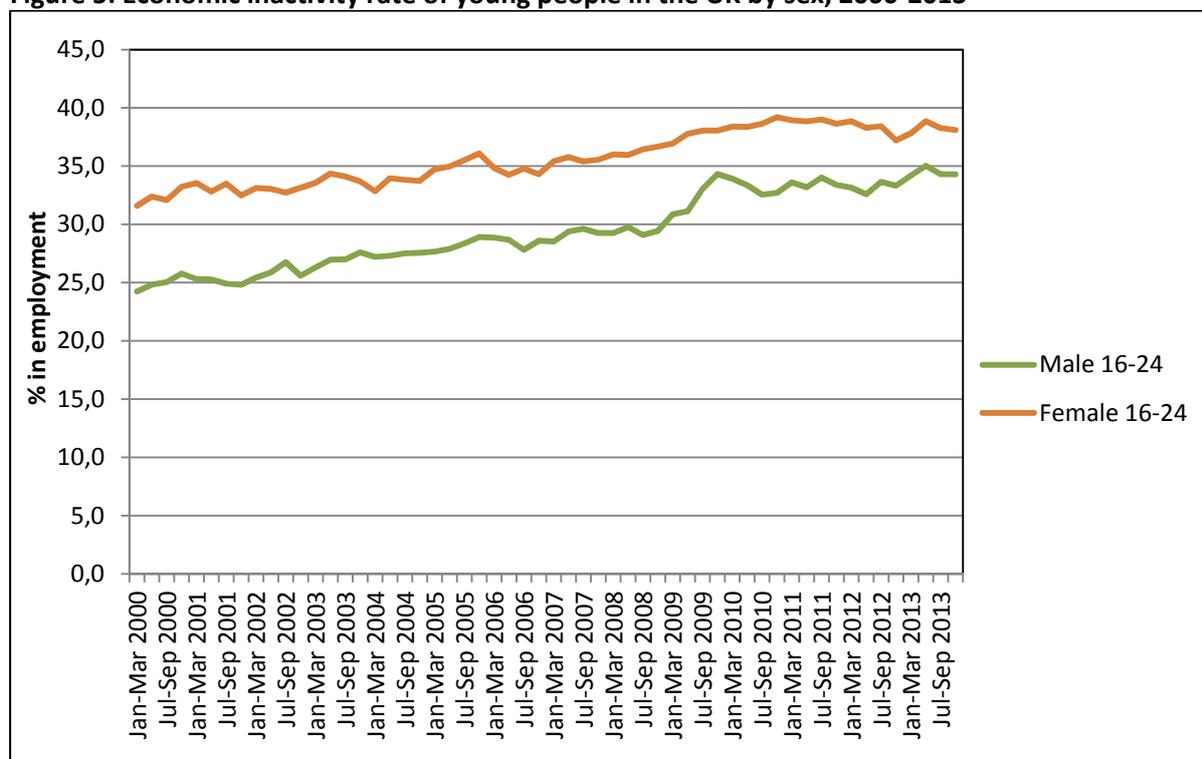
**Figure 4: Unemployment rate of young people in the UK by sex, 2000-2013**



Source: ONS (2014a)

Note: rates are seasonally adjusted.

**Figure 5: Economic inactivity rate of young people in the UK by sex, 2000-2013**



Source: ONS (2014a)

Note: rates are seasonally adjusted.

While the young unemployed as a group in general are a policy concern there are certain sub-groups identified in key policy documents as particularly disadvantaged (Table 2 below; see also Section 5 and Appendices 2 and 3).

**Table 2: Disadvantaged sub-groups of unemployed youth as identified in key policy documents**

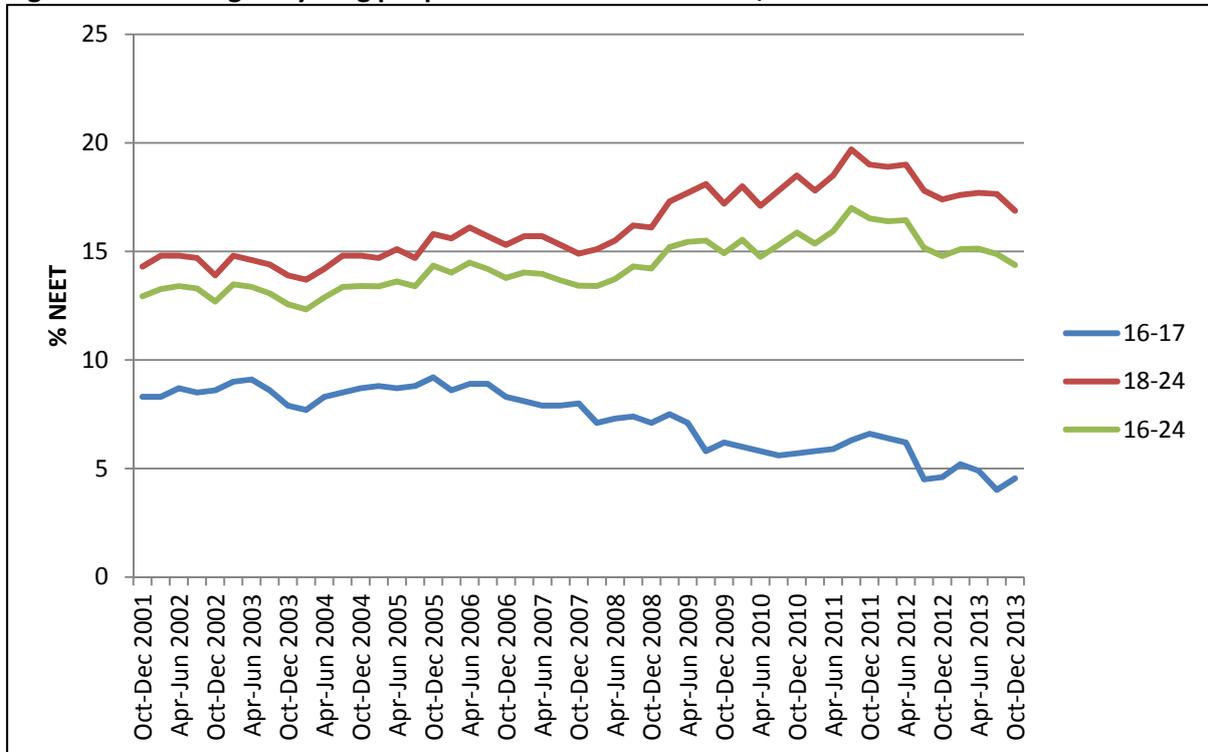
Strategy or policy	Target group of young people
More Choices More Chances (2006)	NEET (not in employment, education or training). Those identified as most likely to become NEET are: care leavers; carers; young offenders; young parents; low attainers; persistent truants; young people with physical/mental disabilities; young people misusing drugs or alcohol. These groups are further broken down into those with few or no additional support needs; those with intermediate needs and those with very complex needs.
Action for Jobs – Supporting Young Scots into Work. Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy (2012)	Breaks down the different groups of the young unemployed: young people looking for work while they are engaged in full-time education; graduates; those not enrolled in full-time education with low levels of qualification or no qualifications at all; and those with a reasonable level of educational qualifications who are not enrolled in full-time education and who, in a stronger labour market, would have better employment prospects.
Opportunities for All: Supporting All Young People to Participate in Post-16 Learning, Training	Every 16-19 year old not in employment, education or training.

or Work (2012)	
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Overall the emphasis of the IBBJ is on whether young people are in or out of work. The policy focus is especially concerned with those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), with some groups of young people being identified as being particularly at risk of becoming NEET. *Action for Jobs* also indicates awareness of a broader group of young people facing barriers in the labour market (see Table 2).

Figure 6 presents the percentage of young people in the UK who are NEET, between 2001 and 2013. Taking young people as a whole (i.e. 16-24 year olds) the percentage who are NEET has increased from 12.9% in October-December 2001 to 14.4% in October-December 2013; with a peak of 17.0% in July to September 2011. For 16 to 17 year olds the NEET rate has decreased over the period, but has increased for 18 to 24 year olds.

**Figure 6: Percentage of young people in the UK who are NEET, 2001-2013**



Source: ONS (2014b)

Note: rates are seasonally adjusted.

#### 4.1.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth – findings from the expert interviews

The young people identified as disadvantaged in the key youth employment policy documents and the labour market information was mirrored in the participants' narratives. Participants were asked who they considered to be the young people who faced the most disadvantages in Scotland today. Some felt that, as a result of the current economic climate, a greater group of young people were disadvantaged than had previously been.

Any period of inactivity was seen by one participant as harmful for young people as other factors that made it difficult for them to find work could come into play. Once young people fall into that pattern of unemployment then it is much harder for them to find work.

*“...what our experience and research shows that if young people don’t make that transition successfully and once they fall into that pattern of unemployment then it’s much harder for them to get out of that” (Youth work organisation)*

However, there were some groups of young people that were identified as being particularly disadvantaged. These are outlined in Table 3 below, classified according to whether they are individual or external conversion factors. These groups mirror those identified in the ‘More Choices More Chances’ strategy (2006).

**Table 3: Dimensions of disadvantage faced by young people in Scotland (especially in relation to employment)**

Dimension of disadvantage	
<b>Individual Conversion Factors</b>	Lack of work experience
	Care leavers
	Ex-offenders
	Young carers
	Low levels of qualifications
	Learning disabilities
	Young people living in poverty
	Young people living in areas of multiple deprivation
	Young people from chaotic backgrounds or experiencing ‘tough realities’.
	Young people with disabilities
	Young people who have been identified as not going to move onto a positive destination
	Lack of confidence
	Low literacy
	Lone parents
	Lack of work readiness
<b>External Conversion Factors</b>	Lack of access to informal employment recruitment routes
	Parental poverty
	Geographically disadvantaged areas
	Rural areas
	External labour market
	Lack of traditional entry level jobs and increased competition for them

Experiences of disadvantage are extremely nuanced and there are issues of intersectionality. Some young people may also be more resilient than others. This makes it difficult to identify who are the most vulnerable, as there are different thresholds. Some organisations may even try not to label a young person as being socially disadvantaged, as it reinforces the barriers that they may be experiencing.

*“...we are at pains not to label the young person; you are a socially disadvantaged NEET or whatever. I think there is way, way too much of that already” (Employment support service provider)*

The barriers faced by young people can also be deeply ingrained. The participants were asked at what points in the transition from school to work are young people most at risk of falling into poverty and/or unemployment. Many stated that the risk factors dated back to

earlier than the transition from school to work, as young people could already be living in poverty as a result of parental poverty. As a result of this the policy focus is often on early intervention and identifying those most at risk of not moving onto a positive destination before young people leave school (see Appendix 3).

*“I would say that the risk of falling into poverty yeah there is a risk of falling into poverty as you leave school, but quite often a lot of the young people who struggle to get into work and move into a positive destination are perhaps already in poverty when they’re in school and they’re leaving school” (Employment support service provider)*

What is apparent is that, in the main, policy and the participants understand disadvantage in terms of “objective” factors and the IJG does not seem to take into account of subjective factors or indicators of an individual’s capabilities (Beuret et al., 2013; Bonvin, 2013; Chiappero-Martinetti, 2013). However, what should be noted is that many participants felt that it was difficult to create one definition of disadvantage. The approach taken to policy making is that decisions and practice should be evidence based. Objective measures are easier to quantify and collect data on than subjective measures (although evidence is gathered on these subjective factors<sup>42</sup>). There is also a lack of ‘capability variables’ in existing datasets as there is a focus on achieved functionings and outcomes rather than freedoms and capabilities, with studies often using proxy variables for capabilities. Therefore subjective measures may not be necessarily reflected in an evidence based policy making approach. As such current understandings of disadvantage are not taking a capability approach, focusing of achieved functionings rather than the ways in which these are achieved, and people’s freedoms to live a life that they have reason to value.

## **4.2 Labour market position of young people and problems at labour market entry**

A number of reasons can be identified for the increase in youth unemployment. As a result of the economic downturn there has been a general contraction of the economy and labour market. Employers may be reluctant to take on new employees, especially young people who are perceived as lacking the necessary skills and experience; and there are relatively high numbers of young people in badly affected sectors e.g. construction. There has been an increase in temporary contracts and precarious employment; as well as increased competition for a decreasing number of jobs (McQuaid et al., 2010; Oxford Economics, 2010; UKCES 2011; UKCES, 2012). Employers were cited by participants as sometimes being wary of taking on young people because of perceived risk, a lack of understanding of the qualifications system, and the difficulty in identifying the support available to them if they were to take a young person on.

*“Small scale employers are where I believe the best experience can happen...are nervous about taking on young people for a whole variety of reasons” (Employment support service provider)*

The participants were asked about the job opportunities available to young people and of the quality of these opportunities. A reduction in elementary and lower-middle level jobs

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<sup>42</sup> For example the Scottish Household Survey collects data on how satisfied people are with their life as a whole nowadays (see for more details: [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0107962.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0107962.pdf))

was identified as an issue, as the types of work that the young unemployed are seeking tend to be in low-skilled or elementary occupations<sup>43</sup>. The economic recession was felt to have reduced the opportunities available to all groups of young people in the labour market and focused policy on the problem of youth unemployment.

*"I think the economic downturn has focused minds on, initially it focused minds of what do we do, we can't afford to have a lost generation of people who have no experience of work and aren't getting jobs and in the future that is going to be costly for us" (Employment support service provider)*

The effects of the recession now meant that graduates could now be defined as being disadvantaged in the labour market. Graduates are now facing disadvantage that they probably would not have previously faced. Although graduates are more likely to be employed than those with lower level qualifications, 47% recent graduates work in a non-graduate role<sup>44</sup>, while 33% work in a low-skilled role (Office for National Statistics, 2013). This lack of jobs for graduates and those with qualifications further marginalises those young people at the bottom end of the labour market.

*"...we have seen groups of young people graduate from university who are either significantly under employed or are unable to find employment and are out of work for long periods of time" (Employment support service provider)*

## **5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention**

This section considers the main instruments to tackle youth unemployment and the degree to which young people can have voice in employment support measures and programmes.

Two issues need to be considered to contextualise the section:

- (1) In considering policies in relation to disadvantaged youth, this research takes in both Scottish Government and UK Government policies, as not all policy areas are devolved to the Scottish Government.
- (2) In an age of austerity the UK Government have been following a programme of reducing public spending to reduce the national deficit. There is a particular focus on reducing welfare costs and 'wasteful' spending (HM Treasury, 2010).

### **5.1 What are the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?**

In the UK there is an arguably hybrid approach to employment activation with a combination of a 'Work First' and a Human Capital Development approach taken (Lindsay et al., 2007). Work first approaches encourage participants to take any job and have rapid labour market entry (Handler, 2006; Daguerre, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2007). As a result the

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<sup>43</sup> Claimant count data shows that in January 2012 of the 18-24 year olds claiming Jobseekers Allowance, 6 in 10 were looking for a job in sales or elementary occupations (Office for National Statistics, 2012a).

<sup>44</sup> Jobs in which the associated tasks do not normally require knowledge and skills developed through higher education (Office for National Statistics, 2013).

access to 'quality' employment may be less of a priority, and the focus may be on those who are most job-ready (Peck, 1999; Dean, 2003). Conversely Human Capital Development approaches acknowledge that the unemployed may need substantial and long term support when seeking work (Lindsay et al., 2007). In addition, greater emphasis has become focused, in the UK, on sustainable transitions into employment, with local provision and integration of activation and other related social support and policies at the local level, but within the national context (Künzel, 2012).

### **5.1.1 Main instruments to tackle unemployment: UK Government**

The key employment policies from the UK Government affecting the young unemployed are detailed in Appendix 3. Employment services are delivered in Scotland by Jobcentre Plus, an agency of the Department for Work and Pensions. The post-2010 UK Coalition government launched the *Work Programme* in 2011, which replaced previous welfare to work programmes, and is the main programme used to support those aged over 18 years into work. This mandatory programme provides support, work experience and training for up to 2 years. Service providers are paid almost entirely for results (in particular sustained job outcomes) and there is freedom for them to tailor the support offered (DWP, 2012a).

There are also programmes specifically aimed at young people. The *Youth Contract* for those aged 18- 24 years old, aims to provide employment and training opportunities (DWP 2012b). 2-8 week *Work Experience* is also available to 16-24 year olds (Job Centre Plus, 2012).

### **5.1.2 Main instruments to tackle unemployment: Scottish Government**

While welfare is delivered through a single, common policy framework across the UK, the devolved administrations have powers to implement complementary programmes to tackle issues such as youth unemployment. Improving the lives of children and young people forms an important part of the Scottish Government's policy priorities, and addressing education, employment, health and wellbeing, and participation are key. The Scottish Government is taking an increasingly preventative approach in its policies, prioritising "*early intervention to prevent risks to the individual and society from materialising later. In addition to reducing demand for public services, this approach will help to tackle the cycles of inequality and disadvantage that blight the life chances of so many people*" (Scottish Government 2013b: 49).

The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce was established by the Scottish Government in January 2013. Made up of people from the worlds of employment and education, it has been tasked with bringing forward a range of recommendations designed to improve young people's transition into employment. The Commission published its Interim Report on 5 September 2013 and the final recommendations will be published in the second quarter of 2014. There were 12 interim recommendations including (Wood, 2013):

- Pathways should start in the senior phase of school which lead to the delivery of industry recognised vocational qualifications alongside academic qualifications;

- Colleges should focus on employment outcomes and supporting local economic development;
- The enhancement of vocational education pathways;
- Expansion of the annual number of Modern Apprenticeship starts, if employers can offer good quality opportunities; and
- Support for young people at risk of disengaging from education and for those who have already done so should focus on early intervention and wide ranging, sustained support.

The key employment policies and programmes from the Scottish Government affecting the young unemployed as well as tackling inequalities and poverty (including education, skills, health, regeneration) are detailed in Appendix 3.

The employment programmes specifically aimed at young people are summarised in Table 4. Skills Development Scotland<sup>45</sup> (the national skills body and a non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government) works with partners to deliver a range of funding and training support for people, including employability programmes (within the *Employability Fund*), a *Certificate of Work Readiness*, *Employer Recruitment Incentives* and *Modern Apprenticeships*. Volunteering is also used and promoted as an opportunity to provide young people with the experience and skills that they may lack, especially if this is acting as a barrier to the labour market. The employability framework, *Working for Growth*, cites volunteering as “one of the best and easiest ways that such invaluable experience can be obtained” (Scottish Government, 2012: 30).

**Table 4: Scottish Government Policies, Strategies or Programmes to Tackle Youth Unemployment**

	Name of Policy, Strategy or Programme	Description
Policy or strategy	More Choices More Chances (2006)	A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland.
	Action for Jobs – Supporting Young Scots into Work. Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy (2012)	Provides an overview of the Scottish Government’s approach to harnessing and supporting the national effort required to increase youth employment.
	Opportunities for All: Supporting All Young People to Participate in Post-16 Learning, Training or Work (2012)	Strategy to improve young people’s participation in post-16 learning, training and work.
	Curriculum for Excellence (implemented in schools from 2010-2011)	The 3-18 curriculum aims to ensure that all children and young people develop the attributes, knowledge and skills to flourish in life, learning and work.
	Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce (interim report 2013)	Established by the Scottish Government in January 2013. Made up of people from the worlds of employment and education, it has been tasked with bringing forward a range of recommendations designed to improve young people’s transition into employment.
Programmes	Modern Apprenticeships	Offer anyone aged 16+ paid employment combined with the opportunity to train for jobs.
	Individual Learning Accounts	Support for those aged 16+ to help pay for learning.
	Employability Fund	Brings together a number of national training programmes and provides flexible training support which responds to the needs of employers and local labour markets.
	Scotland’s Best	Employability programme for 16-24 year olds. Combines

<sup>45</sup> [www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/](http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/)

	training and volunteering.
Community Jobs Scotland	'Meaningful' paid work experience in the third sector.
Youth Employment Scotland	Recruitment incentive for employers of small and medium sized business in the private sector, and social enterprises.
Certificate for Work Readiness	Minimum of 190hrs work experience and the chance to develop skills with a training provider and work coach.

Education policy (a reserved policy area) is also important in shaping young people's experiences in the labour market. *Curriculum for Excellence* (the 3-18 curriculum) aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the attributes, knowledge and skills to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. An important part of the *Curriculum for Excellence* is the strategy on 16+ learning choices, with all young people offered a place in post-16 learning before they leave school (Education Scotland, n.d.). Access to higher education is also a policy concern. Removing barriers to accessing higher education is a key element of the Scottish Skills Strategy (*Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth* (Scottish Government, 2010)) as well as creating high level targets for training programmes. Although participation in higher education continues to be greatest in the least deprived areas of Scotland; between 2006 and 2012, the participation of those from the most deprived areas increased (Scottish Funding Council, 2013). One of the outcomes of the *Scottish Funding Council Strategic Plan 2012-15* is that all people in Scotland are able to access all levels of educational provision that match their ambitions and abilities and allows them to reach their full potential, regardless of their background. The Scottish Funding Council monitor widening access efforts through *Learning for All*, the Scottish Funding Council's strategy for widening access published since 2005<sup>46</sup>.

As is the case with the UK policy framework, the focus in employment and education policy is on getting young people into work or providing them with the skills and qualifications to find work. There appears to be focus on the attributes and deficits of young people, employability and participation. There are some discussions about 'quality' opportunities for young people, but how this is defined, and who defines this, is not clear. The Capability Approach highlights that the transition to work is not always positive if one takes into account the values an individual attaches to outcomes (Bartelheimer et al., 2012; Vero et al., 2012). Although there is some acknowledgement of the demand side elements (for example *Youth Employment Scotland* is a recruitment incentive for employers; and the Scottish Government's (2011: 12) economic strategy highlights the importance of fostering "a self-sustaining and ambitious climate of entrepreneurialism, international trade and innovation" and "encouraging economic activity and investment across all of Scotland's communities") the focus to addressing unemployment still is predominantly centred on supply side measures.

## 5.2 Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programmes they are offered/the subject of?

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<sup>46</sup> See for more information: [www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/FundingOutcomes/Access/learningforall/LearningforAll.aspx](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/FundingOutcomes/Access/learningforall/LearningforAll.aspx)

If labour market activation takes a Capability Approach it should promote an individuals' freedom to choose the work they have reason to value, and participants in employment activation programmes should be able to negotiate the contents of a programme and even be able to refuse a job at a bearable cost (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007; Bonvin and Orton, 2009; Lindsay and McQuaid, 2010; Orton, 2011). Thus the interviews explored the extent to which young people had voice and choice in the programmes that they were subject to, remembering that some programmes, e.g. the Work Programme, are mandatory.

At the meso-level service providers often take regular feedback from service users. Mechanisms are built into programmes for feedback and evaluation, and there may be informal mechanisms through which service users have voice. There is also feedback from employers, where appropriate, highlighting the importance of external factors.

*"[Young people's] voice on the programme and prior to starting the programme is very much helps shape how we work with the young person, and also helps shape what types of support we deliver. On-going evaluation, consultation, feedback from them while they're on the programme is crucial...we formally have to evaluate and get feedback from the young person" (Employment support service provider)*

Another meso-level mechanism to feed the views of young people to service providers in the third sector is having young people sit on their Boards of Trustees or engaging young people in aspects of how the organisation is run e.g. staff recruitment. This is being promoted by organisations like Young Charity Trustees<sup>47</sup>.

But while there was some flexibility in programmes to the needs of young people, the fundamentals of the programme stay the same because of the requirements of service commissioners. Third sector organisations for example are independent of government but the funding available will shape what work they can do and who they work with

*"We have adapted quite a lot, mainly to the requirements of funders..." (Employment support service provider)*

Some of the service provider participants made it clear that they are not funding led and would only deliver what they think meets the needs of the young people they work with.

*"I think we're quite strong on that that we're not funding led, we don't chase the funding, we do the work that we think is valuable for young people in Scotland and hopefully we will find funding streams that match what it is that they want to do" (Youth work organisation)*

However, it was recognised that there needed to be 'realism' in the experiences and opportunities offered to young people so flexibility was necessarily limited.

*"Work is for any of us there are certain rules and they're non-negotiable. Work is not a democracy. And that places an immediate limit on flexibility" (Employment support service provider)*

Therefore the requirements of commissioners and the 'realities' of the labour market limit the extent to which service users are able to negotiate the content of a programme or even

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<sup>47</sup> <http://youngcharitytrustees.org/>

refuse to participate (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007; Bonvin and Orton, 2009; Lindsay and McQuaid, 2010; Orton, 2011).

### 5.3 Areas of non-intervention

Arguably one of the main areas of non-intervention from a Capability Approach, is that the policy focus is on the individual job seeker's attributes and deficits, employability and participation in any employment rather than participation in 'quality' employment and wider issues e.g. wellbeing and the value attached to job outcomes (Lindsay, 2010; Bartelheimer et al., 2012; Vero et al., 2012).

The interview participants identified other areas of non-intervention in the current policy landscape. First, current approaches are often focused on getting young people into a full-time job, but the participants felt that part-time or micro-jobs should also be seen as a success as it is something that can be built upon. One participant felt that there was a lack of recognition of the changing nature of the labour market and how it will look in future, and others felt that the focus should also be on making sure that job opportunities are sustainable (although arguably the *Work Programme* does acknowledge the importance of sustainability).

*"I think the terms of the policy looking at the future I don't think there's been any real recognition about how certain parts of the world of work will look in the future. Trends and predictions you are seeing more and more people self-employed status and new sectors and new markets" (Employment support service provider)*

Second, participants identified the need to further support the most disadvantaged young people (especially ensuring that those with multiple disadvantages are not missed because of the ways in which statistics on disadvantage are categorised and collated). Some participants felt that a broader approach needed to be taken, looking at not just employment but more broadly looking at young people's opportunities.

*"...for some young people improving their disadvantage will take a substantial amount of time and therefore building up trust with some of these young people, assessing what their needs are and letting them have aspirations that they can meet. So there is a lot of work certainly with some of the young people... there is a huge amount of things that are influential, more stability in their housing, more stability in terms of accessing services, what they are able to do and what they are able to engage with in a wider life, looking at not just employment but more broadly looking at their opportunities" (Network/membership organisation)*

One participant also felt that performance based programmes (e.g. the *Work Programme*) could lead to 'creaming and parking' (i.e. concentrating support on those already closest to the labour market) with those who are most disadvantaged not being supported.

*"The increasing movement towards output based funding or performance based funding makes some of the choices for the service providers pretty difficult...I think there is obviously lower hanging fruit... the return on investment can be seen to be fairly quick and quick fast turnaround. And I think what is missed there is the cost to society of dealing with those that have the biggest range of problems and issues who are going to cost in terms of health and justice and welfare" (Employment support service provider)*

Finally, while there may be a lot of opportunities, employers and also young people are not always aware of the support available to them as the landscape of support was perceived as being complex.

*“How do we ensure that there is the landscape around support for young people for employability opportunities is logical and can be much easier navigated than it can be at the present time? Now that’s as much a challenge for young people as it is for people who are providing those opportunities as it is for employers” (Training/education provider)*

## **6. Policy making, participation and implementation**

As well as looking at whether individuals are able to negotiate the content of specific employment programmes for example at the meso-level (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007; Bonvin and Orton, 2009; Lindsay and McQuaid, 2010; Orton, 2011) it is interesting in terms of the Capability Approach to consider the voice of young people in the wider macro-level policy context in which programmes are designed and implemented.

The Scottish Government has in place legislation to increase the participation and voice of children and young people in the design and delivery of services, as well as the whole of society in general. Indeed a Commission set up by the Scottish Government to review the future delivery of public services made a recommendation that services are built around the needs of people and communities, and that community capacity is developed (Scottish Government, 2011b).

### **6.1 Who are the actors that are responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?**

Scotland's employability framework *Workforce Plus* (2006) (refreshed in 2012 by *Working for Growth*)<sup>48</sup> recognised the need for real partnership working between agencies especially at local level (Appendix 3 for more details). With Scottish Government support, a number of national stakeholder-led groups have been established to work together to seek solutions to the employment challenges in Scotland<sup>49</sup>. This employability delivery infra-structure is detailed in Figure 7.

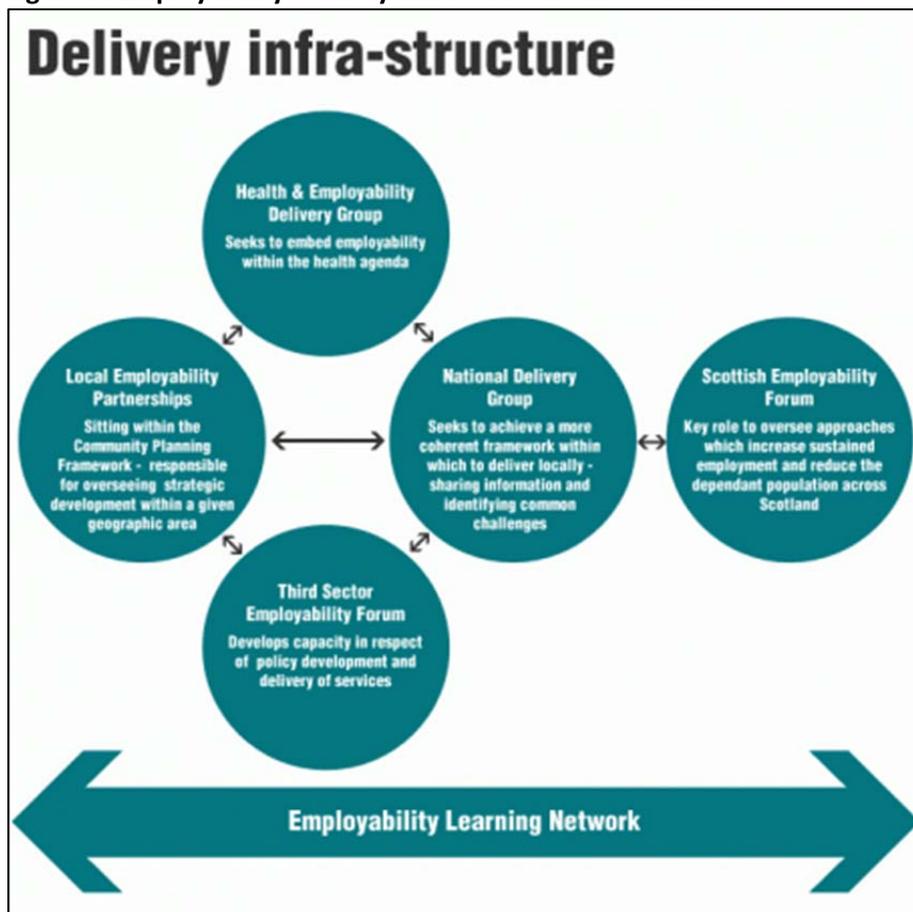
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<sup>48</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/129285/0030791.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/129285/0030791.pdf)

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00402275.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00402275.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> [www.employabilityinscotland.com/policy-and-partnership/delivery-infra-structure/](http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/policy-and-partnership/delivery-infra-structure/)

Figure 7: Employability delivery infra-structure in Scotland



Reproduced from:

[www.employabilityinscotland.com/policy-and-partnership/delivery-infra-structure/](http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/policy-and-partnership/delivery-infra-structure/)

- The **National Delivery Group** (NDG) is attended by employability lead officials from each of Scotland's Local Authorities, and their partners. National organisations with an interest in employability also attend the group. The group's agenda revolves around 3 themes: learning, sharing and identifying. The NDG links into the Scottish Employability Forum.
- The **Health and Employability Delivery Group** (HEDG) is attended by National Health Service (NHS) health managers from across Scotland whose remit includes employability activities. It is supported by the Scottish Government's Employability Team and Scottish Government Health Improvement Directorate.
- The **Scottish Employability Forum** (SEF), is jointly chaired by Scottish, UK and local Government, and provides a single Forum where all parts of Government can come together, with key stakeholders and delivery bodies, in order to address unemployment within the context of economic recovery.
- The **Third Sector Employability Forum** (TSEF) works to develop the capacity of the third sector in relation to policy development and the delivery of employability services funded by the Scottish and UK Governments. The TSEF feeds into and works with the SEF and the NDG and liaises with Scottish Government Ministers.
- **Local Employability Partnerships** are local multi-agency, cross-sectoral partnerships across Scotland's 32 Local Authorities. Partnerships vary in membership but often include representatives from: Local Authorities, Jobcentre Plus, Skills Development Scotland, local colleges, the Third Sector and the NHS.

However, the focus of this section is on the way in which young people are involved in the development and delivery of Scottish Government policy, and the different actors involved in supporting young people's participation at the macro-level (which may include the stakeholders identified in Figure 7).

This research has identified the following macro-level<sup>50</sup> mechanisms, platforms and champions that have been developed to increase the engagement and participation of young people in government policy making.

Engagement and co-productive activity is an important part of the **asset based approach** that has increasingly informed the development of Scottish Government policy (e.g. the Child Poverty Strategy (Scottish Government, 2011a)). The asset-based approaches require that individuals and communities co-produce interventions:

*“while the barriers to exiting poverty for individuals and families may be considerable, it is important that policymakers and delivery agents ensure that efforts to tackle poverty do not focus on these barriers alone, or assume that people lack the capacity for more than passive acceptance of the circumstances in which they live”* (Scottish Government, 2011a).

**Consultation and engagement activities** are an important part of policy development. In 2013 a consultation on developing Scotland's young workforce was opened, that young people could respond to<sup>51</sup>. The voices of young people and service users are also represented through stakeholder (e.g. third sector) responses to consultations.

The Scottish Government has published a practical tool to help improve the experience of all participants involved in community engagement to achieve the highest quality of process and results – the **National standards for community engagement** (Scottish Government, 2005). The standards are based on principles of: equality and recognising the diversity of people and communities; a clear sense of purpose; effective methods for achieving change; building on the skills and knowledge of all those involved in community engagement; and commitment to learning for continuous improvement. There is also a proposed **Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill** (the consultation of the draft Bill opened in November 2013 and closed in January 2014) that aims to increase community participation and unlock enterprising community development (Scottish Government, 2013).

There are mechanisms to encourage the engagement, participation and voice of children and young people in particular. The UK Government has signed up to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international law that applies to all those aged under 18 years old. The Scottish Government has agreed it will take action on 21 priority areas. These 21 areas were developed following consultation with adults, professionals and children and young people (Scottish Government, 2009a).

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<sup>50</sup> There are regional and local mechanisms but this report is focused upon the national policy context.

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[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/edandtrainingforyoungple/commissiondevelopingscotlandsyoungworkforce/consultation](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/edandtrainingforyoungple/commissiondevelopingscotlandsyoungworkforce/consultation)

The Scottish Government has produced resources and mechanisms to encourage the participation of young people. **Valuing Young People: Principles and connections to support young people achieve their potential** (Scottish Government, 2009b) is a practical resource for anyone making decisions that affect the support given to young people or anyone involved in delivering services to them. It is founded on the principle of partnership.

There are also a range of platforms and champions to promote and encourage young people's participation and voice:

(1) **The Scottish Youth Parliament**<sup>52 53</sup> (SYP) is the democratically elected voice of Scotland's young people. It is led and informed by young people and its role is to ensure that young people are heard by the decision makers of Scotland and to campaign on issues that matter most to Scotland's youth. The Scottish Youth Parliament recognises the need to "*engage with young people from hard to reach groups*" (Scottish Youth Parliament, 2013) and therefore the SYP partner with organisations<sup>54</sup>. The SYP engages in a wide variety of activity including campaigns and research. Members of the SYP have lodged public petitions through the Scottish Parliament's online petition system<sup>55</sup>.

(2) **Young Scot**<sup>56</sup> is the national youth information and citizenship agency for Scotland. It works in partnership with young people aged 11- 26 to give them access to information and opportunities. Activities undertaken by Young Scot related to policy making include the setting up of a Youth Commission (16 commissioners aged 14- 21 years) which reported to the Scottish Government on the issue of alcohol misuse (Young Scot, n.d.).

(3) **The Scottish Government Minister for Youth Employment**<sup>57</sup> is a ministerial post in the Scottish Government. Responsibilities include employability for 16-24 year olds; Ministerial oversight of Skills Development Scotland activity; engagement with employers and employer bodies on youth employment; engagement with the Department of Work and Pensions (UK government), third sector bodies and local authorities on support for young people; and coordinating cross government activity to support young people into work.

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<sup>52</sup> [www.syp.org.uk/](http://www.syp.org.uk/)

<sup>53</sup> There is also a Children's Parliament that works with children (and their families, schools and communities) from 0-14 years old ([www.childrensparliament.org.uk/](http://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/)).

<sup>54</sup> For example the SYP has partnered with the British Deaf Association Scotland, LGBT Youth Scotland and the Scottish Epilepsy Initiative. The SYP have also undertaken a census of their members which shows that they are broadly reflective of Scottish society and distributed fairly equally amongst the Scottish Index of Multiple deprivation deciles (see [www.syp.org.uk/img/Scottish%20Youth%20Parliament%202011%20Member%20Census.pdf](http://www.syp.org.uk/img/Scottish%20Youth%20Parliament%202011%20Member%20Census.pdf))

<sup>55</sup> Petitioning provides direct access to elected Members of the Scottish Parliament and other key policymakers. It can raise the awareness of a particular campaign and put issues on the agenda which might not otherwise be considered by the Parliament or Scottish Government. A petition may be brought by an individual person (other than a member), a body corporate or an unincorporated association of members: [www.scottish.parliament.uk/gettinginvolved/petitions/index.aspx](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/gettinginvolved/petitions/index.aspx). Petitions lodged on behalf of the Scottish Youth Parliament include a petition for the establishment of a Scottish Living Wage Recognition Scheme ([www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/OneFairWage](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/OneFairWage)).

<sup>56</sup> [www.youngscot.org/](http://www.youngscot.org/)

<sup>57</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/About/People/14944/Scottish-Cabinet](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/People/14944/Scottish-Cabinet)

Scotland is the only government in the UK (UK Government, Northern Ireland Assembly and Welsh Assembly) to have a dedicated minister for youth employment.

(4) Also in relation to youth employment, the Scottish Government, in partnership with Young Scot and the Scottish Youth Parliament, ran **Scotland's Youth Employment Summit** on 05 December 2012. The event aimed to facilitate young people talking directly to those responsible for providing services which help young people develop the skills and experience to gain employment. After the Summit a report was produced presenting ideas generated by young people to be considered by government, stakeholders and employers (Scottish Government, Young Scot and the Scottish Youth Parliament, 2013).

(5) The role of a **Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People**<sup>58</sup> was introduced following the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2003, to promote and safeguard the rights of children and young people up to the age of 18 years, or 21 years in some instances. Part of the Commissioner's work involves monitoring law, policy and practice as it relates to the rights of children and young people, submitting oral and written evidence on Bills that affect children and young people. The Commissioner also promotes, commissions and undertakes research on matters of concern to young people, with current and recently completed research including children and young people's views of information leaflets, and participation and principles for practice (SCCYP, 2013a). When the current Commissioner, Tam Baillie, was appointed, he made a commitment that his policy priorities would be informed by the views of children and young people; also recognising that participation is not a one off event, rather it is an on-going dialogue (Baillie, n.d.).

Much guidance has been published in Scotland and the UK on how to facilitate engagement and co-productive activity and encourage the participation of young people more generally in service design and delivery, which gives some insights to the resources and approach that will need to be taken in order to make it systemic (see Appendix 4).

## 6.2 Young people's participation in policy making

While the policy review identified a range of macro-level mechanisms to encourage and enable young people to have voice in policy making, the participants reflected on the degree that young people's voice was included and the impact of young people's participation in practice.

Generally it was felt that the ways in which young people's participation in the development and delivery of government policy was seen to happen through formal channels e.g. consultations<sup>59</sup>. Participants also cited that policymakers and politicians engage regularly with young people's representative organisations like Young Scot and the Scottish Youth Parliament.

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<sup>58</sup> [www.sccyp.org.uk/](http://www.sccyp.org.uk/)

<sup>59</sup> It is also interesting to note that the formal channels open to young people are increasing. The Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill makes provision for those who are entitled to vote in a referendum on the independence of Scotland, including provision for the establishment of a register of young voters (aged 16 plus) for the purposes of such a referendum. See for information: [www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/bills/60464.aspx](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/bills/60464.aspx)

Theoretically these formal channels are open to all young people e.g. anyone can respond to a government consultation. However, one participant cited that a lot of disadvantaged communities are not engaged with policy, do not even know what the term policy means and do not know what roles people have. There may be a lack of awareness amongst young people about the relevance of government to their lives (Combe, 2002) and therefore they would not be aware or think to participate through these channels.

*“classically a lot of disadvantaged communities aren’t engaged with policy, don’t even know what the term policy means, don’t know what roles people have...MSPs or MPs, what’s a devolved power and what’s a reserved power” (Network/membership organisation)*

In addition, some of the participants questioned about whether consultation influences the government’s direction of travel. Some felt that it was not always very obvious to see whether any information gathered is reflected in any strategies of policies. Therefore participation could be seen as a ‘tick box exercise’ rather than a meaningful activity<sup>60</sup>. Being involved in a process is not the same as having voice (Cornwall, 2008).

There are several aspects to the perceived lack of meaningfulness. Many participants identified apathy amongst young people about whether their voices are really listened to when they were consulted. Young people need to see that they have effected change (Big Lottery, 2010).

*“...young people I think quite genuinely are quite cynical about that method of representing their views and I think they’re also quite cynical about some of the participation stuff because...I have heard kids say you must know what we think about everything, and we want to see something actually happening, us telling people over and over again we would like this or that” (Network/membership organisation)*

*“If [engagement] is tokenistic [young people] will see through it in a blink of an eye, it needs to be meaningful engagement that genuinely seeks their opinions and views” (Employment support service provider)*

*“I think young people influence policy and are represented in policy at different levels and again for me it comes back to that word ‘meaningful’. I think a lot of people in organisations do it, but it’s very much a tick box that’s sort of set up, whereas other people do it very, very well” (Training/education provider)*

One participant also felt that consultation activity was not always sophisticated and did not yield much informative information, and once the views of the young people were translated through the various layers of government the outcomes can be disappointing.

*“I think some of it is very superficial in terms of what it brings out and I think that you need to do a lot more probably sophisticated drawing out of what kids think about things and what that translates into in the real world” (Network/membership organisation)*

Some felt that the mechanisms that government have for participation are not necessarily particularly attractive or involving for a lot of young people, especially those who are most disadvantaged.

*"I am not sure how informed [young people] might be because basically I am not sure that's the way young people kind of think about things. I am also not sure a lot of the mechanisms that they have for participation are particularly attractive or involving for a lot of young folk" (Network/membership organisation)*

Young people need to be supported and the right atmosphere needs to be created to encourage their participation e.g. jargon can be a barrier to participation but the ways in which young people are communicated with should not be patronising.

*"...Use of jargon is quite a big thing for young people as well in that it tends to irritate them quite a bit" (Citizen body)*

Many of the concerns about the meaningfulness of participation seem also to be linked to the stage in the policy making process in which young people are engaged. Consultation was argued to take place after that initial design phase has taken place, and others were unsure whether it really changed the 'direction of travel' in policy.

*"...there's obviously consultation about every major piece of legislation, strategy or proposal, but how much it changes the direction people are going in I am not sure. I think there is evidence that it does in minor way perhaps...but I don't think the substance of the thing is going to be dramatically altered by any views that they receive and I really don't know how much children and young people generally even know about this legislation never mind...theoretically anyone can contribute to consultation" (Network/membership organisation)*

The policy review did identify however that there are mechanisms that are making the influence of young people's voice on policy clearer, and examples of ways in which young people can effect change in policy making.

- In 2010 the Scottish Government launched an online project, Engage for Education<sup>61</sup>, that enables the public and practitioners to discuss education, learning, youth employment and early years policy directly with the Ministers and their teams. The 'You Said, We Did' section of the website publicises how participation has effected change.
- The Scottish Youth Parliament encourages young people to engage and connect with politicians, and they have led national policy campaigns so young people express their views into policy making. The Scottish Youth Parliament was part of the successful *Votes at 16* campaign; with the voting age lowered to 16 for the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014.
- Participants cited as good and effective practice the *Young Expert Group, Voice Against Violence*, set up by the Scottish Government to contribute to the implementation of the *National Domestic Abuse Delivery plan*<sup>62</sup>.

However, while there are signs of interesting and increasing meaningful participation of young people at the policy (development) stage, some participants felt that currently there is no systemic approach in government. One of the challenges in young people's participation is to move on from one off consultation to a situation where it is embedded

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<sup>61</sup> <http://engageforeducation.org/>

<sup>62</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women/children-young-people/Delivery-Plan/Membership](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women/children-young-people/Delivery-Plan/Membership)

within organisational culture (Sinclair, 2004). This view was reflected in the participants' narratives.

## **7. Social innovation and the role of social innovation in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy**

This section explores understandings and examples of social innovation in Scotland. It examines what are the characteristics of social innovation; where are new and innovative ideas developed, realised, tested and evaluated; and what supports the introduction and implementation of greater social innovation.

### **7.1 What is social innovation?**

Many of the participants did not engage with the term 'social innovation'. Some cited that it was a 'buzzword' that was used but that they were not clear about what it entailed – this reflects findings in the literature (Pol and Ville, 2009; European Union/Young Foundation, 2010; Preskill and Beer, 2012).

*"What does it mean?...I have seen the term and I have come across the term quite a lot, but what does it mean..." (Employment support service provider)*

*"I don't think it's one that probably means an awful lot to folk who out there" (Network/membership organisation)*

A minority of participants were however, familiar with the term social innovation, representing organisations that engaged with the term regularly to describe their work or interests.

Social innovation may be used interchangeably with terms e.g. improvement, social entrepreneurship etc. (European Union/Young Foundation, 2010). Participants were familiar with other terms e.g. innovation and creativity, which they used to describe socially innovative activity. However, there must be some caution about taking terms e.g. social innovation, creativity, innovation and improvement as meaning the same thing. Some have distinguished between innovation and improvement stating that improvement implies only incremental change and creativity cannot be equalled to social innovation as it misses out the *"hard work of implementation and diffusion that makes promising ideas useful"* (Mulgan et al., n.d.). Therefore in the rest of this section it must be recognised that the participants' narratives are sometimes not well defined because of a lack of clarity about what social innovation is and its distinctness.

In general the definitions and descriptions given of social innovation focused on change and doing something differently. Social innovation means doing something differently and in a different way: sometimes to be more streamlined and cost effective. One definition of social innovation was as activity *"deriving value for society in terms of cohesiveness and welfare"*

(Network/membership organisation) and it could be disruptive or incremental<sup>63</sup>. Social innovation did not necessarily mean creating new interventions e.g. social innovation could be found when interventions that were already working fairly well were changed to move them on further or when existing things were better integrated. This is consistent with the idea of social innovation as a process (prompt, proposal, prototype, sustain, scale, systemic change) and the emphasis on social innovation as the delivery of an idea rather than the idea itself (e.g. Caulier-Grice et al., 2012).

*“sort of rolling out something that has already been proven, rather than coming up with the big new idea territory but no less important” (Think tank)*

Many participants highlighted that understandings of social innovation varied and that it can be very context specific (even down to the individual level).

*“[Social innovation is] a dynamic, not just a static phenomenon and will change and adapt over time” (Network/membership organisation)*

Much social innovation is intangible and therefore problematic when it comes to exact measurements of it.

*“...there is this gap in knowledge around what the real impact of all this activity actually is. Much of it is of course an intangible and therefore problematic when it comes to exact measurements of it” (Network/membership organisation)*

For one participant while it was interesting to debate the notion of social innovation and to debate the degree to which something is truly innovative, it was also important to get a sense of what the innovation is for.

*“I think it is interesting to debate the notion of social innovation and to debate the degree to which something is truly innovative but I think it is also important to get a sense for what the innovation is for and therefore, [look] at what is already being achieved and what evidence is already out there” (Think tank)*

## **7.2 What supports the introduction and implementation of greater social innovation?**

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<sup>63</sup> These definitions provided by both participants familiar and unfamiliar with the term social innovation mirror much that is in the literature. Briefly, social innovation is to help create better futures (Pol and Ville, 2009). *“Social innovations are new solutions that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and enhance society’s capacity to act (by creating new relationships, developing capabilities and/or providing better use of assets” (Simon, 2013).* The TEPSIE project provides the following understanding of what social innovation is: it is often ill defined often because it is contextual and practice led; it is cross-sectoral and creates new roles and relationships; it is open and collaborative; it is co-productive and bottom-up; and it leads to a better use of, and develops, assets and resources (Caulier-Grice et al., 2012). Social innovation not only describes new products and programmes (outputs) but also the processes used to generate, test and adapt these new approaches (Caulier-Grice et al., 2012; Preskill and Beer, 2012).

Generally the participants felt that there was a lack of a systemic innovative approach in all government departments although examples of a gathering momentum in social innovation were given in the development of policy.

In terms of whether youth policy in Scotland and the UK is socially innovative, some policy examples were given: e.g. *Getting It Right for Every Child* (see Appendix 3). *Getting It Right for Every Child* is an approach used by practitioners to help them focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people and how they can act to deliver these improvements. In terms of the impact on children, young people and their families, *Getting It Right for Every Child* states that they are listened to and involved in the discussions and decisions made about them. Thus it appears that developing young people's capability for voice is an integral part of this socially innovative policy. The approach is being threaded through all existing policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children, young people and their families. The authors would suggest that this is an example of trying to escape from the policy silos that represent one of the barriers to social innovation in the public sector (Caulier-Grice et al., 2012). *Getting It Right for Every Child* was cited as a fundamental shift in the way services respond to children and young people.

Other examples of socially innovative policy included the Scottish Government is using a *3-Step Improvement Framework* to improve outcomes in Scotland as part of public service reform. The framework seeks to address deep rooted societal issues as well as improving organisational processes and systems<sup>64</sup>. Examples were also given by participants, as well as others identified by the authors of this report, of funding sources that seek to encourage innovation:

- Social Impact Bonds<sup>65</sup> (SIBs) are used with organisations commissioning services with the aim to improve the social outcomes of publicly funded services by making funding conditional on achieving results<sup>66</sup>. Sources of SIB funding include the Cabinet Office £20 million Social Outcomes Fund<sup>67</sup> to catalyse innovative new projects in areas where no single commissioner can justify making all of the outcomes payments; and the Big Lottery Fund £40 million Commissioning Better Outcomes Fund<sup>68</sup> to support the development of more innovative approaches to improving social outcomes.
- The Department for Work and Pensions Innovation Fund is being used to support social investment projects supporting disadvantaged young people and those at risk of disadvantage. The fund tests the effectiveness of a range of social investment models and innovative programmes aimed at disadvantaged young people and those at risk of disadvantage<sup>69</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/Improvementframework](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/Improvementframework)

<sup>65</sup> Although these are not widely adopted in Scotland

<sup>66</sup> [www.gov.uk/social-impact-bonds](http://www.gov.uk/social-impact-bonds)

<sup>67</sup> Only available in England

<sup>68</sup> Only available in England

<sup>69</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://dwp.gov.uk/supplying-dwp/what-we-buy/welfare-to-work-services/innovation-fund/>

- The Scottish Investment Fund Phase Two is aimed at organisations to deliver social enterprise activity that is pioneering and innovative, generating distinct and measurable social impacts in line with the National Outcomes of the Scottish Government<sup>70</sup>.

In the main, social innovation was seen to occur at the local level, through third sector organisations, social enterprises and community based projects. Third sector organisations were cited as: they had more freedom to be innovative and it is closer to service users i.e. could more readily engage with young people and understand their needs.

*“The third sector...have more freedom to be innovative. Because obviously government departments have to take leadership from Ministers and manifestos. So there is much more freedom to be innovative in a third sector organisation where you don’t have those constraints” (Network/membership organisation)*

*“I think a lot of the innovation we see comes from the third sector...it is sometimes tougher for the bigger organisations, statutory organisations to get that close to young people. And it’s not that they don’t try, some of them try really hard...” (Employment support service provider)*

However, social innovation in the third sector and more generally was thought to be stifled by the way in which services are commissioned. The dominant model for commissioning public services has been the use of competitive tendering by local authorities and other contract awarding bodies. Service providers (e.g. third sector organisations) are not involved in the design of programmes as tenders are advertised with the service already designed. This left little ‘room for manoeuvre’.

*“...tendering is still traditional...So that to me is stifling any potential for innovation and different approaches, more streamlined, cost effective approaches” (Employment support service provider)*

Previous literature (e.g. Caulier-Grice et al. 2012) has also suggested a related barrier that services have to be constantly re-commissioned thus difficult to take sufficiently long-term view to be innovative.

What was implicit throughout many of the narratives is that the context needs to be right for social innovation to succeed. Conditions essential to social innovation include: recognition of underperformance which acts as a driver for change; internal and external pressures which act as a catalyst; strong leadership; responsive organisational culture; formal or informal networks at a variety of levels to facilitate innovation; resources to support social innovation (Young Foundation/NESTA, 2007). Service user engagement and the development of service users’ voice also appears to be a key element in the examples of social innovation cited by the participants. Thus these examples could provide the SoCIeTY project with important lessons in developing a broad knowledge base to foster socially innovative policy making.

## 8. Discussion and conclusions

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<sup>70</sup> [www.scottishinvestmentfund.co.uk/aboutus.cfm](http://www.scottishinvestmentfund.co.uk/aboutus.cfm)

This final section reflects on the findings from the interview data and policy review presented in the previous section in relation to the theoretical understandings developed in Work Package 2 and the lessons learned for the Capability Approach.

The findings presented in this chapter provide insights to the national Informational Basis of Judgement with regard to disadvantage in the labour market. Since the economic downturn youth unemployment has become an increasingly significant concern for the UK and Scottish Governments, as young people in particular have been affected by rising unemployment. While the young unemployed as a group in general are a policy concern there are certain sub-groups that are identified as particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. Disadvantage is measured and understood in terms of “objective” factors (i.e. those considered as quantifiable or observable) and the informational basis of judgement does not seem to take into account of subjective factors e.g. motivation, ability to project oneself in the future, capacity to aspire, etc. (Beuret et al., 2013; Bonvin, 2013; Chiappero-Martinetti, 2013). The understandings of disadvantage and the policies and programmes used to address youth unemployment focus is on the individual job seeker’s attributes and deficits, employability and participation in any employment rather than participation in ‘quality’ employment and wider issues e.g. wellbeing and satisfaction with life and the value attached to job outcomes (Lindsay, 2010; Bartelheimer et al., 2012; Vero et al., 2012). Policy does acknowledge the importance of ‘meaningful’ work. But how this is defined, and by whom, is not clear.

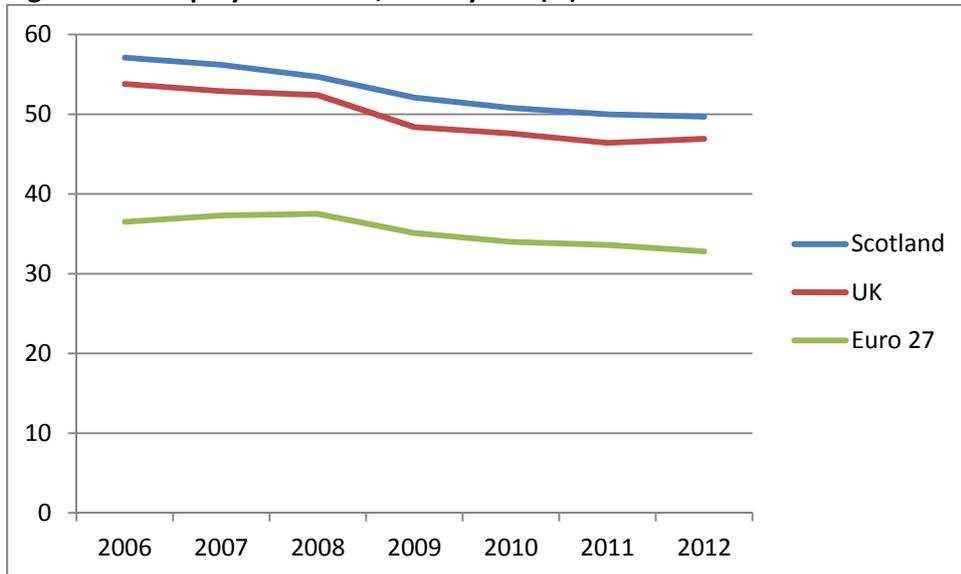
The findings reinforce assertions made in WP2 that policy tends to focus on certain dimensions of disadvantage and discard others (i.e. select one informational basis of judgment) as policies tend to be focused on particular target groups (Beuret et al., 2013). However, the findings presented in this chapter have also highlighted that the national Informational Basis of Judgment regarding disadvantage in the labour market has broadened as a result of the economic downturn. Policy documents and measures may focus on certain target groups, but the interview participants’ narratives indicate that policymakers and those delivering policy on the ground understand that defining disadvantage can be difficult, and that blunt measures may overlook those facing complex and multiple barriers. While certain target groups may be the concern of policy, the findings also show that policymakers understand the nuances and intersectionalities of disadvantage (Beuret et al., 2013; Bonvin, 2013). Barriers may have different impacts on different individuals due to varying levels of resilience, and labelling groups may exacerbate their disadvantage. The WP2 conceptual report asked questions about: whether participative processes privilege the voices of certain groups; whether participative processes allow, and give weight to, alternative modes of expression; and whether decisions are really made within such participative processes (Bonvin, 2013; Ley, 2013). This chapter has focused upon participation with regard to policy making. Participation that also involves all spheres involving collective decision-making as described in WP2 were not of primary concern here and will be dealt with in WP4 (Ley, 2013). This chapter has shown that engagement and co-productive activity is an important part of the asset based approach that has increasingly informed the development of Scottish Government policy. Generally the way in which young people can realise their capability for voice in the development and delivery of government policy is through formal channels; e.g. national level mechanisms, platforms and champions that have been developed to increase the engagement and participation of

young people in government policy making. There are also mechanisms built into programmes for feedback and evaluation, and some flexibility in programmes towards the needs of young people, although the extent to which service users can negotiate the content of a programme (an important element of labour market activation from a Capability Approach) is limited (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2007; Bonvin and Orton, 2009; Lindsay and McQuaid, 2010; Orton, 2011). Theoretically these formal channels are open to all young people; however, this chapter has highlighted reservations amongst key stakeholders as to whether the views of young people influence the overall direction of policy, and whether the views of those most disadvantaged are always heard because of barriers in the way that voices are sought (e.g. use of jargon). In terms of programme delivery, the fundamentals of the programmes have to stay the same because of the needs of those commissioning the programmes and their policy priorities (which are not necessarily informed by the voices of young people). These findings reflect the Work Package 2 conceptual framework which argues that just because people are allowed to participate, it does not mean that their voices will effect change (Bonvin, 2013; Ley 2013). The Work Package 2 conceptual framework also reminds us that it cannot be assumed that more participation will necessarily result in less inequality or more efficiency in the public action designed to tackle inequality (Bonvin, 2013).

This chapter has highlighted that the term ‘social innovation’ is not a term that many participants engaged with, and they were unsure of what it meant. Participants were familiar with other terms e.g. innovation and creativity. Where participants defined social innovation these definitions focused on change and doing something differently. Some policy examples were given, as well as funding streams that seek to encourage innovation. Examples of social innovation cited by participants have the common thread of being concerned with empowering service users. As such, social innovation appears to be a mechanism through which engagement and a capability for voice can be developed. Bonvin (2013) in the introduction to the WP2 conceptual report argues to think about social innovation as something that “*effectively contributes to the enhancement of the capabilities of disadvantaged young people*”. However generally the participants felt that there was a lack of a systemic innovative approach in government with social innovation concentrated at the local level and in the third sector.

## Appendix 1: Youth employment and unemployment, and NEET rates for Scotland, UK and EU 27

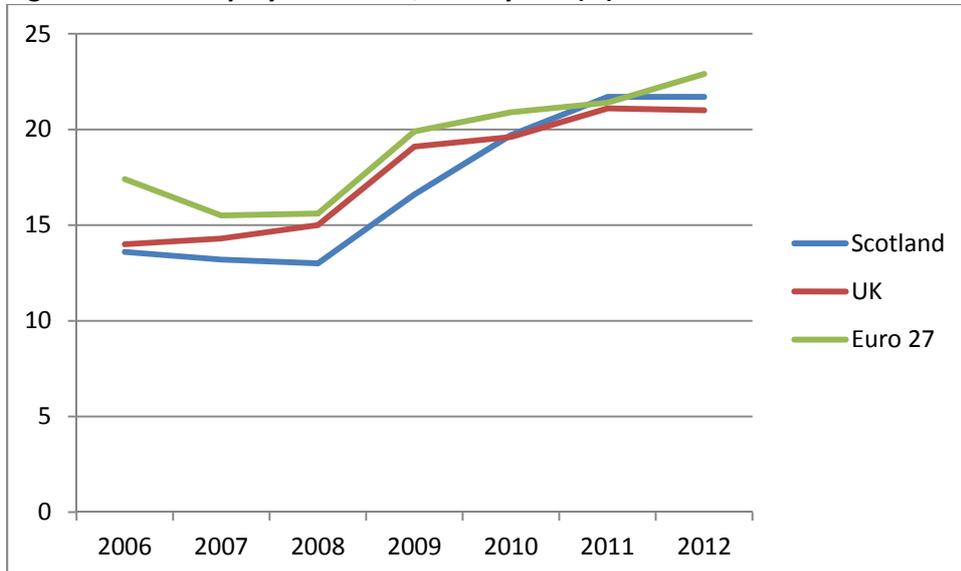
Figure A1a: Employment rates, 15-24 years (%)



Source: Eurostat,

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region\\_cities/regional\\_statistics/data/databases](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/databases)

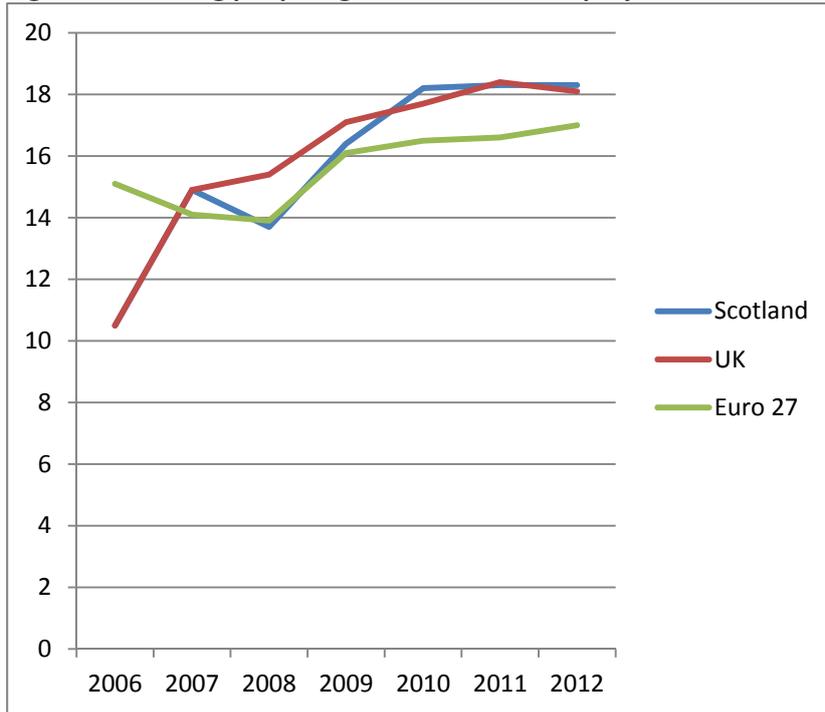
Figure A1b: Unemployment rates, 15-24 years (%)



Source: Eurostat,

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region\\_cities/regional\\_statistics/data/databases](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/databases)

Figure A1c: Young people aged 18-24 not in employment and not in any education and training (%)



Source: Eurostat,

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region\\_cities/regional\\_statistics/data/databases](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/databases)

## Appendix 2: Glossary of key issues

Key issues	How is this issue defined and which key terms are used to describe this issue
<b>Youth policy</b>	Youth is not a distinct national government policy area for either the UK or Scottish Government. Issues facing young people may be covered in policies targeted at broader age groups. There are however, policies specifically aimed at youth: for example, “Action for Jobs – Supporting Young Scots into Work. Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy” aimed at 16-24 year olds.
<b>Youth disadvantage and youth inequality</b>	Since the economic downturn youth unemployment has become an increasingly significant concern for the UK and Scottish governments, as young people in particular have been affected by rising unemployment. While they young unemployed as a group in general are a policy concern there are certain sub-groups that are identified as particularly disadvantaged in the labour market e.g. care leavers; young offenders; low attainers. However, many participants felt that it was difficult to create one definition of disadvantage, and that some may also be more than others. Labelling may also reinforce barriers.
<b>Social innovation</b>	For many of the participants the term ‘social innovation’ was not a term that they engaged with and they were unsure of what it meant. Participants were familiar with other terms e.g. innovation and creativity. Where participants gave definitions of social innovation, these focused on change and doing something differently. Some policy examples were given, as well as funding streams that seek to encourage innovation. However generally the participants felt that there was a lack of a systemic innovative approach in government. Innovative activity was more often cited as happening in the third sector and at the local level.
<b>Participation</b>	Engagement and co-productive activity is an important part of the asset based approach that has increasingly informed the development of Scottish Government policy. Generally young people’s participation in the development and delivery of government policy happens through formal channels. This research has identified national level mechanisms, platforms and champions that have been developed to increase the engagement and participation of young people in government policy making. Theoretically these formal channels are open to all young people, and much guidance has also been published on how to facilitate and encourage the participation of young people more generally in service design and delivery. However, it is not always very obvious to see whether any information gathered is reflected in policy.
<b>The abilities of young people</b>	Certain sub-groups that are identified as particularly disadvantaged in the labour market and thus lacking the abilities to find work. In the main these abilities focus on the individual level (NEET; care leavers; young offenders; low attainers; lack of work experience; young people with physical/mental disabilities; young people from chaotic backgrounds or experiencing ‘tough realities’) but the role of external conversion factors (e.g. lack of access to informal employment recruitment routes; geographically disadvantaged areas; external labour market) is also accounted for.

## Appendix 3: Key government policies and programmes

### Key UK Government Employment Policies

Policy or Programme	Description
Work Programme	A mandatory programme that provides support, work experience and training for up to 2 years to help people find and stay in work. It replaces previous programmes such as the New Deals, Employment Zones and Flexible New Deal.
Youth Contract	Provides nearly half-a-million new opportunities for 18-24 year olds, including apprenticeships and voluntary work experience placements. In Scotland the Youth Contract includes: wage incentives, work experience, sector-based work academies <a href="http://www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/">www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/</a>
Work Experience	Those aged 16 to 24 years can get a 2 to 8 week work experience opportunity through Jobcentre Plus.
Work Choice	Voluntary programme for people with disabilities providing training and development, interview coaching etc.
Support and Allowances	Available to those who want to set up their own business. To be eligible for allowances individuals must be in receipt of certain benefits.
Universal Credit	Universal Credit is being introduced in stages from April 2013. It brings together a range of working-age benefits (Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income-related Employment and Support Allowance; Income Support; Working Tax Credit; Child Tax Credit; Housing Benefit) into a single payment. Part of the aim is to encourage people on benefits to start paid work and to make the transition into work smoother.

## Key Scottish Government policies: employment, education and lived experiences

Policy area	Policy or Programme	Description
Employment and training	More Choices More Chances (2006)	A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland. Emphasis is placed on prevention in the pre-16 stages and priority is given to progressing young people who are NEET into education and training, rather than into jobs without training. NEET reduction is positioned as one of the key indicators for measuring the pre and post 16 systems' success. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/129456/0030812.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/129456/0030812.pdf</a>
	Action for Jobs – Supporting Young Scots into Work. Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy (2012)	Provides an overview of the Scottish Government's approach to harnessing and supporting the national effort required to increase youth employment. It is built upon three strategic themes: adopting an all-government, all-Scotland approach to supporting youth employment; enhancing support for young people; and engaging with employers. It highlights action taken by the Scottish Government to support youth employment and the contributions of employers, local authorities and third sector organisations. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0039/00396371.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0039/00396371.pdf</a>
	Opportunities for All: Supporting All Young People to Participate in Post-16 Learning, Training or Work (2012)	Brings together a range of existing national and local policies and strategies as a single focus to improve young people's participation in post 16 learning or training, and ultimately employment, through appropriate interventions and support until at least their 20th birthday. It builds on and adds impetus to existing entitlements and commitments to support youth employment through the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence, including the development of skills for learning life and work, robust transitions through 16+ Learning Choices and the targeted support offered through More Choices, More Chances. Opportunities for All makes an explicit commitment to offer a place in learning or training to every 16-19 year old who is not currently in employment, education or training. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00408815.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00408815.pdf</a>
	Workforce Plus (2006) and Working for Growth (2012)	These strategies acknowledge that that a key factor in moving people out of poverty is through work. Refreshed in 2012. Workforce Plus (2006) had a particular focus on helping those most disadvantaged in the labour market. Workforce Plus recognised the disconnected nature of much of Scotland's employment services at that time and set out the importance of greater alignment of those services at a local level backed by leadership and support at a national level. Working for Growth emphasises the strategic priorities of: the importance of stimulating economic recovery through bringing the employability and economic development agendas closer together; and the continuing social and economic value of a skilled, educated and creative workforce. Core to this is the need for effective leadership in employability, effective partnership working, placing overcoming barriers to work at the heart of employability, and

	<p>improving performance.</p> <p><i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/129285/0030791.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/129285/0030791.pdf</a>   <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00402275.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00402275.pdf</a></p>
Career Information, Advice and Guidance in Scotland - A Framework for Service Redesign and Improvement	<p>A Scottish Government Strategy to improve careers services in Scotland. This is not a prescriptive framework; rather, it outlines the direction of travel for the future delivery of Career IAG that is affordable and sustainable, and meets effectively the wide-ranging needs of its users – including young people, adults in work, those facing redundancy or who are out of work, and employers.</p> <p><i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/344766/0114737.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/344766/0114737.pdf</a></p>
Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce	<p>The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce was established by the Scottish Government in January 2013. Made up of people from the worlds of employment and education, it has been tasked with bringing forward a range of recommendations designed to improve young people's transition into employment. The Commission published its Interim Report on 5 September 2013 and final recommendations in the second quarter of 2014.</p> <p><i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00433306.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00433306.pdf</a></p>
Minister for Youth Employment	<p>Junior ministerial post in the Scottish Government created in December 2011 following the recommendations of the Smith Group. The Smith Group has been active since 2005, advising and guiding Ministers in successive administrations on education policy, enterprise in education and youth employment issues. The current Minister is Angela Constance.</p> <p><i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/11/SmithGroupReport">www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/11/SmithGroupReport</a></p>
Modern Apprenticeships	<p>Modern Apprenticeships offer anyone aged over 16 paid employment combined with the opportunity to train for jobs across a wide range of sectors. All the Modern Apprenticeship frameworks are developed by the appropriate sector skills council in consultation with their industry.</p> <p>Modern Apprentices are employed from the very start of their training and receive a wage from their employer.</p> <p><i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/35912.html">www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/35912.html</a>   <a href="http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/our-services/">www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/our-services/</a></p>
Employability Fund	<p>The Employability Fund brings together a number of national training programmes (Get Ready for Work and Training for Work) and provides flexible training support which responds to the needs of employers and local labour markets. The aim of the fund is to improve learner progressions along the Strategic Skills Pipeline by funding provision which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Is responsive to differing client needs, employer demand and other funded training at regional level;</li> <li>(2) Enables learners to demonstrate their achievements to employers; and</li> <li>(3) Applies funding levels which better reflect learner, rather than Learning Provider, requirements.</li> </ol> <p><i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00422122.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00422122.pdf</a></p>

Activity Agreements	An agreement between a young person and an advisor that the young person will take part in a programme of learning and activity which helps them to become ready for formal learning or employment. There are two priority groups for Activity Agreements: young people identified as being vulnerable to disengagement prior to leaving compulsory education; and young people who initially move into a positive post-school destination but who do not sustain it. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.emascotland.com/adminfaqsactivityagreement.cfm">www.emascotland.com/adminfaqsactivityagreement.cfm</a>   <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/edandtrainingforyoungple/16pluslc/activityagreements">www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/edandtrainingforyoungple/16pluslc/activityagreements</a>
Individual Learning Accounts	Individual Learning Accounts are for people who are 16 or over and living in Scotland and are for the individuals who will benefit most from this support to help pay for learning. People can apply for an ILA if they: are not undertaking any secondary, further or higher education; do not have a degree or above; are not training through the Employability Fund or Modern Apprenticeships, or participating in the Community Jobs Scotland programme; and have an income of £22,000 a year or less or are on benefits. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/section/funding">www.myworldofwork.co.uk/section/funding</a>
Scotland's Best	Employability programme for 1,000 young people aged 16 to 24. It combines training and volunteering, with successful participants achieving a qualification at the end. Many of the volunteering opportunities will tap into sporting and cultural events that Scotland will host in the next two years (2013-15). <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/our-services/scotlands-best/">www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/our-services/scotlands-best/</a>
Community Jobs Scotland	Community Jobs Scotland is a partnership between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations that creates work opportunities for unemployed individuals within a wide range of third sector organisations across Scotland. The key purpose of Community Jobs Scotland is to support young people into sustainable employment through providing meaningful paid work experience in the third sector. However, it also has the dual purpose of increasing the capacity of third sector organisations at a time of increasing demand for support services. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scvo.org.uk/training-employability/community-jobs-scotland/about-community-jobs-scotland/">www.scvo.org.uk/training-employability/community-jobs-scotland/about-community-jobs-scotland/</a>
Youth Employment Scotland	Youth Employment Scotland funding supports recruitment incentives for employers of small and medium sized business in the private sector, and social enterprises. The £50m Youth Employment Scotland Fund is made up of £15m from the Scottish Government and £10m European Social Fund, matched by £25m worth of in-kind support from employers and local councils. Eligible young people are Unemployed young people aged 16- 24 from day one of unemployment until they become eligible for the wage incentive component of the Youth Contract, or are participating in the Work Programme or Work Choice; Young people exiting other Scottish Government employability programmes; and Young people not engaged in work under a contract of employment and/or not in receipt of a wage <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/policy-and-partnership/youth-employment/youth-employment-">www.employabilityinscotland.com/policy-and-partnership/youth-employment/youth-employment-</a>

Education and Early Years		<a href="#">scotland/</a>
	Early Years Framework (2008)	This framework is about giving all children the best start in life and the steps the Scottish Government, local partners and practitioners in early years services need to do this. The Early Years Framework aims to break negative cycles of inequalities in health, education and employment through early and effective intervention. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/257007/0076309.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/257007/0076309.pdf</a>
	Getting It Right for Every Child	Consistent way for people to work with all children and young people and the bedrock for all children’s services and can also be used by practitioners in adult services who work with parents or carers. The approach helps practitioners focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people – and how they can act to deliver these improvements. Getting it right for every child is being threaded through all existing policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children, young people and their families. The Getting it right for every child values and principles build from the Children’s Charter and reflect legislation, standards, procedures and professional expertise. There are ten core components and a set of values and principles which bring meaning and relevance at a practice level to single-agency, multi-agency and inter-agency working across the whole of children’s services including a focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families based on a shared understanding of wellbeing and an integral role for children, young people and families in assessment, planning and intervention <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright">www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright</a>   <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/318937/0101828.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/318937/0101828.pdf</a>
	Curriculum for Excellence	The 3-18 curriculum aims to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland develop the attributes, knowledge and skills they will need to flourish in life, learning and work. The knowledge, skills and attributes learners will develop will allow them to demonstrate four key capacities – to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The curriculum includes all of the experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated. An important part of the Curriculum for Excellence is the strategy on 16+ learning choices and the transitions made by this age group. All young people are offered a post in post-16 learning before they leave school. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp">www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp</a>
	Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill (2013)	A Bill to make provision about the support for, and the governance of, further and higher education institutions, including provision for the regionalisation of colleges; to make provision for reviews of how further and higher

		education is provided; to make provision for sharing information about young people's involvement in education and training; and for connected purposes. The Bill received Royal Assent on 7 August 2013. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/56717.aspx">www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/56717.aspx</a>
Poverty reduction	Achieving Our Potential: A Framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland (2008)	This Framework sets out further priorities for action and investment to deliver improvement in: reducing income inequalities; introducing longer-term; measures to tackle poverty and the drivers of low income; supporting those experiencing poverty or at risk of falling into poverty; making the tax credits and benefits system work better for Scotland. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/246055/0069426.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/246055/0069426.pdf</a>
	Child Poverty Strategy for Scotland (2011)	The main aims of this strategy are: maximising household resources and improving children's wellbeing and life chances. There are three key principles to the Scottish Government's current approach to tackle child poverty: focusing on early intervention and prevention, taking an assets-based approach and ensuring that the child is at the centre. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/14094421/0">http://scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/14094421/0</a>
Health	Equally Well (2008) and Equally Well Review (2010)	Strategy to tackle health inequalities. Seen to be a key part in achieving the Scottish Government's overall purpose of sustainable economic growth. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/229649/0062206.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/229649/0062206.pdf</a>   <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/315880/0100454.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/315880/0100454.pdf</a>
Economic Growth	Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth (2010)	This Strategy makes clear the Scottish Government's commitment to training and skills and sets out a flexible, responsive, partnership approach to meeting Scotland's skills needs at a crucial point in our economic recovery. This strategy establishes high-level targets for the National Training Programmes in 2010-11. Individually these targets are for 15,000 Modern Apprenticeship starts, 14,500 training places to support the unemployed and 5,000 new flexible training opportunities to meet the needs of businesses. On top of these targets new European Social Funding provision has been secured for an additional 5,000 all-age Modern Apprenticeships, and 800 targeted pathway places for 16 and 17 year olds, taking the total allocation to over 40,000 training places in 2010-11. Removing barriers to accessing higher education is also a key element of the Skills Strategy. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/04125111/0">www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/04125111/0</a>
	The Scottish Government's Economic Strategy (2011)	The Scottish Government's commitment to delivering faster sustainable economic growth with opportunities for all to flourish. There are six Strategic Priorities: (1) Supportive Business Environment; (2) Learning, Skills and Well-being; (3) Infrastructure Development and Place; (4) Effective Government; (5) Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and (6) Equity. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/357756/0120893.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/357756/0120893.pdf</a>
Parliamentary Petitions	Public Petitions Scotland	The petitions process allows ordinary members of the public to have direct influence in the political process. The Public Petitions Committee considers public petitions addressed to the Parliament. A petition may be brought by an

		individual person (other than a member), a body corporate or an unincorporated association of members. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/29869.aspx">www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/29869.aspx</a>
	Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill (2013)	A Bill to make provision for those who are entitled to vote in a referendum on the independence of Scotland, including provision for the establishment of a register of young voters (aged 16 plus) for the purposes of such a referendum. The Bill received Royal Assent on 7 August 2013. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/bills/60464.aspx">www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/bills/60464.aspx</a>
	Children and Young People Bill	A Bill to make provision about the rights of children and young people; to make provision about investigations by the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland; to make provision for and about the provision of services and support for or in relation to children and young people; to make provision for an adoption register; to make provision about children's hearings, detention in secure accommodation and consultation on certain proposals in relation to schools; and for connected purposes. One aspect of the Bill that could have significance in tackling youth unemployment is that it seeks to ensure better permanence planning for looked after children by extending support to young people leaving care for longer (up to and including the age of 25). The Bill was passed by the Parliament on 19 February 2014. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/62233.aspx">www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/62233.aspx</a>   <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/legislation">www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/legislation</a>
	Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill	The proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill will support communities to achieve their own goals and aspirations through taking independent action and by having their voices heard in the decisions that affect their area. The consultation of the draft Bill opened in November 2013 and closed in January 2014. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/engage/cer">www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/engage/cer</a>
	Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland. Draft National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019	This draft strategy sets out ambitions for ensuring young people are placed at the centre of all youth work practice. Consultation on the draft strategy will take place in January and February 2014 through a series of National Discussions across Scotland <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/DraftYouthWorkStrategy_tcm4-823155.pdf">www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/DraftYouthWorkStrategy_tcm4-823155.pdf</a>
Local Government	Concordat between Scottish Government and Local Government (2007)	Sets out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and local government, based on mutual respect and partnership. Under the terms of this new partnership, the Scottish Government will set the direction of policy and the over-arching outcomes that the public sector in Scotland will be expected to achieve. The Scottish Government's intention is to stand back from micro-managing that delivery, thus reducing bureaucracy and freeing up local authorities and their partners. <i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0054147.pdf">www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0054147.pdf</a>
> . - 0	Commission on the Future	The Christie Commission reported on how Scotland's public services can be delivered in the future to secure

Delivery of Public Services (2011)	<p>improved outcomes for communities. Specific recommendations of the Commission included: the introduction of a new set of statutory powers and duties, common to all public service bodies, focussed on improving outcomes (e.g. preventative action); greater use of joined-up services; and consistent and transparent commissioning and procurement standards across suppliers of public services.</p> <p><i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/27154527/0">www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/27154527/0</a></p>
3-Step Improvement Framework	<p>The 3-Step Improvement Framework for Scotland’s Public Services outlines guiding principles to radically improve the outcomes that matter most to the people of Scotland. This reform is driven by evidence based values, designed to meet local needs and provide opportunities to build upon the assets of our people and communities. The Improvement Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides a clear and structured approach to change and improvement whether applied to deep rooted societal issues or to improving organisational processes and systems; it exists to help the right change happen</li> <li>• understands all improvement happens locally and the importance of creating the right conditions to support this</li> <li>• promotes a ‘get started and do’ approach</li> </ul> <p><i>Key documents:</i> <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/Improvementframework">www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/Improvementframework</a></p>

## Appendix 4: Guidance on facilitating engagement and co-productive activity and encouraging participation

Much guidance has been published in Scotland and the UK on how to facilitate engagement and co-productive activity and encourage the participation of young people more generally in service design and delivery, which gives some insights to the resources and approach that will need to be taken in order to make it systemic.

*“Dialogue with children, young people and families gives policymakers and service providers the information they need to improve the relevance of their policies and services. This is true of mainstream services such as transport and health, where children and young people make up part of the wider community using the service, and of dedicated services for young people”* (Scottish Executive, 2006)

Engaging young people requires time and resources (Combe, 2002; Lightfoot and Sloper, 2003; Scottish Executive, 2006). Guidance on involving young people in projects and/or the commissioning of services provides some advice on how to encourage participation, for example: peer recruitment; avoiding tokenism; making involvement accessible; providing support and training to young people to understand any complexities and legalities; recording how young people have effected change; and accreditation of participation (Big Lottery Fund, 2010; Children in Scotland, n.d.; National Youth Agency, n.d.). Barriers and challenges to young people’s participation include: tokenism; ‘over consultation’ of some groups, and lack of consultation of others; consultation rather than dialogue; lack of time and consideration of sensitivities; lack of support to help young people communicate their views; not feeding back to young people; and the use of adult processes and structures that exclude or may not be engaging for children and young people (Lightfoot and Sloper, 2003; Tisdall, 2011; SCCYP, 2013a/b; Children in Scotland, n.d.). These views of tailoring engagement to young people were reflected in the participants’ narratives.

In order to promote young people’s participation there should be widespread cultural change in organisations, policymaking and adults more generally; effective examples should be shared; the policy process should be adapted; and possibilities should be capitalised on (Tisdall, 2011). Organisations involved in children and young people’s participation need to ask themselves: what are the purposes of a given framework for participation; what are the principles and practices found in the framework; what is the reach of the activity; and what are the wider effects of the framework (Mannion, 2012). Lessons from participative activity highlights the importance of young people determining their participation in their own terms and the need for adults to understand their own motivations and be ready to work in partnership with young people (Cockburn, 2005). It must also be recognised that young people’s agendas and interests may not correspond with those of the community which may hamper engagement (Latendresse, 2010).

A Think Tank in June 2011, in Edinburgh discussed the challenges and identifies ways forward regarding children and young people’s participation in policy-making. One of the outcomes of this meeting was a briefing (see Tisdall, 2011) that outlines the need for widespread cultural change in organisations, policymaking, the need to publicise and share effective examples and adapting the policy process to facilitative participation. The Scottish Government has also published a report written by a young person on their thoughts and

experiences of youth participation. This report highlights that sometimes the methods used to engage young people can be patronising; that media coverage could improve the image of participation; and that the ways in which young people have effected change should be publicised (see Brodie, 2002). What is apparent is that the contexts for children's and young people's participation are varied and frameworks for participation need to be flexible (Mannion, 2012). Some young people may feel 'over consulted' and the ways in which they have effected change may not be relayed back to them (Tisdall, 2011).

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# Chapter 8: An overview of the French national youth policies and socio-economic political context

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## 1. Abstract

This paper presents an overview of the French situation concerning youth vulnerability and the related public policies at the national level.

The starting point is a historical presentation of the progressive emergence of youth in French public policies until the ongoing reform initiated by the actual government in 2013. The next section aims at discussing the notion of vulnerability and the factors of inequality in the French context. The role played by school and access to diploma appears central in the French system. This explains why vulnerable youth are usually referred to early school leavers in France.

Youth policy in France is a specific national policy based on transversality between public action sectors. It aims at bringing together various stakeholders national ministries (especially youth, education, employment, justice), regional and local authorities, NGOs, etc. The relation to firms remains relatively weak. The transversality principle based on the idea of a global social intervention towards individuals is developed since the beginning of the 80's. This global approach to youth problems supposes an intense coordination activity in a segmented and sectorialized public action ruled a very centralized State. This coordination has been ever since very difficult to achieve.

A precise description of programs, measures and organizations is hence quite difficult to conduct. This is reinforced by the on-going large set of reforms engaged since the last 2 years.

## 2. Introduction

This report presents a broad description of national youth policies in France. French Youth policies constitute a complex and large set of public policies. It brings together different public action domain such as education, employment, health, housing, transportation or training. It relies on a complex arena of policy makers and implementers acting at the national, regional and local level in public and private organizations. Since the mid 70s when the issue of youth unemployment and poverty appeared on the French political agenda, many ways to convert this sociological problem in terms of political solution have been experienced and a lot of policy tools have been forged. To put it a nutshell, vulnerable youth policy is a complex matter in terms of normative perceptions (IBJJ), system of actors and policy instruments.

This report aims at giving an overview of these policies, the way they evolved overtime and who are the actors in charge of designing and implementing them, at what level and according to what conception of the public interest.

Even if the regions have been given more competencies over youth training, guidance and employment during the last two decades, the core of youth policies remains in the hand of the national government. This explains why this report is focused on the national policymaking process and context. Some insights on region's competencies are given and will be further developed in WP4.

The French youth policy has been redefined after the 2013 presidential elections and has been presented by the new government as a front row priority. At the same time, and with strong interconnexions, the educational policy has also been "re-founded" (to use the terms of the French minister of education). The new Youth policy called "Priorité Jeunesse" (Priority to youth) has an important educational dimension and brings to the forefront the issue of early school leaving as a factor of vulnerability. This explains why a great part of this report is focused on the education policy area and the issue of qualification of youngsters between 16 and 25 years. 16 years marks the end of compulsory school while 25 years is the institutionalized age of adulthood in the employment policy.

### **3. Methods**

The methods used to gather the empirical material of this report is of two kinds: On the one hand a documentary analysis and the other one a series of semi-structured interviews.

Concerning the documentary analysis, two types of documents have been collected and analysed here.

1. An extensive review of the existing legal documents, national budgets and grey literature (evaluation studies, data collections, parliamentary reports) have been conducted on the broad topic of youth policies focusing on youth employment and educational matters. We have focused on the more recent legal provision concerning youth policies especially the actual youth strategy "Priorité Jeunesse" and the innovative policies related to it.
2. A state of the art reviewing the French academic literature on youth sociology, youth policies, youth employment and educational failure. More specifically, we have reviewed the academic works in sociology and political science dealing with the following fields: youth access to labour market, school dropout, urban policies and youth policies.

This documentary analysis has been completed by a series of semi-structured interviews. These interviews have been conducted using the interview guide provided by WP3 leaders. The choice of the interviewees has been made following a "snowball" logic. We have concentrated our interviews on policy makers, governmental expertise producers and academic experts.

All interviews have been transcribed and treated on a transversal/thematic driven process of material analysis. Participants and organization's names are given under the permission of the interviewees.

<b>National government policy makers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Youth policy experts</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>National observatory on poverty (ONPES)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>National observatory on youth (INJEP)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>National observatory on deprived urban areas (ONZUS)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Networks and NGOs (AFEV – FV)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

## **4. National definitions**

### **Foreword: the progressive emergence of a Youth Policy in France**

In France, youth is a recent policy concern. Indeed, during the nineteenth century, the only “program” that was strictly designed for the young boys was their conscription in the French army. Established in 1798 by the Jourdan law, it became compulsory for all boys after 1905.

During WW2, the Vichy regime established three measures under the responsibility of a General Secretariat for Youth. The youth camps, the “boss schools” or schools for executive leaders, and a network of Youth Houses (Maisons de la jeunesse) are created to control the youth. After the end of the war, the French State transferred the responsibility for public action towards youth to Community or Popular education (“éducation populaire”) organizations and youth NGOs.

With the "movement of may 1968" the willingness of young people to gather a place in society bursts. The issue becomes increasingly politicized. Governments are making substantial investments, particularly in education. During the end of the 70's the issue of youth unemployment appears on the political agenda and the first action plan was raised in 1977 with the so-called “Plan Barre” (named after the Prime minister Raymond Barre) or Pact for youth employment (Pacte pour l'emploi des jeunes).

In the early 80s the worrying situation of young people was raised in the public debate. They appeared particularly impacted by the phenomena of social insecurity, impoverishment and unemployment. Pierre Mauroy (French PM) asked a French social work stakeholder, Bertrand Schwartz, for a report on the occupational and social integration of youth. This report published in 1982 proposed the creation of Local missions for youth employment and professional integration (Missions locales pour l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes). This territorialized one stop shop program was designed to promote integrated services (employment, health, housing, etc.) for young people aged 16 to 25 who left school without any qualifications or job. The following year saw the creation of the Delegation for the social and professional integration of young people in difficulty (DIJ) at the national level and an interdepartmental committee (CIJ) at the local level. Hence, the efforts of the State focused

on the professional integration of young people rather than on a comprehensive global youth policy.

In 2000, the work of the General Planning Commission (Commissariat Général du Plan) put forward the issue of youth autonomy and empowerment. According to this diagnosis, the French Youth is plagued by:

- Lengthening of the schooling's duration (about 40% of an age group pursuing graduate studies);
- Difficult access to the labour market (between the end of studies and access to stable job, about one in two young encounters a transition made of successive precarious jobs);
- Earlier emotional maturity (forming couples without the conditions of residential and professional autonomy being met);
- Significant increase of the dependency of young adults vis-à-vis their families while their aspirations for autonomy are highly developed.

The November 2005 urban riots propelled the problems of youth's unemployment; early school leaving, urban violence, ethnical and housing problems on top of the national political agenda.

In 2008, the public policy towards poverty reduction showed that young people are particularly vulnerable, with a rate of 20% showing income below the poverty line (against 13 % in the general population).

In 2009, the government policy for young adults and adolescents changed. The Interdepartmental Committee on Youth initiated:

- A government's action plan for information, apprenticeship and professionalization of youth under 26 years
- A government's action plan for youth " Action for Youth "
- A law " Orientation - Training", dated 24 November 2009, on training throughout life.

In the context of a National Commission on Youth Policy, chaired by Martin Hirsch, High Commissioner for active solidarities against poverty and for youth (Haut commissaire aux solidarities actives et à la jeunesse), a Green Paper was released. The 57 recommendations proposed were aiming at reframing the 16-25 years' policy. One of the main drivers was the creation of a Fund for Youth Experimentation (Fonds d'expérimentation Jeunesse – FEJ). A budget of 200 million€ was to be spent to stimulate and support innovative territorial initiatives. These initiatives were to be precisely evaluated in order to call for further generalization.

In 2010, two additional levers are implemented for a new youth policy:

- The March 10<sup>th</sup> 2010 Act creating the Civic Service which aims at meeting the need of youth engagement while giving them an income that varies from 540 to 600 €;
- The implementation of the active solidarity income (Revenu de Solidarité Active – RSA, a French activation driven minimum income scheme for adults) extended to youngsters by September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010.

In 2013, the Intersectoral Committee on Youth (Comité interministériel de la Jeunesse - CIJ) introduced a new policy entitled "*Priority to Youth*". This policy is based on 13 priority projects broken down into 47 measures. It aims at reforming public policy for young people and is based on four pillars:

1. Give priority to common law (i.e. universalistic & non-differential) for all that concerns young people's access to social rights
2. Reinforce young people's autonomy and secure their life path as a whole (training, housing, health, etc.).
3. Fight against inequality and discrimination
4. Encourage youth participation in public debate

The proposed measures include experimentations such as testing the guidance of children in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade according to their sole wishes (with their parents), and testing of a new decentralized guidance public service (Service Public Régional d'Orientation - SPRO) under the responsibility of the French regions.

Finally, regarding the development and implementation of public policy for youth, a national youth conference will be created from the merger of the National Council of Popular Education and Youth (Conseil National de l'Éducation Populaire et de la Jeunesse - CNEPJ) and the Youth National Council (Conseil National de la Jeunesse - CNJ), and an interministerial delegate in charge of intersectoral coordination will be appointed.

#### **4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth**

**Who are the disadvantaged youth – what makes them disadvantaged? What informs this definition? Do the definitions used by different stakeholder vary e.g. state vs. third sector definitions? What is the predominant definition? What indicators and statistics are used to measure youth disadvantage.**

In terms of IBBJ, the French term "défavorisé" (disadvantaged) by its French etymology refers to the absence of belonging and recognition<sup>71</sup>: A person is disadvantaged compared to what benefits to the group to which he/she would be legitimate to belong. One is not "disadvantaged in itself " but "in relation with". Thus it is reflected in our material definitions referred to a public policy field (e.g. Education) or a membership group (the students). The term questions in the same way the idea of inequality: A person is disadvantaged because it does not benefit from what benefits to this group (e.g. absence of diploma).

Thus, inequality may be "*due to social origin, family breakdown, inequality among territories, whether urban or rural areas, which has often been underestimated in the Youth Policy. [...] There are also difficulties related to health, health becomes more a factor of inequality. Access to housing also for young people in search of autonomy is very complicated. So, here are some inequality factors that I can highlight: school, family, access*

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<sup>71</sup> From the Latin *De* taken off from a whole and *Faveo*: from the Greek "community feeling." A mark of favor is an applause.

*to institutionalized programs"* (interview with France Volontaire (NGO), Manager in charge of the implementation of civil service). One of our interviewees, Chairing Youth Research Program at the School of Advanced Studies in Public Health (EHESP) stated the same. Defining factors of inequality and disadvantage youth in France *"depends on public policy. I do not think there is a general approach to youth. In education: we have a definition of the disadvantages deriving from the family of the student. We say well that disadvantaged children are from disadvantaged backgrounds and often behind it, the children of immigrant origin and then children living in single-parent families. And then there is the issue of educational inequality, where there will be disadvantage for those who fail to conform to the expectations of the system. And then we have other effects, if one is in the field of urban policies such as people beneficiaries of urban policies. Here, depending on the sector, definitions of disadvantage will vary "*.

Taking as a reference unit the highest membership, i.e. the entire population, we can say that in France, the deprived youngsters are doubly excluded: excluded from the wider community enjoying a "normal"<sup>72</sup> standard of living and excluded also from the smaller community supported by anti-poverty measures. Thus in 2007, a conference on the homeless presented: *"Young people aged 18 to 24 are the forgotten from the 'net solidarity' that the society has implemented for the most vulnerable individuals. Under the age of 18, minors in large family or with social difficulties fall under the Welfare of Children (Aide Sociale à l'Enfance – ASE), which, together with its limitations, provides them an obligation to take care. At the age of 25, the poorest are entitled to a minimum income (RMI), which provides the resources for survival. But between these two ages, the society does not recognize any obligation and we find among people homeless youth wandering entering adulthood delivered to themselves "* ( Consensus " out of street ", 29-30 November 2007). In this quotation the recognition of the "youth" category takes place through the nature of the social care: before the age of 18, the social rights are attached to the family, after 24 years of age to the individual. Between these two limits we find an age class " left behind". Who are they?

#### *Juveniles deprived of a fundamental right*

The most vulnerable are young people leaving early and without qualifications the school system<sup>73</sup>, impeding their personal freedom and their autonomy and undermining the exercise of other rights. Thus, "does not possess a diploma" is the first criterion of definition. In our empirical material, the educational institution is in fact heavily questioned. French disadvantaged youth are *"coming out of school without any qualifications"* (France Volontaire); *"poorly qualified"* (National Observatory of Deprived Urban Areas - ONZUS), etc. The rate of early school leaving is a key indicator of persistent inequality factors selected by the National Observatory of Poverty and Social Exclusion: *"13 % of young people [leaving school] without training, without qualification every year and this figure does not move now since last 10-15 years. This is a persistent inequality in the sense that we can not reduce this indicator. It is still pretty basic "*(National Observatory of Poverty and Social Exclusion - ONPES). Thus, *"the first factor of inequality is school"*, the leading cause of disadvantage "it

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<sup>72</sup> Conform to the norm i.e. below the poverty line

<sup>73</sup> "Probability of unemployment tripled compared to a professional bachelor" (Labadie, 2012).

will be the pupil who fails to comply with the expectations of our system" (Interview with P. Loncle).

***Which disadvantages among young people are defined as legitimate/standard outcomes of educational processes and labour market position? Are they static/immutable over the life course or are they reversible/changeable through social support etc.? Are they formally regulated or informally (social norms, gender roles, forms of discrimination etc.) regulated?***

### *The meritocratic illusion*

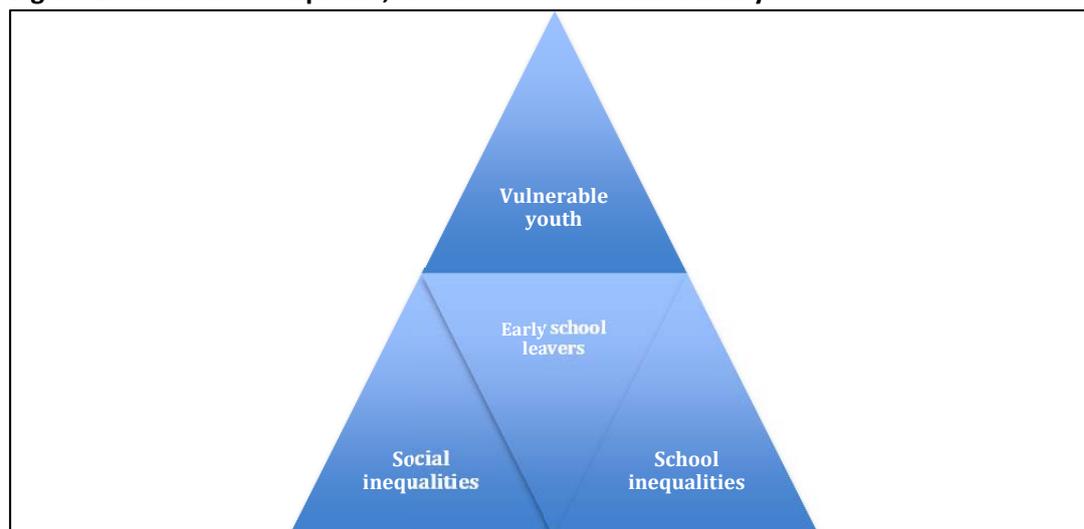
In France, the sociology of education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964) have largely shown that educational inequalities are a mirror of social inequalities. However, our interlocutors recall "*The young people from poorer families have the lowest degree*" (Interview with a former DIJ); "*In France, as known for some time now: the educational system does not correct social inequalities, on the contrary it strengthens them!*" (Interview with an expert of youth policies). The meritocratic system legitimates the inequalities. "*I think what we do not discuss are the inequalities that come from social classes actually. As we live in a meritocratic educational system's full illusion, it is as if there was no inequality at the outset. So yes I think the problem, it is a little bit there, is that we are in an illusion of equality of opportunity for all with respect to the system while this is so precisely a big, big, illusion and that behind the façade people become more aware that this is a bit of a fool's game and suddenly it's become unbearable inequalities for those who are the victims*" (Interview with an expert of youth policies).

Another interviewee states that: "*The idea that school strictly reproduces the social structure is quite divided in France. All observers share it. Now the ideal school is in principle contrary to the ideal of equality of opportunity between all those who enrol in the school. It is possible that this ideal is shared and defended by those who are responsible to implement, especially teachers, but it is still unlikely. The data is so permanent that even those who are not informed observers must still convince themselves that the school is a device to reproduce social inequalities*" (Interview a former DIJ).

Undoubtedly, social and professional inequalities are bound together with a starting point at school: "*About initial training, I think it's pretty clear in terms of socio-professional categories, we see that young people do not have access equally to training*" (interview with ONPES).

Thus, school and social inequalities are reflecting and generating each other. If some dropouts are able to "bounce", the most troubled by social and professional integration suffer from the lack of degree. Borrowed from Latin "can be injured", the term vulnerable starts with the lack of diploma as a grounding vulnerability factor.

**Figure 1: The lack of a diploma, the first factor of vulnerability**



However, through the prism of meritocratic illusion, the vulnerability factor revolt little the victims "we worked a lot with students from 3rd asking them what they tend to, they expect the school system and they have a lot of speech of this kind: 'when you want you can' even when they are very, very poor"(Interview with an expert of youth policies) as well as the entire community. If there are movements against poverty (e.g. Don Quixote, housing protest movement which moto is a home for all) we do not know of similar movements for "diploma for all".

As expressed by several interviewees, this discriminating factor arises from the education system and it is commonly known if not accepted: "*troubled youth are defined as traditionally in France through the non- possession of diploma*"(interview with INJEP). "*The idea that school strictly reproduces the social structure is quite divided about France. [...] The data is so permanent that even those who are not informed observers must still convince the school is a device to reproduce social inequalities* (Interview with a former DIJ).

As a proof, the French results of the OECD PISA survey are clearly pointing the accountability of the educational system in the reinforcement of inequalities. Consequently, the reform of this institutional pillar is on top of the political agenda.

Another index is the "discovery" of the NEETs (Not in Employment, Education and Training) by French academics and politicians. According to a recent survey conducted by the Ministry of youth, in 2011, nearly 15% of youth aged 15 to 29 years are not in employment or training. The share of NEET has increased between 2007 and 2010 (an increase of 2.8 points for 20-24 years and 3.9 percentage points for those aged 15-29)<sup>74</sup>.

***Did the crisis change the national understanding of disadvantage? Did it lead to a shift in the national IJJ or are changes a continuation of longer term trends? Has***

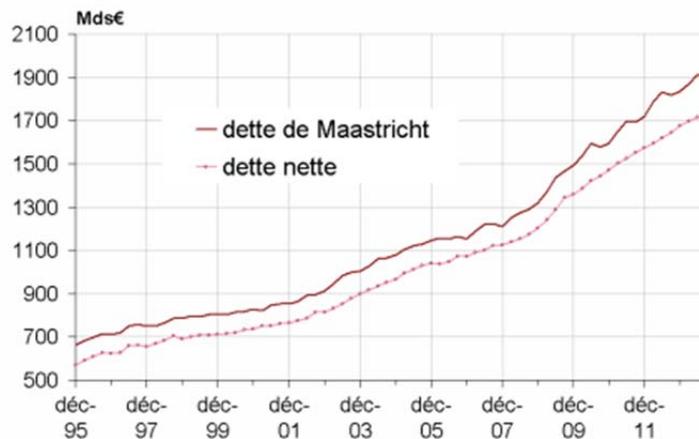
<sup>74</sup> Comité interministériel de la Jeunesse, *Priorité Jeunesse*, 21 février 2013, p. 7.

***the crisis increased the number of disadvantaged youth, has it shifted the composition of disadvantaged youth etc.?***

Budget documents announce equivalent public debt to 93.4 % of GDP. From an economic point of view, France is in " a dangerous area " (Public accounting court – Cour des comptes, 2013)

**Figure 2: France's public debt**

**Dettes au sens de Maastricht et dette nette**



For the actors interviewed the crisis phenomenon would have increased vulnerability as well as its position on the agenda: *"The crisis has led to the conference on the issue of poverty and how to solve it but I do not have the impression that there is a great novelty in this. It is recurrent, it is always the same subjects returning to the front of the stage: the search for employment, debt, housing of the poor, etc. what has changed? Yet nothing (Interview with a former DIJ),"*it [the crisis] revealed an increase in the phenomena of youth's precariousness. This is very clear. It really emphasized it. If there is a change that has made the crisis, it is this one: it really has put forward in the public arena the question of insecurity and poverty among young people, who were already well advanced, well documented, but there really, today, it really becomes a matter of public policy, inevitably. There is something, the numbers are too strong for that we can ignore the case" (interview with ONPES).

The crisis accentuated the cleavage and the duration of the youth. As noted above, the French youth is fragmented by social origin. Popular categories have less access to qualifications than most favoured categories. Diploma constituting a strong signal on the labour market, the most popular youth is at risk of employability problems. This has slowed down the access to financial independence and created difficulties delaying the creation of an autonomous family unit. If we consider that youth is a time of transition between school and working life and between the original family and the procreation family, then we can say that the popular classes suffer a prolonged youth, especially in times of a durable crisis when the labour market is highly selective.

The crisis " has exacerbated inequality factors and perhaps in terms of performances. That is to say that again in a city where you could always find a few individuals among ones comrades who remained, who had found a job, started a family or otherwise, even today

*those who have passed through excellence finally found it difficult to integrate. So these models that may be in membership groups have been weakened. It's the same thing at the family level: if you have a big brother or big sister who yesterday had managed to get his talents a diploma and a job, today many graduates are struggling. So these efforts we asked each other, it is not obvious that the way that you suggested leads to a job, a situation "* (interview with France Volontaire).

Vulnerability factors have developed facing the crisis. So that the unemployment rate for young boys became higher than girls, while it has never been the case! The unemployment rate curve of boys crossed the curve of the unemployment rate for girls. Because they are more often industrial jobs, therefore there since 2010, the unemployment rate for males under 30 years rose above the rate of unemployment girls! While remaining high for the one as for the other, one have grown higher than the other one but it was one of the effects of the crisis. And then the downgrading process in hiring and competition between positions rose. The competition for positions making graduate youngsters taking unskilled jobs has worsened. As mentioned by an interviewee *"competition for available places is at the expense of the less skilled even for unskilled jobs"*.

French youth is also fragmented by geographical origin at different scales. The economic context creates or reinforces territorial disparities. At the regional level as well as at the finer scale of neighbourhoods, *"this issues of low skilled youth takes a particular echo"* (interview with ONZUS). The territory can be a source of inequality due to urban segregation or residential stigma.

*"[The crisis] has affected everyone, qualified or not, but rather those who were underequipped to tackle the labour market and those who were in deprived areas. All young people who now belong to the territories where social plans have multiplied, the industrial territories, with an industrial history, these young longer show a ladle over the head"* (interview with INJEP).

These targeted public policy areas are places where social difficulties are cumulating: lack of education, ethnic relations, high unemployment, downgraded housing, etc. *"In these areas, the concentration of population of immigrants or descendants of immigrants is important because more than half of the urban policy population was either an immigrant herself to 25% or even 25% descendant of immigrants. We do not count the descendants of 2nd and 3rd generation. (...) It has been shown also that there was access to the most difficult job related to these migratory origins"* (interview with ONZUS)

Another remarkable phenomenon is the spatial mismatch between living and working places: *"Which is explained by both the location of these areas and their limited integration into urban units, there is a phenomenon of isolation in these neighbourhoods. So you have to look under the microscope, every neighbourhoods are not locked but there are a number that are"* (interview with ONZUS).

This mismatch is reinforced by the role played by low social capital *"beyond this physical isolation that can exist is another kind of isolation by the networks. That is to say that when asked today – because we have surveys that do – young encountering the biggest difficulties*

*to integrate the labour market, evoke as a primary reason the lack of social networks, people who put their foot in the stirrup"*(interview with ONZUS).

The extreme poverty rate increased in France between 2007 and 2009 by 38% (EU- SILC Eurostat). In 2010, ONPES pointing the appearance of a “new” younger audience: youth out of their family environment: young unrelated to their parents, without financial resources, rather unskilled, sometimes experiencing significant psychological difficulties, frequently homeless, and therefore in a situation of great vulnerability. The survey conducted by the FNARS (a network of urgent housing NGOs) confirms these characteristics of vulnerable youngsters: family breakdown, lack of roof and lack of resources. If some have held precarious or temporary employment, they are anymore able to access it because of the worsening economic climate.

Troubled youth may have different profiles:

- Young French in precarious employment or seeking employment, they combine the difficulties of access to housing and employment
- Students with limited financial resources
- Young foreigners in an irregular situation in particular, often in situations of extreme hardship

Strongly overrepresented among job applicants, young people have been severely affected by the crisis since 2008. The employment rate of recent assets deteriorated.

## **4.2 Labour market position of young people and problems at labour market entry**

In France, being young is a disadvantage when it comes to entering onto the labour market. By the end of 2012, the unemployment rate of young workers (under 25 years) amounted to 24.2% in France.

***What opportunities are available to young people in the labour market and of what quality? What has been the impact of the economic downturn on young people and the wider labour market?***

Youth unemployment constitutes a major burden for all French governments since the end of the 70's. As reminded by ILO, youth unemployment and poverty is a structural, global challenge for human societies: *“The current global youth employment crisis is unprecedented, as globally young people are on average three times more likely than adults to be out of a job, and four out of every ten people unemployed worldwide are young people. (...) More youth are poor or underemployed than ever before: some 309 million young people work but live in households that earn less than the equivalent of US\$2 per day”* (ILO, 2012). For most of the European countries (especially southern Europe), the youth unemployment rate remains heavily high, higher than the average unemployment rate: *“Until the end of 2008, the youth unemployment rate in the EU-27 has been around twice as high as the rate for the total population, reaching its minimum value (18.1 %) in the first quarter 2008. The economic crisis, however, seems to have hit the young more than other age groups. From the beginning of 2009, the gap between the youth and the total unemployment rates has*

increased, so that at the end of 2012 the youth unemployment rate was 2.6 times the total rate"<sup>75</sup>. The situation in France makes no difference. In December 2011, the youth unemployment rate reached 23.8% while the average rate was below 10%. As reminded by F. Lefresne, "in the past 30 years, the youth unemployment rate has never fallen below 15 percent and has regularly exceeded 20 per cent" (Lefresne, 2012). During the same period, the average rate was never over 11% (highest peak 10.8% in 1997).

If the difficulties of youth access to employment have increased, their permanence raises questions. "The labour market is significantly more volatile for youth. These are particularly vulnerable especially in times of recession" (Timotéo in Labadie, 2012, p 218). It has been demonstrated that youth position on the labour market is strongly related to economic cycles and tends to leverage the effects of these cycles. To put it in a nutshell, youth employment rises faster than the average active population in times of economic growth while the effect crises affects more strongly the employment of youngsters.

In addition to this sensibility to economic cycles, youth unemployment is strongly related to a territorial variable. As shown by Thomas Couppié's longitudinal work (2013), the economic downturns have had a stronger effect on youth living in deprived areas. With a higher proportion of low skilled and dropped out, youngster living in poorer quarters are facing major difficulties to enter the labour market. And this situation is not having any kind of improvement since it has been shown that between youngsters exiting the educational system in 1998 and in 2007, the proportion of those exposed to long-term unemployment has raised from 11 points (Couppié, 2013, p.2). It should also be reminded that this situation affects young male more than young women.

Since the 70s the failure of public policy to youth employment, especially regarding low skilled youngsters, suggests the existence of structural mechanisms. As reminded by F. Lefresne (2012, p. 1), the tools of the youth employment policy can be pointed out as a first factor of this policy inefficiency: "The role of public policy towards youth professional integration consists in special work contracts that apply to the market or non-market sector. State-subsidised jobs help young people in difficulties, but generally do not assist in promoting a real upwardly mobile career path and destabilise work contract standards. The main challenge for employment policy is to create and promote a new professional status for the entire body of active people based on secure professional pathways".

***At what points of the transition to school and work are young people most at risk of falling into (persistent long-term, short-term or recurrent (in and out)) poverty?***

Traditionally, poverty affected more the seniors: thus, in 1970, a retired out of four was poor. Today poverty has strongly rejuvenated and this reversal keeps questioning. In 2000, the rate of poverty for youth aged 18 to 24 years was 19.9% and it has reached 22.5% in 2009 while it was 13.5% for the entire population. Between 2005 and 2009, the poverty rate increased to 1,7 points for the 18-24 years, while at the same time the increase is of 0.5 for 65 years and over.

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<sup>75</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics).

**More than in terms of a specific moment in the transition onto the labour market, the risk of falling into poverty appears extremely important when young people leave their families.** The main reason for this relies to the fact that, in France, young people do not constitute a specific target for social policies and benefits. Their protection is mediated through the one delivered to their families as reminded by one of our interviewees *"civil majority is not social majority"* (interview with INJEP) while explaining also that *"all financial support addressed to young people are given to families. Nothing is given directly to young unlike other countries. (...) At 18 there is civil majority, but youngsters remain somehow social minors. Up to 25 years, we have nothing. (...) So we find ourselves in a situation of increasing poverty for young people who leave their families before 25 years because before this age there is nothing for them, nothing at all!"* (interview with INJEP). Several interviewees addressed the same issue: *"The changeover can take place very quickly with a family break, a health problem which can not be dealt directly. These are very important points"* (interview with AFEV French NGO promoting volunteer action of students in deprived areas).

For orphans or without any family support, the risk of exclusion is tremendous, thereby confirming the absence of relay by social policies in case of family failure: *"A third of those who are homeless are under the ASE<sup>76</sup> program. This is huge. That's it. (...) This is a topic that is very much addressed at the European level but very little in France"* (interview with ONPES).

However, young people with a family can also be fragile without having broken up with their family ties: *"Parents' unemployment plays really strongly in the path towards youth unemployment. I think about all possible family breakdown phenomenons. There we can see that there is a dynamic of 'familialization' of childcare. If a young - minor or major - is without family support or coming from a poor family, he/she is particularly exposed. And therefore the moments of rupture are in my opinion the most difficult"* (Interview with an expert of youth policies) .

Other factors may be playing a role in the risk of falling into poverty. For employed youth, this may depend on the type of employment contract, this interviewee expresses it quite clearly: *"For all that is part-time employment, (the youngster) remains in a significant precariousness and get trapped in it there because often this type of employment, cashier for example, are so divided in terms of hours that the person is not fully able to search another type of job. So he/she remains precarious. There are some who hold on, some who are progressing but there are also those who drop out of employment because the difference between a forced working time and a chosen one brings some youngsters to stay in the use of the safety net or social protection measures"* (interview with France volontaire) .

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<sup>76</sup> The ASE (Aide Sociale à l'Enfance) is a decentralized service placed under the authority of the President of the General Council (French political assembly for the Départements). Its main mission is to help children and their families through individual actions or collective prevention, protection and control against abuse. When a minor cannot be maintained in its family, social child welfare is responsible for responding to all their needs. It is then allowed to be in a foster family or in a specialized social institution.

All factors combined, the most affected are the NEET: *"When we superimpose the map of France with young people who are unemployed and without training, NEETs in other words; it is clear that this map superimposes with the youth's poverty one in France. Because not only these young people do not have access to employment but they also do not have any other resources. There is a real correlation between the two"*(interview with INJEP) .

In the end, the French choice to grant state aid to families is widely involved, one of our interlocutors called "familialization" and describes it perfectly: *"It is the fact that public aid will tend to help rather parents than individuals themselves. Let's take the example of the tax relief systems for major students. There we help the parents, it does not help the child. Another example is the ability to gather RSA only after 25. It is assumed that children are under their family care. And so, suddenly it is a huge inequality factor because as we do not help people and believe that they depend on their families; when their family is not able to help because it is itself poor, or it is no longer there after a breakup, it is then that young people are the most at risk"* (Interview with an expert of youth policies)

## **5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention**

### **5.1 What are the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?**

***What are the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty (monetary resources, public services, social rights, training programmes, management tools etc.) and what are the geography and scale of these, and which organisations mainly provide them***

France's territorial organization is quite complex. State, Regions, « Départements (NUTS 3)», municipalities: between these levels of government the formal competences are often blurred. A reform is ongoing which objective is to transfer full competences over specific matters to each levels of territorial government and try to clarify what is generally described as a « mille-feuilles » (thousand layers' cake).

The first decentralization acts (1982 & 1983) were aiming at providing each territorial level with blocks of competencies. By this, the legislator wished to institutionalize coherence between the subnational entities' interventions. However, this initial determination has progressively vanished. Thus, for example, in education, government, through the Ministry of Education remains responsible for defining programs while the territorial political bodies manage the buildings: regions for high schools, "département" for colleges and municipalities for primary schools.

This tangle of skills has negative effects. First it is a source not only of many disputes, but also of inertia. Moreover, it can be considered as a factor explaining the disinterest of citizens in local life. Indeed, how passion for democratic debate at the local level can arise when young citizens are even not aware of who is responsible of what?

The policy for youth in France is a national interdepartmental policy which relies for its implementation on a network of partners, including local authorities, NGOs, etc. The French Ministry of Sports, Youth, Popular Education and Community Life is responsible for the

policymaking and implementation of this broad policy. It relies for this mission, both on the development of policies and specific actions related to the field of youth and also on of mainstreaming concern for youth in the implementation of other sectoral policies. In fact, the policy of " Youth" is therefore based on many programs and actions, controlled and financed by various ministries. These programs are plural in their content and embodiment, centralized or decentralized, purely state-driven or enrolled in a conventional framework involving government agencies, local authorities or associations. This variety is reflected in the number of programs (46) and Missions (21) concerned. Cross-sectoral policy for youth is also related to other policies with a transverse "Youth" component, including urban, social, familial, justice, health, transportation and migration policies .

In the fight against poverty, the multiplicity of policy instruments, territorial scales and levels of intervention produces a complex system whose scarce visibility constitutes a factor explaining non take-up. The fight against inequality and poverty is far from being in France an integrated, uniform and Universalist system.

Regarding the territorial dimension, the main programs of this set of public policies bring together: multilevel programs, programs focused on one level of government, a scarce territorial regulation for education and employment policies and more generally a weak concern with social and environmental conversion factors.

Thus, policies affecting the upstream and downstream of the social and professional integration are mainly top down policies. If between the decision and the implementation a degree of autonomy may exist – therefore some territorial differences can be observed – nothing guarantees that these differences are legitimized or explained by taking into account local specificities. Conversely, the decision may be out of step with the evolution of social issues or lacking resources: "*We have local services that are a bit battered and looking of a kind of second wind. And that it does not facilitate the conduct fully effective public policies*" (interview with ONZUS). Concerning the competencies devolved to local authorities (social action for "departments", vocational training and lifelong guidance for regions), the design of policies also questions: "*What is complicated in fact to understand is the logic and values of these territorial policies for young people. It is very diverse depending on the willingness of local officials involved*" (interview with ONZUS).

The actions conducted in the fight against the poverty are so far based on a statutory-driven informational basis of judgment (IBJJ): the situation of the individual at time of its request for institutional care. Public authorities allocate resources if the social situation of the individual matches with the institutionalized criteria. On the one hand, the processes that have led the individual to his current situation are not taken into account<sup>77</sup>. On the other hand, space capabilities or real freedom of choice is not taken into account. Access to resources is based on individual characteristics but hampers the issue of social conversion factors.

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<sup>77</sup> "*Do we have in our software the right way to follow the individual? i.e. to build a public policy that follows the individual in all stages of life. Finally we might in fact create the ruptures or stress them by creating programs that fail to do this binder in temporality*"(ONZUS).

***What is the object/subject of intervention? Individual young people, communities, families, schools etc.? What policy areas do they cover e.g. family, education, employment, health etc.? Are the different government policy areas, addressing disadvantaged youth, integrated?***

Regarding youth, transversality is on the agenda, but it does not target particularly disadvantaged youth. Thus in the "Priority to Youth" Plan, 'interministeriality' is a key dimension. In this new program aiming at reforming youth public policy, our interlocutors noted that: "All the measures proposed are not targeted towards troubled youth, the measures are aimed at young people in general" (Interview with INJEP). In an aging France<sup>78</sup>, addressing the difficulties that young people may encounter in their path to autonomy is a declared priority.

Whatever the level, transversality raises many implementation difficulties. Some of them sound like a refrain: "it's been a long time since we talk about it. Since 1958 we are working on an intersectoral base". But divisions remain: "In fact it is extremely closed to each other" (Interview with an expert of youth policies). Knowing that for professional integration: "The school trajectories are overwhelming (...) success is played from primary education" and that "popular youth (is) most at risk of school breaks" (Priority to Youth Plan), some levers emerge.

On the first educational lever, many critics are formulated regarding the ministry of education or its agents such as described by this interviewee who gives us his feeling: "We feel that it is still difficult to mobilize the ministry of education! (...) It 's still not one of the easiest to mobilize" (interview with ONPES). On the same lever, whose centrality is recognized by all, recipes seem well known. This would be "trying to implement an effort in the direction of educational success during the primary schooling in order to try to anticipate a number of difficulties that are extra-curricular, but can be extremely punishing, so that no aggregation of difficulties accumulated throughout primary education are burdening the balance in secondary education "(interview with ONZUS).

Finally, during the last phase, the integration into employment may require some conversion factors not possessed by certain parts of the population. This is another lever: "Beyond (education), programs that facilitate access to employment for those people who even when they are educated, well trained, may have more difficulty equivalent to finding a job" (interview with ONZUS).

***What resources are available for the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty (how are they funded and the duration of funding), who funds them, and what resources are available to beneficiaries?***

A transversal policy is a public policy financed to a significant extent by the state, whose purpose involves several programs placed under the authority of different ministries. A Transversal Policy Document (Document de Politique Transversale - DPT) allows

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<sup>78</sup> Between 1975 and 2013, the proportion of 15-29 youngsters in the total population has decreased from 24% to 18% (INSEE).

coordination by a leading ministry between actions managed by several ministries contributing to this policy. DPTs are annexed to the draft budget law of the year<sup>79</sup>. For each relevant policy, these documents contain the following: Objectives, budget, strategy of implementation and monitoring indicators. They also include a detailed presentation of the State's financial commitment to these policies on a triennial base.

The DPT for " youth policy" is placed under the leadership of the Minister of Sports, Youth, popular education and community life. For 2014, the draft of the Finance Act has 22 ministries involved in this DPT. Among them, the leading ministry manages two programs by itself. The most important ministries in terms of programs are: the Ministry of education with 5 programs and the Ministry of Solidarity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities with 4. These programs and departments contribute to the financing and implementation of 16 articulated objectives concerning eight public domains: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, volunteering, social inclusion, youth and the world of creativity and culture<sup>80</sup>. The main instrument of its implementation is the European program for mobility and cooperation entitled " Erasmus + " with an estimated € 13.3 billion for the period 2014-2020 (DPT, 2014 , p budget. 90-94).

Among a gross budget of 81,149,121,773 euros, the budget for youth and community life is of 216,615,860 euros. Credits to implement and support health policy social, sports, youth and community life count for 92,038,660 euros. Youth and sports associations' mission is of 600 million euros. This amount does not include the local government budget.

***What are the policy 'outcomes' for beneficiaries (object/subject of intervention: individual young people, communities, families, schools etc.)? What are the goals of the policy and how is success defined? Are they defined using an explicit "value perspective"?***

As estimated by most of the observers, the results of the previous policies and programs for Youth would not permit (or would not work for) to fight successfully against social and territorial inequalities. Next, and in addition to Plan Priority for Youth, the General Commission for Investment (CGI) will support the emergence of integrated youth policies through a call for proposals<sup>81</sup>. Hence, it will support programs addressing the issues of youth in a comprehensive, territorialized and coherent way, avoiding the pitfall of a juxtaposition

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<sup>79</sup> Article 128 of the amended Finance Act 2005 No. 2005-1720 of 30 December 2005.

<sup>80</sup> Then follow the ministries of "Research and Higher Education", "Labour and Employment", "National Development Finance and modernization of learning", "Equal territories, housing and city" and "Culture " with 3 programs.

Then the lead ministry " Sports, Youth, Popular Education and Community Life ", that of the "Overseas", the "Securities" (2 ) and the " Action outside of the State " with 2 programs.

Finally, one program brings together the following ministries: "Solidarity , integration and equal opportunities ", " Health ", " Sport , Youth and community life ", " Agriculture, Food , Forests and Rural Affairs ", " Media , books and cultural industries" ; " Justice ", " Department of Government action ", " Veterans memory and links with the nation ", " Defense ", " Official Development Assistance ", " ecology , sustainable development and mobility."

<sup>81</sup> This call for project will benefit from the previous experience of the FEJ (Funds for Youth Experimentation).

of non-harmonized sectoral initiatives<sup>82</sup>.

These policies include integrated youth will have to address the following matters that are all factor autonomy for young people:

1. Information and guidance;
2. Employability and the fight against the school and university leavers;
3. Development of innovative educational opportunities, cultural and sports , in addition to the school;
4. Emergence of a culture of entrepreneurship.

In view of its importance in France, the next Society WPs will focus on the study of the dropout phenomenon. That is why we propose here to give priority to the action taken in educational matters among a set of multiple youth policies and programs.

The results of the French educational policies that prevailed until then are inconsistent if not contradictory with the recommendations of the OECD. These recommendations are to reduce school segregation, "*best way to achieve equity*" (OECD, 2011, in Labadie, p. 72). In France, school is not only dedicated to knowledge transmission. As an institution, the French school is considered as founding the Republic. Hence this institution has a double mission: to raise the training level of future workers in a changing economy, but also to strengthen the Republican regime by forming enlightened citizens. Today access is no longer unequal; everyone can theoretically access the same level of education. The barrier is not put at the entrance; the sorting is done inside, through the cursus. And this is where the French educational policies are inconsistent with the recommendations of the OECD. The single college is a myth as the options inside the curricula promote differentiation and inequality. Social distinction is made in this way. The best-informed categories are better able to help their children choose the best curricula and pathways of excellence. Strategies within the college are elitist and the system allows them to exist. However, equality is a founder of the French school myth. Accordingly, questioning the institution is difficult.

Regarding the current policy we do not have results. A new law was passed in July 2013<sup>83</sup>. This "refounding" Act aims to realize the commitment of the President of the Republic to youth and education as priorities of the Nation. It aims to (re) establish a fair school and reduce inequalities. At the time of writing, we can only hope that the results are equal to the stated objectives.

In terms of resources, the law confirms the creation of 60,000 new jobs in education. It establishes also a new training curriculum for the forthcoming teachers (Ecoles Supérieures du Professorat et de l'Éducation – ESPE). A public service of digital education is also created to provide online educational resources and software to teachers, students and their parents. On the other hand, territorial educational projects (Projets Éducatifs Territoriaux – PEDT) are intended to allow local partnership supporting a reform of primary school

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<sup>82</sup> Budget Blue (preparatory documents): Sports, Youth and Community Life. Program 411: innovating projects for youth, PLF 2014 (version du 1/10/2013).

<sup>83</sup> Loi d'orientation et de programmation pour la refondation de l'École de la République 9 juillet 2013, n° 2013-595 du 8 juillet 2013.

rhythms that engages the French municipalities.

In terms of values, a new moral and civic education from primary school to the university, will aim to "make students acquire the respect for the individual, its origins and its differences, for the equality between women and men and for laicism"<sup>84</sup>.

***Please highlight, whether a policy is somehow linked to programmes, initiatives or guidelines coming from the European level - be it for legitimacy reasons, be it because of financial incentives /funds which can only be used if adequate programmes are developed, etc.***

Regarding the relationship with European policies, the first attempt to define a "youth policy" in Europe, as presented in the 2001 White Paper (European Commission, 2001) did not address key areas of "youth" policies such as education or employment, because they fall under specific directions, within or outside the jurisdiction of the European Commission. It was not until the publication of the European Youth Pact in 2005<sup>85</sup> for these areas to be included in the youth policy. This process has accelerated within the recent years with the EU Strategy for Youth (European Commission, 2009) and the publication of "Youth on the Move" in September 2010<sup>86</sup>.

In France, the Minister of Youth is involved in the definition, implementation and monitoring of youth policies in Europe. Under the auspices of the Permanent Representation in Brussels, and in conjunction with the Prime Minister, the Minister represents France in expert groups and the Council of Youth Ministers. The Department supports the work of youth information in Europe conducted with the European Commission and of the Eurodesk network. It also contributes to the European Youth Portal. In addition, the Minister for Youth supports and participates in the Council of Europe, in particular within the European Steering Committee for Youth in order to foster intergovernmental cooperation to promote citizenship rights, democracy, cultural pluralism and mobility.

For what concerns the studied program "*Priority to Youth*", some references are made to situation of youth in Europe but no direct link is made in the official documents with the European policies. In fact, the term "Europe" is used 3 times in this 80 pages programming document and not to refer to any existing European programs for youth. A large partnership is proposed with public agencies, local communities, regional authorities, NGOs, etc. but significantly Europe is never mentioned as one of these partners. This program appears above all in the official publications as a national policy grounded in the promises of the presidential campaign.

## **5.2 Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programmes they are offered/the subject of?**

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<sup>84</sup> Loi n° 2013-595 du 8 juillet 2013 - Article 41.

<sup>85</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/doc1705\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/doc1705_en.htm)

<sup>86</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/education>

***How flexible are the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty in meeting the differing needs of young people? Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programmes they are offered/the subject of? What is the scale and scope of young people's opportunities for voice? Can they opt out of a programme? Do measures and programmes seek to develop young people's aspirations? Or do they aim to make them "realistic", adapting them to the current labour market and social policy system?***

The vast majority of youth (75%) believe that young people are not recognized or heard in society. The French plan for youth provides priority to promote and enhance youth engagement through "all accommodating institutions, especially those dedicated to educational or vocational training" (Priority to Youth Plan).

Progress are to be made as noted by the French Youth Forum, an organization recently created (June 2012) that brings together some of the youth organizations. Indeed, if in universities, colleges and CROUS (Centre Régional des Œuvres Universitaires), students sit in decision-making bodies dealing with issues directly affecting them, this dynamic does not concern the high schools, where student representatives have little place in the executive board or even within the CSE (Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation – Higher Education Council). The secondary education's democracy seeking occasionally the participation of pupils is still lagging behind higher education. Another example of exclusion is in the apprenticeship trainer (Centre de Formation des Apprentis – CFA). There are no apprentices' representatives neither in the decision-making bodies inside the CFA nor at the national level.

For what concerns the political institutions, France has Europe's oldest National Assembly: the average age is 55 years. If it has not always been the case, the dynamics is confirmed with an aging parliament, which aggravates the generational gap and the feeling of contempt and condescension experienced by young people (75 % of young people do not feel respected by politicians)<sup>87</sup>. At a territorial level, the average age among regional councilors is 55, that of general councilors (département's assembly) and mayors is more than 60 years. A few attempts of youth political assemblies at the regional or municipal level can be identified but they are more symbolic than really powerful.

Moreover, young people do not always know their rights. So they are often not aware of their possible participation in an election. An educational effort involving rethinking current approaches seems necessary.

Finally inside companies, union's stewards and staff representatives are often older than the average employee. Young employees are often in precarious situations, cumulating sequences of unemployment periods, temporary or fixed-term contracts, they are not able to stabilize or find a statutory place in the company allowing them to be represented. And for those who find a permanent position, they dare not to engage for fear of losing their jobs or not be given a chance in the unions"(First Notice of French Youth Forum, " Youth representation in France, " 20 June 2012).

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<sup>87</sup> JOC/CSA survey, april 2011.

To sum up, no institutionalized or formal forms of participation or voice is given to youngsters in education and employment policies. Youngsters and youth associations are not enjoying a positive role over the agenda setting, the decision making process or the implementation chain. The main barriers are related to a lack of status given to youngsters and a political/firm decision-making system owned by adults. The existing forms of representation (cf. supra) are lean and powerless. The only capability for voice given to youngsters can be identified only at the local level in the case managing relation and is highly dependent on the street level bureaucrats' discretion.

***How important are external structural and social factors to the development and operation of policy and how are they incorporated e.g. employer needs, labour market conditions, discrimination and constraints. Has policy changed in response to the economic crisis? Did new actors emerge?***

As we saw earlier in France the preferred approach in social policies remains familialist: the young are still considered dependent from their families until their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday. Under the Plan "Priority to Youth", a set of measures designed to empower young people will be tested.

The impact of social conditions on the individual's trajectories is extremely important in France. The school has expanded massively but not in a process of democratization: social origin and school rankings remain correlated. The economic uncertainty is one of the factors explaining the dropping out process.

For youth with disabilities schooling remains difficult. Beyond 16 years only 30 % of them are enrolled in mainstream schools, despite the law of February 11<sup>th</sup> 2005 institutionalizing an open access of children, adolescents and adults with disabilities to all public institutions. At the same time, in France the effects of the crisis on young people are increasing the gaps. Between 2007 and 2010, youth employment declined more than total employment (INJEP, 2012).

In this time of mass unemployment, the most educated scale back their position on the labor market. The less educated are thus losing scarce employment opportunities. The importance of graduate employability illustrates its importance.

### **5.3 Non-intervention (if applicable)**

***Are there instances where disadvantage is identified but not addressed by government policy e.g. policies are missing? Who is assumed to take responsibility when the state does not e.g. individual, family, third sector? Who identifies these gaps – government, third sector organisations, citizen's bodies, stakeholders within civil society etc.?***

Before speaking of non-intervention, it is important to discuss the non take-up of ordinary programs. As theorized in France by the work of the ODENORE (Observatoire du Non-Recours aux Droits et Services), the non take-up takes three forms that are:

1. lack of information,
2. lack of demand and
3. lack of offer or refusal.

In our material, the first and second cases were widely reported including access to the Local Missions specialized in taking care of troubled youth and working on their social/professional inclusion. In other words and following the terms of the CA, the "social conversion factors " may be missing. As our interviewees mention regularly, it is not enough to create or give way to a program. Without an individual follow up, some youngsters miss what they are entitled to. The reason may be what one of our interviewees called their "social remoteness", which also calls for *"more flexibility in hosting what may be their first need"* (interview with France Volontaire) to reduce this distance to entitlement. Any public policy, be it housing, health, vocational training, transport, should consider the possibility of access to all. The transportation is very important to face the requirement of geographical mobility. When transportation are present, they can remain inaccessible for financial reasons, *"in a landlocked city served by buses (...) you are unemployed without special allowance, to take the bus you need a 3-4 zones (expensive) ticket"* (interview with France Volontaire).

In terms of non-intervention, it is above all the failure of existing devices that is deplored. Firstly, social minima and weak or lack of allocation to youngsters under 25, are questioned: *"How shall we consider that people may be excluded from a minimum income simply because they are young?"*(Interview with ONPES). As we already reported, the fight against child poverty and youth is still happening largely through family allowances. On the other hand, as we have also discussed, the early school leaving remains at a high level. On the employment policy side, an effort concerning deprived neighborhoods is still expected in terms of job creation, especially in areas of urban policy.

## **6. Policy making, implementation and participation**

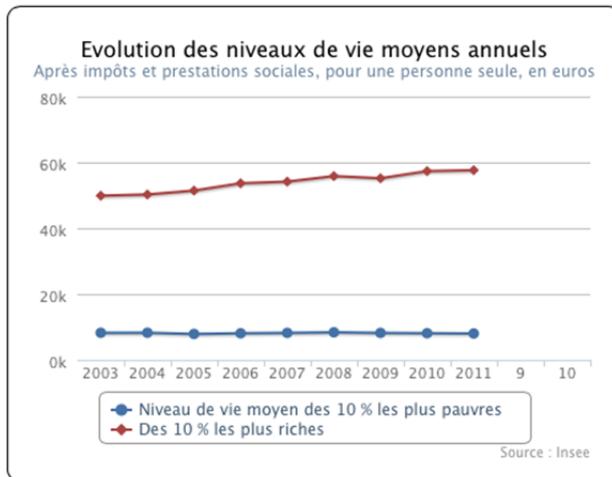
### **6.1 Who are the actors that are responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?**

***Who are the actors that are responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty? Do they have an effective say in all three processes? And in practice who is actually involved in the development of the policy?***

Poverty undermines the French republican ideal of equality. As its causes are many and interact, the number of actors involved is important. Fight against poverty requires taking into account the inequalities together, their complexity and their interactions. We know for example that the health inequalities articulate with employment problems, employment problems with the level of qualification, housing conditions influence educational outcomes, these housing conditions are themselves dependent on the level of household income, etc.. In France, the Observatory of inequalities noted a sharp increase in income inequality over

the last 10 years<sup>88</sup> :

**Figure 3: Annual average standards of living's evolution**



Beyond the income inequality, 10 factors of inequality have been identified as priorities for public action. Its general recommendations are:

1. Slow down the large wealth gap through taxation,
2. Develop a fair pension system,
3. Youth should not be combined with insecurity,
4. Another school to fight against social reproduction
5. An equal system of health for all,
6. Affordable housing near jobs,
7. Gender equality in employment through equality in couple
8. Popularize an elitist culture,
9. Stop believing that hell is other people,
10. Counteract social segregation between neighbourhoods.

Last spring (2013), the French government has politically shifted from right to left (presidency and parliament). By so doing and since most of the territorial bodies were already ruled by them, the left has won almost all institutional powers (national and local). Since the last regional elections (2010), the socialist party rules all the French regional councils, except for one<sup>89</sup>.

The theme of inequality is on top of the actual majority's agenda and so is youth policy. Confronted with the challenges youth faces, the Prime Minister has mobilized all members

<sup>88</sup> « The level of average annual life of the 10% richest is seven times higher than the poorest 10% in 2010. This ratio was 6.3 in 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, the poorest won 33 euros per month, the richest 746 euros, an increase of 5.3% on one side and 19% on the other. But since 2008, the situation changes: the standard of living of the poorest decreases. Between 2008 and 2010, they lost 22 euros per month, while the richest have won 128. The first available data for 2011 confirm that the trend continued thereafter ... a situation of rising inequality driven by the richest growth differentials also linked to a stall at the bottom is passed » <http://www.inegalites.fr>

<sup>89</sup> Alsace (North-east of France, close to the German border).

of the Government and their agencies to collectively build a new youth policy.

The Interdepartmental Committee on Youth (ICJ) is the key organization of this new youth policy. This new Youth policy focuses on 13 priority projects:

1. Create a public information, support and guidance service that meets the diverse needs of young
2. Promote the success of all young people by fighting against early school leaving
3. Improve youth health and promote access to prevention and care
4. Facilitate young people's access to housing
5. Promoting access to employment for youngsters
6. Secure social and professional integration's paths for youngsters
7. Promote reintegration paths for young prisoners or subject to a judicial procedure
8. Foster youth access to sports, art, culture
9. Develop digital culture and youth access to new jobs related to Internet
10. Increase and diversify the European and international mobility of young
11. Promote and enhance youth engagement
12. Increase the representation of young people in public space
13. Strengthen the link between institutions and youth and the fight against discrimination

Thus, the crucial inequality pointed by the observatory plan responds somewhat health, school, housing and employment are well among the government's priorities. The precariousness of young raised by the observatory also would be supported by this new policy. For now, the objectives are defined. Convergence between objectives and implementation remains to be measured since it a brand new set of public policies.

***How are the different government policy areas, addressing disadvantaged youth, integrated?***

The first Interdepartmental Committee on Youth (CIJ) was held on February 21<sup>st</sup> 2013. Responsible for the organization of the Interdepartmental Committee, the Ministry of Youth, in conjunction with the Prime Minister, coordinated all the preparatory work. 24 departments have contributed to the preparation of the CIJ.

The work was coordinated by the Ministry of Sports, Youth, Popular Education and Community Life, particularly its direction of Youth, Popular Education and Community Life (DJEPVA) and INJEP.

1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. Ministry of National Education
3. Ministry for Educational Achievement
4. Ministry of Justice
5. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
6. Ministry for Family
7. Ministry Responsible for Persons with Disabilities and the Fight against Exclusion
8. Ministry for Equality of territories and Housing
9. Ministry for Urban Development

10. Ministry of the Interior
11. Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy
12. Ministry of Labour, Employment, Training and Social Dialogue
13. Ministry for Training and Learning
14. Ministry of Defense
15. Ministry of Culture and Communication
16. Ministry of Higher Education and Research
17. Ministry of Women's Rights
18. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
19. Ministry of State Reform of Decentralization and Public Service
20. Ministry of Overseas
21. Ministry of Sports , Youth , Popular Education and Community Life
22. Ministry for the Budget
23. Ministry for Social Economy and Solidarity
24. French Ministry for Small and medium sized enterprises, Innovation and Digital Economy

This policy targets all youth and not the disadvantaged youth in particular. The use of common law reminds a strong normative principle: public action has an obligation to ensure the effectiveness of universal rights to all. The right to work, rest and leisure, the right to take part in the community life, the right to education are part of these fundamental rights. France in the twenty-first century they appear as factors of inequality.

#### *Complexity and efficiency*

In its study on "social cohesion policies" (Vintage Reports and Documents No. 55, April 2013, the Centre for Strategic Analysis paints a rather pessimistic assessment of the actions taken so far by the State:

*"If we examines social policies, there is an accumulation of often illegible programs, struggling to reach the most vulnerable. The rates of people who do not exercise their rights is higher than it is for RSA, the right to housing, or CMU (Couverture Maladie Universelle - Universal Health Plan). The idea of a State guaranteeing the rights seems to remain in many cases dead letter today..."*. The observations we are going to conduct within the Society Program will focus on the implementation of this new policy at the local level trying to find if the policy adopted by the new government finally insane this pessimistic overview.

## **6.2 Young people's participation in policy making**

### ***How is participation in policy making defined?***

During the same period as the preparation of CIJ, the Minister for Youth conducted a series of meetings with some of the stakeholders acting in the field of youth, in particular the French Youth Forum and the CNAJEP (Comité pour les relations Nationales et internationales des Associations de Jeunesse et d'Education Populaire), youth and popular education associations, youth organizations, elected officials in charge of the youth of the local authorities and the social partners. Since May 2012, The French ministry of youth

participated in meetings with young people, their representatives and elected to bring its approach.

In France, the participation of citizens in public policy making is not usual. The French political participation scheme relies strongly on the role of elections and appears very limited to it. New participation schemes in relation to a more open democracy (program driven public debates, local referendum, policy forums, etc.) have been developed but they remain scarcely used. "*Since moons we wonder how people are associated*" (Interview with ONZUS). Following the same interviewee, it would not be due to a lack of will from the implementers, but perhaps more to a lack in youth representation at all levels (see above), "*We must find ways and means by which to design policies from the people. It is unbridled intellectually but not institutional term*". Or even lack of knowledge "*we are a country that is not quite like that, who does not know how to find ways and means by which ... which is not true in other countries, even European countries and this is a real issue*"( Interview with ONZUS).

***Do young people have input and/or influence over the setting of priorities, design and implementation, both for government policy/programmes and the policy/programmes of other organisations? How, and to what degree, is the participation and voice of young people included? How is their participation encouraged? What are the barriers to their (greater) participation? What is the impact of their participation?***

The French Youth Forum (Forum Français pour la Jeunesse) was established on 20 June 2012 by the will of the main organizations. It is managed and led by young people. The FFJ is an autonomous assembly.

This "space of representation of young people themselves " as he defines himself carries 4 main actions:

1. He produces findings and proposals on all topics affecting youth (health, housing, citizenship, mobility , ...);
2. He seizes the government on these themes and structures working in the field of youth and popular education and civil society;
3. He works for the recognition of youth-led organizations and is ruled by a majority of young people (below 30 years of age average). It supports the development of new organizations and works with various bodies (unions, associations, political parties, local authorities, etc.) on the importance of taking into account the views of young people ;
4. He maintains a watch on youth issues in order to disseminate this information internally and to partners and stakeholders in the field of youth

However, things in this area remain to be improved. The *Priority to Youth Plan* designed one year later raises in its findings the issue of social inequalities in youth engagement and of the poor mutual understanding between young people and various government agencies. In terms of youth engagement and relationship with institutions, much has still to be done. It is the object of the points 11 and 13 of the plan. The forthcoming evaluation will have measure the concrete effects of these measures in terms of their objectives.

## **7. Social innovation and the role of social innovation in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy**

### **7.1 How is social innovation defined?**

***What are the characteristics of social innovation? What informs this definition? Do the definitions used by different stakeholder vary e.g. state vs. third sector definitions. Who decides on the predominant definition?***

In a context of growing social needs and strong budget constraints, social innovation flourishes. Officially recognized by the French President of the Republic, François Hollande, at the closing of the Entrepreneurship Meeting, it is "*focused on the public interest, it consists in developing new responses to seemingly intractable social problems under the current market conditions and social policies: long-term unemployment, equal access to health care or housing, disintegration of the solidarity ties, malnutrition*". Its main characteristic is to involve in the invention, experimentation, dissemination and evaluation all actors and in the first place, the users concerned.

***Is youth policy socially innovative? What are the goals of such innovatory and experimental developments? Which value perspectives are mobilised? Is there a space for experimental youth policies?***

In view of what has been said above, insofar as youth policy was based on a phase of consultation with representatives of youth organizations, we can say that youth policy is relatively innovative. However, by not strongly involve the citizens in its design, it is still innovation in the midstream.

### **7.2 Supporting social innovation**

***What supports the introduction and implementation of greater social innovation? Where are new and innovative ideas developed, realised, tested and evaluated (in relation to youth related initiatives and instruments/programmes measures)?***

Established in 2009, the Fund for Youth Experimentation (Fonds d'Expérimentation Jeunesse - FEJ) finances innovative actions for young people on the ground of calls for projects. The FEJ is led by a management board involving the concerned central government ministries (including employment, education, higher education, budget, youth, Overseas, etc.) and private partners involved in the process: the TOTAL Foundation and the Union of Industries and Trades Metallurgy – (UIMM).

Each project submitted must include an evaluation protocol defined at the same time as the draft. During the first years of the FEJ it was strongly recommended to use randomized controlled evaluations contributing to the development of this experimental method in France. Experimentations must be designed to meet the priority needs of youth. The end of 2013 balance sheet shows: 14 calls for proposals; and 29 experiments in progress. In total

since its inception, the FEJ supported more than 550 projects, with an average duration of approximately two years.

Projects submitted and approved carry on educational and vocational guidance, fight against school dropout, in work training, university dropout, employability, housing, youth rehabilitation under court, international mobility. Their evaluations are available online on the FEJ website<sup>90</sup>.

After experimentation, and if positive, its evaluation should propose the modalities of transfer and generalization of the experiment. Finally, the lessons learned from different experiments are valued at conferences organized by the EFJ at the national level with all stakeholders and evaluators.

***Who is allowed to develop and realise new ideas? Is it a top-down processes; is there a process of collective creation/co-production; is it a bottom-up and decentralised, networked process?***

The FEJ is intended to fund experiments that provide added value compared to existing actions or programs and which belong to possible new public social policies. Therefore, any public or private body entitled to receive a grant from the State may submit a project. As project leaders are of extremely different organisational nature: Local Mission for professional integration of youth, NGOs, Chamber of Crafts, local state administrations, regional council, etc. The FEJ subsidizes only part of the project, the remaining part of the budget must be co-financed on the organization's own funds. The evaluation is funded entirely by the FEJ to guarantee its independency from the stakeholders.

Even if the FEJ has been a major operator of social innovation, all experiments are not supported only by it. Social innovation projects can obviously be worn outside of this framework.

The multiannual plan against poverty and social inclusion adopted in January 2013 introduces a new approach structured on the basis of five principles.

1. The first is a **principle of objectivity**: the society has changed<sup>91</sup>, the poor and precarious should not be considered as a marginal minority, more or less responsible for their situation, it is a sociological nonsense as well as an irresponsible policy. Four other principles are derived from the first.
2. The **principle of non-stigma**: People with social problems are not fixed; the frontiers of poverty are moving every moment. From ruptures to rebounds, each one is living in

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<sup>90</sup> <http://www.experimentation.jeunes.gouv.fr/72-les-resultats-des-experimentations.html>

<sup>91</sup> Redistribution efforts made by the French government did not inhibit the growth of the income gap between the richest and poorest. The long-term unemployment is, to date, structural, and the permanent full time contract constitutes more hiring standard and work less efficiently protects poverty than in the past. The nuclear family is no longer the rule and isolation is gaining ground every day. The problems of sensitive urban neighbourhoods and rural areas in decline have not yet been solved. Persistent inequalities in access to care are directly related to social conditions, nearly a quarter of the 18-25 year olds are living below the poverty line, which is also the case for over a third of women living alone with children.

interdependence with the rest of society. It is the community of all citizens<sup>92</sup> who have an interest in the fact that no one should be abandoned.

3. The third principle is the **principle of participation** of people experiencing poverty or precariousness in the development and monitoring of public policies.
4. The **principle of fair law**, not to mention the issue of welfare fraud, supposes to tackle the phenomenon of non take-up of social rights and services, which has gained alarming proportions (especially because it is more looked at than before).
5. Finally, the **principle of deregulation** of social policies. Solidarity is not a separate subject in addition to the central public policies.

The interdepartmental plan involves 11 ministers, but also the contribution of many others, on public or transverse themes that they are responsible for. Each program proposed in action plan comes with a leader who is responsible for carrying out the entire program. Solidarity is now taking place in each sector of public action<sup>93</sup>.

Beyond the public initiatives also exist private initiatives for social innovation. Without being exhaustive, we can mention that of " SOS Group<sup>94</sup>". To overcome the crisis, the path of innovation, including social innovation, is increasingly explored.

## 8. Discussion and conclusions

Defining precisely a homogenous IJJ related to disadvantaged or vulnerable youth in France is almost an impossible task. The term "vulnerable" is not often used in the administrative and academic literature. The common term used in France to describe youngsters facing social difficulties is generally the word "disadvantaged" which is also used to describe deprived urban areas. In analytical terms this first observation show that youth vulnerability in France is above all conceived 1) in relation with the environment of youngsters (living in a disadvantaged area, family, social class, etc. makes them disadvantaged), 2) they are disadvantaged compared to others not *per se*. As we have shown even in etymological terms, the notion of disadvantage relies on a comparative perspective between a person and his group of belonging. The focus is on a collective/individual perspective rather than centered on the individual. So the IJJ in France is strongly related to the group a person can legitimately belong to. The definition of this legitimacy is the key point here. This definition is not left to the person itself but emerges from a societal categorisation process. The legitimacy of the categorisation is rooted in the process of definition of public action categories. The first consequences of this process is the

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<sup>92</sup> The principle has been to distinguish between "the poor" and "the general population", to end up with the denunciation of laziness or the dishonesty of modest households. People living in poverty or precariousness want to overcome their difficulties. They want to find a meaningful work, a dignified life, they want a quality education for their children, they want to see themselves again as full citizens, legitimate in the exercise of their rights.

<sup>93</sup> This principle goes hand in hand with a change of practice towards a better coordination of the stakeholders, public, voluntary and private, around supporting people until their successful integration instead of a strict program driven logic.

<sup>94</sup> The statutory bodies of the three founding associations lead this group: Prevention & Treatment of Addictions, Home & Personal Care, and Alternatives & Insertion. It represents 330 institutions, 11,000 employees, 650 million euros in sales, an more than 1 million beneficiaries/year.

importance of the legal status in the access to collective recognition and social benefits. Being young does not confer in itself a status. In fact, as shown in this report, the youngster's family plays a filtering role in youth policies. Until adulthood, the social benefits to youngsters are delivered to their family (except for a few measures such as housing help).

As a consequence, the policies dedicated to vulnerable youth are not integrated. They rely on a multiplicity of interventions highlighting the multiplicity of representations, stakeholders and policy instruments. The weak density of the youth as a public action category explains such a fragmented landscape.

However, all agree in defining the vulnerability of youth in relation to their schooling. In France, the importance of diploma and qualification makes it the key issue in terms of IBJJ. Thus, schooling strongly determines the employability of young people, the course of their careers, but also their social integration. In terms of CA, the social origin affects the ability to convert the educational resource into the "get a degree" functioning affecting their basic capability to participate in community life. In other words, French youth and educational policies are poorly informed by social and environmental conversion factors.

The freedom actually enjoyed by low qualified youngsters to choose the life they have reason to value is extremely small (unless withdrawal from the community is considered as a choice). Whether they rationally choose it or not, the early school leaving is the first step towards social disadvantage and vulnerability. From this yardstick, fighting against dropout is starting to promote the development of capabilities. This contributes to explain the choice made in actual youth public policies by the government to prioritize the education focus in the action plan *Priority to Youth*. Together with an ambitious education reform ("School re-foundation"), the fight against dropout is on top of the political agenda concerning youth policies.

Beyond this shift in educational objectives, the new programs for youth are also based on new schemes of governance. It aims at supporting projects with high economic and social value by fighting against the social and territorial inequalities. It strives to develop innovative large-scale partnerships between public and private actors. The main objective is also to promote the emergence of integrated youth policies able to propose new kinds of territorialized solutions in a comprehensive and coherent way.

In terms of participation, the traditional French policymaking process leaves very small room to individual participation. The overarching legitimacy given to the electoral process (representative democracy) tends to marginalize all other forms of political participation of citizens. The existing procedures of youth participation to policymaking are actually more communication artefacts than democratic participation.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of key issues

Key issues	How is this issue defined and which key terms are used to describe this issue
Youth policy	<p>The policy for youth in France is a national interdepartmental policy which relies for its implementation on a network of partners, including local authorities, NGOs, etc. The French Ministry of Sports, Youth, Popular Education and Community Life is responsible for the policymaking and implementation of this broad policy. It relies for this mission, both on the development of policies and specific actions related to the field of youth and also on of mainstreaming concern for youth in the implementation of other sectoral policies. In fact, the policy of " Youth" is therefore based on many programs and actions, controlled and financed by various ministries.</p> <p>The age group covered by youth policies is in general the 16-25 years old youngsters for what concerns education, employment and training. Social rights are delivered to the families until 25.</p> <p>Despite some attempts to provide an integrated youth policy mostly at the local level (missions locales) and in relation to the importance of school performance in life-path building, the education policies are central to youth policies especially the issue of NEETs and early school leaving.</p>
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	<p>In France, social and professional inequalities are bound together with a starting point at school. The growing inequality generated among pupils by the French educational system (cf. PISA survey) paves the road to vulnerability for youngsters. Thus, school and social inequalities are reflecting and generating each other. If some dropouts are able to "bounce", the most troubled by social and professional integration suffer from the lack of degree. Borrowed from Latin "can be injured ", the term vulnerable starts with the lack of diploma as a grounding vulnerability factor.</p> <p>The common term used in France to describe youngsters facing social difficulties is generally the word "disadvantaged" which is also used to describe deprived urban areas. In analytical terms this first observation show that youth vulnerability in France is above all conceived 1) in relation with the environment of youngsters (living in a disadvantaged area, family, social class, etc. makes them disadvantaged), 2) they are disadvantaged compared to others not <i>per se</i>. As we have shown even in etymological terms, the notion of disadvantage relies on a comparative perspective between a person and his group of belonging. In that sense youth disadvantage and inequality are bound together in the French definition of vulnerability.</p>
Social innovation	<p>Social innovation has become a popular term since the last 5 years in French youth policies. The action of the Haut Commissariat pour la Jeunesse (quasi-ministry of youth during the Sarkozy era) and its financial armed wing the Fonds d'Expérimentation pour la Jeunesse (Fund for youth Experimentation) have initiated a large movement in that direction. However, the term generally used is not social innovation but "social experimentation". This point is important as experimentation makes a direct link with upcoming public policies. The idea is to experiment new youth policies and on the basis of their evaluation to generalize them. It brings also back a bottom up process in policy making.</p>
Participation	<p>In terms of participation, the traditional French policymaking process leaves very small room to individual participation. The overarching legitimacy given to the electoral process (representative democracy) tends to marginalize all other forms of political participation of citizens. The existing procedures of youth participation to policymaking are actually more communication artefacts than democratic participation.</p>
The Abilities of young people	<p>The term "décrocheur" (school leaver/dropout) is the most often used term to talk about vulnerable youth. This notion has been recently introduced in the French public space firstly with regards to insecurity and social violence.</p>

	<p>More recently the term NEET together with JAMO (Young with less opportunities) has entered the academic sphere without being integrated in the political discourse until now. It aims at pointing out the double penalty encountered by these youngsters caught out of the educational community and not able to enter the working one.</p>
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	<p>There has been a long-term debate opposing qualification and competence. Qualification is said to be collectively guaranteed through diploma and certification while competence is supposed to be neo-liberal transferring the responsibility towards employability on the individual.</p>
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## Appendix 2: Key government policies and programmes



Due to the recent governmental shift, most of the policy fields concerned by this study are now under redefinition:

- The education policy has been “re-founded” last summer;
- The youth policy is under definition after the launch of a general policy frame “Priorité Jeunesse” last February;
- The share of competences between the State and local authorities is currently being redefined;
- A large reform of professional training, guidance and career advice is on the Prime Minister’s desk including the transfer to regions of the competence over dropouts;
- A pluriannual plan against poverty and for social inclusion has been initiated in January 2013 and is still undergoing.

It is hence very difficult to give a clear description of the programs for youth, as they are not precisely defined yet.

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# Chapter 9: Danish Report on the Socio-Economic Political Context

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## 1. Abstract

The report deals with the socio-economic and political context on a national as well as local level. Though policies on youth are adopted by Parliament, local authorities (the local government) has to implement decisions. The combination of central policy making and decentralized implementation appears to be a rather complicated affair.

The report consists of four parts plus a final discussion. In the first part the political system and its way of function is introduced, followed up in part 2 by a presentation and discussion on methodological selections concerning the research design, the methods of sampling, transcription and coding.

The third part aims at catching national definitions of disadvantage and inequality with respect to youth. The inquiry shows that no single definition is adequate or covering due to the lack of a comprehensive youth policy. Instead elements of youth policy are found in various parts of legislation and in various forms. However, the report emphasizes a few important points.

The fourth part describes how policy making and implementation take place. Eventually, the final discussion sums up the “messages” identified and the broad public discussion about these issues.

## 2. Introduction

The investigated political context within the Danish case has been focusing on the tension between the national and the local political and practical level where the relevant decisions and social support measures are found. This should be seen in relation to the local geographic area of interest, the deprived city district, the former so-called “Ghetto” area, Byparken in Svendborg. The rationale behind this research design is related to the political system of governing services and support systems in Denmark (recent development of the Danish welfare state model). A structural change has been taken place within the public sector since the 80ies when a decentralisation of context specific decisions was placed on a local municipality level which in Denmark becomes the actual *socio-political context within which actual decisions are made*. Hanne Foss Hansen has stated: *“The state structure in Denmark can be described as a unitary, highly decentralized state [...] This structure, of course, makes it interesting to analyse reform activities in both central and local*

*government.*” (Hansen, 2005, p. 325). As a part of the introduction of New public management (NPM) within the public sector, both a decentralisation of responsibilities and some forming of policies at the local level have taken place as well as a centralisation of the overall aims. New public management, following Carsten Greve, is no longer just a fashion tide, but seen from a political science perspective NPM will be found within the discussions of policy and reforms in the many years to come (Greve, 2009). Ove Kaj Petersen describes the latest changes as a development from welfare state to the competitive state (Pedersen, 2011). This diagnosis of the changing discourses has recently been taken over as an ideal for policy making, a change from a descriptive stance to a prescriptive, when the minister of finance, Bjarne Corydon, states that: *“I believe in the competitive state as the new welfare state model”* (Kestler, 2013 [own translation]).

The policies that relate to the deprived city district of interest in Denmark are multidimensional in relation to the areas of “education”, “employment” and “lived experiences”, whereas it is found that a number of different national policies relate to the micro level practice on social innovation and social support measures for disadvantaged youth. In this way different national policies areas covers the youth group in this regard and interdependence is found between them. Whereas there is no explicit defined nor isolated and solely focused youth policy area in Denmark, these interrelated policy areas also address and target a range of overlapping age groups and reasons for interventions etc. We have focused on policies that have an intersection or overlapping concerned with the 15-24 years age group which is of interest to the SocIEtY project. It has to be taken into account that recent national policies and relevant policy documents define “youth” as the age cohort from 18 to 29 years of age. This age group is, therefore, met with group-specific demands within social legislation. As an example on the intersection of the three areas of interest the national political context policies on social benefits relates strongly to demands for youth education or further education. Not surprisingly, this area also relates to employment policies. In order to get a systematic approach when providing an evaluation of current policy making in connection to disadvantaged youth and to stretch out the main strategies that is intended to support vulnerable and disadvantaged young people the relevant policies have been identified through a two directional approach. From the national level the local area of interest has been chosen (top-down). This is Svendborg social housing estate that was found on the former so-called “Ghetto list” (from the macro to the meso level of sociological analysis). The policy concerning “Ghettoes” has just recently (December 2013) been changed and the official former list of “Ghettoes” has likewise changed to *particularly disadvantaged social housing/housing estates*. The other direction in order to identify the relevant policies relating to the Danish social model’s support structures and possible social innovation is directed from the micro level’s purposive sampling of relevant experts and investigating their experiences with the national policies which their practice in different aspects are governed by and related to (bottom-up). This top-down and bottom-up approach regarding the identification of relevant policies is furthermore taken into methodological consideration. In the next paragraph we provide a description of the methodological design.

### 3. Methods

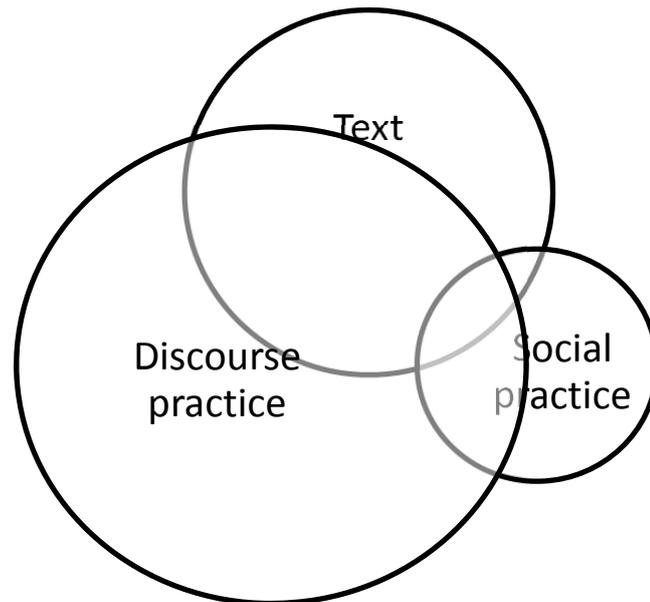
The methods applied in the case are interrelated in a research design where both a qualitative content analysis (QCA) on a purposive sample of policy documents are conducted (Schreier, 2012) as well as *semi-structured life-world interviews* (Kvale, 2012; Kvale, 1996) with experts have been carried out. The analysis and coding of the content was performed using Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) and the chosen software package was NVIVO 10, which is suitable assisting the managing of data, to manage ideas upon data, to make queries within data and to report from data (Bazeley, 2007). In this way the two parts of data have been brought together in a research approach aiming at analysing the produced *discourse* in relation to the *social practice*. Here discourse is understood as:

*“A social theory of Discourse” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 62) where discourse could be defined as language in use, which can be: “in a particular as well as a general abstract way” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 4) and is: “based upon the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 3). The concept of discourse is used both as an abstract noun for a domain of statements and as a concrete noun for a particular discourse or groups of particular discourses (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124). In my interpretation, there is a dialectic where discourse is formed by the social life and forms the social life.” (Kjeldsen, 2014, p. 334)*

#### 3.1.1 Overall methodological design in relation to the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

In order to analyse the political socio-economic context and the discourses on disadvantaged youth etc. we have applied a reduced model of the critical discourse analysis (CDA) and focused on a general level on the different dimensions of the discourse analysis of *social events*. Following Fairclough *social events* can be investigated in a:

*“three-dimensional framework of analysis for exploring such linkages in particular discursive events [...] Each discursive event has three dimensions or facets-, it is a spoken or written language text, it is an instance of discourse practice involving the production and interpretation of text, and it is a piece of social practice. These are three perspectives one can take upon, three complementary ways of reading, a complex social event. In analysis within the social practice dimension, my focus is political, upon the discursive event within relations of power and domination. A feature of my framework of analysis is that it tries to combine a theory of power based upon Gramsci's concept of hegemony with a theory of discourse practice based upon the concept of intertextuality” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 133)*



**Figur 1: The three dimensions of the social event and their weight in our particular analysis**

Therefore, the research design is containing both documentary analysis and interviews aiming at getting insights in the phenomenon of interest through what Steinar Kvale calls a co-construction between the subject and the interviewer, emphasizing that *“Knowledge is neither inside a person nor outside in the world, but exists in the intentional relationship between person and world”* (Kvale, 1999, p. 51). We argue that this phenomenological life-world approach to interviewing brings in a needed dimension in relation to the critical discourse analysis of the socio-economic political context, whereas: *“All practices involve configurations of diverse elements of life and therefore diverse mechanisms We assume that social science investigates the interaction between different mechanisms as it is specifically instantiated in particular social practices. A particular practice brings together different elements of life in specific, local forms and relationships —particular types of activity, linked in particular ways to particular materials and spatial and temporal locations; particular persons with particular experiences, knowledges and dispositions in particular social relations, particular semiotic resources and ways of using language, and so forth. In so far as these diverse elements of life brought together into specific practice, call them ‘moments’ of that practice.”* (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 21). Hereby, it has been possible to grasp and relate the different dimensions of discourses as *moments of practice*. In this context discourse is seen as: *“a complex of three elements: social practice, discursal practice (text production, distribution and consumption), and text, and the analysis of a specific discourse calls for analysis in each of these three dimensions and their interrelations. The hypothesis is that significant connections exist between features of texts, ways in which texts are put together and interpreted, and the nature of the social practice”* (Fairclough, 1995). The political production of “text” is related to the discourse practice found. This is then related to the discourses and dense qualitative descriptions that experts produce and thereby represent social practice as well as their interpretation of the texts (legislation and policy papers) by which their practice are governed. A further insight in the dimension of *social practice* will be gathered as well as influenced through participatory research within WP4. It is therefore only the intention of this report to present some of the relations between the discourses on social practice and the policy documents (texts) that we have found so far.

With respect to readability the different dimensions are kept separated in the analytical parts of the report and brought together at the end in the conclusion.

## **3.2 Construction of the corpus of data for analysis**

### **3.2.1 Sampling of policy documents for the content analysis**

The policy papers and documents become one part of what Fairclough in an earlier writing calls “The Corpus” (Fairclough, 1992), though this was later reserved for larger bodies of text (Fairclough, 2003). However: *“This is partly a practical matter of knowing what is available, and how to get access to it, but it is partly a matter of having a mental model of the order of discourse of the institution or domain one is researching”* (Fairclough, 1992, p. 227). This partly practical matter of constructing the purposive sample of policy documents is done as a subset of policy papers and documents that come under the following classifications:

- 1) Policies or policy relevant papers on a national level (macro level of analysis)
- 2) Policies that have sections or parts with explicit addresses either the specific age group of 15-24 year olds, or have an weighty intersection with this age group.<sup>95</sup>
- 3) Policies that addresses one or more of the issues of education, employment or social housing

### **3.2.2 Transcriptions of interviews for content analysis**

The other part of the corpus for the critical discourse analysis was the transcripts of the life-world interviews with experts. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed by research assistants Thomas Brahe and Dorthe Brix following a number of transcription conventions (Kvale, 2012) chosen for the project. The most important of those to be mentioned here are:

- 1) making the subjects anonymous in the text for publishing (research ethical concerns)
- 2) bringing the text into tabular form with categorization of the speaker (analytical concerns)
- 3) timestamps for each row in the tabular following the time in seconds of the interview (reliability)

Due to the timestamps it has been possible to raise transcript reliability between the recording and the produced text. This was done by both listening and reading the transcript when coding the data. Due to the categorization it has been possible to make different explorative queries and autocodings on the text uttered only by the interview subjects. The full sample of transcripts was ready for analysis the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 2013.

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<sup>95</sup> For instance the reform on social benefits that explicitly addresses demands towards the group of young people that have finished compulsory schooling (at the age of approximately 15-16 years of age) up to the age of 30 years of age.

### 3.2.3 Sampling strategy for interview subjects

The sampling strategy of relevant informants for interviewing was done as a two-stage sampling. The first one was a purposive sampling of professionals in public institutions and services related geographically to the city district, in order to epistemologically meet the project aim of: *“scrutinizing the strategies and policies of local actors in deprived city districts of each partner country.”* (SociEtY Project, Annex, p. 3) and thereby employ *“a radically relational perspective,”* meaning that: *“policy fields can not be analysed in isolation through solely focussing on education and work. The case studies will thus individually identify other policy fields of major importance for young people’s lives in the respective urban areas”* (SociEtY Project, Annex, p. 3). The second stage of sampling of interviews was done in relation to interest organisations and NGO’s that are influencing national policies. Besides this two-stage sampling, two further structures are constructed in the sample. Firstly, the purposive sampling covers the educational track from pre-primary (Kindergarten) to vocational training qualifying for access to the labour market (upper secondary education). Secondly, it was intended to cover the different support structures addressing the different 15-24 year olds when following (or not) the ordinary educational track and transition into labour market. Thirdly, the different offers related to spare time activities in the disadvantaged city district have been included in the sample. Compiled the sample covers the three learning arenas, *formal, informal and nonformal* and thereby also seeks to address the nonformal and informal areas where innovations may be found, as:

*“the Lisbon Memorandum on Lifelong Learning states: ‘Informal contexts offer a vast reservoir of learning possibilities and could be an important source of innovations in the field of teaching and learning methods’ (Commission of the European Union, 2000, p. 10), the German Federal Ministry of Education speaks of a ‘neglected basic form of human learning’ (Dohmen, 2001) and UNESCO discovered: ‘Learning: The Treasure Within’ (Delors, 1996).” (Tuschling & Engemann, 2006, p. 455)*

The categories for comparison between the urban areas in the project and the main policy area as well as a more specific naming of the categories sampled are:

Comparative categories	Role	Case specific subcategories	N=13 (11 interviews)
Regional government policy makers	Policy making	Local government policy makers. Municipality level	1
Training and education providers (please specify whether public, private or third sector)	Education and training	Pre-primary educational institution	1
		Primary and lower-secondary educational institution	2
		Upper Secondary education VET	2
Employment support service providers (please specify whether public, private or third sector)	Employment support	“3f” trade union in Denmark	1
Social work and social support for disadvantaged citizens	Social support actors at community level	Club activities within the deprived city area	1
		Counselling for young mothers within the disadvantaged city district	1
		Residential social work	2
		Consultant for the networking and co-operation between police, social and school (SSP)	1
		Family counselling and family therapy	1

### 3.2.4 Interviews

11 interviews were conducted. Two of these were group interviews. The interviews followed an interview guide prepared in advance with the main research interests in themes transformed into open questions and possible follow ups. The interviewing was conducted by assistance from research assistant Thomas Brahe in the period from the 4<sup>th</sup> of December to the 17<sup>th</sup> of December placed on five days of field visits. The interviews had the following lengths:

Length	Minimum	Average	Maksimum
Time (hh:mm:ss)	00:37:51	00:58:06	01:16:55

### 3.2.5 Coding procedures for the corpus of data

Upon the insights from both of these levels a coding grid for the analysis of the documents has been constructed as a node-structure in NVIVO. Likewise a coding grid for the analysis of the interviews has been constructed in relation to the outline of the report. In this way the

data have been approached analytically in a pendulum between an inductive strategy and a deductive one, as well as between the local level of social practice and the macro level of policy documents and thereby seek to: *“identify the different existing Informational Bases of the Judgements of Justice encompassing definitions, policy concepts tackling inequality and vulnerability as well as key actors responsible for the conceptualisation and implementation of these policies. Furthermore, we will examine the complementary and conflicting relationships among public sector and third sector stakeholders and other significant actors on the community level.”* (SociEtY Project, Annex, p. 57). Additionally, a number of autocodings in relation to specific terms relevant in the understanding of disadvantage has been conducted as queries on the interview subject responses.

The analytical outcomes of the data gathered will be presented and the report starts at the analytical macro level with the national definitions.

## **4. National definitions**

This part of the report will focus on the analysis of national definitions as they have been found in the constructed corpus of data. Providing definitions on what inequalities and disadvantage mean are not a value-free judgement done by informed subjects within policy making. On the contrary, such an analysis enters a battle ground including the power to define these concepts that then get their own life as common constructions within common-sense. Conceptualizations within science are in a sense providing a similar knowledge, and this shapes an arena characterized by different positions in society seeking to legitimize their *doxa*, which: *“is a particular point of view, the point of view of the dominant, which presents and imposes itself as a universal point of view – the point of view of those who dominate by dominating the state”* (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 57). Such definitions are subject of a power struggle between different positions in society. This point of departure makes it plausible to explain that national definitions in these regards are sparse when addressing explicit definitions that enjoy broad support or are even seen as the only “natural” understanding. On the one side the government is legitimizing certain understandings, and on the other social scientists are presenting revealing research about such understandings. In addition, lobbies try to influence local politicians, etc. In case of such explicit expressions in policies we will mention them, but we will also present how different understandings are produced and reproduced in public discourses.

### **4.1.1 Empirical construction of an area of youth policy in denmark and its analytical content**

Youth policy could be defined as the set of different policy sectors that address young people’s experiences, needs and orientations. Several policy sectors – e.g. the economic, financial, transport, housing and criminal justice policies - have impacts on young people’s life and transitions from school to work. Yet, we would like to refer to

- Education and training; providing young people with qualifications that are required by the labour market and similarly in a sense of selecting young people enhancing different pathways of unequal status as well as social recognition;

- Welfare policies which are concerned with the economic situation of young people in bad living conditions and providing social services for groups at risk. At the same time the welfare policies are in transition to a state where social assistance will depend upon the young people's involvement in education or training to labour markets positions; welfare policies are outstanding contributions to the normalization of disadvantaged young people;
- Labour market policies aiming at the regulation of demand and supply for labour by shaping the conditions of entry into the labour market by creating new jobs or by training schemes for the unemployed. These policies are to a very high extent corresponding with employers' interest in cheaper and more flexible labour and with the state's interest in keeping unemployment low and additionally limit public funding;
- Participation, e.g. young people engage in mapping out the pathways to their future as citizens and not only as disposable workers.

In modern societies paid employment has become the centre of social cohesion and individual self-realization. In relation to social integration and social participation four functions are identified: individual possibilities of making a living, personal identity formation, social security as well as integration as a citizen. The four functions are dependent on each other and are mutually strengthening each other and entail the necessary basis of society's material and cultural state of development for social integration and for participation.

Individual level of making a living depends on paid work. This fact points to a political strategy aiming at integrating women and men in paid employment. However, this strategy might lead to a conclusion like "any job is better than no job", implying that vulnerable youth have to accept "bad jobs" characterized by low wages, temporary employment and thereby becoming "working poor". To further analyze such kinds of social integration entails to research both participation in paid work (the field of labour market) and participation in the work places (company level). Looking at the labour market means to state that for those young people a normal working day promising to secure their existence has lost its former importance. The latest time shows a picture of more non-typical and precarious employment. Casual labour and temporary contracts have become standard for young people, and not only for persons lacking secondary education, because even university-trained graduates are placed in similar positions. In brief, this means that the four functions seem to be temporarily suspended. A deeper analysis is not available at this stage, but we will make a follow up later.

## **4.2 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth**

The definitions found in discourses on disadvantaged youth and in particular what is seen as the key indicator of what makes them disadvantaged, a plethora of different political discourses are existing. Yet, the most important single factor is linked to changes from a perspective on income to demands for activities that bring the individual nearer labour market participation through education. With respect to this different definitions are given within the policy areas for education, labour market and lived lives. In this part of the report we will present what is interpreted as the current predominant definition.

Definitions of disadvantaged youth related to problems occurring in the transition into labour market are heavily influenced by the rhetoric on “risks”. A recent policy document is concerned with the question at which points of the transition to school and work the young people are most at risk of falling into a more persistent and long-term situation of poverty. Furthermore this report draws on the latest national definition on inequality and poverty which also concerns disadvantaged youth as a group. In Denmark there has been a long political debate on whether or not to have an official Danish poverty definition (Jensen & Kjeldsen, 2010). After the change in government in 2011 with a prime minister from The Social Democratic Party it was decided to soil the ground for a national indicator on poverty and an expert committee was formed to deliver a first analysis. The analysis provided by an academic expert group was supported and influenced by a broad range of ministries being the administrators of the policies and legislations. Interestingly, the expert group of informants we are drawing upon in our report perform by and large their practice in line with the intensions represented in the policies mentioned. The ministries participating were the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Integration; Ministry for Economic Affairs and the Interior; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Taxation; Ministry of Employment (Ekspertudvalg om Fattigdom, 2013). As stated in the English summary of the report:

*“The terms of reference for the Committee’s work state that: “A poverty threshold can be used to identify particularly disadvantaged groups and help target policy initiatives that will ameliorate their situation. It is not the government’s intention that an official threshold will result in higher benefits for those who fall below it according to the Committee’s definition [...].” In other words, assessing benefit levels was not part of the Committee’s remit. It is also implicit in the terms of reference that a threshold should not be construed as a juncture at which people are accorded certain rights. Rather, the Committee’s recommendations are about how to quantify and describe poverty in Denmark in statistical terms.” (The Expert Committee on Poverty, 2013, p. 5)*

In our interpretation this relates to a specific development of an informational basis for the judgment of justice (IBJJ) and accordingly to the discussion that Sen raises on the question of social rights. It is intended to inform policy making, not in adjustments of the economic levels of social benefits. Having conducted this analysis the expert committee states (in the English summary) that: *“In the Committee’s opinion, poverty cannot be defined objectively or unequivocally. Rather, it is linked to subjective or political perceptions of what it means to be poor. Poverty should be seen in a social context, in relation to a country’s level of development and the general population’s living conditions and ability to alter their lives”* (The Expert Committee on Poverty, 2013, p. 5). In the full Danish report the committee states that:

*“The economic poverty line and deprivation studies provide a picture of the individual’s situation, but they do not provide a comprehensive insight into the individual’s opportunities to influence their own lives. It is therefore recommended to supplement these approaches with a number of indicators that affect a person’s risk of poverty and social exclusion. The committee’s reasons are based on a life-course perspective, and therefore make a distinction between the groups of children, adolescents and adults.” (Ekspertudvalg om Fattigdom, 2013, pp. 10, own translation)*

It is worth noticing that chapter two on poverty and welfare states of the full report is discussing different definitions and academic understandings of inequality. Within this presentation an interpretation of Amartya Sen’s capability approach is given and it is stated that this approach among others can be characterized as: *“Common to the [...]”*

considerations is a focus either on the starting point or end result, while the process as such is not accorded any special significance” (Ekspertudvalg om Fattigdom, 2013, pp. 30, own translation). Moreover, the committee conceptualizes the capability approach in the following manner:

*“A well-known exponent of this approach is Sen (1983, 2009), which emphasizes functionings and capabilities. Functionings is the ability to satisfy certain needs in a specific social context, and capabilities refers to the individual's opportunities to realize these functionings. For Sen process as well as results are of significance.” (Ekspertudvalg om Fattigdom, 2013, pp. 30, own translation)*

The analysis refers only to two of Sen’s publications (Sen, 1983; Sen, 2009), which may explain the selected interpretation with an emphasis on *ends* and *means* to these ends instead and to some degree misreads the emphasis on capabilities as freedoms, where: *“the idea of capability is linked with substantive freedom, it gives a central role to a person’s actual ability to do the different things that she values doing”* (Sen, 2009, p. 253) and furthermore it is not a matter where the “results” are of most significance, because the emphasis is not mainly: *“on what a person actually ends up doing, but also on what she is in fact able to do, whether or not she chooses to make use of that opportunity”* (Sen, 2009, p. 235). In this respect: *“Capability reflects a person’s freedom to choose between different ways of living. The underlying motivation, the focus on freedom, is well captured by Marx’s claim that what we need is ‘replacing the domination of circumstances and chance over individuals with the domination of individuals over chance and circumstances’”* (Sen, 1989, p 44). The outcomes of the expert committee have influenced the reforms of social benefits, and clearly have taken up the critique of solely focusing on economics. Turning to the expert committee’s definition of risk factors these are age specific and therefore relate to the SociEtY projects target group in age. Within the distinction between children, adolescents and adults of the definition of risk factors for poverty and deprivation the groups are defined as *children* of 0-17 years old and *adolescents* of 18-29 year old and *adults* which have the age span from 30+. As discussed earlier the age group of interest for the SociEtY project becomes an intersection of different policy definitions and aggregations. In this case the weight is put on the first two age cohorts namely children and adolescents. The statistical aggregation for these indicators is centered around the family as an economic institution and different equivalents between individual income and the family’s total income is provided. These are:

No. of people in the family	Income threshold for the family (EURO)	Amount per capita (EURO)	Equivalised disposable income per capita (EURO)
1	13832,85	13832,85	13832,85
2	20963,74	10481,87	13832,85
3	26727,43	8913,612	13832,85
4	31767,31	7948,529	13832,85
5	36324,64	7264,929	13832,85
6	<b>40520,07</b>	<b>6755,579</b>	<b>13832,85</b>

Let us now turn to the mentioned risk factors that become part of the informational basis. In the English summary the expert committee states that: *"In its report the Committee has examined various possible social risk factors and compared data from a number of databases. As a result, the Committee proposes the following indicators of risk of poverty"* (The Expert Committee on Poverty, 2013, p. 11). These are cited below from the English summary and compiled into one theme having an age intersection with the SoCleY projects target group in age (The Expert Committee on Poverty, 2013, p. 11):

Risk factor	Theme	Indicator
For group of children (0-17y) accordingly to the intersection in the SocIEty project 15-17y		
<b>Parents' background</b>	Parents' labour-market are attachment	Children living in families with one or both parents in the social group*[" <i>The social group* is a labour market term that covers individuals that have only a weak attachment to the labour market. The definition is people who have been in receipt of cash benefits, introduction benefit, starting allowance or sick pay and people who have been on a rehabilitation scheme, welfare to work or educational leave for at least 80% of the time during the last three years.</i> " ]
	On benefits	Children whose parents are on benefits
	Parents' educational back-ground	Children living in families where the parents do not have a vocational qualification
		Children in families where one or more of the parents does not have a post-secondary/vocational education
For the group of Adolescents (18-29y) accordingly to the intersection in the SocIEty projekt 18-24y		
<b>Exclusion</b>	Marginalization from the labour market	Young people in the social group*
	Educational marginalization (two levels)	[first threshold] Young people who did not graduate from lower-secondary school
		[second threshold] Young people who have not completed a post-secondary/vocational education
<b>Uncertain housing situation</b>	Lack of housing	Young people in care homes
<b>Social and psycho-social welfare</b>	Disadvantaged upbringing	Young people who were subject to preventive measures as children
		Young people who were in care as children
	Abuse	Young people who have received/are receiving treatment
	Psychiatric disorders	Young people with psychiatric diagnoses

These risk factors point furthermore to two issues worth noticing. 1) The number of dimensions taken into consideration as part of an informational basis in what we would name a "risk profile" of young persons in the age 18-29 are larger than for the adult population. 2) The existing statistical censuses and opportunities in Denmark provide a

multifaceted informational basis, still the question is whether these dimensions are the most appropriate, which we will discuss and elaborate further on in WP5 reports.

#### **4.2.1 The relation between the discourse in policy papers and national definitions and the social practice**

When analysing the social practice and the discursive practice in relation to the definition of disadvantaged youth, similar understandings occur on the local level. There is in the discursive construction an emphasis on focusing on the family and the upbringing. Disadvantaged youth thereby mainly becomes described and defined by their family relations and secondary in relation to their own achievements in school and on the labour market. To name a few empirical examples concerning this:

*“So, very typical for a lot of our parents, so, they come from disadvantaged families too. All together. Not all of the kindergarten parents, but at least 50 percent come from disadvantaged families. In the Danish family it is typically the social heritage that is busted through; mother and father have been on benefits and so has grandma and grandpa too - so you will be born here, and there is not the motivation at home ... There is not the grand tour, as others have energy to give their children. Or insight into society. So typically this is how some very small worlds, many of them have lived in.” (Professional 1, time 00:01:59-00:03:02, own translation)*

Or:

*“Well, I think that where I have some goals and ambitions with these vulnerable children, it's getting them aware of what it is for a context in which they find themselves, make them understand that they have choices, no matter how miserable conditions we have here on Earth, get them to understand that one can choose some ways, and if you do not want to choose your parents' ways, then there are some other options. It's actually my goal. Because when I sit down with these children and young people, I get them to draw their family - grandparents, aunts, uncles - make such a mind map. And then these kids get it, "Shut up, but my grandfather died of drinking. My uncle did also". They simply begin to grasp it with : "Wow. Am I inheriting this? Is it genetic? I live in this home, where they either die early, or they have no work, or they drink too much or else he committed suicide". “ (Professional 8, time 00:32:29-00:35:21, own translation)*

#### **4.2.2 Deprived city districts in relation to the national definition of poverty**

A most recent report developed by the Danish think tank KRAKA, has applied the national definition on poverty developed by the expert committee and compared different areas of social housing in Denmark. Kraka, which is an independent think tank aimed at supporting policies in regards of the Danish welfare state, finds that more than half of the particularly vulnerable social housing areas (areas on the former Ghetto list) have experienced more than double the number of poor people over the years from 2002 until 2011. The numbers of people living in poverty following the national definition for the investigated Danish case Byparken/Skovparken have raised dramatically from 2.24 % in 2002 up to 7.09 % in 2011 of the population in the area. This is an increase in percepts of +191% (Jakobsen, 2014, p. 8). Besides the descriptive statistical knowledge produced by this report it furthermore shows an excellent example of how the policy definition on poverty is taken-for-granted and applied as the only existing informational basis for the judgment of justice (IBJJ).

### **4.3 Labour market position of young people and problems at labour market entry**

The indicators provided in relation to the different themes in the definition on poverty for the youth are to be found within Danish statistics provided by Statistics Denmark, and therefore at the same time can be read as a current list of statistical indicators that are being applied as part of the existing IBJJ. It is our reading of the material that this development in understanding poverty and inequality may be seen as the most recent definition of disadvantaged youth in relation to the perspective of the lived lives or live circumstances. This will in the follow up of the Danish case be investigated more in depth with regards of Sen's understanding of the *standard of living* (Sen, 2001 [1987])

It is interesting that when national politicians argue for the need of reforming the whole policy area concerning social benefits, they explicitly name the figures on youth living on social benefits. Hence, it may be interpreted so that the reform within these areas came after a dramatic rise in unemployment, showing that the youth as in the rest of Europe to a higher degree has experienced the effects of the economic downturn, which for Denmark influenced negatively mainly from 2008. Furthermore, Danish statistics on youth unemployment within the age group show that low school performers and youth with no formal education become those most at risk of not being able to become self-supporting or independent. The combination of statistics on age, highest achieved education and receivers of social benefits has - in the policy discourse - become the main informational basis of the judgement on justice (IBJJ). Following this informational basis the financial crisis has executed an increased number of disadvantaged youth in terms of unemployment and a life on social support. The produced political discourse found in policy papers relating to reforms addressing youth in the areas of employment, education and their lived lives, has thereby been shifting within the time of crisis and have constituted a discourse pointing to cuts in the individual economic support through social benefits. The discourse is justified as a needed motivational intervention in order to force beneficiaries without formal education back into the educational system. As in other European countries education is understood as the way out of a life in poverty and low life expectations. This logic also addresses the next generation, whereas single mothers and other holding the economic responsibility are met with a demand of preparing for education during the time of pregnancy. The actual changes in employment for this group have increased during the crisis and thereby influenced a shift in the national IBJJ which is a continuation of a longer term trend.

## **5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention**

### **5.1 Education as the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty**

The main instruments used to combat poverty and inequalities thereby becomes education and training programmes. Monetary resources and public services are aimed at meeting the goal of life long learning for the residual group. To some extent this is carried out on the cost of the social rights for having financial support. In order to follow the results and to screen the youth population a number of new evaluation tools have been set to be developed during 2014-2015 at the local government level of the municipality. In this

matter it is mainly public institutions that are opt to provide social innovations that may lead to the goal attainment within policy. The structure and content of these services are financed on a local level and hence diversity in how this is tackled within the country is expected.

## **5.2 Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programmes they are offered/the subject of?**

Recent legislative changes on social benefits are very explicit both in the different demands that young people will have to meet in order to become supported financially (to secure their subsistence level), and, also, with respect to the sanctions they can be meet with if they do not follow the demands. These demands are among others oriented at gaining a certificate in youth education or to take tests in writings and algebra in order to be able to enter special needs education in these subjects and prepare for further education. Moreover, within this education it is stated that the young person should have co-authorship of his individual plan, aiming at motivating the young person, but it is hard to see the room of manoeuvre this actually can be done within. It is our interpretation that in relation to the capability for voice - understood as: *“the real freedom to voice one’s opinion and to make it count within the public policy process on the one hand and social work practice on the other hand (cf. Bonvin 2012). On a subject oriented (but not individualistic) level, capability for voice is the real freedom to express one’s wishes, expectations, desires, etc. and really make them count when decisions concerning oneself are made.”* (Kjeldsen, et al., 2012, p. 15) - the recent policy reform leaves no real opportunity for exit. Following Bonvin in order to actualize the capability of voice one should be able to: *“choose between either loyalty to the collective prescriptions or norms, or voice in order to contest or negotiate the content of such prescriptions without being subject to heavy sanctions, or exit so as to be able to escape these collective norms at an affordable cost (e.g. by refusing to take up a badly remunerated job without having to abide by excessive financial penalties imposed by the public employment agency).”* (Bonvin, 2012, p. 12). This is clearly not met in the reforms of the policies regarding disadvantaged youth, which meet age and educational level specific demands.

## **5.3 Non-intervention**

In relation to situations with non-interventions in favour of disadvantages there has been a shift in policy. It is actually a change where one of the drivers are a demand for more intervention when disadvantage in the form of low education and/or low or no labour market attachment is found. This can be evidenced by two policy areas that are also partly concerning young people in which the demands for young people are particularly uttered. The first is focusing on social benefits; the former legislation made it possible for the case-worker (social worker in a Danish professional understanding) to place some of the young people with major social problems outside the demands for active labour market interventions and keep them on social benefits as “passive clients”. The other policy area concerns people on permanent social support due to handicaps. In both situations the policy change is moving from some opportunity for non-intervention towards strains for intervention in all cases.

## **6. Policy making and implementation**

As a result of the decentralization of responsibility and the centralization of the evaluative goals the delivery and development of youth targeted policies are found both on a macro level as well as the micro level of analysis. On the macro level a number of reforms have been voted in favour of by the parliament late 2013 coming into force from January 2014 and therefore the results and implementation of these changes are in their early constitutional phase.

### **6.1 Participation in policy making**

Formally, youth has the right to participate as part of their citizenship. The Danish tradition is characterized by an undergrowth of organizations from bottom to top. At local level young people are entering various organizations and networks from boy scouts over sports clubs to school councils just to mention a few. The local organizations are additionally organised on regional level, and the regional organizations or committees are in turn a basis of national confederations or unions (trade unions, athletic national associations, political youth associations, etc.). In principle, young people are represented at all levels. However, this does not entail that every young person experiences participation. Disadvantage and inequality are part of that game, too. Disadvantaged youth would usually not have a strong voice. Formal rights do not always lead to real rights.

One outstanding single factor of our case work evidences the lack of perspectives from side of young people. This challenge is to play an important role in order to make out a spearhead to recognize subjectivities as a part of social realities. Young people are not homogeneous. Their experiences, needs and orientations do not match the expectations of policy makers and vice versa. Often, single policies – like education and training, or labour market policies, or welfare policies, etc. - are not connected with one another. This implies a compartmentalized perspective. Based on our study we might turn policies upside down by bringing a holistic perspective in. A holistic perspective could be built upon the acceptance of young people's right to choice, voice and/or exit.

## **7. Social innovation and the role of social innovation in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy**

### **7.1 How is social innovation defined?**

As we have presented in the report a new form of “enabling welfare state” is emerging. Among others this emergence is linked to technological advances, globalisation and an ageing population. This trend is changing all European societies. In a Danish context those changes are furthermore linked to migration, poverty and social exclusion plus unemployment (primarily youth unemployment).

Some had hope to experience that the markets could solve the problems. However, many of the social problems that markets fail to deal with, or that actually arise from the operations

of the market (for example a not proper risk assessment during the boom led to excessive risk-taking) could instead be addressed by other sectors of the economy and society. Indeed, they are, especially by the public sector. And yet, the public sector has until today not been capable of solving the problems. Appeals to civil society have been increasing, but the Danish experiences show that civil society has been overwhelmed by tasks.

Therefore, social innovation could be an answer. The basic principle of Danish social innovation could be stated as: solutions must focus on the beneficiaries and be created with them, preferably by them, and never without them. This statement also entails focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses and providing holistic approaches instead of fragmented initiatives.

Due to limited data it has not been possible to give a sound characteristic of the definition and understanding of social innovation in a meta perspective. Furthermore, due to the developed conceptualization of social innovation it has not been possible to conclude whether the different policies that address youth are socially innovative. However, it is found that within the recent reform on social benefits a number of experiments will be carried out and developed in the years 2014-2015 and evaluated (dimensions within the policy). Moreover, in relation to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups a number of innovations and experimental youth policies have been implemented. These are funded by the rate adjustment pool gathered as a share of the regulations of the different social benefits. In addition, *"The pool amount used in the social, health and labor market in order to improve the conditions for transfer payment recipients and weak groups"* (Ministry of Finance, Act no. 373 of 28/05/2003). As part of policy development a part of the adjustments of social benefits is not given accordingly to the changes in payment and prizes on the labour market. Instead they are invested in different projects in order to promote social innovations.

## 7.2 Supporting social innovation

If social innovation is conceptualized and constructed as a scientific "tool", outside the political discourse and the practitioners common-sense understanding, it has in earlier writings within the SocIEtY project (WP2) been conceptualized as: *"New ideas that work in meeting social goals and brings increased social value to the society"* (Jensen, 2013, p. 124). The understanding of social value to society is additionally conceptual constructed as: *"a combination of absence of focus on profit and the contributions from the volunteers/professionals, makes it possible to create social value. At the same time social value in certain cases can be converted to reduced economic transaction costs."* (Jensen, 2013, p. 126).

Based on this conceptualization of social innovation and further based on the empirical ground of the interviews different forms of social innovation are found at the local level. The driver behind these initiatives is identified as different forms of relational social work activities taking place at existing institutions, such as primary and lower secondary schools and pre-primary institutions bring in other professionals (social pedagogues, family therapists etc.) into their institutions. The main function of these institutions is still the same as they used to be without the relation to the deprived city district, but due to the specific

problems they find and are confronted with in their daily practice, new forms of initiatives are developed. In fact the actual problems confronting the institution and the municipality foster social innovation.

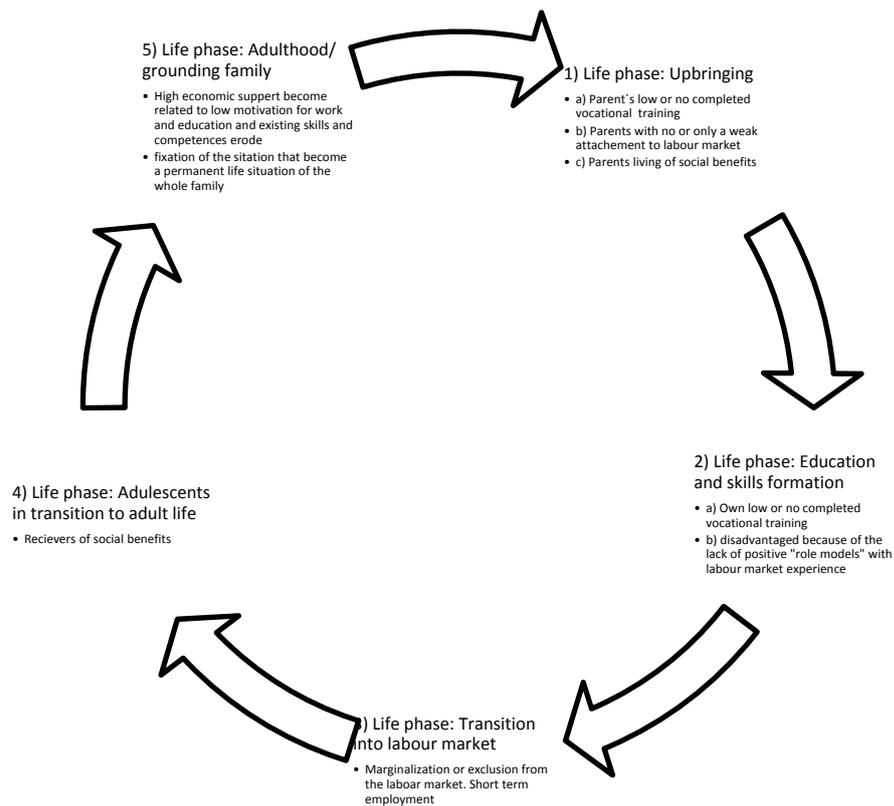
As a result of the decentralised state formation, the responsibility for developing and realising new ways to handle complex social processes that relate to target areas in the shape of national legislation (and national goals) is placed at the institutional level in corporation with local government. We can identify a form of top-down and bottom-up relationship in this regard, whereas national policies set the goals to evaluate and the institutions form their practice in order to reach these and other goals that they find promising in order to return values to the local community.

This innovative procedure mainly supports the development of new instruments, measures and their realisation. For the time being a more systematic testing and evaluation in comparison with other methods and measures has not been conducted in any formal way.

## **8. Conclusions and discussion**

To conclude this study an important finding has turned up: the three addressed policy areas, the social support systems and the interventions through legislation on a national level presented here have no exclusive youth definition and this influences at the same time the understanding and definition of the subset of youth that has to be considered disadvantaged. The disadvantaged youth is in different ways addressed explicitly in legislation which similarly also address other life phases, and a number of characteristics is given in relation to assess who to be considered vulnerable.

The national informational basis for this judgement is at the present time being constructed further and a form of social innovation in this respect is found, whereas existing statistical information is compiled in a new form in order to meet the needed insights concerning comparative follow ups on policies addressing problems of marginalization and exclusion in a broader societal understanding. The prerequisite here is combining the policy discourses with the list of different statistical indicators used as well as the local experts. In this form the texts that policy documents and legislations are materialized as become social events in Fairclough's sense; they are events that are situated within the given contextual social structure at present, further you find them in within language and this produces and reproduces different particular social practices which make out the orders of discourse. In this understanding of a critical discourse analysis, the content analysis of documents represents the social events. The orders of discourse found in the interviews with experts represent, as co-constructions with the interviewer, their phenomenological experiences and life-world description of these specific social practices. Furthermore, the analysis of the linguistic use of certain terms in order to define the target groups of their practice represent at the same time the current, but yet arbitrary, social structure. When these three topics are linked relationally the following chain of constructed relationship between the national policy papers and legislation, and local practices and discourses can be formed:



The figure illustrates the belief system that is predominant produced within discourse that both form and is formed by the existing social practices, and that produces and reproduces social structures. In relation to this heuristic model social innovation are meant to change this reproduction of social inequalities and deprivation. The discourse that produces and reproduces this heuristic model is furthermore strengthened by a mutual interdependency between the construction of the belief in this relationship in discourse and the actual national statistics – what have recently been assessed in databases is part of the heuristic model, and then becomes building blocks in an social intervention of a new construction of an informational basis. Without doubt a statistical covariance can be found between education, labour market participation, and beneficiaries of social benefits, victims of poverty and disadvantage in different areas going from health issues to needed social interventions such as bringing children into care. In order to produce the whole circular representation as a construction in the belief system of the political and professional discourse it also draws on existing dominant values and ideologies. This is to be found in the idea of a relationship between sufficient social benefits and motivation for education or taking a low paid job. It is the naturalisation of this discourse on motivation of a circular relationship that becomes objects in the co-constructed common-sense within dominant positions of society. It has constituted a belief system of social structures and at the same time this constitutes social structures because of the following political and professional response to believe in this particular circular relationship aimed and intended at turning the direction of what we will call the “the belief in the ideology of personal motivation in the wheel of production and reproduction model”. On the one hand the discourse on the family as role models as well as the motivation to learn and on the other the lowering of benefits to the level of study benefit (SU) in order to motivate the youth.

### 8.1.1 Discussion

To effectively combat youth employment today as well as the risks of social exclusion preconditions an understanding of young people's motivations to participate in education, training or a job.

Looking at the current problems of transition from school to labour market there is a need of contributing to broader transition perspectives, e.g. not only taking the demands of the labour market into account, but also bear the transition to adulthood in mind with all the complex and contradictory implications that this approach entails. For example, this broader approach points to creating a better quality of life, by providing young people with new opportunities to grow to the full measure of a person's capacity free of the limiting ties of disadvantage, poverty, and low expectations from side of school.

An integrated youth policy may also contribute to a holistic concept or understanding of transition policies. Some young people are not ready for "the free choice" as they have no experiences of the consequences of such choices; others do not get sufficient support from their birth family. Different forms of interventions aim at letting young people participate in existing networks and letting them benefit from the large knowledge base of e.g. the older generation related to the world of work. These interventions also offer spaces of leisure – related youth work activities which are usually socially important.

For example, the Danish Confederation of Trade Union (LO) has for some years shown an interest in developing a holistic concept of youth policies aiming at combining education, labour market and democratic rights. However, developing an integrated and holistic approach demands an active participation from youth itself – which the current policy making is not practicing.

It seems as if the potentials of a more holistic approach have to be analyzed and discussed within the framework of integrated youth policies. If young people are going to become the key actors of their own life, then an integrated policy or integrated policies has/have to start from the perspective of the young people themselves, include their needs and subjective orientations, and last not least to coordinate policies across sectors.

On a national level contradictions of inclusion and potentials of an integrated approach need a new perspective. This new perspective must be guided by the ideas of a good life for young people. However, policy at national level does not correspond to the 'Europeanisation' of labour market policies (see the European Employment Strategy (EES)) which in turn increasingly challenges national policy models.

We opt for some basic categories in developing a youth policy:

- The active citizenship and participation of young people
- Disadvantage
- Employability
- Flexibilisation
- Activation
- Lifelong learning

These concepts are contested terrain, but they may concentrate to a high extent the central problem of developing democratic participation of young people

## Appendix 1: Glossary of key issues

Key issues	How is this issue defined and which key terms are used to describe this issue
Youth policy	A distinct national policy on youth does not exist. But in the most important areas of government policy the young generations play an important role. Certainly, policy on education, labour market, and housing establish arenas of youth policy
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	In general disadvantage is defined as a position of lacking possibilities. Disadvantaged youth often equals youth with lesser education (compared to youth in average) or in a state of poverty plus at <i>risk</i> when talking about social exclusion.
Social innovation	Denmark has a long tradition on local developmental work in social work, social pedagogy and education. Social innovation is often linked to education. For example second-chance schools were developed to establish new pathways for youth from training to labour market. Social innovation is a key term for the government, especially linked to entrepreneurship
Participation	Formally, young people are participating via representatives (at school, in youth organizations, sports clubs, etc.). From a local level those organizations are also represented nationwide as national organizations or unions. In a formal sense youth has a right to participate in decisions. However, for disadvantaged youth these rights are often in practice not real.
The Abilities of young people	Primarily the concept of competences is used a common denominator

## Appendix 2: Key government policies and programmes

Policy area	Policy or Programme	Description
Social benefits	Reform on social benefits "Kontanthjælps-reformen"	<p>The reform on social benefits is part of a number of reforms that lately have been worked out. The reform have resulted in a number of revised legislations. These can be found within the following two revisions: "Lov om ændring af lov om aktiv socialpolitik, SU-loven, lov om børnetilskud og forskudsvis udbetaling af børnebidrag og forskellige andre love" (<a href="https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=152754">https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=152754</a>); " Lov om ændring af lov om en aktiv beskæftigelsesindsats, lov om ansvaret for og styringen af den aktive beskæftigelsesindsats og forskellige andre love" (<a href="https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=152756">https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=152756</a>)</p> <p>The agreement on the reform can be found on the ministries homepage (<a href="http://bm.dk/da/Beskaeftigelsesomraadet/Flere%20i%20arbejde/Kontanthjaelpsreform.aspx">http://bm.dk/da/Beskaeftigelsesomraadet/Flere%20i%20arbejde/Kontanthjaelpsreform.aspx</a>)</p>
Social housing	Policy on the support and regulation of social housing	<p>The policy on the regulation of social housing estates have been issue of major political discussions during 2013. The question have been on the basis for labelling an housing estate as a "ghetto". The regulation of this policy area can be found in: "Bekendtgørelse af lov om almene boliger m.v." (Bekendtgørelse af lov om almene boliger m.v.)</p>
Early retirement and disability	Reform of the legislation regarding benefits for early retirement due to disabilities	<p>The reform on benefits and early retirement is part of a number of reforms that lately have been worked out. The chances can be found within the active labour market initiatives, the so-called "Bekendtgørelse af lov om en aktiv beskæftigelsesindsats" (<a href="https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=146382#Kap12a">https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=146382#Kap12a</a>)</p> <p>The political agreement on the reform can be found on the ministries homepage (<a href="http://bm.dk/da/Beskaeftigelsesomraadet/Flere%20i%20arbejde/Reform%20af%20foertidspension%20og%20fl eksjob.aspx">http://bm.dk/da/Beskaeftigelsesomraadet/Flere%20i%20arbejde/Reform%20af%20foertidspension%20og%20fl eksjob.aspx</a>)</p>

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# Chapter 10: Youth Unemployment and Public Policies in Italy

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## 1. Abstract

This chapter analyzes key national youth policies that have been put in place to tackle inequalities and disadvantage. In particular, the target is to empirically examine and evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and social programmes focusing on deprived young populations in Italy at the national level through a review of secondary data, national and regional statistics and a qualitative empirical research component comprised of eleven semi-directive interviews. The aim is to disentangle a series of State interventions that target increasing inequalities amongst young generations, especially in the context of an economic crisis that contributes to enhancing such inequalities. We analysed the main policies available for young people, keeping a focus on the Italian labour market and referring to policy's development, implementation, extent of stakeholders' participation and social innovation processes.

In this research, a dynamic definition of disadvantaged youth is provided. A condition of disadvantage is considered as the lack of "genuine opportunity for secure functionings", taking into account risk and insecurity as crucial components. It is also considered, that disadvantages in one sphere can generate further disadvantages in other spheres, acting as "*corrosive disadvantages*"<sup>96</sup>. This interpretation, as we will see later in the report, has relevant connections with the stakeholders' definitions of young people's vulnerability.

Young people's participation in policy making is considered as achieved when young people have effective capability of voice with regards to their problems and opinions and to make them count in the policy-making process<sup>97</sup>.

Several definitions of social innovation are provided, depending on different interpretations of this topic by the national stakeholders interviewed. However, the focus is on policies aiming at filling unmet social needs related to an enhanced educational and participative process of young people. This implies that social innovation allows discovering new needs or new methods to fulfill unmet needs<sup>98</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> This definition is based on the theoretical framework provided in Wp2.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

The key findings derived from this research lead us to outline a general underdevelopment of the current youth public policies – present in their definition, development and implementation the absence of adequate reforms of available educational paths, in particular in reference to vocational training schools more oriented to work. Also the lack of well-targeted policies and insufficient financial resources to contrast youth unemployment are highlighted. In addition, the implementation of the existing policies appears to often not be integrated at the national and regional levels. Finally, the young unemployed appear to not be sufficiently involved in the policy making processes.

## **2. Introduction**

Inequality among youth is one of the most relevant sources of social exclusion in Italy. As a consequence, a large number of young people are deprived of the opportunity to fully participate in society. This chapter focuses on analyzing key national policies targeted at deprived young populations in Italy. The aim is to empirically examine and evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and social programmes. However, also an understanding of regional interventions aimed at tackling youth unemployment will be provided in order to consider more specific policies put in place for disadvantaged youth and their potentially reinforcing effects or lack of thereof. The aim is to disentangle the series of State interventions targeted at the severe inequalities currently present amongst young generations, especially in the context of an economic crisis that is leading to increased inequalities both at the national and regional levels and across levels of human capital attainment, gender and age groups.

Given the high levels of youth unemployment (ISTAT 2013), this chapter will specifically focus on youth employment in Italy. However, to prevent or reduce social exclusion, young people should be enabled to empower themselves through multiple valued forms of agency and participation. For this reason, in order to understand youth inclusion as a whole, in other words as the end result of a process of empowerment, it is relevant to consider a number of relevant factors beyond labour market inclusion, including education, lived experiences and the cross-cutting dimension of participation.

It is still problematic to define what stands within the notion of “youth”. The most common definition has been based primarily on age groups (usually, the group of 15-24 or, more recently, 15-29 years old). However, defining youth only in these terms provides an insufficient understanding of a complex phenomenon. In many cases, policies that significantly affect youth may be aimed at the whole population, acting across age groups and taking into account the inevitable relation – and potentially power relation – undergoing between young generations and seniors. This chapter will be primarily focused on the labour market conditions of youth in the 15-24 years age group. However, with reference to policies that tackle the issue of disadvantaged youth at the national and regional level in Italy, the analysis will also look at public policies towards young people up to 29 years old, and, in some cases, up to 34 years old, given the peculiar and recent exclusion of these generations from the labour market, mostly due to the current economic crisis. Starting from this premise, the overall aim of this chapter is to analyse and

evaluate recent public policies, approved and put in place at the national level, to tackle youth unemployment and its consequences.

### 3. Methods

This chapter will provide an overview of labour market reforms with the specific aim of disentangling relevant public interventions in the field of youth unemployment policies. The methodology adopted has two components:

#### Literature review and collection of available national data

This is will be done through policy analysis, a review of secondary data and national statistics.

#### Semi-directive interviews

The interviewees are prominent stakeholders engaged in the definition of public policies tackling problematic issues related to youth unemployment. The data, collected through the interviews and combination of the analytical methods, will allow for a comprehensive understanding of the recent public policies aimed at tackling the increasing rates of youth unemployment and labour market inequalities, especially in disadvantaged areas.

The interviews are problem-centered with the aim to define: subjects and objects of the public interventions, evaluate the effectiveness of these policies, describe the specific needs and demands of unemployed youth, their level of participation and aspirations, structural and social factors influencing policies (including market discriminations), derive a definition of social innovation and good practices in place that can either overlap with or integrate policies at the national and regional level. The empirical research will involve national government policy makers (Directors of Ministry of Labour), employment support service providers (e.g. public stakeholders, such as *Italia Lavoro*, and third sector operators, such as *Forum del Terzo Settore*), youth work organizations (namely *CGIL*, *CISL*, *UIL*) and membership organizations (*Confindustria*)<sup>99</sup>. Table I shows the numbers of interviewees per relevant entity.

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<sup>99</sup> The interviews have been done between 25 November 2013 and 14 December 2013 in Rome. This is the full list of the interviewees: 1) Lea Battistoni, *Nuovi Lavori*, former manager at the Ministry of Labour; 2) Salvatore Pirrone, Director of the Ministry of Labour; 3) Paola Menetti, President of *Legacoopsociali*; *UIL* (Italian Union of Labour) National Secretaries, the trade union representatives 4) Antonio Focillo and 5) Guglielmo Loy; 6) Liliana Ocmin, *CISL* (Italian Trade Union Labour Confederation) National Secretary for Women, Youth and Discriminations; 7) Carlo Dell'Aringa, Vice-Minister of Labour; 8) Maurizio Sorcioni and 9) Domenico Bova, *Italia Lavoro*; 10) Elena Lattuada, *CGIL* (General Italian Confederation of Labour) National Secretary for Youth; 11) Giulio De Caprariis, Vice-Director for Welfare and Labour-*Confindustria* (General Italian Industry Confederation). All the stakeholders involved in this research gave the permission to use their interviews.

**Table I: number of interviewees per type of relevant institution:**

National government policy makers	2
Employment support service providers (public and third sector)	4
Youth work organizations	4
Networks and membership (sector bodies)	1

All these policy-makers and stakeholders operate mainly at the national level. They have been selected based on their long and specific experience in defining public policies for youth – especially targeted at unemployment –, for their applied approach towards disadvantaged youth and/or for their social engagement in social innovation practices. Finally, some of the interviewees have been engaged in enhancing youth participation in order to provide a better representation of youth rights in the fight against inequality and present good practices in the definition of policies oriented to youth empowerment, to ameliorate their possibilities in finding a job, to facilitate the entrance in the labour market and face periods of transitions between two jobs. Finally, existing policies (e.g. apprenticeship programmes, *Social Card*, etc.) will be assessed and innovative strategies (e.g. the *Youth Guarantee* and incentives) will be identified in the field of youth policy.

Thus said, in the next section, national definitions of disadvantaged youth and some key labour market statistics will be discussed. In section 5, the main instruments used to tackle inequalities amongst youth will be assessed. In section 6, the policies' implementation, the actors involved and the extent of youth participation in policy-making will be introduced. Finally, social innovation will be defined in reference to a number of good practices.

## **4. National definitions**

Inequalities leading to youth unemployment are central reasons of their social exclusion. As a consequence, youth unemployment is becoming increasingly important for labour policies across the EU. A number of well known reasons can be identified for the increase in youth unemployment, including: the general contraction of the economy and labour market, reluctance of employers to take on new employees and the overall increase in competition for a decreasing number of jobs. Moreover, the ramifications of the economic crisis show that young people with lower educational qualifications have become more at risk of being, and staying, unemployed.

### **4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth**

Inequalities are examined with respect to three dimensions relevant for youth well-being: education, employment and participation. As far as data and interviews will allow, the aim of this research is to explore inequalities in terms of opportunities, capabilities and outcomes, adopting the multidimensional definition of disadvantage and corrosive disadvantage suggested by Wolff and De-Shalit.

Wolff and De-Shalit (2007: 182) define disadvantage “as lack of genuine opportunity for secure functionings” and consider risk and insecurity as crucial components of disadvantage. This definition takes a dynamic perspective as it considers not only the level of functionings a person enjoys at any particular point in time, but also their prospects for securing and sustaining that level. Importantly, disadvantages in one sphere can generate further disadvantages in other spheres, acting as “*corrosive disadvantages*”. In other words, it is not a single factor or a set of separate factors that determine individual disadvantage, but the combination and interrelation between personal characteristics and a plurality of contextual factors that affect individuals’ positions and may determine individual differences in terms of opportunities or capabilities (Roemer 2002: 455). For these reasons, disadvantaged youth is defined as lacking of human, social and political resources that serve to enhance the ability and the authority to exert choice and implement change.

Among the involved stakeholders, most of the interviewees<sup>100</sup> define “the young” based on age grouping and the 15/16 to 24 years old one in particular. According to them, the unemployed over 25 need specific policies. Employment support providers<sup>101</sup> explain that the increase in age for a comprehensive definition of youth (up to 34/35 years old) depends on the general absence of policies for young generations. In other words, according to most of the interviewees<sup>102</sup>, the young unemployed (25-34 years old) need differentiated policies. Moreover, a difference among the interviewees came up relative to the definition of disadvantaged youth. According to national government policy makers disadvantage is mainly related to familial economic background, access to education, territorial origins, gender and age. Vice-Minister Carlo Dell’Aringa defined disadvantaged youth as “long-term unemployed” and “those who interrupted their educational path or did not start a stable and adequate professional path”. However, third sector provider, Paola Menetti defines deprived youth firstly in reference to “structural limits of the person”<sup>103</sup>; secondly in terms of disadvantage brought about by the “nature of the subject”<sup>104</sup>. In this instance, employment support provider and trade union representatives<sup>105</sup> added that social and economic disadvantage is related to a deep marginalization. The trade union representative, Elena Lattuada, considered as the most disadvantaged among young people the 16 to 22 years old ones with low educational levels.

#### **4.1.2 Disadvantage, education and discrimination**

According to the trade union representatives<sup>106</sup>, disadvantage is mainly related to educational processes. Especially, Antonio Focillo and Guglielmo Loy report a mismatch between the demand side (production processes-labour market demands) and the skill offer (educational content/offer) and presume that it is due to low investments in

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<sup>100</sup> Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

<sup>101</sup> Interview 1.

<sup>102</sup> Interviews 1, 3, 8, 9, 4, 5.

<sup>103</sup> Interview 3. In this case, Paola Menetti is referring to “disabled”.

<sup>104</sup> Defined by the interviewee as “former detainees, former drug addicts”.

<sup>105</sup> Interviews 1 and 10.

<sup>106</sup> Interviews 4, 5, 6 and 10.

education. Moreover, Liliana Ocmin added that disadvantage is often structural, especially amongst discriminated young people, women and immigrants. In the latter case, high levels of early school leaving (caused by lacking rights of residency/citizenship for immigrants, the absence of processes of school internationalization, etc.) and the recurrent absence of familial support, have been highlighted as possible sources of structural disadvantages. Finally, Elena Lattuada added that, on the one hand, there is a need to tackle early school leaving by rising the compulsory age to 18 years old young people, providing income support to the poorer families; and, on the other hand, an overall reform of vocational schools and financial grants for Academic studies are needed.

#### **4.1.3 Youth unemployment and the economic crisis**

The economic crisis, by causing an increase in the number of young people who are excluded from the labour market and unable to be agents of processes of empowerment, has changed the national understanding of the notion of disadvantage.

According to national government policy makers and *Confindustria*<sup>107</sup>, especially the *Decreto del Fare* had the target to urgently tackle youth unemployment and react to the economic crisis<sup>108</sup>. Moreover national government policy makers highlighted that, due to high number of unemployed youth, more than in the previous decades, it is now central for the Italian policy makers to protect individuals who enter the labour market in a period of generally high unemployment rates, especially using the resources available thanks to new specific policies being put in place also at the European level (i.e. the *Youth Guarantee*).

The UIL's representatives added that the economic crisis prevented the Italian government to enhance temporary work contracts and it is slowing down a potential increase in workers protection. According to Antonio Focillo and Guglielmo Loy, this is the major sign of discontinuity with previous public policies in the labour sector, approved before the economic crisis. Finally, according to a third sector provider, Paola Menetti, the current context of economic stagnation favored the extension of disadvantage among youth within new social classes.

#### **4.2 Labour market position of young people and problems at labour market entry**

The Italian economy has been badly hit by the 2008 economic crisis and by its on-going follow-ups. The detrimental effects have been diversified in type and extent across social categories and youth have been the hardest hit. On the labour market, inequalities have also been recorded across regional, gender and human capital (educational attainment) dimensions: with young, females, coming from the South of Italy and with low educational attainment being particularly disadvantaged and at high risk of being

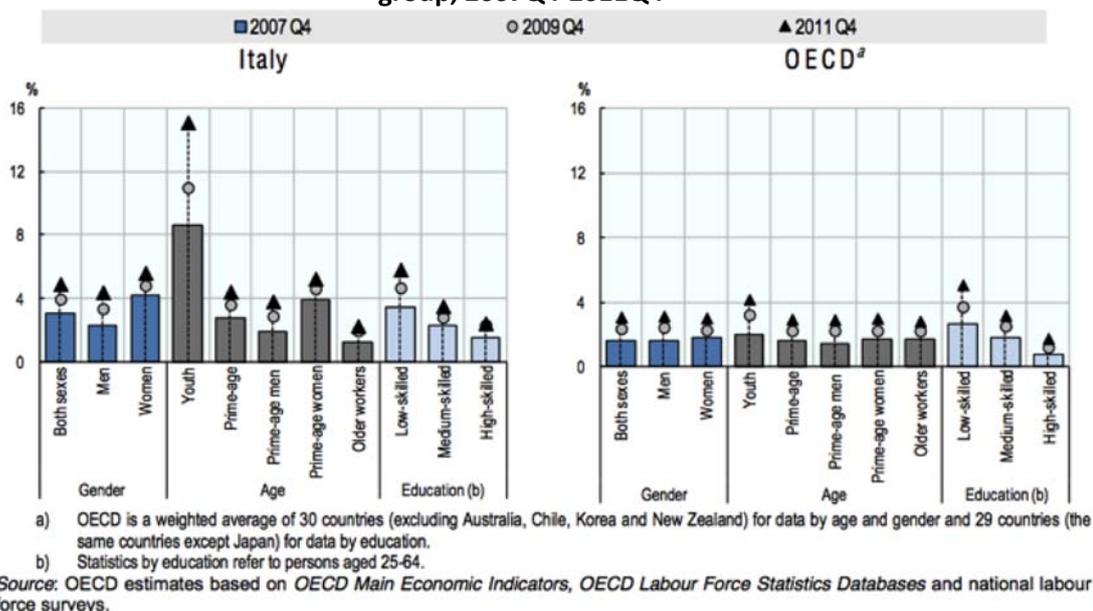
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<sup>107</sup> Interviews 2, 7 and 10.

<sup>108</sup> This partially explains why the government choose a Decree in order to favor a fast approval of the law.

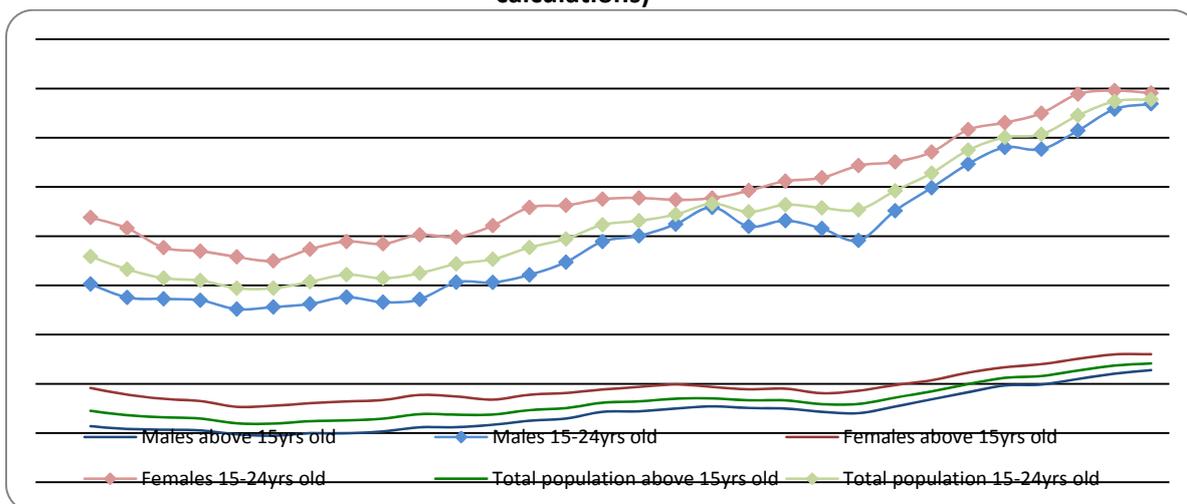
unemployed. Graph I clearly shows that, in Italy, long-term unemployment rate from 2007 (just before the start of the crisis) to 2011 has particularly increased for youth – this is true both compared to other demographic groupings in Italy as well as compared to the OECD averages. It also confirms that women and the low-skilled are strongly disadvantaged compared to males and the high-skilled workers, respectively.

**Graph I: Long-Term Unemployment Rates as a Percentage of Labour Force by demographic group, 2007Q4-2011Q4**



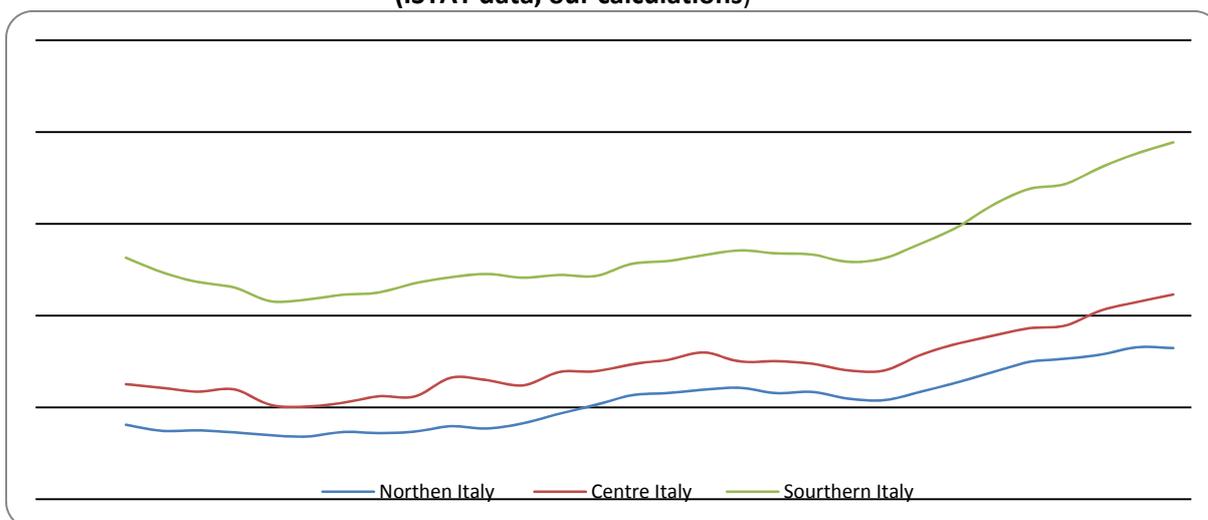
Youth (15-24 years old) unemployment rate has increased almost consistently from 2007 to 2013 and the gap between youth and overall unemployment rate has widened – as Graph II illustrates. Youth unemployment has reached record high levels at the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> trimester of 2013, registering a 55.5% rate and a gap with overall unemployment of over 40 percentage points (ISTAT, October 2013). As also shown in Graph II, although unemployment rates rose for both young females and males; while young women started off as being relatively more disadvantaged, the gap between genders decreased throughout the crisis, especially due to steep increases in unemployment rates for young males throughout 2009 and from 2011 onwards.

**Graph II: Unemployment Rate by gender and age, Italy, 2006T1-2013T2 (ISTAT data, our calculations)**



The Italian labour market situation is also greatly unequal across regions, with the South registering the highest overall unemployment rates (refer to Graph III) as well as youth unemployment.

**Graph III: Unemployment Rate by macro regions, 15 years and over, Italy, 2006T1-2013T2 (ISTAT data, our calculations)**

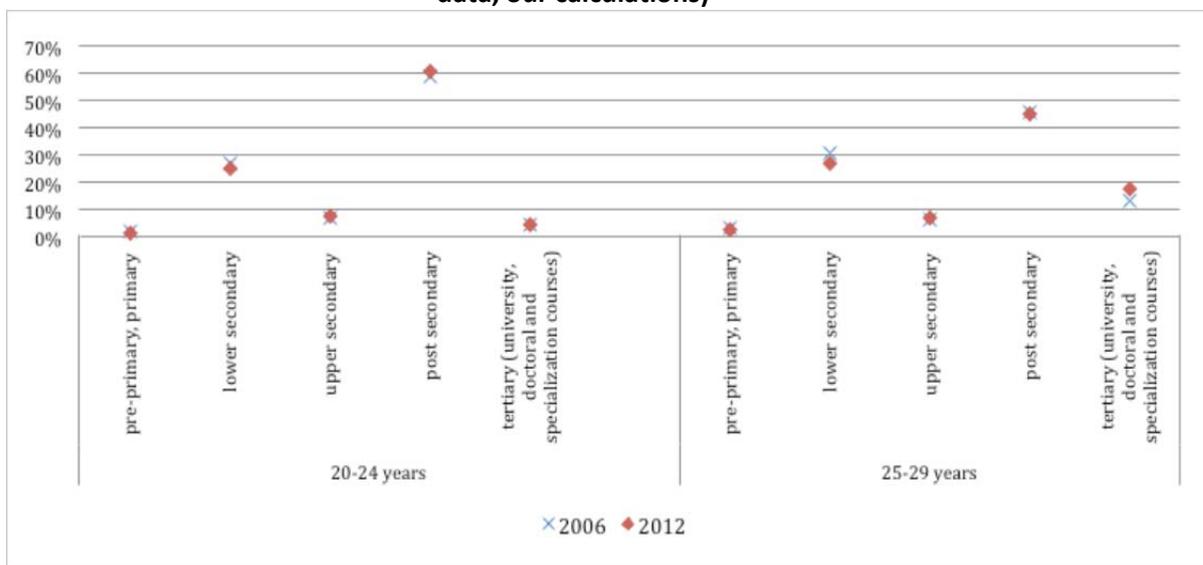


Labour market opportunities open to youth have dramatically declined, especially due to a lack of demand and skills-mismatch. As reported by Professor of economics and analyst John Drifill (March, 2013)<sup>109</sup>, the main issue afflicting the labour markets of the Eurozone periphery is a severe shortage of aggregate demand more than of constrained supply. However, the number of discouraged youth is increasing and the youth jobless rate – which includes those no longer actively looking for a job and that, therefore, gives a better indication of the extent of discouragement across Italian youth – rose to a new high of 41.2% (ISTAT, October 2013).

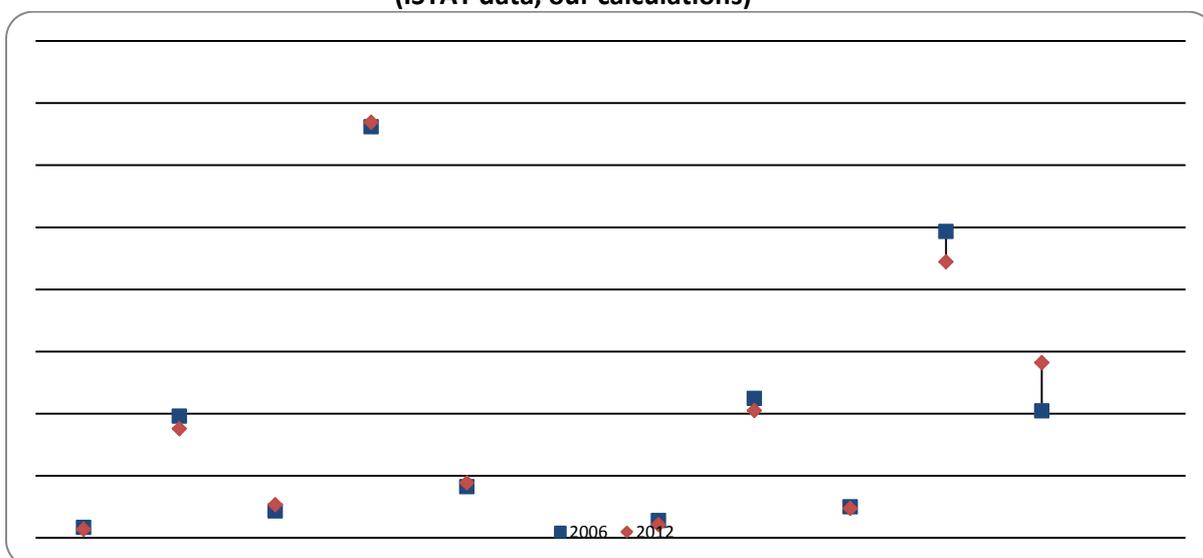
<sup>109</sup> <http://www.voxeu.org/article/european-labour-market-reform>

Furthermore, while employment contracted and unemployment rose, human capital investments did not increase (ISTAT 2013, in [www.finanza.com](http://www.finanza.com)) - as confirmed by Graphs IV and V. Italy also still records low levels of tertiary education attainment.

**Graph IV: Highest Education Level Attained, Males, by age groups, Italy, 2006 & 2012 (ISTAT data, our calculations)**



**Graph V: Highest Education Level Attained, Females, by age groups, Italy, 2006 & 2012 (ISTAT data, our calculations)**

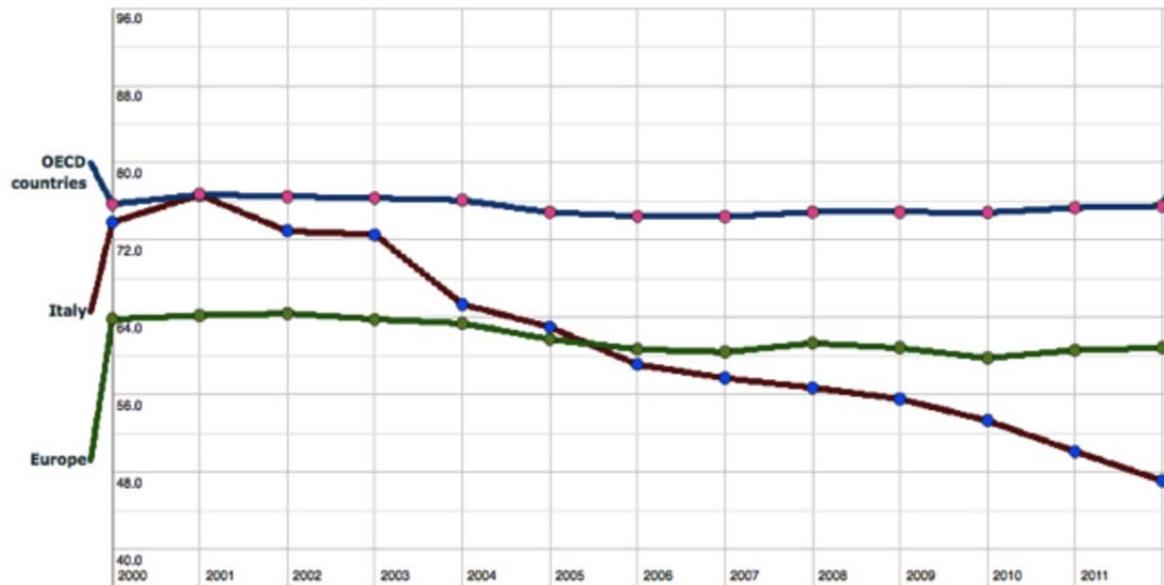


It follows that the number of youth Neither in Employment nor Education nor Training (NEETs) is dramatically high in Italy: it reached 21.4% at the end of 2012 (OECD Employment Outlook, 2013) positioning Italy only after Greece and Turkey amongst OECD countries. The scarring and discouraging effects of the crisis on Italian youth are apparent.

Moreover, those in work find themselves in a highly segmented labour market (OECD, Employment Outlook 2012) with temporary work and other atypical and precarious contracts (as measures of job quality) disproportionately reserved to youth. Graph VI shows the significant decline in the share of permanent contracts amongst employed

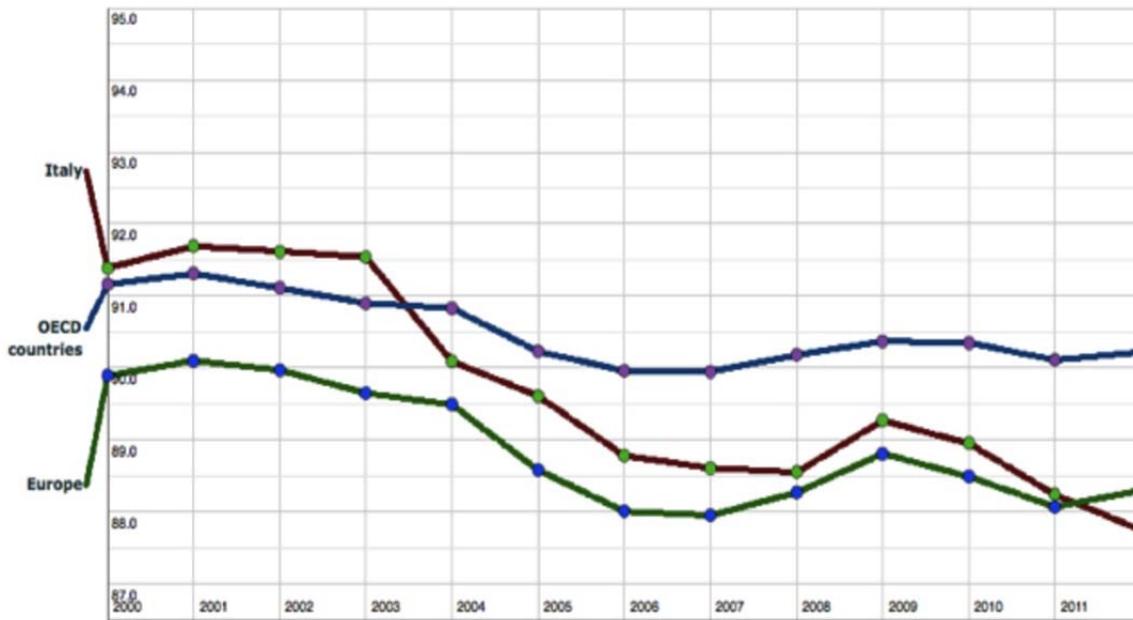
youth: the share fell from 75% in 2001 to 56% in 2008 and to less than 48% in 2012. In contrast, on average, OECD and European countries managed to keep the share rather stable.

**Graph VI: Share of permanent employment amongst dependent employees, 15-24 year olds (OECD online database, Dec.2013)**



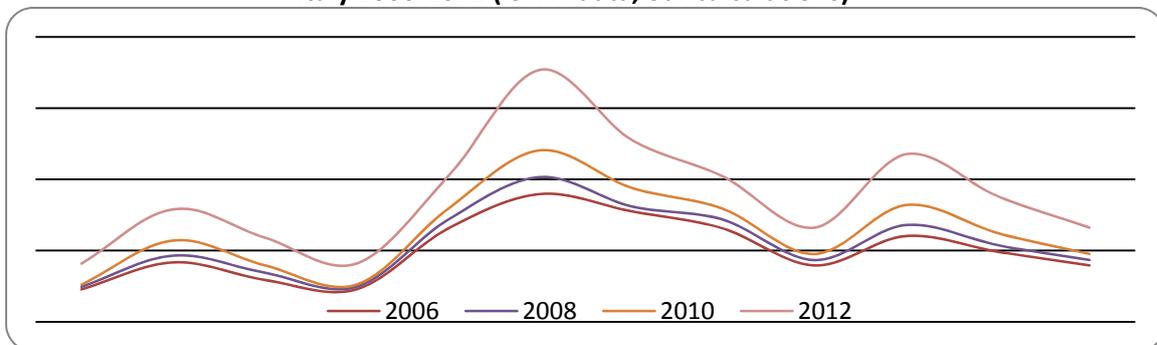
The difference in overall share of permanent jobs between youth and adults is also striking. As illustrated in Graph VII, while the share declined also across employed adults, it started from higher levels – with over 90% of depended workers being on permanent contracts in 2000 – and declined to approximately 88% in 2012 – well above the 48% share of youth on permanent contracts and in line with the average European trend and level.

**Graph VII: Share of permanent employment amongst dependent employees, 25-54 year olds (OECD online database, Dec. 2013)**



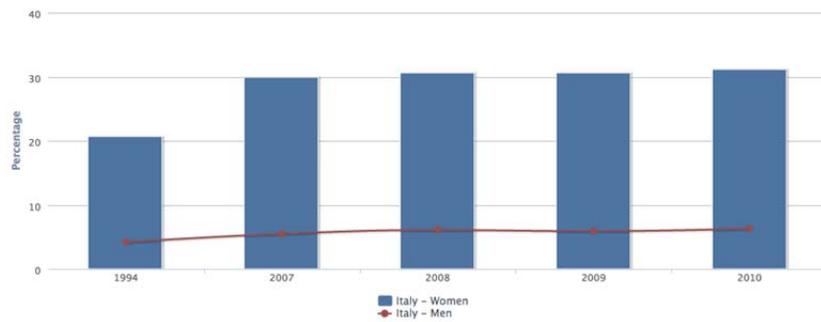
Furthermore, young people, and young females in particular, have a higher rate of under-employment: with over 7% of young employed girls being underemployed. This share has had an increasing trend throughout the crisis across all age groups and genders – as shown by Graph VIII.

**Graph VIII: Under-employed as a percentage per 100 employed, by age groups and gender, Italy 2006-2012 (ISTAT data, our calculations)**



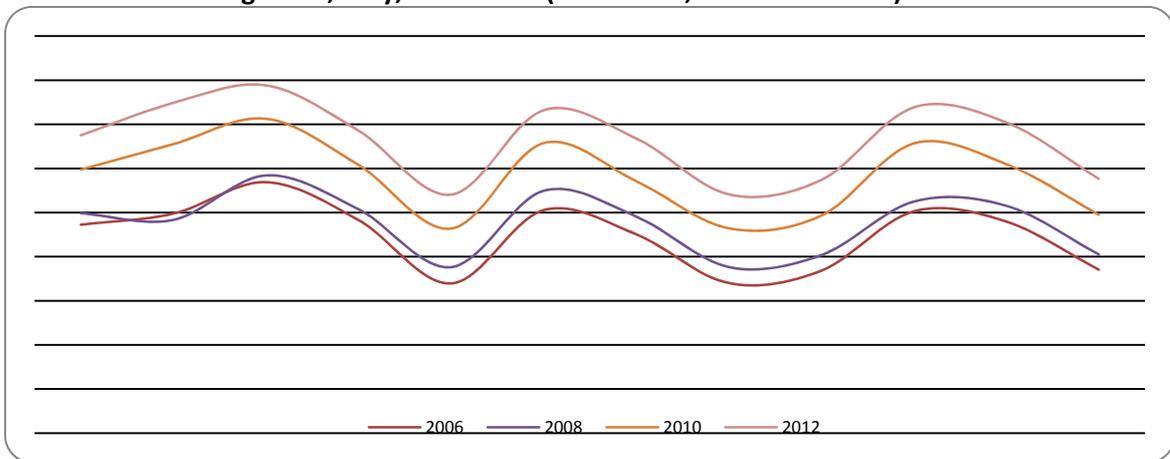
While overall, women in Italy have much higher rates of part-time employment compared to men (see Graph IX); the share of *involuntary* part-time is higher for males in the age group 25-34 years old. Yet, amongst youth (15-24 years old), females have higher rates of involuntary part-time. The rate of involuntary part-time has increased for both genders and across all age groups throughout the crisis – as illustrated in Graph X.

**Graph IX Part-time employment as a proportion of total employment, by gender, 1994-2010**



Source: OECD (2011), [OECD Employment Outlook 2011](#), OECD Publishing.

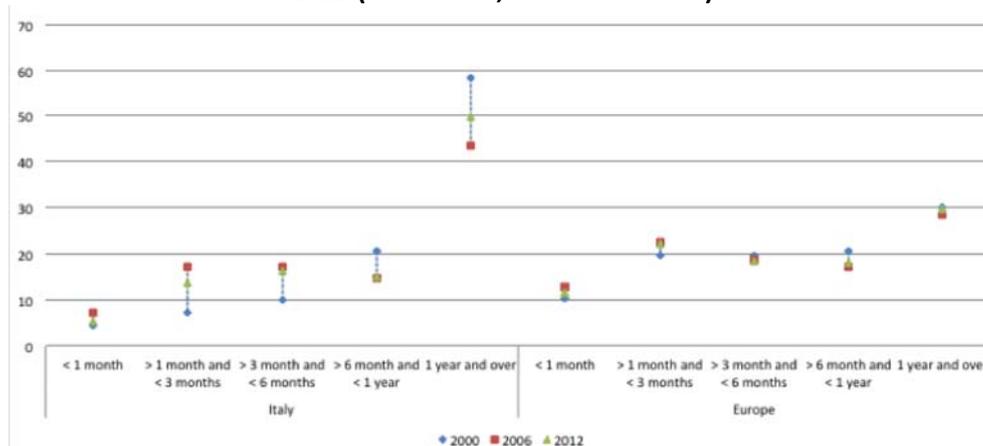
**Graph X: Involuntary Part-Time Employed, Percentage per 100 employed, by age groups and gender, Italy, 2006-2012 (ISTAT data, our calculations)**



#### 4.2.2 Transition to work and risk of following into poverty

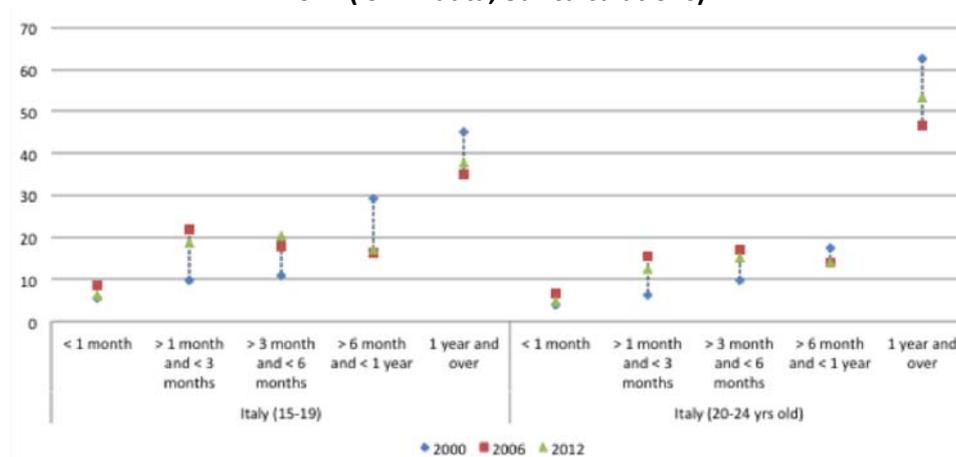
The incidence of long-term unemployment – with duration of 1 year and over – amongst Italian youth is particularly high and well above the European average. Further, while this rate was decreasing from 2000 till 2006, it increased throughout the economic crisis reaching 50% in 2012: this means that 1 in 2 unemployed youngsters are in a situation of long-term, if not permanent unemployment (refer to Graph XI).

**Graph XI: Incidence of Unemployment by Duration, 15-24 year olds, Italy and Europe, 2000-2012 (ISTAT data, our calculations)**



Furthermore, breaking down the age group of young people into 15-19 year olds and 20-24 year olds, graph XII shows that the length of duration of unemployment is higher amongst the older group of youth, suggesting that the risk of long-term and permanent unemployment increases along the transition from school to work. Again, the incidence of youth unemployment rose throughout the crisis (2006-2012) for all durations (less than a month, one to three months, three to six months, six months to a year and a year or over) and for youngsters in both age groups.

**Graph XII: Incidence of Unemployment by Duration, 15-19 and 20-24 year olds, Italy, 2000-2012 (ISTAT data, our calculations)**



Finally, Italians have one of the highest at risk-of poverty rates and young people are most at risk. 1 out of 4 Italians are at risk of social exclusion, 18.2% are at risk of poverty, 6.9% are in serious economic disadvantage and 10.2% live in families with low work intensity – the most at risk are in the age range 18-24 years old (La Repubblica Economia e Finanza)<sup>110</sup>.

<sup>110</sup> [http://www.repubblica.it/economia/2011/12/29/news/istat\\_un\\_italiano\\_su\\_4\\_a\\_rischio\\_povert-27343779](http://www.repubblica.it/economia/2011/12/29/news/istat_un_italiano_su_4_a_rischio_povert-27343779).

## 5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention

The stakeholders involved in this research outlined a general limit of current public policies aimed at tackling poverty and inequalities. In particular, they agree on the lack of well-targeted policies and sufficient financial resources dedicated to contrast youth unemployment<sup>111</sup>. Moreover, existing policies often appear to overlap and are scarcely integrated at the national and regional level. All the interviewees confirmed that the young unemployed are not sufficiently involved in policy making and their participation is generally not incentivized. Finally, all the actors highlighted that, on the one hand, there is a mismatch (demand/supply) between available educational opportunities and the labour market for young generations, on the other hand, the policies to subsidize young unemployed or the transition between two jobs are insufficient.

In this section, it is central to disentangle the main policies available to young people, in the Italian labour market, in reference to recent governmental interventions towards youth unemployment in Italy. Youth unemployment has been a matter of public policy in Italy since the 1970s. In the last decades, the aim of the Italian governments has been to strengthen the labour market's flexibility. This happened with Law 196/1997 (*Pacchetto Treu*), Law 30/2003 (*Legge Biagi*) and 92/2012 (*Legge Monti-Fornero*). Recently, Laws 69 and 76/2013 (*Decreto del Fare* and *Decreto Lavoro*) gave incentives to Italian firms engaged in employing young unemployed (Figure 1).

### 5.1 What are the main instruments to tackle youth unemployment?

The Treu Law introduced temporary contracts and extended the applicability of fixed-term contracts in order to increase the flexibility of the labour market and to reduce unemployment. Law 196/1997 introduced apprenticeship contracts (*apprendistato*) for young people (16-24 years old) in all work sectors. Moreover, it had the advantage to favor students applying for internships and those looking for a first occupation. In addition, the Treu Law intervened in favor of youth unemployed (21-32 years old) in disadvantaged areas, approving a set of "Interventions in favor of young unemployed in Mezzogiorno".

More recently, the Biagi reform (2003) affected the labour market in continuity with the Treu Law. The attempt has been to increase the employment rate and introduce flexibility in the labour market enhancing various forms of atypical contracts, already introduced by the previous measures (e.g. job on call, job sharing, projects work contracts, staff leasing, part-time works, regularization of outsourcing practices). It is true that, according to OECD, in three years (2003-2006), the unemployment rate fell from 11 to 7 per cent, closer to the OECD average, while the temporary employment rate in Italy rose from 10 to about 13 per cent<sup>112</sup>. One of the declared aims of the Biagi Law was to improve access to the labour market for certain disadvantaged categories, such as the

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<sup>111</sup> According to Lea Battistoni the youth is a social segment not attractive in politics because is relatively a small group.

<sup>112</sup> OECD Employment Outlook 2009. See Graph VI.

youth. In this regard, the statistics show a temporary improvement in unemployment rates for youth but accompanied by the rise of temporary and part-time employments from 2000 to 2006 (OECD Labour Force Statistics, 2009). In other words, as a consequence of these two laws (*Treu-Biagi*), the Italian labour market had the disadvantage of becoming more segmented with many young workers employed in precarious jobs (Jessoula and others, 2010).

Finally, in 2012, in a context of a renewed rise of youth unemployment rates, the *Monti-Fornero* law had the advantage to make more flexible the entrance in the labour market.

The attempt was to achieve a balance between flexibility and security. Moreover, the aim of this law was to favor youth employment transforming temporary in long-term contracts. However, according to recent data, the *Monti-Fornero* reform did not help the extension of temporary work contracts. As a consequence of the law, many young workers were fired instead of seeing their contracts extended.

In 2013, the *Decreto Lavoro* (Law 76/2013) is providing incentives in order to employ young workers (18-29 years old). Especially, those who did not have a job in the previous six months and with lower levels of education (High school “Diploma”). Cooperatives of young workers in social, environmental and cultural fields are considered eligible for funding as well. The decree includes incentives to firms who decide to employ young people who are eligible of unemployment benefits (Aspi). Moreover, the *Decreto Lavoro* reactivates apprenticeship’ contracts and internships to favor the entry of young students in the labour market. However, employment support providers criticize the effectiveness of the law. Lea Battistoni outlined the low number of applications for incentives associated to the employment of young workers (9,284 applications approved on 100,000 available)<sup>113</sup>. In this instance, Domenico Bova added that, especially in disadvantaged areas, local entrepreneurs do not consider this instrument as adequate because they are concerned about more public controls over their activities.

In addition, the *Decreto del Fare* extends the number of eligible applicants for *Social Cards* (approved in 2008 for retired over 65 and poor families only). The new card (known as “carta acquisti”, voucher card) is reserved to families excluded from the labour market with the aim to reduce youth poverty. The norm included, in addition to a financial contribution, different paths for social and working re-inclusion of the families who received the subsidy, helping them in finding a new or first job, offering work-oriented training and trying to reduce school exclusion for their children. Moreover, the *Social Card*’s provisions have been extended with the introduction of the SIA (Subsidy for an Active Inclusion)<sup>114</sup>. This has been defined a “first step”<sup>115</sup> towards a guaranteed minimum income without any reference to the age, work or familial backgrounds of the

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<sup>113</sup> [http://www.corriere.it/economia/13\\_novembre\\_03/giovani-fallisce-bonus-assunzioni-incentivi-crisi-anche-sommerso-83f492b0-4457-11e3-b60e-fee364a304ed.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/economia/13_novembre_03/giovani-fallisce-bonus-assunzioni-incentivi-crisi-anche-sommerso-83f492b0-4457-11e3-b60e-fee364a304ed.shtml).

<sup>114</sup> According to the Ministry of Labour, the resources for SIA seems to come mainly from pension funds.

<sup>115</sup> According to interviewees 8 and 9 (*Italia Lavoro*) a more comprehensive change of “welfare to work” is needed.

perspective beneficiaries. Likewise, SIA entails an active support to the disadvantaged subjects with the aim to help them to emerge from poverty.

Finally, the *Decreto del Fare* tackles the relevant issue of disadvantaged areas, approving in the same framework a set of “Urgent measures for youth unemployment and against poverty in Mezzogiorno”. The decree entails grants for internships reserved to youth living in the Southern Italian regions. The funds are provided especially for those who do not work nor study (NEETs, 18-29 years). Moreover, it envisages the creation of a new program with the aim to help self-entrepreneurship and young entrepreneurs in Southern Italy. However, although this new law offers a set of measures with the aim to tackle increasing youth unemployment in Italy, due to its recent approval, it is still controversial to understanding if it had any effect on youth unemployment and on reducing inequalities in disadvantaged areas.

**Table 2: Key Italian government employment policies**

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Laws</b>	<b>Description</b>
Employment and apprenticeship	Law 196/1997	Introduction of temporary contracts: the norm sets the extension of the applicability of fixed-term contracts. It introduces apprenticeship’ contracts for young people (16-24 years old). It favors internships of students and people looking for a first occupation. The Law considers interventions in favor of youth unemployed (21-32 years old) in disadvantaged areas.
Employment	Law 30/2003	Introduction of flexibility in the labour market: the law enhances various forms of atypical contracts (e.g. job on call, job sharing, projects work contracts, staff leasing, part-time works, regularization of outsourcing practices).
Employment	Law 92/2012	Transforming temporary in long-term contracts, especially for young employed.
Employment and training	Laws 69-76/2013	Setting incentives in order to employ young workers (18-29 years old). Cooperatives of young workers in social, environmental and cultural fields are considered eligible for funding. It incentivizes those firms who decide to employ young who are eligible of unemployment benefits (Aspi). It reactivates apprenticeship’ contracts and internships. It extends the number of eligible applicants for Social Cards. It approves a set of measures for

		disadvantaged areas. The Social Card's provisions has been extended. It introduces the SIA (Subsidy for an Active Inclusion) has been approved without any reference to the age, work or familiar background of the perspective beneficiaries.
Employment and training	Youth Guarantee	Beginning a long-term plan to tackle youth unemployment with the aim to favor fixed term contracts, auto-entrepreneurship and to contrast social exclusion in the Southern Italian regions. A consistent support for NEET is provided, especially through new educational trainings. The aim is to equalize at the national level processes of local expertise validations, favoring auto-entrepreneurship and self-employment. In addition, it envisions a general reform of available employment support services and agencies, improving public and private actors' capability.

### 5.1.2 The target of intervention

According to most of the interviewees<sup>116</sup>, the majority of policies target young cohorts excluded from the labour market due to the economic crisis. Especially according to the unionist, Guglielmo Loy, it is essential to strengthen educational opportunities while integrating them with the job market and providing vocational trainings oriented at favoring a smooth transition into the labour market (integrated with: relevant internships, school-work transitions, etc.); further, more integrated efforts to decrease bureaucracy, support certified expertise and create subsidies for periods of unemployment are also needed.

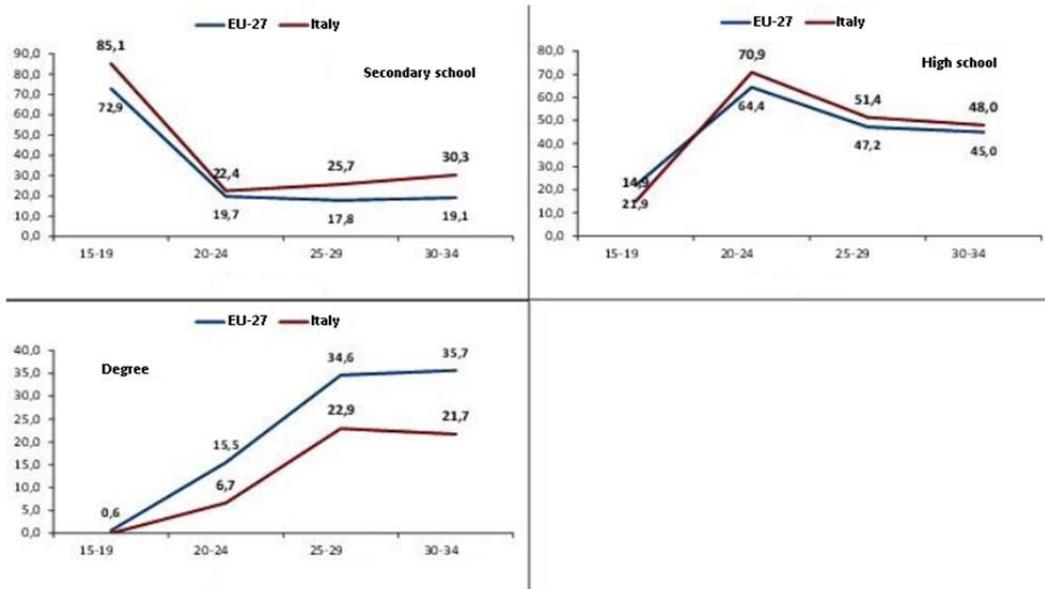
Moreover, according to the employment support providers<sup>117</sup>, it is vital to intervene on education and employment support services (namely Servizi e Centri per l'impiego)<sup>118</sup>. Maurizio Sorcioni added that in Italy there is a lack of tertiary education enrollment and attainment (University), compared to other European countries. Graph XIII shows youth population per levels of education and age groups in Italy compared to other European countries.

<sup>116</sup> Interviews 2, 4 and 5.

<sup>117</sup> Interviews 1, 8 and 9.

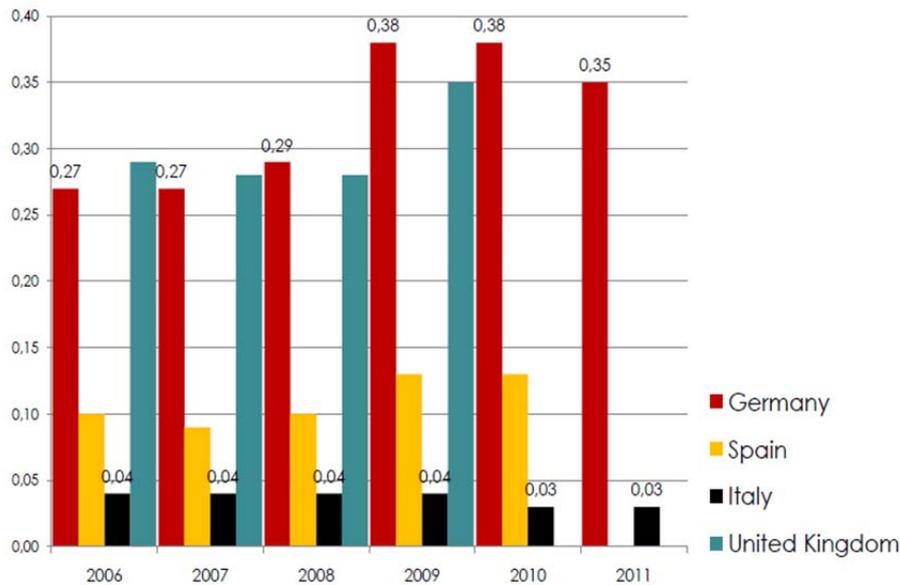
<sup>118</sup> Maurizio Sorcioni outlined that in 2011 in Germany for each unemployed 1,795 euro were deployed in employment support services while in Italy only 81 euro.

**Graph XIII: Youth population per levels of education and age groups in Italy compared to EU countries (*Italia Lavoro*, 2013)**



With regard to employment support services, the interviewees outlined that an accurate analysis of the causes and levels of unemployment is needed in order to help the young who have not yet entered the labour market to be oriented towards relevant internships-apprenticeships-job placement or training opportunities useful for self-employment. Graph XIV shows the available resources for employment support services in four European countries.

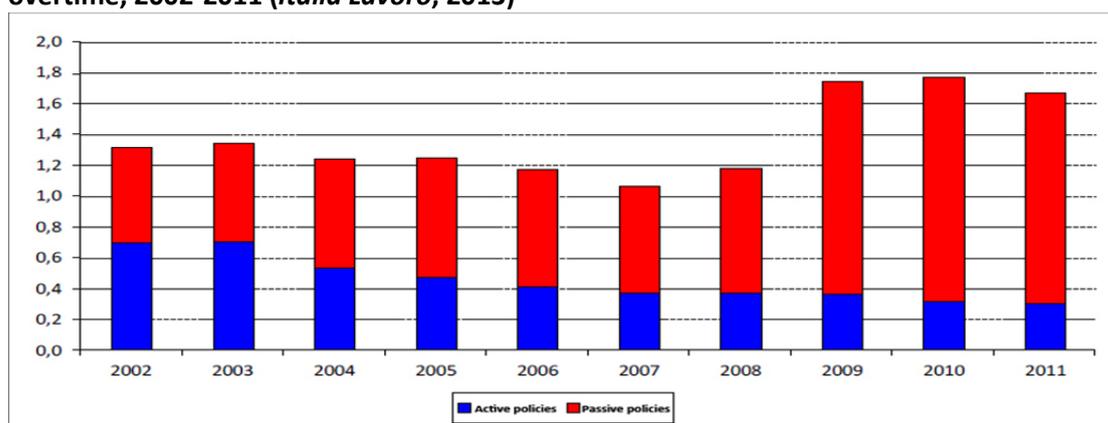
**Graph XIV: Resources available for employment support services in selected European countries (*Italia Lavoro*, 2013)**



### 5.1.3 Resources and outcomes

Especially thanks to the *Decreto del Fare*, *Decreto Lavoro* and to the *Youth Guarantee* the available overall amount of resources for youth unemployment policies at the national level is increasing. On the one hand, the resources available for passive labour market policies are generally rising<sup>119</sup>, the *Decreto del Fare* e *Decreto Lavoro* provide incentives of 1.5 billions of euro to transform temporary into fixed-term contracts for workers under 30. In addition, for the new *Social Card* 50 millions of euro have been provided for a first phase of testing in 12 big Italian cities (2013). Later on, the amount provided will be higher: 167 millions of euro (2014-2015). As for the Subsidy for an Active Inclusion (SIA), for the next three years, 120 millions of euro have been allocated at the national level. Moreover, in 2011, 19,9 bn of euro have been spent for unemployment subsidies. On the other hand, the resources available for active labour market policies remain stable: 544 millions of euro have been allocated in 2011 to finance vocational trainings, 2.6 bn of euro for incentives (to favor long-term employment, fixed term contracts, self-employment, etc.). Graph XV shows the percentage of GDP dedicated to labour market active and passive policies in Italy in the last years.

**Graph XV: Percentage of GDP dedicated to labour market active and passive policies' in Italy overtime, 2002-2011 (*Italia Lavoro*, 2013)**



According to national government policy makers of the Ministry of Labour<sup>120</sup>, the *Youth Guarantee* will provide 6 billions of euro. These resources will be distributed among regions with higher levels of youth unemployment. Employment support providers<sup>121</sup> specified that the amount already available is of 1.7 bn of euro. In other words, in order to reach the aforementioned 6 bn of euro, to the European available FES funds,

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[www.lavoro.gov.it/Strumenti/StudiStatistiche/lavoro/Documents/Nota%20Spese%20Politiche%20011.pdf](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/Strumenti/StudiStatistiche/lavoro/Documents/Nota%20Spese%20Politiche%20011.pdf)

<sup>120</sup> Interviews 2 and 7.

<sup>121</sup> Interviews 1, 8 and 9.

resources at the regional and national level will be added<sup>122</sup>. According to the *CGIL*, the resources available for this programme are inadequate<sup>123</sup>.

The employment support provider, Domenico Bova evaluated that 2 bn euro<sup>124</sup>, as part of the aforementioned 6 billions of euro, is the amount available for financing education and vocational trainings within the framework of the *Youth Guarantee* program. The interviewee considered three policies supported by the Ministry of Labour and *Italia Lavoro* as being especially effective, namely: the LOA-occasional/optional work; ANVA-Apprenticeship and handcrafted works; Lavoro e sviluppo–work and development. According to the interviewee, these policies are effective in narrowing the gap between workers and entrepreneurs by creating new opportunities, especially in disadvantaged areas. Finally, the trade union representatives<sup>125</sup> outlined an inadequate allocation of resources that hinders employment at the municipality levels.

#### 5.1.4 European guidelines and the Youth Guarantee

In line with the Lisbon strategy (European Parliament, 2000), the Cohesion Funds (ERDF, ESF) and the Europe 2020 Strategy, reducing youth unemployment is considered as a strategic target for labour policies. As a consequence, youth unemployment is receiving more attention today than 15 years ago. However, the European field of youth unemployment policies is dominated by a “no coherent and coordinated policy model” (Lahusen, Shulz, Graziano 2012: 4). This is illustrated by the fact that the notion of youth is not identified as a specific category for which to define targeted solutions, even though EU and national policy documents acknowledge that young people are faced with specific problems that require a more comprehensive approach.

The *Youth Guarantee* (2014-2020) is beginning a long-term plan to tackle youth unemployment in Italy with the aim to favor fixed term contracts, auto-entrepreneurship (e.g. start-ups) and to contrast social exclusion in the Southern Italian regions. For these specific policies, 794 millions of euro, as part of the aforementioned 6 bn of euro, (294 to Northern and 500 to Southern regions) have been allocated at the national level<sup>126</sup>. The policy entails direct supplies to individuals and firms. The short-term goal is to guarantee unemployed youngsters (up to 24 years old) either educational or work opportunities within four months from graduation or becoming unemployed. In the long-term, the target is to favor a decrease in labour’ costs<sup>127</sup>. According to vice-Minister Carlo Dell’Aringa, the *Youth Guarantee* has the advantage to be universalistic and “put under

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<sup>122</sup> According to Lea Battistoni (*Nuovi Lavori*), as for the year 2014-15, 1,7 bn of euro are available: 532 ml euro at the national level+FSE funds (532 ml euro)+20% at the national level (106 ml euro)+regional level (532 ml euro FSE 2007-13).

<sup>123</sup> Interview 10 (internal report, 2013).

<sup>124</sup> According to Domenico Bova (*Italia Lavoro*).

<sup>125</sup> Interviews 4 and 5.

<sup>126</sup> [http://www.corriere.it/economia/13\\_novembre\\_03/giovani-fallisce-bonus-assunzioni-incentivi-crisi-anche-sommerso-83f492b0-4457-11e3-b60e-fee364a304ed.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/economia/13_novembre_03/giovani-fallisce-bonus-assunzioni-incentivi-crisi-anche-sommerso-83f492b0-4457-11e3-b60e-fee364a304ed.shtml)

<sup>127</sup> *Nuovi lavori* 2013. This is considered the main relevant merit of this policy by the unionist Elena Lattuada and membership organization representative Giulio De Caprariis (*Confindustria*).

stress” public services in order to fasten the transition from school to work or between two jobs.

Moreover, a consistent support for NEET is provided, especially through new educational trainings. The aim is to equalize at the national level processes of local expertise validations, favoring auto-entrepreneurship and self-employment. In addition, it envisions a general reform of available employment support services and agencies, improving public and private actors’ capability to coordinate the educational networks (individual support and work orientation, income incentives, better services for start-up’ projects, continuous follow-up, etc.) and favoring inter-European mobility.

## **5.2 Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programmes they are offered/the subject of?**

The aforementioned political instruments for tackling inequalities and youth unemployment are often not flexible enough to meet the differing needs of young people. All the stakeholders confirmed a general lack of youth participation in influencing public policies aimed at tackling unemployment. According to employment support service providers, young people had no significant voice in shaping these policies. Maurizio Sorcioni mentioned different failed attempts for a more comprehensive consideration of the aspirations of disadvantaged youngsters. In 2007, the Forum of the Youth Association has been formed (Forum Nazionale Giovani)<sup>128</sup>. Moreover, within the Ministry of Interior, a coordination of local units (Informagiovani) has been created. Finally, a National Agency for Youth has been forged. However, according to Maurizio Sorcioni, these units cannot influence the process of policy making. The trade union representatives and national government policy makers<sup>129</sup> reported a general lack of youth unions that could influence policies and governmental agendas towards youth’s need and priorities. In this instance, Lea Battistoni added that relevant labour market reforms initially had the target to involve young people in the policy making processes but this has never been implemented. Moreover, she admits that norms, regulating “youth councils” (Consulte giovanili), have never been approved.

External structural and social factors are central to the development of policies aimed at tackling youth unemployment. Most of the interviewees<sup>130</sup> considered the currently high long-term unemployment’ rates as being a loss of human capital and a reason for enhancing existing policies. On the one hand, sector body representative, Giulio De Caprariis outlined the need to reduce firms and work’s taxation. *Confindustria* considers helpful a more flexible market labour entry<sup>131</sup>. On the other hand, unionist and

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<sup>128</sup> The *CISL* unionist Liliana Ocmin added that the Forum is still active and meets once per year. She outlined the relevance of youth organization (collettivi di base) in discussing public policies towards unemployment.

<sup>129</sup> Interviews 4, 5, 6 and 2, 7.

<sup>130</sup> Interviews 1,3,8,9 and 4,5,6, 10 and 11.

<sup>131</sup> However, *Confindustria* criticizes the Monti-Fornero reform for an enhancing rigidity of labour market exit.

employment support providers<sup>132</sup> outlined the need to assess the underestimated consequences of an excessive extension of temporary job contracts which took place in the last decades. Elena Lattuada added the need to narrow down the types of temporary contracts and of introducing a minimum market entry level of “labour costs and payments”<sup>133</sup>. In addition, Paola Menetti thinks that the young unemployed often consider looking for a job too late, this is often due to long and not flexible academic educational paths. According to the trade union representatives Guglielmo Loy and Antonio Focillo, it is the lack in planning, investments in innovation and research that push young Italian unemployed to migrate. Finally, the unionist Liliana Ocmin highlighted the need of a constant intervention to prevent discriminations and enhance equal opportunities in the labour market. This issue has been addressed by creating the UNAR (Anti-Racial Discrimination Office) contrasting discrimination versus immigrants and local Committees to support equal opportunities tackling gender discriminations in works’ contracts.

### 5.3 Non-Intervention

If disadvantage, in one or more dimensions, is identified but not institutionally addressed, it is reported that several actors intervene as substitutes of the State. On the one hand, most of the interviewees<sup>134</sup> outlined a general impoverishment of families and the third sector organizations as traditional substitutes of the State. On the other hand, employment support providers<sup>135</sup> reported that commonly young unemployed people turn to the black-market in order to find a job, especially in disadvantaged areas. Paola Menetti outlined a peculiar function of the third sector, which acts as a substitute of the State, to promote legality in the Southern regions<sup>136</sup>. However, according to Carlo Dell’Aringa, as a consequence of the economic crisis, in Southern Italian regions, also the traditional substitutive role of the black-market for youth unemployment is downsizing.

Moreover, Guglielmo Loy affirmed that the failure of putting in place effective incentives within labour policies causes disadvantaged youth to turn to familial and friendship networks in order to find assistance or support to re-enter the labour market. In this instance, the interviewed national government policy makers considered a solely recourse to voluntarism or the action of the third sector as not adequate to compensate for labour market failures.

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<sup>132</sup> Interviews 1 and 10.

<sup>133</sup> Elena Lattuada added a general need to transfer resources from capital levy and tax evasion’s contrast to work policies.

<sup>134</sup> Interviews 1, 4, 5 and 6. According to Lea Battistoni, in last decades, third sector organisations have not been effective in those kind of substitution’s policies.

<sup>135</sup> Interviews 8 and 9.

<sup>136</sup> The interviewee added the need that these policies (for example helping Rosarno young immigrants, in Calabria region, emerging from the black market) to be strengthened by the State intervention.

## 6. Policy making and implementation

The stakeholders involved in this research outlined general limits in the development, delivery and implementation of current public policies tackling poverty and inequalities. The implementation of the existing policies appears often not integrated at the national and regional levels. As it has been confirmed by all the interviewees, young unemployed are not sufficiently involved in policy implementation processes and they rarely turn to existing local employment support services available for delivering re-qualification programs to favor the entry in the work market or municipalities in order to apply for the *Social Card*. Finally, all the actors highlighted, on the one hand, an inadequate attention on narrowing the gap between available education opportunities and the labour market for young generations, and on the other hand, a need to implement new policies to subsidize young unemployed, especially during transitions in-between jobs.

In the following section, the actors responsible for the development and delivery of policies will be considered. In this case, as seen previously, the implementation of the main available policies (e.g. apprenticeship, the *Social Card* and the *Youth Guarantee*) to tackle youth unemployment and poverty will be assessed from the point of view of the actual actors involved in its development. Finally, it will be considered if the governmental policies addressing disadvantaged youth are sufficiently integrated amongst each other.

### 6.1 Who are the actors that are responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?

Most of the aforementioned policies tackling inequalities, and especially disadvantaged youth, involve national and local levels of interventions. *Italia Lavoro* highlighted relevant gaps and overlaps between the two levels<sup>137</sup>. Moreover, *UIL* defined all those policies as “fragmented, not flexible or integrated” both at the national and regional levels.

With regards to the implementation of the *Decreto Lavoro*, the Ministry of Labour (along with controlled agencies as *Italia Lavoro*) has normative, monitoring and controlling responsibilities at the national level. According to the Ministry of Labour, *CGIL* and *Confindustria*<sup>138</sup>, the incentives, available through the *Decreto Lavoro*, are ineffective and firms do not apply for them as a consequence of the economic crisis and a constant “consumption’s drop”. Vice Minister, Carlo Dell’Aringa added that the expectations of the effectiveness of the incentives were much higher and, at this stage, the solely target should be to decrease labour costs driving down contribution taxes.

Moreover, *Nuovi Lavori* highlighted that there is an absence of integrated implementation policies at the national level. It is relevant to consider that firstly, education and vocational training are under the responsibilities of regional

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<sup>137</sup> The interviewee highlighted differing criteria in certifying expertise, trainings, in allocating internships and apprenticeships.

<sup>138</sup> Interviews 2, 7, 10 and 11.

administrations. In this case, national government policy makers outlined a general educational rigidity towards the labour market and in facilitating transitions from school to work. Secondly, provinces provide most of the available services for unemployed youth (as, for example, employment support services). Finally, municipalities are responsible of the delivery of welfare policies (as, for example, the *Social Card*)<sup>139</sup>. As a consequence, passive and active policies contrasting against youth unemployment appeared to overlap and be scarcely integrated at the national and local levels.

According to *Legacoopsociali*, the *Social Card* is gradually becoming a subsidy to unemployment<sup>140</sup>. However, the trade union representatives<sup>141</sup> agreed that the resources available for tackling poverty at the local level are hugely inadequate. Moreover, *CISL* considered that, according to data from several municipalities, the young unemployed often do not apply for this voucher<sup>142</sup>. In addition, *CGIL* added that a general improvement of ISEE (Familial economic condition indicator)<sup>143</sup> is central to ameliorate the *Social Card* as an instrument that hitherto did not help the disadvantaged to enhance their living standards. Finally, *Nuovi Lavori* outlined the ineffectiveness of previous attempts to provide a minimum income, given by local public administrations, to the families of unemployed people, linked to vocational training and working re-inclusion. According to the interviewees<sup>144</sup>, a minimum income, networks of support for labour market entrance and during the transitions between two works are needed in order to help disadvantaged people, fill possible “education lacks” and reward the actors of the labour market that facilitate youth re-inclusion. However, vice Minister Carlo Dell’Aringa outlined that the introduction of a minimum income should not be perceived by the unemployed person as an “unconditional assistance” but as a promotion of an “active attitude” towards the labour market.

Some of the interviewees<sup>145</sup> criticized the effectiveness of apprenticeship contracts. *Italia Lavoro* outlined the decreasing number of these contracts<sup>146</sup>. In 2012, 19.9 per cent of young up to 19 years old has had an apprenticeship contract (compared to 26.1 per cent in 2009)<sup>147</sup>. Elena Lattuada added that apprenticeships do not contribute in forming an individual expertise “oriented to work”. Moreover, the *CGIL* outlined that investments in apprenticeship’s contracts favor the firms and reduce the workers’ salaries. Finally,

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<sup>139</sup> In this instance, Lea Battistoni quoted *Rete Iter* (a project involving 59 municipalities that monitored and evaluated public policies tackling youth unemployment).

<sup>140</sup> In this instance, the interviewee (3) considered the need to convert the funds available for the “unemployment insurance”.

<sup>141</sup> Interviews 4, 5 and 6.

<sup>142</sup> According to an internal *CISL* research, disadvantaged youth is not motivated to apply for this policy. Liliana Ocmin added that this is due to the inadequate funding available that gives as a maximum monthly subsidy of 404 euro for a poor family with more than five components.

<sup>143</sup> [http://www.lavoro.gov.it/PrimoPiano/Pages/20131203\\_Riforma-ISEE.aspx](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/PrimoPiano/Pages/20131203_Riforma-ISEE.aspx)

<sup>144</sup> Interviews 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9.

<sup>145</sup> Interviews 8, 4, 5 and 10.

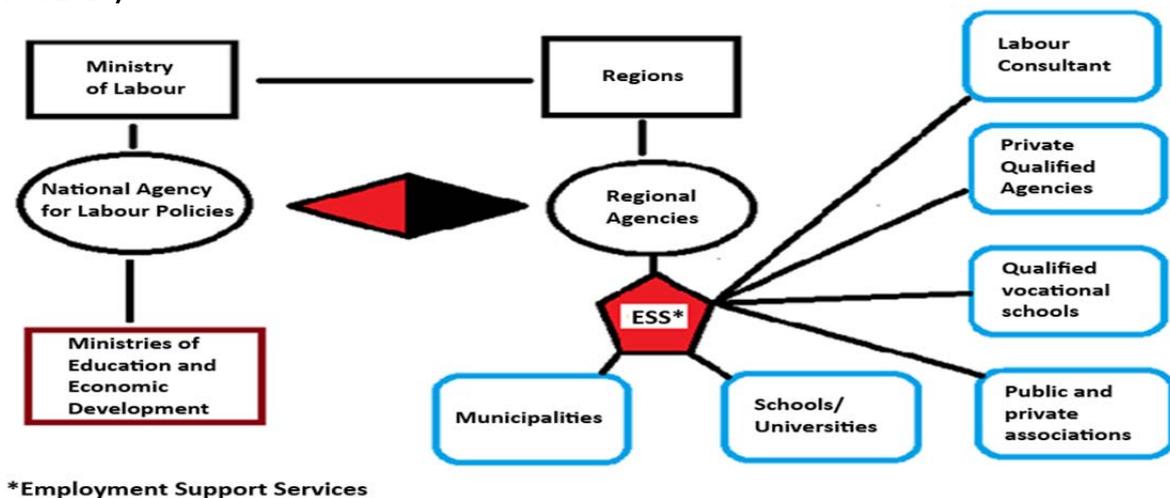
<sup>146</sup> This data has been presented at the Rome conference on Youth, Work and Employment Agencies, Rome 29 October 2013 (source *Italia Lavoro*).

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

national government policy makers highlighted non homogeneous regional norms on apprenticeships.

The Ministry of Labour provided the National guidelines for the delivery of the *Youth Guarantee* programme. The outcomes will be implemented through a dedicated Agency, coordinated by the Ministry of Labour with the support of the Education and Economic Development Ministries. This Agency will define minimum services offered at the regional level and coordinate a system of monitoring. The Regions will implement the national guidelines, co-finance the programme, define targets, control financial flows and coordinate local employment support services<sup>148</sup>. At the regional level with the support of Regional Agencies, municipalities, schools, universities, public and private employment support providers, qualified vocational schools and labour consultants will be involved. Especially the latter will be responsible of the policy delivery. Elena Lattuada outlined the risks of involving “private employment support providers”. However, Giulio De Caprariis considered a “positive step” a new collaboration between public and private employment support services<sup>149</sup>. Graph XVI shows the actors involved in the *Youth Guarantee* implementation at the national and local level.

**Graph XVI: The *Youth Guarantee*: involved actors at the national and local level (*Nuovi Lavori* 2013)**



To conclude, national government policy makers and trade union representatives outlined a general lack in controlling and evaluating the outcomes of the aforementioned policies. Director of the Ministry of Labour, Salvatore Pirrone outlined a perspective enhancement of a successful assessment of the policies’ results through the involvement of ISFOL (Institute for the professional trainings of workers) in new inquiries on the effectiveness of the available policies with interviews with the eligible young unemployed. However, *CGIL* highlighted a general absence in defining the actors responsible for controlling youth unemployment policies’ implementation.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, (source *Nuovi Lavori*).

<sup>149</sup> *Confindustria* highlighted a need in enhancing both public and private employment support services.

## 6.2 Participation in policy making

The participation of disadvantaged youth in policy making is achieved if young people have effective capability to voice their problems and make them count in the policy-making process. For this reason, the development of young people's capabilities should not be pursued via paternalistic ways in which other people (e.g. families, entrepreneurs, local politicians, trade union representatives) define their needs, acting as their substitutes, and decide the best ways to satisfy them. However, this process requires the active participation of all young people, whatever are their social, educational and ethnic backgrounds<sup>150</sup>.

According to the Ministry of Labour<sup>151</sup>, youth groups<sup>152</sup> are "fragmented" and ineffective. For this reason, often major national unions act as youth representatives' substitutes. Moreover, especially in the making process of the *Youth Guarantee*, as stated by European guidelines, youth representatives, unions and sector bodies have been heard<sup>153</sup>. However, especially youth representatives did not give a "relevant contribution"<sup>154</sup> to the policy making process. On the other hand, most of the trade union representatives<sup>155</sup> outlined a general lack disadvantaged youth's involvement in policy making and more generally in contributing to defining means to tackle poverty and inequality. It is evident that there is an inadequate contribution of the major Italian unions in policy making process focused on youth exclusion.

## 7. Social innovation and the role of social innovation in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy

Social innovation can refer to innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly diffused through organizations whose primary purposes are social ones (Mulgan 2006: 146). Although the stakeholders, involved in this research, outlined a general absence of social innovative policies oriented to disadvantage youth in Italy, they quoted a number of good practices (start-ups, internship programmes, youth participation enhancement, etc.) in reference to innovative services that aim to tackle social needs and to contrast youth unemployment, especially at the local level.

All the interviewees outlined the importance of bottom-up initiatives, in particular in disadvantaged areas, in order to favor social innovation activities with reference to participation processes in policy-making and renewed educational paths. In this following section, several definitions of social innovation, provided by the involved stakeholders, are discussed in reference to good practices in addressing needs unmet by public policies.

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<sup>150</sup> This definition is based on the theoretical framework provided in Wp2.

<sup>151</sup> Interviews 2 and 7.

<sup>152</sup> There are youth groups within the framework of the existing unions, inside universities and high schools.

<sup>153</sup> Interviews 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11.

<sup>154</sup> Interviews 2 and 7.

<sup>155</sup> Interviews 4, 5, 6 and 10.

## 7.1 What is social innovation?

Social innovation relates to social needs that are not yet fulfilled. This implies that social innovation allows discovering new needs or new methods to fulfill unmet needs. Social innovation may emerge in two different ways: top-down innovation (where the discovering of social needs comes from the top or the decision-making level, and is then implemented at local level, e.g. in the form of so-called “pilot experiments”) or bottom-up innovation (where grass root actors identify new needs and strive to institutionalize – or up-scale – their practices in one way or another), which means that social innovation can come both from formal organizations and from social movements or civil society actors<sup>156</sup>.

In addition, there is a link between social innovation and participation, which means that in both cases (top-down and bottom-up) there should be space for local actors to express their views and make them count<sup>157</sup>. The concept of “public entrepreneurship” raises important ideas in this respect, it calls for providing all citizens with the possibility to be part of the social fabric. Finally, there is a link between social innovation and education. Social Innovation in terms of education and pedagogy covers the whole process from a new idea to a realized product or procedure (Swedberg 2009). New solutions for new demands or needs in the educational field include innovative and participatory forms of education.

All the interviewees gave a very broad definition of social innovation. However, especially the trade union representatives<sup>158</sup> highlighted a poor presence of socially innovative policies in Italy. *UIL* outlined that both at the national and local levels the unmet social needs are left to individual solutions. However, with regards to bottom-up forms of social innovation, they quoted experiences of corporate social responsibility as examples of effective practices<sup>159</sup>. Lilians Ocmin added the relevance of participation in finding a solution to social needs. In addition, the *CISL*'s unionist outlined the link between social innovation and education (civil service, private participation to welfare, support to meritocracy, etc.) as conditions to an individual contribution to a “welfare society”.

The interviewed third sector provider<sup>160</sup> considered social innovation as activities tackling social inequalities. In other words, Paola Menetti highlighted how essential is to activate services: 1) where they are absent, 2) economically sustainable and 3) productive in order to create jobs. According to the interviewee, this cannot solely come from public policies that should guarantee only national “minimum standard levels”. This process can involve the supply side, enhancing the participation of different actors (youth cooperatives, associations, etc.), and the demand side, favoring labour market insertion.

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<sup>156</sup> This definition is based on the theoretical framework provided in Wp2.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Interviews 4, 5, 6 and 10.

<sup>159</sup> According to these stakeholders, on the top-down level, social innovation is related to renewed processes of planning, simplification and controlling.

<sup>160</sup> Interview 3.

The employment service providers<sup>161</sup>, defined social innovation as a bottom-up process. According to Maurizio Sorcioni, the aim of socially innovative policies is to transfer direct resources to the persons and not to the institutions<sup>162</sup>, by rationalizing labour policies, creating innovative information systems, new administrative archives, favoring experimental policies in particular in vocational trainings. Secondly, Domenico Bova highlighted how social innovation is linked to educational paths especially favoring a constant support from entrepreneurs in vocational schools. Finally, Lea Battistoni added the need to favor, through public funds, juvenile associations with innovative projects supporting young people.

### 7.1.2 Social innovation and youth policies

The existing policies are generally perceived as not socially innovative. As for the *Youth Guarantee*, according to national government policy makers<sup>163</sup>, the available regional guidelines are not particularly “innovative” and mainly rooted in existing policies. Furthermore, it is still early to provide a comprehensive analysis of the effects of this policy. However, vice Minister, Carlo Dell’Aringa highlighted that there should be a follow-up on youth involvement and on the general outcomes of the programme<sup>164</sup>. As for experimental developments in the *Youth Guarantee* framework, *CGIL* added the need to transform the temporary experimental measures of income relief and contributions’ cuts linked to productivity into permanent policies.

As for apprenticeship, *CGIL* highlighted a lack of full experimental developments of the vocational apprenticeship both at the national<sup>165</sup> and local level. However, employment support providers<sup>166</sup> outlined the innovative role in tackling unemployment of new apprenticeship programmes and vocational trainings oriented to firm’s needs. *Italia Lavoro* considered several good practices, for example that of six months paid internships for young students, supported by entrepreneurial tutorials. Although more harmonized standards at the local levels are needed, according to *Italia Lavoro*, after 24 months from the beginning of this internship’ experimental programmes, 58 percent among the young unemployed involved found a job. Moreover, Domenico Bova quoted two effective experiments: 1) “job lab” (botteghe di mestiere)<sup>167</sup> with 150 big, small shops and micro-entrepreneurs involved in programmes oriented to vocational training schools with internships and direct professional artisans’ school visits; and 2) “voucher for occasional

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<sup>161</sup> Interviews 1, 8 and 9.

<sup>162</sup> In this instance, Maurizio Sorcioni quoted good practices in Lombardia and Piemonte.

<sup>163</sup> Interviews 2 and 7.

<sup>164</sup> As the creation of click lavoro: [www.clicclavoro.gov.it](http://www.clicclavoro.gov.it).

<sup>165</sup> Interviewee 10 added that national guidelines are still not finalized and procedures at regional level are not standardized.

<sup>166</sup> Interviews 1, 8 and 9.

<sup>167</sup> Domenico Bova outlined a peculiar role in innovative policies towards young unemployed of the small artisans.

and optional jobs”, defined by the interviewee as a “flexible way to avoid black-market”<sup>168</sup>.

Finally, *Confindustria* quoted several innovative programmes, aimed at favoring internships and vocational trainings for young workers. Firstly, the “a hundred internships” (*cento tirocini*) initiative, supported by *Confindustria*, with the aim to support trainings of young people within its controlled entrepreneurial associations. Secondly, “orientation and entrepreneurial culture”, which has the target to promote firms’ visits and participation of young entrepreneurs in vocational schools’ students<sup>169</sup>. In addition “*la tua idea d’impresa*” (i.e. “your idea for a firm”) is an award to the best entrepreneurial ideas presented by high school’ students. Forth, the *Welfarma* project has the target to re-qualify and re-place workers in the pharmaceutical sector. In addition, *Confindustria* promoted vocational trainings<sup>170</sup> to form textile, construction and mechanical sectors management.

## 7.2 What supports the introduction and implementation of greater social innovation?

All the interviewees outlined a general need to support the introduction and implementation of innovative ideas. The trade union representatives<sup>171</sup> considered vital to intervene in enhancing youth participation in policy making and in tackling unemployment in disadvantaged areas. Elena Lattuada quoted the creation of the *CGIL*’s National Coordination for Youth that has contacts in every region with youth associations. The target is to ameliorate the awareness on available opportunities for young unemployed (internships, rights at the regional level, etc.), in some Italian cities there are also centers for the youth within *Camere del Lavoro*<sup>172</sup>. Moreover, Liliana Ocmin quoted the *Policoro* project, supported by *CISL*. The target of this programme is to provide educational trainings to create new firms in disadvantaged areas<sup>173</sup>.

*Italia Lavoro* and *Nuovi Lavori*<sup>174</sup> highlighted new policies to anticipate the introduction of a guaranteed minimum income. Lea Battistoni quoted a number of innovative programmes at the local level financed by the Ministry of Labour with the aim to support juvenile associations. These groups, supported by local administrations, introduced social projects for creating jobs giving loans to applicants without sufficient guarantees<sup>175</sup>. *CGIL*

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<sup>168</sup> These vouchers are available at tobacco shops and local *INPS*’s offices (National Institute for Social Welfare). Those who need a caretaker for old persons or a domestic servant, etc. can record themselves on the *INPS* website and give the voucher to the employee at the end of the working day.

<sup>169</sup> These projects are especially supported by the body sector: *Ucimu, Federchimica e Assocarta*.

<sup>170</sup> Supported by local entrepreneurial associations.

<sup>171</sup> Interviews 4,5,6 and 10.

<sup>172</sup> Centers for Syndacalst Labour Unions.

<sup>173</sup> According to the unionist in 15 years 500 new firms have been create as an outcome of this programme now introduced in every Italian region.

<sup>174</sup> Interviews 1, 8 and 9.

<sup>175</sup> According to *Nuovi Lavori*, 50 per cent of these experimental groups are still in place as centers of juvenile association.

highlighted several experiments of guaranteed income provided by the Toscana region that were useful to support new start-ups.

### 7.2.2 Actors of new ideas

Third sector organizations are especially prone to realize new bottom-up ideas. *Legacoopsociali*<sup>176</sup> highlighted several examples of social innovation policies. Firstly, Paola Menetti quoted a National forum on innovative start-up projects that provides a network that connects individuals, families and social actors. These projects have different targets, one of them is to favor a better use of the public space in the urban context (i.e. the European initiative on *Smart Cities*)<sup>177</sup>. Secondly, in the Southern regions several projects have the aim to re-qualify places confiscated to local mafias. Finally, in Calabria and Umbria, several projects support “productive cooperatives” providing social services. As for start-ups, Elena Lattuada added examples of municipalities supporting innovative projects. For instance, the municipality of Milan promoted innovative start-up’s projects realized by young people who favored relationships between universities, innovation and auto-entrepreneurship.

## 8. Discussion and conclusions

This chapter analyzed key national youth policies through a review of secondary data and national statistics and an empirical research component. The target has been to disentangle the State interventions aimed at combating inequalities amongst young generations, especially in the context of an economic crisis that is leading to increased inequalities.

Disadvantaged youth has been defined in reference to a lack of opportunities by a series of dimensions (familial economic background, access to education, territorial origins, gender and age). The stakeholders interviewed, highlighted that the most disadvantaged amongst young generations are the long-term unemployed young people (the 15 to 24 years old ones) with low educational levels. It has been reported that disadvantaged youth do not have enough of a voice for participating and influencing public policies aimed at tackling unemployment. Nevertheless in the policy making process of the *Youth Guarantee*, youth representatives have at least been addressed. Although, according to the available data, they did not give a relevant contribution to the policy making process.

At the national level, the definition of social innovation is very broad. Most of the involved interviewees agreed that the term is related to policies aiming at filling unmet social needs through an enhanced educational and participative process of young people. However, the existing policies tackling young unemployment are generally perceived as not socially innovative. The *Youth Guarantee* has been considered as a first attempt to use an innovative approach towards this concern. However, other, mostly bottom-up,

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<sup>176</sup> Interview 3.

<sup>177</sup> In this case, Paola Menetti quoted projects of requalification of old and abandoned railways by social cooperatives of young people.

good practices (apprenticeship, de-taxation, educational trainings, etc.) have been quoted within the framework of existing public policies.

The stakeholders' general perception of social innovation has a strong connection with the given theoretical understandings. However, with reference to the definition and implementation of these policies, a confusion about the meaning of bottom-up processes in the framework of youth policies has been highlighted. With the exception of the involved sector provider and *CGIL*<sup>178</sup>, employment support services, government policy makers and trade union representatives did not appear prone to favor an effective participation of youth representatives in policy making and in institutionalizing such grass-root practices.

Young people do not have effective capabilities of voice and to make their opinions count in the policy-making processes. Consequently, often other people define their needs, acting as their substitutes, and decide the best ways to satisfy them. Youth groups appeared fragmented and ineffective. For this reason, often major national unions act as youth representatives' substitutes. However, also a general lack in union involvement in disadvantaged youth's policy making has been highlighted.

Finally, this research outlined a general limitation of the existing public policies (definition, development and implementation), with an absence of adequate opportunities of available educational paths, in particular with reference to a lack of vocational training schools oriented to work. Also the lack of well-targeted policies and sufficient financial resources to contrast youth unemployment has been highlighted. In addition, the implementation of the existing policies appeared often not integrated at the national and local levels. Finally, the young unemployed appeared not sufficiently involved in policy making. All these limitations are brought about by more complex factors, among them the mismatch between available educational opportunities and the labour market, inadequate policies to subsidize young unemployed and high labour costs have been quoted.

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<sup>178</sup> Interviews 3 and 10.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of key issues

Youth policy	Youth unemployment has been a matter of public policy in Italy since the 1970s. In the last decades, the aim of the Italian governments has been to strengthen the labour market's flexibility. However, a general limitation of the existing public policies aimed at tackling poverty and inequalities has been highlighted. The main target of the existing policies are the 15-24 years old young unemployed. However, the issues facing young people are addressed with a lack of well-targeted policies and sufficient financial resources to contrast youth unemployment.
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	Disadvantaged youth have been defined in reference to a lack of opportunities in one or more valued spheres – such as employment, education, social and political participation – because of circumstances exogenous to the individual – as, familial socio-economic status and background circumstances, territorial origins and demographics. Disadvantages can reinforce each other across dimensions, acting as “corrosive disadvantages”. The disadvantaged may include the long-term unemployed, those who interrupted their educational path early on or did not start a stable and fulfilling professional life. Finally, disabled, former detainees and former drug addicts are often considered disadvantaged. Usually, at the national level policies aimed at tackling youth disadvantage and inequalities are distinct per dimension. At the municipal level, the <i>Social Card</i> is gradually becoming a subsidy to youth unemployment.
Social innovation	Social innovation refers to innovative activities and services, motivated by the goal of meeting a social need, and that are predominantly diffused through organizations whose primary purposes are social value-added. The involved stakeholders gave a very broad definition of social innovation. Most of them outlined that the term is related to policies aiming at filling unmet social needs related to an enhanced educational and participative process of young people. The existing policies tackling youth unemployment are generally perceived as not socially innovative. The <i>Youth Guarantee</i> has been considered the first attempt to apply an innovative approach in this concern. However, other good practices (apprenticeship, de-taxation, educational trainings, etc.) have been quoted within the framework of existing public policies.
Participation	Young people participate in the policy development and implementation when they have effective capabilities to voice their problems and make them count in the policy-making process. This does not happen when other people define their needs, acting as their substitutes, and decide the best ways to satisfy them. However, in the Italian national context, young people tend not to participate in the policy making process. Consequently, often other people (unions, government policy makers, etc.) define their needs, acting as their substitutes. In the shaping process of the <i>Youth Guarantee</i> , youth representatives have been heard, but without making a relevant contribution to the policy-making process.

The abilities of young people	A general lack of harmonized certifications of expertise at the national level has been highlighted. As for NEETs, <i>Italia Lavoro</i> <sup>179</sup> reported a distinction related to age groups: 15-19 years old, 20-24 years old, 25-29 years old; and educational levels and primary activity: without qualifications, primary school, secondary school, vocational school, high school, degree; looking for a job, inactive non available to work, inactive deterred to find a job, inactive waiting for opportunities.
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<sup>179</sup> Monitor 48 *Italia Lavoro*, Aprile 2013.

## Appendix 2. Key Italian Government employment policies

Employment and apprenticeship	Law 196/1997	- introduction of temporary contracts: the norm sets the extension of the applicability of fixed-term contracts. It introduces apprenticeship' contracts for young people (16-24 years old). It favors internships of students and people looking for a first occupation. The Law considers interventions in favor of youth unemployed (21-32 years old) in disadvantaged areas. <a href="http://www.camera.it">www.camera.it</a>
Employment	Law 30/2003	- introduction of flexibility in the labour market: the law enhances various forms of atypical contracts (e.g. job on call, job sharing, projects work contracts, staff leasing, part-time works, regularization of outsourcing practices). <a href="http://www.lavoro.gov.it">www.lavoro.gov.it</a>
Employment	Law 92/2012	- transforming temporary in long-term contracts, especially for young employed. <a href="http://www.lavoro.gov.it">www.lavoro.gov.it</a>
Employment and training	Laws 69-76/2013	- setting incentives in order to employ young workers (18-29 years old). Cooperatives of young workers in social, environmental and cultural fields are considered eligible for funding. It incentivizes those firms who decide to employ young who are eligible of unemployment benefits (Aspi). It reactivates apprenticeship' contracts and internships. It extends the number of eligible applicants for Social Cards. It approves a set of measures for disadvantaged areas. The Social Card's provisions has been extended. It introduces the SIA (Subsidy for an Active Inclusion) has been approved without any reference to the age, work or familiar background of the perspective beneficiaries. SIA entails an active support to the disadvantaged subjects with the aim to help them to emerge from poverty. <a href="http://www.lavoro.gov.it">www.lavoro.gov.it</a>
Employment and training	Youth Guarantee	- beginning a long-term plan to tackle youth unemployment with the aim to favor fixed term contracts, auto-entrepreneurship and to contrast social exclusion in the Southern Italian regions. A consistent support for NEET is provided, especially through new educational trainings. The aim is to equalize at the national level processes of local expertise validations, favoring auto-entrepreneurship and self-employment. In addition, it envisions a general reform of available employment support services and agencies, improving public and private actors' capability. <a href="http://www.cliclavoro.gov.it">www.cliclavoro.gov.it</a>

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Interviewee 3: Paola Menetti, President of Legacoopsociali, Rome 27 November 2013.

Interviewee 4: UIL (Italian Union of Labour) National Secretary, the trade union representatives Antonio Focillo, Rome 28 November 2013.

Interviewee 5: UIL Labour Secretary Guglielmo Loy, Rome 29 November 2013.

Interviewee 6: Liliana Ocmin, *CISL* (Italian Trade Union Labour Confederation) National Secretary for Women, Youth and Discriminations, Rome, 2 December 2013.

Interviewee 7: Carlo Dell’Aringa, Vice-Minister of Labour, Rome 3 December 2013.

Interviewee 8: Maurizio Sorcioni, *Italia Lavoro*, Rome, 4 December 2013.

Interviewee 9: Domenico Bova, *Italia Lavoro*, Rome, 5 December 2013.

Interviewee 10: Elena Lattuada, *CGIL* (General Italian Confederation of Labour) National Secretary for Youth, Rome, December 2013.

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## **Web Sites**

[www.cliclavoro.gov.it](http://www.cliclavoro.gov.it)

[www.corriere.it/economia/13\\_novembre\\_03/giovani-fallisce-bonus-assunzioni-incentivi-crisi-anche-sommerso-83f492b0-4457-11e3-b60e-fee364a304ed.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/economia/13_novembre_03/giovani-fallisce-bonus-assunzioni-incentivi-crisi-anche-sommerso-83f492b0-4457-11e3-b60e-fee364a304ed.shtml)

[www.finanza.com](http://www.finanza.com)

[www.istat.it/en](http://www.istat.it/en)

[www.italialavoro.it/wps/portal/italialavoro](http://www.italialavoro.it/wps/portal/italialavoro)

[www.lavoro.gov.it/PrimoPiano/Documents/Documento%20Garanzia%20Giovani%20approvato%20dalla%20Struttura%20di%20Missione.pdf](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/PrimoPiano/Documents/Documento%20Garanzia%20Giovani%20approvato%20dalla%20Struttura%20di%20Missione.pdf)

[www.lavoro.gov.it/Strumenti/StudiStatistiche/lavoro/Documents/Nota%20Spese%20Politiche%202011.pdf](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/Strumenti/StudiStatistiche/lavoro/Documents/Nota%20Spese%20Politiche%202011.pdf)

[www.nuovi-lavori.it](http://www.nuovi-lavori.it)

[www.repubblica.it/economia/2011/12/29/news/istat\\_un\\_italiano\\_su\\_4\\_a\\_rischio\\_pover\\_t-27343779](http://www.repubblica.it/economia/2011/12/29/news/istat_un_italiano_su_4_a_rischio_pover_t-27343779)

[www.voxeu.org/article/european-labour-market-reform](http://www.voxeu.org/article/european-labour-market-reform)

# Chapter 11: Socio-Economic Political Context: The Netherlands

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## 1. Abstract

Despite its late birth, the Dutch welfare state is known to consist of a wide array of social provisions and welfare arrangements, meant to keep social inequality –largely regarded a non-desirable development in the Netherlands– at a low level. However, despite some achievements, social inequalities are noticeable in the Netherlands, even more so since the economic crisis. Moreover, ‘disadvantage’ as such is not explicitly addressed by present-day Dutch social policies, and related issues are predominantly framed in terms of ‘risk’ or ‘vulnerability’. This report explores how these concepts relate to disadvantage affecting youth, primarily in two policy areas: crime prevention and reduction of school drop-out. The report also explores the avenues for youth participation in the Netherlands. ‘Participation-talk’ is rather common in Dutch policy regarding young people, and opportunities for participation are numerous and diverse, notably through youth councils at various levels. However, there is not much evidence of the voice of young people in the policy areas regarding young people. On the contrary, it seems that interactions between policy makers and young people merely deal with general policy issues and mostly involve young people having a high educational level. Additionally, it seems that the opportunities for participation merely target securing grass-root support for generally top-down developed policy rather than allowing influence in policy on the side of the grassroots. In policy measures aimed at actively encouraging participation among disadvantaged sections of society (i.e. not only young people), ideal ‘participation’ is predominantly defined as ‘no longer depending on social benefits and/or state-funded programmes’ (WMO, participatiewet). As far as youth is concerned, acquiring a ‘basic qualification’ is widely regarded as a prerequisite for (economic) autonomy, beyond which participation is scarcely addressed in the national political arena. Hence, it is far more about social participation than political participation. A multidimensional understanding of promoting participation among disadvantaged groups –aimed at giving them a chance for voice- is still to come in the Netherlands. Yet there are worthwhile foundations for this.

## 2. Introduction

In this report we focus on the Dutch national socio-economic and political context. With a total of about 17 million inhabitants, the Netherlands is a parliamentary democracy (since 1848), organised as a unitary state. Despite the relatively late birth of the Dutch welfare state, social provisions and welfare arrangements have eventually been established to a

high degree, so as to keep social inequality -largely regarded a non-desirable development in the Netherlands- at a low level. Nowadays 'disadvantage' as such is not explicitly addressed in Dutch social policies, and related issues are predominantly framed in terms of 'risk' or 'vulnerability'. Consequentially, writing this report on disadvantage affecting young people implied reviewing a collection of policy areas related to youth vulnerability. Although this foremost appears to be associated with school dropout, links are also regularly drawn between school dropout (and risk of), youth unemployment, and criminality. We also provide a general context of employment and education policy areas in the Netherlands.

Generally speaking, the commitment of the Dutch state to social problems is very high. After World War II, in line with Keynesian policies first implemented by the British government (De Swaan, 1988), a social security system was developed in the Netherlands, providing a guaranteed income to all citizens who were not able (temporarily or permanently) to support themselves. According to the famous typology of Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990), the Dutch welfare state may be interpreted as a combination of the continental (corporatist) model and the Scandinavian (social democratic) model. At first, the Dutch welfare state was mainly of the continental type. Later, a number of social-democratic ingredients were gradually included. The first stages in the development of the Dutch central government consisted in providing benefits so as to complement income for the elderly (1947/1957), the unemployed (1952), and those who were not able to work due to illness or inaptitude (1967). Rather soon the Dutch welfare state was given a universalistic taste with measures like the social minimum income (1965) and state-funding granted to a great number of social facilities for all in the 1970s. Similar to the Scandinavian countries, these benefits and facilities have been linked to high tax rates in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, soon after the development of the welfare sector, the economic crisis undermined state expenses. As early as the 1980s, the governmental welfare policy increasingly aimed at focusing on the most vulnerable segments of the population and social provisions have been gradually reframed along the means-testing principle (Baillergeau et al., 2005). A number of social provisions and facilities meant for a general public were soon transferred to civil society (namely some of those providing youth with leisure activities), while other provisions and/or facilities have had to face severe budget cuts (such as many neighbourhood and/or community centres).

Means-testing and targeting social benefits and facilities have been regarded as a reliable way to make the Dutch welfare policy 'efficient' and 'affordable'. From the 1980s onwards the prospect of a more efficient welfare was twined with another common concern in Dutch society: the democratization of policy. First of all, in the 1990s, all kinds of consultative bodies were created, allowing space for the voice of citizens and recipients. Later on, a new take on democratization gained ground, through a call for participation of citizens and recipients (Duyvendak, 1999). In the area of welfare policy, an important step in this was the passing of the WMO (Social Support Act) in 2007, a law aimed at "foster[ing] the life skills and social participation of citizens and increas[ing] the social cohesiveness of Dutch society" (SCP, 2014). Notably through incentives towards community- and peer support, elderly people and people with disabilities could be enabled to live in an ordinary neighbourhood, which has been presented as a chance to 'fully participate in society' (Verhoeven and Tonkens, 2013; Hurenkamp et al., 2012). The popularity of the participation language reached a new step in 2013, through the yearly speech of the king, which is largely drafted

by the national government and depicts their main foci: the latest edition of the king's speech stated that the Netherlands is changing into a 'participation society', in which "everybody who is capable is expected to take responsibility for his or her own life and surroundings" (Rijksoverheid, 2013). Overall, Dutch social policy thus underwent a radical change from far-reaching welfare provisions towards incentives to foster 'own responsibility' amongst disadvantaged sections of Dutch society (framed as participation).

In spite of a reduced commitment of governmental bodies to the funding of social benefits and welfare facilities, policy targeting (disadvantaged) youth in the Netherlands remains considerable though fragmented and also highly subjected to change over time, at least at the level of policy making. As a result, this report does not intend to be all-embracing (as it obviously would be an illusion to think this might be possible), but is instead predominantly meant as an exploration of the main developments over the past few years.

Besides the development of means-tested benefits and provisions and the upturn of participation talk, the focus on vulnerability has gained tremendous attention in Dutch governmental policy over the last decades. This has largely been at the expense of conceptualisations of disadvantage in terms of social inequality or exclusion, which are clearly less popular nowadays, as it will be discussed in later sections of this report.

In spite of the long-lasting commitment of the Dutch state to addressing social problems, many other actors also play a role. For many centuries, the Dutch Christian churches were the main care providers, for the sake of charity. During the growth of the Dutch Welfare state, most of the old private charity organisations turned into 100% state-funded institutions, thereby losing a degree of independence. In turn, at the time of the retrenchment of the Welfare State a wealth of new operators gained ground in the area of social policy, both for policy advice and implementation. As a result, what could be typified as the third sector in the Netherlands consists of a variety of organisations, either rooted in a long tradition of non-profit action or tailor-made organisations meant to take over previously state-led social policy tasks in a supposedly more efficient way. Obviously there are variations among them concerning the degree to which they comply with governmental policy options. Therefore, resorting to the notion of 'third sector' in the Netherlands is problematic, and one cannot speak of 'the' voice of the third sector in efforts to stipulate deviations from 'the' voice of the government.

### **3. Methods**

#### **3.1 Document analysis**

Because of the rather extensive literature on Dutch welfare policies, this report primarily draws upon a detailed document analysis (n=115). To assemble relevant documents, we mainly concentrated on the period 2009-2014 and used the following keywords, in various combinations and both as noun and adjective (if applicable): In Dutch; jongeren, jeugd, jeugdbeleid, jeugdzorg, nadeel, ongelijkheid, risico, kwetsbaar, achterstand, kansarm, armoede, participatie, integratie, emancipatie, uitsluiting, discriminatie, schooluitval, voortijdig, werkloos, criminaliteit, sociale, innovatie. In English; Netherlands, Dutch, youth, young, policy, care, disadvantage, inequality, risk, vulnerable, marginalised, deprived,

poverty, participation, integration, emancipation, exclusion, discrimination, school, dropout, unemployed, crime, empowerment, social, innovation.

As search devices we have used Google, Google Scholar, databases of the national government [Rijksoverheid], UvA library, various university databases to track theses and dissertations, Narcis, NWO, LexisNexis. Next to this we have specifically consulted websites of major Dutch research agencies and knowledge institutes (see underneath). Through our systematic search we have acquired information from various sources:

#### *National government and ministries*

**Regeerakkoord** (Coalition Agreement; main national policy document, outcome of negotiations among the political parties committed to the governing coalition); **OCW** (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science); **SZW** (Social Affairs and Employment); **VROM** (the former Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, currently called the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment); **VWS** (Health, Welfare and Sport)<sup>180</sup>.

#### *Research agencies and councils for advice to the national government*<sup>181</sup>

**CBS** (Statistics Netherlands; this national agency has a legal responsibility for collecting and processing data in order to publish statistics to be used in practice, by policymakers and for scientific research); **Onderwijsraad** (Education Council); **RMO** (Council for Social Development); **SCP** (The Netherlands Institute for Social Research); **SER** (The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands); **WRR** (Scientific Council for Government Policy).

#### *Semi-independent agencies for social scientific research*<sup>182</sup>

**FORUM** (Institute for multicultural affairs); **Movisie** (Centre for social development); **Nicis Institute** (former institute that generated knowledge to address national and international urban issues, in 2012 merged into Platform31); **NJi** (National Youth Institute; Dutch national institute for compiling, verifying and disseminating knowledge on children and youth matters); **Verwey-Jonker Institute** (Institute for social scientific research).

#### *Agencies in charge of policy implementation*

**Bureau Jeugdzorg** (Youth Care; a national body operating through regional and municipal offices to provide support and protection to children and young people aged 0-18 and their parents or caregivers, either in a voluntary or forced framework); **DWI** (Department of Work and Income; municipal social services); **UWV** (Employee Insurance Agency; an autonomous administrative authority commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment to provide benefits, employment support, social medical affairs and labour market data services).

#### *National organisations that defend the interests of various groups of young people*

**CNV** and **FNV Jong** (Youth trade unions); **JOB** (Youth Organisation Vocational Education); **LAKS** (National Action Committee High School Students); **NJR** (National Youth Council).

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<sup>180</sup> Since Dutch youth policy largely is an interdepartmental affair, also the Ministry of Security and Justice (VenJ) has contributed to some of the policy reports that were analysed.

<sup>181</sup> Providing both solicited and unsolicited advice, often in cooperation with academic experts.

<sup>182</sup> To a greater or lesser extent operating by order of the government.

### 3.2 Semi-structured interviews

Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with both scientific and field experts (n=17) to double-check findings and address pending questions<sup>183</sup>. Because it proved particularly difficult to detect ‘the voice’ of young people in the literature and policy documents that were analysed, this was the most central topic of the interviews<sup>184</sup>. These have been conducted with the following experts (in alphabetic order): dr. Dana Feringa (Fontys Hogeschool); Felix Kievit (NJR); Gijs Kool (LAKS); drs. Hanneke Huls (Jongeren Participatie); Jarno van den Heuvel (JOB); drs. Jodi Mak (Verwey-Jonker Instituut); dr. Judith Metz (Hogeschool van Amsterdam); dr. Marit Hopman (Universiteit Utrecht); drs. Marja Valkestijn (NJI); prof. dr. Micha de Winter (Universiteit van Utrecht); dr. Menno Hurenkamp (Wiardi Beckman Stichting); dr. Rineke van Daalen (Universiteit van Amsterdam); prof. dr. Ramon Spaaij (Victoria University Melbourne / Universiteit van Amsterdam); dr. Rob Gilsing (Verwey-Jonker Instituut); Robbert Coenmans (FNV Jong)<sup>185</sup>.

## 4. National definitions

This section focuses on how social problems relating to youth are conceptualised by national governmental agencies in the Netherlands and addressed through statistical data produced at the national level. It therefore draws on content analysis of policy documents meant to design special measures for certain sections of youth, defined as in need of intervention (section 4.1.), and on statistical data produced by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and accessible to a large audience via the web (section 4.2.).

### 4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth

In the Netherlands, the term ‘youth’ covers a wide age group -ranging from 0 to 27- and is employed differently in different policy areas: Youth care, for example, is usually aimed at providing protection to children and young people between 0 and 18, whereas policy measures concerning employment are targeted at ‘youth’ between 16 and 27.

Similarly, the term ‘disadvantage’ is closely linked to the context in which such a “lack of genuine opportunities for secure functionings” (Wolff and De-Shalit, 2007: 182) is experienced or defined and may for example be related to feelings of discrimination, deprivation, negligence, et cetera. As an ‘external label’ the exact translation of

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<sup>183</sup> Yet this report also benefitted from the knowledge exchanged during a workshop on the aspirations of young people living in difficult circumstances, organized as part of our contribution to WP4 and WP5 (17 January 2014, attended by 20 experts).

<sup>184</sup> Additionally, prof. dr. Herman van de Werfhorst (Universiteit van Amsterdam) and prof. dr. Jaap Dronkers (Universiteit van Maastricht) have provided advice concerning statistical data on school dropout.

<sup>185</sup> All interviewees and advisors gave permission to be named. Of course none of them bears any responsibility concerning the contents of this report.

‘disadvantage’ [nadeel]<sup>186</sup> is not commonly used in the Netherlands in reference to particular groups of young people. Instead, a variety of related phrasings is employed<sup>187</sup>, as will be discussed underneath.

#### 4.1.1 Various conceptualisations of ‘disadvantaged youth’

Although the Dutch language comprises an equivalent of disadvantage [nadeel] and an equivalent of underprivileged [kansarm], these words proved not to be regularly used in recent policy report and talks. On the contrary a few other conceptualisations of ‘disadvantaged youth’ rick high in policy language and will be presented in this section.

##### ‘Risk youth’

A general phrasing, regularly encountered in policy documents and also by far the most popular in the media<sup>188</sup>, is ‘risk youth’<sup>189</sup> [risicojongeren], which usually evokes negative associations by establishing a link between ‘risk youth’ and problems such as nuisance, criminal activities, etc. In the 2010 Coalition Agreement was for example explicitly stated that transgressions by ‘risk youth’ would be repressed by instantaneous penalties (Rijksoverheid, 2010: 39). In line with the focus on problematic behaviour, considerably more boys than girls are considered to belong to the category ‘risk youth’ (NJI, 2011b: 13) and over the past ten years particular attention has been paid to problems caused by ‘risk youth’ from ‘Moroccan’ and ‘Antillean’ descent (Nicis, 2009; VROM, 2010), many of whom belong to the lowest sections of the Dutch society as far as income is concerned.

To keep track of so called ‘risk youth’, a national digital network -the Reference Index Risk Youth [Verwijsindex Risicojongeren]- has been created in 2010, by means of which care providers can report concerns about particular young people in order to check whether colleagues have similar views and thus enable cooperation and deliberation at an early stage (Rijksoverheid, 2014b). Doubts exist, however, about both the added value (DSP, 2012) and the effects of the database, as “[this] combination of prevention and repression entails the archiving of risky individuals and their selection for ‘early intervention’” (Schinkel, 2011: 365), largely focused on crime control.

Since there is no clear-cut definition of ‘risk youth’, interpretations of the term are often adjusted according to the situation, but are usually linked to the risk of social dropout

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<sup>186</sup> All translations from Dutch to English and vice versa are made by the authors. Whenever considered appropriate, the Dutch phrasings are provided between brackets.

<sup>187</sup> Although young people with a ‘disability’ [beperving] may also be considered ‘disadvantaged’, we have not specifically looked at policy aimed at this target group.

<sup>188</sup> Substantiated by a quantitative comparison of Dutch mainstream national newspapers through LexisNexis.

<sup>189</sup> This translation stays as close as possible to the Dutch phrase, and largely bears the same connotations as ‘youth at risk’. However, where ‘youth at risk’ linguistically seems to start off from youth being confronted with risks, ‘risk youth’ [risicojongeren] appears to suggest that they foremost pose a risk to their surroundings and are only a fraction away from becoming ‘problem youth’ [probleemjongeren]. Though ‘risk youth’ is not a widely employed translation, it has for example been used by Van Houdt and Schinkel (2013).

and/or delinquency (Nicis, 2009). Risk factors may have internal roots, e.g. cognitive constraints, and/or external ones, e.g. family situation, poverty, debts, unemployment, and so on (Nji, 2011b: 80). Therefore the Netherlands Youth Institute states to consider it undesirable to largely focus on the risks which such young people pose to their surroundings and (more indirectly) to society at large, as usually happens: “By focusing on problematic behaviour of ‘risk youth’ the circumstances remain unchanged, while usually the circumstances make them overburdened and vulnerable” (Nji, 2011b: 79).

### **‘Vulnerable youth’**

A third definition -‘vulnerable youth’ [kwetsbare jongeren]- appears to be more generally accepted, and usually suggests there is a considerable chance that the young people thus categorized will not succeed in acquiring and retaining economic independency, unless provided with extra support to achieve this (ITS/IVA, 2013; SCP, 2013; SZW, 2011: 3; VWS, 2012: 1). Often, young people who drop out of school are in consequence labelled vulnerable. Simultaneously however, vulnerable young people are considered more liable to drop out of school. Cause and consequence are thus often regarded as interrelated (Movisie, 2009: 26). Emphasis is generally put on a (supposed) lack of capacities [draagkracht], which may cause ‘vulnerable young people’ to indulge in detrimental (in)activities.

Vulnerability is often associated with family situations; children whose parents have little income, a low education level, no job, poor health, and so on, are for instance considered to run a higher risk of developing psychosocial problems than children from families with less risk factors (RMO, 2012: 106). Next to such commonly recognized features of vulnerability, limited self-reliance is increasingly perceived as problematic. This applies to the social network and the skills that individuals have at their disposal to manage what happens in their lives, and is highly related to the current tendency to firstly address people’s own problem-solving capacities (SCP, 2013: 287,288).

### **‘Overburdened youth’**

In order to counterbalance the focus on problematic behaviour, the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) in 2009 introduced the term ‘overburdened youth’ [overbelaste jongeren] to call attention to the disadvantageous circumstances of particular young people. “These are pupils who carry a pile of problems ranging from limited skills and behavioural problems, to broken families, chronic poverty, debts, addiction, exposure to criminality, et cetera. These young people would perhaps like to acquire a school degree, but the accumulation of problems demands so much resilience that they simply collapse at a certain moment” (WRR, 2009: 11). Emphasis is being put on problematic circumstances which may eventually result in an imbalance between the capacities of young people and the excessive burden they have to carry.

As the realization of policy measures aimed at disadvantaged young people is to a large extent concretised at the local level, most municipalities use their own definition of ‘overburdened youth’ instead of the ‘national WRR-version’ (Deloitte, 2012: 12). The city council of Amsterdam for example employs the following modification: “Young people are

considered ‘overburdened’ when they are facing an accumulation of problems and have a high risk of school dropout. They are considered ‘highly overburdened’ when there is a large risk of school dropout and a large risk of social dropout” (quoted in Deloitte, 2012: 12). Although the WRR report has regularly been referred to over the past few years, the term ‘overburdened youth’ is nevertheless not frequently copied.

#### **4.1.2 Different focal points**

Although the conceptualisations of the phrasings ‘risk youth’, ‘vulnerable youth’ and ‘overburdened youth’ are largely consensual, they all entail different focal points: When applying the term ‘risk youth’, emphasis is put on problematic behaviour for which instantaneous penalties are often stated to be the most appropriate approach. By employing ‘overburdened youth’, attention is called to the supposedly excessive burden [draaglast], and references are usually made to problematic circumstances such as domestic problems, poverty, illness, addiction, etc. The phrase ‘vulnerable youth’ in turn accentuates lacking capacities [draagkracht], which are suggested to be mainly related to upbringing and lacking resources. Both for ‘overburdened’ and ‘vulnerable youth’, measures aimed at the reduction of early school leaving are generally argued to be crucial.

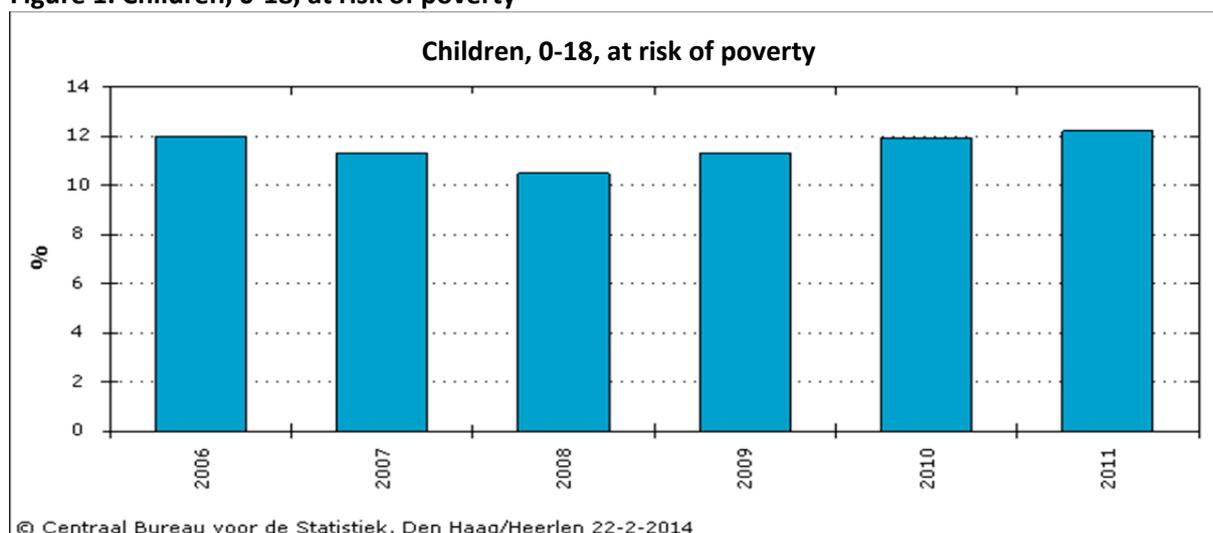
As critical side notes to the aforementioned definitions, some actors have pointed out that specific groups may be considered particularly disadvantaged as regards public opinion and care. For example because young people with multiple problems are regularly portrayed negatively in the media: “Many of them are incorrectly held responsible for problems, because of the bad image of the group” (<http://streetcornerwork.eu>). Findings show that in particular those young people of non-Dutch descent who most vigorously strive to integrate, experience negative effects of discrimination (Paalman, 2013). This is stated to be extra distressing as the needs of these groups appear to be insufficiently met by care providers, who often fail to connect to the life world of such young people, both literally and figuratively speaking (FORUM, 2011; Paalman, 2013).

## **4.2 Labour market position of young people and problems at labour market entry**

### **4.2.1 Poverty and exclusion**

Largely in line with the EU 2020-strategy the Dutch national government has called attention to poverty over the past few years, although problems concerning poverty and exclusion in the Netherlands might be considered minor in comparison to some other European countries. By Statistics Netherlands (CBS) ‘poverty’ has been defined as “not having sufficient money for a particular minimal consumption level” (CBS, 2014). In addition is specifically mentioned that -for practical reasons concerning quantitative analyses- interpretations of poverty are usually limited to material poverty.

Figure 1. Children, 0-18, at risk of poverty<sup>190</sup>



The national government has predominantly interpreted poverty as ‘frustrated chances and opportunities’ (Rijksoverheid, 2012: 24) and has consequentially chosen a specific approach, as explicated in the 2012 Coalition Agreement: “Extra money to families is not the solution. Education and work are vital ingredients. [...] Because a job is the best way to avert poverty, the government focuses on increasing employment and employability” (Rijksoverheid, 2012: 24).

#### 4.2.2 Economic recession and the effects of labour market flexibilization

The economic crisis that started in 2008, however, has made it increasingly difficult to find a job. As the recession has specifically resulted in a higher unemployment rate among starters on the labour market, it especially hits upon young people at the transition from school to work (CBS, 2010: 4). Although the entire labour force is affected by such economic fluctuations, this is more so for young people because they usually lack work experience and often have temporary contracts. Consequentially, they do not succeed in finding a job at all or are the first to be dismissed when employers are confronted with financial misfortunes (CBS, 2010; SZW, 2009).

<sup>190</sup> ‘Children at risk of poverty’ is further specified by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) as ‘those growing up in a multi-person household, with an income at or below 120 percent of the social minimum’. With the data provided through the official Youth Monitor [Jeugdmonitor] this graph can only be generated for the age category 0-18.

Figure 2. Unemployed youth, 15-25<sup>191</sup>

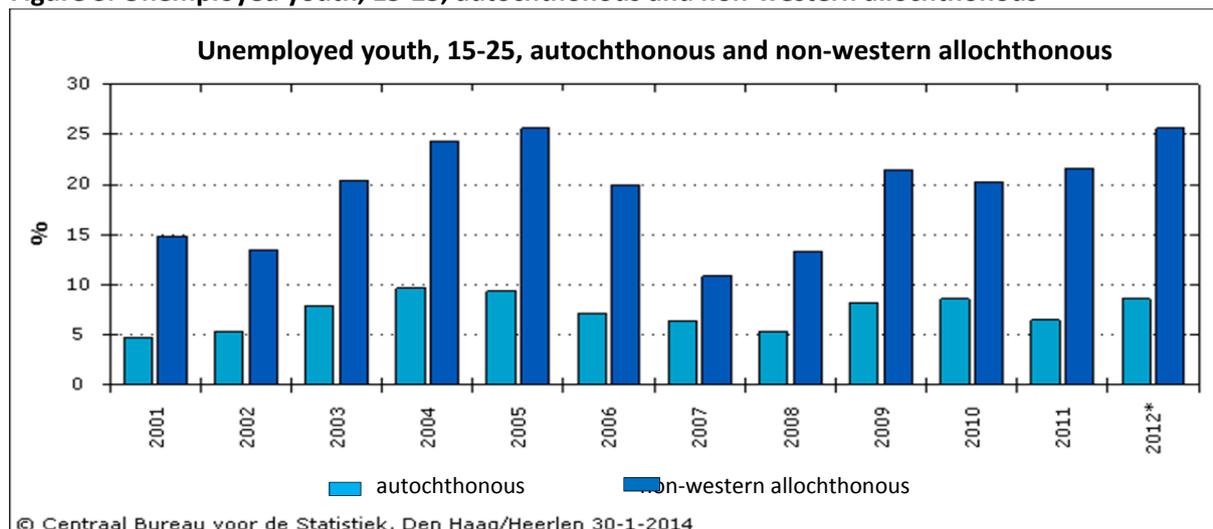


Over the past two decennia there has been an intensification of the trend towards flexible employment in the Netherlands, which has caused less educated young people to be doubly disadvantaged. Although the labour market flexibilization has resulted in a lower unemployment rate among higher educated individuals, the less educated have not benefited from this favourable development, and are instead mainly confronted with less standard employment, and hence less financial security (De Lange et al., 2012: 529). In addition to this, especially non-western young people have been put further behind as a consequence of the economic crisis, since the unemployment among this group has risen in a faster pace than among autochthonous<sup>192</sup> youth (SCP, 2012: 117; SER, 2013). We are critical towards these categorizations but cite them since others use them commonly in the Netherlands.

<sup>191</sup> This concerns young people between 15 and 25 who are not in education. 'Unemployed youth' is defined as 'young people who do not have a job, or have a job for less than 12 hours per week, and who are searching for a job of 12 hours or more per week and are available for this. 'Searching' is defined as 'activities have been undertaken in the past 4 weeks to find a paid job.

<sup>192</sup> Rather commonly used terms in the Netherlands: 'Autochthonous' refers to indigenous Dutch inhabitants, 'non-western allochthonous' to people with at least one parent originating from Africa, Latin-America or Asia (excl. Indonesia and Japan). People with a Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese or Antillean background are the largest groups in this category

**Figure 3. Unemployed youth, 15-25, autochthonous and non-western allochthonous**



The relatively high unemployment rate among non-western youth is argued to only partially be explainable by differences in level of education and work experience, and to hence also be attributable to discrimination on the Dutch labour market (FNV Jong 2011), which especially affects non-western young men as they are often associated with nuisance, unreliability, and threat (SCP, 2012). “Quantitative analyses indicate that discrimination in particular afflicts young people and starters on the labour market [...] [and] relatively often occurs in the lower segments of the labour market. This is alarming, as non-western migrants mainly look for jobs in these segments due to their level of education” (SCP, 2012: 112).

## **5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention**

### **5.1 The main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty**

Youth policy is not one, single policy area in the Netherlands. Rather, youth issues fall into the remit of a few ministries: the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Ministry of Security and Justice, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment; covering a wide range of tasks: Family policy and family and child related benefits; Child and Youth Care; Information and monitoring services (e.g. Youth Monitor); Children and Youth protection and custody; youth employment. Youth protection [jeugdzorg] is heard as the mainline in what is meant by youth policy in the Netherlands.

Although the overall coordinating responsibility for youth policy in the Netherlands lies with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), its actual implementation is rather fragmented and occurs at multiple levels: municipalities are responsible for issues related to education and employment, whereas targeted services for young people in need of special care are at present coordinated at the provincial level.

To advance coordination and cooperation concerning family and youth policy a special Ministry for Youth and Families [Jeugd en Gezin] was established in 2007. This ministry had its own portfolio and dedicated budget, and aimed to take control, and bridge various

sectional interests to the benefit of young people and their families (Rijksoverheid, 2007a). The policy programme entitled ‘All chances for all children’ [Alle kansen voor alle kinderen] emphatically referred to the international convention on the Right of the Child (Rijksoverheid, 2007a). In 2010, with the installation of a new –more right wing- cabinet, the specific Ministry for Youth and Families was abolished again.

Improvement of disadvantageous conditions is considered possible, though only to a certain degree, as “opportunities for growth and development are a matter of both nature and nurture. [...] Moreover, many circumstances are difficult to change [...] and at least one thing has become clear: If you want to compensate for disadvantage, you have to start early” (OCW, 2011: 36), as the government states in its report ‘Overcoming school failure: Policies that work’.

### **5.1.1 National policy measures aimed at diminishing school dropout**

The Dutch government predominantly ‘translated’ the Lisbon Agenda (2000-2010) into objectives to drastically reduce the number of school dropouts, for which in 2006 the ‘attack on dropout’ [aanval op de uitval] has been initiated (Rijksoverheid, 2006). The need for this has sometimes been explained by pointing at the negative effects which early school leaving may have for young people themselves; such as feelings of distress and unworthiness (see e.g. NJi, 2012: 1; Onderwijsraad, 2013a; WRR, 2009: 23). Often, however, emphasis is predominantly put on the disadvantageous consequences for society at large. In this regard links are usually drawn between school dropout and social problems such as nuisance, criminal activities, and/or extra costs caused by ‘those who no longer participate in society’ (see e.g. CBS, 2011: 15; NJi, 2012: 1; OCW, 2006: 1; OCW, 2013; WRR, 2009: 23). In the national report with which the national government in 2006 initiated their ‘attack’ on early school leaving was for example stated that “children who drop out have less chance to develop into independent adults who contribute to society in a useful way. [...] Criminality, high care expenses, low participation on the labour market, problems with integration<sup>193</sup>, deficient citizenship, radicalization: all of these problems are rooted in the fact that some children do not develop into the persons they could and might want to become” (OCW, 2006: 1)

The ‘Office to Control School Dropout’ [Bureau Leerplicht] and ‘Regional Report and Coordination Centres early school leavers’ [RMC’s]<sup>194</sup> are important actors in the endeavour to ‘combat’ early school leaving. With municipalities and schools performance-oriented covenants have been established, linked to performance-grants concerning targeted decrease of school dropout. Main measures to achieve this are:

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<sup>193</sup> In particular non-western allochthonous young people were stated to have a higher chance of school dropout.

<sup>194</sup> The Netherlands is divided in 39 local partnerships between schools, municipalities, public health services, youth care, and the police. Main tasks are to report and register early school leavers and to take care for referencing and replacing students.

## **Compulsory education and the basic qualification law**

Until the age of 16 pupils in the Netherlands are legally obliged to attend school. In 2007 the 'compulsory education law' [leerplicht] has been complemented with the 'basic qualification law' [kwalificatieplicht], which stipulates that young people who have not obtained at least a level 2 diploma of intermediate vocational education [MBO] can be forced to attend school until they are 18. To enable these measures, all high schools are required to report unauthorised absence of students who are at or under the age of 23, to a special 'truancy counter' [verzuimloket] of the executive organisation of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science [Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs]. Registration is facilitated by the personal Education Numbers that since 2004/5 are assigned to all pupils (WRR, 2009: 24). Amplified registration of truancy and interventions linked to compulsory education are considered essential, as truancy is generally perceived as a prelude to dropout (Nji, 2012; OCW, 2006; 2013; Weerman and Van der Laan, 2006).

## **Care and Advice Teams and Plus Programmes**

Other measures are focused on the provision of (mental) support to young people identified as 'overburdened' or 'vulnerable' by Care and Advice Teams [Zorg- en Adviesteams], which consist of education professionals, representatives from Youth Care, social work, municipal health service, the police, and someone from the Regional Report and Coordination Centre early school leavers or a compulsory education official [leerplichtambtenaar]. These Care and Advice Teams are currently active at nearly all schools for intermediate vocational or secondary education. Support is, for instance, provided by activating so called Plus Programmes [Plusvoorzieningen], which come in various combinations of education, care, support, and/or guidance towards the labour market; for example by utilizing 'plus coaches', debt counsellors, or by calling in extra care for pupils with mental health problems. The exact composition of the measures differs per district, dependant on the number of young people in need, the nature of their problems and facilities already present in the area (Nji, 2011a; ResearchNed, 2012). [Local authorities are expected to actively back up the Plus Programmes, as they are held responsible for nearly all relevant actions concerning training and employment, healthcare, social work, leisure activities, and safety.](#)

## **Improvement of school transitions and connections with the labour market**

Additionally, attention has been dedicated to smoothing and strengthening the transfer from preparatory intermediate vocational education [VMBO] to intermediate vocational education [MBO], and the government has stated to particularly focus on quality optimization of schools for intermediate vocational education in the coming years. Next to this, initiatives have been taken to improve the connection with follow-up training and the labour market.

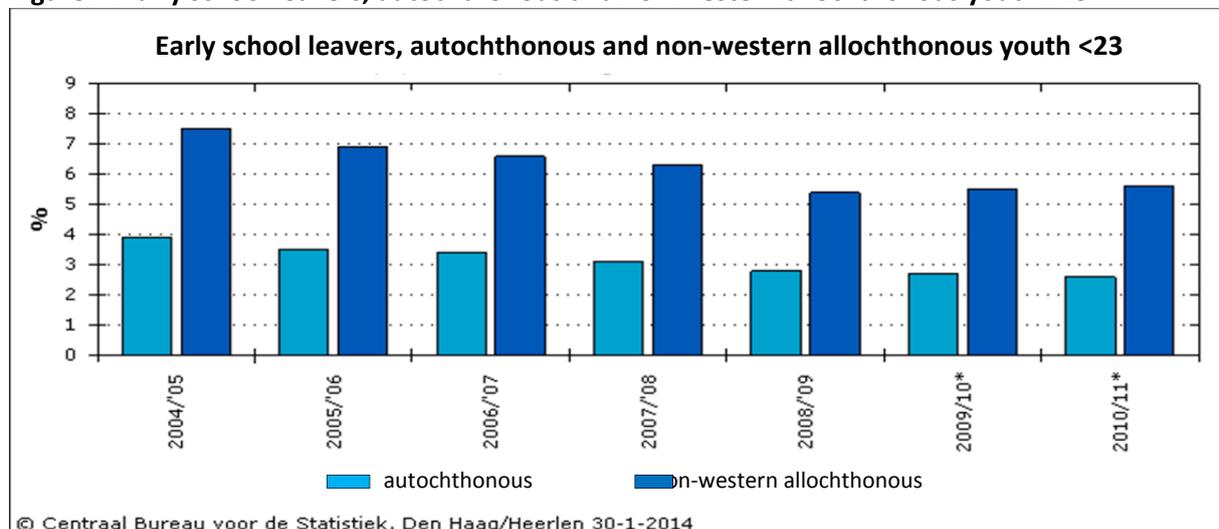
### **5.1.2 Developments concerning school dropout**

Over the past decennium the number of students leaving school without a basic qualification has decreased from 71.000 in 2002 (5.5%) to 27.950 (2.1%) in 2013. Aim of the government is to further reduce this number to a maximum of 25.000 in 2015.

According to the Education Council “the limits of the current policy to combat school dropout are in sight. The numbers show that a hard core of dropouts remains, on whom the measures do not have any effect” (Onderwijsraad, 2013a: 12). This group is expected to expand in the near future, among others because students have to meet increasingly higher demands (Onderwijsraad, 2013a). “Underlying question [...] is where the ‘own responsibility’ of parents and young people for educational success ends, and the responsibility of the governments starts. In times of economic hardship, as we are currently experiencing, this question becomes extra urgent. [...] Continuously should be reflected upon the investments needed for combatting social disadvantages, and the gains yielded by these investments in the longer term” (Onderwijsraad, 2011: 47).

In national policy reports, the number of school dropouts is generally mentioned in total numbers, but often also further specified for autochthonous and non-western allochthonous young people. In line with this, the Youth Monitor [Jeugdmonitor] -a national database that contains quantitative data on various issues concerning youth that is compiled by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) in comment of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS)- enables generation of graphs in which school dropout is related to variables such as ‘district’, ‘age’, ‘gender’, and ‘origin’ (figure 6). Although socio-economic status or education level of the parents are generally considered essential factors concerning early school leaving, such variables cannot be linked to it in this specific youth database<sup>195</sup>. This might be regarded exemplary for priorities set by the ministry with regard to early school leaving in the Netherlands.

**Figure 4. Early school leavers, autochthonous and non-western allochthonous youth <23**



### 5.1.3 Side-effects of the Dutch school system and the Basic Qualification Law

The strong segregation that exists in the Netherlands between ‘lower-status’ vocational education types and more academic ones has been accentuated by the ‘basic qualification law, which implies that a diploma of lower vocational education is ‘not enough’. Although implementation of this measure was originally intended to improve young peoples’ chances

<sup>195</sup> Only through StatLine (a more general database) this is possible to a (very) limited extent.

on the labour market, it has also accentuated inequalities: “Gradually, the instrument [...] has changed into a norm that resulted into the categorisation (and possibly even stigmatisation) of ‘problem cases’, i.e. young people who fail to reach the level of education demarcated as sufficient” (RMO, 2013: 29). This negative effect has been further reinforced in consequence of the fact that “early school leaving is increasingly being associated with criminality, high expenses for (health) care, low participation, and integration problems (RMO, 2013: 9).

Additionally, a low socio-economic status is generally considered an important factor concerning dropout (see e.g. CBS, 2011: 18; Deloitte, 2012: 40), as this is argued to “directly be related to the educational level of the parents, the families income, cultural capital and the degree to which parents support their children in school activities” (CBS, 2011: 18). Additionally, however, some actors also indicate that school composition factors affect early school-leaving (CBS, 2011: 15; Traag and Van der Velden, 2011: 55), which makes children from low-income and/or migrant families doubly disadvantaged, as relatively many of them end up at subordinate schools (Onderwijsraad, 2013b). Not only do lower-education school types recruit disproportionately from the lower social strata, “they also socialize students differently with undesirable consequences for students of lower–status education types” (Berten et al., 2013: 380).

Reflection “on how education itself contributes to educational failure and on its own role in reproducing disadvantages” (OCW, 2011: 36) is said to be needed, because the early selection and the strong hierarchical Dutch education system generate and amplify inequalities of all kinds and stigma related to this (Van Daalen, 2010; Van de Werfhorst, 2011). On the positive side, students can compensate for the disadvantageous effects of the early tracking system by moving up from one educational level to the next, which is relatively often resorted to by non-western pupils. Although they can thus reach the same end level as their counterparts, this detour also makes them older upon finishing school and hence less attractive (because more expensive) for employers (SER, 2013: 7).

#### **5.1.4 National policy measures to diminish youth unemployment**

Although policy measures to tackle school dropout are generally considered to rather automatically lead to a decrease in youth unemployment, also some specific initiatives have been taken: In 2009 the government has launched the ‘action plan youth unemployment’ [actieplan jeugdwerkloosheid], which mainly aims to reduce unemployment by stimulating pupils to longer remain in education [School Ex Programma], establishing covenants with local actors to create more possibilities for traineeships and trainings on the job, and organising extra support for ‘vulnerable youth’ by means of the aforementioned Plus Programmes (SZW, 2009).

Furthermore, most of the municipal social services have a special department for people under 27 [jongerenloket] who apply for welfare, to stimulate them to either go back to school or find a job. When such young applicants do not succeed at accomplishing this on their own, they will be supported by a so-called client manager. In return for welfare benefits, they are usually obliged to participate in an activation project in which they are foremost expected to develop sufficient skills to be employable.

Next to this, the government has recently appointed a national ambassador to specifically draw attention to youth unemployment, and stimulate the various regions and sectors to cooperate in this regard. Also, in some municipalities a 'starters grant' [startersbeurs] is available for young people who have obtained a 'basic qualification' (Startersbeurs, 2014) so that such starters on the labour market can acquire work experience for six months, while receiving a moderate grant which is partly paid by the employer and partly by the government.

## **5.2 The voice of young people**

Warning: We assumed that Section 5.2 should mainly discuss whether young people have a say concerning the policy measures discussed in 5.1 and Section 6.2 should discuss (political) youth participation at large (in particular on the national level and specifically by 'disadvantaged youth'). So there will be more on the voice of young people in the Netherlands (including background information) in Section 6.2.

We could not find much evidence of the voice of young people in the policy areas under investigation: prevention and/or reduction of school drop-out. Policy-making seems to draw upon interdepartmental consultation primarily, also on research findings (WRR, RMO) and on policy monitoring (largely in the hands of private think tanks). Youth councils are consulted on policy matters, but rather not explicitly on youth policy. However, most of the measures regarding prevention and/or reduction of school dropout are implemented at the local level. Therefore it is not highly surprising that there is no aggregate information regarding actual space for participation, nor regarding whether or not eligible youth actually take part, either at the level of policy formulation or at the level of policy implementation in the Netherlands at large. For instance, regarding truancy monitoring, one can expect that efforts are made to make sure the students and their parents are informed about the obligation of attendance and aware of the consequences of non-compliant behaviour. WP4 will help inform the situation in Amsterdam. Some interviewees mentioned some local disparities with regard to attention paid to (disadvantaged) youth participation: local attempts to hear the voice of young people rarely have to do with unemployment or early school leaving, for the departments who are keen to hear from the young people deal with other issues such as leisure activities or public space design; while departments in charge of unemployment or school dropout are less keen to talk with young people. However, there are discrepancies between municipalities; some respondents claim that particular local politicians know well how to connect to youth. However, whether they actually reach beyond particular groups of young people has not been researched so far.

Overall there is no policy talk on aspirations in the Netherlands (unlike the UK). In measures related to social services such as the special departments for youth, the aspirations of young people are officially explored but there is no evidence that the capability to aspire is actually addressed. On the contrary, it seems that the recipients are expected to display capacity of self-discipline and motivation for programmes that are designed elsewhere. In certain care organisations operating in the larger cities (e.g. Amsterdam), there is a focus on hidden talents that are to be discovered, especially those that could prove useful to facilitate fitting in the labour market and ensuring financial autonomy. Beyond such a utilitarian purpose, discovering hidden talents may also contribute to fulfil one's aspiration to find one's way in

society and achieve a desirable social status, but this is scarcely an explicit goal of talent development projects.

The increasing focus on risk in social policy also contributes to challenge recipient participation. When policy targeting is based on risk profiling, much of the policy lies beyond the command of recipient. Some democratic shortcomings of risk-based policy in the Netherlands were highlighted by Schinkel (risk-based policing/surveillance and privacy) but what about the democratic legitimacy of risk assessment in social policy?

### 5.3 Non-intervention

Overall, a wide range of social problems related to disadvantaged youth are addressed in the Netherlands. However a few issues seem not to be widely addressed and this is likely to be even more so in the future since eligibility to social programmes is becoming increasingly restrictive.

A few agencies have called attention to so-called '**silent dropouts**' [geruisloze uitvallers], i.e. young people who drop out of school without showing any preliminary signs and who are subsequently out of sight of the authorities, as they do not apply for benefits and do not cause any trouble (FNV Jong, 2011; ResearchNed, 2010, 57). Of course this does not automatically mean they have problems, but if this would be the case they might be lacking professional support. It is feared that this group of 'silent dropouts' will increase if preconditions for welfare continue to grow more stringent in the (near) future (FNV Jong, 2011).

**Discrimination** happens to be presented as an issue which is not adequately addressed in the Netherlands. Section 4 referred to findings regarding employment and showing that in particular those young people of non-Dutch descent who most vigorously strive to integrate, experience negative effects of discrimination (Paalman, 2013). Additionally, the relatively high unemployment rate among non-western youth is argued to only partially be explainable by differences in level of education and work experience, and to hence also be attributable to discrimination on the Dutch labour market (FNV Jong 2011), which especially affects non-western young men as they are often associated with nuisance, unreliability, and threat (SCP, 2012). Non-western allochthonous young people are regularly perceived as a high-risk group liable to engage in 'undesirable behaviour', in particular those of them who drop out of school and/or are unemployed. "The consequence of this discourse may mean that young migrant people are blamed for their own disadvantage [...]. This may end up in the equating of foreign ethnicity with failing skills and may thus argue in favour of migrants being excluded without it being referred to as discrimination" (De Graaf and Van Zenderen, 2009: 1483,1484).

Another upcoming issue is that of what Bowen Paulle (2013) named the **Toxic schools**, i.e. schools located in distressed (urban) environments, in which a number of pupils are facing unequal access to quality school and hardly overcome difficulties in spite of behaviour in line with the meritocratic ideal. Paulle's ethnographic research focuses on a distressed area of Amsterdam, but there is evidence that more of these schools exist elsewhere in the Netherlands.

## **6. Policy making, implementation and participation**

### **6.1 Actors responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty**

Generally speaking social policy making has been largely in the hands of the Dutch state since the Second World War, as well as employees and employers organisations. Nevertheless, soon after the development of the welfare sector, the economic crisis pushed to the limitation of state expenses and more and more social provisions have been reframed along on the means-testing principle (Baillergeau et al., 2005). A number of social provisions and facilities meant for a general public were soon transferred to the private sector (e.g. some of those providing youth with leisure activities) and some others had to face severe budget cuts (such as many neighbourhood and/or community centres). Over the last decades, a thorough move towards decentralisation deeply affected the way social policy is carried out in the Netherlands and the municipalities have become key-players, especially in large urban areas (where most of the Dutch population is living).

Besides, a wide array of non-governmental or semi-governmental organisations are involved, both in policy-making and policy implementation. What could be typified as a third sector in the Netherlands consists of a variety of organisations, either rooted in a long tradition of non-profit action or specially appointed organisations meant to take over previously state-led social policy tasks in a supposedly more efficient way.

### **6.2 Young people's participation in policy making**

Though not a commonly discussed issue in the Netherlands, there are contrasted takes on the voice of young people in general and disadvantaged youth in particular. Because this is poorly reflected in existing literature, a large part of our interviews focused on issues related to youth participation in the Netherlands.

The Dutch language contains a wealth of words related to participation, especially focused on taking part in talks; such as 'inspraak' (naming the possibility to take part in collective discussions regarding decision making) and 'medezeggenschap' (indicating the right to take part in discussion and decision making). That decisions should be backed by interested parties and target groups is a common concern, as reflected in the popularity of the word 'draagvlak' (literally 'bearing surface', designating the people who support a particular decision or plan). To what extent does it match current reality? Does it reflect full consideration for the voice of young people in general and disadvantaged youth in particular?

Generally speaking, young people are formally given voice in policy matters, just as this is possible for other sections of the Dutch society. Both at the national and the local level, there are a number of youth boards, in which young people can formulate and voice claims, and access members of parliament and ministers through regular meetings. Most of these national boards, such as the National Youth Council (a collective of 36 youth organisations)

get public funding. At the local level, opportunities for young people to voice their opinions and interests are diverse, especially through municipal youth councils and student boards [medezeggenschapsraden] in schools for intermediate or higher education.

However, whether this reflects significant attention for the voice of young people (or not) is questionable. Formally, organisations such as LAKS (national secondary school students organisation, in which mostly higher secondary school students are involved) and JOB (similar organisation for intermediate vocational -education), as well as youth sections of major trade unions such as FNV Jong and CNV Jong are often asked to provide advice to policy-makers regarding formal education matters and labour market policy and they feel they are taken into account regarding topical issues such as quality standards for traineeship. However, most academic respondents told us there is little attention for the voice of young people nowadays. Claiming interest for citizen participation through wide embracing slogans/buzzwords such as 'good citizenship' can draw upon diverse (and possibly divergent) takes on participation, such as allowing third parties to influence and to ask for change in policy, but also making sure measures are backed by civil society.

Overall, it seems to academic respondents that average Dutch politicians are not highly interested in the voice of young people, and that they don't see much added value in taking the views of young people into account; they have little notion that they could learn new ideas from young people, thereby suggesting that they deny any chance/possibility that (vulnerable) young people might have a better view on certain social problems than they do. To some respondents, there is distrust towards the voice of young people and doubt about any outcome of taking care of the voice of the young people. As a result, a repressive top-down approach is viewed as more likely to deliver outcomes. Additionally, according to some respondents, it seems that politicians and policy makers are a little worried about what would happen if disadvantaged youth would be given more space for voice and get organised. However, it was also suggested that (older) politicians might not make good use of possibilities to stimulate participation of young people through social media. So there would be a limited view on young people's participation on the side of Dutch politics. On the basis of a doctoral research into municipal youth councils, Dana Feringa (2013) suggests that participation is mostly heard as making sure policy is backed, since milestones are often formulated in terms of number of young people taking part in a youth council or number of advices issued yearly. Additionally, according to Feringa, municipal youth councils are poorly representative, as youth councils members have little contacts with the grassroots, and make little use of social media.

The present little interest for the voice of the youth does not reflect a grounded culture of participation suggested by the wealth of words related to citizen participation in the Dutch language. It was not always so. In the 1970s and the 1980s, Dutch civil society was flourishing and democratization of policy was high on the agenda of many organisations (Kennedy, 1995) and advocacy work could be subsidised by national and/or local government. LAKS was founded in 1984. Also in the 1990s, in the wake of the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Netherlands in 1995, much attention was devoted to youth participation. Meanwhile, in the 2000s, there was somewhat more policy talk about participation than now, notably under the auspices of the (temporary) Ministry of Youth and Family (2007-2010), which also paid more attention to disadvantaged

youth and provided means for supporting participation where not occurring spontaneously. Some respondents highlighted budget cuts in the matter, affecting the capacity of youth workers to contribute to enhance (disadvantaged) youth participation (i.e. Metz, 2013). In line with a long tradition of social professional support granted to 'disadvantaged groups' to take part in policy applying to them (notably public housing and urban planning), some youth workers have been commissioned to reach out to the 'hard to reach', compensating for lack of participation skills (Baillergeau & Hoijtink, 2010). However, with regard to participation of 'vulnerable groups', this nowadays often seems to be interpreted as teaching them to become independent/autonomous (from state-funded programmes), but not much as 'inspraak' (political participation).

One could then wonder whether or not youth participation matters at all nowadays. It might be seen as a 'luxury issue', i.e. not so important compared to 'hot issues' such as youth unemployment. Current lack of interest for youth participation beyond intentions might suggest that it is not considered urgent enough. As a matter of fact it seems that in the Netherlands young people vote more frequently than other Europeans. Voting is quite heavily promoted in the Netherlands as it is assumed to be the best known way to communicate opinions about the political situation. This might be seen as a favourable outcome of the efforts in youth policy in the previous decades, leading to youth political participation not being seen as a social problem by now.

Besides, according to most respondents, there is a discrepancy between participation among highly educated young people and participation of the least educated young people in the Netherlands. Highly educated young people are more likely to find their way to be heard by those in power than less educated young people, be it through taking part in youth councils; school student councils; voting; taking part in debates or contests (G500) and so on. Besides, municipal youth councils are mostly attended by highly educated young people and often do not address vulnerable youth related issues. Additionally, youth organisations such as FNV Jong and LAKS predominantly consists of highly educated young people.

Moreover, some respondents suggested that the lack of disadvantaged youth's participation is an important issue, as silence and violence/deviant behaviour such as vandalism and criminality could be seen as alternative modes of voice on the side of vulnerable young people when there is no other chance to have one's view voiced and/or little prospect to be heard by those in power. Deviant behaviour is explicitly banned in the Netherlands but little attention is paid to understand what causes it (experiences/perceptions of the young people under consideration).

Having freedom to do the things one has reason to value is closely related to "the agency role of the individual as a member of the public and as a participant in economic, social and political actions" (Sen, 1999: 19). In line with this, different types of participation may be discerned, i.e. economic (being in paid labour and financially autonomous); social (displaying involvement to one's surroundings); and political (having opportunities to influence decision making processes). In Dutch policy reports is usually not specifically indicated which type is referred to when discussing participation issues (FORUM, 2008: 6; Spil, 2009: 4; Verwey Jonker, 2010: 5,6). However, from the context can usually be deduced that in most such

cases participation is conceptualised as ‘being actively involved in society’, both economically and socially.

To stimulate social participation of young people compulsory ‘social traineeships’ were introduced in 2011 for all pupils in secondary education. Aim was to “get them acquainted with society” (Rijksoverheid, 2007b: 30). As of school year 2014-2015 this is no longer obligatory: Schools may then decide whether they want it to be part of their curriculum or not. Also in some of the measures aimed at economic participation a large degree of urge and coercion is involved, e.g. in projects initiated by the municipal social services; if people do not cooperate their benefits will be lowered or withdrawn.

### **6.2.1 Political participation**

The Netherlands has a number of organisations that specifically aim to represent young people with regard to national policy, such as the NJR (National Youth Council), FNV Jong (youth trade union), CNV Jong (youth trade union), LAKS (representing pupils of schools for secondary education), JOB (representing pupils of schools for intermediate vocational education), LSVB (representing university students).

Next to this, in most municipalities ‘youth participation’ is part of the policy goals (Verwey Jonker, 2010: 14). Local politicians, however, often indicate not to know how to actually organize this, as they experience difficulties in connecting to the life world of these young people (Verwey Jonker, 2013: 37,38). To overcome this, several municipalities have youth councils to offer young people an opportunity to be involved in local policy. Additionally, some have a special website aimed at young inhabitants. In spite of such efforts, however, most municipalities do not succeed in giving shape to youth participation, other than by informing or consulting young people about particular policy measures (Verwey Jonker, 2013: 37,38).

Participation is also stimulated through student councils, which are common-place at schools for ‘higher’ education and since 2010 also required by law at schools for intermediate vocational education. As it is still a relatively new phenomenon at the ‘lower’ education types, participation is not yet as well organized as at other school types. Next to this, university students are much more used to give their opinion, e.g. in evaluations which are usually carried out at the end of every course. At schools for intermediate vocational education this only happens occasionally. Consequentially, concerning opportunities for youth participation there is much variety and still considerable room for improvement on various levels.

### **6.2.2 Obstacles concerning political participation of ‘vulnerable youth’**

Youth councils and student councils are generally considered rather conventional means for youth participation and representation, and are usually far removed from the life world of ‘vulnerable’ young people. As such councils mainly concentrate on political debating and lobbying to reach the intended goals, they appear to mainly appeal to higher educated youth. Contrary to previously when ‘action committees’ of young people predominantly communicated their opinion by taking to the streets or occupying (university) buildings,

these new modes make them less visible and increasingly resemble (and operate in line with) the political departments they try to influence. Next to this, “participation implies that citizens can take part in conversations and decisions on matters that affect them in their daily lives. This active citizenship, however, has a downside. Those who have not learned the skills that are needed to do this, tend to be excluded. This for example applies to overburdened young people” (Van Hoorik, 2011: 44).

As ‘vulnerable’ young people are predominantly familiar with the repressive side of the government they are generally distrustful of official initiatives/efforts to stimulate their participation. This is complicated due to the fact that in policy measures aimed at this target group, the different types of participation (i.e. social, economic, political) are often intermingled and linked to urge and coercion.

The best way to reach ‘vulnerable young people’ and stimulate them to voice their opinions is generally considered to be realized at school and/or through youth work. Teachers, however, have been assigned with more and more (administrative) tasks which leave them less space to develop any extra-curricular activities. Simultaneously, youth workers are increasingly deployed by local politicians to stimulate not only political, but also social and economic participation of ‘vulnerable’ young people. Consequentially they are increasingly entangled with responsibilities that originally did not belong to their function and cause tensions for the intermediary position they might fulfil. As a result, students on the lower-ranking sections of the formal educational system (MBO) are less trained than students in the higher-ranking sections (HBO and WO). Furthermore, some respondents claimed that participation often is designed in a ‘white middle class manner’ that is not accessible to all youth. At least, programmes such as Youth in Action are little accessed by disadvantaged youth.

### **6.2.3 Initiatives/practices supporting youth participation**

Overall academic respondents seemed to have little knowledge about existing support to youth participation. Some civil servants or youth workers happen to be assigned to coach municipal youth councils. Some youth workers do connect to and train low educated young people to participate (and could do more about this if funding would allow this).

Some agencies have designed tools to facilitate youth participation on the local level (Quickscan Jeugdparticipatie by Verwey-Jonker Instituut or Be-Involved by Verwey-Jonker Instituut and Stichting Alexander). So far we could not find any data regarding impact on youth from the lower segments of formal education.

Although youth participation is thus ranking high in policy talk, considerable steps still have to be taken towards a multidimensional understanding of promoting participation, in particular among disadvantaged groups, whose participation-to-be is predominantly framed in terms of autonomy.

## **7. Social innovation and the role of social innovation in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy**

Warning: given the ambiguities of the word social innovation and given its limited use in Dutch policy language, this section is predominantly about 'changes' (for better or worse) and we use the term 'innovation' here because this language is adopted by our project.

### **7.1 Definition of social innovation**

The term 'social innovation' is not frequently employed in the Netherlands. When it is used, however, it usually concerns the field of trade and industry, and refers to new business structures aimed to increase efficiency and diminish costs (see e.g. Rijksoverheid, 2007b: 7). Although the phrasing is not specifically used with regard to the social domain or youth policy in particular, some radical changes are currently taking place concerning youth care in the Netherlands. Until now, responsibilities for implementing youth policy have been spread out over various levels; general, preventive youth policy has so far been executed by the municipalities, whereas specialized and targeted services for young people and families in need of special care have been provided by the provinces. This system is about to change, as managerial and financial responsibilities for specialized youth care will be transferred from the provincial to the local level. In the new 'youth system', which is to be accomplished before 1 January 2015, municipalities will thus be responsible for all types of youth care; e.g. youth protection measures and youth rehabilitation.

This development has been instigated in the aftermath of some incidents which occurred in youth care over the past few years and were widely reported in the media. By organizing care closer to the families for which it is intended, it is thought that such tragedies can be better prevented in the future and more opportunities can be created to make active use of social capital (Verwey Jonker, 2013: 5). Besides this, the new system is intended to bring about a drastic reduction of expenses, as the ultimate goal is to achieve a more efficient, coherent and cost-effective youth care system.

These changes are not only perceived as a transition (transfer of responsibilities and tasks), but also as a transformation (system based on different principles) (Verwey Jonker, 2013: 7). "Youth policy in the Netherlands is mostly problem oriented and has a specific focus on youth care. The main challenge at the moment is the transition of the responsibility for provisions for youth care to the local level, together with the development of a non-problem oriented youth policy (development of 'positive youth policy') aimed at all children and young people and not only at young people with problems or young people at risk" (National report, 2010: 4).

Next to the aforementioned decentralisation of youth care, other changes that impact on youth and families will be brought about in the years to come: From August 2014 onwards, schools have a so called 'care-duty', i.e. they have to make sure that all of their pupils have an appropriate place either at the school at which they are enrolled, or elsewhere within the concerning cooperation of schools and municipalities. Aim is to thus reduce costs of special

care-arrangements and diminish the amount of pupils that refrain from the educational system.

Another new implementation is the 'participation-law', which will affect young people who are on benefits. From January 2015 onwards, municipalities will be responsible for (young) people who are considered capable to work, but need some kind of support to accomplish this. This means that the condition of (young) people who now receive a special allowance because of a physical or mental impairment will be rejudged, and it is expected (by the government) that about 60% of them upon further consideration appear to after all have opportunities on the labour market and may hence be expected to partially secure their own income (Rijksoverheid, 2014a).

## **7.2 Supporting social innovation**

For the transition and transformation of the youth care system, general guidelines are provided that have to be further interpreted and put into practice by the municipalities themselves. Similarly, the government attempts to encourage schools to initiate experiments to improve quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of education. This, however, is only allowed within a highly regulated framework (Onderwijsraad, 2013b: 156). Obviously, the budget cuts that accompany the current changes in the social domain bring about limitations as far as facilitation of innovation is concerned.

During our interviews focusing on youth participation, respondents were asked about suggestions to develop youth participation. The main levers are as follows.

- Schools; schools were seen as a place where students could be given a chance for voice and where voice could be given (more) value, notably by teaching participation skills and through a more interactive use of social media (unlike some municipal websites specially designed for VMBO or MBO students that are not interactive).
- Home; parents could be stimulated to let their offspring know why they do certain things such as becoming a member of a union.
- Local level; focus as much as possible on street level to keep in touch with the target group.
- Social media; (older) politicians don't use it a lot, although it is useful to reach out to young people.
- Within the politics arena; attention could be paid to recognize talents of young people and encourage young people to engage in peer-education (role models for politics)
- Youth work and community centres are viewed as critical resources as vulnerable young people with migrant background are dependent on them to learn about opportunities for Dutch ways in participation and participation culture in case they have not been able to learn this from their parents. Beyond learning about opportunities youth work and community centres were also seen as places where participation skills could be introduced by youth workers to young people for whom it does not sound self-evident that one can have an opinion and one can voice it.

Besides, through our explorations for WP4 and WP5, we noticed a number of social practices/projects happen to influence aspirations of disadvantaged youth, notably through the commitment of role models. This might, in turn, facilitate participation.

## **8. Discussion and conclusions**

The notion of Informational Basis of Judgements of Justice has not yet been applied to the study of youth disadvantage in the Netherlands and such a plan sounds challenging. Debates regarding youth disadvantage largely rely on ethnicity criteria such as 'non-Western immigrant' or 'young people with low educational level' vs. high educational level, which can be useful in a way, but also happen to be misleading to some degree. Another difficulty comes from the focus on risk, policy targeting being increasingly based on external judgements ('risk youth' or 'likely to drop out of school') rather than on the status or experiences of recipients.

Citizen participation is ranking high in policy talk, both at the level of central government and municipalities. In schools and in health care facilities for instance, children are often encouraged to form and voice a personal opinion and provided with tailor-made information and education so that it becomes possible. Youth councils exist in the Netherlands and they are widely accessible. However, there are significant differences in actual participation, disadvantaged youth (heard as youth people in or from the lower segments of formal education) lagging behind, according to all respondents. Over the last decades, the Dutch youth policy has endeavoured to acknowledge some limitations regarding the limited participation and invest in attempts to increase participation among 'disadvantaged groups' (to reach out to the 'hard to reach', compensating for lack of participation skills). Some sections of Dutch welfare work have gained expertise in this regard. However, when it goes about participation of 'vulnerable groups' nowadays, promoting participation seems to be often understood as teaching them to become independent/autonomous (from state-funded programmes), but not much on 'inspraak' (political participation). As far as youth is concerned, getting a 'start qualification' is widely regarded as a must to achieve (economic) participation, beyond which participation is scarcely addressed. In policy talk regarding enhancing participation, different types of participation may be discerned, i.e. economic (being in paid labour and financially autonomous); social (displaying involvement to one's surroundings); and political (having opportunities to influence decision making processes). In Dutch policy reports, the type of participation which is referred to when discussing participation issues is usually not specifically indicated. However, the meaning given to 'participation' and 'active citizenship' has changed over the last decades: it is not anymore about political involvement, in a way in policies, but all about employment, social participation. Consequently, measures aimed at enhancing participation among disadvantaged youth scarcely endeavour to enhance the voice of disadvantaged youth.

So far, it seems that a step towards a multidimensional understanding of promoting participation among disadvantaged groups still has to be taken in the Netherlands. Yet there are worthwhile foundations for this.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of key issues

Key issues	Definitions and key terms
Youth policy	Youth policy largely revolves around ‘youth care’, standing for protection offered to children and young people up to 18. Youth policy encompasses both child welfare policy (also addressing family issues) and juvenile justice policy.
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	Nowadays youth disadvantage is primarily understood as youth vulnerability, drawing upon concepts such as ‘risk youth’ (at risk of causing harm to others), ‘vulnerable youth’ and ‘overburdened youth’
Social innovation	The term ‘social innovation’ is not frequently used in the Netherlands. When it is used, however, it usually refers to new business structures aimed to increase efficiency and diminish costs. With regard to social policy what is widely regarded as ‘socially innovative’ in the Netherlands is favouring collaborative policy and therefore bringing all interested agencies to collaborate with each other (‘joined-up’ policy). However such view on social innovation is far from new, since it has been going in policy talk for over two decades now and has not been limited to words.
Participation	In the Netherlands there is no single definition of participation. Citizen participation is generally heard as either ‘political’ or ‘social’. However, a forceful trend in participation talk is participation as full autonomy from state-funded benefits and social provisions.
The Abilities of young people	In the mass media and in policy circles there is not much attention for the abilities of young people, but is rather focused on their deficits and the problems they might get into or cause to others. However, in certain sections of social policy, ‘talent development’ is advocated and ‘talent discovery’ lies at the core of a number of projects offered to young people who dropped out of school and/or are likely to.

## Appendix 2: Key government policies and programmes<sup>196</sup>

Policy area	Policy or Programme	Description
School dropout	Basic qualification law <i>Kwalificatieplicht</i>	In 2007 the 'compulsory education law' has been complemented with the 'basic qualification law', which stipulates that young people who have not obtained at least a level 2 diploma of intermediate vocational education can be forced to attend school until they are 18.
	Care and Advice Teams <i>Zorg- en Adviesteams</i>	Care and Advice Teams are currently active at nearly all schools for intermediate vocational or secondary education and consist of education professionals, representatives from Youth Care, social work, municipal health service, the police, and someone from the Regional Report and Coordination Centre early school leavers or a compulsory education official.
	Plus Programmes <i>Plusvoorzieningen</i>	Plus Programmes come in various combinations of education, care, support, and/or guidance towards the labour market; for example by utilizing 'plus coaches', debt counsellors, or by calling in extra care for pupils with mental health problems. The exact composition of the measures differs per district, dependant on the number of young people in need, the nature of their problems and facilities already present in the area
Youth unemployment	Youth departments DWI <i>Jongerenloketten DWI</i>	Municipal social services (DWI) have a special department for people under 27 who apply for welfare, to stimulate them to either go back to school or find a job. When young applicants do not succeed at accomplishing this on their own, they will be supported by a so-called client manager. In return for welfare benefits, they are usually obliged to participate in an activation project in which they are foremost expected to develop sufficient skills to be employable.
	Extended schooling <i>School Ex Programma</i>	Programme which aims to reduce unemployment by stimulating pupils to longer remain in education.
	Starters grants <i>Startersbeurs</i>	in some municipalities a 'starters grant' is available for young people have obtained a 'basic qualification' so that such starters on the labour market can acquire work experience for six months, while receiving a moderate grant which is partly paid by the employer and partly by the government.

<sup>196</sup> This overview is anything but exhaustive: As there are many more policies and programmes aimed at 'vulnerable youth' implemented on the provincial or local level, it is impossible to include all of them.

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## Chapter 12: Belgian Report on the Socio-Economic Political Context

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### 1. Abstract

In order to explore the Informational Basis of the Judgements in Justice with regard to disadvantaged youth in Flanders, we combined semi-structured interviews with a variety of actors involved in the field of policy towards disadvantaged youth and an extensive document analysis of a wide range of policy documents. Although the Flemish approach of disadvantage combines aspects of both a cultural and a materialistic definition of poverty, the definition of both poverty and social vulnerability (two widely accepted definitions with regard to disadvantage) largely shifted to non-materialistic, cultural and psychological aspects. In this Flemish approach of poverty and social vulnerability, the role of government intervention and the welfare sector is to help to bridge the so-called cultural gap between people in poverty and non-poor people, with an increased effort on integration strategies in the domain of employment and education policies. Therefore, Flanders initiates empowering, participative and preventive policy strategies, especially towards people in socially vulnerable situations, to enhance their participation in educational systems and the labour market.

However, despite all the efforts, the most vulnerable (young) people are often not reached by such initiatives, which are largely based on the image of the ideal client that participates maximally in the services provided. As such, we also see a dual policy strategy emerging: on the one hand empowering support is provided to enhance active participation in educational systems and the labour market, and on the other hand, the use of repressive interventions and the conditionality of rights is increasing. We argue that, by translating poverty and disadvantage as individual, educational, pedagogical, cultural and psychosocial issues, rather than as political or social problems, the welfare system interprets needs in ways that individualize responsibility and culpability while simultaneously diminishing social, political, and economic conditions and dimensions.

Therefore, we suggest, with regard to the focus on integration and participation strategies on the domain of employment and education, to explore the meaning of these domains and of the (non)participation to these institutions from the perspective of the youngsters, and in relation to other integration strategies and broader social, political and economic issues. Moreover, we suggest to explicitly link recognition policies (enhancing the involvement and participation through empowering support) to redistribution policies (more structural

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factors). Concerning social innovation, we suggest that social innovation should go beyond an organisational top down perspective, and should be inspired by a participative process with youngsters that reflects their perspective and the diversity of society.

## 2. Introduction

Belgium is a founding member of the European Union. It covers an area of 30,528 square kilometers and it has a population of about 11 million people. Belgium is a federal state, consisting of three Communities (the Flemish, the French and the German-Speaking Community) and three Regions (the Flemish, the Walloon and the Brussels Capital Region). Their territories overlap geographically, since they correspond to different combinations of Belgium's four linguistic areas (the Dutch language, the French language, the German language and the French-Dutch bilingual area). Each entity has its specific area of responsibility. The federal level has the responsibility on important policy fields such as justice, social security, employment and tax legislation. The responsibilities of the Regions are linked to its "territory" and include environment, agriculture, urban planning, housing... The responsibilities of the Communities are "person-related" matters, such as education, health care, youth...

An exploration and analysis of policy towards (disadvantaged) youth unavoidably brings different interrelated policy domains into the picture: youth policy, education policy, poverty policy, welfare policy, labour market policy... Since the authority of many of these policy domains is situated at the level of the Communities (and not federal matters), we mostly focused on an exploration of the socio-economic political context and policy strategies of Flanders rather than Belgium. In Flanders, the institutions of the Community and the Region fused together. As such, Flanders has one parliament and one government (Country Sheet on Youth Policy in Flanders, 2011). In 2012, the Flemish region counted 6.345.387 inhabitants (Belgisch Staatsblad, 23/02/2012, 12604).

The Communities are competent for youth and youth policy, so it is on this level that most explicit 'youth policy instruments' can be found. The Communities have a minister responsible for Youth, a parliamentary commission and a number of administrative departments with 'youth' in their title and a large number of specific youth-related budget items. Given the fact that every Community has its own Minister of Youth, this means Belgium has three (Country Sheet on Youth Policy in Flanders, 2011).

Since 1999, Flanders has a minister of youth (0-30 years), and the youth policy plan is one of his most important instruments in realizing a broad and integral youth policy, making an appeal to diverse policy domains. The central mission of the Flemish youth policy plan 2010-2014 (Vlaams Jeugdbeleidsplan 2010-2014) states: "Flemish youth policy proves all children and young people in Flanders and Brussels the biggest possible scope for development and the opportunities to be part of a democratic, open and tolerant society". This mission wants to bring about the following social change: 1) Flemish youth policy should uncover and fight the mechanisms responsible for undermining opportunities of certain groups in society, so that all children and young people with the same talents get equal opportunities, 2) the opportunities for development of children and young people should increase to improve their functioning in society, 3) children and young people should get (more) space to be

non-adult, to experiment and make mistakes, to shape their lives and to be themselves, 4) children and young people should participate fully in society in contexts in which they can shape their citizenship.

In what follows, we will critically explore the formulated goals, instruments, strategies and underlying logics on the different policy domains concerning *disadvantaged youth* in relation to these goals as formulated in the Flemish youth policy plan. We address the broad range of policy domains relating to youth, but will focus more in depth on education and employment policies and strategies towards disadvantaged youth.

### 3. Methods

We combined two complementary research techniques. These methods include semi-structured interviews on the one hand and document analysis on the other hand.

We carried out eleven semi-structured interviews (which were audio-taped and transcribed) with a variety of actors involved in the field of policy towards disadvantaged youth, ranging from academic researchers and policy makers to practitioners in the field of youth (welfare) work. As the first part of the report is rather descriptive, we included the perspectives of the respondents mostly in the second half, in which a more critical perspective is introduced.

National government policy makers	
Regional government policy makers	4, 7
Training and education providers (please specify whether public, private or third sector)	1, 2, 3, 6
Employment support service providers (please specify whether public, private or third sector)	
Citizen's bodies (e.g. youth parliaments/councils)	8
Youth work organisations	9, 10
Think tanks (governmental and non-governmental)	
Networks and membership organisations (sector bodies/agencies, campaigns, lobbying, networking, project work, awareness raising)	5

- (1) Professor at the department of Social Welfare Studies at Ghent University.
- (2) Postdoctoral researcher who made a PhD study on the history of youth work in Flanders and its connections to developments in the other social professions and in other European countries.
- (3) Postdoctoral researcher affiliated to the Youth Research Platform (JOP), an interdisciplinary cooperation between 3 research groups, initiated by the Flemish government to stimulate systematic and interdisciplinary attention for youth research.
- (4) Member of the Department of Social Cultural Work for Youth (a) and member of the team associations within the same department (b).
- (5) Chairman of a youth welfare organization
- (6) Manager in the system of youth care in Flanders.

(7) Professor who has a background in economics and is working as a research manager at the Higher Institute for Labour Studies, a multidisciplinary research institute specialised in social policy.

(8) Member of the Comité Directeur Européen de la Jeunesse (CDEJ) which is the intergovernmental body in which preparing policy work is done (48 members) and where cooperation between Governments regarding youth policy is strengthened.

(9) Collaborator of the Children's Rights Commission since 2009.

(10) Manager of a youth welfare work organisation in Ghent.

(11) Coordinator of an umbrella organisation for youth work initiatives working with vulnerable young people in Flanders.

To complete these perspectives with a more focused view on youth unemployment and its relation with education, we also attended two conferences

(1) The impact of the crisis on children and youngsters (22<sup>th</sup> of October, Hasselt)

(2) Youth unemployment (11<sup>th</sup> of December, Brussels)

Additionally, an extensive document analysis was undertaken. We addressed a wide range of policy documents (see attachment and references).

The research data were analysed in an interpretative way by means of a “qualitative content analysis” (Wester, 1987).

## **4. National definitions**

### **4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth**

In Belgium in 2012, 21.6% of the entire population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This risk is defined as the union of three subindicators: at risk of poverty and/or severe material deprivation and/or living in a household with low work intensity. In 2012, 23.1% of the Belgian people between 18 and 24 years old is at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat, people at risk by poverty or social exclusion by age and sex). Concerning more specific regions, Eurostat only provides data about the entire population. In 2011 the percentage of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the French-speaking region was 25.4%, while the percentage for the Dutch-speaking region was 15%.

If we look at the age group 0 to 15 years, the risk of poverty in 2011 was 10,3% in Flanders according to the Directorate General Statistics and Economic Information (DGSEI). In Belgium, the risk over poverty for the age group 0 to 15 years was even 18,5%. Considering the evolution of poverty in Belgium between 2005 and 2009, we can say that the poverty risk of elder people has significantly decreased: from 23% to 19%, while the poverty risk of children has significantly increased: from 15% to 18% (Van Lancker, 2013). However, the increase of child poverty seems a problem that is situated in Wallonia (from 19% to 24%) rather than in Flanders (from 10,2% to 10,8%). Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is no problem of child poverty in Flanders, since the poverty index of Child and Family reveals another evolution: between 2005 and 2011, the amount of births in poor families increased from 5,9% to 9,7%. In contrast to the EU-SILC (on which DGSEI bases its reports), the multidimensional poor indicator of Child and Family not only takes the income into

account, but also the education level and employment situation of the parents, the development of the children, their health and the housing (Van Lancker, 2013). The increase of child poverty seems to be situated in urban contexts in the first place.

In Flanders, disadvantaged youth is often indicated by the term “socially vulnerable youth”, a concept developed by Vettenburg and Walgrave (Vettenburg, 1988; Vettenburg & Walgrave, 2002). In accordance with this definition, social vulnerability is described in the Flemish youth policy plan (2010-2014) as “the risk to be repetitively exposed to negative situations (control, sanctions) when dealing with social institutions and profit less from the positive provisions” (Vettenburg, 1989). This description is widely spread and accepted as the predominant definition of social vulnerability in Flanders, both by the state and third parties and emphasizes a multidimensional perspective on disadvantage, as it integrates a variety of aspects, referred to as “risk factors” for social vulnerability. In the Flemish youth policy plan, it is stated that socially vulnerable children and young people are at disadvantage or excluded in different spheres of life due to their origin, home situation, physical or mental condition or their status. The SES of the parents (profession, work status, financial resources, educational level as interlinked factors) and the ethnic-cultural background of young people (often in combination with religion) are often identified as the main predictors of social exclusion in various domains of social life, including leisure, health, law, labour and education. Additionally, living in a single-parent family is found to augment the risk. Another important factor for being excluded is young people's own educational attainment. Low educational attainment put serious constraints on life opportunities of school leavers. A majority of the low skilled school leavers indeed come from low SES families who cannot provide a safety net, therefore adding to the precarious situation of such school leavers (Baert, 2013; JOP; PISA, 2009). Since a couple of years, it has become very clear that poverty amongst (these) young people in Flanders is impermissibly high. Youth poverty and its various consequences is consequently a topic in the current Flemish youth policy plan and in the Flemish Action Plan on Children's Rights (Vlaams Actieplan Kinderrechten). Moreover, youth poverty is defined as one of the ten priorities for the policy period 2014-2019. Furthermore homeless minors and minors in psychiatric care are also a focus of the Flemish Action Plan on Children's rights. Two other youth groups are acknowledged as socially vulnerable groups, and therefore receive special attention in Flemish youth policy, practice and/or research, namely lesbian-gay-bisexual youth and young people with disabilities. The Flemish ministry on equal chances focuses with her supplementary policy on these minority groups and on equal rights for men and women. Adults as well as young people are subject of this policy on equal chances. Another socially excluded youth group that has become increasingly visible in Flanders and might be viewed as being the most 'excluded' because they/their parents do not even have citizen rights, are the group of young asylum seekers (especially unaccompanied minors) (Ruiz-Casares, Rousseau, Derluyn, Watters & Crépeau, 2010). Last, the Flemish youth policy plan makes mention of the young people who are/have been interned in youth care facilities. Among others, the realisation of their right to receive formal education and their ability to rent an apartment or house when leaving youth care is often an issue.

The political informational basis for decision-making and subsidizing initiatives to enhance participation of disadvantaged youth, correspond to the indicators: (1) involvement in trajectories organised by youth care, (2) poverty (on an individual or family level),(3)

unemployment and (4) level of education. However, it is generally known, and research also describes in detail, that these factors are to a wide extent interrelated, in such a way that disadvantage in one specific field can lead to an accumulation of disadvantages. This corrosive disadvantage is for example illustrated by the over-representation of families in poverty in youth care, which is a continuous point of discussion (King Boadouin Foundation// Koning Boudewijnstichting, 1994; Nicaise & Dewilde, 1995). The indictment concerns above all a selective and more radical interventionism of youth care in poor families, as also the experience of the families in question of further marginalisation and exclusion from our society throughout youth care. Another example that illustrates the interrelatedness of the enumerated indicators: the Flemish poverty monitor (2013) indicates both work and education/training as protective factors against poverty. This brings us along a very topical way of defining disadvantaged youth in terms of so-called NEET's, the young people not in employment, education or training. Although it is in origin a term from the UK, it was more than once uttered by the interviewees and we will elaborate on it in the next section.

## **4.2 Labour market position of young people and problems at labour market entry**

A strong focus in policy discourse lies on "NEETS" and those young people passing under the institutional radar, not taking up employment, education or training. The Flemish department of Work and Social Economy provides numbers about NEET youth. In Belgium, 12.3% of young people between 15 and 24 years old were not in education, employment or training. For Brussels and the French speaking part of Belgium, the percentages are considerably higher, respectively 19.2% and 15.4%. Flanders shows a lower percentage, with 9.2% young people not in education, employment or training. However, in 2008, the percentage for Flanders was 6.3, which indicates an increase of 2.9%.

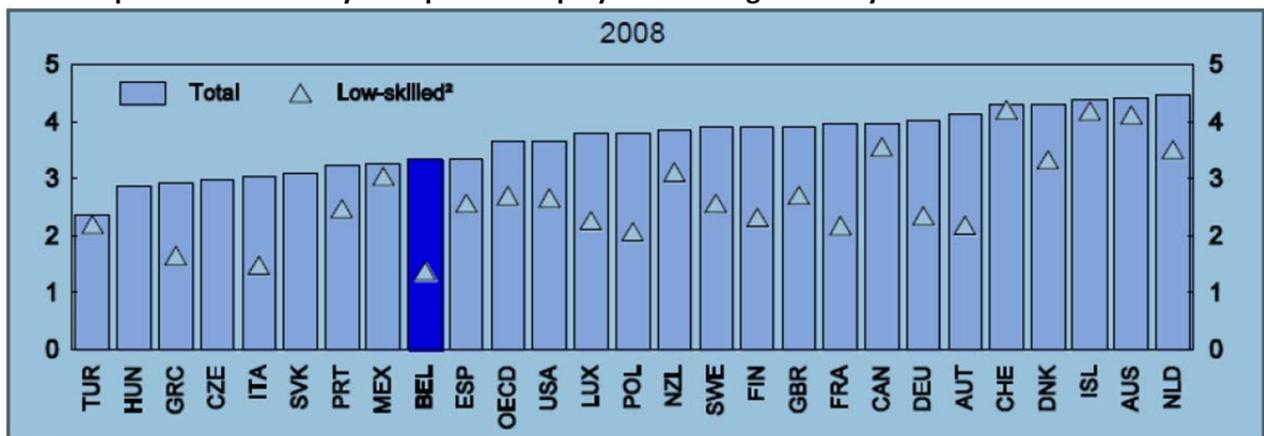
Focusing on unemployment, Eurostat learns us that in October 2013, 9% of the entire population between 20 and 64 years old in Belgium was unemployed. The unemployment rate for people below age 25, however, was 19,8% in 2012, which implies that youth unemployment is almost three times higher than adult unemployment (6.8%). Considering the separated regions, we see that in Brussels, youth unemployment is 35% and adult unemployment 15.8%. In the French speaking part of Belgium, 29,6% of young people below 25 years are unemployed and 9,6% of adults between 25 and 54 years. In the Dutch speaking part of Belgium, we note a youth unemployment rate of 13.5% and an adult unemployment rate of 4%.

In Belgium it is commonly believed that youth unemployment is essentially a problem in Wallonia and Brussels, but not so much in Flanders. Cockx (2013), however, convincingly argues why we should not agree with this view, since Flanders has – compared to the EU member states – a very high proportional rate: youth unemployment is 3,3 times as high as adult unemployment.

When taking a closer look at youth unemployment in Flanders since the crisis of 2008, we see that, whereas the number of unemployed people (seeking for a job) below age 25 was decreasing since 2004, it starting to increase again in 2008 (in January 2008 the

unemployment rate in this age category – number of the unemployed to number in the total labour force – was 10,49, in January 2009 it had already climbed to 13,39). In 2010 the upward trend smoothed down temporary, but since 2012 the unemployment among young people is rising again. To illustrate: in January 2012 the unemployment rate of people under the age of 25 was 14,85%, in the same month in 2013 it was 16,75%. Also, the current (September 2013) unemployment rate of young people under the age of 25 is substantially higher than last year in January (the number of young people registered for employment increased with 6,8%, the unemployment rate in this age category increased from 19,53% to 21,49%) (Arvastat). So, from January 2008 to January 2013 the unemployment rate for people under the age of 25 increased from 10,49% to 16,75%, the number of young job-seekers increased from 32.279 to 46.729 (+44%). Considering the yearly means until 2012 according to age, it also becomes clear that this crisis-related unemployment has increased most among the young. The Minister of Work (Conference Youth unemployment, 11<sup>th</sup> of December, Brussels) defines the peaking youth unemployment as a cyclical problem: a general decline of the economy, the production and thus employment, affects young people the most for a wide range of reasons. For example, employers try to keep employees with lots of experience rather than young people, who are often perceived as lacking the necessary skills and experience or they have the lowest dismissal costs. This results in an increase in temporary contracts and an increase in competition for a decreasing number of jobs. It is an evidenced fact that the relatively high youth unemployment rate in Belgium reflects predominantly a problem of the low-skilled (youth). Between 2003 and 2012, in Belgium the average unemployment rate of high educated youth (ISCED97 5-6) was 12.7%, lower than the EU27 average of 14.2%. By contrast, the corresponding average of youth without a secondary school diploma (ISCED97 0-2) was 30.4% in Belgium against 23.8% in the EU27 (Cockx, 2013). The table below provides further evidence that in Belgium the school-to-work transition is in particular problematic for the low educated. In a five year period after graduating, Belgian youth is on average only three years employed. This is well below the OECD average of about 3.5 years. However, the low educated are only slightly more than one out of these five years employed. No other country displayed in the figure performs worse.

**Table: Expected number of years spent in employment during the five years after school**



Source: Høj (2013, p. 16) in Cockx, B. (2013) 'Youth Unemployment after the great recession: Evidence and lessons of national policies', *Intereconomics*, 48(4), pp. 202-209.

## 5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention

### 5.1 What are the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?

Combating poverty and social exclusion is stated as a top priority by the Flemish Government. Flanders aims at a 30% reduction for all three indicators of poverty or social exclusion (poverty risk, serious material deprivation, households with low job intensity) and at reducing by half child poverty (Flemish Reform Programme Europe 2020). In order to combat poverty in a coordinated manner, the Flemish Government has a coordinating minister and a coordination committee of poverty reduction, who are entitled to pursue a horizontal poverty policy, which is strengthened through the establishment of a knowledge platform with stakeholders. The Flemish Government draws up a continuously adjusting Flemish Action Plan on Poverty Reduction (Vlaams Actieplan Armoedebestrijding) every five years.

It is explicitly stated in the action plan, that the Flemish government is but a player on the pit and should work together with other policy levels and other actors, such as civil society organisations, service providers, business, and above all people in poverty and their organisations. But it is also mentioned that on the federal level as well, important levers should be realized (f.e. benefits, replacement incomes and financial accessibility of health care). Within the Flemish Action Plan on Poverty Reduction, poverty is defined as “a network of social exclusions in different domains of life that are intensely intertwined” (Vranken, 1998). The central mission of the plan is formulated as follows: “Flanders addresses all aspects of poverty and social exclusion and pursues an ambitious policy intended to prevent and suppress poverty and social exclusion”. The seven basic assumptions of the plan in realizing this mission are: 1) an empowering policy: the available potentials, singularities and power of people in poverty are noticed, supported and applied, 2) a participative policy: people in poverty and their organizations are timely and structurally involved in the preparation, execution and evaluation of policy, 3) a preventive policy: at first policy should try to prevent poverty and to break up the spiral of poverty, besides, government should avoid creating extra poverty, 4) an inclusive policy: poverty reduction policy is integrated where possible, specially adapted where necessary, 5) an integrated policy: poverty reduction concerns all policy domains, levels and responsible, 6) a persistent policy: poverty reduction demands a long term vision and a persistent approach, and 7) an evaluated and evolving policy: a visible, effective measuring, testing and evaluation of policy and its potential and real effects on poverty is necessary to make adjustments if necessary. The objectives of the Flemish Action Plan on Poverty Reduction are formulated according to the ten social constitutional rights: the right on participation, social services, family, dispensation of justice, leisure time, income, education, employment, housing and health care.

In the scope of this report we will explore some of these aims and their specific translations towards disadvantaged youth. We will investigate more in depth the intersection of poverty reduction policy and youth policy through the diverse policy domains. As participation is explored more in depth further, we will not address this here.

### **5.1.1 Social services**

With regard to social services, the Flemish Action Plan on Poverty Reduction (2010-2014) mentions the need of a more intensive (automatic) attribution of the rights. The so-called "rights explorer" gives online information about social benefits and contributions at several administration levels to inform vulnerable people about their rights. As regards the accessibility of social services, vulnerable people experience a lot of thresholds concerning affordability, mobility, socio-cultural and psychological barriers... The Flemish Action Plan on Poverty draws particular interest to the importance of communication and information tailored to people in poverty on the one hand and to sensibilizing social workers on the other hand. A third point of interest, which we will elaborate more in depth since it is of particular interest for vulnerable young people, concerns integrated care.

Within the Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Family, the Youth Welfare Agency is responsible for social services for young people. The Agency's mission is defined as follows: "Together with our partners, we organize quality prevention and assistance to children and young people in problematic living conditions in order to maximize their chances of personal development" (Country Sheet on Youth Policy in Flanders, 2011). Youth Welfare ensures the coordination of partnerships and networks focusing on education support and, in this way, enhances the development of a provision that prevents problematic education and family conditions (Country Sheet on Youth Policy in Flanders, 2011). The central objective of integral youth care is conceived as offering "a coherent set of help to the minors and/or their living environment to safeguard their development opportunities and to increase their welfare and health" (Broos & Grossi, 2000, p. 11). Some core principles as formulated in the Decree concerning Integrated Youth Care (Vlaams Parlement, Ontwerp van Decreet betreffende de Integrale Jeugdhulp, 2013) are: (1) within the contours of the available youth offer and the available appropriations, each minor/parent with a request for help has a maximal right on youth care, (2) youth care operates in a context-oriented way and at the same time efficiently and effectively, (3) corresponding a tendency towards community care, the strengths of minors, parents and other important persons in the living environment are perceived as an important resource in order to prevent influx in youth care, to enhance the participation in youth care and to stimulate emancipation and participation in society, (4) youth care is demand-oriented and organized according to the principle of subsidiarity, (5) with the exception of judicial youth care, help is voluntary. These principles are in line with the aims of the Flemish Action Plan on Poverty Reduction (2010-2014), emphasizing empowerment as a major goal and situating the direction of a trajectory in care at the level of the client.

### **5.1.2 Income**

To enhance the income or financial capacity of people and families living in poverty, a Basic Act on Flemish Social Protection is said to be realized that pays attention to affordability and accessibility (consolidation of the care insurance scheme for instance). As regards the debt burden, reference can be made to the comprehensive preventive approach of debts, as well as increased access to, and quality of, debt assistance. Measures in this area must further reduce the current percentage of nearly 5% of Flemish people living in a family with at least

one debt in arrears over the past year (Flemish Action Plan on Poverty Reduction, 2010-2014).

### **5.1.3 Leisure time**

Leisure time is generally stipulated to have positive effects on the life of people in poverty and therefore a point of interest in the Flemish Action Plan on Poverty Reduction. Nevertheless, many (financial, material, socio-cultural, psychological...) barriers that prevent people in poverty to participate in organised leisure time activities are recognized. In October 2013, the Flemish Government determined policy priorities for the different policy domains. Concerning youth policy, the funding of municipalities for the coming years depend upon their investment in three areas: 1) support of youth work in its broad sense, 2) a youth work policy aimed at young people in socially vulnerable situations and 3) youth culture. As youth work policy towards vulnerable youth is one of the priorities for local policy, this is also a main concern of the Flemish Youth Policy Plan (2010-2014), which makes reference to the International Convention of the Rights of the Child Art. 31, saying that all children have the right to leisure, rest and recreational activities. One of the strategic goals in the Flemish Youth Policy Plan sounds “more of the leisure time, educational and welfare offer is adapted to the needs of socially vulnerable children and young people”. This is translated in three operational goals: (1) there is a strategy across policy domains, supporting organizations that work in an integrated way with socially vulnerable children and young people, at the crossroads of different policy areas, (2) local and supra-local authorities gain expertise to enlarge the (demand or needs based) offer for socially vulnerable children and young people and (3) more socially vulnerable children and young people use international mobility programmes. The Flemish youth policy plan further refers to the necessity of action to tackle structural youth unemployment in cities and to the goal that each child should be able to fully participate in society, education and social life, defining the essence of youth policy to support and develop tools that reinforce young people’s and children’s belief in their own abilities. *Education, which is perceived as a possible social leverage, and employment are the spearheads of Flanders’ policy to reduce inequality, poverty and social exclusion.*

### **5.1.4 Education**

It is an evidenced fact, that the educational system in Flanders, still reproduces inequality. Flanders belongs to one of the top regions in terms of overall performance, but is the only region that combines a high average level of performance with a strong correlation between performance and socio-economic background (PISA, 2009). No other OECD country is doing worse than Belgium in terms of inequalities, nowhere is the gap between the median and the last 10 percentile as large as in Belgium (Unicef, 2012). The socio-economic background and social status of youngsters remains one of the most powerful factors influencing their performance in the educational system (PISA, 2009). Recent research shows that youngsters from a lower socio-economic background are, in comparison with their peers, excluded more often and are strikingly more often referred to special education (Vranken, De Blust, Dierckx & Van Haarlem, 2010). Social inequality and exclusion is already noticeable in pre-primary education, showing less frequent participation of toddlers from lower-income families. In Flanders, this results in a delay of at least one year for approximately 6% of the

children entering primary education (Gadeyne, Onghena, & Ghesquière, 2008). This trend continues at primary education, where in the school year 2010-2011, 18% of the children was at least one year behind. Children from a lower socio-economic background in Flanders are five times as likely to repeat grade one, while the chance on grade retention by sixth grade is 7.2 times larger for this group of children. Moreover, they are 8 to 10 times more often referred to special education (Eurydice, 2007). This process of educational delay and social exclusion from the educational system continues in secondary education, where a so-called educational *cascade mechanism* is structurally at play: many students start secondary education in general academic tracks, but are relegated over the years to technically or vocationally oriented educational tracks. The downgrading of students into these tracks is strongly related to social and economic factors (Woessmann & Schuetz, 2006). This cascade mechanism particularly affects young people from poor families. In Flanders, youngsters from a high SES background are generally (approximately 93.3%) engaged in academic educational tracks, while children from a low SES background are over-represented in technical and especially in vocational training (approximately 55%) (Eurydice, 2007). In secondary school, the rates of school delay are 11% in general secondary education, 33% in technical secondary education and 61% in vocational secondary education. Boys and children with a non-Belgian nationality are over-represented (Bral, Jacques, Schelfaut, Stuyck, & Vanderhasselt, 2011).

The share of pupils in full-time secondary education that regularly skips lessons was 1.1% in 2010-2011. In part-time secondary education, the registered truancy rate in 2010-2011 was 28%. Both in primary and secondary school, pupils who are labeled as “problematic absent” score higher than average on the poverty indicators. They are more represented in the (part-time) vocational secondary education and have more school delay. There seems to be a consistency between students with problematic school absences and delay (AgODi, 2011). Finally, research indicates that about 1 in 7 youngsters in Flanders quit school without qualifications. Eurostat reports 12% early leavers from education and training in 2012. However, the chance to drop out of the educational system unqualified is 12 times higher for low SES students (i.e., 26 % versus 3%) (Unicef, 2012). Both the problems of school delay and truancy are overrepresented in the cities, although there is wide variation between the core cities (Stadsmonitor, 2011).

Respondent 7 summarized this Flemish educational situation as follows:

Education has an ambiguous nature. On the one hand, it's an investment that possibly functions as a lever for social mobility. On the other hand, it is also a filter, which is in the one country more sharp and severe than in another. Education is dominated by a very strong meritocratic logic: you have to acquire it, you have to fight for it. But if one has to fight with unequal starting positions, it's quite clear that the opportunities are very uneven. E.g. in pre-primary education, children come up with very unequal luggage. In addition, pre-primary education is still voluntary and so socially weak groups and ethnic minorities, etc. participate less in pre-primary education than others. Of course, this has implications on their subsequent school career. In primary school, the weakest group is sidelined to special education. Currently more than 10% of the boys already end up in special education in primary school. That is hallucinatory. In itself, special education is well-intentioned, as it provides extra care to children who are struggling. But the curriculum of special education does not connect with the curriculum of secondary education. As such, your chances to ever get a decent degree almost drop to zero if you followed special education. So the filter starts very soon and the trend to refer to special education, despite all the measures that have been taken in the past 20 years, is still increasing. Moreover, you have a very early selection in secondary education. Already during the first years of

secondary education, there is an orientation, which results again in a strong social selection. Because the younger you select, the more social distorted the selection is. So our education system is both a lever, but also a filter.

Flanders seeks to improve the quality of the educational systems and hence brings the EU 2020 headline targets on education to the fore. In the Coalition Agreement Flanders 2009-2014 (Regeerakkoord van de Vlaamse regering 2009-2014) it is stated that “talents are our main asset and we cannot waste them. This is unacceptable to the student, who emancipates through education. Moreover, each talent is an important economic asset and important for the social cohesion”. As education is more than ever before the determining factor for polarization in society, the Flemish Government (with its focus on equal opportunities in education) is taking measures to contribute to increased social inclusion from nursery education up to higher education. Reference can be made to measures aiming at increased participation in nursery education and at addressing financial thresholds in education. In addition to secondary and higher education, since a few years, parents can also receive study grants for their children in nursery and primary schools. In the same vein, we should mention the maximum bill that is in force since September 2008 to restrict the costs of educational resources, mainly in primary schools (Circular letter cost control in primary education // Omzendbrief kostenbeheersing basisonderwijs, 22/06/2007). With the Decree Equal Educational Opportunities (Decreet Gelijke Onderwijskansen, 2002), the government assigns funds (based on the socio-economic characteristics of the pupils) to schools, enabling them to develop a comprehensive care for all children and young people, and for disadvantaged children and young people in particular.

In the European member states, the demand for higher skilled workers is increasing from 20.9% in 1996, to 25.3% in 2006 and 29.3% in 2015. The demand for lower skilled workers is decreasing from 32.9% in 1996, to 26.2% in 2006 and 20.8% in 2015 (Policy document education // Beleidsnota onderwijs, 2009-2014). Incentives in Higher Education will aim at attracting more non-traditional students (disabled people, adults with a job, children of uneducated parents, ethnic minority groups). Steps are being taken to achieve an automatic allocation of study grants in order to bring about further democratization in higher education. In addition, the expansion of student grants to students in higher vocational education and students who are following a diploma-oriented training course in compensatory education (two paths that bridge the gap to higher education) will also be examined. By making use of distance learning in higher education, Flanders seeks to create more opportunities for students who are combining education and work. Moreover, Flanders provides extra incentives for lifelong learning and compensatory education with the following instruments: training vouchers, reimbursement of enrolment fees, time credit, and so on.

Moreover, the Pact 2020 favours a major reform of secondary education so that technical and vocational education can be upgraded. Flanders is also working to make the offer of vocational education and training more attractive through focusing on high quality traineeships and workplace learning for vocational education, an adapted offer of foreign languages in vocational education, in-service training of teachers and recruitment of practice experts as teachers. In order to reduce the number of early school leavers by 2020, measures are taken that seek to prevent students from dropping out and getting them back to school (Flemish Reform Programme Europe 2020). Examples are the Action plan against

truancy (Actieplan Spijbelen) and the Flemish Parliament Act on Learning and Working (Vlaamse regering, 2008) that seeks to prevent students from dropping out and getting them back to school. Besides, wise study decisions and school career guidance is combined with an intensified cooperation between education and the labour market (Flemish Reform Programme Europe 2020; Flanders 2009-2014), in order to decrease the number of low-skilled youngsters. To ensure that each citizen acquires the core skills needed in the knowledge economy, IT skills and competences for lifelong learning has been included in the attainment targets, and also in the Literacy Plan and in the 'Dutch as a second language' courses (Flemish Reform Programme Europe 2020). These initiatives are part of a broader proactive labor market policy, enabling each talent to develop in an early stage, as this facilitates activation on the labour market (Flanders, 2009-2014).

### **5.1.5 Employment**

Another example of the focus on skills development in order to increase labour market participation is the personal development plan, drafted by the Flemish Government together with the Flemish social partners as well as the recognition of obtained professional experience and skills by career services. Investments include a flexible and future-oriented education offer; reference is made to the project 'Platform Flemish labour market research of the future' (VLAMT) initiated in September 2010. With this platform, Flanders seeks to experiment with methods for detecting and analysing trends and their impact on occupations and skills. Moreover, through an integrated 'action plan for bottlenecks policy', the Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency (VDAB) will work on integrated guidance and mediation from start to finish and on a more intense cooperation with all education providers and other stakeholders. Since 2011, the VDAB focuses on development of centres of excellence for skills enhancement, which constitute a cooperation platform aimed at achieving concrete, labour market-oriented objectives in terms of skills development and guidance. The various actors and stakeholders consult with each other and will take joint action in view of a rational synchronisation of demand and supply on the labour market for the purpose of filling sector bottleneck vacancies. These initiatives have to be situated in the context of the "shortage economy" and, more widely, the "matching issue", which is referred to in Pact 2020 as Flanders' challenge to attract, retain and develop talent depending on the labour market needs (Pact 2020).

In the scope of the employment and investment plan (WIP) (Flanders in Action), a specific approach was developed for various vulnerable groups and the associated capacity released. Jobseekers with a welfare issue should get offered appropriate guidance and support, for instance via an increase in the number of activation projects for jobseekers with psychosocial problems and experimental work-welfare programmes for people living in poverty (Flemish Reform Programme 2020). The Flemish Government committed to contact medium (1 to 2 years) and long term (2 years or more) jobseekers earlier and wants to offer them an appropriate plan, which should result in a suitable guidance and training offer to an additional 16,500 medium and long-term jobseekers per annum. An orientating project guidance call was launched via the WIP, by which jobseekers (up to 30 years of age) who did not receive support through the VDAB or a partner in the past year, are invited to participate in a new evaluation with an eye to guidance towards the most suitable project. As it is recognized that some long term jobseekers will require an intense period of guidance

and reinforcement of skills, the Flemish Government offers working experience to approximately 3,000 long term unemployed people per year. Through the WIP the measure is now also open to jobseekers who have been unemployed for more than one year (instead of the two years that applied previously).

With regard to young unemployed people, a new initiative entails the so-called work@teliers (ESF project) that are being provided to young people with a more employable profile whose outflow to the job market has been hindered by the crisis. The aim is to support an innovation trajectory by providing a shielded and guided environment to a concrete business plan that is implementable and investment proof (social economy).

Concerning low-skilled young unemployed people, the federal government released some measures to facilitate a structural involvement of the youngsters. In Flanders, the VDAB is authorized for the concrete operation of some of these measures (both remediating and preventive). We will only mention them briefly at this point.

Since 1 January 2008 the VDAB launched the youth work plan plus, a mediation and guidance initiative for all job seekers below 25 years old, conform to the European youth guarantee plan, which sets out that all young people under the age of 25 should receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education (draft council conclusions on enhancing social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training, 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2013). Some unqualified youngsters who cannot enter the job market straight away, require extra help which they receive via the work experience trajectories for youngster. The federal measure of the entry apprenticeships creates the possibility of a first paid work experience for young people who did not yet find work after 6 months. This enables young job seekers during the seventh to the twelfth month of the vocational mobilization time to acquire additional skills in the workplace.

Another federal measurement to promote the recruitment of young, low-skilled jobseekers is the reduction of the labour costs. This relatively quick (6 months job seeker) substantial reduction of labour costs (1000euro/month) enables enterprises to offer a stable (3 years) employment to young job seekers.

## **5.16 Housing**

Various measures are being taken to increase affordable housing in Flanders. The offer of social houses is being extended. The Flemish Parliament Act on the land and buildings policy (2009) is providing an additional 43,000 social rentals and 21,000 social houses for sale, as well as an additional 1,000 building lots for social housing by 2020 (Flemish Reform Programme Europe 2020, p. 21). Affordability of social housing is being improved (Decree of 27 March 2009 on the land and property policy). Nevertheless, there is still a large shortage of social housing. Therefore, Flanders established a priority policy. With regard to the right on social housing, the presence of children in a family is explicitly taken into account (Flemish poverty reduction action plan, 2010-2014). Concerning youngsters, the social housing policy gives priority to candidate tenants who are minors removed from guardianship or a person with application of the Decree of 7 March 2008 on special youth

care who is going to live independently with guidance by a recognized service (article 19, 8 ° of the framework decision social rental (current text) (this priority rule was introduced by the Decree of the Flemish Government of 30 September 2011). In 2011, eleven experimental projects strengthening the cooperation between social housing and the welfare sector run, including some specifically related to youngsters.

### **5.1.7 Health care**

In terms of health and welfare, the role of neighbourhood health centres in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is strengthened and expanded by recognizing them as centres with special expertise and a community-based health promotion working for socially vulnerable groups in the context of the prevention Decree.

Together with the Federal Government and the other authorized communities, the Flemish minister of Welfare, Health and Family is working towards a reform of mental health care for children and youngsters, following the reform of adult mental health care (projects article 107, [www.psy107.be](http://www.psy107.be)). For several years, there are two projects in which psychiatric facilities support the Community institutions in their region and offer them a time-out, tailored to youngsters who form a big challenge for the care and support systems. In autumn 2013, the Youth Welfare Agency launched an appeal for 5 projects distributed in Flanders, with a one-time grant of EUR 100 000 per project to mainly improve the cooperation between youth care and child psychiatry in complex care files.

In cooperation with the sector, the Agency Care and the Flemish Agency for persons with disabilities are setting up a project for children and young people with intellectual disabilities and autism and severe behavioural disorders. This project is being submitted to the end of 2013 to the RIZIV.

The Flemish policy pays attention to the sexual and relational education of young people. This attention is also reflected in the national hiv plan ([http://www.cavaria.be/sites/default/files/hiv-plan\\_nl.pdf](http://www.cavaria.be/sites/default/files/hiv-plan_nl.pdf)). In addition to the general prevention policy, there is a focus at specific prevention for groups with higher incidence of hiv, the so-called 'key populations'. Sensoa is the partner organization that deals with information and advice to the target groups (<http://www.sensoa.be/>).

On the subject of prevention policy in Flanders, six health objectives are formulated (most of them also relate to young people) and each of them is completed with a Flemish action plan: (1) food and exercise, (2) tobacco, alcohol and drugs, (3) breast cancer detection, (4) suicide and depression, (5) accidents in the private sphere, (6) vaccinations.

## **5.2 Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programmes they are offered/the subject of?<sup>198</sup>**

The current Flemish youth policy plan (2010-2014) is the result of the interaction between policy making in Flanders (in cooperation with Flemish youth organisations) and the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy. The EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) applies a cross-sectorial approach to youth policy and has two overall objectives: (1) to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market and (2) to encourage young people to be active citizens and participate in society. The EU Youth Strategy formulates initiatives in eight fields of action and proposes among other ways of implementation of a structured dialogue to involve young people in continuous joint reflection on priorities, implementation and follow-up. As such, the EU Youth Strategy energised policy participation opportunities for Flemish young people. These participation opportunities are also translated in a strategic goal in the Flemish Youth Policy Plan (2010-2014): “The Flemish authorities involve children and young people actively and qualitatively in policy decisions and encourages others to do the same.” Already before the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy, Flanders had youth councils at every level of policy-making (apart from the inter-municipality level), in which youth organisations and young people advise on policy matters. Having a youth council is a criterion for local and provincial authorities to receive Flemish funding. The Flemish Youth Council is laid down in the Parliament Act on youth and children’s rights policy. If a Flemish minister wants to take a decision that affects young people, (s)he has to consult the Flemish Youth Council. Youth Councils make efforts to enhance the diversity of the representing youngsters. Moreover, Flemish ministers are since 1997 obliged to study the potential impact of their proposed parliament acts on children. Since 2009, the impact on people under 25 of each parliament act has to be assessed (the so-called child and youth impact assessment or JoKER). The Flemish Youth Council can also advice in case its members find it necessary in view of the interests of young people. The Flemish Youth council regularly organises participation projects and ad hoc youth surveys to explore the opinions of (other) young people about specific topics and to link new youth policy plans to the life world of young people. The Flemish Parliament Act prescribes the participation of the youth sector in the development of the Flemish youth policy plan.

Moreover, the Flemish Youth Council is frequently invited to participate in all kinds of reflection and steering groups. There is a formalised cooperation between the Flemish Youth council and the youth councils of the two other Belgian communities, called J-Club, advising on federal policy matters. Since the EU Youth Strategy, the Flemish Council has started with the project (subsidized by Europe) ‘Youth Ambassadors for...’ in which youth representatives express their opinions on the topic of the EU Youth Strategy that has been chosen as priority by the trio of presidencies at that time. The discussions in the ‘Youth Ambassador Groups’ are based on preceding broader youth consultations. In 2011, a process was started to prepare a pact between the government of Flanders, youth and civil society: the Youth Pact 2020 (Jeugdcompact 2020). In 2011, the Flemish Youth Council was

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<sup>198</sup> Partially based on the national report Flanders, first cooperation cycle of the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2012

asked by the Government of Flanders to organise a large-scale survey of dreams and future expectations by and for young people in Flanders. Based on the results of this survey, different meetings were organised, during which young people, policy makers, youth organisations, social partners and other actors in civil society were invited to commit themselves to make Flanders in 2020 a place where young people like to live. The Government signed this Youth Pact, agreed upon all partners in June 2012.

Other initiatives in which the perspectives of (socially vulnerable) young people were explored, are diverse research projects published in the framework of the UNICEF Belgium project 'What do you think?' in cooperation with the Flemish Youth Council and the Conseil de la Jeunesse of the French Community. F.e. in 2010, the report "This is what we think. Young people experiencing poverty talk about their lives" was published. In 2012 "Equal chances in education? This is what they think about it. The perspective of socially vulnerable children and youngsters in the education debate". In September 2013, the report 'Youth Work with socially vulnerable children and youngsters' (De Pauw, Vermeersch, Cox, Verhaeghe & Stevens, 2013), commissioned by the Agency social-cultural work for youth and adults, Department youth and conducted by the KATHO and Ghent University, was presented.

The government of Flanders funds the non-profit organisation Karuur (autonomous since 2009), whose main task consists of supporting youth 'participation' at the level of the municipalities. Moreover, the government of Flanders funds political youth organisations (youth divisions of political parties) and (long-term or project-based) non-profit youth organisations that develop mechanisms for youth policy participation (Flemish Parliament Act 2008). The Flemish Parliament Act of 2008 on conducting a Flemish policy on youth and children's rights (1 January 2009 – 31 December 2012) on 'Participation' provides a cross-sectoral base for policy initiatives to tackle unequal leisure participation. Provincial and local authorities are encouraged to promote the participation of as many children as possible from diverse backgrounds, often with Flemish financial support. The Flemish Youth Council has also tried to reach a big and diverse group of young people in its project 'Youth Ambassadors for...'. Moreover, the Flemish Youth council is also (by Parliament Act) obliged to pursue a diversity of young people in its own structures. However, as respondent 11 noticed, this seems not to be evident:

Youth councils ask us to introduce some generation-poor youngsters. It's important to have Youth Councils and it's very meaningful to a number of middle class teenagers who are in a life phase in which they look for social commitment. But don't say to a generation-poor youngster who tries to survive: we will brainstorm on the issue of the sustainability of the city policy. His primary concern is to have a roof over his head tonight and having a warm meal tomorrow.

The Minister of Poverty Reduction gave a grant to a youth welfare organisation to start activities for children with young adult participants as activity leaders. This is in line with the (financial) support of various initiatives of 'learning to participate', since the widespread idea about youth work is that in leisure-time organisations, young people do not only (have to) play together, but should learn to participate in a democratic society, through making organizational decisions and sometimes coming to lead activities, f.e. in self-organised youth initiatives (National Report Flanders, first cooperation cycle of the eu youth strategy 2010-2012). In the same vein, the Flemish youth policy plan (2010-2014) states that participation

projects should focus on learning to think in a social way, on community building and on giving more responsibility to children and young people to facilitate their active role in society. Or as Respondent 4a formulated the importance of participation in youth work:

There is the idea that participation in youth work correlates with a lot of positive effects for a more democratic society: basic democratic attitude etc. The correlation is there. The causality however is always a big issue in this kind of stories. There are various dimensions. I think that different people find from different views and with diverse objectives. And also youth workers will address this from a variety of perspectives. Within a socio-cultural point of view there is traditionally an idea of people's 'upliftment', actually this is an old-fashioned word for what is now called integration.

Also in formal education, citizenship education is included in secondary school attainment targets and developmental objectives since 1997. The Flemish education policy document (2009-2014) mentions that education should form open, versatile and strong personalities and should stimulate social skills, creativity, curiosity, flexibility, health, critical sense, respect, responsibility, caring, self-reliance, positive self-image... Since 2010 citizenship education is nurtured by focusing on concrete developmental goals, such as caring (for the future), responsibility (for society), open and constructive attitude, media literacy, critical reflection, empathy... Schools themselves have to work out how to promote citizenship, based on their unique situation. Stimulating active citizenship is still an explicit task of the Agency for Communication and Education and the Flemish Minister of Education funds a non-profit organisation (King Boudouin Foundation) to develop tools to put citizenship education into practice. Finally, citizenship education for young people is also part of the activities of the educational service of the Flemish Parliament (The power of your vote!). There are also opportunities for active participation in school policy, anchored in a Flemish Parliament Act. Flemish primary and secondary schools, universities and university colleges are obliged to organise student councils (or other participation mechanisms) if students request it. These student councils are also organised at Flemish level. Their umbrella organisations are represented in the Flemish Education Council (VLOR), the strategic advisory body for education and training policy.

In addition, the participation of young people is also an issue in youth care policy. The Flemish Parliament Act of 2004 on the legal position of minors in youth care (Vlaamse Regering, 2004) was evaluated in 2010 at a colloquium with the sector. The new Flemish Parliament Act on integrated youth care (2012-2013) includes a special chapter on 'participation'. The idea is to further develop and to support the participation of young clients in youth care, with regards to the process of individual assistance.

Also the (Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Agency (VDAB) takes some initiatives to enhance the participation of youngsters. Their website provides clear and accessible information and they use diverse social communication media to reach young people. In the autumn of 2013, the VDAB organised - on the advice of the Flemish Youth Council - life youth panels to formulate their opinion and brainstorm about the services of the VDAB. The VDAB challenges Flemish IT students to create innovative prototypes of tools or concepts to enable young people to search for a job. Together with various youth organisations and Klasse (a magazine published by the Flemish Ministry of education and training), the VDAB supports the co-creation project Roadies, in which 2 job seekers test another work every

week. Via their website ([www.roadies.be](http://www.roadies.be)) one discovers the labour market through their eyes and the opportunities and difficulties related to educational and professional choices.

Also the Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction (2010-2014) puts participation on the foreground as an important line of force. It states that the participation gap for people in poverty should be bridged. With regard to the policy participation, we should refer to the (Flemish network of) associations where the poor take the floor, which is recognized and subsidized by the Flemish government and functions as a discussion partner within the scope of a participative anti-poverty policy. Another instrument, determined by the poverty decree, to involve people in poverty in poverty reduction, is the training and employment of experts by experience in poverty and social exclusion (Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction, 2010-2014). There is an extensive cooperation between the Flemish network of associations where the poor take the floor and the VDAB. The Flemish network is also part of a think tank housing-welfare. Moreover, the involvement of people in poverty in local applications of decrees (f.e. youth policy plan, sport policy plan) is stimulated and their structural participation to the networks of integrated youth care is also formalized (Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction, 2010-2014). Concerning the digital participation, the Flemish network of associations where the poor take the floor is involved with the National Plan to combat the digital gap.

## **6. Policy making, implementation and participation**

### **6.1 Who are the actors that are responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?**

The vision of poverty and poverty reduction in Flanders, is summarized in three ideas: (1) enabling poverty is a violation of human rights, (2) poverty is a loss of social (and socio-economic) value, and (3) the fight against poverty should focus on a full participation to society, so that everyone can fully benefit from all fundamental social rights (Flemish anti-poverty policy plan, 2010-2014). Since anti-poverty policy making is closely interrelated with conceptualizations of poverty (Lister, 2004), we will explore more in depth the definition of poverty in Flanders, as formulated in the Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction (2010-2014):

Poverty is a network of social exclusions spread over multiple areas of individual and collective existence. It separates people in poverty of the generally accepted activity patterns of society (Vranken, Geldof, Van Menxel & Van Ouytsel, 2001). Between the lives of people in poverty and people without poverty experience there is a difficult bridgeable gap, which manifests itself in a variety of areas: structural participation, skills, knowledge, feeling and forces of the people (anti-poverty plan 2010-2014). This gap can be bridged only when society (both the policy and the broad civil society and other actors) (1) makes a call on the power of people in poverty and their environment, (2) creates the conditions, so that people in poverty are able to use this power and (3) gives everyone equal opportunities to take part in all aspects of society (Van Regenmortel, 2002).

Although the Flemish approach combines aspects of both a cultural and a materialistic definition of poverty (as reflected in the policy strategies, f.e. the basic act on Flemish social protection, study grants, social housing), the definition of poverty largely shifted to non-materialistic and cultural aspects (Vranken, 1998). This is significantly revealed in the

definition adopted in the National Action Plan Social inclusion (Nationaal actieplan sociale inclusie, POD MI 2008-2010, p. 4): “Social exclusion refers to a process through which poor citizens do not (any longer) manage to find connection with the rest of society. In one or more areas of life a line of social fracture exists because poor people do not achieve the generally accepted standard of living.” This definition illustrates that the poverty is mainly situated in a debate about finding connection with public services. However, it is recognized that the general policy strategies and measures are often insufficient for people in disadvantaged situations, and reference is made to the cultural gap and the powerlessness for people to bridge this gap: “poverty is the result of a system of social exclusion in which certain conditions reinforce each other, such as poor education, employment, and income; and poor people cannot bridge this gap under their own power.” (POD MI 2008-2010, p. 4). Also the definition of social vulnerability, is largely based on cultural and psychological aspects, rather than on structural characteristics. Social vulnerability is defined as “an accumulation of negative experiences with social institutions leading to socio-psychological coping mechanisms and psychological characteristics that carry the risk of more intensive exclusion” (Hauspie, Vettenburg & Roose, 2010, p. 15). In this Flemish approach of poverty and social vulnerability, the role of government intervention and the welfare sector is the help to bridge this cultural gap, so that people in poverty can find connection with general services (f.e. education, health care...) of society. For example, one of the formulated goals in the Youth Pact 2020 is that every municipality has a poverty coach who actively traces families in poverty, supports them and refers them to the right instances (in dialogue with the OCMW, organisations where poor people take the floor, schools, socio-cultural organisations, VDAB etc.) (<http://www.jongerenpact2020.be/armoede/>). To bridge the cultural gap and to realise the connection with general services, Flanders initiates empowering, participative and preventive policy strategies (Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction , 2010-2014). This empowering policy is defined in the Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction as “a process of strengthening on three level, in which individuals, organizations and communities get grip on their own situation and their environment, through gaining control, sharpening critical consciousness and stimulating participation” (Driessens & Van Regenmortel, 2006, p. 101, in Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction 2010-2014). Or in the words of respondent 8:

To empower is to strengthen young people. As I understand it, in the first place to take charge of their own destiny, to retain their autonomy, to stimulate their personal development... in order to participate as a full citizen. But that's mine interpretation.

In Belgian anti-poverty politics, this empowering dimension is understood as the stimulation of an individual process of personal growth and adaptation of poor and socially excluded people (Roets, Roose, Claes, Vandekinderen, Van Hove, & Vanderplasschen, 2012) and translated into a range of remediation strategies and pedagogical practices such as personal advice, training, job brokerage, budget guidance, voluntary work, case-management, educational support. This focus of care and support on the psychosocial aspects, is sharply illustrated in the interview with respondent 6, who reflects on this topic from a youth care view, which is very relevant since, as we mentioned before, people in poverty are overrepresented in youth care in Flanders:

The possibilities of material support are actually relatively limited. It does happen that money from services is used to help young people to get an apartment and furniture, that enables them to live

independently, but these practices are rather seldom. So the material side is not all that great, support is especially situated in the immaterial, in forms of educational support, which imply treatment, training and counseling. Besides the question clarification and the diagnostics, these three things (treatment, training and counseling) are very strongly developed in the youth services.

We will briefly light up policy strategies and practices concerning disadvantaged youth in three domains: (1) youth work, (2) employment and (3) youth care, which are translations of the cultural/psychosocial interpretation of poverty/disadvantage.

One of the strategic goals (SD2) in the Flemish youth policy plan (2010-2014) is to provide all children and youngsters with the access to good youth information that strengthen their choice possibilities and processes. To realise this, information days about education, youth, work, welfare and housing will be organised, whereby the need for special attention towards pupils in part-time vocational training and special education, is stressed. Another strategic goal (SD7) concerns the adaptation of the offer of leisure time, education and welfare to the needs of socially vulnerable children, based on the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children have the right on health (care) (art. 24), an appropriate standard of living (art. 27), education (art. 28), leisure time and cultural activities (art. 31). It is stated that youth policy has to do an effort on the one hand to stimulate the participation of children and young people to the regular circuit and on the other hand to expand the need-focused offer for special target groups, as it is recognized that the 'cultural gap' is often too big. However, it is stressed that building bridges with other children/youngsters in other organisations is of crucial importance.

It is widely accepted in Europe, that the NEET status may lead to a wide range of negative social conditions, such as disaffection, isolation, insecure and underpaid employment, crime, and mental and physical health problems. These negative consequences are almost all situated at the psychosocial level. It is stated that these outcomes each have a cost attached to them and therefore being NEET is not just detrimental for the individual but also for societies and economies as a whole. The economic cost is generally expressed in a certain percentage of the GDP. The social cost is translated in the considerably lower level of political, democratic and social engagement of those youngsters compared to their age group (Eurofound, 2012). One of the preventive political strategies towards NEET is to promote access to adequate, affordable, accessible and high quality services, such as early childhood education and care, housing, health and social services to prevent young people getting into or remaining in a NEET situation (draft council conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training, 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2013). These actions can be summarized as strengthening the (members of a) disadvantaged family and encouraging their participation to the services.

Another political strategy towards NEET is the youth guarantee, encouraging immediate action to focus on young people and to provide tailored services. Moreover, opportunities for apprenticeships create possibilities for young people to acquire skills relevant to the labour market. Another strategy is to foster youth entrepreneurship. However, it is recognized that all of these policy strategies are particularly effective for the work-ready youth, but do not affect disadvantaged youth. For them, special active integration initiatives are set up, f.e. alternative provision of training opportunities, individual coaching, competence-enhancing actions ... Concisely: an individually tailored approach is applied in

order to effectively and successfully (re)integrate the youngsters into the labour market, the education or training system, and social life. However, respondent 10 made an important side note about these practices:

I feel like we are in a juncture in which the question “What is the manageability of things” takes a central position. I have to deal with and take account of this on a daily basis. But what is of real importance to me, is the narrative story of our youngsters. The narrative story of our youngsters, who come to our organization in the dead of winter, being hungry and wearing a t-shirt. The story of young people committing racism, which is often a conflict about claiming space, and how we deal with this as a city. The narrative story of youngsters who are at their wit’s end in education and dropped out of the system. The question: what does this mean for those youngsters, is seldom asked. And we formulate sometimes some simple answers, without checking out what it means to them. How can we help them forward? Rather than how many of them did we reach? We see the same thing happening in activation trajectories towards the labour market. Currently, our counselors sometimes dance already joyfully when a youngster is activated on the labour market for three months: “We have activated him!!!”. But what within two months? Does that guy actually has a solution for his problem? That is a serious concern, that we, as a society, don’t give it a moment’s thought: what does this basically mean for this youngster? Does that guy has a qualitative job? Is it meaningful to him? Or did we just push him into the labour market? How far will we go? The problem is that it is more difficult to grasp the narratives.

The new decree on integrated youth care, strongly focuses on community-based care and the strengths of youngsters:

“Youth care has the task of strengthening the forces of minors, their parents and, where appropriate, the child-rearing responsables and the persons from their environment in order to: 1° avoid, if possible, the inflow of the minor, his parents and, where appropriate, the child-rearing responsible, in youth care. 2° increase their participation in the youth care services; 3° promote their emancipation and participation in society. Therefore, youth care providers use adapted methods to strengthen the forces of minors, their parents and, where appropriate, the child-rearing responsables and the persons from their environment to maximize their own forces, which enable them to tackle the problem.”(Flemish Parliament, Decree on integrated youth care, article 9)

In line with this philosophy youth welfare took already steps in the direction of more community-based care. On the department ‘referring policy’ a solution-focused and strengths-based approach is implemented through two specific methods for the consultants. The short-term, intensive, mobile, solution- and power-oriented interventions of the project ‘Positive reorientation’, running since 2010, are expanded with 150 counselings. Moreover, the community institutions are stimulated to integrate power-oriented support in their treatment, moreover by actively involving young people and their parents (policy letter welfare, health and family, policy priorities 2013-2014 // beleidsbrief welzijn, volksgezondheid en gezin).

## **6.2 Young people’s participation in policy making**

User participation has come to function as a central social policy concept for the implementation of anti-poverty strategies on a broad range of policy domains and both on macro, meso and micro levels.

It is recognized that the knowledge and experience about poverty and possible solutions of people in poverty offer a special added value for a powerful poverty policy (Action Plan for

Poverty Reduction , 2010-2014). The appearance of the General Report on Poverty (Algemeen Verslag over de Armoede) in 1994 illustrates this point of view, as it was presented as a joint venture by social workers and other actors, particularly (self-)advocacy organisations, aiming at guaranteeing the recognition of the standpoints of people in poverty in a structural dialogue with representative policymakers in the Belgian Welfare state (Roets et al., 2012). With regard to disadvantaged youth, policy efforts are made to involve the client(representative)s. Investments are made in support of the representatives of the clients in the Intersectoral Regional Consultation Forums Youth Care (IROJ's) and in the Advisory Board (policy letter welfare, health and family, policy priorities 2013-2014). However, it is also recognized by respondent 6 that the creation for a participative policy platform in youth care has – although it is appreciated as important – not been very successful in reality:

On the macro level, we have representation issues. If we want to let the representatives of young people and parents participate in policy, we must also support them to do so.(...) If you would look at how much money we have spent this term and you should consider how much of that money was invested to support representation and participation on a macro level, you would instantly get the picture. Do you understand what I mean? We try to do things very explicitly within the framework of integrated youth care, but the creation of a platform has failed. I would certainly not claim that one would not have wanted that, but it's not there. On the macro level the money was not freed up.

At the same time, respondent 6 states that participation processes on the micro level were launched to a larger extent, among others, through the decree on integrated youth care, which asserts a maximal participation of youngsters and their parents in youth care trajectories. This reflects the idea that governments (federal, regional and local) see for themselves a role to play in supporting children, young people and their families by creating opportunities for them to fully develop and to take up an empowered position in society. In this vein, participation is viewed as a process: the mechanism by which people gain mastery over their lives (Van Regenmortel, 2002, p. 75). Within youth care, f.e. strengths-based conferences are pushed forward as a tool to implement participative processes and citizenship in practice. Respondent 11 referred to these participative methodologies in a critical way during the interview:

Many policy makers and social workers, reason from an offer. And participation is understood in terms of: do youngsters take part to that offer? And if the answer is “no, participation should be higher”, then they organize offer-oriented participation opportunities. F.e. in Antwerp, there was a lot of commotion when the youth service organized a participation moment concerning youth unemployment. They hired a consultant (the Flemish Government did already the same) who developed a participation methodology in which the youngsters had to take part. There's neither here nor there. If you say that youngsters need to determine how we should work around youth unemployment, it means to me that a youth worker talks a lot with the youngsters before employment is defined as a problem. The decision “we're going to do something with it” should be made by listening to their stories. By listening to a story and taking it into consideration when you make choices, you work participatory. Then, the youngsters will experience: we have an impact on what happens here, because we told this and one has listened to us. This requires no consultant nor expensive procedure, but a basic attitude, called a lifeworld orientation.

## **7. Social innovation and the role of social innovation in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy**

### **7.1 How is social innovation defined?**

In Flanders in Action Pact 2020, a long-term innovation strategy is put forward as an answer to the question: how can we respond to great societal challenges, such as climate change, the ageing population and an efficient approach to mobility and logistics? As a knowledge economy, Flanders wants to endorse the smart, inclusive and sustainable growth objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and innovation is considered a crucial factor in this. The government of Flanders says not to promote innovation merely for innovation's sake, but because it has a societal and economic leverage effect. Establishing transversal links across the policy areas seems an important concern in this (Flanders in Action Pact 2020). Multidisciplinary innovation hubs are created by coupling Flanders' scientific and technological strengths with the great societal and economic challenges. The innovation hubs cover six different areas: (1) transformation through innovation (industrial innovation), (2) eco-innovation, (3) green mobility, (4) renewable energy, (5) care innovation and (6) social innovation. In order to realise this innovation and scientific progress, the Government of Flanders aims to mobilise knowledge institutions, small and large companies, the non-profit sector and civil society and raise their enthusiasm for participating in the innovation process. A new innovation pact is to lay down the commitment of all the actors involved (Flanders in Action Pact 2020).

The Concept Note Innovation Center Flanders (Conceptnota over de stroomlijning van het gericht innovatiebeleid, 2011) defines social innovation along three lines: workplace innovation, social entrepreneurship and the widely supporting social innovation. Workplace innovation in Flanders takes shape through the promotion and effort of Flanders Synergy, but there is no clear innovation policy covering social entrepreneurship and the widely supporting social innovation. Therefore, in 2012 the government of Flanders organised a participative round-table meeting around social innovation, where two aspects were highlighted: social entrepreneurship and the widely supporting social innovation. This debate was driven by diverse European initiatives concerning social innovation: the BEPA (Bureau of European Policy Advisors) report on social innovation of the European Union (2011), the Social Innovation Europe Initiative (March 2011) and the Social Business Initiative Europe (November 2011). According to the report of BEPA, Europe defines the role of social innovation as "to uphold sustainable, smart and inclusive growth, social innovation is necessary to address poverty, create employment, develop capabilities and participation, and promote changes in production and consumption habits" (2011, p. 14). The European policy context of social innovation is to introduce social and ecological accents in the Lisbon strategy which targets on innovation, growth and jobs, as evidenced by the renewed social agenda for 2008 and the Europe 2020 growth strategy.

Social innovation relates to the development of new forms of organisation and interactions to respond to social issues (the process dimension). It aims at addressing (the outcome dimension): (1) social demands that are traditionally not addressed by the market or existing institutions and are directed towards vulnerable groups in society, (2) societal

challenges in which the boundary between 'social' and 'economic' blurs, and which are directed towards society as a whole, and (3) the need to reform society in the direction of a more participative arena where empowerment and learning are sources and outcomes of well-being (BEPA, 2011, p. 43).

In her speech on this round-table meeting (April 2012), Ingrid Lieten, the Flemish Minister for Innovation, Public Investment, Media and Poverty Reduction, formulated a working definition of social innovation: "One can speak of social innovation when the innovation structurally aims to address social needs or challenges and when new products, goods, services, processes, marketing methods and/or organisational models are involved." She added: "Social innovation needs to be social both in the objective and in the method. It should be clear which short, medium and long term goals are intended, how these can be measured and how different actors with different backgrounds and expertise in a process of co-creation can achieve the intended goals".

Nevertheless only the social aspect is stressed in this definition, the economical aspect is also mentioned in the BEPA (2011, p. 24) report: "At a time when resources are limited, new solutions must be found to respond to these demands, making better use of existing resources and transforming them into sources of growth". Furthermore, it is stated in the same report: "This makes the case to view the social dimension as a fundamental source of growth and jobs" (BEPA, 2011, p. 24). This perspective was also reflected in the interview with respondent 8:

It is a term that derives from the business world. If you do not refresh – because innovation means refreshing for me – you can't get better. You cannot improve your quality. So you cannot grow. Therefore, they must work innovatively to their methods. To their actions. And so on. And so, innovation is linked to entrepreneurship. It's in the economic logic. That's my interpretation of it. And social innovation. That's with a touch of social I guess.

According to the speech of Minister Lieten, social innovation policy in Flanders should get shape through three phases:

A first phase is aimed at stimulating innovative ideas by and with stakeholders on an ongoing and longitudinal way, so that the social innovative capacity in Flanders is strengthened. A second phase will focus on enriching and developing selected socially innovative ideas. Finally, in a third stage the elaborated social innovative projects are strengthened on the basis of an impact analysis (social, economic and return on investment) and guided to the market, regular policy or to a private-public cooperation.

This suggests that the Flemish social innovation policy handles rather a systematic approach of social innovation, in which the process is coordinated in a top down way. With regard to youth policy, both top down and bottom up innovative approaches get possibly subsidized. However, as respondent 4a explains, top down initiatives are more common:

The government has two angles. One approach is bottom up. We do not define what experimental youth work is. You are coming with your application and if that is indeed something innovative from a Flemish perspective – that no one in Flanders has already done – and that can cover methodology, target group..., then you get subsidized. A different approach is when a Government – and that happens more often – says: we have a bag of money if you do work around this theme or with this

target group. That can also be innovative, for example, working with a target group that is not reached so far.

During the interview, respondent 8 also mentioned instrumentalisation as a tricky point. The working definition of Minister Lieten leaves much space for interpretations about the social needs and challenges that have to be addressed and about which new products, goods, services etc. that should be involved. One of the most important questions at this point is who defines the needs and the ways to address these, and in addition, does social innovation confirm a certain (exclusion) logic or challenge it. Respondent 5 raised this point:

I used to be quite critical about the term innovation, since I always interpreted innovation as the need for something new, something innovative, with web applications or so. But in the Yearbook on Poverty (2012), Stijn Oosterlinck defines social innovation as an innovative way of organizing or meeting a certain group of people who falls out. So eg. in the 1960's or 1970's you had innovative sport projects for women. However, when they do not come to your facilities and clubs, because they experience thresholds, you need to start thinking in other ways about how you can organize and how you can bring something meaningful. When you perceive innovation that way, it means that you have your government with its logic, and working innovative is taking a step back and looking what's wrong with that logic, and exploring if there are other possible logics.

With regard to youth policy, respondent 9 mentions the effort that is made to involve young people in youth policy on the one hand and the challenge to further develop the participatory character at every stage of policy making:

Talking about innovation in link with participation, I spontaneously think about the effort that is made today to maximally involve both young people and civil society in shaping youth policy. Considering the manner in which the latest youth policy plan took shape, it has been a long process, but I think that's very ok. In the sense that young people really had the chance to have their voice heard. They also have been involved in certain work groups, also civil society was involved to a large extent, not youth work only, but also youth welfare work and youth care. However, once the plan is formulated, it is much more difficult to keep up the participatory character. Talking about an innovative challenge in relation to participation, there's a lot of work to do! Because once the plan is formulated, it is left to the cabinet and administration. And there is not one opportunity for young people to evaluate the goals of the Flemish Youth Policy Plan. At that point, the participatory character is completely lost.

Also in youth care, social innovation is linked to a participative and question-oriented approach, as respondent 6 explained:

Social innovation is about introducing certain new techniques in care and support, not only on an organizational level, but also in terms of content. I believe that this innovative dynamic has to start with the question: what is a question-oriented approach and how can we meet this question? Our point of departure is a question-orientated approach, that's the motive for innovation. What is the question *[of the youngster and the parents]* and how can we meet this question. And this means more than ever before that organizations have to work together around certain target groups to realise the question-orientated approach. E.g. the cooperation between two residential institutions. One institution does want to admit the youngster, but no thirty days in a month, because they can't: "If I do my educators are exhausted" etc. And then, the two institutions will take turns. Is that the best situation for the youngster? No. But not getting any help is even worse. But it is innovative that one tries to combine things that formerly could not be combined, and by which one comes to a care and support offer that is more in line with a question-oriented approach than referring a youngster to a community institution because there is no alternative left. In such situations, I see innovation. There are also organisations that merge with others in order to increase this flexibility. So things are happening. Although, it is always the same, twenty, thirty percent of the organisations and not the other way round, no 70%.

With regard to young people, it is worth to mention that in the current Flemish youth policy plan, social innovation is not addressed as such, but innovation is treated along with entrepreneurship. Moreover, the environmental analysis in preparation for the new Flemish youth and children's rights policy plan (omgevingsanalyse Vlaams jeugd- en kinderrechtenbeleidsplan, 2015-2019) reflects a focus on technological innovation, since innovation is explored in terms of new developments in the media aimed at children and young people and its possibilities (home education for sick children, leisure time, right of participation) and risks (invasion of privacy, cyber bullying, sexual abuse etc.). In the same environmental analysis, the experts' opinion about innovation, which is based on three focus groups with experts in the domain of youth policy, states that there needs to be more space and support for grass-roots initiatives and thinking out of the box in (youth)policy, since failing (both in society and policy) is not accepted, taking risks is discouraged and as a consequence, innovation is quasi impossible (Environmental Analysis, Youth and children's rights policy plan, 2015-2019).

Summarized, we perceive a tension between two approaches concerning social innovation. On the one hand, there is a top down approach, based on an economic logic and implemented systematically. On the other hand, a bottom up approach is mentioned, inspired by a participative process and reflecting the perspective of youngsters.

## **7.2 Supporting social innovation**

Following the kick-off meeting on social innovation in December 2011 and the round table in April 2012, a call was launched to generate social innovative ideas. On the one hand, there was the opportunity to submit an own idea (open category) and on the other hand, two substantive themes were put forward, in particular urbanization and social inclusion. For example, projects can cover the encouragement of an open and warm society, developing creativity, enhancing democratic involvement of citizens, etc. (theme urbanization). Or the projects can address poverty, immigrants, elderly people, lonely persons etc. (theme social inclusion). The open category encloses innovation suggestions with regard to mobility problems, or linguistics and language technology applications framed in citizenship courses, or ideas for alternative ways of financing or barter etc. (<http://www.ewi-vlaanderen.be/oproep-sociale-innovatie-2013>). Overall, it is stated that social innovation is any innovation that structurally fleshes out a social need and a new or significantly improved product, service, process, marketing method or organisational model. In addition, a project proposal on social innovation needs to meet four desirable criteria. Such a project proposal: (1) elaborates a medium and long-term vision on society or on a future envisaged by the innovation, (2) contains a daring reflection on the way the direct effects and the effects in the medium term are preserved and can be measured reliably, (3) connects different human actors in an innovative way and (4) emphasizes emancipation, empowerment and/or participation (presentation about social Innovation, Cabinet Ingrid Lieten). The submitted projects are evaluated on the feasibility of the idea and a further plan is worked out. Moreover, the evaluation of the capacity of the applicant to valorize the result of a follow-up program by their own means in the long term is an essential part of the project evaluation.

Besides, at the beginning of December 2012, the plan was approved to found a social innovation factory which focus is both on social entrepreneurship and on broad social innovation. This social innovation factory is a non-profit organisation in which actors from the business world and from civil society (moreover the Flemish network of associations where the poor take the floor) participate and put together a Fund. A call for ideas was launched and financial support and a possible cooperation within the factory is provided. The ideas have to connect to one of the following approaches: (1) idea-driven: innovative answers on societal challenges are developed and supported, f.e. innovation vouchers (2) challenge-driven: societal challenges are explored by a wide range of actors and bring opportunities for social innovation with them, f.e. idea generation campaigns, expert web seminars, (3) capacity-driven: expanding the capacity for social innovation of actors from companies and non-profit organisations, f.e. executive course for managers from companies and non-profit organizations and (4) community-driven: a support base for systemic change is expanded by a learning network in which a wide variety of actors to enrich their knowledge, f.e. local and regional networking. In their study about social innovation in the context of poverty reduction in Flanders (commissioned by the Flemish poverty foundation - VLAS), Ghys and Oosterlynck (2013) state that in the social innovation factory: "The emphasis is mainly placed on private-civil partnerships and the complementarity of social innovation and technological innovation, where the social aspect must be found mostly in the introduction of areas such as poverty reduction and inclusion. (...) This is the first place to the development of new projects and business models and less about learning processes, empowering and supporting existing local initiatives".

More specifically aimed at youth, there is a Decree on Experimental Youth Work, by which innovative initiatives can get subsidized for three years, after which it has to make its way. Respondent 4b made a comment about this, concerning the continuity of this project-based financing system, referring to the results of the research 'Youth work with socially vulnerable children and youngsters', commissioned by the Agency social-cultural work for youth and adults, Department youth and conducted by the KATHO and Ghent University:

This is also revealed in the research: projects can be innovative, but it denounces the fact that there are too many projects instead of opportunities to work (and get funded) on a structural base. If you need to make an agreement with local governments each time for a year... Well, in a year, especially with that youngsters as target group, it's not evident to go through a participatory process. It takes time, especially with young people... The conclusion is that sometimes it would be better to get subsidised on a more structural base, without completely shutting down the project grant.

Also in youth care, social innovation is encouraged by government through funding, as respondent 6 explains:

Also the government stimulates social innovation, through diverse forms of funding: envelope funding or module funding. In the framework of the EMF's and MFC 's, new forms of funding are experimented with. That, of course, is also an important part. Organizations can search, but if they are not insured by the accreditation of their income and funding, at some point they stop searching and innovating, because they run the risk of no longer being paid for what they do. Organising otherwise and getting subsidized otherwise go hand in hand.

## 8. Discussion and conclusions

At the end of this report, we want to return to one of the central concepts of the Capabilities Approach, in particular, the Informational Basis of the Judgements in Justice with regard to disadvantage youth. We will briefly resume Flanders' broadly accepted foundations for the construction of disadvantaged youth and the resulting content and purposes of policies and practices.

In Flanders, disadvantage is mainly covered by the term "social vulnerability", which refers to "the risk to be repetitively exposed to negative situations (control, sanctions) when dealing with social institutions and profit less from the positive provisions" (Vettenburg, 1989). Social vulnerability is defined as "an accumulation of negative experiences with social institutions leading to socio-psychological coping mechanisms and psychological characteristics that carry the risk of more intensive exclusion" (Hauspie, Vettenburg & Roose, 2010, p. 15, own translation). This description is widely accepted as the predominant definition of social vulnerability in Flanders and emphasizes a multidimensional perspective on disadvantage, as it integrates a variety of aspects, referred to as "risk factors" for social vulnerability, as explained before. The definition of social vulnerability is largely based on cultural and psychological aspects. In the same vein, the Flemish approach of poverty largely shifted - without ignoring the materialistic angle - to non-materialistic and cultural aspects (Vranken, 1998).

As pointed out before, in this Flemish approach of poverty and social vulnerability, the role of government intervention and the welfare sector is to help to bridge the cultural gap with an increased effort on integration strategies on the domain of employment and education policies. Therefore, Flanders initiates empowering, participative and preventive policy strategies, especially towards people in socially vulnerable situations, to enhance their participation in educational systems and the labour market. In Belgian anti-poverty politics, this empowering dimension is understood as the stimulation of an individual process of personal growth and adaptation of poor and socially excluded (young) people (Roets et al., 2012) and translated into a range of remediation strategies and pedagogical practices such as personal advice, training, job brokerage, budget guidance, voluntary work, case-management, educational support.

However, despite all these efforts, the most vulnerable (young) people are often not reached by such initiatives, which are largely based on the image of the ideal client that participates maximally in the services provided. As citizens, (young) people in socially vulnerable situations, have the right to be offered support (and care), but they do not always fit the support models that make an appeal to the service user's responsibility. The reference to (em)power(ing)-oriented approaches runs the risk of increasing the vulnerability of people in socially vulnerable situations, as it has been widely observed that socially vulnerable people (poor, minority, marginal, disabled and chronically ill people) might already bear heavy caring responsibilities, but they also have the fewest social resources and might not be the best risk managers (Jordan, 2004). If the delivery of social services is based on a logic of self-responsibility and self-management of clients, social service professionals might be treading on a tightrope, since they are charged with "motivating and cajoling service users towards projects of autonomy and self-development,

while controlling the deviant and destructive aspects of resistance strategies (crime, drugs, benefit fraud, self-harm, mental illness)” (Jordan, 2004, p. 10) through intensified surveillance, control and disciplinary practices. Respondent 9, touched this topic in the interview:

Willem Schinkel, a sociologist from Rotterdam, proposed a very good term for this: prepression, which combines prevention and repression. The individual takes a central position and is perceived as very responsible, and the government will arrange everything in a way that the individual does what government wants it to do. And if he or she doesn't, he/she will be punished immediately. Today, I see a lot of interventions towards individuals, much more than interventions on an institutional level.

It was also the respondent 9, who perceived a shift from a welfare state towards a responsabilisation state, with a growing focus on risk-management, individual responsibility and a discourse of “no rights without duties” in which allowances are no longer taken for granted (Vandenbroeck, Roose & De Bie, 2011):

It is inherent in that movement that rights get a more conditional character. And although that's a bit jumping to conclusions, I would like to state that young people have to prove that they are good citizens and have good intentions, to make a claim on their rights. And if not, then they bump against conditions. The whole discussion around truancy is a very nice illustration of this logic, where you will see that the school fees (for certain groups of parents who are entitled to receive a fee for their children in elementary education) depend on the extent to which their children attend school. You get a very large conditionality. Yet another example is what is currently happening at the unaccompanied minors. The right to an equivalent of the minimum living wages is going to be linked – at least at the OCMW – to a number of conditions. There is a whole movement to: we want to give you something, but you need to do this, this, this ..., so under certain conditions. And if you don't meet the conditions, this will have repercussions on you rights.

The question is how these policy strategies and practices relate to one of the central aims of the Flemish youth policy plan concerning space to be non-adult, to experiment and make mistakes.

The conditionality of rights is also explicitly integrated in the Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction (2010-2014), that states that full participation to society is necessary to benefit from all fundamental social rights. In the same vein, the Action Plan against Truancy translates the right on education in a duty for which the pupil (and its parents) are held responsible individually, sometimes even by signing a contract against truancy or by obliged parenting support programmes. As such, school failure is dominantly framed as a psychosocial deficiency of individuals and families and as a cultural gap (not adapting to the school culture) that should be bridged, first by supporting their active participation, but if this strategy does not work, by punishing them, for example by giving them a fine. So we see a dual policy strategy emerging: on the one hand empowering support is provided to enhance active participation in educational systems and the labour market, on the other hand, the use of repressive interventions is increasing. It is also in this light, that the distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor should be understood, as explained by respondent 7, a multidisciplinary research institute specialised in social policy :

The deserving poor are those who are aimed not to be responsible for their situation. They get the support of all social groups. With regard to the undeserving poor, the adults who have an active age, who can work etc... many political parties and lobbies will say: that is not our problem, that's their own problem. On the contrary, they belief in a hard approach for these adults (...) E.g. the reduction

of social protection is clearly a trend. There are very nice unemployment insurance studies that show how the poverty rate of unemployed people – not only in Belgium but also in other countries – is increasing systematically. And yet, Belgium is strongly recommended to reduce benefits for the long-term unemployed. That is emblematic of that ideological approach, that you get the poor out of poverty by punishing them and by putting them at pistol-point. Those are the undeserving poor, the long-term unemployed.

This distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor, in our opinion, reflects the evolvement from a welfare system into a social investment state: “a welfare state that does not compensate for failure, but invests in future success, since the traditional welfare state could no longer efficiently tackle the new social questions such as re-emerging poverty and unemployment’ (Vandenbroeck, Roose & De Bie, 2011, p. 73 ).

However, as Vandenbroeck, Roose and De Bie (2011) point out, the idea of stimulating an individual process of personal growth and adaptation through empowering policies and practices as “a modern way to tackle problems of poverty denies the fact that these approaches rather refer to a continuity in history and in social work, where the blatant (and growing) social inequality is disregarded, which makes it even virtually impossible to think of poverty in a different vocabulary than the vocabulary of individual choice”. However, the ideology of individual choice and opportunity becomes tricky when it masks the effects of social inequality and disregards the fact that some citizens have few available choices and resources (Lister, 2004). The increasing use of a language of “choice” implies equality of access to the market and denies actual structural positions of disadvantage (Burman, 1994). By translating poverty and disadvantage as individual, educational, pedagogical, cultural and psychosocial issues, rather than as political or social problems, the welfare system interprets needs in ways that individualize responsibility and culpability while simultaneously diminishing social, political, and economic conditions and dimensions (Roets, Kristiansen, Van Hove & Vanderplasschen, 2007).

We also want to draw special attention to some practices which are described as innovative and good practices in the interviews and in policy documents. F.e. since 2008, the VDAB provides work experience trajectories for youngsters. Another identified innovative good practice is the reorganization of youth care in order to realize a question-oriented approach. However, most of the mentioned initiatives in the report are initiated by a top down movement and not seldom inspired by an economic logic, as it was often mentioned in the interviews, amongst others by respondent 9:

The new decree on youth care is preceded by a year of parliamentary work, moreover by the ad hoc Committee youth work. Integrated youth care is an exercise that is made at the level of the administrations. But the big concern of the Committee on youth care was the large influx of young people in special youth care and the central aim of integrated youth care is to reverse this movement by introducing a broad access to care on the first line, to prevent them to seek specialized care. That is the main concern, because it costs way too much money of course. (...) We strongly hammered on the fact that when you devise youth care, it is important to ensure children and young people's participation. But, that's still a problem. Young people still have the feeling that a process is put in motion, but it goes wrong both on the level of informing them about the process as on the level of the impact they have on the process. Also, getting a voice through that process, is not an evidence yet.

So the question can be raised how these innovative good practices relate to the experiences and concerns of the youngsters they address? To which extent are these practices informed

by the perspective of the youngsters? How are social diversity and contradictions brought in? Which approach and conceptualization of democracy do these practices reflect? It was amply illustrated (see 5.2 and 6.2) that Flanders has a lot of instruments to encourage the participation of youngsters in policy making processes and strongly recommends to involve people in poverty in poverty reduction policy. Nevertheless, some important questions should be asked: who is reached by the participative initiatives and who stays out the picture? Do these participative platforms create space to speak, yet also to be heard?

With regard to one of our central findings of the report, in particular the focus on integration and participation strategies on the domain of employment and education, we suggest,

- 1) to explore the meaning of these domains and of (non)participation to these institutions from the perspective of the youngsters
- 2) to explore this meaning in relation to other integration strategies and broader social, political and economic issues, f.e. housing
- 3) to explicitly link recognition policies (enhancing the involvement and participation through empowering support) to redistribution policies (more structural factors), for example the (innovative) debate around the guaranteed minimum income (<http://www.basicincome.org/bien/>)

Concerning social innovation, we suggest that

- 4) social innovation should go beyond an organisational top down perspective, and should be inspired by a participative process with youngsters that reflects their perspective and the diversity of society.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of key issues

Key issues	How is this issue defined and which key terms are used to describe this issue
Youth policy	The Communities are competent for youth (policy), and it is on this level that most explicit ‘youth policy instruments’ can be found. The Communities have a minister responsible for Youth, a parliamentary commission and a number of administrative departments with specific youth-related budget items. Since 1999, Flanders has a minister of youth (0-30 years), and the youth policy plan is one of his most important instruments in realizing a broad and integral youth policy, making an appeal to diverse policy domains. In such, the minister of youth has a coordinating function in order to realize a categorical Flemish youth policy.
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	In Flanders, disadvantaged youth is often indicated by the term “socially vulnerable youth”. In accordance with this definition, social vulnerability is described in the Flemish youth policy plan (2010-2014) as “the risk to be repetitively exposed to negative situations (control, sanctions) when dealing with social institutions and profit less from the positive provisions”. This description emphasizes a multidimensional perspective on disadvantage, as it integrates a variety of aspects, referred to as “risk factors” for social vulnerability.
Social innovation	As a knowledge economy, Flanders wants to endorse the smart, inclusive and sustainable growth objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and innovation is considered a crucial factor in this. However, social innovation is not defined in a single way, but knows a diversity of interpretations. We perceive a tension between two approaches concerning social innovation. On the one hand, there is a top down approach, based on an economical logic and implemented systematically. On the other hand, a bottom up approach is mentioned, inspired by a participative process and reflecting the perspective of the youngsters.
Participation	(User) participation has come to function as a central social policy concept on diverse policy domains, to encourage active citizenship. F.e. (1) Flanders has a lot of instruments to encourage the participation of youngsters in policy making process, (2) Flanders recommends to involve people in poverty in poverty reduction policy. Flanders initiates empowering, participative and preventive policy strategies with a focus on the domain of employment and education. On the one hand empowering support is provided to enhance active participation in educational systems and the labour market. On the other hand, the use of repressive interventions and the conditionality of rights is increasing.
The Abilities of young people	The Flemish poverty monitor (2013) indicates both work and education/training as protective factors against poverty. This brings us along a very topical way of defining disadvantaged youth in terms of NEET’s, the young people not in employment, education or training. Although it is in origin a term from the UK, it was more than once uttered by the interviewees.

## Appendix 2: Key government policies and programmes

Policy area	Policy or Programme	Description
Youth Policy	Flemish Youth Policy Plan (2010-2014)	Since 1999, Flanders has a minister of youth (0-30 years), and the youth policy plan is one of his most important instruments in realizing a broad and integral youth policy, making an appeal to diverse policy domains. The central mission of the Flemish youth policy plan (2010-2014) states: "Flemish youth policy proves all children and young people in Flanders and Brussels the biggest possible scope for development and the opportunities to be part of a democratic, open and tolerant society". <a href="http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/jeugd_kinderrechtenbeleid_doc/jbp3/VJBP3.pdf">http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/jeugd_kinderrechtenbeleid_doc/jbp3/VJBP3.pdf</a>
Education Policy	Flemish Education Policy Document (2009-2014)	Although the role of local government and the support of the local authorities is expressly recognized in the conduct of a local flanking education policy, there is a Flemish minister of education and an Education Policy Document, which highlights some strategical and operational goals. It states that 'education should be a lever to transform young people into open, strong and versatile personalities who can fully take their responsibility in society'. <a href="http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/beleid/nota/2009-2014.pdf">http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/beleid/nota/2009-2014.pdf</a>
Poverty Policy	Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction (2010-2014)	The Decree on Poverty commits the Flemish government to draw up a Flemish Action Plan for Poverty Reduction (VAPA) that runs over a period of five years. This action plan is the result of a cooperation between the representatives of all policy domains, in the permanent poverty consultation (PAO) of the Flemish Government, with participation of the target groups in partnership with the Flemish network of associations where poor people take the floor and different stakeholders. The central mission is formulated as follows: 'Flanders tackles all aspects of poverty and social exclusion, and performs an ambitious policy aimed at preventing and combating poverty and social exclusion'. <a href="http://www4wvg.vlaanderen.be/wvg/armoede/vlaamsactieplan/Documents/VAPA2010-2014.pdf">http://www4wvg.vlaanderen.be/wvg/armoede/vlaamsactieplan/Documents/VAPA2010-2014.pdf</a>
Youth Care Policy	Decree Integrated Youth Care (July 2013)	The Decree Integrated Youth Care specifies the reorganization of youth care in Flanders. The central objective of integrated youth care is perceived as 'to provide youngsters and their parents with tailor made help and care, to meet their needs'. <a href="http://www4wvg.vlaanderen.be/wvg/ijh/vlaanderen/documentenregelgeving/20130913_decreet_staatsblad.pdf">http://www4wvg.vlaanderen.be/wvg/ijh/vlaanderen/documentenregelgeving/20130913_decreet_staatsblad.pdf</a>

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# Chapter 13: The Socio-Economic Political Context of the Young in Spain

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## 1. Abstract

The youth in crisis-ridden Spain is facing multi-dimensional disadvantages and a rapidly changing socio-economic political context. Through literature review and interview of key informants, this research brings together and analyses different perspectives on their situation. A new view on youth disadvantage or risk of social exclusion has emerged during the crisis. While the classical view identifies social exclusion with factors such as early school dropout, low income or breakdown of family, the new view considers the youth as a whole as a disadvantaged collective, due to the differential effects of the crisis on them, limiting their possibilities of fulfilling their personal and professional aspirations. A key aspect is their precarious position in the labour market, with high rates of unemployment and worse working conditions. Those in higher risk of social exclusion have few opportunities to dodge the negative life-long impacts of such a situation. Current youth policies and general policies that affect the youth, instead of solving these problems, contribute to them: Programmes targeting the most excluded young have been reduced or eliminated, as have been 'normalised' youth activities and programmes; legal changes have made the access to health and education more difficult for the young. Progressive measures are limited to employment and focused on entrepreneurship, which harvest serious questionings in terms of impact, equality and paradigm. These youth programmes are generally designed in offices far from the everyday reality of the young, whose aspirations are rarely taken into account. This is mirrored in the technocratic policy making process which does not allow for the involvement of local level actors having experience and knowledge about the situation of and the work with the young (youth councillors, youth professionals, third sector...). Moreover, the participation of the young is limited to institutionalised interlocution through youth councils, which are currently being shut down or suffering severe budget cuts, adding to their pre-existing limited representation capacity. The concept of social innovation is alien to the Spanish youth sector and has no clear boundaries, although top-down, individualised and market oriented perspectives are prevalent. There is very little support from the administration to innovative youth programmes, with a handful of exceptions. Rather, present youth policies are regressive, eliminating or reducing programmes that effectively reduced inequalities and disadvantages.

## 2. Introduction

It is not an easy task to research about the socio-economic political context of the young in Spain. For one thing, because this context varies significantly from one region to the other. There are differences in the socio-economic situation of the young, but the strongest

disparities are related to the youth policies. This is related to the decentralised political system in Spain where the level of responsibility of the Autonomous Communities<sup>199</sup> and the local municipalities on youth policies is very high. For another thing, because of the rapid change and uncertainty that have arrived along with the crisis. Deep social and political transformations are going on, making it difficult to assess the present situation of the youth and what will happen in the near future. Moreover, with the severe budget cuts in the country, many youth policies are being withdrawn or remain underfunded and non-implemented, while new ones are put in place or being designed. Nevertheless, this state of affairs makes the mission of conducting such an analysis a pressing and relevant one.

This diagnosis of the socio-economic political context of the young in Spain will therefore have a limited period of relevance, as the overall situation may change dramatically in a couple of years' time. It reaches up to the legal changes and data available by the end of 2013. Due to time limitations and the scope of the research, it won't either be able to cover the whole Spanish territory. Instead, it will first focus on the state level, examining the general situation of the youth and the central youth policies. It will also analyse the policies at the regional level, specifically the ones of the autonomous community of Valencia. Insights from some municipalities have also been included with illustrative purposes.

Regarding the policies studied, we have included all the policy areas –employment, education, lived experiences and participation–, although employment has emerged as the predominant sphere, due to the dramatic situation in this respect in Spain, with youth unemployment figures over 50% (Rocha, 2012); more than twice the EU average.

It is important to clarify the idea of youth. Although in Europe young people are considered those in the 16-24 years age group, the concept is different in Spain (and other Mediterranean countries), where the transition to adulthood takes place later. Therefore, youth is considered to extend up to 29 in the Spanish context and there are some policies that extend even up to 34. In this chapter, in line with the Spanish context, we will generally consider the age group 16-29, noting the specific age group in other cases.

Finally, it is also important to share the positionality from which this work is written, as it has an influence in how the subject is broached. The main author is Spanish and aged 30, having thus experienced himself some of the situations and policies that will be discussed. He has a background on engineering and has later on specialised in development studies and sanitation policies. Moreover, for many years he has been participating in a youth leisure organisation –both as a child and later on as leisure activities instructor– and volunteering in an NGO working with children and adolescents in risk of social exclusion in Valencia.

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<sup>199</sup> Spain is a highly decentralised state, divided administratively and politically into 17 Autonomous Communities (and 2 autonomous cities) which are governed according to the national constitution and their own Statutes of Autonomy, which contain all the competences they assume, varying from one community to another.

### 3. Methods

The methods used for the elaboration of this report are primarily a literature review and interview-based empirical research.

The literature review covered several fields, including youth policy, youth employment, emancipation, education, youth participation and disadvantaged youth. Both relevant documents (laws, policies, websites, statements, reports) and existing studies on the topics were considered. Regarding geographical scope, the documents and studies covered from the autonomies level to the whole state of Spain, sometimes including a comparative perspective with other European countries. The selection of sources of information started from the repositories of relevant institutions like the national and regional Youth Institutes (INJUVE and IVAJ, respectively) and from internet searches of scientific works. Additionally, based on the bibliography cited in these works, different thematic threads were followed and further explored.

The empirical research consisted of 21 interviews relevant stakeholders, including people working at the administration, politicians from different parties, youth organisations, youth councils, NGOs, advocacy networks, experts from the academia and from think tanks... The interviews were conducted both in Madrid, the Spanish capital, and in Valencia and its surroundings, with the aim of covering the different administrative levels (national, autonomic and municipal). The sampling of the interviewees was made for one thing through contacts with the relevant institutions and for another thing selecting youth experts within our informal professional network. The selection was completed through snowball sampling; we asked the interviewees who they thought we should interview next to complete our view about the topic discussed.

The composition of the interviewee sample follows:

National government policy makers	2	1 member of parliament, 1 youth institute civil servant
Regional government policy makers	3	1 member of parliament, 1 youth institute civil servant, 1 municipal youth councillor
Training and education providers	3	1 youth NGO, 2 day-centre workers (third sector)
Employment support service providers		(the 2 day-centre workers also provide employment support)
Citizen's bodies	3	2 elected representatives of youth council, 1 worker in youth council
Youth work organisations	1	1 member of a trade union youth organisation
Think tanks	6	4 university experts, 1 trade union think tank expert, 1 consultancy expert
Networks and membership organisations	3	1 youth-related advocacy network member, 1 youth professionals network member, 1 political youth organisation

As the table above shows, the sample is broad and consistent. However, one limitation is that it is to some extent imbalanced, as we interviewed few policy makers, especially at the national level. The reasons behind this limitation is two-fold: on one hand there were time constraints and on the other hand few national-level policy makers were ready to receive us for the interview, especially the ones from the ruling party, which is already a sign of the current situation and political priority of youth policy in Spain. Finally, there is urban bias in the sample, neglecting rural youth organisations or councils and municipal experiences far from big cities.

The interviews were semi-structured, using open-ended questions about the different topics covered in this report, and were recorded digitally, with the consent of the interviewee. The question list was common, but stress was put in specific questions in order to adapt to the profile and expertise of the informant. In addition some questions were improvised in order to deepen on relevant topics emerging throughout the interview.

Regarding the analysis of the data, the documents and interviews were reviewed in order to compile and synthesise the most relevant evidences gathered, at the same time reflecting the contested perspectives of the different actors involved. In the case of the interviews, the software Sonal<sup>200</sup> was used to encode the audio extracts in order to facilitate the thematic comparison and to transcribe the most relevant passages. The quotations from the interviews in these documents were translated from Spanish, Valencian or Catalan into English by the authors. The quotations were anonymised so that the participants would not be identified. A draft version of the report was shared with them in order to ensure they had no objection to their quotes in the research output.

## **4. National definitions**

### **4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth**

#### **4.1.1 Defining disadvantaged youth**

In Spain, the term disadvantaged youth could be translated as ‘juventud desfavorecida’, which is an expression that is seldom used. Instead, to characterise this situation, preferred terms are vulnerable youth or youth in risk, either broadly or related to social exclusion or poverty. All these concepts are generally used interchangeably, being youth in risk of social exclusion (‘Juventud en riesgo de exclusión social’) the most used one, although there is not necessarily a common interpretation of what it means. Actually, one expert believes that “one of the problems is that none of these terms has ever been defined with exactitude” (university expert 1), leading to confusion about the collective.

In order to broach this subject broadly while conducting the interviews, we used the term disadvantaged youth and asked the interviewees whether this term was familiar to them, what concept they generally used to describe this reality and what it meant.

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<sup>200</sup> The software is available at: <http://www.sonal-info.com>

As expected, the answers coincided in risk of social exclusion was the most common term. Moreover, it was possible to identify two different perspectives on it.

On the one hand, there is the classical view on the risk of social exclusion, which identifies as youth in risk of social exclusion –or in situation of social exclusion– those having little perspectives of being able to take part in a normalised social life (especially in terms of access to the labour market), as a result of a combination of several inhibiting factors such as early school dropout and less education opportunities, low income households, precarious housing, breakdown of family network, lack of social support, scarce opportunities of healthy leisure or little capacity of organisation and social participation. One interviewee listed: “Young with limited training, young that do not find a job, long-term unemployed, [...] unstructured families” (youth NGO 1). Several social groups, such as gypsies, immigrants, young with disabilities and those residing in poor or conflictive neighbourhoods were identified as having higher probability of being in risk of social exclusion. The crisis, apart from making life even more difficult for those in such a situation –they have less income opportunities and reduced social protection– has been leaving more and more previously low income households without jobs, making them slip into this category.

On the other hand, there is the new view on the risk of social exclusion, emerging from the present crisis which the young suffer most. Being young is thus seen as a disadvantage in itself; the youth as a whole is now in risk of social exclusion, due to the precariousness of the labour market, the high level of unemployment and its long duration (for themselves and for their families), coupled with shrinking social protection and rising educational costs: “just for the fact of being young, you are already in a situation of inequality, even more in the time we are living now, in which [...we] are the section of the population most affected by the consequences of the crisis. Because we were the first to be expelled from the labour market back in 2008 and we are nowadays the ones having more difficulties in being able to rejoining it” (representative youth council 1). This has several consequences, such as difficulties for emancipation and for fulfilling personal and professional aspirations.

Generally, those working in the third sector or in NGOs based in ‘difficult neighbourhoods’ and those doing research in such areas position themselves in the classical view of social exclusion, while youth organisations and councils and those working in youth sector in general (administration and politicians) are closer to the new view. However, these two ways of understanding youth disadvantage are not necessarily contradictory, and actually many interviewees had a combined perspective, acknowledging the vulnerability of the youth as a whole, but also identifying specific groups with a more severe situation: “The situation of the young nowadays is one of inequality as compared to the adult population, and then within the young, there are collectives which suffer it more; [...] disabled young [...] young women [...] young LGBT [...] rural young [...] young immigrants” (trade union young 1). This laxity in the definitions used in the sector is problematic, because there is no common ground for discussing the situation, planning the actions and targeting the groups in order to solve these situations. It is beyond the scope of this work, but it would be very positive to establish clear definitions and differentiated categories to characterise the youth (and the population) that now falls under the confusing umbrella of the multiple terms used.

Without stating it explicitly, other contributions pointed similarly to the need of embracing the plurality of the youth. For instance, to what concerns vulnerability: “We tend to use youth in situations of vulnerability, also because within this vulnerability we understand that differences exist, isn’t it? Different vulnerabilities, different situations” (trade union think tank 1). A youth institute civil servant also highlighted the need to differentiate among age groups within the youth and between young people living with their families and living on their own, the latter being a group in an increasing deprived situation, though prior to the crisis it was not considered in risk of social exclusion.

Apart from the two main perspectives, there were other minority perspectives on social exclusion. An interesting one shared by a couple of interviewees conceptualises youth disadvantage or social exclusion as an overall lack of opportunities or an inequality of opportunities as compared with other age groups or others within the young: “I prefer to speak about lesser opportunity; lesser opportunity in terms of options to be able to get along later on” (day-centre 1). The idea of opportunities is used broadly, and may refer to employment, access to education, health, leisure activities... This perspective is in line with the concept of capabilities, which are the real opportunities people have to be and do what they have reason to value (Sen, 1999).

#### **4.1.2 Indicators of the risk of social exclusion**

The two perspectives described earlier are reflected in the indicators used to measure the situation of the youth in Spain.

The National Statistics Institute, in line with the EU, measures the overall poverty risk or social exclusion rate calculating the population in any of these situations: risk of poverty (60% of the median income per consumption unit), severe material deprivation and households without jobs or with low employment intensity (members worked for less than 20% of their total potential). The youth in risk of social exclusion has increased from 21.8% in 2007 to 34.5% in 2012 (INE, 2013a). This indicator could be seen as aligned with the classical view of social exclusion –although simplifying the concept–, as far as it uses the typical variables used to identify the deprived sections of society. When these data are communicated to the press and the citizens by the National Statistics Institute (INE, 2010), the income aspects are stressed even more. It may also happen in practice, as shows the view of a member of a youth institute: “in fact, what defines being in a situation of risk of social exclusion is the income level” (regional youth institute 1). A problem of these indicators, which relates to the lack of clear definitions of these collectives, is that they are too all-embracing, in the sense that they do not help differentiate among the plurality of situations mentioned earlier and the range of people accordingly classified as in risk of social exclusion is too broad. As a consequence of this little discrimination capacity, those in high risk of social exclusion are subsumed in a bigger group and thus loose relevance and do not get the attention required.

On the other hand, these indicators are also inadequate for capturing the new view of the risk of social exclusion of the youth. Due to the household level focus and the weight of income variables, the situation of the young is diluted within the household, the labour related problems are minimised and other aspects such as emancipation are neglected. There is a consensus on the fact that a renewed look is required for comprehending the new

realities of the young. Although there is no clarity yet on how this should exactly materialise, several existing indicators have been gaining attention, as show some of the recent publications. Interestingly, the Spanish Youth Council has started to elaborate a quarterly publication called 'emancipation observatory', thoroughly analysing existing indicators of emancipation (especially employment and housing), which is a way of highlighting what they consider relevant in this respect. Another example is Rocha (2012) who analyses the differential impact of unemployment on the youth, including an indicator of the rate of temporary jobs. A very relevant study entitled "The Transition to Adulthood in Spain. Economic Crisis and Late Emancipation" (Moreno Mínguez, López Peláez and Segado Sánchez-Cabezudo, 2012) does a very thorough analysis of these aspects. Apart from exploring existing indicators, new ones are introduced and used in a survey, trying to explore the 'ideal' ages –according to the young– for leaving the parental home, for cohabitation with a partner, for marriage and for having children. The idea is to compare these with the actual indicators in order to capture the gap between the aspirations and the reality of the young. Finally, there is also the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) indicator, which has lost momentum after an initial period of popularity. This is both because of its intrinsic limitations and because of its negative connotations (it was translated as 'ni-ni', meaning 'neither-nor') and pejorative use. There is an interesting work (Serracant i Melendres, 2012) where a modified NEET is proposed as a tool to better target social policies. The indicator is based on the Eurostat (2013a) and OECD one, but aims at improving it by reducing the heterogeneity of situations that may appear under the original NEET indicator.

#### **4.1.3 Changes brought about by the crisis**

These and other recent fresh looks at the situation of the youth, along with the different perspectives gathered in the interviews, prove that the crisis has broadened the understanding of disadvantage, from the classical view mentioned earlier to a new broader one.

However and despite the indicators explored in the studies mentioned, this change of perspectives has not been reflected in a change in the national informational basis for the judgement in justice (IBJJ), as the main official indicators remain the same. It must also be noted that relevant 'new areas' such as youth emigration lack consistent indicators and thus remain a blind spot in the analysis.

In spite of the rigidity of the official IBJJ, there has been a shift of the political attention from the youth in risk of social exclusion (from a classical view of the concept) towards the unemployed youth (closer to the new view of social exclusion), in which the few youth-related political initiatives are focusing now. As we will discuss later, the problem is that this shift has been a zero-sum game; it has led to some extent to the invisibilization of the youth in risk of social exclusion.

To what concerns the processes through which the young can fall into disadvantage, we again would have two different sets of processes. On the one hand, for the groups in high risk of social exclusion, the processes leading are multiple and complex, including identity issues such as social extraction, family background, neighbourhood or origin. On the other

hand, the new social exclusion affecting the youth as a whole is related to the recent crisis, especially the tough consequences in terms of youth unemployment and the decline of the social protection system. However, some sections of the young are most affected by this, principally those who dropped out of school early and went to work in the construction sector during the pre-crisis boom –many of them sharing some of the identity issues mentioned for the classical excluded groups– and who do not have family security networks.

According to most interviewees, the disadvantages suffered by the youth would be potentially reversible... if there was adequate social support. However, In Spain there has always been limited public action to tackle existing inequalities, partly because of the view of the families as the main support network. In the present context of increasing poverty of the families and substantial cuts in the social welfare system, the perspective in the short term is even bleaker. More and more young will suffer disadvantages and reversibility will only happen in limited cases, probably those who manage to increase their training and/or to get a permanent job.

That the exit of the economic crisis does not arrive late and that it results in increased employment rates and in the restoration of the social welfare system will be crucial for the disadvantage youth in the long term. However, the weak position of the youth in the labour market is not something new, as we discuss in the next section, and many consider that it may continue in the future for today's young; there will be cumulative disadvantages leading to what has been called a lost generation: today's youth will suffer lifelong of higher unemployment and more precarious working conditions, firstly because the years of inaction affect their career prospects and secondly because they may be left out of the job creation process when it arrives, as younger people –and equally inexperienced– could be privileged. In words of an interviewee: “here we have a generation that will paying for this lifelong” (trade union young 1).

## **4.2 Labour market position of young people and problems at labour market entry**

Young people do not have much opportunities in the Spanish labour market, with employment rates among people aged between 16 and 24 consistently over 40% after 2009 and over 50% after 2011 (INE, 2013b). Women have been to some extent less affected, primarily due to their lower involvement in the construction sector (Rocha, 2012).

As a consequence of the lack of opportunities in Spain, half of the youth (18 to 24) states that they are looking for any kind of job, no matter where, for what salary or whether it matches their qualification or not (Rodríguez San Julián and Ballesteros, 2013). Actually, many young people are looking for job opportunities abroad; this applies specially to those with foreign nationality, but also increasingly to Spanish people. Among the first (aged 15 to 29), migration balance shifted from a 150.000 increase of population in 2008 to an approximately 12.000 decrease in 2012. Among the latter, net emigration increased from around 1000 in 2008 to over 6500 in 2012 (INE, 2013c), and the rate seems to be accelerating quickly in 2013 (INE, 2013d). These figures show a clear trend of job emigration of the young, but may strongly underestimate the phenomenon, as in many cases the emigration is not registered officially.

Those less educated, previously massively employed in the construction sector, present also higher levels of unemployment, although the differential is proportional as compared to before the crisis. However, they have less opportunities to move abroad to seek a job –for example due to knowledge of other languages– or become entrepreneurs, and also have a bleak perspective in the long term, as their low qualification level puts them in a weak position for getting a job once employment starts to increase in Spain. This is even more worrisome if we take into account that 36.5% of the Spanish population aged 20 to 34 has only lower secondary education attainment, almost twice the EU rate (Eurostat, 2013b).

The poor labour situation of the youth in Spain is clearly related with the economic downturn, which has had very severe consequences in terms of employment. However, these have affected the youth more severely than the rest of the population: those aged 16 to 24 have more than twice the unemployment rate of the older population (Rocha, 2012). This points to the fact that it has not just been the crisis; the youth was already in a vulnerable situation before. Although youth unemployment was comparatively low then –in a 17% to 19% range during the period between mid-2005 and the end of 2007 (INE, 2013b)–, most had precarious employments. A study about the 2001-2006 period (Verd and López-Andreu, 2012) stated that the existing high levels of flexibility, temporality and overqualification among the young workers led to unstable professional trajectories until the late 30s for a big share of the population, especially affecting women.

From a life course perspective, we see that the transition from educational system to employment has always been a moment of vulnerability for the young. The administration, however, has traditionally given little attention to this transition moment. The underlying vision seems to be that when the young leave the formal education system, it means they are ‘prepared’ for the real world. Therefore, they do not need preferential attention from the administration and will face the labour market as the adult population does –with weak employment support services. In the years of the construction bubble, people managed to find a job, as precarious as it may be. But in the present crisis-ridden times, this transition period has become more critical, leading to a more serious situation of disadvantage. This affects the youth as a whole, irrespective of the educational achievements. However, while the most educated may find ways to muddle through, for the less educated it may lead to persistent long-term poverty. As this phenomenon is only recent –less educated young had comparatively good professional opportunities before the crisis– more research will be needed in the future to confirm this hypothesis.

## **5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention**

### **5.1 What are the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?**

There is almost a consensus amongst the people interviewed that tackling inequalities and poverty among the youth is not a public priority in Spain presently. Instead, the main aim of the Government is to reduce the public deficit and ensure stability in the debt market... and any other priority is subordinated to that one. The logic is that stability is the precondition for growth, which will then increase the employment rates, thus helping reduce inequalities. The hierarchy in priorities was institutionalised in 2011, when the Spanish constitution was

quickly reformed in the Parliament, adding the article 135 which gives absolute priority to budgetary stability. This weakens, among others, the article 48 (Constitución de España): “The public authorities shall promote conditions directed towards the free and effective participation of young people in political, social, economic and cultural development”.

It is therefore difficult to write about the main instruments against the disadvantages the youth are suffering, as it is not a priority and there is no clear political strategy neither for protecting the most vulnerable young people nor to counter the especially severe effects of the crisis on the youth. Actually, most of the budget cuts and measures taken rather deepen these inequalities: “what our governments are doing taking advantage of this label of ‘crisis’, what they are doing is to bring us to a situation [...of] social polarisation, to really amplify the distance between those who can and those who can’t” (university expert 2). The only exception to the reduction of these policies is the recent measures to fight youth unemployment, which have arrived only when the rates have risen to embarrassing levels, resulting in EU’s pressure (El País, 2013a).

### **5.1.1 Measures for the youth in high risk of social exclusion**

Focusing first on those in high risk of social exclusion (classical view), we can say that not only the youth but all the population in this condition have moved down in the political agenda, partly as a consequence of their little capacity of networking and claiming their rights. According to several interviewees the low mobilisation capacity also applies to third sector organisations working with them. The move towards the bottom of the political agenda is also related to the emergence of a big sector of the population that was previously middle class and has been strongly affected by the crisis which is getting much more public attention –although their situation is less severe. When this is combined with the shortage of public funds, the result is that those in high risk of social exclusion are getting much less public support than before, which is worrisome taking into account that they are more in number nowadays and their opportunities of getting a job are lower.

The almost only instrument created during the crisis is the Plan Prepara, a temporary rent (around 400 € during 6 to 18 months) given to families without incomes once the period of unemployment benefits are over. The plan will be active as long as unemployment rates are over 20%. Another similar scheme is the minimum insertion income, given to households that cannot meet their basic needs. The scheme was already active before the crisis, but the number of beneficiaries has practically doubled between 2007 and 2012 (Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2012). Both measures are household focused and practically only benefit the young through their families, as they are rarely entitled to them; the first requires at least two years of employment, the latter is for people over 25 years old.

Locally, the social services also have social housing schemes and social emergency aid systems, which cover temporary stringent needs of poor households. However, the first are very limited and slow and the latter do neither reach all the petitioners nor cover all their basic needs (El País, 2013b), so people are many times forwarded to charities. A recent study highlights that the Spanish social protection system does not fully cover basic needs as such food, clothes or house related expenditures (Equipo De Estudios Cáritas Española,

2013). People first resort to their family networks –with strong solidarity in the Mediterranean social systems– and then to charities. These play a very important role nowadays, especially the food banks and meal centres, which have expanded their activities significantly over the past years. To this respect, one interviewee highlighted that “the public network is not keeping up [...] it is necessary to choose between rights and alms. The Spanish Government has decided to support alms: it makes brutal cuts in social policies and at the same time increases by millions of euros the transfers to NGOs” (member of parliament 1).

Regarding the measures specifically targeting youth, there are several preventive and protective measures, mainly oriented to young under 18 and located in social welfare departments. These include on the one hand familiar shelter and residences, for the cases where the families are not taking adequate care of the minor. On the other hand, there are the so-called leisure day-centres, located in ‘difficult’ neighbourhoods and where adolescents in risk of social exclusion can go and get homework support, participate in leisure activities, etc. However, these schemes –generally run by NGOs– have gradually been declining, in terms of the number of people they reach and of the stability of their funding. On the contrary, the punitive system has been promoted, with high investments in reform centres, run by private organisations which have been accused many times of putting economic benefit before minors’ rights and having questionable practices, including lack of transparency, bad pharmacological practices and use of prison-like punishment system (Amnistía Internacional Sección Española, 2009; Defensor del Pueblo, 2009). According to some interviewees, this reflects a conceptual shift from ‘youth problems’ to ‘youth as a problem’, as well as the emergence of a vision of disadvantaged youth as a source of profit: “impoverished people, which were considered subjects of action, have become objects of consumption” (advocacy network 1).

### **5.1.2 Measures for the youth in general**

We now deal with the youth in general, in line with the new view that highlights the inequalities they face just because of their condition as young in the present situation (although what is described here also has effects on the young in high risk of social exclusion).

The measures taken by the government in the different policy areas have not contributed to counter the differential effect of the crisis on them, but rather the opposite.

For instance, the coverage of the public health system has been reduced for those over 26 who have never worked (and paid the social insurance contribution). Also, unemployed people who stay abroad more than 3 months will be excluded from the public health system, measure that may affect many young people looking for professional perspectives abroad (Post Digital, 2014).

Education, an area seen as the key to level inequalities, is also becoming more and more discriminatory: in order to reduce the expenditure in public education, students/teacher ratios have increased, many medical leaves remain without replacement and salaries have dropped, clearly affecting education quality. The reduction of special programmes for

students with difficulties and the increasing support to semi-private schools is contributing to the decline of the public education system, especially in poor neighbourhoods, where segregation of students is subtly taking place. At the university, access to grants for low-income students has been restricted and coupled with performance indicators, undermining the right to education and generating the exclusion of those with specially complicated situation, according to several interviewees.

To what concerns the youth-specific policies, activities such as leisure, information, participation, exchanges or language courses, there have been severe cuts, too, to the point that several regional youth organisms have been shut down. Moreover the national house renting schemes for young people called the basic emancipation rent that had been launched in 2007 was withdrawn in late 2011.

Regarding employment, for one thing, active employment policies have been sharply downgraded in the country, too. Firstly, public employment services have faced reduced manpower and resources. Centrally, job advisers were reduced from 3000 to 1500 in late 2012 (Público, 2013) and the service has been opened up to private service providers. Secondly, many employment subsidies have been reduced or eliminated. In the Valencian Community, for instance, several programmes –some of them specifically targeting the youth– were stopped (El País, 2012), included partly EU-funded schemes. Finally, training schemes aimed at bridging the gap between youth and companies, such as the employment workshops and the workshop-schools, have been minimised or eliminated.

For another thing, there were several legal changes related to employment, especially through the Labour Market Reform in early 2012. These introduced increased labour flexibility and benefits for hiring young people, with the ultimate aim of creating jobs for the young. Examples of these are the training and apprenticeship contract or the entrepreneur permanent contract. Despite optimistic assessments from the Employment Minister (El País, 2013a) these measures have proved to be ineffective in reducing the unemployment rates and have increased the precariousness and the insecurity of those who have or get a job. In early 2013, a specific youth employment and entrepreneurship strategy with 100 measures was launched by the government, with the objectives of promoting contracts and entrepreneurship among the youth (including a flat rate for young entrepreneurs), harmonising education and training with the labour market reality, improving employment service intermediation and orientation and reducing early school dropout. In late 2013, as a consequence of EU's initiative, Spain has approved the National Youth Guarantee Plan, building on this previous strategy, and guaranteeing that all the young (up to 24) within a four months period after they finish their studies or become unemployed will get apprenticeship or practices opportunities, continuous training or a job offer. Although it is early to assess the impact of these plans, the reactions of the interviewees to these and previous measures to tackle youth unemployed are not enthusiastic:

- “they are not integrated” (trade union think tank 1)
- “It is almost the same as usual... well, it is not that I am sceptical in respect to this, but I believe that in addition to all this it is necessary to inject quite a lot of resources” (national youth institute 1)

- “entrepreneurship measures are a toast to the sun [an empty gesture]” (university expert 2)

The regional youth employment plan does not seem to receive better assessments: “There is a Youth Employment Plan... it is a sheet of paper... a bit the same as usual: discounts [in the social insurance contribution], reduced costs of contracts. In the end it has been proved that it is not being of any use. That is, the same solution produces the same results. They are not proposing anything new or different” (representative youth council 1).

Also illustrative is the analyses done both by an expert and by a member of the regional administration, pointing to the fact that there is a lack of a long-term strategy and of a vision on how to solve the dramatic figures of youth unemployment:

- “there is some disorientation, even at the European level” (university expert 3)
- “I believe that in general, in general, the employment related services are still stunned after what has happened over the last four years, and nobody knows well what to do. From Europe money is going to come, because for Europe this is an important open wound, but I, in general, think that little is known on how to cover this wound” (regional youth institute 1)

The strong stress on entrepreneurship is also widely criticised. Firstly, because it is a way of putting the responsibility to solve a collective and public problem on the shoulders of the citizens: “I find a bit outrageous that the kind of policies that are being advocated for are the ones of self-employment and training, which are not more than the individualisation of responsibilities” (trade union think tank 1). Secondly, because it won’t be effective to solve youth unemployment, taking into account that they generally do not have the working experience and the financial safety that would be required for starting a business.

The situation described earlier is a general picture that can represent the average in Spain. However, there are regional variations due to the fact that the competences in many of the policy areas are at the autonomic level. For instance, the Basque Country was mentioned as a region having more progressive policies and giving more priority to the youth. The case of the Valencian Community is mixed, as on one hand there have been very severe cuts due to an especially difficult financial situation and on the other hand the youth institute (IVAJ) is still working, unlike what has happened in other regions. However, the IVAJ has suffered a reduction of its yearly budget from 17 to 10 million in the last 6 years and the role it plays has been reduced to information-orientation, management of the youth card, organisation of trips, management of EU-funded programmes (such as youth in action) and some entrepreneurship promotion activities. There is also a new youth law (LLEI 18/2010, de 30 de desembre, de la Generalitat, de Joventut de la Comunitat Valenciana), approved in 2010, but lacking implementation: “I would like to see what the degree of compliance of that law is. Actually, we work as if it wasn’t there” (youth professionals network 1).

Moreover, there is also strong variation at the municipal level –though the main trend is also of big cuts–, from where traditionally most of the leisure and information activities for the youth were managed. The reform of the local regime law that is underway and will reconfigure the competence system may imply, according to some interviewees, that the

municipalities are not anymore allowed to do youth policies, reducing the support to young people even further.

To sum up, it can be said that the policies and measures to tackle inequalities and poverty among the youth have been reduced, with the exception of those referring to employment, which have recently peaked with a specific focus on entrepreneurship. The lack of an overall strategy is illustrated by the story of the Youth Plans, which represented the government's youth policy, involving measures to be undertaken by youth organisms as well as those of other ministries (employment, health, housing...) that should specifically target the young. The last Plan finished in 2008 and after that a thorough review of the plans and the situation of the youth was started in order to decide what to do in the future. This was a comprehensive process which led to the elaboration of a white book of the Spanish Youth 2020. The final version was to be approved when the date of elections was advanced in 2011. The new government refused to approve the white book and left it in oblivion and there has been no alternative plan or strategy for the last years. There are evidences that a youth strategy is now being prepared, but the elaboration process is lacking transparency and participation. The case is similar in the case of the Valencian Community, which is presently starting the elaboration of a new Youth Plan, 8 years after the expiration of the previous one (2005).

## **5.2 Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programmes they are offered/the subject of?**

The measures and programmes that are offered to the youth are generally designed without taking into account their voice. The only institutionalised mechanism is the interlocution with the Youth Council –which we will discuss in the next section–, dealing however mainly with broad macro-level policy issues.

At the meso and micro level, however, young people have little say in the definition of the measures and programmes they are offered. It is true that they generally do have a choice between different options in the programmes they participate –e.g. between different training paths, leisure activities– but this is just a last-stage individually-based participation, not a substantive one.

This lack of promotion or encouragement of the participation of the young is related to the prevalent traditional view of the young as “objects of protection” (university expert 4); although at the discursive level, it has changed towards one of youth as agents of transformation, this has yet to be translated into practice.

The lack of substantive participation has also as a result that there is a big gap between the policy makers and the ‘beneficiaries’ of the policies. The first are not aware of the situation, the codes and the languages of the latter. A member of the national youth institute puts as an example the slow adaptation of the youth services to the digital era, in an age of a native digital youth. A local professional of the youth sector also observed that the administration is very far away from the young, even in terms of language, pointing to the fact that professionals like him have to make an effort in order to bridge this gap and make it easier for the young to liaise with the services of other departments (employment, health).

There is a national level Youth Observatory, which has among its aims to channelize the participation of the youth and gather their opinions and thus could help bridging the gap between policy making and the reality of the youth. However, its impact is limited, primarily because the outputs produced do not get the political attention needed: “I believe that we know, but we don’t want to know” (university expert 1). A further problem of the observatory, especially in regard to targeting disadvantage, is its primary focus on the ‘average’, giving insufficient attention to social and regional diversity. A couple of regions have their own observatory. The one in the Valencian Community, however, has not been launched yet despite the provision in this regard in the 2010 Youth Law.

Nevertheless, due to the decentralised system, there is variation in the level of participation from one municipality to the other. Especially in small ones, there is a closer relationship, so it is easier for the young to exert some influence on the programmes and measures they are offered. In medium and big ones, it will rather depend on the vision and motivation of the local politicians and members of the administration. In some municipalities neighbouring the city of Valencia, they use several mechanisms to include the perspectives of the youth and adapt their policies to their aspirations. Apart from the interlocution with local youth councils, they do small surveys and focus groups, visit secondary schools, establish communication through social networks or set up networks of young informants in educational centres. In one municipality –Quart de Poblet– they even agreed with the youth organisations on how to reduce the budget devoted to youth in order to adapt to the financial constraints. As said, these municipalities are not representative of the average, but rather represent the best practices, which result more from individuals’ motivation than from guidance from higher administrative levels.

Finally, it is important to analyse whether the differing perspectives and situations of the youth are taken into account, especially the ones of those most deprived. Youth policies have never wanted to target those in risk of social exclusion and have consequently focused on the ‘normalised youth’, targeting middle class or ‘stable’ working class. Cause and consequence of this, youth professionals are not specialised in social exclusion, and thus the responsibility over these situations is transferred to the social welfare department or the social services. However, these work with all age groups and do not always have enough sensibility about the situation of the young in high risk of social exclusion, despite their increasing numbers. For instance, in traditional preventive measures such as the day-centres, the level to which participation is promoted depends on the social intervention style of the social worker or of the NGO that is running the centre.

In words of a politician, “laws are made pretty much thinking of normality, but the point is that the normality is less and less normal” (member of regional parliament 1). Actually, according to various interviewees and in line with the invisibilization mentioned earlier, almost nothing reaches these collectives. Even when they are targeted, the distance between their world and the one of those designing the measures makes it difficult for them to get some benefit. To illustrate this disconnection a worker of a day-centre shared his experience with EU’s Youth in Action, which explicitly intends to ensure equitable access of the disadvantaged youth to the programme. He thought of preparing a project with the

group of youngsters he works with, until he saw that everything had to be written in English, strongly limiting their participation opportunities.

## **6. Policy making, implementation and participation**

### **6.1 Who are the actors that are responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?**

#### **6.1.1 Actors and competences over youth policies**

The responsibilities over youth policies development and delivery are distributed in a complex and confusing web, with the main competences at the level of the Autonomous Communities and a big share of the implementation happening at the municipal level.

The national government can design youth policies and has a great say in many other areas that affect the youth (employment, health, education, etc.). The youth institute, INJUVE, is in charge of the coordination of the youth specific policies and programmes (including EU ones) with the Autonomous Communities and municipalities. It also aims at harmonising the efforts of the different ministries and departments whose policies affect youth. In this line, for many years there were the national Youth Plans, putting together all the efforts needed for the youth in the different policy areas. The Plans were criticised as being just a summary of what was already being done by the different departments, as well as for the illusion of introducing youth 'transversally' in the general policies, yielding poor results (Libro blanco, 2010). As a consequence, they were stopped in 2008, in order to rethink youth policies thoroughly. The white book that was drafted in that reflection process was nevertheless set aside once the government changed in 2011, without promoting any alternative to date. A new youth strategy is being drafted now, but with a lack of transparency such that key actors outside the government are not aware of it.

In practice, the competences over youth policies are held by the Autonomous Communities, as shows the fact that their related expenditure was six times the one of the national administration in 2006 (Comas Arnau, 2007). In legal terms, however, each Community has a different statute, where some included the competence over youth policies and some didn't (Comas Arnau, 2007). In the case of the Valencian Community, youth is mentioned in the statute. The Communities created youth organisms, be it general directorates, be it autonomous institutes, as is the case of the Valencian Youth Institute (IVAJ). The role of this institute is similar to the INJUVE in terms of coordination, but managing more programmes (although implementation remains mostly at the municipal level)... at least until the recent budget cuts it has suffered. Similarly, until 2005 the IVAJ was in charge of preparing and implementing the autonomic youth plan. Several 'Conselleries' (autonomic organisms analogous to ministries) also held competences over general policy areas that affect the youth (social housing, education, social welfare, etc.). Among these, some are related with measures and instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty among the youth, including preventive measures (day-centres, shelters) and punitive instruments (reform centres).

Finally the municipalities are also active in the youth sector, although in theory they do not have the competences to do so. Nevertheless, they have been traditionally implementing most of the programmes coming from higher levels and also their own policies. Through the municipal youth councillors, they cover primarily the areas of information/orientation, participation and leisure activities. The implementation of such programmes was generally attributed to teams of youth professionals working at the municipal administration. However, many have been fired recently due to the budget cuts... some of them work now in small companies, self-employed or in cooperatives, hired by the municipalities for conducting the same activities but in more precarious conditions and with lower salaries. Besides, municipalities also hold the competence over the social services department, in charge of identifying the population (and youth) in risk of social exclusion or social emergency and of taking measures to solve these situations. Some of these measures (primarily day-centres and reform centres) have been progressively transferred to NGOs, foundations or private companies through biddings, projects or contracts, in a process that started long before the crisis.

There is a further administrative level between the municipalities and the Autonomous Communities, known as the Provincial Councils. Although they have in principle no youth competences, in some cases they have been doing youth policies, too. The picture being very diverse from province to province and their relative weight (in budgetary terms) being low, they have not been included in this analysis.

### **6.1.2 Coordination and participation of these actors**

The coordination of the different administrative levels involved in youth policies is far from perfect. Tensions around competences frequently arise, especially when there are different political parties at the concerned levels, impeding collaborative dynamics. Within the administration, the politicians and higher level functionaries are the ones who have a say in these processes, at the expense of the voice of those specialised in youth and working in direct contact with the young at the local level, such as municipal youth councillors and youth professionals, who feel not being taken into account. One municipal youth worker feels that the few meetings in which they are included happen with the exclusive aim of showing afterwards "that you have done a meeting with 40 professional experts" (youth professionals network 1) in order to design the policy. Partly as an attempt to counter this, several Youth Professionals Associations were created in different parts of the country short before the crisis in order to coordinate and make their voices heard. Similarly, municipal coordination efforts at the national level were also made. However, recognition of institutional interlocution was never fully achieved, and the subsequent budget (and jobs) reduction weakened the momentum of these initiatives.

Regarding the involvement of the private sector (implementing youth policies and social service policies affecting the youth) in the design and development of these measures, the picture is mixed. There are no formal mechanisms for gathering their opinion, so their participation is based mainly on lobbying. The big foundations and NGOs, either directly or networked, have easier access to decision makers and thus have a greater power to inform youth policies. At the same time, smaller organisations can only reach the policy makers through more extensive networks where their message may get diluted. Alternatively, they

may focus on sensitisation in order to get the public opinion to support their views. The conclusion of an interviewee with long experience in the youth sector is illustrative: “¿who influences? Those who have the resources to influence” (day-centre 2).

It is worth noting that despite the little space for participation of the private sector in the definition of the policies, they are generally given a lot of room of manoeuvre at the time of the implementation, to the point that the control of the administration of the delivery of the service is insufficient, especially when it comes to the services for the most disadvantaged youth. One expert interviewed complained that the day-centres were allowed to open without the permissions legally required and attributed this laxity and tolerance to low quality service delivery to the fact that “they are vulnerable people. If you are more vulnerable, I pay less attention to you. Money is given, but with demagogy, because there is no planning” (university expert 4). But where the situation is more worrisome is in the reform centres, where despite the many complaints and reports of abuses, the levels of opacity and the lack of control of the administration are alarming. According to some interviewees, all this is the consequence of the lack of interest of the politicians in making good quality programmes reach the disadvantaged youth. These would generally be long-term process-oriented prevention programmes, while their personal priority is rather short-term and results-oriented. One interviewee puts it sarcastically: “invest in prevention programmes so that someone else takes the merits?” (university expert 4).

## **6.2 Young people’s participation in policy making**

The main mechanism of young people’s participation in policy making is through the Youth Councils, which represent the main youth organisations present in the concerned territory. There is a national one: the Consejo de la Juventud de España (CJE). It was created in 1983 in order to propitiate the participation of the youth in the political, social, economical and cultural development of Spain. It gets public funding and has a legally-recognised consultative and representative function, along with the promotion of youth associativism. It has to be consulted when laws related to youth are elaborated. During many years, the CJE has had privileged access to the policy making process, but in the framework of the reform of the public administration, the Spanish Government wanted to abolish it, generating a conflict that has deteriorated the interlocution between the two. Due to internal and external pressure –including a letter from the president of the European Parliament (Schulz, 2013)– it seems that this threat won’t be realised. However, the budget cuts it has suffered will probably increase in the future years.

There are also Youth Councils in the Autonomous Communities, with similar structure and functions as the CJE. There were 13 in 2010 (Libro blanco, 2010), but now at least five have been eliminated: Madrid, Castilla La Mancha, Baleares, Aragón and Galicia. The remaining ones have suffered severe budget cuts and are not safe from plans to shut them down. The one in the Valencian Community, the Consell de la Joventut de la Comunitat Valenciana, was also created in 1983 and seems to have a stable situation. But for instance, despite the fact that the council has to be consulted when regional laws affecting the youth are discussed, the 2010 regional Youth Law was approved without its perceptive report. Actually that law eliminated the consideration of the council as a consultive organism. The council is also part of the advisory board of the Valencian Youth Institute. However, it did not meet for the last

5 years. The situation has changed slightly after the appointment of a new head of the 'Conselleria' under which Youth initiatives are located. A new Plan is being prepared and the advisory board is starting to meet again, although the process is not exempt of criticisms – e.g. for not assessing the present situation and needs of the youth– and suspicions about the real motivations of the government: “it is a purely strategic issue, elections are approaching and they need to sell smoke [show they are doing something] [...] that they have taken the young into account for designing their policies” (trade union young 1).

Local Youth Councils can also exist at the municipal level. In the case of the Valencian Community, there are 18 local councils, although not all are fully operative, due to reduction of funds and lack of active participation. The story shared by one interviewee (representative youth council 1) about the one of the city of Valencia –the biggest in the region– showcases some of the problems faced: as a consequence of a confrontation with the municipal youth councillor about the youth plan, their budget of the following year was reduced by 40% and completely eliminated in the subsequent year.

As a whole, it can be said that the government at the different levels does not see participation as a tool to improve governance, but rather as something one would like to avoid but has to comply with, as it is legally established and politically correct. This compliance is never full, as shows the fact that the 2008 Valencian law of citizen participation has not been developed or fully implemented yet.

This is obviously the main barrier for the effective participation of the youth in policy making.

However, it is also important to question how representative the Youth Councils are. They represent formal youth organisations, where only 4-5% of the Spanish Youth is participating. Moreover, only 18% of the young know about the Youth Councils at the autonomic level (Libro blanco, 2010). This is attributed by some to the fact that their main function is consultive and they do not directly organise activities for the youth. But in the end, this is reflected in their capacity to mobilise the youth and limits the impact of their actions. A further problem mentioned is the excessive weight the youth organisations of political parties sometimes have in the councils, introducing partisan interests with disrupting effects. The functioning local councils is generally better, as they represent smaller youth organisations which are in turn closer to the young in the municipality. Overall, the existence of the youth councils was considered positive by the interviewees, even by those sceptical about their efficacy.

A further barrier to participation of the young which helps also understand the problems of the youth councils, is the little interest of the youth in engaging with or joining formal organisations. There is little knowledge about participation mechanisms and a general distrust towards institutionalised political participation (parties, unions, etc.). Several interviewees related this phenomenon with the lack of promotion of critical thinking, participation and active citizenship in the formal education system.

## **7. Social innovation and the role of social innovation in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy**

### **7.1 How is social innovation defined?**

#### **7.1.1 What is social innovation at all?**

The concept of social innovation is not a very established one in Spain and there is no unanimous definition. This lack of clarity was perceptible in the interviews and is also reflected in the broad array of practices that can be found under the label of social innovation. A definition commonly referred to in the literature is the one conceptualising social innovation as “new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are both good for society and enhance society’s capacity to act” (Mulgan, Caulier-Grice and Murray, 2010).

The definition is broad in itself, but as said, the novelty of the concept in Spain allows for even more blurred boundaries. As a consequence, it is many times used for initiatives that would be purely technological innovation or that are not innovative at all, just old practices with a new coat of paint. These appropriations of the concept and its increasing popularity respond to diverse interests and processes. Among these, it should not be omitted that it can be used as a way of simplifying the analysis of the causes of the current situation and the solutions needed: ‘the old ways are not enough for meeting today’s needs, but with social innovation we will be able to make it’. This can divert attention from the structural causes of the crisis and create inflated expectations about social innovation.

In Spain, the concept first gained acknowledgement in business schools and universities, followed by big private companies, some governments (primarily the one in the Basque Country) and some big third sector foundations (Valls, 2013). Its acknowledgement specifically in the youth sector is even lower. This journey of the concept in Spain, coupled with the lack of engagement of the civil society with it, has privileged a certain perspective of social innovation. This perspective highlights market orientation, individual initiative and top-down processes. As a consequence, social innovation is generally related to social entrepreneurship (even used interchangeably sometimes), social economy initiatives, social corporate responsibility, crowdfunding platforms or innovative uses of information and communication technologies. On the contrary, more grassroots or bottom-up and collaborative social innovations without market orientation are less taken into account or just not identified as such. An example of this could be the Mortgage Victims Platforms that have recently emerged in many parts of Spain. They are developing new ways of social struggle to fight the evictions of thousands of families that became unemployed and cannot face the monthly payments of their mortgages.

#### **7.1.2 Are Spanish youth policies socially innovative?**

All the interviewees agreed that current youth policies in Spain cannot be considered innovative at all; in a time of strong regression in terms of youth policies, where many

measures and programmes are being withdrawn, there is little space for experimentation or innovation. Actually, some pre-crisis initiatives that were to some extent innovative have been shut down, too.

Nevertheless, there are some exceptions, mostly related with innovative mechanisms of participation; for instance in the Basque Country (especially in the province of Gipuzkoa) and in the municipality of La Laguna in Tenerife. In the Valencian Community, there are also exceptional cases, especially in the municipalities surrounding Valencia city, which have historically been innovative in youth policy and have managed to keep the pace during the crisis to some extent. Among their innovations, one that could be highlighted (more for its exceptionality than for its novelty) is the set up of a network of municipalities called Joves.net, which served as a platform for reflection, coordination and collaboration in the area of youth, leading to activities of higher quality and lower costs. Initiated by 7 municipalities in the mid 1990s, it reached a number of 21 a couple of years ago and has decreased recently as a consequence of the budget cuts. Another interesting case is the organisation by a sociocultural services company called Culturama of a biannual regional award of innovative practices in the youth sector, the best of which are compiled in a white book. Analysing the practices published in the first (Culturama, 2010) and second (Culturama, 2013) books, it must be noted that all originate from third sector organisations and from municipalities –most of the latter being part of the network Joves.net.

## **7.2 Supporting social innovation**

Presently there is no clear support to social innovation in the youth sector coming from the national or autonomic governments. The Spanish Youth Institute through its Youth Observatory seems to be seeking to identify and compile existing innovative experiences, but without a clearly established line, methodology or budget. From their point of view, the task is also not easy, as those innovating generally do neither expect nor demand support from the administration.

In the Valencian Community, the Youth Institute (IVAJ) is not thinking much about social innovation, and all what has been done about it has been more due to "demands from this kind of collectives [NGOs] than promoted by the IVAJ itself" (regional youth institute 1).

A municipal youth professional reinforces this idea, though from a more critical perspective, when he declares: "we cannot say that there is an institutional encouragement... it is heroism" (youth professionals network 1). This is exemplified by the experiences shared in the previous section, showing that innovative initiatives in the Valencian Community arise from a few third sector organisations and exceptional municipalities.

An illustrative example is the organisation of the first International Forum for Social Innovation that took place in Valencia in March 2013. It was not organised by the administration, but by a local NGO which is incorporating social innovation within its daily work and in addition works in the youth sector. That organisation is now trying to get the IVAJ to incorporate the idea of social innovation, especially for its several youth entrepreneurship promotion activities, which they believe are neglecting the social dimension of entrepreneurship.

In any case, although interviewees could point to some pre-crisis innovative initiative (especially pilots in the education system), it cannot be said that before the crisis there was a significant support to social innovation in youth. For instance, there was little recognition to the Joves.net network –especially at its initial stages– and no efforts to disseminate or scale it up.

Finally, it is worth noting that some interviewees reacted with scepticism or even anger to the idea of the administration promoting social innovation in the youth sector. For instance, one said that "nowadays innovation is related to not having a cost " (youth professionals network 1) and criticised that there was in general a deficit in evaluating the initiatives implemented in order to improve them, which would be a step before or a pre-requisite for doing innovation. But the most acid reaction came from a worker of an NGO running day-centre in an excluded neighbourhood: "I do not understand what is the sense of innovation... If there are things that work, why are they not multiplied?" (day-centre 2). He shared that municipal authorities had told them they needed to reinvent themselves, and that innovation is one of the criteria their projects need to fulfil in order to get funding. However, he believes that in neighbourhoods such as the one his NGO is based in, there are people working with the disadvantaged youth who know what to do and how. Thus, what needs to be done "is to provide the people that work in these places and are there since many years ago with the resources they need to do their job. And it is not new infrastructures, new projects that last one year, it is not those new big ideas with poetically fitting titles" (day-centre 2) which are more attractive to politicians in terms of visibility. An expert in the area also highlighted the tension in terms of priorities: while youth in social exclusion need long-term individualised processes, politicians need short-term results. This criticism connects with the idea of the rhetorical use of the youth policies and the risk of using the term social innovation to divert the attention from structural problems.

## **8. Discussion and conclusions**

We have seen that there are different perspectives about social exclusion of the youth in Spain. On the one hand, the classical view of social exclusion, related to having low income, limited access to education, health, housing or leisure alternatives, etc. On the other side, the new view highlighting that the youth as a whole is in risk of social exclusion in the present time, due to the differential impact of the crisis on them that affects their possibilities to develop their life plans. The emergence of this new perspective reminds us of the importance of having a multidimensional perspective and of paying attention not only to objective deprivation but also to the aspirations of the people.

The established informational basis of judgement in justice (IBJJ) is grounded on indicators that apply primarily to the first view although with very little discrimination capacity, impeding the identification of those most deprived. This reflects the blurred boundaries of the concept of social exclusion, which has not been adequately defined yet. Moreover, this IBJJ does not comprehend the new reality of social exclusion of the youth as a whole. Other IBJJs are being explored, as shows the publication of the Spanish Youth Council analysing emancipation-related indicators or the increasing relevance of employment-related data. However, such alternatives have not gained institutional recognition yet. Despite this

immobility in the official IBJJ, the political priorities have to some extent shifted towards this reality, primarily as a reaction to the pressure of the public opinion and the EU because of the high youth unemployment rates.

The problem is that this shift has come along with an increasing invisibilisation of the young in high risk social exclusion (as per the classical view of social exclusion of the young), who have fallen even lower in list of priorities of Spanish politicians. This highlights the fact that the little capacity of voice of this section of the youth reduces their possibilities of defending their rights and making their situation noticeable. Moreover, it reminds us that integrating 'old' and 'new' inequalities is not trivial and that it remains an unsolved and urgent mission.

Logically, in a situation of shrinking budgets, this has resulted in severe cuts in policies and measures for the youth, especially for those in risk of social exclusion, which has widened the gap both within the youth and between the young and the older generations. From a capability perspective, this is very worrying, as it deepens existing inequalities.

The only area where some supporting measures for the young have been developed is employment, primarily through the reduction of the contribution to the social security system when hiring young people and the promotion of young entrepreneurship. This elicits two critical thoughts. First, the sole focus on employment disregards other relevant dimensions and thus won't help those suffering cumulative disadvantages. Second, the main emphasis on entrepreneurship has two problematic implications. For one thing, it is a way for the state to avoid its obligations towards the youth and individualise the responsibility about the dramatic social problem that (youth) unemployment represents. For another thing, entrepreneurship promotion will at its best reach the low hanging fruit, as it is very difficult for a first-job seeker or a person in risk of social exclusion to undertake a new business, having thus no impact in terms of equality.

The key to understand the regressive drift of youth policies in Spain is in the policy making process: the government seems to prioritise its actions in order to accommodate the pressures it suffers and to focus on areas that have more visibility and may help them get re-elected. And youth –especially socially excluded youth– is not such an area. Cause and consequence of this is the lack of substantive participation in the policy making process, which is highly top-down. Youth professionals and municipal councillors have little say in it. In turn, the youth had a privileged participation channel before; Youth Councils were legally recognised as representative interlocutors between the youth and the administration. But recently the government has attempted to close them down (with success in several Autonomous Communities) and their budgets have been strongly reduced. This points to the fact that the main barrier for the youth for participating is the lack of political will, which reduces their capability of voice and their agency. However, the limited representative power of the youth councils and the lack of mobilisation of the youth-related stakeholders in general are another relevant factor which explain the weak reaction against the measures and policies of the government.

Given this outlook, it is important to question the lineal view of policy, in which decision making is based on rigorous information and on rational arguments, and bring into the equation the interests of the politicians, the existence of other actors in the political arena,

etc. This in turn calls for refraining from an overemphasis on achieving more accurate IBJJs and having instead a holistic perspective when analysing policy making.

Regarding social innovation, we have seen that it is not an established concept and there are different visions about what it exactly means. The insights from the interviews have contributed to highlight that the view of social innovation is generally biased towards top-down, individual and market-oriented initiatives, leaving unlabelled more participatory bottom up experiences. It has also become clear that –omitting a handful of local exceptional cases– youth policies are not innovative but rather regressive, with many initiatives closing down.

Finally, a critical questioning about the focus on social innovation emerged, too. In principle, social innovation relates to social needs that are not yet fulfilled and to new ideas or methods to fulfil these unmet needs. It has the implicit assumption that new solutions are required for these unmet social needs. This may be true and relevant in a politically stable situation where the reality is evolving and new needs are emerging for which fresh ideas are desirable. But maybe it is not so pertinent in a context of increasing unmet needs due to reduced social protection, for which in most of the cases the effective ways to fulfil them that are known but either withdrawn or left without the support required.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of key issues

Key issues	How is this issue defined and which key terms are used to describe this issue
Youth policy	Youth policy is a distinct national government policy area, coordinated by the Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. Youth-specific policies cover the areas of information, participation and leisure, while general policies affecting the young (employment, health, education, housing...) are the responsibility of other Ministries. However, the main competences over youth policies are at the Autonomous Communities, with institutional structures similar to the national ones. Local municipalities implement most of the youth policies, but their own ones, be it programmes from higher administrative levels. The age groups targeted depend on each policy. The traditional 16-24 years range was changed some years ago to 16-30, while specific policies may extend to 35.
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	The terms youth inequality or youth disadvantage are seldom used in Spain. Instead vulnerable youth, youth in risk of poverty or youth in risk of social exclusion are more common. There are no clear definitions of these terms, which many times are used interchangeably. Regarding youth in risk of social exclusion, the most common concept, two different views exist. First the classical view, related to having low income, limited access to education, health, housing or leisure alternatives, etc. Second the new view, considering the youth as a whole in risk of social exclusion, due to the differential impact of the crisis on them. Income related indicators are commonly used to measure these issues.
Social innovation	Social innovation is not a term many youth-related stakeholders engage with, with the exception of a handful of third sector organisations. Actually, in the present situation where many programmes are being reduced or withdrawn, the idea is generally received with scepticism. What is the point of finding new ideas if the existing good ideas are not disseminated? Existing youth policies are not innovative and there are no prospects of change in the short term.
Participation	Policy making is broached as a technocratic exercise and is therefore not very open to participation. The young have a legally recognised participation mechanism through the youth councils (at the national, autonomic and even municipal level), which represent formal youth organisations and need to be consulted during the elaboration of policies that affect youth. However, the governments have recently attempted to close these councils (successfully in several Autonomous Communities and municipalities) and sharply reduced their funding. There has been little reaction from the youth, showing the lack of engagement and participation in the councils of most of the young. At some municipalities, more participatory dynamics may occur.
The Abilities of young people	The main focus when describing the abilities of young people is the level of education attained, in which Spain rates poorly when compared to the rest of Europe. Socially, the image of professional training is also undervalued, as compared to university studies. The term NEET –nini in Spanish– has negative connotations and is thus not very popular. A deficit commonly highlighted is their lack of entrepreneurial spirit, which could be interpreted as a way of blaming them for their lack

	of professional perspectives. In the case of the most deprived youth they may sometimes labelled as problematic, legitimising punitive measures.
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## Appendix 2: Key government policies and programmes

Policy area	Policy or Programme	Description
Employment	Permanent contract for entrepreneurs	This kind of contract aims at encouraging entrepreneurs and small companies (<50 employees) to hire young permanently, and will be applicable until unemployment falls below 15%. Companies hiring young (16-30) full time for at least 3 years will get a reduction in their contributions to the social security system. There will be a one-year period of probation. Link: <a href="http://www.sepe.es/contenido/empleo_formacion/empresas/contratos_trabajo/contrato_emprendedores.html">www.sepe.es/contenido/empleo_formacion/empresas/contratos_trabajo/contrato_emprendedores.html</a>
Training and employment	Training and apprenticeship contract	The aim of this type of contracts is for workers to acquire professional qualifications by alternating formative activities with employment in a company. The contract can be used for hiring young aged 16 to 30 (the limit will fall to 25 when unemployment falls below 15%) during 1 to 3 years. Companies using these contracts will have reductions (75% to 100%) in their contributions to the social security system. There are also incentives for making the contracts permanent once the apprenticeship period is over. Link: <a href="http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/informacion/contratos/contenidos/formacionyaprendiz.html">www.empleo.gob.es/es/informacion/contratos/contenidos/formacionyaprendiz.html</a>
Employment	Driving entrepreneurship and self-employment of young people	Several measures to foster young entrepreneurship, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50€ flat rate social security contribution for new self-employed contributors under the age of 30 during 6 months. The reduction will decrease from 80% to 50% for the second semester and to 30% for the following year and a half.</li> <li>- Compatibility of unemployment benefits with start of entrepreneurial activity</li> <li>- Extension of possibility to capitalise unemployment benefits and return to collecting benefits after engaging in entrepreneurial activity.</li> </ul> Link: <a href="http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/estrategia-empleo-joven/medidas/autonomos-emprendedores/tarifa-plana-autonomos.htm">http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/estrategia-empleo-joven/medidas/autonomos-emprendedores/tarifa-plana-autonomos.htm</a> and <a href="http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/NR/rdonlyres/789C994B-1CE9-425B-A967-152237A289F6/237370/EmprendedoresEaglePDF.pdfhtm">http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/NR/rdonlyres/789C994B-1CE9-425B-A967-152237A289F6/237370/EmprendedoresEaglePDF.pdfhtm</a>
Employment	Youth Guarantee	The youth guarantee will ensure that all the Young below 25 get a good job offer, continuous education, apprenticeship training or a practices periods within 4 months after joining the youth guarantee scheme. The requisite for joining it is having finished formal education or become unemployed. Job offers will match the characteristics of the young person and be at least par-time

		and for least 6 months. Education activities may be vocational education and training or similar programmes. Training activities may be related to languages, information technologies and must have more than 90 hours. Link: <a href="http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/estrategia-empleo-joven/destacados/PlanNacionalGarantiaJuvenil.pdf">http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/estrategia-empleo-joven/destacados/PlanNacionalGarantiaJuvenil.pdf</a>
Employment (Valencian Community)	EmprenJove	EmprenJove is a free service for young between 18 and 35 who want to start their own businesses. It includes orientation service to solve any doubt of the young entrepreneur, which can be provided online. Moreover, it incorporates a training programme on business management and support for applying for business creation grants. Link: <a href="http://www.gvajove.es/ivaj/opencms/IVAJ/es/empleo/empresas.html">www.gvajove.es/ivaj/opencms/IVAJ/es/empleo/empresas.html</a>

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# Chapter 14: The Socio-Economic Political Context for Addressing Youth Employment in Romania

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## 1. Abstract

This paper is an analysis of youth policy at the national level, with emphasis on youth employment policies. To analyze the situation of young people in Romania is important to know the legal and institutional framework that relates them. The legal and institutional analysis and the main elements specific to the labor market participation of young people consider issues related to the context, opportunities, facilitating factors and obstacles to access.

In the first part of the paper are mentioned some issues related to the situation of disadvantaged youth, especially on labor market, the problems they encounter in accessing employment, and lack of correlation between educational programs and labor market requirements. Further we outlined policies, instruments and levels of intervention in the fight against poverty, inequality and social exclusion of young people, and the extent they are involved in the development of policies and programs designed for them. Many of the ideas presented in this paper are coming from interviewed social actors / stakeholders and most of them are reinforcing our own findings.

Chapter 6 of the paper refers to the main national actors responsible for developing and delivering policy, the main tools to combat inequality among young people and their involvement in policy development. The next chapter discusses the concept of "social innovation" and its role in delivery and policy development for young people, and ways of supporting social innovation. The paper closes with a set of conclusions about the social inclusion of young people with a focus on labor market inclusion.

## 2. Introduction

Young people represent a highly important social group in nowadays Romania, not only because of their number / share in total population but because even they represent the future for Romania, they are one of the most excluded groups. The actual high rate of social exclusion of young people (especially from the labor market, but also from adequate / correlated education and other significant spheres of public life such as involvement in making decisions related to their future) it's not only the result of the actual deep economic crisis started in 2008 and /or a consequence of our "communist totalitarian heritage" but also to inadequate policies (or neglected policies) in the last 24 years envisaging youngsters. Social exclusion of young people is a cumulative result of some structural/ systemic factors

the adversely affected this social group<sup>201</sup>. The focus of this paper is rather at national than regional level, but in some cases we use examples at regional level (including Bucharest) and present some comparative data between Romania's various regions. The data / information we have reviewed & collected are mainly about employment and education, but there are also some sequential information and analyses on youth lived experiences. The target group is formed by young people 15-24 years old, but in some situation we took into analysis the 15-29 group<sup>202</sup>.

In Romania, the policies envisaging young people are based on general principles that stipulate the necessity of increasing youngsters' participation in the public life and to foster them in assuming individual / group responsibilities. These policies underline also the necessary support that young people should receive in order to actively participate within economic life, guaranteeing the right to education and the need to stimulate and sustain the access of youngsters to information & IT as well as encouraging their mobility (spatial & professional).

Unfortunately many of these principles are caught on public policy agenda and the realities of the last years are contradicting the decision-makers voices. The unemployment disconcerting rate for overall active population of 7.5% (Sept. 2013) seems to be in deep contradiction with realities. The youngsters group is the most affected by unemployment – 32.5% in urban area and 17% in rural<sup>203</sup>. Employment rate of young people 15-24 YO was 24.3% (June 2013). Moreover 1/3 of youngsters are living at risk of poverty and social exclusion, respectively 40.3% as comparative with 24.3% in EU-28, and the same percentage for whole Romanian population.

The paper is developed applying as much as possible to Romanian context the CA approach and IBJJ.

### 3. Methods

The research process comprised three levels:

- a) Literature review at national level: various studies, including official data / statistics stressing on youngsters situation in Romania, emphasizing the aspects in relation with the labor market.

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<sup>201</sup> The ratio of 15-24 YO population in Romania was 12.3% (Census 2011) and 14.9% (Census 2002). What is very interesting is the discrepancy between Roma and Romanians: Roma 15-24 YO = 21.4%; Romanian 15-24 YO = 15.5% (2002). The ratio of 15-29 YO population in Romania is 18.8% (Census 2011).

<sup>202</sup> In Romania it was issued by Government the "Young People Law (No. 350 / 2006) which defines as young people the group of 14-35 years old. In Romania there are more than 6 million youngsters (28.6% in 2012). As a consequence of this legal definition, "The National 2014-2020 Strategy for Youngsters" refers to people 14-35 Years Old.

<sup>203</sup> Lower than in urban area because many of them are working in subsistence agriculture producing only for self-consumption and are recorded as self-employed. Economic dependency ratio in Romania is 1: 1,28. "Occupation and Unemployment of Romanian Graduates during the current Economic-Financial crisis" [http://www.revistadestatistica.ro/suplimente/2012/2/srrs2\\_2012a56.pdf](http://www.revistadestatistica.ro/suplimente/2012/2/srrs2_2012a56.pdf)

- *“An inclusive labor market”* – study at national level (MMFPS, 2012) regarding poverty, social exclusion and labor market opportunities of youngsters 16-35 YO;
  - *“The Graduated Youngsters and the Labor Market”* – monitoring study at national level (UEFISCDI, 2012) regarding labor insertion of new university graduated;
  - *“Better Chances of Labor Integration for University Graduated”* (Fundatia pentru Educatie și Dezvoltare MediaPro, 2012);
  - *“Young People and the Labor Market Inclusion – needs, expectations, solutions, threats”* (ANBCC, 2010);
  - *„Labor Force Occupation and Unemployment in 2012”* (INS - AIGO, 2013)
- b)** Official public policy documents envisaging young people integration:
- *“The National 2014-2020 Strategy for Youngsters”* (MTS, 2013);
  - Governmental Program 2013-2016;
  - National Development Plan 2007-2013;
  - Labor Legal Code;
  - Youngsters Law No. 350 / 2007;
  - Governmental Decision 600 / 2007 regarding young people protection at workplace;
  - Law 72 / 2007 on stimulating employability of students;
  - Law 333 / 2006 on setting up “Information and Counseling Centers for Young People”.
- c)** Based on a semi-structured guide interview were taken 20 interviews (including over the phone) with various stakeholders having relevant experience to the in focus topic:

National government policy makers	2
Regional government policy makers	1 (Bucharest)
Training and education providers (please specify whether public, private or third sector)	2 public 1 private 1 third sector
Employment support service providers (please specify whether public, private or third sector)	1 public 1 private 1 third sector
Citizen’s bodies (e.g. youth parliaments/councils)	1
Youth work organizations	1
Think tanks (governmental and non-governmental)	1
Networks and membership organizations (sector bodies/agencies, campaigns, lobbying, networking, project work, awareness raising)	1

As a plus, we included in analysis 6 additional interviews with young university graduated which are facing difficulties in finding / maintaining a job. The aim of these interviews was to identify significant aspects related to: youngsters’ perception on access to the labor market, their level of information about labor occupation programs for young people, their perception about access to labor market in the area they are living, plans for future etc.

## 4. National definitions

### 4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth

In Romania there are more than 6 million young people between 15 and 34 years. There is a continuous decrease as a share of population, from 32.1% in 2003 to 28.6% in 2012, of young people 15-34 years as a result of combination between several factors: increased life expectancy, decreased birth rate and emigration, the latter phenomenon involving young people in a proportion much higher than other age groups<sup>204</sup>.

Although the share of young population in Romania is above the EU27 average of 25.1% (2012), the decrease in the last 10 years is more pronounced in Romania. EUROSTAT projections show it expects a sharp decline by 2060 the share of young people in the total population. Romania is among the countries heavily affected by this trend, in 2015 Romania falling below the EU-27, and the difference will increase by 2060. Fertility rate in Romania was at 1.3 in 2011, significantly below the 1.6 registered in the EU-27 average.

Whatever the method of poverty estimation, children and youth were consistently in recent decades the most vulnerable groups. More than a quarter of young people between 18 and 24 are in relative poverty<sup>205</sup> (28.1% in 2011), which places Romania among the three countries with the worst situation in the EU-27. At the same time, the level is increasing in recent years. More than a third of young people are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, namely 40.3% versus 24.3% in the EU-28. The total population in Romania, the risk of poverty or social exclusion is considerably lower, 24.3%. More than a third of young people are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, 40.3% versus 24.3% in the EU-28. The total population in Romania at the risk of poverty or social exclusion is considerably lower, 24.3%. Another significant issue is inter-generational cohabitation. In Romania, 60 % of young people 18-34 years are living with parents versus 48.5 % in the EU-28 (EUROSTAT, 2011). Romania has the highest percentage of population residing in overcrowded housing among EU-27, except for Hungary. With 2.9 persons per household on average, Romania has the highest number of members per household in the EU-28, tied with Bulgaria, Croatia and Malta. Labor market constraints, more harsh for youth than adults and lack of access to independent housing solutions are among the factors leading to the postponement of important decisions in the sphere of family life. Age at first marriage has increased between 1990 and 2010 from 22 to 26 years for women and from 25 to 29.1 years for men. Average age at first birth has also increased significantly, from 22.4 years to 26 years at the same time. Partly due to the high share of the population residing in rural areas, 43.3 % of young people aged between 12-17 years are severely deprived in terms of housing: living in overcrowded housing and are affected by at least one problem regarding inadequate housing (roof is poorly insulated / leaks, missing bathroom / toilet / shower in the dwelling

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<sup>204</sup> Approximately 80% of people emigrating in 2011 registered in official statistics are between 18 and 40 years. Source: INS, TEMPO database

<sup>205</sup> Relative poverty rate (Eurostat) is 60% of median income per adult equivalent. Young people are at higher risk from the point of view of *absolute poverty* being even poorer than children. In 2011 the poverty level was 5.0% overall, 8.4% for young people aged 15-19, 7.6% for 20-24 years, 6.0% for 25-29 years and 4.6% for 30-34 years (source: MMFPSPV).

or dwelling is inadequate lighting). The level of severe housing deprivation in Romania is over 4 times higher than the European average.

According to the „National Strategy for Youth Policy 2014-2020”<sup>206</sup> in Romania, the categories of disadvantaged young people affected by social exclusion are:

*Young homeless people.* There are no official statistics on the number of children and young people living on the streets. In 2009, the NGO "Save the Children" estimated (for three major cities - Bucharest, Brasov and Constanta) about 1400 street children & youngsters. The vast majority are in the Bucharest (around 1150). Less than half are children (0-17 years), most of them young people 18-35 years.

There are about 5,000 *young people* that are annually *leaving public residential care institutions*, being highly vulnerable and at risk of poverty and / or social exclusion. Most children in residential care system are 14-17 YO, followed by 10-13 years. The Socio-professional integration services and the activities for development of life skills addressed to this vulnerable group are underdeveloped.

*Young people from territorially compact poor communities.* Although overall poverty and youth in particular, is higher in rural areas in recent decades have begun to form „pocket poverty / ghettos” in compact urban areas. In all these areas, children and young people is the main category of the population (over 60%), while the population 60 years and over is less than 10% of the total.

*Young Roma people.* Of Roma people, 33.6% were poor in 2011, an absolute poverty rate 6.7 times higher than the national average. Roma represent only 3.3% of the population<sup>207</sup> but 21.9% of the poor. Poverty rates are significantly higher among Roma children: 27.3% of Roma children in urban areas, compared with 2% of Romanian children, and 41.1% compared to 10.6% in rural areas. Only 17% of Roma are following a vocational school, a high school or higher levels of education.

*Teens with at least one parent working abroad.* Approximately 170 000 children from primary schools had, according to an OSF 2007 study , at least one parent working abroad. Young people in this situation are more likely to drop out of school and out of the normal path to adulthood, the consequences of parents’ abandonment, even if temporary, is expected to occur over the entire life.

*Young people living with HIV / AIDS.* Young people between 20 and 25 years are about 60% of people with HIV / AIDS in Romania, following a wave of nosocomial infections about the late 80s and early 90s. Sexual transmission can be attributed in recent years in 4 of 5 cases diagnosed and she was registered particularly in young people aged between 15 and 29 years with a peak at those between 20 and 24 years<sup>208</sup>. These people are often faced with many factors of social exclusion, from discrimination to lack of access to employment and adequate health services.

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<sup>206</sup> National Strategy for Youth Policy 2014-2020, pp. 21-22  
<http://www.mts.ro/documente/diverse/Strategie%20Dezbatere%20Publica.pdf>

<sup>207</sup> Official / 2011 Census data (619.000). Research data estimates this population around 2 million (~10%).

<sup>208</sup> HIV / AIDS National Strategy 2011-2015.

*Victims of labor exploitation with sexual purposes.* Most of the victims are young and juvenile, especially in regards to the sexual exploitation but labor as well. The average age of identified victims was 24 years, but there is an increased vulnerability to age 17, at that age recorded the highest overall incidence rates<sup>209</sup>. For female victims, which are 65% of the total victims, the highest risk occurs around the age of 21 years. Juveniles make up about a quarter of all trafficked persons, especially those in the age range 14-17 which come from disorganized families or orphanages.

*Youngsters discriminated on grounds of age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation.* The most discriminated social groups, according to the opinions of respondents of a recent survey, are the Roma people, people with physical or mental disabilities, HIV / AIDS, the homeless, orphans and drug addicts<sup>210</sup>. According to the same research, 31% of the Romanian state that they would feel very little / not at all comfortable around a person of homosexual orientation.

*Young people with disabilities.* Disability is one of the important determinants of adolescent behavior, with prominent influences on their relationship with peers, school and adjacent social environment<sup>211</sup>. The data presented by the Ministry of Labor (ANPH/ NAHP) show that there are over 10,000 registered disabled people aged between 15-17 years. There are estimations that within the age range 14-34 years we have between 80 and 100 000 (out of nearly 700,000 people with disabilities in the population). According with ANPH, about 6,000 young people with disabilities are in caring institutions are no more than 5-600 are employed. Based on these findings we can conclude that a very large number (over 70,000) of young people with disabilities are in the care of families, most of them without a job and living almost isolated from society.

## **4.2 Labor market position of young people and problems at labor market entry**

Employment rate of population aged 20-64 years in Romania (63.8% in 2012) is lower than the EU average (68.5% in 2012), the national target being 70% by 2020. For the age groups 15-19, 20-24, 25 -29, employment rate is considerably below the EU-28:

- the 8.4% employment rate among youth aged 15-19 is about half the European level;
- only slightly more than 1 in 3 young Romanian 20-24 are employed compared to about half of young Europeans;
- 67.5% of Romanian young people 25-29 years are employed compared to 72.1% of young Europeans.

Significant discrepancies occur at regional level, thus the lowest employment rates for young people aged 15-24 years was recorded in the West (27.9%) and North-West (27.6%),

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<sup>209</sup> National Agency against Trafficking in Persons, Report on the situation of trafficking in 2012

<sup>210</sup> National Council for Combating Discrimination, 2012

<sup>211</sup> UNICEF, State of adolescents in Romania, 2013

while there are regions with a situation significantly better, North-East (36.4%) and South-Muntenia (34.5%).

Young people in Romania have access later and to a lesser extent in the labor market and incomes are lower as comparative with most EU countries. Thus, Romania has the highest poverty level 18-24 working young: 30.7% of them were poor in 2011 (on the whole working population is 19%) but have a job while in EU-28 value is 11.2%. The „wage poverty” of youngsters is even more alarming when you consider that it is growing: in 2008, at the beginning of the economic crisis, 23.1% of young workers were poor.

Existing jobs are not in line/ adequate to youngster’s background / education which are much higher than the jobs required qualifications, in other words, the labor market is not adapted to the higher level of youth qualifications. This situation is caused by insufficient development of partnerships between education and economic environment. Legislative instability and the inability of local governments to strategize, at least in the medium term is one of the issue in this context. The economic crisis makes it difficult to attract investors to create new jobs at local level, especially in rural area and small towns.

Young Romanians face a rigid labor market, without flexible forms of employment available, enabling them to have a job and study in parallel. Only 17.3% of young employees in Romania between 15 and 24 years were part-time working in 2010 versus 28.9% in the EU-28. While 42.1% of young people aged 15-24 employed in the EU-28-1 have a temporary work, only 3.1% of Romanian youth are employed temporarily in the workplace (EUROSTAT). Temporary employment and part-time programs represent more a barrier to entry for young people into the labor market, rather than a characteristic of a flexible labor market with alternative forms of employment.

Young people employed in the informal sector, mainly in subsistence agriculture, is one of the most vulnerable social groups. Over 40% of people employed in the informal sector are young people aged 15-34<sup>212</sup>.

Much of youth unemployment is chronic, extending for more than 1 year: 43.3% of 15-24 years unemployed were long-term unemployed in 2012. Long-term unemployment rate among young people aged 15-24 was 13.3% compared to 3.2% for the whole working population.

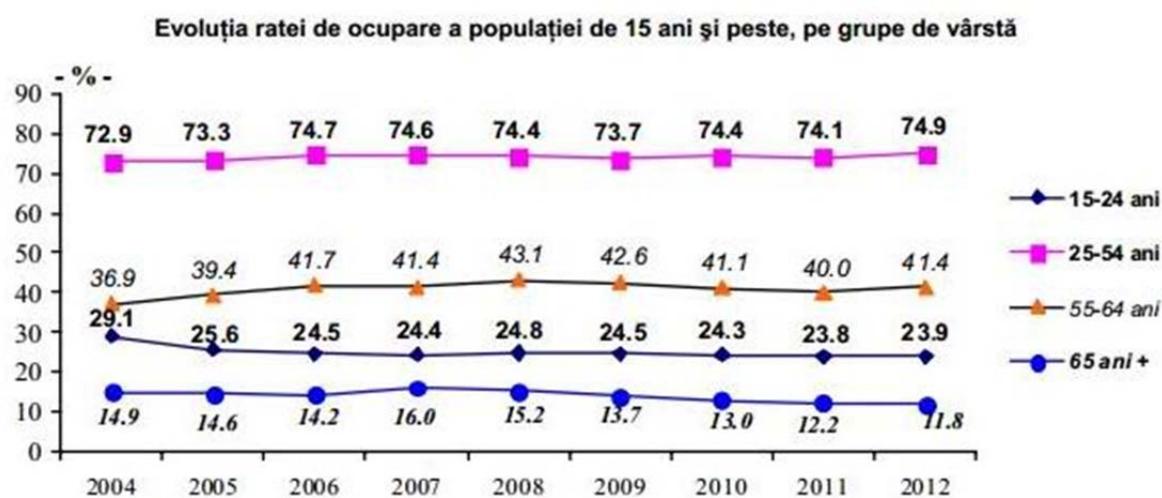
A particular risk is that graduation of higher education does not improve in Romania, contrary to the global trend, the chances of success in the labor market. Thus, if the ILO unemployment among people between 25-29 years who have completed a secondary school or post-secondary level was 10.3% in 2012, the level was 10.9% for university graduates. University graduates entering the labor market are blocked because employers prefer experienced staff<sup>213</sup>, and they do not have such experience due to lack of temporary and part-time jobs.

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<sup>212</sup> CPARSD, “Presidential Commission Report on Social and Demographic Risks”, 2009

<sup>213</sup> “Recent graduates of higher education and their integration in the labor market”, Bucharest, DOCIS; 2010 [http://docis.acpart.ro/uploads/noi/Studiu\\_sociologic.pdf](http://docis.acpart.ro/uploads/noi/Studiu_sociologic.pdf)

In 2012, 16.8% of young people in Romania were classified as NEET (young people 15-24 who are not in employment, education or training), compared to 13.2% of young people in the EU-27. After several years of decline in Europe, the share has stabilized in 2008, but then increased as a result of the economic crisis. In Romania has been an increase as well in the share of NEET, from 11.6% in 2008 to 17.7% in 2011, but 2012 recorded a slight improvement in the phenomenon.



Source: [http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/com\\_anuale/ocup\\_somaj/somaj\\_2012r.pdf](http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/com_anuale/ocup_somaj/somaj_2012r.pdf)

## 5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention

Social inclusion of young people is a recurrent topic on the agenda of decision makers in Romania but the effectiveness in tackling this issue in practical, effective actions is highly debatable. Considering the fact that many young people express their intention to leave the country to work (about one third), it can be stated strongly that young people represent one of the biggest challenges of social inclusion in Romania. Being at 'crossroad' of employment policies, educational policies and the youth ones, labor market inclusion of young people raises many practical problems, turning into an integrated context-dependent objective of national and European policies<sup>214</sup>.

"National Development Plan 2007-2013"<sup>215</sup> proposed by the Government establishes the issue of integration of young people into the labor market as one of the priorities for action, as a result of rising unemployment rates. Government documents set the labor market integration of young people in close correlation with the ability of the education system to provide relevant skills and qualifications tailored to the market needs.

<sup>214</sup> "Youngsters in Romania: approaches to social inclusion", ANBCC, Bucharest, 2011 [http://www.stpcentru.ro/fileadmin/user\\_upload/dezvoltare\\_durabila/Raport\\_Youth\\_Employment\\_ANBCC.pdf](http://www.stpcentru.ro/fileadmin/user_upload/dezvoltare_durabila/Raport_Youth_Employment_ANBCC.pdf)

<sup>215</sup> Planul Național de Dezvoltare 2007-2013, [http://www.aippimm.ro/files/otimmc\\_files/71/172/planul-national-de-dezvoltare-2007-2013.pdf](http://www.aippimm.ro/files/otimmc_files/71/172/planul-national-de-dezvoltare-2007-2013.pdf)

Consecutively, the National Youth Strategy 2014-2020 addresses the situation of youth and policies for youth 14-35 years, as stipulated by Youth Law. The analysis is done by age groups 14/15-19, 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34/35, for comparative reasons with other countries, because it can guide youth policies towards convergence at European level.

Outside the National Development Plan, the Romanian legislation does not elaborate, however, a stable framework regarding labor market integration of young people in the sense that there is no specific law in this area. The only rules are those of the county or local level who are trying to prevent the problems that young people face. A brief analysis of County Councils Decisions has shown that interest in the issue of inclusion of young people fluctuates from one region to another. Of the seven regions, within the North West region the County Councils adopted 9 decisions in terms of social inclusion of young people, while West and South-West Regions are positioned on the last places with only a legislative act adopted.

## **5.1 Main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty**

In Romania, the main tools to combat inequality and poverty of young people are the legislative provisions, as well as strategies, programs and projects focused on young people, who are targeted by additional protection: hiring age, working hours, ensuring the health and safety at work. To foster and maintain young people on the labor market from unemployment insurance fund are granted employment allowances, while employers have a number of facilities. Forms of protection of young people are following aspects like: regulating the minimum age of employment, provision of financial aid (subsidies, allowances), facilities for employers to hire and maintain the employment of graduates, working conditions (safety and health at workplace), training support (scholarships)<sup>216</sup>.

*National Strategy for Youth Policy 2014-2020* aims generally to support the active participation of young people in economic, social, cultural and political life of the country, ensuring equal opportunities of access to education, employment and decent living conditions, with particular to young people who, for various reasons, may have fewer opportunities.

*Youth in Action* Program 2014-2020 is the EU program that supports non-formal learning activities for young people by funding projects. This is a continuation of the "Youth" Program implemented during 2007-2013. Program with funding from the European Commission, aims to promote active citizenship among young people by building up solidarity and tolerance, supporting mutual understanding between young people in different countries, promoting of European cooperation and contribution to improve the quality of support systems for youth activities.

*Lifelong Learning Program* is developed through the National Agency for Community Programs in Education and Training (ANPCDEFP) under the Ministry of National Education and provides actions (Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, study visits,

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<sup>216</sup>Labour laws, Labour Code, Protection of young people <http://clubhr.ro/legislatia-muncii/sintlex/codul-muncii/item/132-protectia-tinerilor.html>

preparatory visits) which encourages young people to give them a voice and the opportunity to find their role in society, strengthening public dialogue with decision makers in a variety of projects, volunteering and exchange programs among young people.

#### Legal basis

- G.D. 600/2007 on protection of young people at workplace. Article 1 stipulates the protection of young people against economic exploitation, any work that may affect the safety, health or their physical, mental, moral, social or jeopardize their education. The provisions apply to any person under the age of 18 who has signed an individual contract of employment in accordance with the law.
- Labor Code Art.13 [Legal capacity of the employee] states that a person can acquire the right and ability to work at the age of 16. It is possible that at the age of 15 can sign a contract to work as an employee only with the consent of parents or legal representatives for activities consistent with the physical, skills and knowledge of the child.
- Law 350/2006 (youth law) regulates the legal framework necessary to ensure appropriate conditions for social and professional integration of young people, their needs and aspirations. (Article 1) The State provides special protection and assistance for young people (14-35) to achieve their rights. (Art. 2) There are a number of youth policies that are based on the following principles:

# developing and promoting comprehensive and integrated strategies based on current social research findings;

# ensuring participation of young people in decisions affecting them;

# increasing youth participation in public life;

# providing support and guidance of youth for active participation in the economic, educational and cultural life of the country;

# guaranteeing the right to education, training and professional specialization;

# boosting youth access to information and information technologies.

- Law 76/2002 on unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation. (Article 1) stipulates that to every person is guaranteed the right to freely choose their profession, work and unemployment insurance. The law regulates the measures for policies designed to protect individuals against the risk of unemployment and a high level of employment. (Art. 2) The measures provided by the law aimed at achieving certain objectives, such as:

# preventing and combating unemployment and its social effects;

# hiring or re-hiring persons seeking employment;

# supporting employment for disadvantaged people;

# ensuring equal opportunities on the labor market;

# support the unemployed to find a job.

- Law 72/2007 on stimulating employment of students. Under this law, employers who employ students during holidays are entitled to a monthly financial incentive equal to 50% of the gross minimum salary guaranteed per student. (Article 1) The maximum financial incentive is provided for 60 days. The difference between monthly financial incentive granted and salary should be covered by the employer funds.

- Law 376/2004 on private scholarships based on a contract by a legal entity or a person of a beneficiary who may be a student, doctoral or which is a postgraduate training program in an accredited institution of higher education in Romania or in another country.
- Law 333/2006 on setting up information centers and counseling for young people 14-35 years, for information, counseling and advising young people in different areas. These centers are established in the county capitals and elsewhere, to the extent deemed necessary. These services are free and accessible respecting non-discrimination principle and ensure the confidentiality of personal data.

## **5.2 Are young people given voice to influence/shape/determine the choice of measures and programs they are offered/the subject of?**

In Romania, young people are not involved directly in the development of policies affecting them. In this regard, there are various erratic initiatives and approaches for involving young people in decision-making at a high / national level, bringing to the fore the concept of representing the interests of young people through their ability to be part of national and international decision-making bodies, emphasizing the importance of knowing involvement opportunities they have.

The Council of Young People from Romania (CTR)<sup>217</sup> aims to defend and promote the rights of Romanian youth in the country and abroad and increase their active participation in the life of the communities in which they are living, and to support and promote the common interests of its members at local, regional, national, European and international level.

The EU "Youth in Action" program, established during 2007-2013, to extend cooperation in the youth field in the European Union, develop personal responsibility of young people, initiative, concern for others, active citizen involvement in local, national and European levels. The program focus is on involving young people in decisions taken on their behalf. They can be partners within dialogue with decision-makers who make strategies for youth, who decide what measures shall be taken or not taken.

This is the idea underlying "Meeting young people and those responsible for youth policy". Projects funded under this action should seek to facilitate a structured dialogue between young people and those who have the power to decide. Through this dialogue, young people have the opportunity to express their views and ideas on topics proposed by the European Commission, to suggest solutions for specific cases - things they see around them, their city, and their group friends. The meetings of youth with decision makers aim is empowering youth and encouraging them to make their voice heard. These projects represent a way to endorse their views and suggestions which can be later found in official decisions and policies at national/ regional/ local level.

## **5.3 Non-intervention**

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<sup>217</sup> Mai multe detalii despre scopul, obiectivele și activitățile *Consiliului Tineretului din România*, disponibile la: <http://ctr.ro/articles/index/3>

The interviewed people identified various areas of non-intervention in the actual public policy, which are overlapping with our analysis and „desk identification“. Both the lack of flexibility and security in labor massively affects (as we saw previously occupancy / youth unemployment) integration and continuity in the labor market, but also providing a decent income, so that a large proportion of young employees are to be "working poor". Although social policy documents speak about *flexicurity*, this is rather absent.

All the young people interviewed, as well as other social actors included in the study, pointed out that a major impediment for youth employment is employers express requirement that youngsters must have previous work experience. Or if nobody hires them "first time" because they did not have any formal working experience, is entering a vicious circle in which, theoretically, these young people will not be hired ever ... One of the solutions proposed was that for higher education graduates, internships during college to be recognized as work experience. Another proposal aimed at assimilation of volunteering activities with work experience.

Broad categories of vulnerable young people - young people in rural areas, those with disabilities, drug users, young people with HIV / AIDS, young offenders - are virtually out of social integration programs, both due to poor targeting of these programs, and due to marginalization, social labeling and stigmatization of the population in general and employers in particular.

In this situation, the responsibility to support a person at risk rests almost exclusively on family support. But as usually members of these families are also at high risk, practically there is no possibility of intervention. Temporary solution to mitigate the crisis (but not overcoming it and attaining social integration / self-sufficiency) is represented by small aids in cash / in kind provided by NGO's or by local authorities (generally quite conditioning ... especially in elections periods).

A participant in the research showed that even in their intent the implemented programs pursue the support of disadvantaged / youth, in reality those who benefit most are rather well positioned, while the targeted beneficiaries the results are rather limited to improve the ad-hoc life conditions, without developing skills and abilities necessary for an independent self-sufficient life.

Inefficient communication of public authorities leads to the depletion of implemented projects. So even some measures / programs to improve the quality of life of young people are implemented, the mentoring, access and trust, both from the direct beneficiaries and applicant institutions is low. Also, one participant pointed out that cumbersome and super-bureaucratization is not only an impediment to the implementation of projects as well as a deterrent to further access such types of programs.

## 6. Policy making and implementation

### 6.1 Who are the actors that are responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?

The Romanian Constitution states the following rights and freedoms directly applicable to the target group of the research: the right to education (art. 32), to labor and social protection of labor (art. 41), prohibition of forced labor (art. 42) and protection of children and young people (art. 49). The State provides special protection and assistance to young people to achieve their rights. Central and local public administration authorities, public services and their subordinate institutions have an obligation to support youth work and to secure a proper framework at national and local levels. Art. 32 stipulate that the State shall ensure the right to education of young people "through compulsory education through secondary and vocational education, by higher education and other forms of education and training". According paragraph 4 "State education is free [...]. State offers scholarships to children and young people from disadvantaged families according with the law." According to art. 49 on the protection of children and youth, they "enjoy a special protection and assistance in the realization of their rights." In this sense it gives "child allowances and benefits for care of ill or disabled child. However "minors under age 15 cannot be gainfully employed."

Institutional actor mainly responsible for the right to education for young people is the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (MECTS). Labor rights protection is one of the main objectives of the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection (MMFPS). Within the current configuration of the Romanian government, other ministries that run programs with direct impact on youth employment are: the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment (MECMA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Sustainable Development (MADR). Other two ministries that serve to support the set of measures for young people in general and in rural areas in particular are added: Ministry of Interior and Administration (MAI) and the Ministry of Public Finance (MFP).

Other public institutions subordinated MECTS relevant for young people are: National Center for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education, the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education and the National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with Economic and Social Environment.

Within area of labor and social protection functions an inter-ministerial Council<sup>218</sup> for Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection. In this Council were included a wide range of National Commissions, with responsibilities in the field of equal opportunities, implementation of strategies for vulnerable people, promoting social inclusion, promoting National Employment Plan, the problems of Romanians working abroad etc.

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<sup>218</sup> HG 750/14.7.2005 and Annex 1: "Consilii interministeriale permanente. Componenta si conducere" / "Permanent Inter-ministerial Councils – Composition and Leadership"; Annex 2: "Preluarea organismelor interministeriale existente" / Taking over the actual inter-ministerial departments".

The labor market policies in Romania focus both on active and passive measures. The main actor involved in the implementation is the National Agency for Employment of Labor Force (ANOFM). Adoption of the Law 76/2002 on unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation radically changed the philosophy of applied system, especially by adjusting the period of granting unemployment benefits and eligibility criteria (stimulation to return to work before the expiration of unemployment period).

Another significant actor of the central government is the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection (MMFPS), which is "developing programs in the area of work, family and social protection". According to the Government Programme 2009-2012, labor chapter provides series of government objectives "to improve access to the labor market of disadvantaged groups, the development of inclusive labor market". Among the guidelines are mentioned "increasing employment from 59% to more than 65% in 2012"<sup>219</sup> and "increasing participation in continuum vocational training from 2 % to 7% of the population of working age 25-64". Government Programme 2012 included among courses of action: "increasing employment to reach 65% in 2013, while continuing to achieve the target of 70% under the Europe 2020 Strategy" and "stimulating, by active measures, the participation of employees in continuous training, with particular attention to rural people and vulnerable groups."

In conclusion, from an institutional perspective and in close connection with the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, the main institutional actors are MECTS, MFP, MECMA and MADR. Through subordinate structures at regional, county and local level they implement programs aimed at both young people in general and those in rural areas. MECTS is responsible for implementing the law of education as well as sports and leisure activities for young people. MFP support youth employment in particular through ANOFM, organizing job fairs and providing grants to employers. MECMA through AIPPIMM<sup>220</sup> support youth entrepreneurship in particular by the START program launched in 2011 to develop entrepreneurial skills among young people and facilitating their access to finance. Eligible youth must be aged up to 35 years and to establish for the first time a company with limited liability. MADR finances through APDRP a program named "Installation of young farmers" for farmers of up to 40 years.

To Ministries mentioned above it add MAI and MFP. These two ministries have direct responsibilities in the protection of young people but are close to their issues either by geographical proximity of subordinate structures (MAI), or by financial support (MFP). According to the law of decentralization, territorial administrative units of MAI ensure the implementation of a series of actions with direct impact to the right to education, to work and to protection of youth.

National social policy agenda in employment is harmonized with the EU one. As a member state, Romania has taken the Europe 2020 target of achieving an employment rate of up 75% for the population aged between 20 and 64 years. Our country aims to reach an employment rate of 70% in 2020.

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<sup>219</sup> This did not happen. In 2012, the employment was 59.5%.

<sup>220</sup> Implementing Agency of Projects and Programmes for SME's

## 6.2 Youth participation in policy making

Recognizing youth as a distinct social category with a very specific problematic and the need for a coordinated action to support young people through social policy field was recently put in focus in Romania (National Plan of Action for Youth to Romania (PNA-T). The policies for young people are rated as poor, particularly in terms of how they were elaborated. One of the main problems is the lack of consultation of young people by the institutions that make decisions that directly or indirectly affect them (this is how the "ordinary" youth are involved in consultations/ have voice not the organizations that represent them). The issue of appropriate ways of communication between young people and the institutions called upon the distance between young generation and the ruling adult generation.

National Strategy for Youth Policy 2014-2020 attempts first to find answers to the problems of youth, to solve, to facilitate their access to the institutions, but does not intend to appoint young in certain positions with decision-making responsibilities. Involving young people in decision-making at a high level depends on their level of self-determination, they should aim high goals, but in small steps.

At the end of 2013, there has been a debate on youth involvement in decision making at high level, debate organized and coordinated by youth delegates of Romania to the United Nations. In this debate has presented a new initiative for youth involvement in decision-making processes: Program Youth Delegate to the United Nations<sup>221</sup>. In short, the program has five main objectives:

- Direct involvement of young people in international youth policy development;
- Sustainable development of society and democracy by facilitating youth participation at all levels of decision;
- Promoting youth policies, mechanisms for youth policy coordination among young at a national level and the importance of youth programs as part of socio-economic
- Familiarize young people in Romania with global development issues and opportunities of involvement they have in this regard
- Support activities and initiatives of the youth of Romania.

## 7. Social innovation and its role in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy

### 7.1 How is social innovation defined?

Although the scientific literature in Romania addressed this concept from multiple angles, at the public institutions there is not a very integrated approach to social innovation and implementation in practice is rather weak. The NGO sector also addresses social innovation but rather on a small scale (punctual / local projects / initiatives) and not always convergent with the macro and imprecise approach of the public institutions.

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<sup>221</sup> More details about the Program "Delegat de Tineret la Natiunile Unite" / "UN Youth Delegate" at: <http://www.unyouthdelegate.ro/youth-delegate/>

Social innovation takes several forms adapted to the specific of particular public institutions. For example, the National Agency of Public Finances (ANFP) aims social innovation in 3 directions: administration between systemic constraints and development of the human factor; social media - a mechanism to facilitate dialogue with citizens; partnership - the formula for successful performance institutions for citizens.

The NGO "Institute of Management and Sustainable Development" called social innovation as a "quiet revolution" and shows that it refers to "new strategies, concepts, ideas and organizations that address social needs - from the labor market and working conditions to education, community development and health - and involving civil society and development. [... It includes] new tools that support the community, and using technology to address community problems, new methods of funding (e.g. microcredits) or research."

<sup>222</sup> The tertiary sector, as associative environment, is targeting by social innovation the social entrepreneurship taking rather the form of lessons learned or best practices guides.

One of the most important NGO's in Romania - FDSC - organized a large event in 2013, with the theme "Inclusion and social innovation", showing that "social innovation is a constant challenge for both public service providers in the field, as well as private ones, which are concerned with the prevention of social exclusion of vulnerable groups in Romania. In addition to existing services, new approaches are needed to increase the impact of interventions that address social needs" as needed "to identify possible interventions to address the social needs of rural and urban communities in their dynamics."<sup>223</sup>

T. Ling defines innovation as the study of the way in which new ideas are generated, the way in which they lead to changes in organizational or individual practices that add value, and how they are running successful practices (Ling, 2002). He identifies three stages of innovation in the private and nonprofit sector: generating ideas and identifying market opportunities, innovation management and the diffusion of successful innovation. In these three areas, the author identifies practices that can be transferred to the public sector.

Ling (2002) shows that the three main differences between innovation in the public sector and the private sector relates to:

- base against which innovation is valued: in the market, this unit is the enterprise, while the public sector can be a complex system (e.g.: education or health system);
- motivation, goal or incentive for innovation: in the private sector innovation is brought shareholder value, while in public sector and it satisfies the public interest or a public policy objective;
- type of constraints in relation to law: private innovation must comply with the legal framework, and the public is limited in its development to the legal constraints of public bodies (e.g.: freedom of information) but not the legal constraints directly on it (Ling, 2002).

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<sup>222</sup> "Inovatia sociala – revolutia tacuta?" / "Social Innovation – the Silent Revolution?" <http://www.imdd.ro/en/node/604>

<sup>223</sup> Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile, 2013, Incluziune și inovație în domeniul social, / Foundation for Civil Society Development "Inclusion and Innovation in the Social Field " [http://fondong.fdsc.ro/upload//raport\\_de\\_eveniment\\_19.06.2013.pdf](http://fondong.fdsc.ro/upload//raport_de_eveniment_19.06.2013.pdf)

In a comprehensive article on social innovation, Aura Matei<sup>224</sup> reviewing the social innovation literature shows that *social innovation*:

- ✓ ... meets a social problem or unmet social needs. „Social innovation is a new solution to a social problem, a solution that is more effective, efficient, sustainable and equitable than existing solutions and for which the added value is primarily created for society as a whole more than for private individuals.”<sup>225</sup>
- ✓ ... is a solution to a social problem, and can take many forms. It can be an activity or service innovation, may be a change of process, product, and organizational change or financing; may be as well an idea that may be new or be applied to existing idea in a new way that solves the challenges of social, cultural, economic and environmental benefit of humankind.
- ✓ ... involves novelty. Even if the novelty is an intuitive feature of innovation it seems natural that an innovation should represent a novelty, it raises the question of reporting of this novelty in context. That involves it is not necessarily important that the new idea or the pattern to be brand new, but do matter to be seen in the context in which they are applied.
- ✓ ... social change. The new solution must produce social change, cultural structural, normative or regulatory change including the process of creating opportunities for change.
- ✓ ... produces an improvement, progress, a better situation. Produced Improvement is often identified by a rise in the quality of life of the target group of innovation, but at a lower level of generality is identified with economic or social performance, with effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and greater equity, with an increase in the number of valuable options from which people can choose.
- ✓ ... produces a benefit to groups of individuals, communities, society as a whole, not private individuals, but has an impact at the macro level. Social innovation creates value not only for the direct consumer / beneficiary. For example, improvements of educational or finding a job services by introducing a new way of organizing have positive effects on youngsters not only now, but the whole community in which they work toward they will be able in turn to provide better services in the future.
- ✓ ... is diffused through organizations whose primary purpose is not profit. Even if economic innovations produce an increase in individual welfare, quality of life, so have social consequences they are produced and distributed for profit. The specificity of social innovations is that they are not created for profit.

Unfortunately many of these characteristics of social innovation are hard to find in many of the projects and actions implemented in Romania in recent years. Wishful thinking in innovation, especially in terms of youth policies (employment, education, active participation in social life) is high at declarative level, but the willingness and power are small (demonstrated through monitoring the implementation and performance indicators).

## 7.2 Supporting social innovation

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<sup>224</sup> Aura Matei, 2009, “Inovația socială – o hartă tematică” / „Social Innovation – a thematic map”, [http://www.inovatiiasociala.ro/pdf/art\\_1361646173.pdf](http://www.inovatiiasociala.ro/pdf/art_1361646173.pdf)

<sup>225</sup> Stanford Graduate School of Business, Center for Social Innovation, [www.gsb.stanford.edu/csi/](http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/csi/)

Theoretically, in the last 4-5 years the legislative and institutional framework in Romania feature / support implementation of the greater social innovation. But implementation of innovative ideas and initiatives is difficult sometimes because of lack of experience of the implementers, and the lack of support and know- how, assistance and continuous monitoring. Competitions for grants that help to implement ideas and new solutions to social problems of young people (and others) are not always fair play. There are people specialized in writing projects ("soldiers of fortune") which charge a fee of 10-25% of the total value of the project if it is funded. Unfortunately in many cases the winning institution / organization have no real capacity of implementation and execution, or to assure sustainability, and finally positive effects on target groups are negligible. Unfortunately perhaps *the most significant social innovation is found in the sphere of... corruption!*

The environment in which social innovation is developing can shape the conditions that stimulate this process:

- Social movements - innovation is fostered by the existence of legal protections, of open means of communication.
- In business, social innovation competition can be facilitated by the existence of an open culture and accessible sources of capital and will be inhibited by the monopoly of urban elites or governments on capital. In this situation, it is questionable to refer to social innovation and not economic innovation. It is rather a reference to the factors that stimulate economic innovation with social effects.
- In politics and government stimulatory conditions include the existence of competition between the parties and between think-tanks (policy organizations), lines of financing for market competition and innovation pilot projects.
- In social organizations, social innovations are facilitated by the existence of networks of practitioners, political allies, strong civic organizations (the union hospitals should mention: in other European countries schools and hospitals can be organized as foundations).

In theory and in countries with stable and secular democracies the situation is as in our previous (theoretical) description. Below we give two examples, one negative and one positive, regarding implementation of innovative ideas in Romania.

Cluj- Napoca has been designated European Youth Capital for 2015. Under the heading "*European Youth Capital 2015 ignore innovative projects in tourism*"<sup>226</sup>, Journal of Cluj shows that the City Hall opposes implementation of touristic platform "Discover Europe", a free and innovative guide, fully optimized for mobile devices with very low implementation costs. Instead the City Hall acted immediately following this proposal by placing several monumental panels with QR Codes linking to [visitcluj.ro](http://visitcluj.ro) – a platform owned by the City Hall. Performance and cost differences between the two platforms are notable. The article says that "the platform *Discover Europe* offers for free to all tourists a complete guide optimized for mobile phones accessible through information panels mounted on sights. The system has been implemented in Constanta and in Cluj-Napoca was realized a demonstration targeting the Unitarian Church. According to the project, the monuments put up a billboard

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<sup>226</sup> [www.ziardecluj.ro/capitala-europeana-a-tineretului-2015-ignora-proiectele-inovatoare-in-turism/](http://www.ziardecluj.ro/capitala-europeana-a-tineretului-2015-ignora-proiectele-inovatoare-in-turism/), January 16th, 2014

with a short text in English and Romanian, and below another three options for access to more information, and an audio presentation, all six languages. Discover platform can be accessed totally free scanning a QR Code or touching with your phone the marked area for NFC technology. Even those who do not have a smartphone are not discriminated against, they have access to the audio guide dialing a phone number and entering a four-digit code corresponding to each objective. It is a unique project in Europe nominated for Innovation in Tourism Award, Brussels 2014. Using one of the three options tourists gets an absolutely free audio guide, available in six languages, so while visiting the monument can listen to the information. Platform shows besides audio guides in Romanian, Hungarian, English, French, German and Italian and a text describing the monument, and vintage photographs. The project does not consume power, does not require employees and costs are exclusive related to production, money that are paid only once. For example voice to a message in a foreign language costs 30 euro per minute, the cost is a few hundred dollars, but initiators have suggested to City Hall to find alternative funding sources, if the institution has no funds. Meanwhile municipality placed multilingual information panels on the facades of monuments that contain a QR Code, leading to [visitcluj.ro](http://visitcluj.ro) portal, developed within the European / City Hall project "Walking through town-treasure" funded with 500,000 euros. City Hall's portal [visitcluj.ro](http://visitcluj.ro) does not have instead mobile version and QR code scanning option drives tourists to the home users' version where they find presentations written in six languages. For these panels were spent ~27.000 Euro, but unlike variant *Discover* information can be accessed only by those who have smartphones and can scan the QR Code and [visitcluj.ro](http://visitcluj.ro) portal has no audio guide.

Association for Development and Innovation (ADI) initiated in 2005 the "*Democratic Republic of Youngsters*" program in which students of high schools in Bucharest and Brasov were involved in a role play with duration of one year during which they founded "Democratic Republic of Youngsters" in their high schools. Thus they tried to understand and adapt real Romanian legislation, organizing elections and reproducing organizational central and local government institutions. They formed ministries and had specific initiatives designed to improve the educational process in the respective colleges. Students in Bucharest replicated central authorities' structures forming the parliament, the government and other central institutions, while their friends in Brasov simulated local administration. Initiators' intention was that after implementation of pilot project in the first year, it will be extended in many other schools, with the support of local authorities, including some in areas with high minority representation (which still has not happened ...).

## **8. Discussion and conclusion**

The fieldwork and policy/ documents reviewing process drove to some significant, particular findings (conclusions) regarding social exclusion / disadvantage the Romanian youngsters are facing nowadays. The actual high rate of social exclusion of young people (especially from the labour market, but also from other significant spheres of public life such as involvement in making decisions related to their future) it's not only the result of the actual deep economic crisis started in 2008 and /or a consequence of our "communist totalitarian heritage" but also to inadequate policies (or neglected policies) in the last 24 years envisaging youngsters. Social exclusion of young people is a cumulative result of some

structural/ systemic factors the adversely affected this social group. The main factors (and consecutively areas of urgent intervention) are:

- *Increasing public social expenditures*, mainly in the area of education / labour market / jobs creation. Currently there are few effective public policies and programmes which really and effectively address the issue of social inclusion (education / labour market) for disadvantaged youngsters but mainly in the benefit of the better off ones.
- *Focus of support policies on disadvantaged individuals living in deprived areas*, such as rural area, small towns and the deprived neighbourhoods of big cities. Reducing youngsters' dependency by the social support / welfare through active employment (and consecutively citizenship) is a key factor not only for avoiding dependency trap but for a flourishing independent way of life which could be a strong example to follow for the next generations.
- *Diminishing the gap / lack of correlation between educational system and what the labour market is looking for*. 80% of new university graduated in the last years are performing in other fields than they graduated, most of them in low-skilled jobs. There are too many questions and consequences raised up by this situation, but one comes up stringently: how a society can give voice to the young people when they are structurally excluded by the manner in which one core system – education – it is shaped? The educational system (mainly at university level, but also the vocational schools) it is not interested by the real demand of the labour market, but only to offer their services in a big volume / for a lot of students, not having neither proper mechanisms, nor the interest, to monitor the employment routes of their alumni. Attaining university courses and graduating with a diploma it is a value *per se* in Romanian society, a kind of long term asset that *could be* useful in the far future but not for the moment. For most of the university graduated youngsters it is not at all an asset in relation with the current job market, not necessarily because of low level of their accumulated skills but because of de-professionalization.

Due to economic crisis/ cuts on public funding but also lack of experience/ tradition in formulating & implementing effective policies, it seems that the dictum “Think big, act big!” is not anymore proper in the actual circumstances. National policies should create a very flexible framework and to encourage / support local social partners to develop projects adjusted accordingly from two other different perspectives: “Think big, act small!” which diminish the risk of failure but increase the chances of learning and replicate the small successes to a bigger one; “Think Small, Act Big (but be prepared to think big)!” in the main sense of using resources as effective as possible.

All the traditional actors should be involved, but there is a need of a real involvement of young people and civil society not only in identifying the problems and solutions but also in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programs.

Involvement of youngsters/ youngsters organizations and civil society organizations (NGO's) should be de facto because actually it seems that in many cases de decision makers that are designing the public policy agenda just want to check on the checklist the very formal and inconsistent meetings in which this actors are invited to participate.

There should be a better correlation of educational policies with labour market.

Employment policies should focus on disadvantaged individuals living in deprived areas in which live deprived (young) people. It is necessary to move from the dictum “Think big, act big!” to two other different perspectives: “Think big, act small!” which diminish the risk of failure but increase the chances of learning and replicate the small successes to a bigger one; and “Think Small, Act Big (but be prepared to think big)!”

## Appendix 1: Glossary of key issues

Key issues	How is this issue defined and which key terms are used to describe this issue
Youth policy	The first attempt of strategic planning in youth was conducted in Romania in late 2001. The document 'National Action Plan for Youth – Romania' (PNAT-R) consider a list of eight goals, the first four combined under the name of participation (economic, civic and political, cultural and participation in education), plus another 4 regarding: reducing marginalization and exclusion factors, stimulate creativity and promote mobility within European space and optimization of institutional framework. Concerns for the development and coordination of national youth have increased especially in the last 10-15 years.
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	Social protection for disadvantaged young people aims to significantly improve the situation of groups of young people at high risk of social exclusion; a particularly challenge is chronic problems these young people during the transition period. Disadvantaged young people are street youth, poor Roma youth, young people out of residential care system, young people in poor areas territorially compact, young victims of child labor and sexual purposes, young abandoned by their families, young people with HIV / AIDS, teenage mothers and young discriminated by different criteria: age, sex, sexual orientation or ethnicity.
Social innovation	Social innovation is emerging as a new field of analysis in Romania, both in the context of development of approaches that consider projected social development be possible and effective, and in the context of other approaches turning to account dispersed knowledge, decentralization and communities capacity building, social groups to self-organize and formulate new specific answers to the problems they face. Important in this area is the social problem: innovation as a response to a new social problem, to an unsatisfactory solution for a social problem or is seen as an approach to improve the existing solutions.
Participation	Youth participation in youth policy development is in the stage of initiative, efforts are made to promote and encourage youth participation. One of the programs for youth in decision-making is 'Delegate Youth Program to the United Nations' that promotes: direct involvement of young people in international policies for youth in sustainable development of society and democracy by facilitating youth participation at all levels of decision to promote youth policy, mechanisms for coordinating youth policy to youth nationwide and importance of youth programs as part of socio-economic development, familiarizing young people in Romania with global development issues and opportunities for involvement.
The Abilities of	Youth policy, at legislative and institutional level when addressing the issue of youth refers to youth perceived as

young people	vulnerable or socially excluded from education, employment, health or other form of exclusion. In general, young approach includes concepts like: young graduates, training young, youths in the training and integration into society process, youth employability, facilitate youth access to the labor market. Most policies for young people give priority to enrollment youth on labor market.
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## Appendix 2: Key government policies and programmes

Policy area	Policy or Programme	Description
Employment	<b><u>G.D. 600/2007</u></b> 13/06/2007 protection of young people at work	According to article 1, the provisions of this decision aimed at ensuring protection of young people against economic exploitation, any work that may affect the safety, health or their physical, mental, moral, social or jeopardize their education. The provisions apply to any person under the age of 18 who has signed an individual contract of employment in accordance with the law <a href="http://www.ssm-iso.ro/legislatie/ssm/Hg600_2007.pdf">http://www.ssm-iso.ro/legislatie/ssm/Hg600_2007.pdf</a>
Employment	<b><u>Labor Code</u></b>	Chapter 1 of Title II of the Labour Code refers to the signature of the individual labor contract for employed youth. Article 13. [Legal capacity of the employee] states the ability to work it is acquired at the age of 16. It is possible that at the age of 15 can sign a contract to work as an employee only with the consent of parents or legal representatives for activities consistent with the physical, skills and knowledge of children/ young. <a href="http://www.usuuc.ro/data/_uploaded/downloads/Codul%20muncii.pdf">http://www.usuuc.ro/data/_uploaded/downloads/Codul%20muncii.pdf</a>
Employment and training	<b><u>Law 350/2006</u></b> (Youth Law)	This law governs the legal framework necessary to ensure appropriate conditions for social and professional integration of young people, their needs and aspirations. (Article 1) The State provides special protection and assistance for young people to achieve their rights. Young people are citizens aged between 14 and 35 years. (Art. 2) <a href="http://mts.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Legea-Tinerilor_350_2006.pdf">http://mts.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Legea-Tinerilor_350_2006.pdf</a>
Employment	<b><u>Law 76/2002 on unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation</u></b>	In Article 1 of the law stipulates that every person is guaranteed the right to freely choose their profession, work and unemployment insurance. The law regulates the measures for policies designed to protect individuals against the risk of unemployment and a high level of employment. (Art. 2) <a href="http://www.emplonet.ro/wpcontent/uploads/2012/02/L76-2002_act.pdf">http://www.emplonet.ro/wpcontent/uploads/2012/02/L76-2002_act.pdf</a>
Employment and apprenticeship	<b><u>Law 72/2007 on stimulating employment of pupils and students</u></b>	Under this law, employers who employ pupils and students during holidays are entitled to a monthly financial incentive equal to 50% of the gross minimum salary guaranteed per pupil and student. (Article 1) This financial incentive is granted at the request of the employer's from unemployment insurance fund. The maximum financial incentive is provided for 60

		<p>days. The difference between monthly financial incentive granted and salary shall be paid from the employer funds.</p> <p><a href="http://www.upt.ro/pdf/legi/LEGEA_nr.72_din_2007.pdf">http://www.upt.ro/pdf/legi/LEGEA_nr.72_din_2007.pdf</a></p>
Employment and training	<b>Law 376/2004</b> on private scholarships	<p>Private scholarship is the type of support for young people to study, based on a contract by a legal entity or a natural person granted to a beneficiary who may be a student, PhD or postgraduate training program in an accredited higher education institution in Romania or in another country. (Article 1) The contract that grants private scholarships include clauses on how the recipient must fulfill their study and other conditions under scholarship it is offered. (Art. 2)</p> <p><a href="http://static.anaf.ro/static/10/Anaf/legislatie/L_376_2004.htm">http://static.anaf.ro/static/10/Anaf/legislatie/L_376_2004.htm</a></p>
Employment and training	<b>Law 333/2006</b> on setting up information and youth counselling centres	<p>Information and counseling centers are set up for young people aged between 14 and 35 years. These centers have as attributions information, counseling and advice to young people in different areas of specific interest. These centers will be established in the county capitals and elsewhere, to the extent deemed necessary. (Article 1, subpct.1, 2,3) Services provided by centers for young people are free and accessible, ensuring non-discrimination and the confidentiality of personal data. (Art. 2)</p> <p><a href="http://www.juris.ro/legislatie-detaliu/Lege-nr-3332006-din-17072006-privind-infiintarea-centrelor-de-informare-si-consiliere-pentru-tineri/">http://www.juris.ro/legislatie-detaliu/Lege-nr-3332006-din-17072006-privind-infiintarea-centrelor-de-informare-si-consiliere-pentru-tineri/</a></p>
Employment and training	<b>Lifelong Learning Programme</b>	<p>The program is developed through the National Agency for Community Programs in Education and Training (ANPCDEFP) under the Ministry of National Education and stipulates actions (Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtving, study visits, preparatory visits) by which encourages youth initiatives in order to give them voice and the opportunity to find their role in society, strengthening public dialogue with decision makers in a variety of projects, volunteering and youth exchange programs.</p> <p><a href="http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm</a></p>
Employment and training	<b>Youth in Action Program</b>	<p>This program is funded by the European Commission and aims to promote active citizenship among young people, develop feelings of solidarity and tolerance, supporting mutual understanding between young people in different countries, the promotion of European cooperation and contribution to improving the quality of support systems for youth activities.</p> <p><a href="http://www.tinact.ro/ce-este-tia">http://www.tinact.ro/ce-este-tia</a></p>

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# **Chapter 15: Youth Poverty, Youth Inequality, and Youth Policy in Austria. Experts' Perception of Youth Poverty and Inequality – Active Labour Market Policies and Youth Work – Opportunities of Participation – Social Innovation**

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## **1. Abstract**

Focused on the period after the 2008/09 crises, this qualitative study on the situation of disadvantaged youth in Austria is based on document analyses and 19 semi-structured expert interviews. It shows that from an international perspective Austria seems to be quite good in offering youth adequate pathways into VET and employment. However, deeper analyses show that the Austrian school system continues to be the main mediator of inequalities. Growing problems with the apprenticeship system led to the implementation of a so called “training guarantee” which offers every school leaver an apprenticeship place in a publicly financed VET institution. Furthermore the study reveals that the concept of NEET is becoming more central in both policy making and research as the available structure do not reach every young person. A reported increase in mental ailments and the situation of young women in a NEET situation deem of interest for further investigation.

## **2. Introduction**

Youth as a concept unifies diverse social positions, effectively hiding differing sets of resources between people of the same age cohort. At the same time it is precisely at the point of transition into adult or working life that inequalities amongst young people in the same age cohort become distinctive and virulent: social circles become ever more closed, leaving young people who are being disadvantaged with even fewer options to choose from (Sting, 2011: 40). This connection can well be understood within the multi-faceted framework of Sen's capability approach (cf. Bonvin, 2013: 4):

- (1) Sen (1990) pointed out the importance of the informational basis for the understanding of inequality and justice. The so-called “informational basis of Judgement of Justice” (IBJJ), i.e. the available knowledge on poverty, inequality or disadvantage (including date, concepts) form the understanding of the phenomena and so predetermine possible interventions. The analysis of the definition of disadvantage and the descriptions of inequalities is based on this idea (cf. sec. 4).
- (2) Focussing on capabilities (instead of commodities/goods) opens the discussion on poverty and inequality towards formal and informal education, which is especially useful for the analysis of the situation of the youth. The education and career decisions they take have far reaching consequences for their lives. In this regard it is important to

question whether young people have the freedom to make “choices they value” or if they are forced to accept the limited offers of the market of apprenticeship posts (cf. sec. 5.1.2. ff.).

- (3) Moreover, the capability approach emphasises the importance of public institutions for individuals’ capabilities (Sen, 1999). This opens the door for considering the impact of youth policies and policy making for every young person’s opportunities (cf. sec. 5 and 6).
- (4) Finally, Sen discusses the importance of democracy, participation and codetermination (e.g. Sen, 1999), which leads us to the question of participation of young people in both, the programmes they take part (see sec. 5.2) and participation in society (cf. sec. 6.2).

Referring to these aspects of Sen’s capability approach, this chapter analyses the understanding of youth poverty and inequality as well as youth policy in Austria. The chapter is structured as follows: After describing the method in section 3, in section 4 we analyse the definition and usage of the terms disadvantage, poverty, inequalities when taken to describe the situation of young people. Section 5 discusses youth policies and interventions concerning disadvantaged young people. The high amount of measures does not increase the opportunities, but rather works in a paternalistic way, by constructing a dispositive (Foucault) around these young people and highly predetermining their individual decisions. Section 6 describes the political procedures concerning youth in Austria and the participation of (disadvantaged) young people in these procedures. The ways in which young people can participate in decisions on their lives are often seen as “learning for democracy” and organised in an “as-if” manner, which serves as a fig leaf. Section 6 deals with the concept of social innovation, which, however, is rarely used in Austria.

### **3. Data and methods**

The data we used for this study stems from expert interviews and documentary analysis on youth policies and programmes and was collected between September 2013 and February 2014.

*Document analysis:* The documents used for this study have been identified by a literature search using google, google scholar, bibliographies, springer link, jstor and websites from youth policy institutions. They cover official reports of ministries and administrative institutions, evaluation reports as well as descriptions of measures and programmes, issued by stakeholders of the field of youth policy.

*Analysis of interviews:* Interview partners were selected on three levels: practitioners, mid-level, and governing body level (national and regional) taking into account the following three criteria of sampling: a) involvement in or responsibility for youth policy, b) particular expertise on groups of youth identified in the literature review, c) mixing practitioners, mid-level governing bodies and service providers, and policy makers.

**Table 1: Interviews**

<b>National government policy makers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Regional government policy makers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Training and education providers</b>	<b>2 public 1 th. sec.</b>
<b>Employment support service providers</b>	<b>2 public</b>
<b>Citizen's bodies (e.g. youth parliaments/councils)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Youth work organisations</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Think tanks (governmental and non-governmental)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Networks and membership organisations (sector bodies/agencies, campaigns, lobbying, networking, project work, awareness raising)</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>sum</b>	<b>19</b>

In detail, the sample includes two civil servants of National Ministries, a deputy to Vienna's Parliament, a leader of the youth department of a federal province, representatives of the social partners (Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Labour), a board member of the National youth council, a manager of a youth department of the PES as well as programme managers and practitioners working in non-profit associations.

Two team members conducted all 19 interviews together (except of one), which took about 1.5 to 2.5 hours each. Two interviews were conducted with two interviewees. All 21 respondents agreed to audio recording. They were informed that the interviews will be anonymised and that they will not be identified in any analysis or report. An interview guideline ensured that all main topics were discussed, but the interviewed experts could place their own topics. All interviews were entirely transcribed.

With regard to interview data, we conducted a qualitative content analysis following Mayring (2007). The combination of the analysis of documents and of expert interviews allows describing the way experts understand disadvantage, poverty, and inequality of young people (section 4) and therefore the informational basis of judgements of justice (IBJJ) of Austrian politics.

Regarding questions on policies (instrument/measures) and policy making/implementation (section 5 to 7), we applied the policy analysis approach. It serves for analysing the "assortment" of measures and programmes as well as for answering the question of who is making policy and how measures are implemented.

## **4. National definitions**

### **4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth**

Youth as a concept unifies diverse social positions, effectively hiding differing sets of resources between people of the same age cohort. At the same time it is precisely at the point of transition into adult or working life that inequality amongst young people in the same age cohort become fervent: social networks become ever more closed, leaving young people who are being disadvantaged with even fewer options to choose from (Sting, 2011:

40). Jean-Michel Bonvin suggests that within the framework of a capability approach opportunities, capabilities and outcomes should serve as analytic terms in investigating income, education, employment as well as participation (Bonvin, 2013: 4).

#### **4.1.1 Exclusion in school and the life course of young people in Austria**

The Austrian education system is generally assessed as not sufficiently effective in accounting for existing social differences, (Knapp and Laueremann, 2012: 12), or as reproducing said differences and thereby legitimizing them. Bacher et al. (2013a) found that it is only via the school system that what may be considered disadvantage becomes a risk factor for youth to end up in a NEET situation. Increasing individualization and competition for educational attainment prolongs the time spent in education and training which in turns prolongs economic dependency (Knapp and Laueremann, 2012: 13)

As indicated above, it is within the school system that inequality is reproduced. There are four divisional points within the Austrian education system (highly selective early on), which work to the exclusion of youth who are being disadvantaged:

- (1) Whether students attend general elementary school (Volksschule) or special needs School (Sonderschule)
- (2) Which secondary school they attend at the age of 10: Academic secondary school (Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule (AHS)), lower secondary school (Hauptschule), or new secondary school (Neue Mittelschule)
- (3) Continuation of / entrance into upper secondary school after nine years of compulsory schooling.
- (4) Pursuit of further education or VET at the end of compulsory school attendance (Vogtenhuber, S. et al., 2012: 62).

In the following section we will analyse the structure of social inequality reproduced in and through the different levels of the Austrian education system.

Educational attainment and background are closely linked in Austria: children are at risk, whose parents are first generation immigrants, are affected by poverty or are of low educational attainment (Vogtenhuber et al., 2012c: 22). These factors work cumulatively (ibid.: 24). There is little social mobility from one generation to the next (Vogtenhuber et al., 2012: 125).

In part, this is due to the traditional approach to differing levels of academic ability being traditionally tackled by selective segregation and homogenization by form regarding lower secondary education, and segregation by ability within forms, whereas current policy calls for addressing different levels of ability individually (Vogtenhuber et al., 2012a: 78). Bacher et al. (2013), in following Herzog-Punzenberger (2009, 2012), list the following reasons for the apparent lack in fostering children with a migrant background:

- parents' low educational attainment makes it difficult to support children in a school system which,
- being only half day and lacking individual support, relies on parents to supervise their

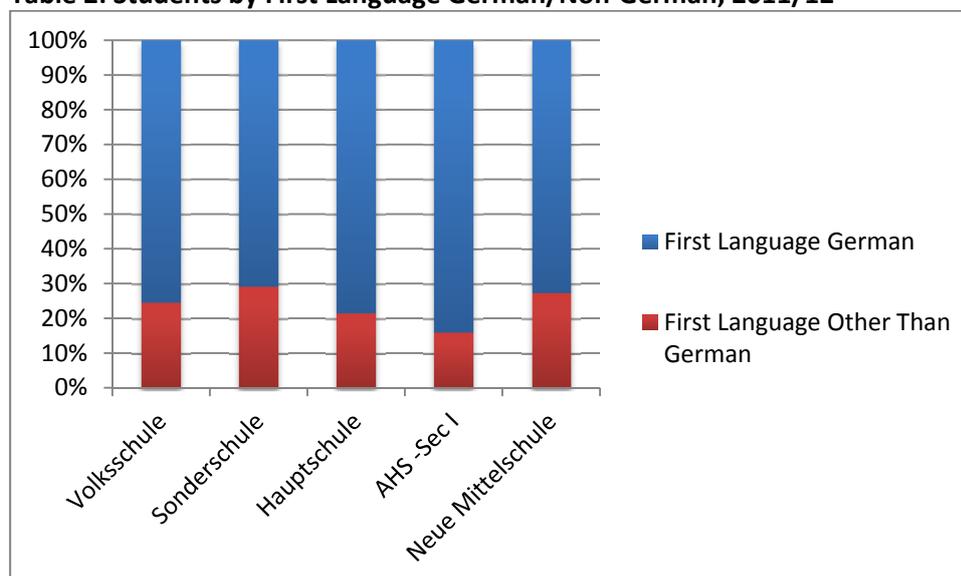
children's homework.

- Also, the early divisional points enforce the disadvantage of migrant parents with low educational attainment.
- Further elements comprise high numbers of first and second-generation children being put into the same classroom, and the lack of an acknowledgement of multilingualism as a resource.
- And finally, the institutional discrimination of students with a migrant background in assigning a disproportionate number of them to special schools (Sonderschule) (Bacher, 2013: 114).

### Elementary School or special needs school

The Austrian educational system reproduces and deepens social inequalities. Thus, students with a migrant background are overrepresented in special needs schools (Sonderschule). Children whose first language is not German make up 19% of the general student population in Austria. They are more likely to attend special needs school: they make up 29% in special schools versus 25% in general elementary schools. Attendance in a special needs school is either granted by parental request or determined by a commission within the first two years of school attendance in elementary school. In practice, however, it is often the children's teachers who will suggest to, or even convince the children's parents to request special needs education, as several of our interview partners report.

**Table 2: Students by First Language German/Non-German, 2011/12**



Source: Statistics Austria, our Graph.

### Lower Secondary level

There are two forms of lower secondary school in Austria: Lower secondary school (Hauptschule) or the first part of the academic secondary school, that is, preparatory schools which may be attended for both lower and upper secondary level. In order to attend the academic secondary school (AHS), which often serves as a gateway to tertiary education, children need to have high marks in German and math upon graduating from elementary

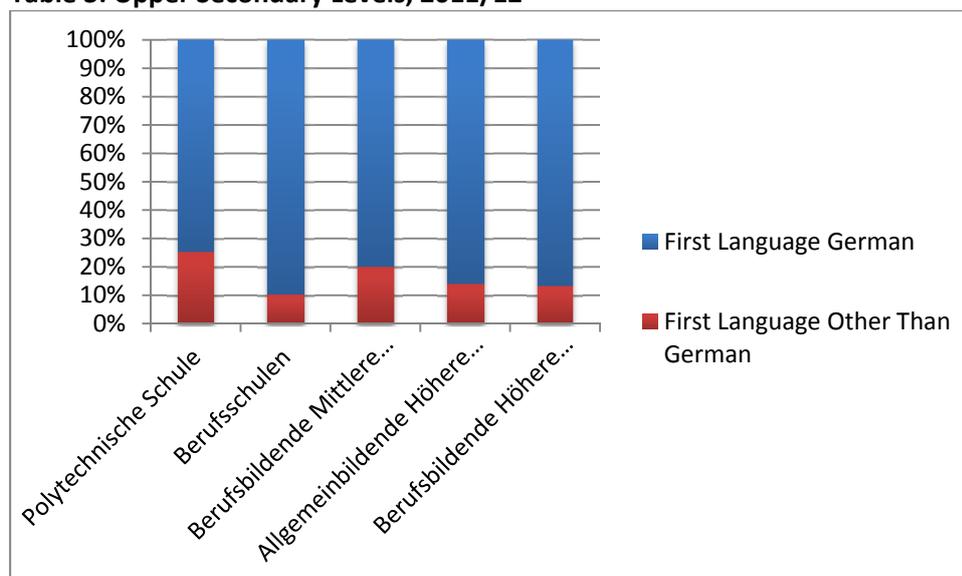
school. If not, they need to pass an entrance exam. Vogtenhuber et al. (2012b) report that in 2010, children whose first language is not German made up 20% of students in the lower secondary level, but they made up only 16% of AHS-students; 21% in lower secondary school and 28% of new secondary school. In special needs schools they made up 30% of the student population (2012b: 36).

Furthermore, children in larger cities are more likely to attend an academic secondary school (AHS). Girls are more likely to attend an AHS as well. (Vogtenhuber et al., 2012a: 64). Regarding one's parents' educational attainment, attendance rates in different forms of upper secondary schools differ a great deal: Half of the students attending the AHS have at least one parent holding a tertiary degree; another fifth has a parent with an upper secondary level graduation exam (Matura). Only 30% of parents whose children attend the lower secondary school or the new secondary school hold a Matura or tertiary degree. Students whose parents have graduated from VET or not at all only make up 31% of lower secondary of the academic secondary school. Only 8% of children whose parents only have minimum schooling attend academic secondary school (Vogtenhuber et al., 2012b: 70).

### Upper Secondary level

Many youth whose first language is not German leave school after the end of compulsory education (after nine years of schooling at the age of 15); they only make up 13% (14% in 2011) of the student population on the upper secondary level. In upper secondary AHS, 76% of 15 to 16 year olds have at least one parent holding the Matura, and 50% in BHS (upper-level secondary colleges), whereas 25% to 30% youth in BMS (secondary school medium-level), vocational school or polytechnic schools do (Herzog-Punzenberger, 2012: 70) In 2011, 59% of pupils in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, which for many youth marks the last year of compulsory schooling as nine year attendance is compulsory, were either in an AHS or BHS. 19% were attending a BMS, 19% in polytechnic school (preparatory trade school) and 2% in special school. (Herzog-Punzenberger, 2012: 63).

**Table 3: Upper Secondary Levels, 2011/12**



Source: Statistics Austria, our Graph.

## 4.2. Modes of disadvantage

Chiappero-Martinetti and Spreafico (2013) have pointed out that interpersonal as well as intergroup differences („diversity“) need to be accounted for in order to complete the shift from a one-dimensional approach on disadvantage: „Indeed, given one’s resources, diverse personal, socio-economic and even environmental conditions can affect differently the extent and type of real opportunities people have“ (ibid.: 15).

In applying this in a pragmatic approach to data analysis, it is to be kept in mind that different group membership pertaining to an individual actor might play out very differently over the life-course of said actor. „In both cases, it is not a single factor or a set of separate factors that determine individual (dis)advantage, but the combination and interrelation between personal characteristics and a plurality of contextual factors that affect individuals’ positions and may determine individual differences in terms of opportunities or capabilities“ (ibid.: 28).

We will present groups of youth who are being disadvantaged based on existing literature as well as on our experts’ notions (IBJJs) of who is a youth being disadvantaged: these comprise groups sharing certain attributes, or, as Chiappero-Martinetti and Spreafico put it, „sources of equality (2013: 16), such as gender, first language, citizenship or economic status, as well as groups defined by commonly used indicators such as NEETs or Early School Leavers, and use the relative age span based on the data available, which is relative to the definition of the indicator.

### 4.2.1 Early school leavers

Steiner (2005: 22) defined two main indicators for disadvantaged youth in Austria: Early School Leavers and the unemployed. In the most recent national report on education, the EU definition of Early school leavers is expanded to also include youth who

- a) graduate from lower secondary school (Hauptschule),
- b) graduate from polytechnic school (Polytechnische Schule),
- c) graduate from the one year form of a secondary technical and vocational school medium level (Berufsbildende Mittlere Schule),
- d) or leave school on secondary level without graduating (the latter being the EU-indicator) (Vogtenhuber et al., 2012: 116).

In 2008/09, 7.2% of 14-year old students attended neither further schooling nor VET-training, 6.6% of girls vs. 7.8% of boys (ibid.: 117). Most early school leavers were attending lower secondary school (36%) or polytechnic school (38%); 8% were in special school or secondary technical and vocational school medium level (BMS), only 4% were attending an academic secondary school (Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule) or upper-level secondary school (Berufsbildende Höhere Schule). About a third has another first language than German (ibid.: 116).

#### 4.2.2. NEET

More recent research has been focused on the NEETs indicator, as do Bacher et al. (2013). As recent policy has focused strongly on NEETs, we present these groups in depth: Bacher et al. (2013) have found that from 2006 to 2011, 8.6% of 16 to 24 year olds, that is, 78,000 youth could be classified as in a NEET situation, of whom 9.2% were in waiting position (that is, waiting to start further education or to start a job already secured), 46.9% actively seeking employment, 22.4% wanting to work, but not actively seeking employment, 21.5% neither seeking employment nor wanting to work, mostly because they're caregivers – 53.7% of this subgroup live with one or several children under the age of three; 64.5% are caregivers, frequently young women with a migrant background<sup>227</sup> (Bacher et al., 2013: 120)

Bacher et al. (2013) identified young men suffering from undefined mental ailments as one of larger groups in the group of disadvantaged in a NEET situation. Several interview partners on different levels report a rise in mental ailments, as did this practitioner, unpromptedly:

*“What we’re noticing particularly strongly is the increase of youths and young adults who have psychological problems, partly with massive handicaps in that direction. With or without a diagnosis, which hardly makes any difference. [On being asked which kind of psychological problems:] That is entirely, really, the whole range from anxiety disorders to lacking, to problems with aggression, quote unquote, that is, auto-aggressive behaviour or aggressive behaviour towards a third party. Naturally, the whole circle of forms: borderline, depression, the whole palette.” (int. 17)*

#### 4.2.3 Poverty / social exclusion

Poverty and social exclusion appear as marginal topics in public discourse on Austrian youth, even though 13% of youth between the age of 15 and 17 are at risk of poverty, 5% of whom are materially deprived (EU-SILC, 2012). While young adults between the age of 18 and 29 are often the focus of labour market research, poverty in this age group is seldom studied, as Laimer and Oismüller note, even though adults in transitioning phases have been identified as running a particularly high risk of poverty (2011: 168). In their secondary analysis of EU-SILC 2004 and 2009, this age group are in risk of poverty, as predicted. (180).

### 4.3 Labour market position of young people and problems at labour market entry

#### 4.3.1 Entry into the labour market and VET training, integrative VET

Being disadvantaged in the context of the labour market can be defined either as young people being unemployed, and thus being disadvantaged, or as being disadvantaged, and thus being unemployed. The focus of the former is on a structural mismatch between the

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<sup>227</sup> If the NEET status is defined as lasting for at least two quarters however, the rate is reduced to 4.1% (37,000). If defined as lasting for at least 3 quarters, 2.6% (24,000). 1.4% (12,000) are in a NEET situation for min. 5 quarters.

labour and training market and a high youth unemployment rate, which is attempted to be met by mostly individualised measures. The latter puts the focus on potential individual shortcomings, which are attempted to be met by highly structured transition regimes which often go along with a low unemployment rate (Steiner, 2005: 7).

Considering the number of 53,000 Early School Leavers (7.6%) between 18 and 24 (Statistik Austria, 2013a, cf. Stadler and Wiedenhofer-Galik, 2012: 967), 78,000 NEETs (8.6%) in the age group of 16 to 24 (Bacher et al., 2013), and 175,669 (8.7%) unemployed young people between 15 and 24 in 2012 (AMS, 2013: 22), the design of the transition from school to vocational training and work has garnered increased attention during the last years. Most interventions focus on leavers of secondary school (age 14 or 15) and unemployed young people (up to 24), and aim to accelerate the entrance into the labour market. Many programmes try to push school leavers of secondary schools – which have not been successful in school, have had difficulties with the language, or the school system – to enter into an apprenticeship. A successfully completed apprenticeship is still believed to be a guarantee for a job and an adequate income, although the payment during the apprenticeship is comparably low and the long-term opportunities of leavers of continuing upper schools or high schools are much better (cf. Alteneider et al. 2006). An interviewed expert of a municipal labour support organisation, believing that a permanent fulltime job is rather utopian, emphasised, that

*“it makes a difference if you kick out a youngster of 15 and tell him: ‘Apply for a job’ and at the same time: ‘But really, nobody will need you’ – or if you say the same thing to a youngster of 18 with a certain educational foundation and a little bit more stable personality. A boy of 15 or 16 probably just gets the feeling that ‘nobody needs me’. That makes a difference.”* (int. 15)

At the End of 2012, 125,000 youngsters were about to do an apprenticeship in one of 33,700 companies (BMSAK, 2013a: 31). About 40% of an age group choose this kind of vocational training (WKO, 2014: 3).

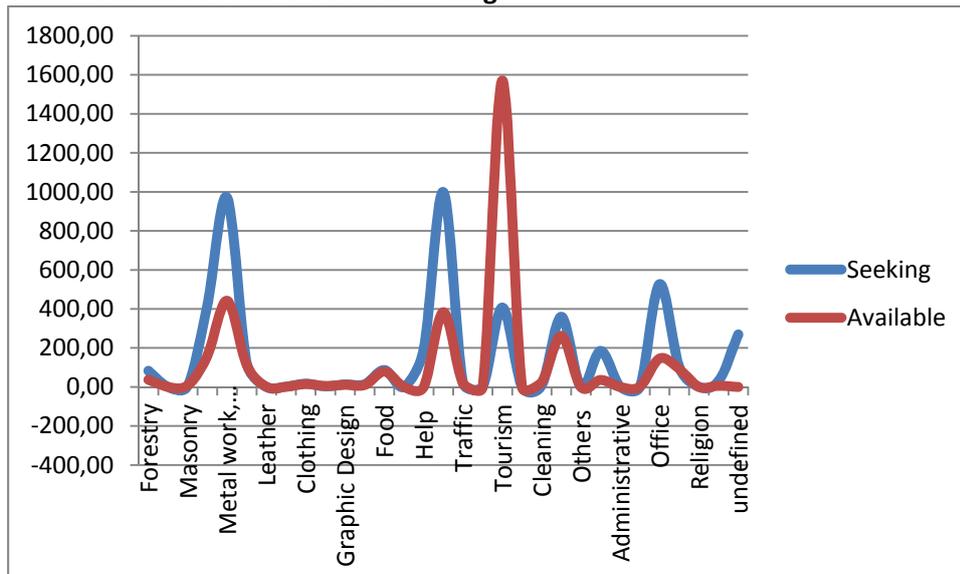
VET is most strongly segregated by gender, but is also very exclusive towards youth with a migrant background: only 8.7% of students in vocational schools for apprentices (Berufsschule) are multilingual, that is, have a migrant background without German as a first language (Herzog-Punzenberger, 2012: 247).

In 2013, 5,727 youth were looking for a VET post, while 3,420 such post were advertised. Furthermore, there is a mismatch between the posts advertised and what young people are actually looking for (Baliweb). In 2011, 11,942 attended public VET, 9,832 of whom in one of two general tracks (ÜBA 1 and ÜBA 2, see below) and 2,018 were attending special needs public VET (Trinko, 2012: 3).<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> See also 5.1.3 and 5.1.4.

**Table 5: Available VET vs. Youth seeking**



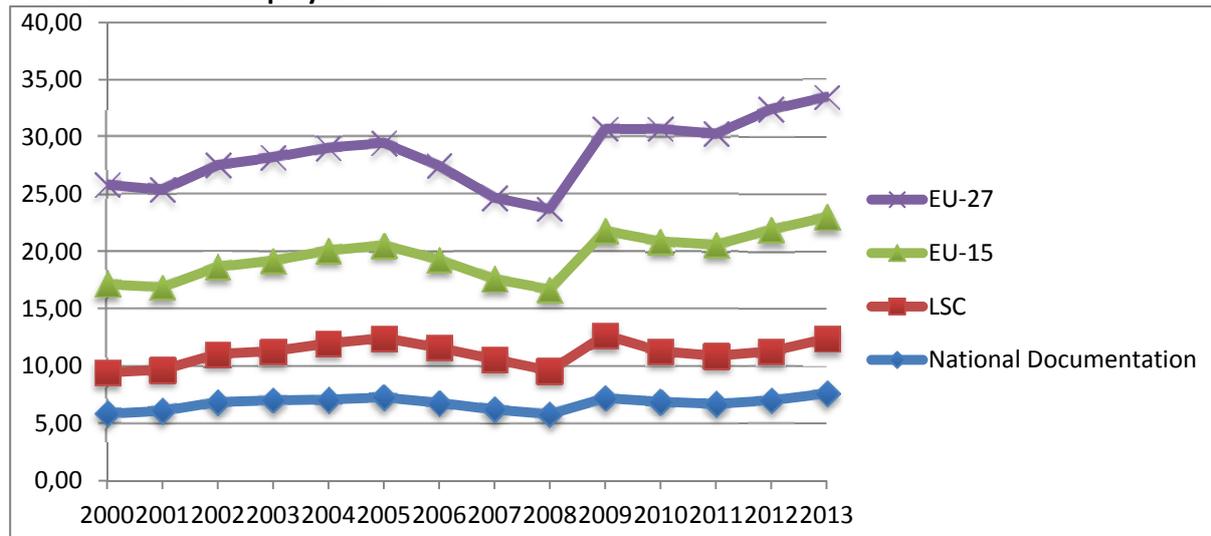
Source: Baliweb, our Graph

The largest mismatch which should work to the advantage of VET post seeking youth, was recorded in tourism: 1,571 posts were advertised whilst only 407 individuals were looking for a post in tourism. Vice versa, there were 383 posts available in trade, but 999 youth looking for an apprenticeship in this profession. In 2013, 26,539 youth between the age of 15 and 24 attended some sort of active labour market policy programme.

#### 4.3.2 Youth unemployment

The unemployment rate in Austria is low when compared to other European countries. So is the level of qualification of young for example regarding the rate of how few may be classified as early school leavers. The position of people without high attainment in education in the labour market is generally declining. Consequently youth who have only attained compulsory occupation face more difficulties in transitioning from education to the first labour market (Bacher et al., 2013, see also Hirschbichler and Knittler, 2010), but neither the school system nor social security have been adapted to these longer transition phases.

**Table 4: Youth Unemployment**



Source: Baliweb, our Graph

There was a slight, but insignificant increase of youth seeking employment between 2006 and 2011; there is however, an increase of NEET youth in 2009, which was reduced by 2011 (Bacher, 2013: 78). In 2011, unemployment was particularly high for 15-24 year old early school leavers, at 8.3%; 12.1% of 15-24 year olds who only have basic education were unemployed (Statistik Austria, 2013c).

In 2013, 5.7% of 15 to 19 year olds (9,597) and 11.8% of 20 to 24 (34,516) year olds were registered as unemployed, the average over both age cohorts being 9.9%. This is low by international comparison, which reveals a strong commitment of the Austrian VET-regime and relevant actors (government, social partners, regional und municipal councils etc.) assure that school leavers are offered a VET place. However if the unemployment rate for people of 20 to 24 is taken into account it becomes clear that there are also significant problems for young people in the Austrian labour market. The unemployment rate of this age cohort is high compared to the rate of the general unemployment rate, which was at 7.6% in 2013. The number of unemployed of this age group has considerably increased in the crisis. They belong to the most affected groups. The EUROSTAT unemployment rate for the 15 to 24 year olds was 8.6%.

## 5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention

### 5.1 The main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty

The instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty mainly refer to three fields. Firstly, there is a broad range of financial subsidies for families with children. Secondly, there are measures to improve the fairness of the Austrian school system, which is known to produce immense inequalities in opportunities and competences. These programmes intend to inform and advise young people, and guide them into further education or offer vocational training to them. Finally, youth work is, at least by professionals, considered as a service that helps disadvantaged young people to improve their abilities and soft skills and thus their long-term opportunities.

### 5.1.1 Financial support for families

Austria has a generous system of family-oriented financial support. Families receive *child benefits* for each child up to 18 years, or up to 24 years if the child attends a school, higher education, or is in vocational training. The benefits consists of a combination of a family allowance (Familienbeihilfe) and a so-called "child tax credit" (Kinderabsetzbetrag), which are paid out together and in total ranges from € 163 to € 210 per child and month, according to age and number of children in the family. There is extra support for handicapped children, an amount of € 138 per month. For students there is extra support that is, € 100 at the beginning of each school year. These benefits are usually given to the female parent; they are not income related or means tested, which limits their (re)distributional impact. The Austrian state spends about € 4.4 billion on a total of 1.7 million children. In addition, there are tax credits for single parents (Alleinerzieherabsetzbetrag), sole earners (Alleinverdienerabsetzbetrag), payers of child support (Unterhaltsabsetzbetrag), and child care (Kinderbetreuungsabsetzbetrag) as well as a child tax allowance (Kinderfreibetrag), all of which reduce the tax level.

Families without any or with low income also benefit from the means-tested minimum income scheme (bedarfsorientierte Mindestsicherung). In 2013, this benefit guaranteed a monthly amount of at least € 794 per adult, of € 1,220 for two adults and of € 146 per child up to three children, with € 122 per child for each additional kid. However, all these amounts are below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold according to the EU definition (Statistik Austria, 2013b: 10). Statistical records on the number of adolescents who receive such benefits are not available. The fact that more than 21,700 single parents and 63,300 couples with one or more children received such payments in 2012 (Statistik Austria, 2013: 33) shows the importance of this benefit for the youths. However, minors themselves do not have any entitlements in most federal provinces, as is criticized by the "Poverty Conference – Network against Poverty and Social Exclusion" (Armutskonferenz, 2012; cf. BMASK, 2012: 82).

### 5.1.2 School world interventions

While formal education is still considered a means of social advancement, the Austrian School System has turned out – as shown above – to be highly selective. Among other things, this results from early school tracking, and from selection instead of support for weak students (int. 1, 5, 8). Some changes have been made during the past few years to render the system more just. Among these improvements are:

- (1) Teachers of the first grade in elementary school, in cooperation with the child and the parents, have to develop an individual support plan for students who have on-going learning difficulties in order to support them in this early stage and to avoid on-going school problems (Eder and Thonhauser, 2010: 559).
- (2) In 2008 class sizes were lowered to 25 students (ibid.).
- (3) As an attempt to move towards a comprehensive school for all students up to the age of 14 a new type of school called "New Middle School" (neue Mittelschule) was introduced. This was to tackle the growing problems of the so-called Hauptschule (one of three forms of

lower secondary education), which has become a so called “school for the rest” (“Restschule”) – at least in urban areas; this notion refers to the fact that, in urban areas, where the majority of children attend an Academic Secondary School (highest level of education), all children with learning difficulties, family problems, migrant backgrounds etc. are placed in these schools. The new middle school often includes after-school programmes. (4) Up until now the school system is focused on ‘fast knowledge transfer’ in the mornings, relocating studying and doing homework to the afternoons at home, counting on the abilities of parents to help with the homework. As it has become apparent that children might be disadvantaged if their parents are not up-to-date on the specific educational content, or if they simply do not have the time to support their children with their homework (Cf. AK, 2013a), afternoon childcare is being expanded. In 2013, 119,000 out of about 1 million students attended school facilities in the afternoon (Die Presse, 2013); and 23% of all families with children use some kind of afternoon care (AK, 2013a). However, afternoon care is most widely available in academic secondary schools (Bacher, 2013), and thus does not help the disadvantaged youngsters. Some non-profit organisations help youngsters cope with the school requirements for free. One integrative programme (‘Mama lernt Deutsch’ - ‘Mum is learning German’), for instance, includes the parents by teaching German to them as well.

Nevertheless, until now all these efforts have not changed the selective mechanisms of the school system significantly, which is due to a political stalemate at the federal level. The education system is only changeable through a change of the Austrian constitution for which a two-thirds majority is necessary. Some leaders of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) are strictly against the implementation of comprehensive schools (Gesamtschulen) (Kriechhammer, 2012) and even discussed to transform the academic secondary school in an even more elitist school (Burgstaller and Pumberger, 2013; Pumberger, 2013). Interestingly enough, while some interviewees mentioned that the NEETs-quota of Austria is below the Europe-2020-goal of 10 per cent, there seems to be no discussion at all on another educational goal: The EU-strategy urges as well that 40% of a cohort should have a tertiary degree (Commission, 2010). In 2010 the quota of the age group 25 to 34 was only 19% in Austria (Statistik Austria, 2013c: 89). Interventions towards this EU-goal would influence the whole structure of inequality.

With regard to inclusive learning, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons is not fully implemented. Besides inclusive classes, there are still “special educational needs schools” (Sonderschulen) for physically or mentally handicapped children, for weak students or for so-called “problem children”. Whereas this type of school is meant to address the special needs of these children, it seems that it is still used to park “difficult students”, students with migrant background or with difficulties with the German language (cf. sec. 4): Only 1.7% of all German-speaking students are in a special school, but 2.6% of the students with another colloquial language (Statistik Austria, 2013c: 27). Furthermore 64.1% of special school students are boys (ibid.: 25). Some of the interviewed experts criticized these “removal proceedings” for multiple reasons: During the decision-making process the parents of the students are neither sufficiently informed on the meaning of the procedures or the consequences, nor effectually involved in the procedures (int. 11). In spite of the intended special promotion this type of school “makes students with handicaps out of disadvantaged students” (Luciak, 2009: 369): The attendance in special educational needs

schools is stigmatised and later leads to difficulties when looking for an apprenticeship position or a job (int. 11, 13), and there is usually no way back into the regular school system.

### 5.1.3 Transition from school to vocational training and work

Considering the number of 53,000 Early School Leavers (7.6%) between 18 and 24 (Statistik Austria, 2013a, cf. Stadler and Wiedenhofer-Galik, 2012: 967), 78,000 NEETs (8.6%) in the age group of 16 to 24 (Bacher et al., 2013), and 175,669 (8.7%) unemployed young people between 15 and 24 in 2012 (AMS, 2013: 22), the design of the transition from school to vocational training and work has garnered increased attention during the last years. Most interventions focus on leavers of secondary school (age 14 or 15) and unemployed young people (up to 24), and aim to accelerate the entrance into the labour market. Many programmes try to push school leavers of secondary schools – which have not been successful in school, have had difficulties with the language, or the school system – to enter into an apprenticeship. A successfully completed apprenticeship is still believed to be a guarantee for a job and an adequate income, although the payment during the apprenticeship is comparably low and the long-term opportunities of leavers of continuing upper schools or high schools are much better (cf. Altenecker et al. 2006). An interviewed expert of a municipal labour support organisation, believing that a permanent fulltime job is rather utopian, emphasised, that

*“it makes a difference if you kick out a youngster of 15 and tell him: ‘Apply for a job’ and at the same time: ‘But really, nobody will need you’ – or if you say the same thing to a youngster of 18 with a certain educational foundation and a little bit more stable personality. A boy of 15 or 16 probably just gets the feeling that ‘nobody needs me’. That makes a difference.”* (int. 15)

At the End of 2012, 125,000 youngsters were about to do an apprenticeship in one of 33,700 companies (BMSAK, 2013a: 31). About 40% of an age group choose this kind of vocational training (WKO, 2014: 3).

Considering the outlined problems young people leaving school after nine years of compulsory schooling are confronted with, the design of the transition from school to vocational training and work has garnered increased attention during the last years. Thus, a range of activities and programmes have been developed mainly by the PES, the social partners, the government and local and regional councils.

*Job information.* The job information centres of the Austrian Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice, abbr.: PES) offer written information, lectures, and guidance for occupational orientation. This service works in a very formal way and is not always well received, so a new service named “Youth Coaching” (Jugendcoaching) was established throughout Austria in 2013. During their last school year (at age 14 or 15), teachers select students who they think have not yet grappled the subject of vocational training or a job, and would need support. The youth coaches then can use the contacts of this outreach approach to get in touch with them. According to the needs of the young people these coaches offer simple information or an encompassing, continuous support. This service is

mainly offered by NGOs. An estimated 35,000 students were coached in 2013 (BMSAK, 2013: 31). This programme was initially developed for the support of disabled youngsters, and was expanded to all schools and students in the hopes of lowering the number of early school leavers (int. 13).

Another kind of advisory programme tries to influence making of career decisions of girls with a focus on better-paid occupations. Young girls are offered to participate in workshops on technical or craft subjects.

*Production school.* For young people who do not want to enter in an apprenticeship or who are considered not to be ready for this step, “production schools” are offered. Despite the term “school” this institution is not a regular school, but a programme for unemployed young people, which is financed by the PES (with the participation of each Federal province in Austria). Production schools combine practical manual work, vocational guidance, social-pedagogical support, internships and answers to a backlog of fundamental knowledge. The courses last up to one year. Some young people with difficult school experiences come along better with this practical, occupation-related approach (Bergmann and Schelepa, 2011; AMS, 2013: 22).

A pilot project in Vienna called “Spacelab” combines a low-threshold programme where young people can work on a daily basis with a formal production school. So youngsters can have an initial motivating work experience in the low-threshold programme and then enter in the production school, which could lead to a regular apprenticeship in the end.

#### **5.1.4 Integration into the “Dual Apprenticeship System”**

As mentioned before, in Austria the completion of an apprenticeship is considered a guaranteed path to a stable living situation above the poverty threshold, especially for disadvantaged young people. This approach is taken from statistics, which show that the odds of being unemployed are much lower after an apprenticeship. In 2012 the unemployment risk for economically active/working people with no more than compulsory schooling is 18.7%; the unemployment risk for skilled workers with a completed vocational training is only 6.0% (AMS, 2013: 11; cf. Statistik Austria, 2012). For this many steps are taken to place them in an apprenticeship and to keep them there, even if it seems to be more and more difficult to find a job after an apprenticeship since the beginning of the recent crisis (int. 13, cf. sec. 4). The number of the unemployed aged 19 to 24 increased between 2007 and 2012 by 8 % (from 128.692 to 139.014) (AMS Charts, 2013).

Given the increasing reluctance of companies to offer apprenticeships, public institutions have developed a range of fiscal incentives to increase and stabilise the number of available apprenticeship opportunities. The Chamber of Commerce gives out subsidies for every new apprenticeship and for additional support that companies offer their apprentices. In 2010 € 193 million were distributed (BMSAK, 2014). Furthermore the PES pays out subsidies to companies as an incentive to offer apprenticeships for girls in typical male professions, to young people that are disadvantaged on the labour market, to disabled persons, and to adults over 19 that could not find another job because of lacking qualification. In 2012 the Employment Service spent € 22 million covering 8,000 apprenticeships (AMS, 2013: 22). The

“integrated vocational training” (Integrierte Berufsausbildung) is a modification of the normal apprenticeship for people without a secondary school qualification, with handicaps or for students coming from special needs education schools (Sonderschule). These apprenticeships are either longer, so that the apprentices have more time to learn (verlängerte Lehrausbildung) or they cover only a part of the regular apprenticeship (Teilqualifizierungslehre), and sometimes they take place in special training facilities. About 5,700 people took part in an integrated vocational training by the end of 2012 (Dornmayr and Nowak, 2013: 67).

To tackle the problems of the dual system and the transition from education to the labour market, the so-called “Austrian Vocational training Guarantee” for Young People (Ausbildungsgarantie) was developed in 2008 by the social partners and the government (cf. Haidinger and Atzmüller, 2013). Under the Austrian Vocational training Guarantee for Young People (Ausbildungsgarantie), 11.700 training opportunities are organized at special training centres during the school year 2013/14 (BMSAK, 2013a: 23). There are two options. Either a full apprenticeship is offered as a supra-company vocational training (überbetriebliche Lehrausbildung) with a few internships, or the training takes place in more than one company as an inter-company vocational training (Dornmayr et al., 2012: 28). However during the training the trainees always have the possibility to change to a regular apprenticeship, and one third of trainees use this opportunity (ibid.: 33). Apprentices in these training facilities are paid a remuneration (8 € per day) which is below the payment for a regular apprentice. According to many interview partners it seems that young people do not consider supra-company vocational training a “normal way” to do an apprenticeship; because of that the training is somehow stigmatised (int. 15, 7). Even experts make reservations. An executive of the Chamber of Commerce assumed that they have as many holidays as students, which is not at all the case, as the supra-company vocational training includes according to law the full working hours of a usual apprenticeship:

*“What I have often heard, that, how can I say it, that it is more comfortable there, because I have as many holidays as a student and I do not have to be at the shop floor at 6 or 7 in the morning; half past eight is okay as well. I can understand that.”*  
(int. 6)

The Austria Employment Service spent € 122 million for this programme in 2012 (AMS, 2013: 22); the overall costs were € 613 million (BMSAK, 2013a: 29).

Overall 48.2 % of unemployed youth were integrated in one programme or another. In 2011 more than € 349 million was spent for this group, which is more than a third of the total budget spent for the unemployed, young and old (AMS, 2013: 23). Besides production school and supra-company vocational training there are some more short time training facilities for unemployed young people.

Currently two major modifications are on the way. (1) During the government coalition negotiations it has become clear that the Vocational training Guarantee for Young People will be transformed into a Vocational training Duty (Ausbildungspflicht, Ausbildungsverpflichtung), prescribing that youngster must stay in school or in an apprenticeship up to age of 18. Penalties similar to the impositions of truancy are foreseen

(Bundeskanzleramt, 2013: 10; cf. Neuhold and Rosner, 2014). The Social Democratic Minister of Social Affairs pursues this project, and most interview partners endorse the idea (int. 5, 6, 13). Partly they hope that this “education duty” goes along with an expansion of programmes (int. 5, 13). The dangers that young people might be pushed into low-pay apprenticeships, that they do not have the possibility and the freedom to choose (and to fail) and that they have not the opportunity to experience what it means to be motivated intrinsically is considered fairly insignificant (int. 7).

(2) In a new project a system should be developed that allows collecting certifications for skills acquired in practical work as well as in Employment Service training during periods of unemployment. In the end, these modules should be combined into a certificate on the level of a graduation of an apprenticeship training (int. 15, 13).

At first sight the “dual apprenticeships system” seems to be an easy way to enter the working life; for this reason, other countries in Europe consider adapting it. However, not taking into account the problem of transferring this system in other countries, there are enough problems related to this kind of vocational education in Austria.

- (1) Despite of the huge amounts paid to apprenticing companies (and administrations) there are less and less enterprises offering places. The situation on the market of apprenticeships even worsened at the beginning of the crisis in 2008. Since then, over 12,500 of 128,233 apprentice opportunities were lost.
- (2) Often the offered places do not meet the interests of the young people. A recent study shows that half of the apprentices could not find the place in their preferred field (AK, 2013).
- (3) Moreover, apprentices often are not taken over at the end of their training and have then difficulties to find a job. This means that unemployment might only be postponed instead of being removed. Actually, whereas the unemployment of youngsters between 15 and 19 was 4.7% in 2012, the rate of the age group 20 to 24 is 9.0%.
- (4) In 2012 about 16% of the apprenticeships were discontinued (Dornmayr and Nowak, 2013: 49ff.), partly because of problems with colleagues or the company, or because the apprentices dislike the employment or want to change the occupation / vocation (ibid.; cf. Oehme, Beran and Krisch, 2007: 106).
- (5) Furthermore, about 18% of the apprentices do not pass the final examination at the end of the apprenticeship (Dornmayr and Nowak, 2013: 69ff.); sometimes apprentices are not trained in their vocation, but misused as “cheap workers”; then they get the impression that they have not learned enough, and avoid the examination in fear of disgrace, as a interviewee explained (int. 7).

All in all, the dual apprenticeship system leads to the expectation that youngsters at the age of 15 or 16 enter working life and make far-reaching decisions on their occupational life of which they cannot garner the consequences. A “juvenile moratorium” or stage of orientation is not foreseen; whereas students of the academic secondary school do not have to make similar decisions. Youngsters who are not well orientated or cannot stay in school because of bad marks or because their parents expect them to earn money must enter an apprenticeship immediately or are referred to youth coaching, training programmes, application trainings and supra-company vocational training before long. The expectation of

the early entrance in the work life goes along with an “institutionalisation of problems” and the creation of “problematic youngsters”. Within this stigmatising system, organised by the PES and the social partners, the youngsters always have to repeat the “story of their deficiencies and their failure” and learn to become an object of advisors (cf. int. 16).

### 5.1.5 Youth work

In Austria youth work is divided into several areas: there is the youth work of the official youth associations (e.g. sports club, musical societies, boy scouts, fire department youth). This is the largest sector, but usually they are used more by middle-class than by disadvantaged youngsters. Open youth work services are open to everybody, but mostly used by disadvantaged youngsters. Furthermore, there is school social work, short time participatory youth projects and youth information (cf. BMWFJ, 2013; Liebentritt, 2013: 842).

Open youth work attracts disadvantaged youngsters as it offers spaces to meet friends and open-minded adults you can talk to in an easy-going atmosphere and without compulsion to buy. The open youth work offers leisure activities like sports and games in youth centres and, especially in Vienna, in parks. As girls often are underrepresented in the activities offered daily, there are some activities especially designed for them (BOJA, 2011). 400 associations in Austria offer these services. In Vienna alone, about 1000 employees work in this field (Krisch and Wehsely, 2013). The services are not oriented towards formal education or employability but focused on development of every-day competencies and skills, flourishing by offering new experiences, and emancipation (Oehme, Beran and Krisch, 2007).

Sometimes conflicts arise when youth workers are asked to give up their ambitious aims for a “more realistic” orientation towards work and employability. This has to do with the realisation that a standard biography is utopic for a lot of these young people (int. 13, 20). All in all, the approach of the youth workers seems very close to Sen’s approach of capabilities that enlarge the scope of action in a broader sense, not just focused on the labour market. Some other theories play an important role in the open youth work: “Social space theory” (“Sozialraumorientierung”) emphasises the importance of the local community (Krisch, 2009; Deinet and Krisch, 2013; Spatscheck, 2012; Oehme, Beran and Krisch, 2007). Often the community offers resources to solve some problems of the youths, e. g. if voluntary support for school work can be found, or possibilities to work and so on.

The orientation towards the “social space” shows another feature of the youth worker’s approach. Whereas all the other measures listed above related to education, apprenticeship and work, focus on the individual person and their problems (bad grades, missing certificates, unemployment etc.), the “social space” approach makes it clear that the constraints as well as the resources of the environment are crucial for the development of a person. This approach includes the awareness of the fact that the youngsters do not have to blame themselves.

Youth workers increasingly face the challenge of reporting the results of their work. A new Federal Budget Law (Bundeshaushaltsgesetz) codified “impact orientation” and

“performance budgeting” for many administrative fields. Against this background, many youth work associations has begun to implement an impact-oriented approach in quality management although the analysis technics are hardly elaborated, but complicated. This makes it difficult to concentrate on the work with the youngsters.

### **5.1.6 Poverty alleviation approaches and coordination**

As we have seen, the measures taken against poverty are focused, for the most part, on training and work related interventions; but these interventions are not renowned as anti-poverty measures. Monetary benefits like the child benefit do not target needy families but aim to support every family with children in Austria. According to this, politics sells this intervention as suitable for the “normal family”. Only the financial aid in the form of the “needs-oriented” minimum income scheme (and similar benefits addressed to individuals and families in need, e.g. housing benefits or public housing), and partly the provision of childcare facilities are understood as specific poverty alleviation measures. This negligence of poverty might be the reason why coordination of anti-poverty policies is weak. However, some federal provinces now established “coordination offices” to align youth work / social pedagogical support and work-related programmes.

## **5.2 Voice and choice of young people in relation to measures and programmes**

In the theoretical preparatory work for the policy analysis of the SociEtY-project, Thomas Ley (2013) clarifies the meaning of participation in the context of the capability approach. Doing so, he favours a broad definition of the term that includes the scope of opportunities and the co-determination in every-day decisions. This leads to the question, how youngsters can influence, shape, and determine the measures and programmes provided to them. Furthermore one might ask to what degree they have a real choice between different options – or even the possibility to opt out. In the following section we discuss this freedom of choice in different field of interventions.

(1) In youth centres the participation of youngsters in decisions regarding the leisure programmes is quite normal, even if there are no fixed standards. A special event of some Viennese youth centres is a role reversal (“Seitenwechsel”). Some of the young users take over the responsibility for the youth centre for some weeks. They even have the possibility to change house rules. The pedagogical staffs only serve as advisers for the “new leaders” (int. 20, 5; see Sallaba, 2008). This allows young people to make experiences with taking over responsibilities, bearing of consequences, and criticism through fun and games, even if this is not a sustainable way of co-determination. In addition to such projects, youth centres try to support young people in having a voice by teaching them methods of expressing themselves like graffiti spraying, rap, or hip hop. In some rare cases the users are involved in some team sessions. However, as far as we know from the interviews there are neither complaint procedures nor is there an Ombudsman in youth centres, as the teams think that problems can be productively solved face-to-face (int. 20).

(2) The newly introduced youth coaches (see above) are said to take the wishes of young people more into account than the existing job counselling of the Austrian Employment

Service. Nevertheless, especially for the disadvantaged youth “cooling out” – that is working on the lowering of aspirations (Goffman, 1952; du Bois-Reymond, 2002) – is a very common advisory strategy (int. 22, 20). It seems that the “openness” of the coaching is more of a method to “catch the youngsters”, as one interviewed expert repeated several times (int. 15). Thus, consultancy here does not follow the idea of the capability approach to extend the opportunities of choice of individuals, but rather “works on the preferences” to adapt them to the demands of the PES and the labour market. The interviews with administration experts also showed that problems with finding the right job, profession, or apprenticeship are sometimes interpreted as a lack of motivation. The limited opportunities of young people, however, are not considered (int. 6, 9, 15), and reflection on the implications of the working life – or life as an unemployed – are avoided. A manager of a youth department of the PES in answering the question if young people should be prepared for periods of unemployment:

*“I don’t think it’s a good idea to tell them ‘Okay, my dear, now you are at school and I’ll tell you, you will be unemployed in your life.’ The youngster only understands, that this old boy explains me that I should expect that I will be unemployed – top-notch, I flout it! ... I think you rather have to tell them: ‘be careful! What could we do? In which direction can we go? Where can I help you?’ Now, youth-coaches or some social pedagogues do this. I wouldn’t confront them...” (int. 9)*

It seems that the consultancy should rather disguise than clarify the perception of their situation. The Vocational training Duty which is part of the coalition contract and is planned to be introduced in 2015 comprises the duty to be consulted / supported (Bundeskanzleramt, 2013: 10). This will change the counselling setting towards a more obvious activating measure.

(3) As concerns the choice of the apprenticeships and the profession linked to it, the common idea is that everybody has the right to choose freely. However, as there are not enough apprenticeships places available, the choice is rather limited (dependent on region and sector); so which apprenticeships are available is determined by the employers. As said above, the situation for youngsters who seek an apprenticeship place worsens. Especially young people with non-majority names, migrant background, bad grades, or without a secondary school qualification have great difficulties to find an adequate apprenticeship or job even if highly motivated (see e.g. Wieser and Häntschel, 2012: 39). This was confirmed by several interviewees (int. 7, 17). Often they have to accept occupations that they do not really like. Then youngsters might try to find another apprenticeship or take part in a programme. According to the interviews, in this case PES usually follows the approach of a second chance (int. 9).

As concerns the choice of apprenticeship place and vocation a ‘vocational training duty’ (Ausbildungsverpflichtung) would limit youngsters’ opportunities again. The possibility that they are forced to enter unacceptable places will be even higher, as there will be no chance to opt out. This is true even if the introduction of a quality management is planned (Bundeskanzleramt, 2013; 10). An executive of the Chamber of Commerce pointed out that the changing of the “balance of power” might cause difficulties for both sides:

*„In practice, the problem of a vocation duty obviously will be the burden of proof if one party, be it the youngster or be it the company, will have the whole responsibility for the fulfilment of the vocation duty. I think in the field of the dual education system [combining training on the job and vocational schooling] and apprenticeship training the success story consists in a good cooperation and a good interplay between the young people, the training companies and the vocational school. You can't give one of the players the whole responsibility for the completion of the vocation duty.” (int. 6)*

However, even if the occupational choice is de facto limited, there are legal mechanisms that enable young people to be engaged in the enforcement of their interests.

(4) In the firms the opportunity of co-determination for young people is limited as well. In large companies there might be a youth representative (Jugendvertrauensrat; see below). With regards to the supra-company vocational training the offer of vocational trainings is determined by an advisory committee of the Employment Service, the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Labour according to the current needs of the labour market (int. 5, 9). The interests of the young people play a negligible role. Young people who participate in such trainings can choose only between several vocations, dependant on region and free places in the programmes.<sup>229</sup>

This overview shows that there are a few possibilities for the Austrian youth, and especially for young disadvantaged people, to have voice or to have an impact on decisions that influence their lives. Valuing the opportunities of young people to choose for themselves and to raise a voice for their interests and needs, one should differentiate according to the proximity to the labour market. A general rule of thumb is that the more the labour market is concerned the less is the room for choice, co-determination and voice (cf. int. 13). Furthermore, the degree of formalisation and juridification should be taken into consideration. For example, a youngster without citizenship may take part in the participation offerings in a youth centre, but is not allowed to participate in formal elections.

### **5.3 Areas of non-intervention**

In Austria “new” social topics and problems are often “discovered” and initially discussed by third sector organisations. In the case of politics recognizing these needs, an administration might support the involved NGOs in their work or issue calls for tender for projects. In the following some youth policy subjects will be discussed which have not yet been comprehensively resolved by tangible measures.

1.) A discourse on inequality in health exists for several years now in Austria. In the interviews it was mentioned several times that more and more young people have mental problems, and that in trainings programmes which focus too much on “performing” / “working” such cases may only be perceived as drop outs (int. 15). However there is no public discourse on health problems of disadvantaged young people and hardly any

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<sup>229</sup> In Vienna for example youngsters can choose between 30 to 40 apprenticeships (Kleinlerchner and Challupner, 2014)

research on this topic (Bacher et al., 2013; regarding Vienna: Veznikova et al., 2011). Similarly, politicians have not taken action on this subject.

2.) In some of the interviews the experts commented on “disappeared girls”. Those are early school leavers or in a NEET situation, who “disappear” for some years, maybe work in the family or become mothers. This leads to an underrepresentation of girls in nearly all training programmes. They “re-emerge in the day care centre as young mothers with little knowledge in German; with a delay these young ladies with a low education level and few positive characteristics for labour market integration re-emerge four or five years later.” (int. 15) The research of Bacher et al. (2013) confirms that very little is known about this group. One only can speculate that they missed opportunities to give their lives a direction in a self-determined way.

3.) Another problem of a subgroup of young people is well known, but not treated. There are about 650 adolescents and young adults detained in Austrian prisons. In 2003 special juvenile prisons were abolished. This leads to situations in which young people are threatened and abused by prison inmates (Helige, 2013). An EU study (Ludwig-Boltzmann-Institut, 2013) confirmed these problems: „In the cells happen massive attacks, partly in form of sexual abuse and mistreatment. The fear of reprisal by the fellow inmates prevent them of reporting on such incidences on the stuff“ (ibid.: 18). After the reporting of a violation undue statement of the then Minister of Justice, now there is new discussion on the appropriate imprisonment of young offenders.

4.) In 2011 more than 1,300 unaccompanied minors reached Austria as refugees. As long as their asylum procedure is under way the young refugees usually do not have the right to work. Only seasonal work is allowed in some branches. Since 2012 minor refugees are allowed to do an apprenticeship if no Austrian can be found for that position; in April 2013 this right was expanded to refugees under the age of 25. However, they cannot even use support from the PES and they are not allowed to participate in any public training programmes (cf. Watzl, 2013). Therefore, only very few refugees make an apprenticeship or work during the legal procedures (int. 9, 10). In Vienna, a non-profit association, PROSA, in which teachers work voluntarily, helps young refugees to pass the tests for the compulsory school graduation certificate. This service, which only exists in Vienna, is solely financed by charity as no administration supports it.

## **6. Policy making, implementation and participation**

### **6.1 Development and delivery of policies to tackle inequality and poverty**

There are three reasons why the responsibilities for the development and delivery of measures against youth poverty are spread thinly within the political sphere. Firstly, the measures and programmes mentioned above do not set high demands on poverty prevention, poverty alleviation or guaranteeing equality of opportunities, but they are – more simply – thought to place young people in jobs, to “care about the youth” or to improve the situation of young migrants or refugees. Secondly, youth policy is split in several fields, like education, labour market policy, youth work/leisure activities, and youth welfare services, which are not completely integrated. Thirdly, Austria is structured into

federal provinces, where the competences are shared between the national, regional and municipal level according to complex legislation. However, the different players are very well linked to each other and networking works well, on the political as well as on the operative level.

### 6.1.1 Youth policy and the political system in Austria

On the national level, different ministries are responsible for the measures and programmes mentioned above. The leading ministry for youth policy is the Federal Ministry for Family and Youth. However, as far as school and education is concerned, the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture is responsible; the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection are responsible for work matters. The idea of “Generation Mainstreaming” makes policy a cross section subject (cf. Liebenritt, 2013: 841). Typical top-down strategies have their origin in the ministries. They pick up the political discourse, communicate the proposals of the ministers, they assign evaluation studies and further research to get the proper overview and are responsible for pilot projects. In accordance with the federal structure of Austria the federal ministries should only provide guidelines, and the individual federal states and municipalities should take the appropriate measures and carry out projects.

Besides the federal structure, “social partnership” is another characteristic of the political landscape in Austria (Tálos, 2009). It consists of a tight institutional cooperation of the representation committees of the employees (Austrian Chamber of Labour<sup>230</sup> and Austrian Federation of Trade Unions<sup>231</sup>) and the representation committees of the employers (Austrian Economic Chamber<sup>232</sup> and Federation of Austrian Industries<sup>233</sup>). They are included

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<sup>230</sup> The Austrian Labour Chamber (Arbeiterkammer Österreich) is the representation of all employees in Austria. The membership is compulsory for all employees. The Chamber works on national and regional level (Landesarbeiterkammern). The Austrian Labour Chamber is strictly involved in the discourse about and action for equality, equal opportunity and distributive justice (AK 2012, 2012a, 2013). In regards to young people the Chamber advocates for high-quality vocational training, good work conditions (int. 7) and good education (Sozialpartner, 2013).

<sup>231</sup> The Austrian Trade Union Federation (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund) is the umbrella organisation of all trade unions in Austria. Whereas the trade unions are party to the negotiation of collective labour agreements, the Federation is a social partner. The membership in these organisations is voluntary. All unions and the Federation have youth chairmen. All younger trade union members are organised in the Austria Trade Union Youth (Österreichische Gewerkschaftsjugend), which is the youth organisation of the Federation. The Austrian Trade Union Federation and the Union Youth supports, advises and teaches youth representatives (Jugendvertrauensräte), which are elected in the companies (see above). The interests of the Union youth are quite similar to the Chamber of Labour, although the Union cares more about tangible workplace problems and the political education of the union members.

<sup>232</sup> The Austrian Economic Chamber is the representation of all Austrian Companies and Employers. The membership is compulsory. The Chamber support companies which employ or want to employ apprentices and they provide state-financed subsidies for companies that offer apprenticeships. The interest of the Chamber is that the companies can easily find a sufficient number of well-educated apprentices and employees. At the moment they plead for the introduction of new “low level vocations” like furniture assembler or alteration tailor as there is a need for employees

in all formal negotiations of labour-related subjects. The social partners have the right to propose legislation and examine proposals. Due to their still far-reaching activities and influence they are also crucial actors in the process of policy making and implementation concerning young people. Thus, e.g. the training guarantee was the result of an agreement between the social partners before it became a state wide active labour market and VET strategy.

### **6.1.2 Education policy und provision of education**

According to the Austrian constitution (Art. 14 B-VG), the (federal) Ministry of Education is in charge of education policy and the provision of education. Regarding the maintaining of schools, however, the federal state, federal countries, and municipalities share the responsibility for the construction of new schools, their funding, and for the administration. (Bodenhöfer, 2006). Whereas national government administrates higher schools providing general education, the federal provinces administrate basis schools. Up to now, teachers of the diverse tracks were even trained differently. At the regional level, administration is provided by separate federal authorities, i.e. the so-called Province School Boards (Landesschulräte) and District School Boards (Bezirksschulräte).

Reforms of the educational system – especially the introduction of a comprehensive school and all-day school – are frequently discussed (see above) but in the end the system and its weak points seem to be very stable. Some interview partners emphasised that there is little hope for fundamental changes.

*“Anyway, I have to say, assumedly I’m sitting in committees for about two decades, but it doesn’t work. I think there is a chance that the school will change little by little [...] But as long as there is no clear cut which completely changes the system, I’m very sceptical.”* (int. 4)

An executive of the PES stated:

*“I have to be honest ... if I will be back on earth in 300 years, there would be any changes in the school system.”* (int. 9)

At the same time the school system is quite closed towards cooperation, e.g. with youth workers. An interviewee with a youth-work background explained that in the meantime cooperation and networking with the PES works quite well, but that it remains very difficult to work together with schools (int. 4).

### **6.1.3 Employment promotion**

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accomplishing these job profiles in companies. The apprentices and skilled workers in these fields would be paid less than in traditional vocations (int. 6).

<sup>233</sup> The Federation of Austrian Industries (Industriellenvereinigung) is the representation of large manufacturing companies. The membership is voluntary. Their interests are quite similar to the Economic Chamber but rather oriented towards the needs of larger companies.

The Austrian Employment Service is the main player in the administration of labour and unemployment. It initiates most of the measures and programmes in this field, and partly realises them. In 1994 the Employment Service was separated from the Austrian Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, turned into a “modern public-law service provider and a separate legal entity” (Atzmüller and Krischek, 2010: 35, quoted from Feuerstein, 1997: 516), and was decentralised to be able to react more flexible to the regional requirements and problems (Atzmüller, 2009: 157). The PES consists of a national office, of head offices in each of the nine federal provinces and about 100 regional offices. On the national and federal level the management now includes all social partners (representatives of the Austrian Economic Chamber, the Austrian Chamber of Labour, the Austrian Trade Union Federation, and the Federation of Austrian Industries). “[C]lose ties between the social partners and Austria’s major political parties also ensure a high level of close cooperation with regional and local administrations and thus with the decentralised levels of government” (Atzmüller and Krischek, 2010: 7). The main tasks of the PES are placement services, qualification and support. The PES claims that “compared to other countries the focus is on qualification” (BMASK, 2013: 4). Since the 1980s there have been youth employment programmes (ibid.: 3). Furthermore the Employment Service is responsible for state-financed subsidies for apprentices with handicaps. Often new programmes start as pilot projects, partly financed by the European Social Fund (int. 13). The in-house evaluation is mainly based on placement rates, although the situations vary widely depending on region (int. 9). All programmes are evaluated by external research institutes and often adapted.

The decentralised structure of the Employment Services allows cooperation with federal and regional organisations (Atzmüller and Krischek, 2010: 35). Some federal provinces (Bundesländer) have established their own institutes offering additional support for employment promotion. Vienna, for example, established the “Vienna Employees Promotion Funds” (Wiener Arbeitnehmerinnen Förderungsfond, WAFF). The fund belongs to the resort of finance and economic policy of the city of Vienna. The board consists of members of the social partner institutions and of the political parties of the City Parliament. WAFF counsels unemployed persons and offers a wide spectrum of trainings, qualification programmes and retraining measures for workers, unemployed and companies (ibid.). It develops and delivers its own measures and administrates out-sourced programmes and thus broadens and completes the standard services of the PES (int. 15). Often WAFF and PES cooperate and co-finance programmes (Atzmüller and Krischek, 2010: 36). As one expert emphasised, WAFF has extensive know-how and experience in employment promotion and is well connected which made it an outstanding platform for the application and administration of EU subsidies (int. 13). The collaboration of the municipal administration, the Employment Service and the youth work in Vienna has led to the implementation of the pilot project “Spacelab”, which combines a low-threshold means for contacting young unemployed people with advanced training programmes (see “social innovation”, below) (int. 5, 13, 15, 20). At the moment they plan to offer modular certificates. Training modules attended in periods of unemployment and on-the-job training are combined into a certified qualification on par with the final apprenticeship examination (int. 15).

Aside from the introduced institutions, two kinds of networks try to make the complexity of the work world and support systems manageable. In some federal provinces *coordination offices for youth programmes* (Koordinationsstellen) have been established. They link the

administration of the educational, advisory, training and social-pedagogical programmes. Outsourcing allows the cooperation of institutions assigned to different levels, like Federal Ministries, political institutions of the federal provinces and operative institutions like the Employment Service.

Another kind of network is called *Territorial Employment Pacts* (TEP, 2014). These contract-based regional partnerships link employment policies to other policy areas, like education, disability, family, gender, regional aid or structural policies (ibid.). They should ensure efficient use of resources and improve the support provided for certain target groups. The main aims of TEPs are to create and preserve jobs and to secure financial support for the region concerned to ensure the region's sustainable development (Atzmüller and Krischek, 2010: 10). The pacts are often co-financed by the European Social Fund. At the moment, most pacts aim at the implementation of regional networks (TEP, 2013).

All coordinative measures taken on national and regional level, improve the overview of the administrative experts and the functionality of the measurements. However, as mentioned before, they do not have the focus to tackle inequality or poverty, but concentrate on inclusion in the labour market.

### **6.1.3 Youth work**

Until the end of 2012, the leading ministry for youth policy and youth work was the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth. In the course of the coalition negotiations the governmental departments were newly pooled and a ministry was established that was solely responsible for Family and Youth. This Ministry of Family and Youth coordinates youth topics in inter-departmental workgroups with other ministries (e. g. European Pact for Youth) and in 'strategic groups' with shareholders (BMWfJ, 2009: 7; FPB, 2008: 40). It is responsible for the implementation of the EU recommendations (BMWfJ, 2009: 11). It sponsors only very few projects directly, for example the work of BOJA, the umbrella association of the open youth work.

The extra-curricular child and youth work is a matter of the federal states and the municipality, which finance the institutions and services together. It comprises the offers of the youth work organized in association as well as the open youth work in youth centres. Regarding open youth work, the municipality usually assumes 70% of the costs and the federal province 30%.

In all federal provinces, their own departments (Landesjugendreferate) are responsible for youth policy and work. Umbrella organisations and networks, which develop quality and the political standing of open youth work, exist in some states. These structures are approved and mostly sponsored by the youth departments (Liebentritt, 2013: 846). The federal provinces meet once a year with the Federal Ministry for the development of common strategies at the "conference of the leaders of youth departments" (Konferenz der LandesjugendreferentInnen) (Zimmermann, 2010: 194). Common initiatives are for example an instruction course for youth worker, a work group for youth participation and one for youth information. In the municipalities, local youth officers organise the coordination of the services, the networking of the stakeholders, the financial support of youth

organisations as well as the development and realisation of their own projects. Youth centres usually are organised as non-profit associations. Their influence is limited as they depend on the benevolence of politicians. At the same time they are a sensible voice of the interest of (disadvantaged) youth and are acknowledged as openly taking the side of youngsters.

At this point we present three further youth work organisations: BOJA, which is the federal network of the open youth work, the working group participation and the working group for youth information. *BOJA* is the “Federal Network of Open Youth Work”. This association works as a service and network office as well as for the improvement of quality in the field of open youth work. It represents the open youth work at the federal and international level (BOJA, 2013). The board consists of 18 members from all federal provinces (Liebentritt, 2013: 847). BOJA is mainly financed by the Federal Ministry of Family and Youth.

The working group *Youth Participation* (ARGE Jugendpartizipation)<sup>234</sup> was established in 1991 just after the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was declared. The members are the youth departments of the federal provinces and of the province of South Tyrol/Alto Adige (Italy), as well as the Federal Ministry of Family and Youth. The ARGE works together with the Austrian Youth Council (see below). It aims to inform young people in Austria on the subject of participation and co-determination and discusses new techniques and experiences in youth participation. Furthermore standards of participation are about to be set (Gartner, 2011: 54).

A further network is the *Austrian Network on Youth Information* (Verein Bundesnetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfo) that operates information offices in all federal provinces and runs a web portal with youth information<sup>235</sup> according to the European Charta on Youth Information (ERYICA). Its budget was about € 2.5 million in 2009 (Häfele, 2011: 390). The network is part of the European Youth Information Network EURODESK. The web portal of the network gives information on youth topics in Austria and launches online-surveys as part of the Austrian youth strategy.

## 6.2 Young people’s participation in policy making

In the public discourse young people in Austria are said to be politically apathetic and not interested in politics at all. Research, however, shows that this is may be true for traditional party politics, but not for politics in general (Zimmermann, 2010: 195). Instead, Austrian youngsters are very much interested and prepared to engage in shaping their social environments/ neighbourhoods. When defining participation, hence, experts mostly refer to a quite broad understanding of participation, including several forms of participation apart from formal political representation on the municipality level or similar (cf. Zeglovits and Schwarzer, 2011: 256). However, for disadvantaged youth, the situation is different. Although there is very little research on the participation of disadvantaged youth (Wohlmacher, 2013; Rosenberger, Walter and Fuchs, 2008), one must start from the

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<sup>234</sup> [www.jugendbeteiligung.cc](http://www.jugendbeteiligung.cc) (Accessed 10 January 2014)

<sup>235</sup> [www.oesterreichisches-jugendportal.at](http://www.oesterreichisches-jugendportal.at); [www.jugendinfo.at](http://www.jugendinfo.at) (Accessed 10 January 2014)

premise that the disadvantaged feel much less addressed by politics than youth in general as the problems on felt distance to the political system are even greater.

### 6.2.1 Participation in elections and legislation

Young people are eligible to vote when they are 16 years old. Such a low age limit is unique in the EU and has been introduced in Austria in 2007. Before that people were allowed to vote starting with 18, and to be elected with 19 (Perlot and Zandonella, 2009).

Currently most parties try to show that they aim at representing interests of young people in parliament through young candidates for the National Council. In 2013, the youngest member of the newly elected National Council was 24 years old and ten of the 183 members were younger than 30 years (Parlament, 2013); the youngest minister is 27 years old. Whereas in this context the group of the under 30's is quite well represented, migrants without Austrian citizenship are not. They have no right to vote – only EU citizens are allowed to vote at local level and for EU elections. This means for instance that in Vienna 21 percent of the inhabitants are not allowed to go to polls.

During the first elections after lowering the voting age in 2007, media were highly interested in young people. (Perlot and Zandonella, 2009: 422). An interviewed expert said:

*“We noticed that from the moment of the announcement of the lowering of the age limit ... politicians became very interested in young people. Before young people were of absolutely no interest, and then, suddenly, they are potential voters and it may pay off. ... we [the youth centres] ... were perceived stronger as potential gate keepers of politicians.” (int. 20)*

When youngsters voted for the first time, this was accompanied by large information campaigns in schools and on the internet (Perlot and Zandonella, 2009: 422; Zimmermann, 2010: 196). Studies confirm that most young people requested information (Zimmermann, 2010: 196), especially in school (Zeglovits and Schwarzer, 2011: 261) and that they had been aware of the campaigns. This need for information was also confirmed by one of the interviewed experts (int. 8); and today some youth associations including the Austrian National Youth Council (see above) urges for a school subject called *political education*.

The possibility of taking part in elections awakened youngsters' interest in politics (Zeglovits and Schwarzer, 2011: 258). Young peoples' election turnout was as high as of the average population (ibid.: 270). It is considered as an advantage of early voting that many young people are still in the institutional context of school and youth work and “learn” to vote there (Zeglovits and Schwarzer, 2011). Compared to youngsters who still go to school at age 16, those who do an apprenticeship or are engaged in a training programme cannot benefit in the same way of information at school and are disadvantaged again (cf. ibid.: 269). In the end, early transition to work of disadvantaged groups might lead to an underrepresentation in elections. Indeed, in the group '16 to 18', employed young people describe themselves less often as interested in politics as do students. Similarly, migrants (who might even not have the right to vote) describe themselves as less interested compared to non-migrants.

With regards to legislation, there are two mechanisms that should ensure the taking into account of the youth. The first one is the National Youth Council (*Bundesjugendvertretung, NYC*). The NYC is the umbrella organisation of all Austria-wide youth associations and the legal representative of the Austrian Youth. The council was founded in 2001 and has more than 50 members including pupil and student committees, associations of the so-called mobile or “open” youth work, of the Austrian Trade Union Youth, of private associations like the Austrian Brass Music Youth and the Austrian Alps Association Youth, and last but not least the youth organisations of each political party (cf. Häfele, 2011: 387). The participating associations comprise 1.5 million members (BMWJF, 2014). The upper age limit for members in the NYC is 30. The NYC has its own office and four employees (ibid.). For youth-related matters the organisation is the representation of interests and has the status of a ‘social partner’ (BJV-G §3 (2)). The Council has the right to introduce and evaluate legislative proposals and to suggest measures and funding recommendations (Häfele, 2011: 388). The NYC sends some youth representatives to the UN General Assembly. They can advocate for youth-relevant subjects and advise diplomats. In Austria the Youth Council fought for lowering the voting age limit, it initialised information campaigns before elections (ibid.) and it was strongly committed to the incorporation of child and youth rights in the Austrian constitution (Hätönen, 2006: 141), which they finally achieved in 2011. The Youth Council campaigned also against child and youth poverty, though this is not their focus. Some authors (ibid.: 60, 97) and interviewed experts (int. 5, 4) consider the influence of the NYC limited. The interviewees said that the contact persons change too often.

The second mechanism that should ensure youths’ taking account in legislation is the so-called ‘youth check’ for legislative projects. It was introduced in the beginning of 2013 as part of the Austrian Youth Strategy. According to the youth check, the impact of laws on the situation of young people must be estimated in form of an outcome-orientated impact evaluation (*wirkungsorientierte Folgeabschätzung*) in order to secure childrens’ and youngsters’ interest. However, young people are not directly involved in the procedure. When introduced, this was roundly criticised for the fact that the youth check is not in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (BJV, 2012). As one might expect there are no special mechanisms for disadvantaged young people.

### **6.2.2 Co-determination in education, apprenticeship, and job**

*Co-determination in companies.* In companies with at least five employees below 21 years, youngsters can elect a number of youth representatives (*Jugendvertrauensräte*) according to the number of young employees. They have a function similar to the workers council of all employees. There are 2,400 youth representatives in Austrian companies (ÖGJ, 2014). The youth representatives are contact persons for all apprentices and young employees in case of any problems at work. They should care about the economic, social, and cultural interests of young employees, about occupational safety and health. They can propose measures for vocational education and training. Currently, they campaign for higher quality of apprenticeships, for an intermediate examination (in order to decrease problems with the final examination), and for a better compatibility of the apprenticeship with additional trainings for secondary school examination (called “*Lehre mit Matura*”) (ibid.). Recently, they achieved that apprentices who have to attend vocational college far off can stay freely in boarding schools. They are also concerned with mobbing, discrimination, and racism.

Usually the youth representatives are organised within the youth section of their responsible trade union. The umbrella organisation of all youth sections is the Austrian Trade Union Youth Group (Österreichische Gewerkschaftsjugend), which is also the youth section of the Austrian Trade Union Federation (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund). All members of trade unions with less than 26 years, about 41,000 people according to the chair of the youth group of the Austrian Trade Union Federation, are automatically member of the Austrian Trade Union Youth Group. The Austrian Trade Union Youth considers itself responsible for the political training of the youth representatives as well. The Youth Group elects regional chairmen (Landesjugendvorsitzende) in every district and a national chairman (Bundesjugendvorsitzender). These chairmen discuss and collect problematic issues. The national chairman is always a member of the executive board of the Trade Union Federation, which is the highest board of all trade unions in Austria. So, the youth groups have an opportunity to promote their topics at the highest level. The Austrian Trade Union Federation has the status of a “social partner”, is closely linked to political parties on the left, and therefore can feed topics into the political sphere.

Taken as a whole it seems that the institution of youth representatives and their entrenchment in the Trade Union and the Trade Union Youth can allow young people to make experiences with a collective engagement for comprehensive demands and learn to organise political interests.

*Co-determination in trainings.* Most training programmes for unemployed young people, like production schools or the youth coaching mentioned above, are realised by the Austrian Employment Service, partly in cooperation with or co-financed by other institutions.

Often the administration contracts out the realisation of the programmes to non-profit or for-profit companies. Here, co-determination is neither envisaged for young people nor for adults. There is only feedback by ex-post procedures of “customer satisfaction surveys” and by evaluations of the institution, which funds the programme. Only the Austrian Employment Service itself has a complaints office. Most of our interview partners became irritated when we asked for participation co-determination or the existence of an Ombudsman. One interviewee pointed out that there is a plan to apply focus groups in which the trainees can speak about their experiences in the programmes (int. 5). Since 2010 there are youth representatives (Jugendvertrauensräte) within the supra-company vocational training. As some of the interviewed experts noticed (int. 5, 12), a problem can arise if – as intended – during the programme young people leave for regular apprenticeships and so the continuity of the work is interrupted (the representatives are especially trained by the trade union for example) (int. 5, 12). As only some providers were interested in the election of the youth representative, the mode of election was changed. It is now the youth department of the Austrian Employment Service that executes the election for the youth representatives (int. 5).

### **6.2.3 Participation in daily life**

In daily life there are some opportunities for young people to participate politically. In schools class representatives and school representatives advocate their interests. A

peculiarity of the Austrian system of school representatives is that students and representatives are organised in party-affiliated organisations.

*Participation in the municipality.* In some municipalities and in the Viennese districts (Bezirke) there are “parallel events” for the representation of young people. In rural areas they are organised as youth councils (Jugendräte), which are selectively integrated in political decisions. One possibility is to randomly pick ten to twenty youngsters out of the register and ask them to participate in a mixed-age working group, which deals with a certain subject for several days. Then the results are presented in public. Politicians can use this information for their decisions (TJO, 2014). The participation of the young people consists of a right of proposal, the right to be heard or in the opportunity to take part in a session of a council. As the integration of young people on a board needs experience, specialised non-profit associations offer to support public institution with facilitator teams.<sup>236</sup> The influence of youth councils is limited and it is to assume that disadvantaged youths are underrepresented.

In Vienna there are child and youth parliaments, which are organised by youth centres in cooperation with schools. Since there are rather disadvantaged young people in youth centres, this approach is suitable for the integration of this group. The child and youth parliaments begin with workshops where 15 or 16-year-old youngsters get information on the decision procedures in the districts. Then they chose their topics (Interview VWJZ). Youth representatives from school classes and youth centres articulate and put forward their demands. When they present their results to adults, facilitators make sure that the youngsters are not functionalised by them (Holzhacker, 2008: 64). Then the demands are discussed by the districts councils. Sometimes the youth parliaments even have their own budget (Int. 5, 20). In addition to such projects, youth centres try to support young people in having a voice by teaching them methods of expressing themselves like graffiti spraying, rap, or hip hop (Int. 22).

These technics, which were illegally used before, are tamed and legalised now. The project “Viennese Wall” (Vienna Wand) made a dozen of walls in the city available for spraying graffiti, for example. This is very typical for some developments in the Austrian and especially the Viennese youth scene. During the 70’s and 80’s some abandoned houses were squatted (Wächter, 2006). There, cultural and youth centres developed alongside living projects (Nußbaumer and Schwarz, 2012). Some of these projects managed to become legalized and even subsidized; some of them are still operating today – and this can be taken as a successful form of participation and appropriation of young people; other projects were fought by the municipality and failed. This shows very well the way in which new appropriation technics are turned-over by politics. Even the youth work in the public parks, which is today presented as a showcase, goes back to a confrontation with youngsters. As the police was not able to keep the parks “clean” of young people in search of open spaces, the municipality of Vienna established social-pedagogical programmes for them.

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<sup>236</sup> Jugendrat Team Oberösterreich ([www.jugend-rat.at](http://www.jugend-rat.at)); INVO Service für Kinder- und Jugendbeteiligung ([www.invo.at](http://www.invo.at)); beteiligung.st Fachstelle für Kinder-, Jugend- und BürgerInnenbeteiligung ([www.beteiligung.st](http://www.beteiligung.st))

## 7. Social innovation

### 7.1 How is social innovation defined?

Social innovation as a term is mostly defined and applied by macro and meso level organizations comprising research institutions as well as both the political and NPO/NGO sector.

In particular NPOs/NGOs, as well as critical experts, try to propose a specific understanding of what social innovation could mean in Austria to expand the scope of social policies, related to poverty, employment, education and social inclusion and to foster a bottom up approach which transcends the narrow focus on employability and work first. One instrument for this is to give an award to socially innovative projects. These initiatives are important as they try to open up the field for a wide range of activities. Nevertheless experts such as Hammer and Diebäcker point to the difficulties in defining social innovation from the perspective of bottom up initiatives as well (2009). The Centre for Social Innovation's definition is "Social innovations are new concepts and measures, which are adopted by the societal groups concerned and put to use in solving social challenge" (Zentrum für Soziale Innovation, 2014).

The Unruhe Foundation, a private foundation hosting and funding an annual contest for social innovation named "Sozial Marie" since 2005, sets the following definition for social innovation. "Social innovation drafts solutions to pressing social challenges. It provides room for new approaches, gives innovative answers and lays news paths. Social innovation either reacts to a new social question or it solves a known problem by a new practice. Action can be taken by the affected social group itself, it must in any case be appropriated and co-implemented by those concerned. In this manner, social innovation creates sustainable, exemplary solutions that inspire others" (Unruhe Private Foundation, 2013).

Hammer and Diebäcker (2009) analyse concepts of social innovation based on the projects submitted as well a survey of and focus group discussions with applicants. They found that in defining social innovations three elements are at play, that is, novelty, a specific set of values and the kind of processes involved. Novelty may be meeting a need thus far not met, as well as the combination of new actors or fields, or in bringing something new to a region. Novelty not corresponding to a certain set of values, however, is not considered as innovative. This set of values is often related to the situation of a certain group, which serves as legitimation for the project submissions. However, the social analysis of these values often remains underdetermined as if it were to be self-evident in the sense of being a consensus. The element of processes is firstly considered in relation to the consideration to an active participation or empowerment of the groups concerned. Secondly, most projects strongly focus on the needs of the groups concerned, that is, they aim to offer solutions, which exactly meet those needs. Very often this is associated with a holistic approach of offers. And thirdly, if processes involve different agents whom had not interacted before. All three elements concur within a normative framework, which is aimed at justice in societal participation, which is hampered by development, current gaps in the social system, and existing inequality (Hammer und Diebäcker, 2009: 1-13).

In his conceptual paper for Society, Jensen Rosendal stresses an element which seems to be lacking in these definitions, but is rather present in social innovation as we encountered it: “At this level it is obvious that social innovations besides the social element are closely linked to the economic aspects of welfare solutions: How it is possible within the public sector to offer welfare to more people for lesser money” (Rosendal, 2013: 128).

Not only NPOs/NGOs try to promote social innovation, but public institutions, such as the PES, develop measures and programmes that may count as socially innovative if a wide definition is taken, too. Several enterprises in Austrian youth policy qualify as social innovation in a double sense: on the one hand, many agents in the field of youth policy meet the criteria for social entrepreneurship insofar as they create social value. This holds true both for the sphere of youth work which is dominated by NPOs, whose work, however, rests mainly on employees rather than volunteers, as well as the sphere of labour market integration, which is dominated by governmental agencies and contractors. Interestingly, the beginning congregation of these spheres in projects that combine social work and labour market integration was mentioned as socially innovative by many of our interview partners.

The most prominent of these projects is spacelab, a low barrier labour market integration project, which gives financial incentives on a day-to-day basis to youth who stay on a whole day at a time to try out different sorts of jobs. It was the winner of the Austrian ESF-Innovation award 2013. It is a cooperative effort of several Viennese NPOs. It is noteworthy that the spacelab project is to be expanded over the next years in preparation for the “Ausbildungsverpflichtung” to become the most low-level entrance point of continuous labour market integration trainings. The fifth and last award-winning place was given to the project “Mia\_san” in Styria, which was aimed at improving the language skills of young girls by incorporating theatre pedagogy.<sup>237</sup>

In the privately funded Sozial Marie, which is open to projects all over Europe; one project awarded a smaller sum was an online counselling service in support of young girls in Austria who are threatened by forced marriage to be offered by the NPO Orient Express. Another award was given to the Institute for Social Services of Vorarlberg to fund social work focusing on families as networks. A similar approach was introduced to us by one of our experts: his organisation is currently implementing a family network based model in probationary services for youth called social conference, whereby the entire social surroundings of a youth is involved in getting them back on track. Furthermore a project offering storytelling techniques to pupils in order to tell their own tales of migration (NPO Spieltrieb).<sup>238</sup>

Another project frequently mentioned by our interview partners, especially on mid-level, is the newly implemented youth coaching: a case management approach in guiding youth in the transition from education to work. It was introduced in 2013 by the Bundessozialämter (Local executives Bureaus of the Ministry of Social Affairs) and 36,000 cases were opened in the first year alone. Prior to 2013, it was a service available exclusively to special needs students, which was then introduced to serve a wider group. The access to job coaching however was criticized quite harshly by some of our experts: according to their report,

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<sup>237</sup> [www.esf.at](http://www.esf.at) (Accessed 10 January 2014)

<sup>238</sup> <http://www.sozialmarie.org/winners> (Accessed 10 January 2014)

teachers identify students according to a questionnaire, which by implication might stigmatize candidates.

## 7.2 Supporting social innovation

Hammer and Diebäcker (2009: 2) found that the overwhelming majority of projects applying for the “Sozial Marie prize” were from non-governmental or commercial organisations.

The two awards were chosen to give examples of which projects is considered as socially innovative by governmental actors and civil society. They all share that they are being developed and implemented by mid-level organizations which have the necessary resources to access funding for such enterprises; one of our interview partners who is from a smaller organization strongly stressed the point that it takes quite an elaborate infrastructure and knowledge to even apply for funding such as the ESF's. On national policy level, the notion of social innovation is frequently stipulated by incentives of the ESF; the Ministry of Social Affairs grants an annual ESF prize for the most socially innovative ESF funded projects. Several noteworthy programs such as spacelab also started out on ESF funding.

Mediating agencies have been installed to guide and evaluate these processes such as the Koordinationsstelle Vienna, which coordinates and evaluates existing youth programmes within the city of Vienna. It does, however, also work to gradually homogenize the programme structure.

Contemporary social innovation is mostly developed and implemented by mid-level organisation in civil society, the chamber system, and NPOs. Our experts report long-term deliberative processes between these organizations in order to establish new programmes; the initiatives, however, are often given top-down, such as the newly established Austrian Vocational training Guarantee. Several of our experts on practitioner level have expressed that there seems to be less budget and time for more traditional areas of youth work centred on a more holistic approach.

Hammer and Diebäcker (2009) note that “the economisation of socially innovative work, however, works to suppress justice as an issue, while at the same time the continuing deconstruction of the welfare system appears to let almost anything appear as innovative” (13-14). This is very accurately reflected in one of our expert’s statement: “Well, I think what is being attempted in Vienna right now is not innovative, it is necessary”.

This leaves little space for youth policy not directed at social competence and labour force integration. Some of our experts, especially on practitioner level, spoke of innovative ideas such as integrating more art into youth work. Such projects, they report, are not funded at all, or only for a short period of time. An example would be the Interact theatre project in Graz: the AMS labour market service funded a citizenship building theatre project for a group of unemployed youth who were on their service. Several also addressed that social innovation would need to happen in schools, for example regarding citizenship education.

It is interesting to note that, from what our experts report, contemporary youth policy profits from the squatting scene all over Austria in the 1980s regarding both infrastructure

as well as human resource: several actors organizations were founded in this context (such as the WUK, which is home to one of the carriers of the spacelab project). Furthermore, at least one of our experts himself comes from a squatted autonomous youth centre in his province of origin. This does not, however, inform current policy: young people's squats over the past decade have resulted either in eviction, and in one interesting hybrid model: the Pankahytttn in Vienna, where the squatted house was given to its users on the condition that there would be a social service present on the premises.<sup>239</sup>

## 8. Discussion and conclusions

Disadvantage and vulnerability of youth is defined first and foremost in the context of individuals partaking in the labour market and or education system. Most policy is directed towards the integration in said systems; this gradual process will be implemented ever more strongly with the compulsory education or training starting from 2016. Social innovation is very strongly developed and encouraged within this framework; most agents of social innovation aim at the empowerment of the groups of youth concerned rather than an active participation. Political participation is hindered by socioeconomic factors – youth from financially deprived households often do not participate in youth organizations – and also by a growing demographic of youth who were born in Austria but lack citizenship.

Youth policy may be regarded as innovative in regards to an IJJ that is very strongly oriented towards labour force integration: youth may be given more apprenticeships in or outside the supra-company vocational training in the future, but the social security they can expect remains precarious. The social immobility which is largely produced by the school system forms part of the information basis, however it remains largely untouched by policy. Involvement if any, is given preference over actual participation of youth who are being disadvantaged; forms of participation often are a practise in, rather than a practising of, actual participation: e.g., few of the youth parliaments are actually given any spending money with which to fund the projects they decide on – the actual decision remains with the executive concerned.

What is particularly noteworthy in this regard is that the new system of training that is being established in Austria is an expansion of models that were practised in special needs training prior to the 2000s. It remains to be seen whether this will help reduce stigma and make more functionings possible for more young people, or whether this will work to further hamper opportunities for more socially disadvantaged youth by way of expanding stigma rather than resources. Furthermore, the choice between different modes of education for one, may become larger, but the choice of lifestyle is.

Social innovation in Austria might serve as an example of how the interplay between a welfare regime under pressure, and third sector and NPO agents increasingly under pressure produce a range of projects that is increasingly aimed at labour market conformity.

Austrian youth policy has taken an interesting turning point in late 2013 by introducing compulsory training or schooling up to the age of 18. It will deem worthy of research to see

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<sup>239</sup> <http://www.pankahytttn.at> (Accessed 10 January 2014)

which effects the interplay between a dual VET system and obligatory participation will produce.

Further questions for future research comprise:

- The rise of mental ailments in youth, which was reported both by our experts as well as in several (social scientist) studies.
- The so-called vanishing girls: young women who after compulsory education choose to work as homemakers, whose choices are being problematized.
- The apparent unchangeability of the Austrian school system might prove an interesting subject for political science.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of key issues

Key issues	How is this issue defined and which key terms are used to describe this issue
Youth policy	Youth policy is a distinct national government policy area in Austria that the federal Ministry of Family and Youth is in charge of. However, educational and vocational matters are determined and administrated by other Ministries; and the federal provinces and local administration (as well PES) determine the tangible implementation of measures, programmes etc. on a local level. The term youth usually covers young people in the age of about 15 to 24. An example therefore is the Austrian youth strategy which addresses youngsters aged 14 to 24; the labour market statistic differentiates between two groups: Youth (15 to 19) and young adults (19 to 24). Though many programmes directly address young people, especially in the field of labour market and leisure activities, hardly any measures against youth poverty exist.
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	Interview partners rather mentioned low education and migration background than low income. It is the selective education system which at first reinforces inequalities between young people attributed to their family background and then fixes them by attesting attained (levels of) qualifications. The discourse on youth disadvantage and youth inequality focuses on labour market integration; categories like early school leavers and NEETs become more and more common (see sec. 4).
Social innovation	The term social innovation was unfamiliar to most of the interviewed experts. When asked about innovations they either described adaptations of existing programmes or they talked about new programmes that are better suited to meet the problems or needs of disadvantaged youth. Nobody ever brought into the discussion that innovation could somehow be managed. In research, social innovation is brought into context with funding.
Participation	There are two meanings of participation: one refers to participation in society (having friends, having a job and so on), the other to refers to political participation. Laymen rather understand it to mean political participation. In this chapter, we mainly refer to political participation. As concerns young people there are a lot of measures where they can punctually participate in thematic workshops (e.g. in youth work projects or local youth councils). However the results are not binding for politicians. All in all we got the impression that young people' participation rather signifies "learning how democracy works (when one is an adult)" than taking part in current political discussions or decisions. In public discourse participation there is a focus on participation in the labour market.
The abilities of young people	In our interviews, almost all respondents suggested that professionals working with youngsters should take greater account of youngsters' resources. In spite of the high esteem for the resource-oriented approach (cf. Knecht, 2012), interviewees mostly made deficit-orientated diagnoses of "lacking maturity", of "a need of further maturing" (Nachreifung), and of dysfunctional families. Abilities of youngsters are reflected more in resource focused social work as well as some active labour market programmes.

## Appendix 2: Key government policies and programmes

Policy area	Policy or Programme	Description
Transition to vocational training	Jugendcoaching (Youth Coaching)	<p>Youth Coaching is a measure to improve the transition from school to vocational training or further schooling by advice and on-going assistance. It aims at reducing the number young people who do not begin an apprenticeship and the number of NEETs. In 2013, the first year when Youth Coaching was offered all over Austria, about 35.000 youngsters were counselled; € 22 million were spent for this programme (Bundeskanzleramt 2013a). In 2015, when the vocational training duty will be introduced, making use of these programmes will become compulsory for youngsters.</p> <p><a href="http://www.bmukk.gv.at/jugendcoaching">http://www.bmukk.gv.at/jugendcoaching</a>  <a href="http://www.neba.at/jugendcoaching/warum.html">http://www.neba.at/jugendcoaching/warum.html</a></p>
Education (soft skills) / Youth work and vocational training	Spacelab, Job Ahoi	<p>Pilot programmes which combine a low-threshold access with the possibility to enter a vocational training or other training programmes of the PES.</p> <p><a href="http://www.spacelab.cc/">http://www.spacelab.cc/</a>  <a href="http://www.ojad.at/index.php/ojad/jobahoi">http://www.ojad.at/index.php/ojad/jobahoi</a></p>
Vocational training, employment	vocational training guarantee (Ausbildungs-garantie) and supra-company vocational training (Überbetriebliche Ausbildung)	<p>In Austria young people between 15 and 18 who cannot find an apprenticeship place in a company (or administration) have the possibility to begin an apprenticeship in a supra-company vocational training. This offers the opportunity to make a comparable apprenticeship in a training workshop or office. For the training year 2012 / 2013 the PES offered about 11.700 places and spent about € 150 million for this programme. (Bundeskanzleramt, 2013a: 25) Presumably, the vocational training guarantee will be transformed in a vocational training duty (Ausbildungsverpflichtung) in 2015.</p>

Employment	„AusbildungsFit“	The programme AusbildungsFit is a low-threshold and modular measure for (early) school leavers or NEETs. It offers basic qualification, soft skills, career orientation, catching up of graduations, and social-pedagogical support (Bundeskanzleramt 2013a). This programme started in 2012 as a pilot project. In 2015 it will be extended to the whole of Austria and become part of the vocational training duty (BMASK, 2013).
	Aktion Zukunft Jugend	This programme addresses young adults at the age of 20 to 24. It ensures that unemployed people easily obtain training facilities adapted to their individual needs within six months or that they find a new job. In 2012 about 81,000 young adults took part in qualification programmes and about 96,000 began to work.
Vocational training	Produktionsschulen (production schools)	Production schools offer a combination of manual work, creative methods and support of social workers in programmes of 6 or 12 months. This “school” serves only to support young people in their vocational choices; it is not possible to finalise an apprenticeship there. There are 20 production schools, and about 2.500 places in Austria by now (BMASK, 2013: 213).
Youth policy and participation	Austrian Youth Strategy	The Austrian Youth Strategy is the national adoption and implementation of the European Youth Strategy. It aims at improvements in the fields of employment, education, participation, engagement, and quality of life for the age group 14 to 24. One feature of the Youth Strategy should be “participation” which was mainly realised by online surveys up to now. As part of the youth strategy, qualitative and quantitative indicators shall be established “for the on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of youth policy in the whole of Austria” (BMWFJ, n.y.: 6).  Link: <a href="http://bmwa.cms.apa.at/cms/content/attachments/8/8/2/CH0618/CMS1373966310578/jugendstrategie_-_strategische_ziele_2013_-_2020.pdf">http://bmwa.cms.apa.at/cms/content/attachments/8/8/2/CH0618/CMS1373966310578/jugendstrategie_-_strategische_ziele_2013_-_2020.pdf</a>

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# Chapter 16: The Socio-Economic Political Context for Addressing Youth Unemployment in Switzerland

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## 1. Abstract

This report focuses on youth policies in Switzerland. It provides a multi-focal analysis of current policy making in relation to disadvantaged youth (in terms of employment, education and lived experiences). Due to the Swiss federalist system, this report considers both general federal orientations in the realm of youth and the dynamics of implementation at a more local level. While the former are addressed essentially by providing insights of the current trends in several policy domains that are relevant for youth, the latter are informed by a policy “in action” analysis, which integrates the various actors involved in the delivery of services targeted at (disadvantaged) youngsters. The findings highlight that there is no “transversal” youth policy in the Swiss context but rather a broad spectrum of competencies that are distributed amongst different actors, both governmental and non-governmental, at cantonal, federal and communal level, which are directly or indirectly involved in policies and politics concerning youth. Our analyses further show that initiatives that figure under the heading of “youth policies” generally do not include “hard” policy sectors such as education, work and social assistance. Youth policies that are explicitly conceived as such cover mostly extracurricular activities, participation of young persons and protection of minors, and are thus operating through other channels than “implicit” youth policies. As a consequence of this fragmentation, the “official” participative arenas in which youngsters are given a voice barely address the question of inequalities and disadvantage.

## 2. Introduction

This report focuses both on the national and on the regional (cantonal) level of youth policies. Due to the specificities of the Swiss political system, characterized by a high cantonal autonomy, a multiplicity of actors, as well as a diversity of policy fields relevant for youth that are fragmented along different territorial levels, we decided to present the main developments on the federal level, describe the general institutional arrangements in the field of youth policies, and to specify central dimensions of disadvantage.

A special focus will be put on the governance relation between local and central state and the use of social experimentation in a multi-level governance system. We will more particularly focus on the role of different state, non-state, interest and advocacy groups in the discursive framing of inequalities and disadvantage in the space of youth. Hereby, our points of interests are not only policies which explicitly figure under the heading “youth policies”, but also developments, arrangements and actors in the field of education, VET, unemployment insurance and social assistance policies, which are of central importance for

the question of youth inequalities. As Williamson describes, “all countries have a youth policy, by intent, default or neglect” (2007: 57). Thus, while in Switzerland, the field of “explicit youth policies” covers extracurricular activities, participation and protection policies, youth’s lives are equally strongly influenced by more “implicit youth policies”, particularly in the field of education, employment and social protection policies.

These policy domains - with their age-limits, eligibility criteria, distribution of responsibilities between state, market and family (Van de Velde 2013), but as well with their thematization of youth as welfare subjects and their “climates of normality” (Walther 2006) - play a central role for the constitution of youth. As Lima (2013: 126) argues, the “access to citizenship rights of young persons is mitigated by age rules specific to each and every sector of social intervention“. As these policies all entail different modes of horizontal (i.e. relation between different political administrative fields relevant to the living conditions of young people) and vertical integration (i.e. relation between local and central structures) (Siurala 2012) with disparate responsibilities distributed amongst the local and the central state, as well as between different policy resorts, the interplay and intersections of these different actors are especially important.

### **3. Methods**

After a first mapping of the key actors, we conducted interviews with national and cantonal policy makers from the different policy fields, youth advocacy groups and non-governmental actors at the national and regional level, as well as providers’ associations that operate in the field of youth policies. Our initial sampling aimed at interviewing a very broad range of actors. We started by regrouping information provided by our informants to deepen our knowledge of the institutional network that is relevant for youngsters and get more insight in relation to the diachronic development of youth policies in Switzerland. We then started to do a “snowball sampling” (i.e. we asked them to give us other contacts) coupled with a theoretical sampling (i.e. we choose central interlocutors on the basis of initial research hypotheses and interests).

The following table recapitulates the different levels of governance that will be considered in this report and shows the variety of institutional inscriptions of the actors involved in this process:

**Table 1. Interview participants<sup>240</sup>**

Federal	State high administrators	2
	Umbrella youth organizations	2
Regional	Social policy and assistance	2
	Education and training	2
	Youth participation	2
Communal	Youth delegates	2
	Open-youth work	2
Third-sector organizations	Education and training	1
	Youth participation	1
	Employment	2
Total		18

Important additional information was drawn from legislation, grey literature and official reports, from parliamentary discussions and the pre-parliamentary consultation processes in order to track the policy-making process and the development of legislation that directly concerns youth. This also entailed an analysis of articles on youth in three central publications of federal offices (*Panorama, La Vie économique, Sécurité sociale*). This approach allowed discerning the different political and economic interests that undergird the design of policies concerning youth. This aspect of policy analysis also tried to identify the actors' definition of social innovation and, more specifically, to trace the specific constellations that undergird processes of social innovation.

Swiss legislation processes are heavily drawing on negotiation, bargaining and pre-parliamentary consultation, where different actors are allowed to comment on the laws to be implemented. This constitutes a rich source for analyzing the discursive framing of youth issues. Also, participative democratic processes and the possibility for popular initiatives leave ample space for different advocacy actors' organizations, which are partially taken into account too.

The interviews and documents were submitted to a "thematic content analysis" which focused on the identification of main developments and trends, as well as the construction of youth as a target group of policies. The focus is thus – beside the analysis of concrete policies – on policy "discourse" as those "interactions of individuals, interest groups, social movements, and institutions through which problematic situations are converted to policy problems, agendas are set, decisions are made, and actions are taken" (Rein and Schön 1993: 145).

## 4. National definitions

### 4.1 Disadvantaged youth and inequalities among youth

The first part of this chapter reviews some central findings on inequalities in Switzerland and traces how they depend on a specific institutional arrangement. Furthermore, it describes

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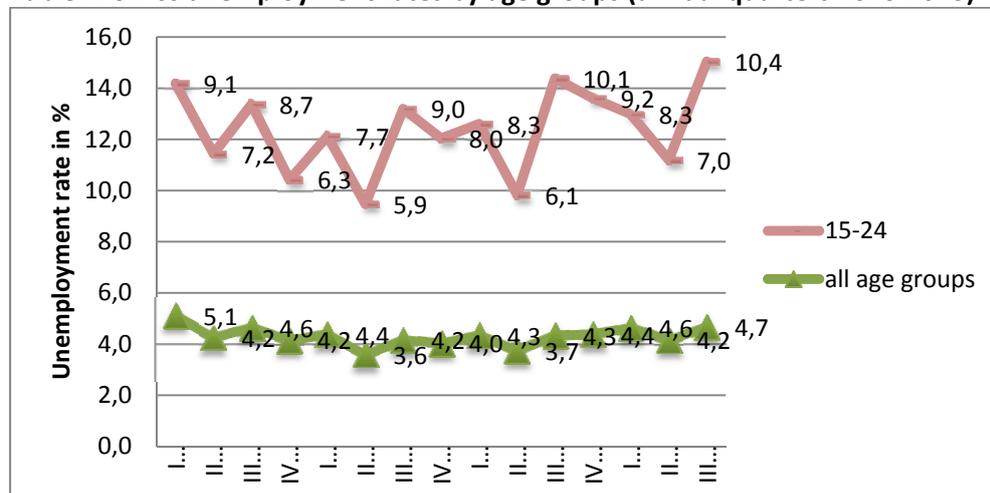
<sup>240</sup> A detailed description of interviewed services can be found at the end of this document

interaction effects between different policy fields (education, employment, VET and social assistance) as well as the Swiss institutional arrangement in a comparative perspective with neighbour countries. The second part describes the political interpretation and the discursive framing of these results, and describes the discourses and schemes around these inequalities, by highlighting the controversies at central points.

### Youth unemployment in Switzerland

Switzerland has relatively low, but generally underestimated rates of youth unemployment<sup>241</sup>. One reason for this underestimation is that public discourse usually refers to the official statistics of the SECO, whose numbers regroup all job seekers registered at the public employment services. The official numbers of the SECO for the unemployed population are a third of the unemployed calculated by the ILO-definition (including those not registered at the PES): while the Seco calculates an unemployment rate of 3.5% for all age groups, and 3.6% young persons aged 15-24<sup>242</sup>, the numbers according to the ILO definition calculated on the basis on the Swiss Household Panel show a different situation, with relatively large gaps between adult and youth unemployed (in December 2013, 10.4% of young unemployed against an overall unemployment rate of 4.7%). In international comparison this places Switzerland among the top countries in terms of low youth unemployment – a fact often attributed to its dual vocational system. Nevertheless, compared to its reference group of countries with a dual skill formation system, it fares lower than for instance Germany (7,6%) and on an equal level with Austria (10.5%) (reference period: January 2014).

**Table 2: Swiss unemployment rates by age groups (annual quarters 2010-2013)<sup>243</sup>**



<sup>241</sup> Underestimation is far from being a Swiss specificity. It may apply more generally to most European countries.

<sup>242</sup> [http://www.seco.admin.ch/themen/00374/00384/index.html?lang=fr&download=NHZLpZeg7t,lnp6lONTU042l2Z6ln1ae2lZn4Z2qZpnO2Yqu2Z6gpJCGdoJ9e2ym162epYbg2c\\_JjKbNoKSn6A--](http://www.seco.admin.ch/themen/00374/00384/index.html?lang=fr&download=NHZLpZeg7t,lnp6lONTU042l2Z6ln1ae2lZn4Z2qZpnO2Yqu2Z6gpJCGdoJ9e2ym162epYbg2c_JjKbNoKSn6A--)

<sup>243</sup> Table based on data of the federal office for statistics.

Cf.

<http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr/index/themen/03/02/blank/data/03.Document.118343.xls>

The gap between registered job seekers (Seco numbers) and the young unemployed population (ILO definition calculated on the basis of SHP-Data) indicates that many young job seekers do not register at the local PES, and that the PES does not necessarily constitute a main resource for young people looking for an apprenticeship. The relatively high number of cantonal, school-based “transition offers”, which usually do not give access to unemployment benefits, and the reduction of unemployment benefit entitlements for young people after the last legislative reforms certainly play an important role.

#### Educational inequalities and institutional effects

Research yielding robust results on educational inequalities in Switzerland was hardly available before the conduct of the 2000 PISA Studies. An OECD report on transitions from obligatory education to work in 1998 stated that at that time, “no knowledge on transition processes was available” (Galley and Meyer 1998: 19). The PISA results 2000 showed that Switzerland is part of that group of OECD countries in which the parental occupational status has the strongest effect on the literacy-scores of youngsters<sup>244</sup>. Additionally, the difference between the performance of native and first generation immigrants is one of the highest in the OECD<sup>245</sup> (Fuentes 2011: 7), proving the relative inability of the Swiss obligatory school system to compensate for unequal start-conditions. This is highly relevant, as Switzerland has, after Luxemburg, the second highest immigration rate in Europe, and 22% of pupils aged 15 have a migrant background (Fuentes 2011). The report also showed that around 20% of the population did not reach the competence level 2 in reading skills. These recent studies tend to confirm the general results that others had already underlined in a comparative perspective (Schnepf, 2007), as illustrated in Table 3.

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<sup>244</sup>To put it more exactly, in Switzerland, each increase of parental ISEI by one standard deviation influences the reading skills by 41 points, while for Finland this influence is only 12 points (BFS/EDK2003: 16).

<sup>245</sup>Without taking account of ISEI and cultural status, migrants have 81 points less in science performance than natives, while the OECD average is -54. When controlling for ISEI, the difference shrinks to still important 56 points (OECD 2007 Pisa data).

**Table 3: Differences in average achievement scores between native and immigrant pupils<sup>246</sup>**

Country	PISA			TIMSS		PIRLS
	Maths	Science	Reading	Maths	Science	Reading
Germany	<b>-79</b>	<b>-97</b>	<b>-89</b>	<b>-40</b>	<b>-79</b>	<b>-51</b>
Switzerland	<b>-75</b>	<b>-87</b>	<b>-74</b>	<b>-57</b>	<b>-85</b>	
Netherlands	<b>-65</b>	<b>-74</b>	<b>-52</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-49</b>	<b>-42</b>
Sweden	<b>-61</b>	<b>-76</b>	<b>-53</b>	<b>-34</b>	<b>-62</b>	<b>-44</b>
France	<b>-52</b>	<b>-63</b>	<b>-54</b>			<b>-30</b>
USA	<b>-25</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>-52</b>	<b>-31</b>
UK	<b>-15</b>	<b>-19</b>	-11	-1	-19	<b>-33</b>
New Zealand	<b>-12</b>	<b>-23</b>	<b>-22</b>	-11	<b>-35</b>	-5
Australia	-2	<b>-11</b>	-6	-3	-17	
Canada	2	<b>-14</b>	-3	<b>-14</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-18</b>

Countries are ordered by mean achievement differences in PISA reading; bold figures mean that achievement differences between natives and migrants are significant at the 1% level. Source: PISA 2003, TIMSS 1995, TIMSS 1999 and PIRLS 2001

In addition, some features of the Swiss obligatory school system seem to reinforce initial inequalities. Most Swiss cantons have a three-tier school system with early-tracking. This means practically that at the end of primary school (year 4, 5 or 6 – ISCED 1), students are channeled into 2 to 4 different lower secondary school tracks with so called “basic” or “expanded” curricula and intellectual requirements. Bauer and Riphahn (2006) show, through comparing those cantons with tracking after 5 and after 8 years, that intergenerational correlations between fathers’ income and sons’ income are higher in early tracking cantons (see also Falter et. al 2012).

#### From obligatory education to vocational training

In a nutshell, the Swiss transition regime can be described as an “employment centered transition regime” (Walther 2006, Stoltz & Gonon 2008) characterized by a highly stratified educational system and the predominance of (dual) vocational training. Obligatory school ends at age 15-16, thus at the level of lower secondary education, after which pupils are either following a general education school (leading to a matura) or following a dual apprenticeship. The latter means that they apply for a 2-4 year apprenticeship position in a firm and follow 1-2 days of schooling per week and have to decide – at this point - for a profession. At the upper secondary level, 65% of all young people enroll in a VET program, while 25 % enroll in mostly general education matura schools (Stalder and Nägele 2011). The entry into an (dual) apprenticeship (vs. a general education program) is mediated by different factors. The type of lower secondary level school seems to play a central role for the differentials in transition rates to either a general education program, an apprenticeship or into so called “bridging offers”. As Hupka, Sacchi and Stalder (2006 :15) state, “we can see that students attending *Gymnasium* programs had much better chances to enter a post-compulsory education program. On the opposite, we find students from *Realschulen*, the

<sup>246</sup>Taken from Schnepf (2007).

academically least demanding lower secondary programs. These young people have substantial problems getting an apprenticeship – and they also have little chances to enter an exclusively school-based program”. Researchers have identified a “stigmatization effect” (Meyer 2003, Meyer, Stalder, Matter 2003) for pupils from the lower school-types. Pupils from secondary school tracks “with low demands” enter, to a significantly higher degree, into apprenticeships that do not correspond to their intellectual level than students from lower secondary school tracks with higher demands, even if these students have the same PISA score in literacy skills<sup>247</sup>.

The pathways to employment (and to an apprenticeship) are highly influenced by individual, ascribed and institutional factors. Pupils in the first year of vocational training in apprenticeships with lower skill demands and pupils who did not find an apprenticeship at all seem not to be very different in terms of PISA-skills. Whether a pupil enters directly into apprenticeship or has to draw back on a transition measure depends not only on the level of educational achievement, but also on so called “ascriptive” characteristics (Hupka, Brunner, Meyer, Stalder, Keller 2012a: 212). Other institutional factors play a central role: when comparing different cantons, one sees that the number of students tracked into school tiers “with lower demands” correlates with the number of young persons in “transition measures”, certain “cantonal school-systems ration educational offers at the obligatory level for certain groups of pupils, which then have to be compensated for through transition measures” (Hupka, Brunner, Meyer, Stalder, Keller 2012b: 181). The simple fact to have visited a lower obligatory school track thus has – even when controlling for the effective PISA-competencies - an effect when it comes to selection processes at the level of the firm.

Entry in the labour market: selection processes and reasons for being without upper secondary education or becoming a so-called “NEET”

Employers decide autonomously if they provide apprenticeships and whom they provide apprenticeships. This means that they are the central gate-keeper for the entry into the apprenticeship system and for the later position of young persons in the labour market. These selection mechanisms play an important role for the transmission of inequalities (see for instance Imdorf, Haeberlin et al. 2004, Imdorf 2010) particularly in SMEs, which apply a firm specific selection logic that systematically differentiates between predefined groups of applicants without taking into account the specific qualities and competencies of the individual applicant. In a nutshell, pupils from lower school tiers have to compete with a higher number of pupils from higher school tiers. This leads to a negative group stereotype about the low “employability” of school leavers from the lower tiers (Solga 2005). Young persons with “ascribed” characteristics that act as negative market signals (lower school tier, migrant background) have not good prospects to find an apprenticeship. Characteristics like “employability” or “trainability” are thus not defined only through a straightforward relation between human-capital characteristics of individuals, but through a variety of factors defining their relative position in the labour-queue. In addition employers have the

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<sup>247</sup> “Even pupils of the tiers with “low demands” who fulfil the highest skill-demands (PISA-levels 4-5) do only have in one out of four cases (28%) a chance to find an apprenticeship with extended demands. For young persons from secondary school with extended demands this is the case for 3 out of 4 cases (72%)” (Meyer 2003 : 28).

tendency to give positions to pupils from obligatory school pathways with “extended demands”, even if pupils from school tracks with lower demands would be able to do the job.

As Meyer, Hupka, Brunner and Keller (2011) have shown on the basis of TREE-data, one quarter of the cohort of school leavers does not find a direct entry into vocational training after one year, thus having to draw back to so called “bridge offers” (ibid : 91). The results also show that a relatively constant percentage of NEETS (6-9%) persists until even three years after obligatory schooling. In 2006, 18% of the 2001 cohort who are not in education anymore have exited upper secondary education without having graduated (Meyer and Bertschy 2011: 97). These authors describe that “there is an alarmingly strong relation between non-completion/drop-out and social background<sup>248</sup>” (ibid: 97ff), while “students attending the basic requirements track drop out twice as often as students enrolled in the advanced tracks” (ibid: 99). Albeit the Swiss labour market absorbs populations without upper secondary education, they are exposed to a higher risk of unemployment, precarious jobs and bad working conditions. But even in the case of a successful apprenticeship diploma, the differential risk to enter an unqualified job after completion is higher for those from so called “intellectually less demanding apprenticeships”. As the Swiss educational report (2010) has shown, “less intellectually demanding apprenticeships (...) are significantly more likely to find either no job after graduation or only an unqualified job that would not have needed the apprenticeship” (ibid. 2010: 150). The apprenticeship system, as a main distribution mechanism of social positions thus has important effects on the labour-market entry patterns and positions, coming with higher risks for those who were not so lucky.

#### Young persons in social assistance

These institutional characteristics also have an impact on other social systems, and above all on social assistance. In the period between 2005-2012, the number of social assistance recipients without upper secondary education is constant around 70% (BFS, Sozialhilfestatistik 2012, Strukturhebung 2011). While the overall social assistance rate in Switzerland amounts 3.1%, it ranges from 10% in some, often more urban, cantons or towns (Bienne and Lausanne with a rate around 10 %) to very low rates in small, rural cantons (1% in GL, GR, SZ, TG). Young persons and children are over-represented in social assistance: nearly a third of all recipients are below 18 years (75.000, resp. 29.9%, OFS 2013). A report on young persons in social assistance by Priester (2009) showed that 23% of young persons (aged 18-25) in social assistance were also in training. One can thus consider that in certain cases, parents are not able to finance the training of their children, while the stipends offered by the cantons do not always suffice to provide enough financial resources for economic subsistence.

This is also due to the fact that in comparison to other continental welfare states with a dual VET-system, Switzerland seems to have maintained a more “liberal” character when it comes to familial responsibility and the role of the market for providing VET. In contrast to Germany, no obligatory schooling beyond 16 years exists. In contrast to Austria (VET-

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<sup>248</sup>Youth from the socioeconomically most disadvantaged tercile are four times more likely to early drop-out than their peers from the most privileged tercile (15% vs. 4%).

guarantee), the state is less involved in the regulation of the access to training. In Switzerland, parental support is expected until 18 years, but extends until children have terminated an upper secondary training (art. 277 Swiss civil code). Switzerland's transition regime has thus like other continental welfare states a familialist character, in comparison to "universalist" transition regimes in which "the right to social assistance applies to young people from 18 years old onwards regardless of the socio-economic situation of their families. If participating either in formal education or training they receive an educational allowance" (Walther 2006: 125). This familialist dimension has implications for social inequalities as well. According to the CSIAS/SKOS guidelines, social assistance only pays training insofar the parents are themselves dependent on economic support, and insofar the family budget is insufficient (even insofar the young persons are older than 18 years) (Dubacher and Deschwander 2008: 18). Stipendia for training are cantonally organized and thus very heterogeneously implemented. Furthermore, wealthy parents are able to pay private schools for their children. As Siegerist (2007) states, "in the Swiss informatics sector, 25%, for the region of Zurich 40%, are privately financed". This specific institutional arrangement leads to certain coverage gaps, particularly for specific groups, which is also reflected in social assistance statistics.

It makes sense to give a short appraisal of the Swiss regime according to Van de Velde's question: "who, the state, the market or the family is in charge of the period between obligatory schooling and the labour market?" (Van de Velde 2013: 134). This will be achieved through comparing it with other countries disposing of a similar dual apprenticeship training system (Austria and Germany) and through comparing its social protection policies for young people with other regime types. As stated by Meyer (2009), the Swiss VET-system is, when compared to its German and Austrian counterparts, more strongly relying on the market, more liberalised, and state intervention in the provision of upper secondary education is at its minimum here. While Austria puts a relatively large amount of money in state-funded VET-places (the so called Austrian Youth guarantee), and Germany has (at least officially) a mechanism to coerce employers to provide sufficient apprenticeships, Switzerland heavily relies on a corporatist arrangement in which the willingness of employers to provide enough apprenticeships is given priority. Additionally and in comparison to Germany, the obligatory school age is relatively low (16). After that, the state is not responsible for them anymore. In comparison, Germany has a "vocational school obligation" until 18, and Austria's Youth guarantee (a guarantee for a VET-place launched in 2008) gives the state a stronger hand on the problem of youth unemployment. While Switzerland has issued the "common goal" of reaching an upper secondary completion rate of 95% until 2015, the means to reach that goal are much less coercive.

## **4.2 Actors and definitions of disadvantage**

"Disadvantage" is far from being a "common" word in the vocabulary of policy-makers. Nevertheless, the last years have witnessed a policy controversy about the inclusiveness of the apprenticeship system and its effects on inequalities and social exclusion, in which cleavages between different interest groups (employers, youth organisations, the state, trade-unions, the cantons, parents) appeared. These discussions also led to new policy constructions of young people and considerably re-oriented policy actions with regard to young people.

## Discursive struggles on the inclusivity of the VET system: manpower demand vs. a social demand approach

Access to upper secondary education is, in the Swiss system, operated through a market inclusion mechanism. Employers and firms themselves define how many apprenticeships they create, how many apprentices (and in which domains) they recruit and what the access conditions to apprenticeships are. The demand is thus regulated by a market driven<sup>249</sup> manpower demand approach, in which the “demand” of apprentices in different sectors is dependent on the economic fluctuations of the labour-market. During the 90s, when Switzerland was facing an economic depression, the number of apprenticeship places dropped permanently, only recovering to the before crisis level in the late 2000s. The development of so called “transition measures” goes back to this period. Also a large number of reforms have been initiated. During the 90s, this market inclusion model did not work anymore, and political actors had to take some action.

Three events are central for understanding the discursive struggles about the inclusiveness of the Swiss VET-system. The LIPA initiative (1998), a popular vote initiated by youth organisations and the trade unions, aiming at inscribing a right to vocational education into the federal constitution, the implementation of the new VET-Act (2004) taking up only minor parts of the initiative and maintaining a market based inclusion model, and the implementation of de-centralised political measures (2007-2010) in which coordinated support measures for young people were to be implemented in the cantons at the instigation of the Confederation.

The LIPA initiative claims to implement a right to vocational training in the constitution would have enabled the Confederation to take action in those cases where not enough apprenticeship places were provided by employers. They would supplant, similarly to Germany<sup>250</sup>, a manpower requirement approach by a social demand approach, in which

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<sup>249</sup>Official definitions of the Swiss VET-system describe it as a system which “enables young adults to make the transition into the working environment and ensures that there are enough qualified people in the future. It is geared to the labour-market and is part of the education system” (OPET 2006, p. 3, cited in Meyer 2009). Vocational training in Switzerland is seen above all, as described in the aims of the VET law, as “a system that (...) ensures integration into the world of work and that transmits to the individual the capacity and the readiness to be flexible and to persist in the labour-market” and additionally, that “serves the competitiveness of firms” (art 3a and 3b, VET act 2004). While the Swiss vocational training system has always “oscillate[d] between the promotion of education and the promotion of the economy” (Maya Graf G, BL 27.11.2001), the role of educational governance seems to become an increasing factor for attracting businesses. This is also well reflected in the introduction statement by the parliamentary Anita Fetz during the second discussion of the vocational Act: “the educational level of a population is nowadays the strategic competitive advantage of a country - if we want to keep up in that competition, we will have to invest in our youth and invest in modern professional fields” (Fetz, SP *ibid.*).

<sup>250</sup> In difference to Switzerland, in Germany, a judgment of the constitutional court of 10.12.1980 arguments that “every young person who is willing to enter VET has to be provided with a place even if the free flow of forces should not suffice to fulfill this task”. See Granato and Ulrich (2013) on the strategies of German employers’ organizations to avoid state pressures to provide more apprenticeship places. Switzerland, in turn, has a “can” formulation (VET Act, art 13, allowing the

employers would be urged to train over their labour-force demands. Nevertheless, the initiative was rejected on the ground that it would threaten the character of vocational training as a “shared duty” by the state and the employers, that it would lead to a “socialization” (*Verstaatlichung*) of vocational education, a “dismantling” of the dual apprenticeship system, and a “state-provided educational system”, that it would lead to a situation in which young people “are trained against the market needs” (Engelberger FDP) necessarily leading to higher youth unemployment. Also would the initiative convey “the wrong message to young persons” and “undermine their own responsibility” (Pfister, SVP)<sup>251</sup>.

#### From structural disadvantage to “individualised” educational and social deficits

These developments were also accompanied by an important discursive shift: while youth unemployment was largely seen as outcome of structural problems of the Swiss economy during the 1990s, the implementation of the VET-act paralleled with a more individualized problem description. Research commissioned by Government (Egger et al. 2006) had identified that transition problems were restricted to a small group of 3-5% of a cohort, and that these could be clearly identified by specific risk factors. This report especially stressed the need to focus on the ability of transition systems to work towards not giving to the young persons wrong incentives to prefer “suboptimal” solutions like for instance transition measures or “doing nothing” over entering education (Egger et al. 2006: 58). The study concluded that a risk group of “2000 to 2500 do in a permanent manner not manage to enter the employment system and disposes of a high risk potential to be recurrently or even permanently dependent on welfare benefits” (53). This would “produce considerable costs for social insurance systems” (ibid). According to Egger, Dreher and Partner, the current organization of the transition system in the 6 analyzed cantons was poorly equipped to account for those 3% percent of young persons that were in the terms of the report “unwilling” and “unmotivated” to search for an apprenticeship or to enroll for a transition measure and thus at risk of dropping out on a long term basis. The report strongly emphasized the “incentive structures” (chapter 5) of the different transition systems presented to the young persons, for instance the motivational semesters through providing a small monetary allowance may incite young persons not to search for an apprenticeship and to choose - according to a rational choice model - welfare over work. These groups would dispose of “multidimensional deficits” and would therefore require more specific support, a support that the new VET-law foresaw. In addition the situation on the apprenticeship-market allegedly bettered, and the fact that a number of apprenticeship places were left free, did lead to a discussion in which policy-makers were more and more thinking about ways to reduce disincentives for young people to enter apprenticeships. The lack of apprenticeship places was seen as a problem of a lack of educational competencies.

Cleavages on the obligatory school age and the discursive turn to envisage young people as objects of “social investment”

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Confederation to get active in the case of a “misbalance” on the apprenticeship-market). Indeed, state-intervention is less pronounced in Switzerland.

<sup>251</sup> All citations drawn from: [http://www.parlament.ch/ab/data/f/n/4612/56378/f\\_n\\_4612\\_56378\\_56913.htm](http://www.parlament.ch/ab/data/f/n/4612/56378/f_n_4612_56378_56913.htm) Popular initiative 00.086 (National council, Winter Session 2001, 11th Session, 12.12.01).

As federal actors were not able to impose more far reaching measures, the discussion about youth unemployment and the apprenticeship crisis happened mainly on the inter-cantonal level and in the corporatist arena. One example to describe the cleavage between different actors is the question of the elongation of the obligatory school age. While some actors, for instance the CSIAS/SKOS, fully in line with its perspective of “education as a social investment” (CSIAS/SKOS2007: 7) was calling for “the right and the duty for training until the age of 18” (ibid.) and suggested to “examine the possibility for an elongation of the obligatory training period” (ibid.), this proposal was not taken up by the other actors. Indeed, these laws would have to be implemented by the cantons, which did not have a proper interest in doing so, as this would have caused considerable expenses. By contrast, the Confederation, confronted with low legislation capacities in this field tried to initiate exchange projects and to foster coordination at the inter-cantonal level. One example of such arrangements was the implementation of an exchange project called “Nahtstelle 2010”, on behalf of the “conference of cantonal directors of education” (CDIP/EDK) in which members of the corporatist arrangement met and decided on a “common commitment” about the reforms to be implemented. It is clear that these had a less binding character than a federal law: they rather had the character of “recommendations”. These recommendations stated that the number of upper secondary diplomas had to be augmented to 95%, initiated the introduction of standardized tests for assessing the skills of young persons in order to better match them to labour market needs, and stated that VET should directly follow after the end of obligatory schooling (young persons were considered to enter too late into VET). At the same time, attempts were started to better coordinate the different legal vessels (VET, social assistance and unemployment insurance) in order to ensure that education was given priority over integration into work<sup>252</sup>.

“Educationfare”?

At the same time, during the subsequent reforms of the unemployment insurance, the related benefits for young persons without upper secondary education have been restrained, both in terms of extent of monetary benefits, length of the waiting period and duration. These measures were not only introduced for ensuring cost containment, but were based on a “different policy construction of youth” (Jones 2005: 43). Within a rational choice model of unemployed youth, giving unemployment benefits to young people would propose the “wrong incentives” to young people who would subsequently rather stay in unemployment than search for an apprenticeship. Unemployment insurance benefits for youngsters aged 16-25 have therefore been subjected to stronger conditionality, an increased waiting time prior to accessing benefits and have been retargeted to integration into an apprenticeship. In the words of Doris Leuthard, at that time Federal Councilor in charge of the federal department of economy, the unemployment insurance had to be reassessed in order to “make employment more attractive than social insurance” and “remove all incentives for young persons to stay at home” (Tabin 2012). On the side of

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<sup>252</sup> This was based on the observation that some employment measures did not act according to these principles. Particularly the unemployment insurance financed measures (the motivational semesters) that were accused to have institutional disincentives to integrate youngsters the fastest possible into work, as such countering the overall objective.

social assistance too, a stronger focus on integration into apprenticeship appears, as position papers of the CSIAS/SKOS (2007) bear witness of (CDIP, CDAS, CDEP 2007). “In each and every case, young persons should experience a considerable pressure from every agency with which they come into contact to follow a basic vocational training. Where social insurance systems can set conditions, they should focus -wherever possible- on training” (CSIAS/SKOS 2007). While unemployment insurance revisions effectively restricted the access to motivational semesters and implemented stronger conditionality criteria, the different inter-cantonal conferences, regrouping the cantonal directors of each political resort (educational CDIP, social CDAS, and economic CDEP) re-affirm the principle of “education before work” and argue that “despite the fact that we do not dispose of a legal basis allowing an obligatory follow-up of young people after obligatory schooling, it is nevertheless possible to systematically monitor those young people who did not find a solution after obligatory schooling” (CDIP, CDAS and CDEP 2007: 3) and to “propose them adequate measures” which are considered “more effective than a prolongation of the obligatory school age above 16 years” (ibid.: 3).

### **4.3 Contested fields and issues**

Several factors are decisive for the definition of disadvantage in the Swiss context. First, the institutional fragmentation due to the complex arrangement of responsibilities across different horizontal and vertical levels leads to the fact that disadvantage is hardly addressed in its multidimensional character. For educational actors, it is mainly formulated in terms of skill-supply questions and individualized educational disadvantages of specific groups of a cohort of school leavers. Young persons become “problems” insofar they regroup different risk factors, which is endangering their transition to VET. For labor-market actors, disadvantages are only relevant (and thus subject to socio-political intervention) insofar they constitute a direct barrier to entry into employment, respectively in terms of matching supply and demand. For social insurances, disadvantage (especially when related to educational participation) matters mostly in terms of the costs it produces at later life course stages. Here, young people are conceived as “social investment subjects”. Educational participation is not primarily important because of its relevance for inequalities, but because it reduces risks to become dependent on social assistance.

Secondly, the trajectory of the construction of disadvantage in the Swiss context implies a switch from structural explanations of disadvantage to an explanation in terms of individual risk factors and individual responsibility. In the wake of transforming the issue of youth unemployment into a politically “treatable” social problem, the discursive framing has put much emphasis on individual volition, at the expense of more far-reaching reforms, which would have necessitated supplanting a labour-supply approach with a social demand approach.

## 5. Policies, instruments and levels of intervention

### 5.1 Main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty

Policy Domain	Distribution of responsibilities in the federalist arena	Programmes/Policy Papers
Unemployment Insurance	Legislation: Confederation Implementation: Cantons	
Social Assistance	Legislation and Implementation: Cantons Open coordination through inter-cantonal bypasses	CSIAS/SKOS (2007): “Being without training and unemployment amongst young adults. Ideas for an integrated strategy for fighting the risk of poverty of young adults”  “Professional and social integration of youth: common position of the CDIP, CDAS and the CDEP” (2007)
Education and VET	VET: Confederation Obligatory schooling: Cantons (with intercantonal coordination) Stipends: Cantons	Federal law on vocational education and training (2004)  Case-management vocational training (2010)  2011 Statement of the common educational policy goals for the educational space Switzerland (Swiss conference of the cantonal directorates of education) (CDIP/EDK: 2011)
“Youth Policies” (narrow sense)	Legislation: Cantons Framework law: Confederation Inter-cantonal coordination	2008: For a Swiss policy for children and youth  2013: Federal law on the encouragement of extracurricular activities of children and youth

Due to the high cantonal autonomy of the regions (cantons), it is very difficult to describe exhaustively the different instruments and policy measures aiming at young persons. The federal level governs only VET and upper secondary education, the unemployment insurance and some minimal regulations for youth and children rights (fixed in constitutional articles). As the cantons are also responsible for the implementation of these policies, even these more “standardized” approaches show a high degree of regional variations in the line of executive federalism.

**Unemployment insurance** (UI) is regulated at the federal level through the LACI and financed by both employers' and employees' contributions. Access to related benefits is dependent on prior contribution (the general rule corresponds to a twelve-month period of contribution during the last two years before unemployment), which penalizes those youngsters who did not enter employment, respectively an apprenticeship<sup>253</sup>. Nevertheless, the LACI provides a small financial allowance (450 CHF) for youngsters after obligatory schooling, who are "available for employment" and who are participating in a motivation semester (SeMo).

Switzerland has followed the trend of its neighbour countries by adopting a pro-employment orientation in its social policies since the mid-1990s (Bonoli and Häusermann 2011). The 1995 reform of UI has initiated a dynamic of activation that has been pursued recently with a further legal reform of the LACI. The cost-containment measures (and the increasingly restrained access to benefits both in time and in waiting period) that have entered into force in the beginning 2011 amount to transferring costs towards the cantons, especially in relation to young people. At the same time as costs<sup>254</sup>, responsibility for implementation is more and more rescaled to the local, territorial level (Kazepov 2010, Bonoli and Champion 2013). The cost-containment measures of federal schemes thus increasingly have switched the space in which these problems are treated to the local, cantonal level. Young persons have been hit particularly hard by the cost containment measures in the unemployment insurance. This involved the redefinition of "suitable job" for persons under 30 as well the reduction of eligibility periods for young persons.

**Social assistance** is a residual, means tested benefit that is paid and administered by the cantons and the municipalities. The national association CSIAS/SKOS defines amounts of benefits and emits guidelines, but has no legal power and cantons are free to follow their guidelines or not. It is impossible to describe the overall social assistance situation for Switzerland, due to the lack of sufficient and robust indicators and to divergent terminologies (Bonoli and Champion 2013: 15) and the fact that "each city and region develop programs [...] in a bottom-up manner" (Lindemeyer and Walker 2010 : 66), which makes it very hard to give an overall overview. Particularly, differences in the cooperation between the different social insurance systems, and the amount of support of social assistance beneficiaries for employment issues exist. During the last years, several parliamentary initiatives<sup>255</sup> strived to tackle inter-cantonal discrepancies with a federal framework law, which has been sustained by the CSIAS/SKOS. Until now, federal authorities have rejected these initiatives, arguing that social assistance was a task that necessitates social proximity and, under this light, the cantonal regulation was more appropriate.

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<sup>253</sup>During an apprenticeship young people contribute to the unemployment insurance. Nevertheless apprenticeship wages are generally so low that they do not allow young people to lead an autonomous living (a monthly starting wage around 800 CHF), they are thus still dependent on parental (or if existent state) support.

<sup>254</sup>Cantons receive less money per participant/measure, and young people are faster urged to draw back on social assistance measures or educational measures, which are of cantonal responsibility.

<sup>255</sup>During the last three years, two motions have to be mentioned in particular: parliamentary object n°11.3714 (2011) and n°12.3013 (2012), both driven by MP Thomas Weibel.

**Vocational education and training** is a federal policy field, and follows a corporatist logic. This means that dual vocational training is defined as a “common task” of the federal state, the cantons and the organizations of the world of work. The new VET-act (2004) changed nothing substantially in this distribution of tasks but introduced a minimal “rescaling” of responsibilities in favor of the Confederation. It equips the Confederation with the possibility to fund pilot-projects (art. 4), especially in relation to “disadvantaged youth” (art. 55), to fund “disadvantaged groups and regions” (art. 7). The VET law furthermore urged the cantons “to provide measures which prepare young people with *individual educational deficits* for initial vocational training” (art. 12). 10 % of the overall federal budget is put in innovative pilot projects, amongst others those aiming at “disadvantaged youth”. Thereby, the federal state finances **training networks** (40 in Switzerland) and supports the cantons for the introduction of a **case-management vocational training** (CMFP).

The project “Transition/Nahtstelle” took the form of a working group initiated in the wake of the reform of the VET legislation by the federal conference of directors of public education. It regrouped the corporatist actors of the VET system (employers’ organizations, trade-unions, and different federal ministries). They emitted guidelines for the optimization of transitions : all young persons should have the possibility to achieve an upper secondary education diploma adapted to their competencies; 95% of 25-year-old persons should have an upper secondary diploma until 2015; a better preparation to the choice of a profession in obligatory schooling, with the use of assessment instruments to this purpose; to work against the augmentation of the entry age in upper secondary education and to provide “additional offers” for those who require help in this respect. Furthermore the guidelines argued in favor of a better coordination of the different actors and identified tensions between “labour-market measures” (SeMos) and educational transition measures. Young people should not be attributed to “transition measures” through the employment offices. Education should be given priority. Beside these guidelines, the transition project organized different working groups, commissioned reports and emitted “good practice” examples.

CMFP is a federal strategy introduced in 2010, aiming at fostering the achievement of a post-compulsory vocational education, with an objective of achieving an upper secondary completion rate of 95% until 2015. This goal has been re-iterated in the 2011 Statement of the common educational policy goals for the educational space Switzerland by the Swiss conference of the cantonal directorates of education (CDIP/EDK: 2011). It is accompanied with 20 mio CHF funding for encouraging cantons to implement CMFP at a regional level, under the monitoring of SEFRI and the Swiss conference of cantonal directorates for education. CMFP aims at a better coordination of the different actors responsible for young people who did not enter an apprenticeship on an individual case-level.

Even though the policy domains and instruments described above deeply impact on youngsters’ opportunities and living conditions, they usually do not figure under the heading of youth policies. For this reason, we can consider them as “implicit youth policies”. By contrast, “explicit youth policies” cover mostly extracurricular activities, participation of young persons and protection of minors. By contrast with Germany in which a Federal Law covers the whole range of child and youth related services (from foster care to open youth work), these different fields are separated and responsibilities distributed on different levels. When we talk about “youth policy” in the Swiss sense, it usually involves

extracurricular activities, the support of youth organisations, and issue of youth participation.

Nevertheless, in 2008 in response to different parliamentary interventions, the Confederation commissioned a report for the development of a Swiss youth policy. The most important parliamentary motion was asking for the establishment of a federal framework law that would require the cantons to develop an “encompassing children and youth policy” (Janiak 00.3469, 27 Sept 2000), as well as the setting up of a central federal institution responsible for youth policies<sup>256</sup>. The revision of the law was broadly supported by a coalition of NGOs in the field of open youth work and representative bodies of youth organizations, called “coalition for effective youth policies”. This bold proposal faced political and constitutional barriers, and instead of strengthening a “Swiss-wide” development of coherent youth policies, the law finally voted in 2013 put much more emphasis on “soft” mechanisms of coordination, information exchange and “self-coordination” of cantons. As a result, inter-cantonal exchange forums (the Swiss conference of social directorates) in which the different cantonal youth officers meet twice a year play an important role. On the positive side, the introduction of a new law, *Loi sur l’encouragement de l’enfance et de la jeunesse (LEEJ)*, which came into effect in 2013, went beyond the focus on classical youth organizations (scout, sports, etc.) and included activities of “open youth work<sup>257</sup>” and informal learning. It thus extended funding possibilities for these actors. The law furthermore was geared by the will to pursue a more strategic allocation of funds, and it aimed at financing umbrella/professional organizations in the field of youth through “performance agreements” which allocate not only money, but very specific tasks to those organizations.

Despite these recent developments there is a strong (horizontal) institutional fragmentation of the domain of youth policies. As a study on different cantonal strategies in the field of youth policies describes (Frossard 2003), important differences in the definition of, as well as in the degree of transversality of, youth policies exist on the cantonal level. This is due to the fact that competencies are distributed amongst different actors, both governmental and non-governmental, at cantonal, federal and communal level, which are directly or indirectly involved in policies and politics concerning youth. At this level of public intervention, initiatives towards youth are brought together mostly under the labels of *protection, encouragement, children rights* and *participation*. The law voted in 2013 only covers the aspect of “encouragement” and policy makers pointed our attention to the fact that legislation in the other fields is bound to be developed in the coming years. The action in these fields of intervention consists mainly in encouraging the development and implementation of youth policies at the cantonal level, financing umbrella organizations,

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<sup>256</sup>By contrast with other countries there is no ministry that is directly responsible for youth questions. The federal organ that is officially in charge of “youth policies”, and labeled as such (“*Secteur en charge des questions de l’enfance et de la jeunesse*”) is part of the Federal office for social insurances (OFAS).

<sup>257</sup>There are important terminological, conceptual and even professional differences of “open youth work” according to the linguistic regions of Switzerland. While the German-speaking part is strongly influenced by the German tradition of “*offene Jugendarbeit*”, the French speaking region heavily draws on a conception of “*socio-cultural animation*” influenced by France.

regional or local youth organizations or supporting youth-oriented projects led by third sector, private and non-governmental organizations, according to existing legislation.

## 5.2 Fields of non-intervention

Interviewed actors, both from governmental and third sector organizations identified different areas in which state intervention is minor and suggested possible action fields. Actors from social assistance pointed to the fact that the overrepresentation of youth with migrant background in social assistance depends on structural factors on which the social security system itself can have no impact. Particularly, families with fewer resources in front of the Swiss educational system but as well mechanisms of structural discrimination in employment lead to the fact that social assistance “*is partly tackling dysfunctions of the school system*” (Head of SPAS). Furthermore, the relative success of the integration through apprenticeships approach is due to a favourable situation on the labour-market<sup>258</sup>. One administrator emphasized that the state has no obligation to provide “transitory solutions” for young people who do not find an apprenticeship. This leads to the fact that for some groups among a given cohort, measures are lacking or not sufficient (or not always appropriate). The transition system is trapped between the political call for “no youth without a solution” and the political sensibilities and budget constraints when it comes to funding more and/or new measures. The Swiss trade-union organization identifies a gap in the very heterogeneous application of stipends and reclaims their extension for apprentices who only have a small salary that doesn’t guarantee their subsistence. As stipends constitute a prime vehicle for equality of opportunities, the harmonization of the “absurd stipend-federalism” (SGB 2013) is overdue and reclaimed by various actors<sup>259</sup>, as the present situation leads to very different eligibility patterns, making opportunities dependent on the canton in which a person lives. In a similar vein, umbrella associations of youth organizations and a coalition of youth organizations and parliamentarians lobbied in favour of a “framework law” for youth encouragement activities on the federal level. While this law has been implemented in the beginning of 2013, umbrella associations criticize its non-binding character and highlight the fact that money initially meant for non-formal leisure activities is used by some cantons to develop youth “protection” schemes. They furthermore criticize the often “formal” definition of political participation and highlight that open youth work has an important role to play for participative experiences.

Scientific actors also play a central role in the identification of gaps. Different studies have shown that “carousel effects” (Regamey 2006, Drilling 2004) exist, forth-and-back-switching beneficiaries between different social insurance regimes often to the detriment of the most vulnerable. Third-sector organizations providing employment measures for obligatory school leavers deplore that some legal prescriptions coming from the unemployment insurance are not flexible enough for the population they deal with, and highlight a conflict

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<sup>258</sup>The question remains whether present success rates can persist when the labour-market situation worsens.

<sup>259</sup> See for instance the claim by Swiss trade-unions <http://www.sgb.ch/themen/bildung-jugend/artikel/details/das-recht-auf-bildung-auch-in-der-praxis-wahrnehmen/>

between professional and organizational values on the one hand and legal and administrative prescriptions on the other hand. They state that a measure with *educational* aims should not be attached to the *unemployment insurance* and that the financing modalities do not allow much margin of manoeuvre when it comes to innovative developments. Of particular importance are advocacy groups in the field of children rights, which regularly identify gaps within particular practices at Swiss level, as well as international regulations, which also had an influence in the implementation of Swiss youth and childhood policies around the three pillars of the convention of children rights (protection, provision, and participation). It seems as if the CRC acts as a catalyser for interest organizations to make their claims heard. Caritas Switzerland criticizes for instance the gap between Swiss asylum policies and the ratification of the CRC and claims for a more ambitious early-childhood education system, conceived as a tool for tackling inequalities. Other actors, for instance the children's rights framework, or the Swiss Center of Expertise in Human Rights (SCHR), through their monitoring and reporting activity, also identify specific gaps in child protection and henceforth strongly contribute to the institutionalisation of rights of children and youth. While these aspects contribute to the framing of youth policies, they correspond to rather abstract and legalist concerns, which appear to be mostly disconnected from the daily preoccupations of young people.

## 6. Policy making and implementation

By contrast with other EU countries, Swiss federal authorities do not have current plans to carry out national measures to tackle inequalities or better young people's living conditions, for example with regard to the socio-economic environment and the opportunities or obstacles this may pose for the social inclusion of young people. As many interviewees confirmed, competencies towards children and young people are essentially left to cantons and municipalities, the federal state playing only a subsidiary role (i.e. supporting specific initiatives). Even though the Federal Youth Commission has proposed a definition of youth policy as a "global policy which considers at all levels and in every realm the situation, the needs and aspirations of young generations"<sup>260</sup>, explicit youth policies are usually not conceived as including those crucial fields like education, employment and training, even though they have a considerable impact on the living conditions and capabilities of youngsters. In this section, we thus focus on the lower levels of public action to highlight the impact of local entrepreneurs and institutional actors in the framing and implementation of policies oriented towards disadvantaged youth.

### 6.1 Who are the actors responsible for the development and delivery of policy, and the main instruments to tackle inequalities and poverty?

In almost every Swiss canton, youngsters whose integration into the labour market is put into question, be it defined as "missing" or "unachieved", have the opportunity to participate to **SeMos**. Several actors spontaneously mentioned the role of SeMos when it came to disadvantaged youth. Indeed, this program is targeted at young people who are

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<sup>260</sup>Rapport de la Commission fédérale de la jeunesse, "Les jeunes, cogneurs ou souffre-douleurs?", 1998, p.15. Original citation in French: "...politique de société qui prenne en compte, à tous les niveaux et dans tous les domaines, la situation, les besoins et les attentes de la jeune génération".

without a professional solution or dropped out of apprenticeship after their obligatory schooling. At the local level, this program represents undoubtedly a relevant tool for policy makers to intervene on youth transitions. SeMos came into birth during the first half of the 1990s at the instigation of local entrepreneurs who were looking for innovative tools to foster the market integration of youngsters with bad school background, in a general context of economical crisis and increasing unemployment rates. SeMos have been affiliated to the unemployment insurance measures, where they now figure under the heading of “temporary employment programs” (art. 59 LACI). They are administered by the cantonal offices for employment measures, which finance mainly third-sector organizations. In the canton of Vaud, nevertheless, due to the introduction of “one stop-shops”, young people’s attribution to SeMos happens through the regional case-manager, in order to avoid “cherry picking” of private providers and to ensure that the measure is appropriate to the needs of the young person. Cantonal offices receive a fixed amount from the State secretariat for economic affairs (SECO) and subcontract active labour market measures to third-sector organizations, which deliver these services. Again, differences exist in the cantonal employment strategies and the way to attribute labour-market measures. Due to the “provider-purchaser” split between the cantonal employment offices and the implementing associations, in some cantons, a quasi-market model for employment measures exists, leading to the introduction of market like-principles in governance of ALMPs. In the canton of Vaud, this model rather looks like a subvention model with preferred provider organizations that are submitted to “output” indicators (rather than performance indicators). This, and the fact that most SeMos are implemented by third-sector organizations, explains why they can take very different forms. These organizations are themselves members of an association of organizers of employment measures (AOMAS) on the federal level, in which quality-standards and norms are implemented. Membership in this organization is mandatory if applying for cantonal subsidies. While some SeMos specialize in the direction of “social economy” through developing production activities, others specialize in more individualized support systems. Due to the high involvement of associations - in which many civil society actors are involved – SeMos correspond also to an organizational model in which social innovation is taking place.

In the field of social assistance, cantons and local actors are responsible for the design and implementation of measures. In the canton of Vaud, for instance, policies are designed by the Department of Health and Social Affairs, more precisely the SPAS, and implemented by regional social centers (CSR) according to the SPAS directives. Measures are subcontracted to third sector organizations in a way very similar to that of the unemployment insurance. The canton of Vaud has put a strong emphasis on a “social investment” approach to “youngsters in difficulty”. As the head officer of the SPAS describes, “50% of resources for social assistance are put at the disposition of young persons, which constitute 20% of the social assistance population”. In a context of considerable increase of public expenditure and the political pressures resulting from this, cantonal policy-makers decided to lead a relatively ambitious program. Indeed, among the nearly 1’800<sup>261</sup> RI beneficiaries aged between 18 and 25 in 2006 (i.e. the year in which this program was launched), only 30% had completed vocational training or earned a professional degree (Von Muralt and Spagnolo 2007). In other words, around three quarters of young RI beneficiaries had not completed a

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<sup>261</sup>In 2010, this figure had almost doubled, as 3’000 young adults are social assistance recipients.

vocational training. The program, termed FORJAD, was precisely aiming at equipping young persons in social assistance with a VET-diploma. It includes thereby a broad range of measures like a pre-apprenticeship preparation in social integration measures, tax-reductions for employers who provide apprenticeships to “young adults in difficulty” (JAD), a switch from social assistance benefits to cantonal stipends for those who found an apprenticeship, and a regular follow-up and coaching of youngsters<sup>262</sup>.

In our view, the FORJAD program provides an interesting insight on the Swiss mechanism of social innovation. Firstly, its introduction has been accompanied by a new way of framing the problem of young persons in social assistance. Youth is seen as a “window of opportunity” to put “young people back into the circuit” (Head of Office, SPAS). In this process, advocacy and third-sector organizations played a central role, especially through the publication of research reports (Regamey 2001, 2006) by the Protestant social center (CSP)<sup>263</sup> that launched the debate and brought the topic of “young people in difficulty” from “the streets to the suites” (McLaughlin Scott 2009). The head officer of the SPAS describes that this problem has then be taken up by the cantonal authorities and “institutional entrepreneurs”, gathering political support across the different policy fields and identifying hitherto unrecognized issues, especially the necessity of a better coordination between social assistance benefits and cantonal stipends, which required to mobilize actors from different policy fields. Such a reframing of youth issues encountered a fertile ground because it could be articulated within a discursive field at the federal and local level that favored innovative programs. Indeed, educational actors had issued the goal of augmenting the VET completion rate to 95%, the CSIAS/SKOS was following a social investment discourse, and the different federal and intercantonal exchange vessels highlighted coordination problems between different schemes. At the same time, research reports were highlighting the problematic situation of young persons on the federal level (TREE 2001, 2003), as well as international actors (OECD 1998, 2001).

A specificity of the FORJAD-scheme is the role of local, sometimes very small, third-sector organizations (sometimes only following 10-20 persons) for the provision of integration services, providing a broad range of opportunities at the disposal of cantonal actors. The governance of provider organizations is on the one hand accompanied by a focus on performance indicators, mainly the rate of persons who could find an apprenticeship after participation, and on the other hand, seems to involve a lot of negotiation and exchange between providers and purchasers, especially when it comes to defining new needs. As the Head of the SPAS puts it:

“we are putting out calls for tender, but providing associations also suggest us measures. They are also informed annually in relation to the goals of our office, but we are ultra-pragmatic (...) we have no minimal conditions like they exist for labour-market measures but we negotiate very concrete goals and let them use the means which they consider right, without too much standardizing the offers”.

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<sup>262</sup>A very detailed description of the scheme can be found in the final report on “Educational, vocational and Policy landscapes in Europe” (Bonvin, Dif-Pradalier, Rosenstein 2011). We will only focus here on a few relevant points for the SocIEtY project.

<sup>263</sup>The CSP is a small and state-independent organization, which supports many young persons outside of the social security system.

The Head of office describes that this decentralized recourse to third-sector organizations allows to better react to local contexts as they are often very well involved in the local economic tissue. The contact to training enterprises is thus facilitated. These contacts are crucial, as these youngsters “have fewer chances to find an apprenticeship when passing through the regular recruitment and selection channels”. The work of local third-sector organizations, with a follow-up coaching during the apprenticeship is meant to allow “reducing the uncertainty of employers during recruitment”, which requires “trust of employers” in the measure and these organizations could more easily work “on the image of the young persons” also because civil society actors are represented inside them.

In the realm of VET, the federal impulse towards a case management approach has stimulated new institutional arrangements at the cantonal level, involving a relatively broad range of actors at the cantonal level, who compose with pre-existing institutional arrangements. In the case of the Canton of Vaud, the federal strategy has led to the creation - under the lead of the cantonal office for specialized education (SESAF) - of **5 regional one-stop shops (Guichets T1)**, in order to achieve the aim of 95% of youngsters in upper secondary education. They operate an administrative follow-up and monitoring of the cohort of school leavers, attributes them different transition measures, monitors young people already “at risk” inside the compulsory schooling system and provides counseling for the “hard cases”. Additionally, the CMFP scheme was introduced to “*know where young people are at*” (Head of SESAF) after they finished a transition measure without finding an apprenticeship, dropped-out of an apprenticeship or were outside the “institutional system” for some time. It covers the age-range between 13 (early monitoring of risk-pupils in obligatory schooling) to 23 (those over 18 not in social assistance and without an apprenticeship). It thus intervenes before social assistance. Young persons who want to have recourse to a transition measure have to be registered at the Guichets T1, which perform a psychological assessment (competencies and skills, interest tests) in 70% of all cases and is meant to offer further support.

These rough indications about the local implementation pattern of youth policies in the canton of Vaud will be elaborated upon in greater detail in WP4 report.

## 6.2 Youth participation in policy making

During the last decades, the feeling of citizens that their voices are not heard or that initiatives to influence government policy are ignored or inconsequential has led to vivid debates on the forms of democracy. In Switzerland, youth activism has led to the introduction of several measures to give young people a voice. Since 1991, there is a *Youth session* that takes place once a year in the house of Swiss parliament in state capital Berne. The guarantee of a formal participation at the very heart of Swiss central political institutions should however not mask its limited impact. Indeed, the potential of a once-a-year meeting between youngsters without previous familiarity or common achievements, experimenting contrasted realities and speaking various languages may be put into question. Such an interrogation is formulated for instance by Kay and Tisdall (2010), criticizing student and youth councils for their isolation or detachment from other associated activities and their inability to use young people’s own networks. On the other

hand, social homogeneity (in terms of educational level, political sensitivity, milieu of origin, etc.) may limit conflict and social opposition within this arena, thereby neutralising the essential characteristics of a vivid society. Furthermore and as a matter of fact, young people's debates inside the federal assembly during the early years after the introduction of the *Youth session* were restrained to some pre-given topics and the number of participants could not exceed a certain threshold. To tackle these structural biases, regional sessions have been introduced in 1997. However, another major problem remained unsolved, which gave youth participation a symbolic or tokenism dimension rather than effective impact: The fact that claims and petitions brought by youngsters during their common meeting remained largely unheard.

To facilitate contacts with "official" political representatives and foster lobbying opportunities, a federal forum impelled by an umbrella organization of youth organizations, the CSAJ (*Conseil suisse des activités de jeunesse*), took form in 2001 (composed by approximately 15 youngsters who benefit from access-badges to Federal House). Operating beside the *Youth session*, members of this *Youth forum* are thereby able to transmit a list of claims to the Federal chancellery, organize podiums and direct meetings with representatives, or bridge the gap with specific youth organisations. Such initiatives are in line with the idea of governance, which refers also to the inclusion of a broader range of actors within the democratic processes, for reconciling the interests of government and civil society. At the federal level, the CSAJ takes an active role in this process, partly as a political "vigil" (identifying youth potential issues and interests), who may intervene on the framing of a parliamentary object, partly as a consultation organ whose members are frequently included in the expert commissions in relation to youth issues. Beside its institutional and parliamentary activity, the CSAJ has launched several field initiatives, like for example *Speak Out*, a 3-year pilot-project aiming at fostering participation of unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers (UMA) in Switzerland. Through monthly workshops involving diverse themes and activities, UMA are able to voice the issues affecting them, with the goal of gaining visibility and making own voice heard in political arenas. However, an evaluation of this project reports a relatively low and inconstant participation, and mentions that UMA consider problematic that "the project does not help their asylum procedure or improve their situation now" (Bauman, 2011:4).

Youth integration in Swiss democratic institutions reverberates also at lower levels of the federal system. To take the example of the canton of Vaud, youngsters benefit from the possibility to take part to the Cantonal Youth Commission (*Commission des jeunes du Canton de Vaud, CdJ-Vaud*), whose aim consists in formulating opinions and addressing position-taking to policy-makers regarding actual or youth particularly relevant issues. As a political achievement, the CDJ-Vaud mentions in its report of activities that several propositions of the council regarding cantonal legislation have been accepted and even included by cantonal authorities<sup>264</sup>.

At the communal level, various initiatives and measures exist to foster youth participation. Many municipalities (and not only the biggest) include in their functioning a youth council. In Lausanne, youngsters can become members of the Youth Municipal Council (*Conseil des*

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<sup>264</sup>See CDJ-Vaud report of activities (2011-2013), pp. 12-13. URL : [http://www.cdjvaud.ch/pdf/RA2011\\_2013.pdf](http://www.cdjvaud.ch/pdf/RA2011_2013.pdf)

*Jeunes de Lausanne, CdJL*), composed by 60 youngsters from age 13 to 25 who seek to develop local projects. This organ meets once a month and disposes of an annual budget of 100'000 CHF. Amongst its most recent realizations, one can mention a campaign against homophobia ("*Youth against homophobia*"), which has been accompanied by several expositions and classroom presentations, and succeeded in introducing an ad-hoc anti-homophobia disposition in the new cantonal legislation on the education system (*Loi sur l'éducation obligatoire, LEO*). At the communal level, youth participation is also implemented through the organization of participative forums, allowing social issues and needs regarding local life to emerge and be collectively discussed. In the specific context of the canton of Vaud, municipalities that are willing to develop such events can benefit from the support of promoters (so-called *promoteurs projets jeunesse*) sponsored by the canton to provide both technical and organizational counselling to interested parties (including to youngsters). The organizations of the open-youth are also involved in encouraging youth participation. As the central coordinator of the 16 community centers of Lausanne put it, "*bridging the gap between civil society and the municipal authorities is a central part of the community workers' mission*". Recent initiatives like *citizens' walks*<sup>265</sup>, during which municipal representatives, urbanists and community members walk together through the district, aim precisely at integrating the voice of the latter in the definition of needs regarding public infrastructures.

## **7. Social innovation and its role in the delivery and development of existing and new youth policy**

### **7.1 How is social innovation defined?**

Social innovation is an implicit topic in Swiss policy-making. As described above, due to the separation of competencies about youth related issues both at the horizontal and vertical level, the national state can influence policies concerning youth only in a sectorial and limited manner. We distinguish between two types of social innovation. Social innovation can happen in a top-down manner, insofar it is used as a policy coordination tool at the federal level. In this case, social innovation is used by central state-actors to foster local experimentation (e.g. at the cantonal/communal level), that is then disseminated across different levels and spheres. Social innovation may also happen in a bottom-up manner. In these cases, local actors develop innovative policies, identify local needs and flexibly respond to these needs. Whether or not these policies are later on institutionalized and up-scaled, these processes often entail a process, in which a social problem is re-framed from a new perspective. Due to the high prevalence of third sector organizations relevant for policy implementation and policy making, this strand of innovation plays a crucial role too. In our view, bottom-up and top-down processes are equally relevant for the analysis of social innovation in the field of youth policies. Bottom-up processes are particularly interesting when considering the less institutionalized actors (e.g. advocacy groups) who play a central role for "*reconceptualizing youth services because they propose new ways to view young people, address youth issues, and work with youth in proactive ways that depart significantly from past policy responses to youth*" (Scott et al. 2006: 693). Last but not least,

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<sup>265</sup> English translation of the French expression "*balades citoyennes*".

local associations and advocacy organizations are themselves heavily involved in the delivery of services, and sometimes propose local innovative initiatives which are then up-scaled on the cantonal or even national level. This bottom-up dynamic refers to processes in which youth issues are transported from “the streets to the suites” (Scott Mc Laughlin 2009).

#### Top-down social innovation

As the federal state cannot directly legislate in most policy fields, federal actors opt for so called “by-pass strategies” (Obinger et al. 2005), which serve to compensate for central state regulation. These are often able to overcome federalist rigidities, but often remain one shot fast-patches rather than coherent reforms. They try to foster the cantonal development of certain policy fields through agenda setting, benchmarking, and federal funding of “model-projects” (the so-called *projets-pilotes*). Such a model could, if viewed in a positive way, be termed “laboratory federalism” (Kerber and Eckardt 2007) in which policy learning happens through spreading new knowledge about appropriate social policies, fostering peer-review mechanisms and up-scaling locally implemented socially innovative policies. Many scholars observe that this process may have a potential to disseminate innovative policies from one canton to another. Some describe this mode of governance as having some similarities with the European open method of coordination (Bonoli et al. 2008 for youth policies, Kraus 2010 for the implementation of CMFP, Baumann, Stremlow et al. 2010 for a comparative analysis of old age pensions, social assistance and unemployment-insurance). Some others propose to use more extensively an OMC-like procedure for Switzerland, in order to “foster mechanisms of knowledge exchange between cantons and the identification of best practices” (ibid 155). Meyer (2009) describes Switzerland in terms of a “life-size VET laboratory”, in which “a variety of models and solutions make it possible to view varying cantonal features as experiments being conducted in a sort of large laboratory as a basis for decisions on further innovation” (Gonon 2002: 91). The federalist arrangement is thus not only seen as a barrier for reforms, but also as an important pool for innovation: “federalism not only contributes to a fragmented social assistance system but is also a source of policy innovation” (Obinger et al. 2005: 294).

One example of such an innovation process is the field of VET policies and the implementation of specific strategies for supporting “disadvantaged” youngsters in their transition from school to work. As a “transversal” policy issue, many of those fields that were touched by the transition problem were under cantonal responsibility and, accordingly, the federal state could not directly legislate in these areas. In order to compensate this, the federal policy-makers used a by-pass strategy and gave to the new VET law a strong innovation dimension. According to the new VET act (voted in 2004), the Confederation is indeed equipped with the possibility to fund pilot-projects (art. 4), to foster their implementation at cantonal level in relation to “disadvantaged youth” (art. 55) and even to fund “disadvantaged groups and regions” (art. 7). Since 2010, these funds have been largely used to support the cantons to launch inter-schemes or inter-institutional coordination initiatives and a “case-management for professional training”, as the new VET law urged the cantons “to provide measures which prepare young people with individual educational deficits for initial vocational training” (art. 12). In addition, a forum between different stakeholders has been created in order to allow knowledge exchange and to foster

actors' coordination, which led to *Nahtstelle 2010*, a project providing "guidelines" according to which the transition from school to work should be organized. As the transition guidelines stated, "existing concepts should be collected and analyzed, and good practices should be diffused" (NAHTSTELLE 2010).

In the realm of case-management for education and training, federal funding was subordinated to the introduction of a cantonal concept, with a written and signed commitment of the different services included in the coordination. According to the delivery of these different milestones, the federal office responsible for vocational training attributed fixed amounts to the cantons (Leber and Schmidlin 2010). In the same time, the SEFRI (formerly OFFT) partly defined the target-group and the problem description, but did so through the diffusion of information and the commissioning of reports. Commenting this "cognitive harmonization" of the problem, Kraus (2010) describes the implementation of the case-management training as a new form of "soft governance" and establishes a parallel between the European OMC model and the Swiss complex VET multilevel governance system. As he puts it, the "complex interplay between actors and the balance between cantonal actors and the federal state requires the use of political strategies that can be characterized as soft modes of governance. Their common aim can be described as governing policies through processes" (Kraus 2010).

Is this project innovative? As a matter of fact, cross-service collaboration and joint-up service work is an important issue in Switzerland, as the fragmentation between different legal vessels, the lack of clear responsibilities and the multitude of actors led to situations in which no institution really felt responsible for young adults. In some cases, youngsters were simply "parked" in "misleading trajectories", especially where lacking coordination between the different legal vessels produced poor transition outcomes. One can thus talk about an emerging new "social need", to which case-management oriented VET-projects seek to respond. As a policy officer of the former OFFT states,

"(...) these are all things that have to be discussed at national level, because these laws are national laws, and they are all built in a way that such coordination is difficult. This means that we cannot take money from VET to pay measures for a person in a social insurance because we don't have any stipends, and in case there are stipends, they are most often regulated cantonally and only for certain cases, not for others. This is the biggest challenge."

Nevertheless, the complexity of the issue shows that a "soft governance" mechanism with its non-binding character may be an insufficient response to the coordination challenge:

"The difficulty is to implement collaboration between different offices, (...) the fact that a vocational training office is meant to work with the unemployment-insurance, the invalidity-insurance, etc... The biggest challenge is to ensure that these institutions actually collaborate, also financially, you have to imagine, these are youngsters who sometimes didn't go to school for a long time, but the social insurance says, we are not willing to pay them a vocational training... who pays then a vocational training? It is also about such things."

There was thus a real “coordination challenge”. As Bonvin and Rosenstein (2009: 10) state, this “illustrates this political ambition towards more coordinated integrated policies”. However even the latest version remains a rather one-off collaboration on a case-by-case basis, and its implementation largely depends on the goodwill of the cantons. As one federal high administrator stated, “This is not a real policy, it is rather a project; as soon as a canton decides not to participate anymore, nobody will keep it from doing so”.

Furthermore, other dimensions of the program put the “innovative aspect” of such a policy into question. While the exact implementation of the program was left to the cantons, certain characteristics were strongly pre-defined. Federal actors operated with an individualized description of young adults as a risk group, and reduced the problem of transition to a small group with “multiple disadvantages”, thus purporting a specific problem description. In the light of the longer discussions on reforms in the VET-system and the weak degree of top-down binding regulations, this policy could maybe be depicted as an alibi-policy for avoiding larger, structural reforms in the field of transition policies.

In other cases, federal actors did not directly rely on the cantons. The new VET-law even accorded 10% of the VET budget for the promotion of pilot projects “in the public interest”<sup>266</sup>, and explicitly funded offers which are aiming at disadvantaged youth, the promotion of gender equality, etc. These funds were open for any kind of organizations, and financed up to 60% of projects. Amongst others, the project *L’avenir prime sur l’origine* (*Future matters more than origin*) was launched at the instigation of training trade unions, sensibilizing employers for fair selection practices (especially towards youngsters with migrant-background). With the same funds, the relatively successful policy of “training networks” (Imdorf and Lehmann 2011) was installed. Other projects, for instance a participative theatre group for apprentices, have been funded through this mechanism<sup>267</sup>. These examples show that social innovation is sometimes initiated by the top, with more or less strong guidance, and with the idea to foster local initiatives and associative actors’ ideas for “innovative” policies. A similar mechanism has been used in the field of “explicit” youth policies, with an even more pronounced reference to “innovation”, conceived here again as a policy tool for inciting institutional change, but without touching the competence order between confederation and cantons.

**“We observed that many cantons and many cities and municipalities have similar problems, and that the cantons react with very interesting measures, but that everywhere they have to start to “re-invent the wheel “, because this knowledge is not put at their disposition, it is not diffused, because no canton knows that other cantons have had similar problems. Because of this, the Confederation said : there will perhaps be the possibility to collect good practices at a certain point in time, but now we are rather trying to do an inventory of what exists, and the confederation should try to disseminate this knowledge” (Policy officer OFAS)**

The new law on the “encouragement of youth activities” (2013) institutionalized new funding modalities, not only for local, experimental programs of “national relevance”, but as

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<sup>266</sup><http://www.sbf.admin.ch/berufsbildung/01545/index.html?lang=fr>

<sup>267</sup>[www.rookie-forumtheater.ch/rookie.html](http://www.rookie-forumtheater.ch/rookie.html)

well for the development of cantonal youth policy concepts. Hereby, the idea of innovation and policy “scaling up” is explicit, as the projects have to “contain innovative aspects”, be “transferable”, they have to correspond to a “proven need” and the knowledge transfer has to be ensured. Again, national third-sector organizations are largely involved in submitting projects with up-scaling potential. As examples, we can mention the project *Femmestische*<sup>268</sup>, initially aimed at creating exchange possibilities for migrant women (mothers in particular) in “private or institutional contexts in which they can exchange on topics of health, everyday life or education”<sup>269</sup>. Nowadays, this program is implemented in most cantons (29 regional centers on the national territory). Another funded project is called *Zwischenräume*, submitted by a small, local independent association in Zurich. It aims at using temporarily non used urban spaces, houses or buildings for conducting participative projects with young persons. This project is much less developed and anchored very locally, but it corresponds to a clear social need<sup>270</sup>. Another project, introduced by the canton of Valais and funded by federal authorities because of its national relevance, was the creation of a new job profile, the so-called *animateur socioculturel itinérant*. As especially small rural municipalities often do not have sufficient resources to implement their own youth work organizations and networks, the idea of a mobile youth work unit was meant to be transferred to other rural contexts.

Moving away from local, specific projects, the top-down support for social innovation also happened on a more regulatory and legislative model. The OFAS also concluded provision agreements with cantons in order to develop cantonal youth policy concepts. In the wake of the introduction of Swiss youth policies at the federal level – pushed by the adoption and implementation of the CRC, cantons are supposed to implement cantonal youth policy laws. This implementation was very heterogeneous: as Frossard (2003) described, not all cantons dispose of explicit, transversal youth policies, and their definition is very different among cantons. The openness of the procedure leads to the fact that cantons develop their youth policies in very different manners – which also leads to conflicts about resources. As a federal officer describes “of the 4 cantons with whom we work during this period, some develop “youth observatories” which coordinate youth policies in a transversal manner, others develop their child protection policies” (Policy officer OFAS).

These developments are seen critically by other actors. Different interviewees highlighted that organizations (both private and third-sector, both national and regional associations) are competing for the same funds, and that this policy would not allow avoiding “redundancies” and double responsibilities for certain fields. Such “innovation mechanisms” are not able to make up for a lack of regulation. The rhetoric of innovation in terms of policies seems sometimes to be used for the top-down diffusion of policy agendas, breaking with the conception of locally defined social needs.

### Social innovation through “bottom-up” processes

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<sup>268</sup>Submitted by “Elternbildung Schweiz” (literally: “Education of parents - Switzerland”)

<sup>269</sup><http://femmestische.ch/fr/ziel/>

<sup>270</sup>The question of youngsters “occupying” urban spaces is still an important issue, particularly in Swiss-German media, in which it took the form of a moral panic, leading even to curfews and bans for young people from some public spaces.

On the other side, third-sector organizations and associative actors seem to play a central role in social innovation as well as in the identification of social needs. Several examples can be given that describe this process. As such, associative actors had an important role for setting the issue of “young persons in social assistance” onto the policy agenda. The success of these advocacy tasks was aided by their relative independence from the state and the fact that they had a longstanding tradition in supporting young persons. Examples show the central role of third sector actors also when it comes to the institutionalization of specific support structures. For instance, in the canton of Vaud, the support scheme TEM-Accent which consists in coaching young persons during their apprenticeship, has been developed by a central third-sector player two years before it has been identified by state actors as a “good practice” and has been institutionalized through the creation of an ex-post law. The identification of needs, as well as the implementation of a service within the third-sector, preceded its institutionalization through state actors.

The processes of social innovation may be based on the specific role third-sector organizations play for the delivery of services in Switzerland. Particularly in the canton of Vaud, relationships between third-sector providers and state purchasers seem to be based on long term collaboration, and the financing mode based on subvention contracts with preferred providers rather than competition between different actors in a quasi-market. As such, third-sector organizations often act as “institutional entrepreneurs”, as well in the identification of needs, the problem construction and in policy implementation. Nevertheless, even in these cases, social innovation sometimes remains simply “good” post-hoc responses to a mainstream policy that is hardly identifiable as “innovative”.

Other innovations started at the local level and were diffused at the national level. For example, the project *Lift* started with a local project and has then been transferred on a Swiss-wide level (it was initiated by a third-sector organization to provide short-time work appointments for youth with difficulties in obligatory school). Similarly, locally implemented coaching schemes for young persons in apprenticeships - initially developed by a local organization in response to an emerging social need - have been implemented more widely after the possibility of benefitting from such services was institutionalized in a new law (partially on successful lobbying of these organizations).

These practices surely correspond to common definitions of social innovation, as they are both “innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need” (Mulgan 2006: 146) and are “predominantly diffused through organizations whose primary purposes are social ones” (ibid.). However, the question whether these practices are simply new organizational forms to reach pre-defined, classical aims, or if they are also innovative in the definition of the problem itself requires further investigation. Such an investigation would have to analyze more thoroughly the informational basis of these policies, including the identification of the different “conceptions of poverty and social exclusion the different strands of social innovation are (often implicitly) working with and the causes and consequences implied in these conceptions” (Osterlynck, Kazepov et al. 2013).

## 8. Discussion and conclusion

The understanding of current issues and actual trends in the realm of youth policies should integrate the specificities of the Swiss federal system and its multilevel governance model. The relatively weak-binding character of federal prescriptions leaves ample space for regional experimentation, which materializes in the implementation of local policies involving a variety of actors, which cannot be detached from the locally situated processes of issues identification and problem definition. In the domain of VET and employment, as well as in the field of social protection and assistance, cantonal actors are key players in the definition of the IJJ of disadvantage and social inequalities in relation to youth. In the case of the canton of Vaud, this report provides several insights showing their influence over the introduction of new schemes and programs that have a deep-seated impact on the living conditions of young adults. Putting the focus on the genealogy of such programs allows highlighting the role of very locally anchored organizations of the youth support network, be it as “whistleblowers” for the definition of “new” social needs, negotiation partners or as service providers aiming at correcting youngsters’ individual biographies marked by risk-factors. In this configuration, cantonal policy-makers can rely on national orientations and strategies in order to obtain federal support, allowing better coordinating crucial sectors such as VET, employment and social assistance and creating new school-to-work transition measures.

In the realm of more “explicit” youth policies, the emergence of discourses emphasizing the role of innovation is intimately bound with the introduction of the federal law aiming at “encouraging children and youth activities” (LEEJ), which gave birth to new opportunities for developing projects. By contrast with previous “implicit” youth policies, these initiatives are based mostly on a homogenous conception of youth as citizens, which does not aim firstly at correcting disadvantages or inequalities. As many in the open youth work active interviewees insisted, participative initiatives are, maybe first and foremost, conceived (and used) to provide an overall positive image of youth inside the society.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of key issues

Key issues	How is this issue defined and which key terms are used to describe this issue
Youth policy	<p>Youth policy in Switzerland is strongly characterized by the federalist organisation of the Swiss political system. There is a “minimalist” framework legislation on the federal level, evolving around the three main pillars of “protection, participation and support”. Implementation being left to lower levels (cantons, and particularly municipalities), there is a high heterogeneity on the local level. Policies that carry the label “youth policy” are mostly “soft” policies, and responsibilities are distributed on different political levels. Attempts for more transversal youth policies have been started, but rather evolve around “vertical” integration rather than “horizontal” integration. Youth policies usually carry the label “children and youth policy”, they thus cover the range of 0-25 years, and are -on the federal level- mainly tackling youth organizations, prevention programs (violence and alcohol) and rights of children and youth. Education, employment, and social protection policies for young people are either regulated on the local level or covered by very different political levels. There are however policies specifically aiming at youth in these fields.</p>
Youth disadvantage and youth inequality	<p>Disadvantages are not a direct concern of youth policies on the federal level. Disadvantages and inequalities are mainly tackled – and more particularly since the mid 90s - in the field of education policies and vocational training. The Swiss skills formation system, evolving as a dual apprenticeship system, lead to several disadvantages adding up with a primary transmission of disadvantage in the three-tiered educational system. These problems are “framed” through three distinguishable discourses. Firstly, a critique of “discrimination” within the selection decisions of employers, secondly, a discourse framing young persons as “welfare subjects” and “NEETs”. A third – more marginal – discourse mainly purported by NGOs, is tackling youth disadvantage as an outcome of poverty. In general, disadvantages are seen as problematic only insofar they may generate later costs (cf. social investment discourse) and constitute an absolute barrier to enter work, or insofar they are not seen as fair according to a model of merit-based competition about social positions.</p>
Social innovation	<p>While social innovation was not a “common” term in Switzerland, several interviewees pointed to important dimensions and processes of innovation. Federal actors described top-down approaches of social innovation which were geared at up-scaling local, innovative practices, and at supporting local implementation of policies defined as innovative. This strand of social innovation derives from policy experimentation within a federal</p>

	<p>multi-governance system. These processes were sometimes supported by specific innovation funds at the central state level. On the local level, third sector organizations played an important role for the development of “innovative” approaches, sometimes through re-framing a policy issue and advocacy activities which resulted in the discovery of new needs, sometimes through developing innovative approaches in service delivery and implementation on their own.</p>
Participation	<p>Switzerland has a well-developed network of youth councils, both on the federal and cantonal level. In the canton of Vaud, municipalities are legally requested to provide “participative experiences” and in many municipalities, youth forums are implemented. Nevertheless youth participation happens mostly on a formal level. The Swiss policy process leaves much space for consultation on legislative projects, in which youth organisations, but also young people themselves can play a role. Participation mostly involves formal and structured channels. In the canton of Vaud, support structures for “youth projects” (ranging from the production of a song to the construction of a skate-park) exist.</p>
The abilities of young people	<p>On the “soft” level of youth policy, a “capability-friendly “ language prevails. Other important policy sectors (esp. education, employment) rather draw on arguments from a human capital perspective, in which the Swiss vocational training system is largely seen as a key success factor for the Swiss economy. Nevertheless, a network of open youth-work, strong local initiatives (often at city level) and of NGOs, as well as the heterogeneity of youth policies in Switzerland, do not allow to formulate a definite answer to this question. While individualised support systems have been established, these often focus on the preparation for applying for an apprenticeship. Subsistence-supporting measures, and monetary benefits allowing for an extensive educational moratorium period (like for instance in Scandinavian countries) do not exist to the same extent.</p>

## Appendix 2: List of acronyms

<b>ALMP</b>	Active labour market policies	
<b>AOMAS</b>	Swiss association of labour market policies organizers	Third sector
<b>CDAS/SODK</b>	Conference of cantonal directors for social affairs	Inter-cantonal
<b>CDEP/VDK</b>	Conference of cantonal directors for economic affairs	Inter-cantonal
<b>CDIP/EDK</b>	Conference of cantonal directors for educational affairs	Inter-cantonal
<b>CdJ-Vaud</b>	Youth commission of Vaud	Cantonal
<b>CdJL</b>	Youth council of Lausanne	Communal
<b>CFEJ</b>	Federal commission for children and youth	Federal
<b>CMFP</b>	Case management for vocational training	
<b>CRC</b>	Children rights convention	
<b>CSAJ</b>	Swiss council for youth activities	Federal
<b>CSIAS/SKOS</b>	Conference of cantonal institutions of social assistance	Inter-cantonal
<b>CSFP</b>	Conference of vocational training services	Inter-cantonal
<b>CSP</b>	Protestant social centre	Third sector
<b>CSR</b>	Regional social centres	Cantonal and communal
<b>FASL</b>	Foundation for socio-cultural animation in Lausanne	Third sector
<b>FORJAD</b>	Vocational training for youngsters in difficulty	Cantonal
<b>JAD</b>	Youngster in difficulty	
<b>LACI</b>	Law for unemployment-insurance and insolvability compensation	Federal
<b>LAJ</b>	Law for youth activities	Federal
<b>LEEJ</b>	Law for children and youth encouragement	Federal
<b>LEO</b>	Law for obligatory education	Cantonal
<b>LIPA</b>	Initiative on the adequate supply of apprenticeship places	Federal
<b>OFAS/BSV</b>	Federal office for social insurances	Federal
<b>OFS</b>	Federal office of statistics	Federal
<b>OFFT (see SEFRI)</b>	Federal office for training and technology	Federal
<b>OMC</b>	Open method of coordination	

<b>ORP</b>	Regional employment services	
<b>RI</b>	Minimum wage for integration (in the canton of Vaud)	Cantonal
<b>SECO</b>	State secretariat for economic affairs	Federal
<b>SEFRI (former OFFT)</b>	State secretariat for training, research and innovation	Federal
<b>SeMo</b>	Motivation semester	
<b>SESAF</b>	Office for training support and specialized education	Cantonal
<b>SGB (trade-union)</b>	Swiss federation of trade unions	
<b>SPAS</b>	Office for welfare and social affairs	Cantonal
<b>TSHM</b>	Mobile street workers unit	Communal
<b>UI</b>	Unemployment-insurance	Federal

### Appendix 3: Institutional affiliation of interviewed partners

Federal	State high administrators Umbrella youth organisations	Office fédéral des assurances sociales (OFAS) - domaine Famille, générations et société – secteur Questions de l'enfance et de la jeunesse Conseil Suisse des Activités de Jeunesse (CSAJ) Association faîtière suisse pour l'animation enfance et jeunesse en milieu ouvert (DOJ) Secrétariat d'Etat à la formation, à la recherche et à l'innovation (SEFRI)
Regional	Social policy and assistance Education and training Youth participation	Service de prévoyance et d'action sociale (SPAS), affilié au Département de la santé et de l'action sociale (DSAS) Service de l'enseignement spécialisé et de l'appui à la formation (SESAF), Transition école métier T1, affilié au Département de la formation, de la jeunesse et de la culture (DFJC) Délégation à la jeunesse, Centre vaudois d'aide à la jeunesse & Service de protection de la jeunesse (SPJ)
Communal	Youth delegates Open-youth work	Délégué à la jeunesse, Ville de Renens Délégué à la jeunesse, Ville de Lausanne. Fondation pour l'animation socioculturelle Lausannoise (FASL).
Third-sector organizations	Education and training Youth participation Employment	Centre vaudois d'aide à la Jeunesse (CVAJ) (third sector, both youth work and employment) Promoteur "projets jeunesse" Semestre de Motivation (third sector) Coordination Romandie, Semestre de motivation (SeMo)
Total		18

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