

In the last few years the Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) has been following with interest and published the results of the social research project that is carried out through a youth survey based on a compared European perspective. We have learnt of the changes that have taken place in the conceptualization of youth transitions to adult life and the differences observed in different European Union countries.

The monographic report that we present today focuses on two situations which form part of what we call constellations of disadvantage in youths in Europe: a) youths who leave school early and whose qualifications do not go beyond compulsory secondary school level, and b) youths who are unemployed and/or whose contracts are temporary or precarious.

## Young people and constellations of disadvantage in Europe



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**Young people and constellations  
of disadvantage in Europe**

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## TOPIC



Young people and constellations  
of disadvantage in Europe

## TOPIC

During the last years, the *Instituto de la Juventud* (INJUVE; the Youth Institute) has been interested in and has published the results of social investigations on young people from a comparative European perspective. Through its publications (for example, the Youth Report 2005 and the *Revista de estudios de Juventud* nr. 56 / 2002 and nr. 65 / 2004) the Youth Institute provided information on the changes in conceptualization of young people's transitions to adult life, as well as on differences observed among different European countries. In former times, people got a job after education/ training and then formed a family, but young people's transitions in Europe are no longer linear, as highlighted by the concept of "yo-yo trajectories". In current times, the different stages are reversible: Today they are in training; tomorrow they will find a temporary job and stay "employed" for a while, after that they may enter unemployment, and then again re-enter training or find another (temporary) job. "Yo-yo transitions" are fragmented, reversible and young people's future is uncertain.

In modernity, deviations from the project plan, the norms or the traditions were disapproved of. But at the same time, people perceived these factors as impositions, as threats to their freedom and personal development. However, nowadays its absence is seen as a source of uncertainty and insecurity by many people. Whereas in post-modernity, social institutions created to support the individual have lost plausibility. Norms and values are called into question and institutions, while competing to ensure people's safety, fail to do so, therefore being called into question as well.

The new situation has forced people to drastically change strategies, resulting in what Bauman calls liquid modernity.

*"Liquid is something that can easily change its shape. Applied to the concept of society, this means a revolution, as the only thing remaining constant is constant change. For the first time in human history we are confronted with change as a permanent condition of human life. This leads to the necessity of developing appropriate behaviours and to dispose of contacts in a state of constant change. There are no reference models to follow"* (Bauman, Z. 2004, "Flüchtige Moderne, supervision, Sonderheft ANSE-Konferenz 2004:3)

This means that knowledge, as well as information, is provisional. There are no routines, no transferable models nor valid recipes. There is not a unique authority, there are many and they are in constant competition. And they frequently contradict each other. The individual has to choose the one he prefers. In liquid modernity, to learn and to forget is a simultaneous process, because what you learn about the world today will be useless tomorrow. Bauman (2004) explains this new situation as a consequence of the continual change we are going through, underlining that "learning" is precisely that: what we consider to be true, useful and effective one day, will no longer be so tomorrow.

The sociologist Ulrich Beck, in his book entitled "Risk society (1986)", analyzed the current state of society basing his analysis on the paradigm of "individualization". Applying this concept to situations, personal relations, problems or events we face every day in present society (which Beck calls second modernity, or Bauman characterizes as liquid society) we can interpret and understand them.

The trend towards individualization in society is the main characteristic, the distinctive sign of the second modernity society. Individualization shows itself in the **dissolution** of previous socio-historical forms and links, meaning subsistence dependences and traditional dominance (dimension of freedom); **loss of traditional securities** regarding know-how; background norms and beliefs (dimension of disenchantment), and a **new form of social cohesion** (dimension of control/integration), this is, a new way of relating to each other, a new kind of social unity. (Beck, 1986:206)

Therefore, the concept of individualization expresses that people are "forced" to choose, to take decisions; traditional links are no longer valid, links to lean on are not available anymore and, as a consequence, we have to build up new ways of relating to each other, new social networks.

Freedom, singularity and different ways of living are opportunities offered to us by second modernity society. But at the same time, hence its ambivalence, the individual can no longer turn to the family or the social environment to receive help, life orientation or examples for individual situations.

Faced with this new situation of constant change, trying to be oneself, having to take decisions, constantly choosing, people need knowledge and individual skills to cope with the decisions they



have to take. Individualization does not mean that social structure has lost importance, in terms of origin and opportunities. Social inequality linked to resources and opportunities also persists in individual trajectories, leading to broader or narrower biographical choices. Individual ability to manage the own transition to adulthood fundamentally depends on social capital, cultural knowledge, support received by the family and opportunities and restrictions related to education, gender, social origin and ethnic group. In view of this new situation, the need of being able to access individualized counseling to cope transitions from school to work, and to other stages in life, becomes evident.

Inequality in young people's social capital makes *constellations of disadvantage* more and more visible during decision-making, although it is the need to decide by oneself what makes these constellations visible.

This monographic issue focuses on two situations, which are part of what we call *constellations of disadvantage* of young people in Europe: a) early school leavers with qualifications below compulsory education and b) unemployed young people and/ or young people working in temporary or precarious jobs.

The European Council meeting in Lisbon (23-24 March 2000) carried the label "Towards a Europe of Innovation and Knowledge". Clear objectives were stated and defined. They were to be met by 2010. Objectives such as to lower early school leaving, youth unemployment and job precariousness was among the objectives.

Half way through, in 2004, the Commission commissioned a report to assess the progress in the "Lisbon Strategy". The workgroup was under the direction of former prime minister of the Netherlands, Wim Kok. Results were not optimistic and forced EU-governments to redefine ongoing strategies and programmes. The European Council of March 2005 redefined the Lisbon Strategy as suggested by the Kok report.

During the years 2004-2005 a group of researchers from 13 different countries (Austria (AT), Bulgaria (BG), Denmark (DK), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), Spain (ES), Finland (FI), Greece (GR), Italy (IT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), United Kingdom (UK), Rumania (RO)) worked on a thematic study of policy measures related to disadvantaged youth, commissioned by the DG for Employment and Social Affairs, EC. The article by Andreas Walther and Axel Pohl presents a detailed explanation of the project.

One of the objectives of national reports was to compare social responses and measures implemented in different countries in order to solve specific situations of disadvantage, as well as to gather information about policies and identify factors that make some measures more effective than others.

This number of the journal includes a summary of the situation in six European countries, chosen for their very particular characteristics or for the "Good Practices" that have been developed in the respective countries. Bulgaria was selected because it can be important to gather information about its situation and about specific measures related to the Roma ethnic minority before joining the EU; it is worth to compare the situations in Britain and Finland, two countries that obtained excellent results in the PISA study (OECD), although Finland suffers from high unemployment and Britain shows high youth employment rates. In Denmark and Austria there is low youth unemployment (5.6%) and low early school leaving; the early school leaving rate in Slovenia is 4.2%, but at the same time the youth unemployment rate is 16.9%, with a high rate of temporary jobs – 37.9% of all temporary jobs are being carried out by young people under 25. And finally, Spain was selected due to its high early school leaving rates, the high rate of temporary employment and also the Good Practices, mainly on a local level.

The article "Reactions of the European Union to the situation of young people: Employment Plans, Lisbon Strategy, Comprehensive Reform Policies", by **Andreu López Blasco**, presents the most relevant policies of the European Commission, from 1997/98 to 2005; policies tending to favour

convergence, promote employment creation – mainly for young people, women and long-term unemployed people – and approve measures to encourage young people to stay in educational institutions. There is a clear relation between policies promoted by the European Commission and EU member states and the known information about the situation of young people and, therefore, a brief tour through the most recent investigations carried out in the EU, Canada, Australia and the United States is made. Also the results of an evaluation of Employment Plans (1998-2001) are presented: from the perspective of second modernity society (Ulrich Beck) or using the metaphor of liquid modernity introduced by Zygmunt Bauman. As a consequence of the new situations that young people have to or may face, different action lines are proposed in the field of youth policies, considering that young people are “forced” to take decisions by themselves. The objective must be to carry out comprehensive youth policies that include (financial and personal) structures and resources in order to create a different form of social support, where young people can feel completely accepted as “negotiators of their own matters”.

**Mario Steiner (AT)**, in the article “Disadvantaged youth in Austria”, describes the most important indicators related to disadvantaged youth and, after that, in the second part of the article explains why Austria has a comparatively privileged situation. However, there are also specific challenges for Austria, challenges that are analyzed in the third part. In the fourth part, the intervention strategies and the “Good Practices” are presented, with an effort to do an interesting methodological presentation, summarizing the relevant indicators of the presented experiences in a table. The outcomes are based on the analysis of diverse reports about policies, different assessment studies and there have been calculations done, using the Labour Force Survey and other statistics related to labour market and educational system.

The article by **Siyka Kovacheva (BG)** “Constellations of disadvantage and policy dilemmas in youth transitions from school to work in Bulgaria” presents, taking into account the background of radical social change that happened during the nineties, the effort to overcome the observed deteriorations in transitions of young people from education to employment and in social participation in general, as a consequence of the change from centralized planification and state economy to a market economy. With the disappearing of the State of the active interference in the regulation of relations between social groups, young people were affected by the disappearing of the security of the designs of transitions, leaving them today in the sea of risks and uncertainties of societies regulated by the market. In the last part 2 examples of good practices are presented.

**Torben Bechman Jensen, in collaboration with Louise Joergensen and Camilla Weltz (DK)**, in the article “Answers to the constellations of disadvantage of young people in Denmark from the perspective of the individual”, present in the first part a general vision about who is considered disadvantaged youth in relation to un-employment and education in Denmark. In this first section, contextual elements, the educational system and the problems faced by Danish society are introduced.

The second part of the article presents three different types of good practice. These include a new initiative of support and advising (counselling), the production schools and the activation policy. These three “good practices” are chosen for their broadness and their substantive importance in the field of policy initiatives, which potentially are offered to a great number of young people in danger of marginalization. All three policy experiences are a good example of the reaction to the new situation of young people in the society of second modernity – there has to be an offer of counselling and support to allow people to take decisions individually.

**Mirjana Ule (SI)**, in her article “Disadvantaged youth in Slovenia”, describes the efforts undertaken in order to prevent the growth of poverty risk, especially among unemployed people, and the increase of social inequalities during the transition to a capitalist system. Therefore, the net of public education institutions which offered programmes going from primary education to university was expanded, as well as various support forms for children and young people belonging to more vulnerable social strata. During the last ten years, the problematic of early school leaving has led to the creation of a

relatively dense institutional network, which offers alternative educational options and promotes participation in various educational programmes. We think that knowing about the efforts done by Slovenia can serve to debate about new forms to take on the decrease of early school leaving rates. Among “Good Practices” we get to know through this article it will strike the reader how important counselling and training of the new professionals, the counsellors, is for Slovenia.

**Germán Gil Rodríguez (ES)**, in his contribution “Constellations of disadvantage are becoming visible in Spain”, describes two of the phenomena that are affecting, with more intensity, the life of young people in Spain: early school leaving and temporary and precarious employment. They consider leaving educational institutions as a result of the evolution of society, of the changes that have been taking place in the education system, of the lack of investment in the education system, as well as the low valuation of qualifications and certificates by employers. In spite of the measures applied by educational authorities to answer to the needs stated by young people, these measures have not managed to lower the rates with respect to the EU average. Early school leaving puts young people in a situation of disadvantage for their insertion into the labour market. Insistence on the real causes of disadvantage demands the development of integral policies addressed to families, school and the social environment and, above all, to subjects that suffer this disadvantage.

**Ilse Julkunen (FI)**, in the article “Early school leaving in Finland – a problem solved?” asks herself if Finland has already solved all problems related to transitions. The answer is twofold: On one hand, Finland belongs, from a European point of view, to the group of countries with low early school leaving levels. In Finland, 90% of the young people obtain certificates above compulsory education. On the other hand, Finland belongs to the group of countries with a high youth unemployment rate. The unemployment rate reaches 20% and is 4% higher than in some European countries and 10% higher than the average among the OCDE countries. Although Finland has lowered the already low early school leaving by modernising vocational training, improving the access to training and intensifying counselling and cooperation between and within schools, however, the low percentage of existing early school leaving is still a problem for the more vulnerable groups, particularly in urban areas. “Good Practices” presented focus on individual plans and on intensifying collaboration within and between different sectors in the community.

**Andy Biggart (UK)**, in the article “Dealing with Disadvantage: an overview of the United Kingdom’s policy response to early school leaving, low attainment and the labour market” presents a general view of the dominating policies addressed to disadvantaged youth in the UK, focusing on those aspects of the policies that have as objective to decrease early school leaving, improve achievements and deal with youth unemployment. After presenting a summary of the British context and the policies applied in this field, the article examines in detail two of the most important policy initiatives the New Labour government has introduced, the “Connexions service” and the “New Deal for young people”. In the middle of the Good Practice “Connexions” is the central figure of a new professional occupation, the “Connexions Personal Counsellor”, whose objective is to provide a single contact point to offer support to young people in a wide range of topics.

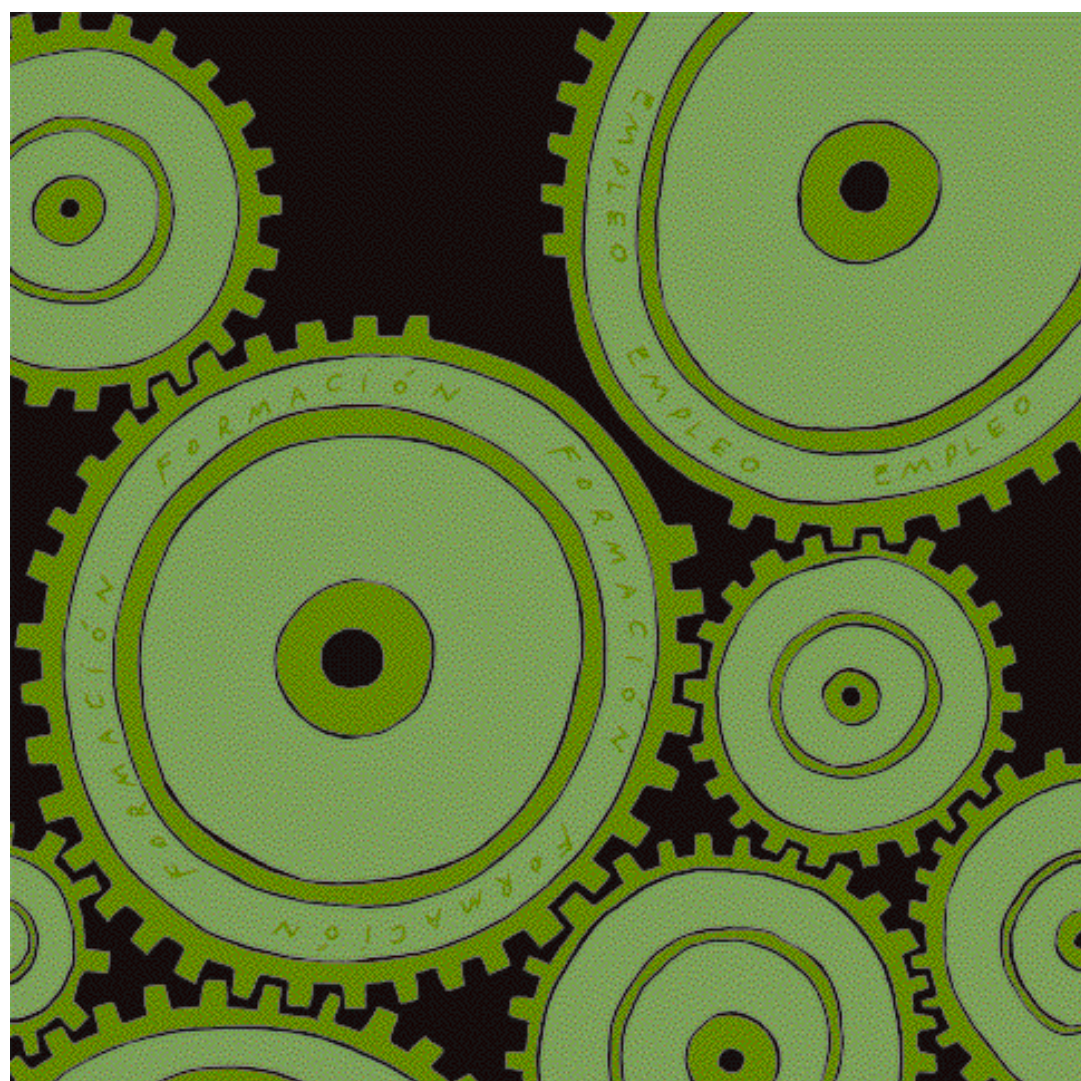
**Andreas Walther and Axel Pohl (DE)**, present in the summary-article “Disadvantaged youth in Europe: Constellations and policy responses”, the principal findings of a study commissioned by the European Commission about policies addressed to disadvantaged youth in 13 European countries and it focuses on three fields: the constellations of disadvantage in transitions of young people from education to employment, a general view of the applied policies in different countries and the conclusions that can be obtained from the comparative analysis between the different countries. The concept of disadvantage developed in the study is based on the supposition that former social inequality lines such as gender, ethnic group, and social class are today mixed with new lines of segmentation. As a consequence, it is argued that policies for social inclusion of young people have to be designed in an integrated way, taking into account biographical aspects and the vital cycle as an underlying principle.

In the first eight articles of the journal we can see that the thread of structural-preventive policies focuses, among others, around the creation of integrated youth policies addressed to young people or

to a young person as an individual, or the creation of counselling services and the continual assessment of monitoring – implementation of assessment (especially, and as good practices, in Denmark, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Finland, Spain).

For that reason, we thought it would be appropriate to put at the end, after the summary-article by Andreas Walther and Axel Pohl, the article “Counselling as a structure and action in labour and social insertion processes of young people: A reflection from the praxis”, by **Jesús Hernández Aristu (ES)**, a theoretical reflection about the function of counselling in the liquid society, based on praxis carried out by himself. The author starts with a reflection about the social changes and transformations and their impact on transitions of young people. In these transformations not all young people start from the same point, the living conditions are not equal, and therefore he suggests the substitution of some institutions for others, of one educational action to another counselling action. What he calls “new support structures” in school, in companies, in the leisure-time, etc. These new structures demand new actions, and that is why the author suggests individual counselling as a form of action and support in these new structures. The objective has to be a reinforcement of the person, of the intrinsic motivation, the reinforcement of one’s own social networks, the auto-determination of their own objectives, that is, help young people to be a person by him- herself. The author’s experience in training counsellors and his activities in social and labour integration projects for disadvantaged young people guarantee his proposal.

Andreu López Blasco





## Reactions of the European Union to the situation of young people: Employment Plans, Lisbon Strategy, Comprehensive Reform Policies

We present three Agreements or Strategies that are closely related to youth policies passed by the European Commission and the Heads of government of the EU-countries and we link them to data that have been published about the situation of young people and the concern that was becoming obvious in society – all measures appear in very specific contexts. To get to know the situation of young people in the EU different studies and researches funded by the Commission, as well as studies carried out by various institutions in different EU-countries have helped. Therefore, we think that it could be interesting to present the most relevant studies of recent years (2005 and 2006).

In the evaluation of the measures carried out in the framework of the Employment Plans, we state that, generally, the institutional point of view focuses in transitions from school to work, but there are other processes that take place in transitions, such as those that refer to the transition from the family of origin to independence, the couple and sexuality, from the peer-group and the youth culture to individual life-styles, from childhood to citizenship, and so forth, and that are not taken into account.

From the point of view of society of second modernity we underline the need of taking into account that it is the young people who have to take decisions and they not always have the needed instruments to choose correctly. That is why policies that focus on the individual are relevant and these policies give more importance to participation, counselling, orientation and guidance. The objective is to carry out integrated youth policies that include (financial and personal) structures and resources to create a different type of social support, where young people feel completely accepted as “negotiators of their own matters”.

**Key words:** second modernity, liquid modernity, individualization, choice/decision, transitions, Employment Plans, Lisbon Strategy, Reform Plan, integrated transition policies, counselling.

### 1. Introduction

The evolution of youth policies that have been passed in EU-countries shows that, most of the times, the objective is to react to changes in the labour market and society. Many different researches about young people being carried out on behalf of the European Commission in different European countries also have an influence or develop these policies. The high number of young people without a job shown by statistics for the mid-nineties and the fact that to obtain a job academic certificates and social abilities are important motivated the approval of Employment Agreements/ Strategies developed since 1997 – Luxemburg Summit – in different European Commission and EU Head of Government Conferences.

The objectives are the same: to favour convergence, activate employment creation – mainly for young people, females and long-term unemployed people – and, in the framework of network society, the knowledge society, bet on continual training, on extending the stay of young people in educational institutions.

Generally speaking about “constellations of disadvantage” among young people and about strategies to cope with them can mean many things, such as reminding us about policies developed by the European Commission and EU-countries to favour “Social Inclusion”, policies against social discrimination due to ethnic group, gender disabilities, or new policies focused on the emancipation of young people, favouring participation, a stable job and access to housing, as well as policies directed to support young people as an active subject that is obliged to take decisions.

From all these possible aspects, this monographic issue presents two topics that show and make the situation of disadvantaged young people visible: early school leaving and precarious unemployment/employment. Based on the presentation of experiences carried out in some countries, we insist on the fact that policies that favour overcoming these deficiencies need to be linked to other policies that reinforce motivation, participation and decision taking of young people.

Recent researches carried out in EU-countries and other countries show success deficits of youth policies and showed up, in spite of advances, that the key for success still are academic certificates: young people coming from a family with a higher social class will get more support from the social environment and go to schools that offer more possibilities to be successful, while children and young people from disadvantaged classes will not receive economic support and normally leave the post-compulsory education system too early.

In the framework of this introduction, I would like to make a brief presentation of representative youth studies done in EU-countries and other OECD-countries, with researches to be taken into account. As an extension to the reports of seven countries we present in this issue, we make a brief reference to researches about young people in: Canada, Italy, Germany, United States of America and Australia.

Therefore, we take the possibility of classifying the reports/studies carried out on a national level by *typologies*. Depending on the theoretical and methodological framework, as well as on the topics analyzed, being aware of the fact that these research-typologies hardly or never appear in a pure form, but rather are centred round a neuralgic point, amplified through individual aspects taken from a different typology.

In order to classify youth studies currently being carried out, we can group them in four categories:

1. Studies about **transitions**: research whose main topic is the transition from childhood/ youth to adult life as a development process; others, from the point of view of life-stages, are more inclined to study social contexts and the influence of factors derived from different life-conditions. (1)

Among this kind of research, we could mention the Canadian study “Youth in Transition Survey” – YITS – that focused on the factors that have influence on transitions and career-models related to education, training and employment. This is a longitudinal research, with two groups sorted by age. A different study that can be included into this typology is the one carried out since 1983 by the Institute IARD, Milan (Istituto di Ricerca S.c.r.l. Via Sancino, 1. 20123 Milano). “The IARD-report”, a research about young adults between 15 and 34 years old, focuses on the transition to adult life analyzing a wide range of aspects, taking into account factors such as values, political participation and attitudes towards institutions, with special regard to their life-forms: when they leave their parents' household, couple relationships, labour integration and positioning in adult life.

(1)  
In this typology we could mention the following studies:  
Statistics Canada, Ottawa and Human Resources and Skills Development, Quebec  
Istituto sulla condizione giovanile in Italia, Milano;  
Giovani del nuovo secolo. Quinto rapporto sulla condizione giovanile in Italia, Milano 2002/3  
Kinderen in Nederland, Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands, The Hague 2005  
National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) 1997-2010, Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Washington D.C.  
Statistics Canada, Ottawa and Human Resources and Skills Development, Quebec:  
National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY)  
Alt, Ch., 2005/2006:  
Kinderleben - Zwischen Familie, Freunden und Institutionen - Bd. 1.  
Aufwachsen in Familien, Bd. 2.  
Aufwachsen zwischen Freunden und Institutionen, Deutsches Jugendinstitut, München

2. Studies focusing on the **fields of life**: the different situations in life and the behaviour of young people are analyzed sorted by fields of life. Situation and behaviour is studied in a wide range of situations, but normally it is not possible to cover all the topics completely and research them in depth. (2) This kind of investigation usually maintains some constant neuralgic topics, which allows comparisons with one or more past studies, and that way it is possible to see the changes that have happened. These studies analyze basic information such as social origin, educational trajectory and labour situation, as well as attitudes and expectations with regard to values, cultural attitudes, leisure-time, identity, and political participation. Usually, already tested instruments are used and, that way, it is possible to examine and compare if there are changes in the ways young people react to new situations.

In this category, we could include the German report “Shell – Youth Study”, with the 15<sup>th</sup> edition released in 2006. Since 1953, the energy company “Deutsche Shell” commissioned the carrying out of studies on attitudes, perceptions, situation and expectations of young people in Germany to different Institutions. The study is published every four years.

In the presentation of the research we put emphasis on the fact that current youth can be defined or characterised by being a *pragmatic generation under pressure*. As in studies belonging to this typology, the situations of young people, their perceptions and attitudes towards family, training, work, couple, future, political participation, values, etc. are analyzed, but, for the first time, there are questions in the report regarding attitudes towards demographic change, and from this point of view youth is analyzed. Demographic change and ageing of society, also related to youth, is one hot topic in German society.

(2)  
Shell Deutschland Holding (hrsg.): Jugend 2006, Frankfurt a.M. 2006  
Gille, M.; Sardei-Biermann, S.; Gaiser, W.: Jugendliche und junge Erwachsene in Deutschland, Wiesbaden 2006  
Fairfax County Youth Survey, 2005, The Southeast Kansas Education Service Centre Iowa Youth Survey, Iowa Department of Public Health



An important part of the study is devoted to the so-called “big topics”: *demographic change, European Union and globalization*. The study also underlines the importance of the chapter entitled “*Young people in an ageing society*” for the rest of the research. In that chapter they present a qualitative analysis based on different *portraits* of young people.

The fieldwork was carried out at the beginning of 2006 and the results were presented in September of the same year.

Frequently, in investigations with pre-determined objectives, already tested measurement instruments (indicators) are used to obtain information on the aspects related to ways of acting in life, and this information is analyzed based on data coming from other previous studies. This way, the design of the investigation is not previously determined, and neither are the objectives of the information nor the methodological theory of the indicators, which means that what, or why, or in what specific circumstances a certain information may be important, or why the measurement instruments are thought to be appropriate for the research is not specified.

The “Shell 2006” study, and also the investigation “Australian Youth 2006”, base the choice of their respective special topics on their theory about the developments taking place in society and the effects on the situation and perception of life of young people. For instance, the study “Shell 2006” assumes, among other things, that the strain between socio-cultural independence and socio-economic dependence has increased. The stay – waiting room – in the education system is longer and the procedures to enter the labour market without knowing if they will fulfil the needs, that increase with age, of obtaining socio-economic autonomy or coping with the fear of not obtaining a secure position in work and society. The psychological pressure deriving from this situation not only prevents tranquillity and inner self-organization, but also favours the appearance of resignation and fear towards the possibility of some kind of protest strategy (Shell 2006: 35). Following this speculative hypothesis, leads the authors of the study to conclude that, compared to past studies, the gap between “winners” and “losers” has probably widened in the field of training and occupation. The analysis of the constellations would confirm this situation.

3. Studies related to **specific “problems”**: studies whose objective is preventive or therapeutic, or about situations that are considered of social or political relevance, such as the situation of training or labour, couple relationships, sexual behaviour, family orientation, cultural and political identity, their democratic behaviour / the political participation, etc. (3)

This typology includes studies that, for commercial, economic or socio-preventive reasons focus on researching a specific aspect as, for example, the situation in school or training, political attitudes, consumption, spare-time behaviour, criminality, sexual behaviour, etc. There are a lot of studies in the different States of the US about “Youth and Health”, or researches that refer to the “relation between parents and young people”.

(3)  
Healthy Youth Survey,  
Washington State, 2005  
Survey of parents and youth,  
Columbia University, 2002  
Università La Sapienza. Dipart.  
di Scienze Demografiche:  
Giovani e mercato del lavoro,  
Roma 2006  
La situation des jeunes en  
echec scolaire et  
professionnel, Conseil  
économique et social de  
Bourgogne, 2006  
Charest, D.: La situation des  
jeunes non diplômés de l'école  
secondaire. Québec 1997  
Organisation de coopération  
et de développement  
économiques (OCDE), 2002:  
Un meilleur départ pour les  
jeunes? Perspectives de  
l'emploi de L' OCDE;  
Évolution récente et  
perspectives du marché du  
travail, p. 22-64, Paris  
Ministère de l'emploi, de la  
cohésion sociale et du  
logement: Les jeunes face à  
l'emploi: alternance et  
apprentissage plébiscites,  
Paris, 20 Sept. 2006  
Bourmaud, F.-X.: Alerte sur  
l'emploi des jeunes dans le  
monde. Le Figaro, Economie.  
L'actualité économique, Le  
Figaro 30 oct. 2006

Together with topics related to health and family, all those related with training, profession and occupation stand out.

The Italian research «Giovani e mercato del lavoro» (Roma 2006) analyzes the precarious possibilities that specially young people between 20 and 34 years old suffer in order to access a professional life. Among other reasons, this study confirms that, against the needs derived from the global market, young people are not willing to learn foreign languages or to accept a job in a foreign country, and generally to labour mobility. On the other hand, young people demand a training that is not that far away from praxis, and state-support that allows a needed mobility, in the field of education, as well as in the professional field.

4. Studies from **the point of view of social change**: studies whose topic profile is based on information or assumptions about development of society and the effects of this developments on young people: structural changes in economy and the effects on labour perspectives and/or demands directed to young people; structural changes of the population with effects on the social system, the change of values, the change of relational structures and the effects on life situations and behaviours of young people. (4)

The study “National Survey of Young Australians 2006” starts with the theory that modern life taxes the perception of life and the expectations of young people. Unstable economic grounds, broken families and dissolution of community links have a negative influence, creating insecurity to young people’s way to adult life. For that reason, there is every day a higher number of young people that do not successfully cope with the access to adult life. An important reason for failures in form of unemployment, early divorce, lack of vocational training, economic poverty, addictions and psychological problems, etc. is to be found in the fact that, during their school and training period, young people spend their time without bonds to their community and without being controlled by adults. The study confirms that changes taking place in society with regard to life-conditions reinforce the sensations of insecurity among young people; the new factors of insecurity (“levels of turbulence”) aggravate the already difficult transition to adult life.

The research-group states that the number of experiences of discrimination has increased among young people, so in future researches they are focusing on this topic.

Finally, I would like to remind you of the fact that most studies highlight not only the central importance of the life context of young people, but also the importance of these young people for society. All studies usually contain the theory that structural changes of the economy, the changes in the labour market, and socio-political demands have an influence on transitions and endanger those young people with lower academic/ professional qualifications and social competences, also adding the insufficient support by the family. These situations mean a burden for the whole life of these young people, and also a burden for society. (Still, 13.1% of young people under 25 years old living in EU-countries are

(4)  
The National Youth Survey’ (14 700 interviewed) and the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth Cohorts’ (13 000 interviewed):  
- Mission Australia, Research and Social Policy, Sydney  
- Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Camberwell

neither in the education system nor have an occupation; they seek a job without success or have a job with no qualification requirements and with a very low salary) (Bourmaud, 2006). (5)

## 2. The European strategy to favour the creation of employment: homogenization of language and joint strategies

### National Employment Plans

At the European Conference on Employment, held in November 1997 in Luxembourg, the guidelines for the development of Employment Action Plans were approved. These guidelines were to be presented and developed by Member States at the Head of State and Government summit of 1998 (Cardiff, June of 1998). There are two aspects to be highlighted of the Luxembourg conference: first, the joint acknowledgment of the need to view employment as a priority by all EU-member states and, second, the homogenization, through joint guidelines, of the language to be used in order to develop individual policies related with the socio-economic characteristics of each country. The homogenization of language may serve to improve the joint “europeization” of EU-member states and it is an important way to balance how the most important and influential Member States understand issues and practices. (Until then there were great differences, mainly regarding how bigger countries understood education issues and made proposals regarding the “description and formulation” of educational and professional qualifications at the European level).

The guidelines presented in Luxembourg affected the main improvable areas: the implementation of new norms and strategies directed towards unemployed young people to ensure unemployment periods not longer than 6 months (12 months in the case of other groups of unemployed people). And, it is expected that the new structures of the national system of vocational training improves flexibility and compatibility of qualifications obtained within the education system. The main aim consists in updating the education system with the introduction of more measures to activate vocation training in order to ensure a better adjustment between education supply and labour market.

The guidelines were centred on four main pillars:

*Pillar I: Improvement of professional insertion*, through different guidelines: fighting unemployment and long-term unemployment...

*Pillar II: Development of the spirit of business*, in order to allow favourable conditions for the creation of companies...

*Pillar III: Promote the capacity of workers and companies to adapt*, in order to enable the labour market to react to economic changes...

*Pillar IV: Reinforce policies that promote equality of opportunities in the labour market*, in order to fight discrimination between males and females and bring employment rates of both collectives nearer...

(5)  
Bourmaud, F.-X. : Alerte sur l'emploi des jeunes dans le monde. Le Figaro, Economie. L'actualité économique, Le Figaro 30 oct. 2006

The Luxemburg guidelines, the Social Action Programme 1998-2000 and the National Employment Plans join active measures to create employment with policies to develop formal and non formal education systems, as well as permanent training, everything from a perspective to facilitate the transition to the labour market and the adaptation to technology and economic transformations.

The statistical information that we will now present again reinforces the need and importance of the Agreement on Employment approved by Heads of State and Government to develop Employment Action Plans.

During the years 1996 and 1997 the unemployment rate among young people under 25 year olds were high.

Table 1. **Unemployment rates among people under 25 years old**

	1996	1997	1998	2004
<b>EU (25 countries)</b>			19,4	18,6
<b>EU (15 countries)</b>	21,2	20,5	19	16,5
<b>Euro-area</b>	23	22,4	20,5	17,9
<b>Euro-area (12 count.)</b>	23,2	22,6	20,8	17,9
Belgium	22,1	22	22,1	19,8
Germany	15,6	16,2	15	15,1
Greece	31	30,8	30,1	26,9
France	28,5	28,4	25,6	22
Italy	30,4	30,2	29,9	23,6
Luxemburg	8,2	7,9	6,9	12,9
Netherlands	11,1	9,1	7,6	8
Austria	6,3	6,7	6,4	9,7
Portugal	16,7	15,1	10,6	15,4
Finland	28	25,2	23,5	20,7
Sweden	20,5	20,6	16,1	16,3

Source: INE (National Institute of Statistics). European Indicators.

In the Employment Action Plan of 1998 promoted by the government of Spain the situation of the labour market in Spain is described as follows:

- The unemployment rate of young people under 25 was 39.0%.
- The female employment rate was 28.4% (16.2% for males).
- Long-term unemployment was 54.7% of the total unemployment.
- 44.2% of long-term unemployed people were young people and 59.8 were females.
- For people between 16 and 64 years old, the occupation rate was 49% (year average) and the female occupation rate was 34.3%.
- The activity rate, for the same age group as mentioned before, was 61.9% and for females it was 48.0%. The temporary employment rate was 33.2%.
- Seasonality affects fundamental sectors of the Spanish economy very much.
- The situation of the labour market in different *Comunidades Autónomas* (regions) shows great differences. While in some of them unemployment is lower than the European average, in others is over 30% (page 4).

Table 2. **Unemployment rate sorted by age-group**

	1996	2000	2003	2004	2005
16 to 19	52,2	33,6	30,9	29,08	27,70
20 to 24	38,2	23,4	30,9	19,46	16,15
25 to 54	19	11,9	10,1	9,46	7,67
Over 55	11	8,5	6,4	6,68	5,54
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,7%</b>	<b>13,4%</b>	<b>11,2%</b>	<b>10,56</b>	<b>8,70</b>

Source: INE (National Institute of Statistics). Labour Force Survey and MTAS (Ministry of Work and Social Affairs)

Table 3. **Evolution of the temporality rate sorted by age-group 1998-20004**

	16-19 year olds	20-24 year olds	25-29 year olds	< 30 year olds	> 30 year olds
<b>1998</b>	26,34	69,78	47,93	59,20	21,91
<b>2004</b>	82,57	62,12	44,42	53,24	24,22
<b>Dif/</b>	+56,23	-7,66	-3,51	-5,96	+2,31

Source: INE (National Institute of Statistics). Labour Force Survey and MTAS (Ministry of Work and Social Affairs)

### Lisbon Summit, March of 2000

Few years after the implementation of the Employment Plans, the existence of weaknesses in the European labour market is again confirmed: the creation of employment is insufficient; there are imbalances between EU-member states, especially with regard to southern European countries. There is insistence towards answering to two of the circumstances that are more important for the economy in general: globalization and the importance of information and communication technologies, in the professional field as well as in the private field.

Five aspects are highlighted: technological challenge, knowledge society, improvement of competitiveness, integration and coordination of financial markets and modernization of the European social model. One of the most important novelties at the Lisbon Summit was determining objectives and establishing *quantitative and qualitative indicators* to measure the impact and compare “good practices” among states on all levels, from the European level to the local level.

We are going to analyze the guidelines referred to the improving of education and training, to the existent gaps between the labour market and the education/training system, and to indicators suggested at the Lisbon summit. (6)

The so-called “Lisbon Strategy” sets the objectives of increasing permanent training to reach “at least” 12.5% of the population in 2010 (in Spain it is 5.8%); lowering early school leaving” from the present 30.4% to 10%, and increase the percentage of people with post-compulsory education from 63.4% to 85.0%.

(6)  
In the article by Germán Gil Rodríguez the Spanish situation is analyzed in detail from a comparative perspective, taking into account other European countries.

Table 4. **Indicators for the Lisbon Strategy, 2000**

Indicators labour market/training	Spain	UE-15	Objective Lisbon 2010
Participation of population in continual training (25 to 64 year olds)	5.8	9.7	At least 12.5
Early school leaving (18 to 24 year olds)	30.4	18.0	Not over 10.0
Population with at least finished post-compulsory secondary education (20 to 24 year olds)	63.4	74.0	85.0

Source: Own elaboration.

[http://www.europarl.eu.int/summits/lis1\\_es.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/summits/lis1_es.htm)

The introduction of indicators has meant an important step towards the use of evaluations about the levels reached regarding the suggested objectives. Therefore, in 2004 the Commission created a high level work-group led by Wim Kok (former prime minister of the Netherlands) to carry out a report about the objectives and results of the Lisbon Agreement (known as the KOK-report): Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok "Facing the challenge. The Lisbon strategy for growth and employment", November 2004.

The results of the KOK-report show that, at the current speed the programmes of the Lisbon Agreement (2000) are being developed, we are still far from reaching the objectives.

### **National Reforms Programme of Spain, October 2005**

After the KOK-report, the Social Agenda 2005-2010 (February 2005) is approved and the Lisbon Strategy is relaunched (European Council 2005). This can be summed up in three main objectives:

- a) more growth – make Europe a more attractive place to invest and work;
- a) create more and better jobs – knowledge and innovation for employment;
- a) better governance – more coordination of macro- and microeconomic policies.

The response of the Spanish government to these demands is the *"National Reforms Programme of Spain – Convergence and Employment -, passed the 13<sup>th</sup> of October of 2005"*.

### **Contradictions between the education system and the labour market**

Different reports carried out by the OECD (1992: 59; 1995, 1997), inform about the situation of employment in the world by the ILO (from 1999 to 2004), White Books by the European Union (*Growth, competitiveness and employment*, 1993, and *The knowledge society*, 1995), as well as different annual employment plans of Spain have continued insisting on the need of "training of the labour force" as a privileged way of fighting unemployment, establishing a close relation between education level and unemployment rates.

In spite of advances made during the last decades by increasing training of young people and lowering unemployment rates, young people, in their process towards adulthood, are still characterised by having "the doors open to education/training, but closed to the labour market. Here, there

is a great gap, a great rupture between training, mainly done in school, and the labour field (...) young people can participate in nearly all education areas, as mentioned before, but have serious problems when it comes to integrating into the labour market” Hernández Aristu (1998:274).

The relations established between educational institutions and labour institutions have been ambivalent and were followed by strains, disagreement and even close collaboration. Currently, and due to high structural unemployment rates affecting especially young people, educational institutions, from the decades of the 80's/90's onwards, started a change process of the education plans, as well as of internal structures and the meaning of education and training itself.

This fact has raised voices that demand an education that prepares young people for a future labour insertion, while others consider that education/training has a meaning, independently of its link to the labour market. The every time closer relation between training and work has made training into an element of economic policies of the countries.

The business world wants learning to “subordinate” to the interests of the labour market and young people to be prepared by educational institutions for the moment of their insertion into the labour market, being able to adapt (flexibility) to changes that are being produced very fast in the field of labour organization and the technologies applied to production.

The need to increase the level of training of workers due to the demand of qualification of the labour market and the high unemployment rates of young people have caused a longer period of stay of young people in educational institutions. These institutions have acted, occasionally, as real “containers” of young people, “hiding” them by saying they need a better qualification and arguing that the education system would provide them with an easier labour insertion in the future.

Table 5. **Activity and unemployment rates sorted by level of training. Year 2005**

	Activity rate		Unemployment rate	
	25-34 years	25-64	25-34 years old	25-64
Total	84,9	74,4	9,6	7,8
Illiterates	36,2	30	16,4	21,4
Primary education and no education	76,4	55,6	14,1	9,6
Lower secondary education	82,8	73	10,7	8,9
Upper secondary education	84,6	80,6	9	7,3
Higher education	89	87,6	8,6	6,2
Doctorates	91,8	92,7	4,3	1,8

Source: MEC (Ministry of Education and Science). Education Indicators. 2006

If during Industrialization, companies demanded workers with low or no knowledge at all, because they learned at the working place and occasionally a single job lasted for the whole life, currently the development of technology has caused companies to demand workers with very different qualifications, costly technical knowledge and a preparation of workers by the State (or a training subvention by the State).

The technical preparation of future workers through regulated vocational training, the response to unemployment through training for employment and permanent technical update through permanent training has become one of the main axes of economic and social policies in the different countries. The knowledge society obliges the whole of society to be in a permanent state of training and acquisition of knowledge, because the training acquired may not be valid for very long, and it could even be difficult to know who is interested in the acquired training. It is difficult to find levels of youth unemployment as high as today in other historical periods, in spite of the important investments destined to education/training for employment.

Table 6. **Occupational training, sorted by previous level of education of participants**

Table 10 Occupational training, sorted by previous level of education of participants						
Lower than lower secondary education		Secondary education		Post-secondary education		
		Vocational Training programmes	General Education	Higher Professional Technicians	First University Cycle	Second University Cycle
Total	2.8	7.6	60.5	12.4	7.2	9.6

Source: MEC (Ministry of Education and Science). Education Indicators. 2006

Today, the longer stay in educational routes leads young people to create expectations related to their professional life. At the same time, these expectations can not be always satisfied, due to economic and social changes related not only to the flexibilization of the labour market and the high level of unemployment, but also to the general increase of the level of qualifications among the population, which created an inflation of educational careers. Learn and forget is a simultaneous process, because what was learned for the world of today is no longer needed tomorrow. Learning has become a never-ending process during the whole life. And today learning consists of being able to change what we considered to be true, real, useful and effective (Bauman, 2004).

For young people with academic certificates there are many possibilities that they will experience a long period of wait before they assume responsibilities related to work and independence.

The productive activity is in a constant and radical process of change in all its elements. Computing and telecommunications added to the world of labour in a very fast and comprehensive way so that theoretical knowledge is not the most important element when young people access the labour market. This labour market demands procedures and attitudes, because needed knowledge to fulfil a specific work is part of what the company, occupational training or permanent training offer.

Education is subjected to strains produced by the plurality of demands coming from very different sectors. Sectors that demand immediate solutions to problems that are not caused in school nor can these problems be answered by school.

Frequently, we lose sight of the perspective that states that work is a scarce resource and that it is very difficult to fulfil the circumstances to allow full employment. Therefore, the conception of education based on



learning during the whole life is very important and, occasionally, training is used to hide the rough reality of admitting that there is not enough work for everyone while economic structures are maintained with the perspective of economic profit.

Table 7. **Permanent and continual training: people over 25 years old that are in education.**

	Total		
	1996	2002	2005
Total	4,3	6	12,1
Males	3,8	4,6	11,2
Females	4,7	5,6	13,1

Source: MEC (Ministry of Education and Science). Education Indicators. 2006.

Education has become a primary socialization factor and work is the most important instrument of social insertion. For some people, the education system is responsible for the number of unemployed people, more than the labour market. This way, the structural dimension of unemployment and the subordination of social and economic policies to economic profitability are forgotten. If school as an institution is no longer the only place for young people to learn: What function does it have or must it have? To what kind of objectives must it answer?

The distancing between school and companies can be counterproductive, even irreversible, if there is not an appropriate relation between them. Overcome the strains between the two worlds, create renovation and innovation conditions among companies and in educational centres is currently an indispensable task. Investment in research, development and human capital is not only a need, but something essential.

Schools face every time more difficulties to “keep” young people and continue with their educational task. The distancing between educational and labour world has been favoured by the reservations towards their relationship, that sometimes and during longer periods of time were inexistent, due to mental reservations and prejudices from both sides. Occasionally, the distancing was followed by mutual ignorance, and therefore it is needed to activate actions that bring companies and educational centres into contact.

### 3. Youth policies in second modernity/ liquid modernity.

“individualization is not a choice, but a destiny. In the land of individual freedom, the choice to escape individualization and refuse to take part in this game is something emphatically not considered” (Bauman, 2004:39)

While presenting the Topic of the journal we briefly referred to the paradigm that defines current society – individualization, choice, access to goods/services through the market (mass consumption society) – now, we would like to introduce its influence regarding the implementation of employment plans. These thoughts are based on an investigation carried out during the years 1998-2001 (7) and on the publication (8) released in 2002.

*We cannot escape from individualization: we are “obliged” to choose, to make decisions.*

One of the most important results of our research was the fact that most policies did not take changes in society, its implications and consequences for the development of policies directed towards young people, their transitions to adult life and the labour market into account.

Generally, the institutional perspective is focused on transitions from school to employment, but there are others that also take place as the ones referred to the transition from the family of origin to independent life, the couple and sexuality, from peer group and youth culture to individual life-styles, from childhood to citizenship, and so forth. These fragmented transitions follow different speeds and work with a different logic, which shows the change between modern societies to post-modern societies. Young people have to reconcile different aspects of these broken or, at least, fragmented trajectories. These trajectories tend towards disintegration, but still keep an internal logic within their own individual biographies (EGRIS, 2001) (9)

In spite of the results of the investigations and the European Commission's (2001) interest in them, policies generally tend to re-standardize young people's transitions. They create a fiction, the “logic of linearity, that does not represent non linear trajectories (yo-yo) seen in the life-cycle of many young people. Lots of these policies tend to create an artificial agenda within a chaotic social structure” (Machado Pais, 2002: 88).

The analysis of education and employment policies for young people carried out by us in the framework of National Employment Plans has highlighted policies as “failures” when:

- They do not take subjective perspectives of young adults into account, restricting social integration and integration into the labour market.
- They work as “containers” with the objective of removing young people of the streets and directing them towards “career plans” instead of helping them to build their own itineraries.
- They disguise the structural imbalance between education system and labour market, turning problems into something personal and defining problematic collectives in order to make them guilty of structural deficits.
- They demotivate young people demanding of them more education, without being able to offer a worthy education.
- They regulate the access to benefits by means of bureaucratic criteria such as age, length of unemployment, nationality or gender, instead of taking into account individual needs.

(7)

During four years, the EGRIS network carried out the 4th Framework programme in the section “Targeted Socio-Economic Research” (TSER). The research group AREA is part of this network. The research project was entitled “Evaluation of employment policies for young people in Europe. Unsuccessful trajectories?”

(8)

Bois-Reymond, M. du, Cuconata, M., Lenzi, G., López Blasco, A., Stauber, B., Walther, A. (2002) (see bibliography)

(9)

The results of the researches carried out by the EGRIS network and other research groups have an effect on the activity of policy-makers. The European Commission, in the White Book “A new impetus for European youth” (2001), mentions three important challenges related to the analysis of the situation of young people, and its relation to policies and measures directed to this group: (1) youth lasts longer; (2) life-trajectories are not linear; (3) collective traditional models loose ground and are every time more individualized” (E. Commission 2001:9)

Other conclusions show the need of measures that go in the direction of activating education and employment while prioritizing the interrelation of the systemic and the subjective perspective. Generally, however, education systems tend to prioritize the systemic perspective and therefore it is needed to prepare people for different social positions in order for them to answer to the demands of the labour market. Students have to adapt to an organizational structure and to a curriculum with fixed educational objectives. The subjective perspective of individual is not taken into account, or rather, is not possible to be taken into account by the education system.

It is necessary to contextualize learning in relation to system and subjective perspectives involved in the process. The main implications are: extension of access to all kinds of education in all levels, increase of abilities recognized as relevant and acceptance of more forms and configurations of informal education. In any case, we have to admit that educational reforms will not give us all answers, because these answers also depend of innovations in other areas of society.

It seems very difficult for education systems to face this problem with satisfactory results for all involved actors, and this fact delays answers to new demands of the knowledge societies. In knowledge societies, it is essential that individuals understand as soon as possible that they learn for themselves and that they will continue learning throughout their whole life. Young people have to create the habit of learning in order to support this attitude.

The integration potential of a permanent education requires an extension of the abilities recognized as relevant in transitions to work, as well as the access of all young people to the possibility of acquiring and developing these competences in the context of individual education biographies. This means that:

- a) Education and training systems do not have to exclude young people due to social class, gender or ethnic group; this also includes making transition from one level to another more flexible. Students also should not be punished for leaving the system: sometimes, earning money can be more important for the individual, and consequently they can postpone their studies. In any case, education systems are structured with selection mechanisms. Furthermore, putting formal qualifications as the most important factor may lead to a dead end, to a trap or a curl that demotivates young people to continue in education. They must have the possibility to choose from different education routes.
- b) It has to be promoted that young people are able to manage their own educational trajectories. Many times students start a certain educational trajectory, but they need support to finish successfully. Schools, as well as companies are reluctant or unable to offer support to young people in order for them to learn. Schools and companies usually give advice and accept a percentage of young people that do not integrate. Young people have difficulties to manage their educational trajectories. If, on the one hand, organizational structures are not very clear, they lack experience related to the labour market or no one advises them in case they need it, about alternative routes,

and on the other side teachers and professors do not know anything certain about the world young people live in, young people could face difficulties when it comes to making decisions.

- c) A successful education depends on motivation. In the knowledge society it is not enough with external motivations and it is counter-productive to leave school too early. Many students are tired of learning because the experience of learning seems as something they are forced to do; it does not feel as something related to their own potential and personal doubts. Everyday life in schools and training centres in Europe shows the “loss” of learning abilities, which leads to less opportunities and higher risk of social exclusion for young people that are unable to stay within the system. In any case, individual education “contracts” which oblige young people to carry out an individual curriculum can be designed in a way that allows a higher degree of intrinsically motivated learning.

Young people in a situation of transition to adult life, to the labour market, not only have to acquire a number of abilities and qualifications, but they also have to manage and take decisions regarding multiple transitions, under the risk of failing. Every day, they face the need of individually “managing” structural risks. There are social exclusion risks inherent to the transitions to work, in terms of lack of qualifications and employment, and subjective risks such as lack of motivation and personal experience, transversal abilities. The diversified access to flexibilization of work reinforces the existent segmentation lines: more financial, cultural, educational, social resources mean an easier adaptation to flexibilization, with more productive individual choices; those with fewer resources face a higher risk.

Transition policies have to favour systemic measures, and at the same time not ignore the effects of these policies on individual decisions. Therefore, integrated youth policies should focus on two main objectives: avoiding that risks during transitions become a social exclusion risk and helping young people to face the risks and manage them successfully. Therefore, referring to social policies as part of Transition Policies includes social protection in terms of material resources, as well as social support in terms of counselling and mentoring; both aspects are crucial for an active *personal negotiation* of transitions.

The growing complexity regarding the direction of biographical transitions – due to flexible labour markets and the fragmentation of inter-linked transitions – requires social support directed to the needs of young people in terms of guidance. Instead of being diagnosed as disadvantaged, in the sense of having personal deficiencies, in a formal counselling process (manly paternalistic and clientelistic) to later being “derived”, “directed” towards compensatory measures, young people should be able to access mentoring possibilities that offer more freedom and less standardised forms, where they can choose and the result is not measured by standardised and formal results.

Traditional counselling for young people often fails because concepts differ significantly on how young people really see themselves. Young people do not want to be treated as a problematic group, they often see institutional support as a stigma, and at least they want to define their

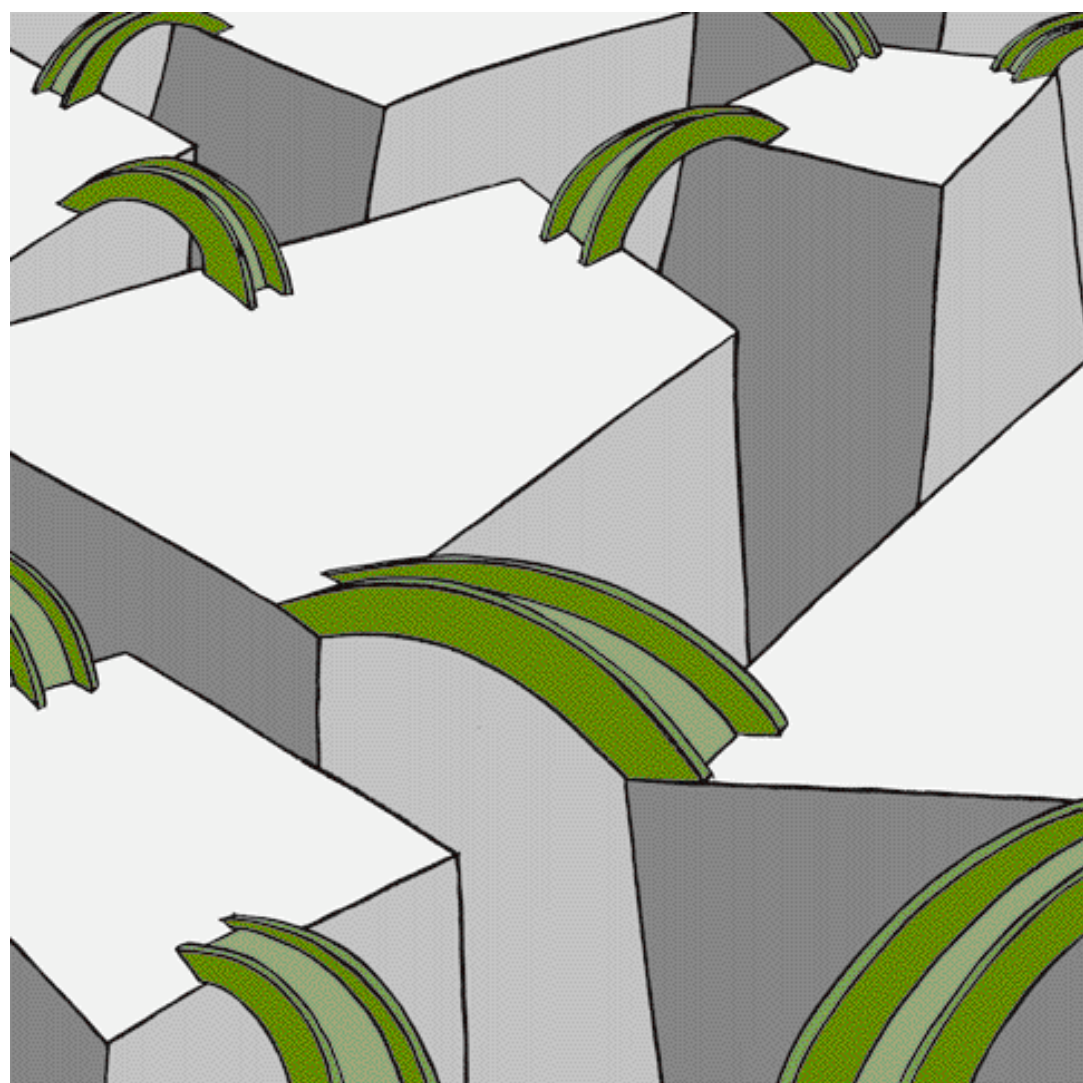
problems by themselves. At the same time they need support, not only because they are not able to take the appropriate decisions, but also because these decisions are more and more complicated.

The articles presented next gives different *answers to the new situations* that young people have to face in current society: individual contracts/deals between the Administration and the young person (“New Deal”, United Kingdom); financial support in form of “basic income” (United Kingdom); creation of new structures for individual counselling (Denmark, Slovenia); create and reinforce the role of a professional counsellor/adviser (“Connexions” – United Kingdom, Slovenia); offer educational options in the non-formal area and acknowledgement of these practices (Spain); reinforce the education system and the transitions to employment (Austria, Bulgaria); integrated support options directed to young people that seek a job (“One-stop” office – Finland).

These are all integrated youth policies that include structures and (personal, financial) resources in order to create a different type of social support, where young people can feel completely accepted as “negotiators of their own matters”.

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## Disadvantaged Youth in Austria

The aim of this article is to analyse the problems and strategies of interventions concerning disadvantaged youth in Austria. At first the progression of important indicators associated with disadvantaged youth will be described and consequently an attempt of an explanation why Austria is in a comparatively privileged situation will be made in the second part of this article. Nevertheless there are also specific challenges for Austria, which are worked out in the third part following the previous mentioned topics. There are diverse intervention strategies and measures targeted towards this challenges. The intervention strategy is discussed and two examples of good-practice measures are described in the forth part. All this will lead to conclusions and recommendations in the fifth and last part of this article.

The results presented here on the one hand are built upon empirical and on structural analyses. Therefore a broad range of policy papers and evaluation studies was analysed and calculations were made using the Labour Force Survey and other labour market and educational statistics. On the other hand side an expert discussion with representatives of relevant institutions in the context of disadvantaged youth (1) forms an integral part in the methodological design of this study. Whenever the text refers to the 'actor's perspective' the results of this discussion covering the specific situation of and necessary policy measures for disadvantaged youth in Austria are meant.

**Key words:** disadvantaged youth, dual vocational training, assessment of reports and statistical information, policy measures, good practices

### 1. Problem situation in a macro perspective

Concerning disadvantaged youth there are two EU key indicators, which demonstrate the extent of the problem, namely the ratio of early school leavers and the youth unemployment rate. Both will be discussed in this section and both will show a relatively privileged situation of Austria at a first glance.

Regarding the EU key indicator of early school leaving (ratio of population aged 18-24 years not in education an without graduation above ISCED-2-level) Austria has a ratio of 9% in the year 2005, which equals half of the European wide average (EU-15: 17,2%, EU-25: 15,2%) and less than a third compared to Spain (31% in 2005). Regarding the periodic change of this ratio there has been a remarkable decrease in the mid 1990s and nearly a stagnation of the ratio since the end of the 1990s. Whereas the Austrian ratio of early school leavers remains on a rather constant level since 1999 (-1,7%), the European ratio dropped from 20,5% in 1999 to 17,2% in 2005. Even though the Lisbon target of at most 10% early school leavers by 2010 has been reached yet in Austria, a rather constant amount of 8.000 young people are leaving the educational system without any adequate qualification every year.

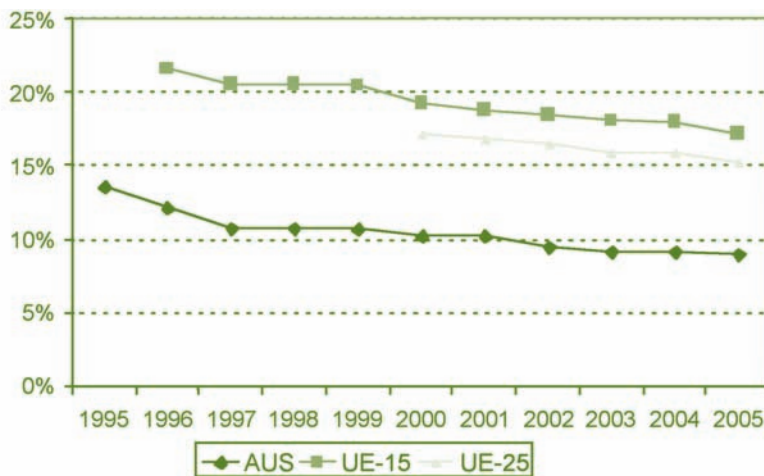
(1)  
Austrian Chamber of Labour,  
Public Employment Service,  
Federal Ministry of Education,  
Science and Culture, Federal  
Ministry of Social Security and  
Generations, Austrian Trade  
Union Federation, Austrian  
Federal Economic Chamber,  
Educational Executive Board  
Vienna and Federation of  
Austrian Industry.



The development of this indicator over time is demonstrated in the following chart:

**Figure 1:**

Ratio of 18-24 years old not in Education and without Graduation above ISCED 2 (Early School Leavers)



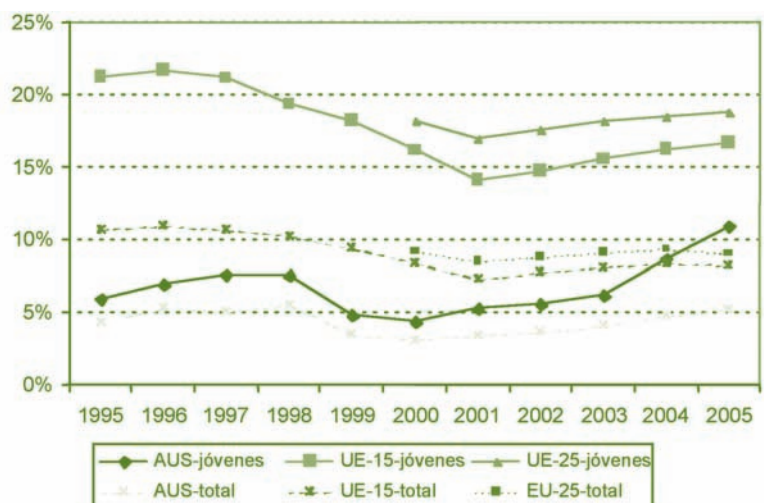
Source: EUROSTAT, Graphics: Steiner - IHS

The youth unemployment rate, which is the second indicator for analysing the scale of problems concerning disadvantaged youth, also implies the assumption that Austria is confronted with a lower level of problems. In 2005 the youth unemployment rate (15-24 years) in Austria reached 10,9%, while the average European rate is considerably higher (EU-15: 16,7%, EU-25: 18,7%). The following chart clarifies that also in Austria the youth is more effected by unemployment than the whole labour force, like it is typical for Europe the youth unemployment rate equals the double compared to the overall unemployment rate.

Looking at the periodic change there has been a more intensive increase of youth unemployment in Austria than in the European average, therefore the gap closes and the specific situation in Austria is minimised. One reason for that can be found in the under average weak economic

**Figure 2:**

Youth Unemployment Rate in Comparison



ILO-Definitions. Source: EUROSTAT, Graphics: Steiner - IHS

development in Austria. The strong rise of youth unemployment in Austria from 2003 to 2004 compared to a rather moderate rise in EU-average can hardly be interpreted because the concept of the LFS data collection in Austria was changed in the meantime. (2) But as the closing of the gap continues from 2004 to 2005 it can be expected, that Austria might lose its rather privileged position concerning youth unemployment.

Despite of some indications of increasing problems concerning disadvantaged youth even in Austria, the extent of the problems is on a lower level compared to the European average. Therefore Austria in some respect can be seen as a comparatively successful country in Europe. Task of the following statements is to find an explanation for this positioning of Austria.

## 2. Explanation approach for Austria's position

Basic condition for a generally smooth transition from education to employment is doubtlessly a positive economic development in connection with an appropriate need for qualified labour force. Due to the fact that economic development in Austria is not that different to the European one the explanation for Austria's comparatively privileged position concerning disadvantaged youth has to be found in other domains.

Compared to the international level two aspects of the Austrian educational system seem to be relevant for the low ratio of early school leaving and the lower youth unemployment rate. This is the "dual system" – ergo the apprenticeship as a specific educational form – in connection with the demand-orientation of the vocational education and training system in Austria.

40% of the cohort choose an apprenticeship; therefore the apprenticeship is the most favoured educational form on post-compulsory level. This educational form has some interesting specifications, which are relevant in connection with early school leaving and youth unemployment:

First of all entrance requirements for this educational form are set on a low level at least in a formal perspective. The most important criteria to start an apprenticeship is the conclusion of a contract with a company providing an apprenticeship place, whereas there exist no educational entrance barriers like a positive compulsory school leaving certificate. However on the one hand companies select the apprentices on the basis of their qualification level and their productivity, but on the other hand the former educational success is not a definitive obstacle compared to other educational forms.

The apprenticeship system has a specific status within the educational system, because in contrast to other vocational education forms the "dual system" starts at the 10th level of education. Hence the "dual system" offers some kind of a safety net for those young people, who have chosen a secondary fulltime vocational school at the 9th level of education, but realize that this kind of vocational education and training does not fit them or is not what they expected. Instead of dropping out the educational system the apprenticeship offers them an alternative vocational education and training without any time loss in their career because of the delayed start.

(2)  
Kytir J., Stadler B. (2004).

Besides that the character of the vocational training in form of the “dual system” is completely different compared to the fulltime vocational schools. 80% of the educational time is spent on practical tasks and only a fifth in the context of the formal school system. Therefore this form of education is an attractive alternative compared to fulltime vocational schools for a considerable part of the young people. In addition they get the early possibility of having an own income.

These three specifications of the dual system have a positive effect on the dropout rate. In addition it is possible to point out some characteristics of the Austrian educational system in general as well as some characteristics of the apprenticeship system in specific with a positive influence particularly on the youth unemployment rate:

Above all the dual system but also increasingly other forms of vocational education and training are strongly oriented on the demand of the labour market needs. Concerning the apprenticeship the orientation on the demand is evident and an integral part of the training. The fact, that 80% of the training is performed within the companies providing an apprenticeship place, offers the employers the possibility of training those qualifications which are relevant for the company. This could be an explanation why e.g. multinational companies are willing to train apprentices though the apprenticeship system is not known in the national context they come from. A successful example in this respect is the training profession “Systemgastronom”, which was developed due to the demand of only a few multinational fast-food companies.

This demand-orientation of vocational training is built upon the strong integration of the economy concerning the development of curricula and the arrangement of training processes. This again culminates in the dual system, where the “Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat” (Federal Vocational Training Advisory Board) built mainly by the social partners is responsible for the steering of the whole system. The involvement of the social partners in general and the economy in specific in vocational education and training is another possible explanation for the lower scale of youth unemployment in Austria.

Finally the “dual system” is an ideal example for the smooth transition from school to work for many young people. On the one hand the training is both, employment and qualification, on the other hand the apprenticeship offers the possibility for employers to observe potentially future employees over years to get an impression of their productivity. Therefore employers are often willing to offer an employment status after finishing apprenticeship.

Besides many advantages there are also some critical point associated with the “dual system”. So the number of apprenticeship places within the dual system heavily depends on the economic development. This means on the reverse that if the economic development gets worse there will be an increasing selection of the best whilst integration chances of disadvantaged youth will recede.

Besides the overall economic development that is relevant concerning the total number of apprenticeship places available the ongoing specialisation of companies is an obstacle providing apprenticeship places. If companies

specialise in a small segment they often are not able to cover a whole training profession. Therefore they are not allowed to train apprentices. Rather than a mismatch in training professions available and demanded there is evidence for a structural mismatch between the more broad educational requirements of an apprenticeship education and the fact that an increasing number of companies only can cover parts of the curriculum.

### 3. Specific challenges

Besides Austria's comparatively privileged position concerning early school leaving and youth unemployment the fact must not be ignored that there are also specific challenges and serious problems in Austria. In order to validate this hypothesis early school leaving and the youth unemployment have to be analysed more in detail. Therefore the focus in this section will lie on social inequalities concerning the risk of dropping out the school system early and the risk of unemployment (Steiner 2006). (3)

In order to visualize social inequalities concerning early school leaving 'risk-factors' have been calculated, which result when the ratio of dropouts in a specific subgroup (e.g. young people living in urban areas) is divided through the ratio of a corresponding reference group (e.g. young people living in rural areas). (4)

The results of this calculations presented in the following chart show that the social inequalities concerning the risk of early school dropout are remarkable high in Austria:

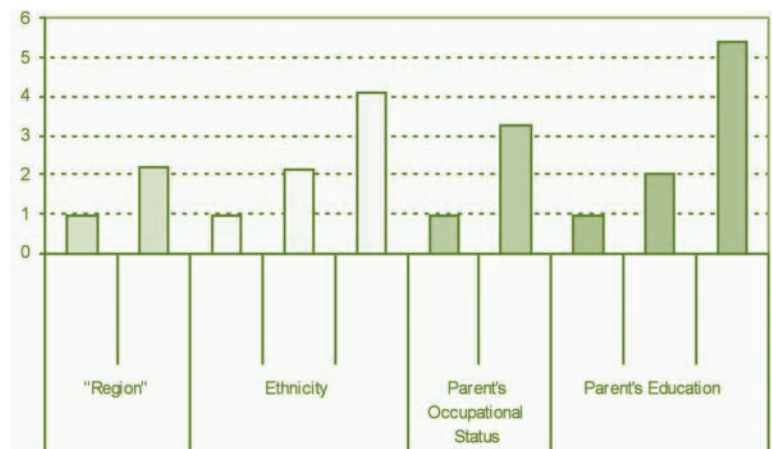
**Figure 3:**  
Distribution of Dropout-Risks in Austria 2004/05

(3)

The source of the results concerning social inequalities which are presented here, is a research project of the Institute for Advanced Studies completed just recently: Steiner M., Steiner P. (2006).

(4)

The risk-factor of the reference group is defined as 1. If the dropout-ratio in the specific subgroup, which is compared to the reference-group, would be the same, the result of the division (respectively the risk-factor for the specific subgroup) also would be 1. Therefore risk-factors higher than 1 are an indicator for discrimination of the specific subgroup (higher ratio of dropouts) compared to the reference group. If the risk-factor of the specific subgroup in comparison to the reference group would be e.g. 2, this means, that the specific subgroups risk of dropping out the school system is double compared to the reference group.



Source: Statistic Austria, Calculations: Steiner-IHS

Young people living in urban areas are two times more likely to drop out the school system early (dropout-ratio: 11,8%) than young people living in rural areas are (dropout-ratio: 5,4%). Compared to the equal educational opportunities discussion in the 1960ies and 70ies this result means that the situation seems to have changed completely. 30 years ago the rural youth was referred to as educational disadvantaged, nowadays it is the urban youth, which faces higher risks of leaving the educational system without sufficient qualifications.

Immigrants are much more likely to drop out the school-system than Austrian pupils are. The ratio of dropouts among immigrants without an EU-citizenship is four times higher (the dropout-ratio equals nearly 30%) than the ratio among young people with German mother tongue of the same age (dropout-ratio: 7,2%) and the risk of the 2nd/3rd generation pupils of former immigrants still is double compared to native Austrians.

Besides these inequalities among different socio demographic groups discussed before the focus now will lie on inequalities concerning the risk of early school dropout dependent on social origin. Therefore the dropout-risk now will be analysed according to the parent's occupational status and the parent's education.

Young people whose parents are unemployed face a risk of early school dropout that is three times higher (dropout-ratio: 21,1%) compared to young people whose parents are employed (dropout-ratio: 6,4%). At last the social inequalities concerning school-dropout are highest if differentiated according to the parent's education. Young people whose parent's are educated low (parents are dropouts themselves) leave the educational system without sufficient qualifications 5,5 times more likely (dropout-ratio: 16,8%) than young people whose parents are highly educated (dropout-ratio: 3,1%). The conclusion is, that the early school leaving of parents devolves upon their children.

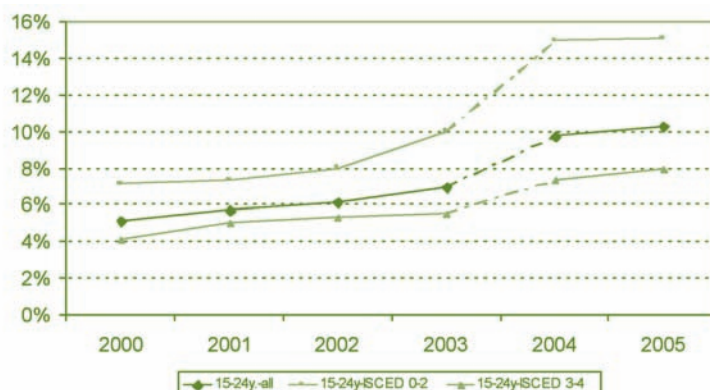
In the actors perspective these persons dropped out because of the very selective Austrian school system on the one hand and because of the hard competition situation on the apprenticeship market on the other hand. Another reason for dropping out is the short duration of compulsory schooling, which enforces the disadvantages of young people instead of reducing them.

If we summarize the findings, we can conclude that the social inequalities concerning the risk of leaving the educational system without sufficient qualifications are remarkable high in Austria. So we therefore face serious problems concerning disadvantaged youth although the average ratio of early school leavers is comparably low. The problem situation even could be worse, if school dropout leads to unemployment and a higher risk of permanent social exclusion. Therefore the task now will be to analyse the youth unemployment in Austria more in detail.

There is a risk of permanent social exclusion of young people who dropped out the educational system and who are confronted with difficulties entering the labour market particularly in systems with a lower level of problems. Comparing the constellations of disadvantage across Europe (Walther/Pohl 2005) a distinction can be made whether young people are disadvantaged, because they are unemployed or they are unemployed, because they are disadvantaged as a result of e.g. early school leaving. The combination named last fits for Austria. In many European countries unemployment is common status in the transition from school to work, therefore fluctuation from unemployment to the labour market is a common process after a while. But if a big majority of the cohort – like in Austria – has no problems concerning the transition from school to work, there is a tendency of negative selection of disadvantaged youth. Consequently these young people have to overbear great difficulties entering the labour market.

This presumption for Austria is approved reflecting the unemployment rate depending on the level of qualification like the following chart shows. In the year 2005 the unemployment rate of young people with at most a compulsory school-leaving certificate (ISCED 2) is 15,1% (according to the LFS-concept). The unemployment rate of this group is nearly double than the rate of young people having a school-leaving certificate on ISCED 3-4 level (8%). These relations of inequality got worse since 2001. The difference of the unemployment rates between both educational levels observed was 2,3 percent-points in 2001 and is 7,1 percent-points in 2005. Therefore the assumption of an intensified risk of exclusion gains ground particularly in periods of economically difficult developments.

**Figure 4:**  
Youth Unemployment Rate  
depending on Education in  
Austria



Source: EUROSTAT, ILO-Definitions, Graphics: Steiner-IHS

This results in mind it can be concluded, that early school dropouts face severe problems by entering the labour market. Because ethnicity has been one of the most discriminating factors concerning the risk of early school leaving, the question now is, if this is also true for youth unemployment.

The unemployment rate of young Austrian citizens in June 2005 is 8,9%. This is nearly half of the corresponding rate within EU-15, which reaches 15,6%. In comparison of these two figures the relatively privileged position of Austria, as discussed before can be seen once more. But if the figures for migrant young people are compared the situation in Austria is even worse than within the EU-15-countries in averaged. The unemployment rate of migrant young people in Austria reaches 27,3% whereas the corresponding rate within EU-15 is 4,6 percent-points lower. This empirical result strengthens the hypothesis that disadvantaged young people face a higher risk of social exclusion in Austria (where the overall unemployment rate is lower), than this is true for EU-15 (where the overall rate is higher).

**Table 1. Youth Unemployment Rate in Austria depending on Ethnicity**

	II/2005		
	15-24 years total	15-24 years males	15-24 years female
UE-15-total	16,7%	16,7%	16,6%
UE-15-national	15,6%	15,8%	15,4%
UE-15-non-UE	22,9%	23,1%	22,8%
AUS-total	10,9%	10,9%	10,8%
AUS-national	8,9%	8,9%	9,0%
AUT-non-UE	27,3%	27,3%	27,4%

Fuente: EUROSTAT, ILO-Definitions, LFS-concept

The empirical results point out that there is a particular problem concerning disadvantaged youth in Austria. Consequently specific intervention strategies and measures are needed, which focus on the qualification of young people and their integration in the educational or occupational system. These strategies and measures will be discussed in the last chapter.

## 4. Strategies of intervention and measures

In the first part of this chapter I now will develop a framework, which intervention strategies seem to be suitable for the specific Austrian situation, give an overview to the intervention as a whole, characterise them concerning their specific target groups and will work out where the blind spots are. In the second part of the chapter two concrete measures will be described more in detail.

### 4.1. Analytical Aspects

In order to point out which intervention strategies seem to be suitable for disadvantaged youth the specific Austrian situation has to be remembered at first. The assumption was made that because of the comparably low level of problems of early school dropout and youth unemployment in a macro perspective there is a high risk of negative selection and social exclusion of disadvantaged youth. This assumption was confirmed in chapter three of this article by analysing the big social inequalities concerning the risk of early school dropout and youth unemployment in Austria. As a result of these findings the priority of intervention strategies has to be laid on building bridges for disadvantaged youth to get back into the educational and occupational system. These bridges should guarantee that young people, who have dropped out of the system, could overcome the high entrance barriers. If otherwise the aim is to build bridges for disadvantaged youth to minimize their risk of a permanent exclusion, the measures and strategies will have to focus on the specific needs and requirements of the target group facing different integration barriers in a sensible way. This means that individual support and assistance is needed for integrating disadvantaged youth in Austria. The most disadvantaged young people in Austria are migrants and young people from a low-educated and unemployed family-background. The measures in favour of disadvantaged youth therefore primarily have to be designed to meet and overcome their specific needs and deficits. The answer to the question, if this is true, is one aspect in the context of analysing the Austrian intervention strategies which follows now.

In Austria most of the measures targeted on disadvantaged youth are included in European programmes such as the National Action Plan for Employment (NAP), the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAP-inclusion) or the ESF-Objective 3 interventions. There are no separated programs or policies for disadvantaged youth but the measures for this target group are part of the programs mentioned. This situation offers synergies because disadvantaged young people also can be found in measures, which have not been designed just for them but also in others. But this situation at the same time also can be seen as a contradiction to the requirements mentioned before because it undermines a demand tailored approach to the needs of disadvantaged youth in some of the



measures. All in all 250 Mio. € are spent annually and more than 50.000 young people are integrated in youth measures. These 50.000 young people equal 6% of the population aged 15-24 years. The spectrum and the intensity of the measures are very different and range from singular counselling and advice to intensive trainings.

It would go beyond the scope of declaring all measures, hence only some important measures concerning early school leaving and/or youth unemployment are described in the following scheme for illustrating the dimensions and bandwidths of the measures.

MEASURE	TARGET	Dur. of individual Participation	Participants (03/04)	Budget in € (03/04)	EVALUATION
Vocational Preparation Courses	Bridging apprenticeship training for unsuccessful apprenticeship seekers	12 months	6.800	71 Mio. €	67% in work 6 months after measure, 21% unemployed
Jobs4You(th)	Different qualification and occupational measures for young people	Diverse: some weeks to more than 1 year	9.500	47 Mio. €	Continuous monitoring, depending on measure 60-80% in work 6 months after measure.
Clearing	Assistance for disadvantaged youth on the transition from school to work	6 months	2.500	4,8 Mio. €	Continuous monitoring: 37,4% in job or school after measure (external evaluation report expected at the end of 2006).
Job Assistance	Assistance to integrat disabled or social handicapped persons into the labour market	12 months	6.500	n.a.	Continuous monitoring, external evaluation report expected at the end of 2006.
Integrative Training	Forms of apprenticeship for disadvantaged/disabled youth	1 to several years	500	n.a.	Continuous monitoring, external evaluation report expected at the end of 2006.
Teamteaching for Immigrants in Commercial Schools	Mother tongue instruction for immigrants by a second teacher	12 months	634	4 Mio. €	Continuous monitoring (for more detailed information see best practice description)
Preparatory Courses for ISCED-Level-2 school-leaving Certificate	Preparation for making up the compulsory school leaving certificate	12 months	1.200	2,1 Mio. €	68% reach ISCED-Level-2 school-leaving certificate, after measure: 88% in training or job.

Most of the labour market policies concerning young people are reactive to manifest problems and measures aiming at young people's employability are the dominant type. Preventative or opportunity-building measures form a small minority in the context of all measures targeted on early school leaving or youth unemployment. Nevertheless the focus of ESF-objective 3 under the priority of lifelong learning and some measures within the new 'National Reform Program for Growth and Employment' (Republic of Austria 2005) following the NAP is a more preventative one. Orientation-measures for girls, the establishment of new educational tracks oriented towards promising job-fields (e.g. IT), broader VET-curricula but also the combination of measures with corresponding train the trainer initiatives can be mentioned in this context.

Concerning anti-discrimination policies within the programs in discussion (NAP, NAP-Inclusion, ESF-objective 3) more attention is paid to gender-



aspects than to ethnic background. Within the programs mentioned several measures have been included targeting gender-discrimination but only a few can be found targeting problems of migrant youths. A target of all measures (and also realised in most cases) is a female participation of 50% at least. Concerning ethnic background no minimum requirement of participation has been defined, although 12,5% of the young people aged 19 years have a migrant background and although immigrants are much more effected by early school leaving and youth unemployment as shown before. For many measures no reliable data is available concerning the participation of migrant youth, but the labour market monitoring report 2004 (BMWA) states that 18% of the participants in the youth measures within the Austrian NAP had a migrant family background. This means that compared to their share of population they are over represented but at the same time this means that they are underrepresented if it is taken into account, that migrant youths are three to four times more affected by youth unemployment and early school leaving than non-migrant young people are. Because of that it can be concluded that there is a lack of measures in favour of and demand-tailored to the needs of disadvantaged young people who are endangered of permanent social exclusion most.

In contrast to the needs of disadvantaged youth a gap particularly in motivating measures turns out. Closing that gap seems to be urgent, because it can be assumed that due to the described mechanisms of selection disadvantaged youths have accumulated a range of disappointments trying to return or to stay in the system. Therefore they need specific assistance and motivation to start a new attempt of integration. From the actors point of view mentoring could be an option in this respect. In Austria mentoring has been established as an instrument in the context of gender mainstreaming. Transferring it to intervention strategies in favour of disadvantaged youth would be an innovative approach in the Austrian context. One could think of mentoring programmes integrating persons who faced the same problem situation in former times, but who improved their situation in the meantime. These persons know and understand the problems of the target group because of their own experience and therefore could find better access to the target group.

Besides these more critical aspects concerning the Austrian intervention policies for disadvantaged youths the aim of the following good-practice description is to discuss two measures in detail, which seem consistent with the specific problem situation. The main conceptual task of the 'Vocational preparation Courses' besides qualification is to building bridges back into the educational and occupational system. The second measure described 'Clearing' is a good example for a target-group-sensible approach. Both is essential within the specific Austrian situation of a low overall ratio of early school leaving and youth unemployment but a high risk of social exclusion.

## 4.2. Good Practice Examples

The aim of the following table is to give an comparative overview to the two good-practice examples before they are described in detail:

	Vocational Preparation Courses	Clearing
Framework	NAP	NAP-Inclusion
Policy Field	Labour Market Policy	Social Policy
Participants/ Funding	2003/04: 5.500 Participants, 2004/05: 6.800 Participants,	2002: 1.700, 2003: 2.500
Funding	2003/04: 57 Mio. € 2004/05: 71 Mio. €	2003: 2,5 Mio. € 2004: 4,8 Mio €
Pilot or Long-Term	Long term	Long term
Where?	All over the country	All over the country
Main objectives	Safety net for young people who did not find an apprenticeship place after compulsory education. Temporary bridging solution until a regular apprenticeship place is found.	Integration of young people with disabilities or social disadvantages into the educational/occupational system, accompanying the transition process after compulsory school.
Target Group	School leavers not successful on apprenticeship market, Participants of earlier courses, disabled persons	Young people with disabilities or special needs and social disadvantaged youth
Main Activities	Vocational training, counselling for girls, skills and knowledge, training in seeking apprenticeship places	Individual profile-creation, strengths/weakness analysis, career/development plan, training according to individual deficits/plans, reveal employment perspectives
Main actors	Educational institutions, Public Employment Service (AMS), Federal Ministry of Economic and Labour	Regions, municipalities, third sector organizations, NPO, Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations
Persons involved in routine	Clients, employees at the educational institutions and at the public employment service	Clients, "Clearers", teachers, parents, employment service, federal social welfare
Key activities	Courses, practical training (at least 60% of instruction), counseling and vocational guidance	Counseling, strengthens /weakness analysis followed by interventions according to individual action plans (training, education...)
Duration of Process	12 months are aspired, but if no apprenticeship place is found in this time, the measure can be extended.	6 months
Acquired Skills	First year of apprenticeship, personal stabilization and soft skills	Individually different according to career/development plans
Future Plans	Programme is constantly extended, 8.000 places in 2005/06	Because of its success it is planned to extend the programme.

### Good practice 1: Vocational Preparation Courses (Lehrausbildungsplätze)

The Vocational Preparation Courses have been chosen as good-practice example because their main aim is to build bridges back into the system, in a context where a rather small minority faces the danger of permanent exclusion. (5)

The Vocational Preparation Courses are Part of the programme of action under the Youth Training Consolidation Act, which is an essential part of the Austrian NAP programme. The Vocational Preparation Courses therefore are part of the labour market policy on national level. The Youth Training Consolidation Act (JASG) besides other tasks assigns to the Public Employment Service the responsibility of compensating for the shortage of apprenticeship places by providing a suitable safety net in form of additional

(5)  
For a description of the measure compare also: Republic of Austria (2003b: p.79f.).

apprenticeship training places in special institutions. The intention is to give a chance of training to all young persons who have not found a suitable apprenticeship place after completing their compulsory education. The prior aim of the measure is to provide a temporary bridging solution until a regular apprenticeship place can be taken up in an enterprise. The intervention starts with vocational guidance modules and leads to courses with a duration up to 12 months, where the participants are taught and can train the skills acquired in the first year of a regular apprenticeship. Besides offering training comparable to regular apprenticeships within the Vocational Preparation Courses particular attention should be drawn to scholastic deficits and personal disabilities of the participants.

In the year 2003/04 5.500 young people participated in the programme, 2004/05 the number of places available climbed up to 6.800 and for 2005/06 even 8.000 participants were planned. 48% of the participants in 2004/05 were female and 18% had a migrant background. The amount of funding constituted 57 Mio. € in the year 2003/04 and 71 Mio. € in the year after, whereas 53 Mio. € are funded by the Public Employment Service and 18 Mio. € are contributed by the federal states ('Länder').

The target groups of the Vocational Preparation Courses in general are school-leavers who were not successful in seeking apprenticeship places, but special attention should be drawn to disabled young persons as well as to those with special placement difficulties (long-term unemployed, persons with learning difficulties as well as school dropouts). The general prerequisite for participation is the registration at the Public Employment Service as seeking apprenticeship places and the evidence that they have made at least five unsuccessful applications for apprenticeship places.

The Vocational Preparation Courses consist of the following modules:

- Vocational guidance and/or vocational preparation: Clarification of individual occupational prospects,
- Counselling of girls seeking apprenticeship places with the primary counselling aim of expanding the range of occupational choices for girls, which is limited by gender-specific role patterns.
- 12-months courses in training institutions, to teach first-year apprenticeship skills and knowledge. It is aspired that during these 12 months the participants should change into a regular apprenticeship. If this aim is not obtained, another course could be attended and in single cases the participant is able to finish his apprenticeship within the programme (in average an apprenticeship ends after three years), but generally the transmission into a regular training place is striven. Practical training should cover at least 60% of the educational time. In addition the courses should also give training in procedures for seeking apprenticeship places or work and in job applications. The courses offered should be related to the actual demand on the relevant regional labour market. This should help to meet the overriding aim to place the participants in a regular apprenticeship.
- To support the aim of training, additional technical and educational help can be provided like personality-related training, coaching or regular group chat sessions.

Main actor is the public employment service, assigned by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour. Task of the PES is to elevate the demand for vocational preparation courses nationwide and to control the implementation of the programme. The courses themselves are organised, provided and operated by educational institutions. In order to be commissioned to carry out Vocational Preparation Courses the educational institutions have to design a concept of the measure and make an application at the public employment service. In most cases there is no active involvement of the participants nor of the social environment in the planning and execution of the programme.

The public employment service also is responsible for the monitoring. The prior indicator of success is the number of direct transitions from the measure to an apprenticeship place. A second indicator is the distribution of graduates by relevant labour market positions like employment or unemployment. 12 months after participation in the measure 54% found an apprenticeship, 11% were employed and 12% were unemployed. (BMWA, 2004: 17f). Half a year before, that means 6 months after ending the measure 67% of the participants found an apprenticeship place. This means that 13% of the participants lost their apprenticeship again.

A survey among 300 participants, companies and representatives of the actors shows that another main effect of the programme is the personal stabilization and the extension of the soft skills of the participants. The experience of the companies with former participants is quite positive; therefore some of them had arranged additional apprenticeship places.

### **Good practice 2: Clearing**

The good-practice example 'Clearing' is part of the NAP-Inclusion programme. It is a measure on the national level and it is implemented all over the country. The programme exists since 2001, and for this reason it can be referred to as a long-term intervention yet. This measure was chosen as good practice example within the Austrian context, because it is a good example for demand and need tailored interventions. (6)

After finishing compulsory school it is often difficult for young people with special needs and disadvantaged youth to be integrated into the labour market. Therefore a huge proportion stays at home with their families without any perspectives for support or employment. Only some move to various institutions and measures but a comprehensive safety net or support system for the after-school phase of disabled schoolchildren did not exist until 2001. 'Clearing' is a new measure for integrating young people with special needs into employment, which is positioned directly at the interface between school and employment. The task of 'Clearing' is to determine together with those affected the best-suited individual package of measures for integration into employment in the final or penultimate school year.

1.700 young people participated in 'Clearing' in the school year 2001/02, in 2002/03 the number of participants rose to 2.500. The target group in the beginning primarily were young people with disabilities and special needs. In the meantime also social disadvantaged people at the age of 13-24 belong to the target group. In the year 2002/03 69% of the participants were persons with an emotional handicap, 20% of the young people had a mental disability.

(6)  
For a description of the measure compare also: Bundesministerium für Soziale Sicherheit und Generationen (2004b) and Republic of Austria (2003a).

The main activities within the measure are:

- Drawing up a interests and suitability profile
- Carrying out a strengths/weaknesses analysis
- Establishing or outlining any possible needs regarding extra training
- Revealing employment perspectives on the basis of the interests and suitability profile, and building on that
- Drawing up of a career/development plan.

“The idea is not to take existing problems away from young people and their parents, but that they should be offered the support necessary to solve issues which arise as independently as possible, according to the principle of “helping people to help themselves”. An essential factor for success is the active inclusion of the young people, their parents and teachers. As the work with the young people already begins in their last or penultimate school year, it is ensured that the transition into employment is as seamless as possible. Building on the support measures taken in school, an individually tailored “package of measures” for integration can be put together. The needs, possibilities and interests of the young people form the basis of the actions of the clearing offices.” (2nd NAP-inclusion 2003-2005, p.57)

The funding for the programme was 2,5 Mio. € in the year 2003 and 4,8 Mio. € in 2004. The state and the European Social Fund (ESF) finance the programme.

Actors implementing this programme can be regions, municipalities or third sector/non-profit organisations. Organisations interested in implementing ‘Clearing’ have to make an application at the Federal Ministry of Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection. The applying institutions have to fulfil following aspects: experience with the clientele, good position in the region and a professional and service-based concept.

The persons working at the project, named “Clearers”, are social workers, psychologists or persons with a pedagogical background. The “Clearers” should be aware of the ability to communicate and to work in teams, they should have job experience over several years, knowledge in project working and basis knowledge of the regional infrastructure. One ‘Clearer’ working 40 hours a week has to advise around 50 clients per year, therefore there were 53 project workers engaged within the measure in 2003.

‘Clearing’ is based on high cooperation with the provincial education authority, the Public Employment Service, class teachers, parents, facilities for people with disabilities and the Federal Social Welfare Office, whereby the latter plays a managing role and is responsible for the current monitoring.

“According to the annual reports of the regional offices of the Federal Social Welfare Office, clearing was already offered almost everywhere in 2002. The clearing process was successfully completed with 1.450 young

people in 2002. As it was possible to provide suitable apprenticeships, employment contracts, public employment service measures or further school education for many young people with disabilities, the clearing measures are to be further extended.” (2nd NAP-incl. 2003-2005, p.57f.)

“Fact is that 21% of the participants extended their school attendance, 9% visited different subsequent measures. Nearly 15% of the support led into work assistance (“Arbeitsassistentz”), a measure for supporting disabled young people after they found a job. [...] 4% of the young people found a regular employment, 12% began an apprenticeship. 11% could be prepared to get a regular employment in form of lower-level apprenticeships (Vorlehre). Nearly 21% attended a measure of the public employment service or a further job orientation.” (Jahresbericht “Clearing” 2003, p.14)

The measure ‘Clearing’ was awarded “best practice” status in 2004 on European level.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Intervention strategies and measures focussing on disadvantaged youth as the ones discussed before doubtlessly are needed. But in order to minimize dropout rates it is more effective to implement measures in compulsory schooling institutions than designing reparation measures for people who dropped out the educational system yet. Therefore the high selectivity of the Austrian school system intensifying the disadvantages instead of supporting the disadvantaged youth has to be reconsidered. In this context deep structural changes like for example an obligatory preschool-year, a common form of education for pupils aged 10-14, an extension of compulsory schooling or the cancellation of barriers like the repetition of school years are proposed. For improving the situation of disadvantaged youth in the dual system the dropout rate in the corresponding vocational schools should be reduced. In the actors perspective this could be achieved for example by combining vocational education with support for personal development or the extension of the apprenticeship-training-assistance existing presently in specific measures to all apprentices.

So one answer to the problem of early school dropout is individualised support. Besides that individualised supporting structures could also help to achieve a better preparation of young people for working life. Weaknesses-/strengths analysis and socio-pedagogical support might be helpful in this context. Additionally occupational orientation should become an obligatory subject. Moreover not only the target group, but also parents, teachers and companies need intensified information and consultation.

Besides these recommendations concerning the educational system itself to prevent the problems of early school leaving and youth unemployment it is also possible to work out conclusions oriented towards intervention strategies and measures of active labour market policy that focus on disadvantaged youth. It is important for young people, who could not get an apprenticeship place or face problems entering the labour market not to loose time in ineffective short-term measures, but to get high-quality vocational education and training. Whenever possible approved and

recognised educational certificates compared to partially qualifications are the better solution for disadvantaged youths. Nevertheless modularised forms of education allowing certificates also for basic vocational qualifications are needed.

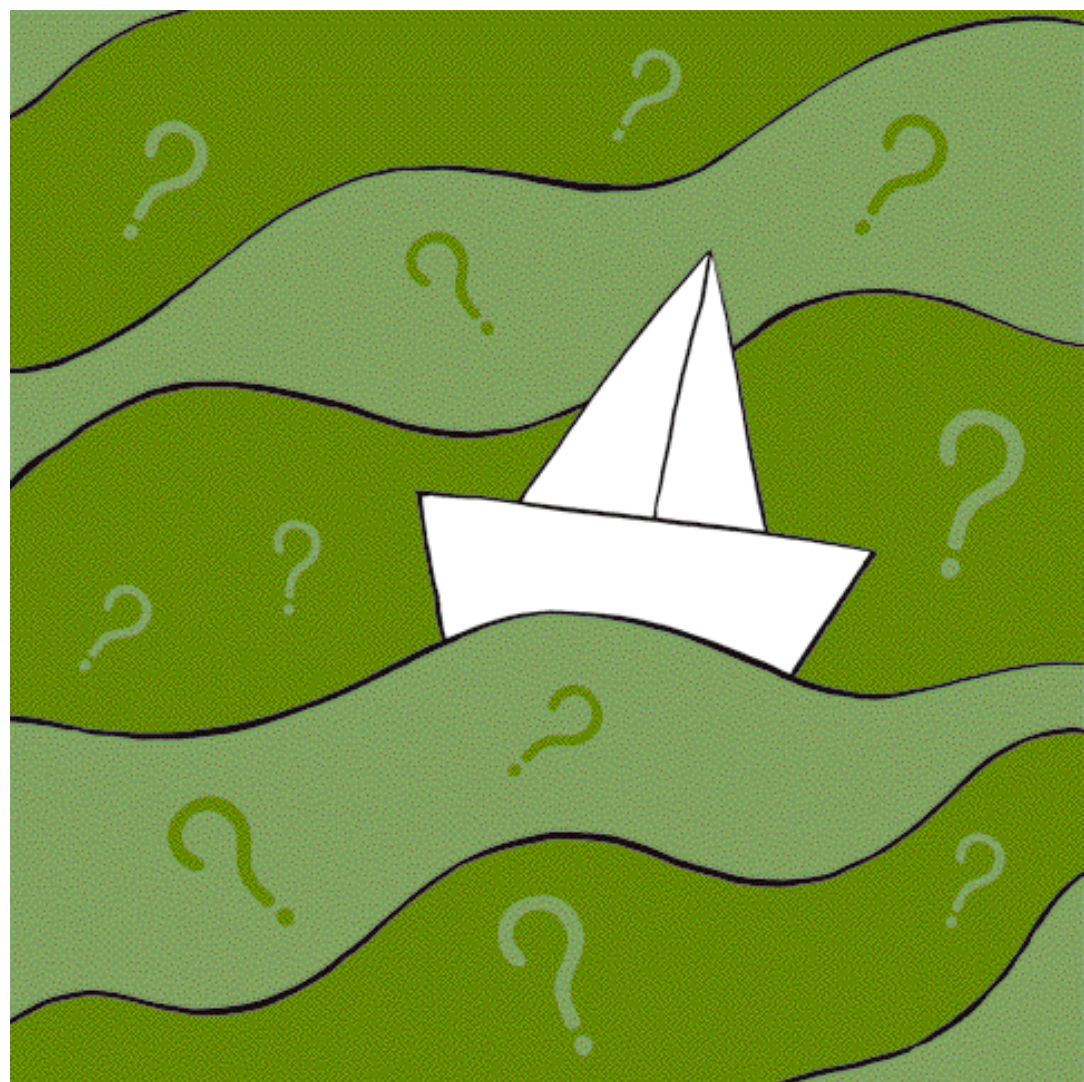
In the specific Austrian situation it was stated several times that the measures and interventions targeted on disadvantaged youth need enforced orientation on the target group. By analysing the intervention strategies it becomes obvious that this is realised only within a small number of measures and therefore has to be enforced. This recommendation could be realised by participating the target group in the designing of the measures. A target group orientation also means that new didactical concepts in educational forms focussing not the deficits but the potentials of the young people are needed, means investment also into the qualification of teachers, trainers and advisers as well as the inclusion of social work assistance.

Concluding all the analyses the transferability of the findings to other national contexts should be discussed. Measures and intervention strategies in most cases are tailored to the specific national situation and can be expected to be successful within a specific framework of institutions and national preconditions. Therefore single measures cannot easily be transferred from one country to another. In Austria where the level of problems concerning disadvantaged youth is comparably low measures building bridges back to the system are essential. This is the level of recommendations useful for an international discussion and should be the level of discussion about transferability. The Vocational Preparation Courses are good practice in Austria but this measure cannot be transferred unless there is an apprenticeship system established. Also the apprenticeship system itself can be seen as good practice but its transfer will fail if there is no tradition of employer's engagement in the education and training of young people and employees. Therefore the lessons that can be learned from the Austrian situation concerning disadvantaged youth mostly are the necessity of building bridges back into the system and the need of demand-tailored measures. Besides that individualised supporting structures will be relevant also in other national contexts.

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## Constellations of Disadvantage and Policy Dilemmas in Youth Transitions from School to Work in Bulgaria

The chapter, first, outlines the constellations of disadvantage in youth passages to adulthood in Bulgaria in a comparative perspective and, second, explores the main policy approaches in support of disadvantaged youth presenting the factors of their efficacy. That made use of four main sources of information: statistical data provided by the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute and Eurostat (The Labour Force Survey); official documents of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Youth and Sports, and Ministry of Finance; research reports and publications of national and international sociological agencies; and expert consultations, including a seminar discussion with representatives of the academic community, policy makers, and stake holders in Bulgaria.

**Key words:** transitions of young people, constellations of disadvantage, transitions and active measures, social inclusion policies, transitions to market oriented economies, employment, good practices

In the past ten years there has been a growing concern in Europe with the drawbacks in youth transition from education to employment and social participation more generally (European Commission (EC), 2001; EC, 2005). Bulgaria is among the countries with accumulated problems in young people's educational attainment and integration into the labour market. Having experienced a radical social transformation in the 1990s in the course of which the centrally planned and state owned economy was replaced by a market oriented one, the present-day Bulgarian society lags behind the new member states in economic output and living standards of the population. The liberalisation of social life affected young people disproportionately hard. With the state withdrawal from active interference in the regulation of relations among the social groups, young people in particular were cast from the certainty of the previously firmly structured and strictly controlled transition patterns of the state-socialist societies into the sea of the risks and uncertainties of market regulated societies (Kovacheva, 2001). What are the key problems in youth school-to-work transition and main barriers of their sustainable employment integration? What are the dilemmas faced by the social inclusion policies in the country and the factors for the success and failure of the active measures in support of youth transitions?

### 1. Constellations of disadvantage facing young people in Bulgaria

The social inclusion of young people in European societies is hampered by a combination of economic, social and cultural barriers. The factors for disadvantage (conceptualised as unequal opportunities and risks of social

exclusion) operate in complex interrelationships creating different patterns in different countries. These specific clusters are understood as constellations of disadvantage in youth transitions from education to employment (Walther and Pohl, 2005). Focusing on constellations of disadvantage rather than problem groups helps to avoid neglecting structural problems and presenting them as individual deficits. Some of the barriers might be self-erected but it is the institutions of society which perpetuate life-chance inequalities among youth.

The perspective on constellations of disadvantage allows us to consecutively examine the clusters of early school leaving, unemployment, precarious employment and poverty, prevalent in the social context of present-day Bulgaria.

#### *- early school leaving*

The educational system in Bulgaria is open and not rigidly selective. Despite that, the system's reach of young people is fairly small by the operating European indicators.

Table 1. **Young people's enrolment in the educational system (%)**

Age groups	Bulgaria	European Union (25)
5-14 year olds	98.0	99.2
15-19 year olds	70.5	81.3
20-29 year olds	15.2	22.2

Source: Ministry of Finance, 2005.

While Bulgaria unlike other post-communist countries managed to preserve its network of public child care facilities and to make the preschool year mandatory to be spent in kindergarten (in 2004), the country is falling behind Europe in the numbers of young people it reaches as early as secondary school level. The existing normative base for the exams after seventh grade increases the selectivity of the secondary education and generates a considerable interdependence between parents' income and children's selection. There is also a noticeable lapse in the number of young people reached on the next educational level where the higher professional qualifications are acquired.

Early school leavers in Europe are considered youth aged 18-24 with highest qualifications ISCED level 2, that is, completed basic education. According to Eurostat in Bulgaria in 2004 21.4% of young people fall under this category. For comparison, the Scandinavian countries, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Lithuania have shares of early school leavers below 10%. A problem that becomes all the more pressing in Bulgaria is the youth dropping out of school in the first few years of schooling without acquiring basic literacy. Recently the National Statistical Institute (NSI, 2004a: 15) started publishing data on this process – in 2003 about 3% of the first-to-forth grade students left school, as did 3.2% of the fifth-eight grade students and 3% of the ninth-thirteenth grade students. First among the indicated 'reasons' for leaving school is the category "family matters" which hides poverty, ethnic prejudices, bad transportation links and a multitude of other institutional disadvantages. There is still no official data on the number of children who have never started school but we can assume with a high degree of certainty that their number is increasing.

#### *- deficiencies of the vocational training system*

Major problems in the social integration of young people in the country are caused by the state of vocational education and training. The achievements of the reform in this sphere are the new legal base, the broader institutional network with numerous state and private schools, the decentralization of management, the efforts towards cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Even though the system offers education in a multitude of forms: vocational studies in the basic school after the sixth grade, secondary four-year vocational-technical schools, colleges and technical institutes as well as shorter courses in centres for vocational training, it still has not overcome many of its flaws. We consider the most important reason for this state to be the fact that the vocational training is conducted in schools without adequate technical equipment and not in a real business milieu. There is no system for cooperation between vocational schools and firms in the real economy. As a result such training remains mostly theoretic with an emphasis on information instead of skills and qualifications and young people graduate without experience in working with modern technology. The state of higher education is similar as professional internships are offered very rarely and such internships are most often just nominal and do not equip young people with professional work experience (MBMD, 2005). A major research conducted by the National Statistical Institute (2004b) on the continuing vocational training in the country during 2004 established that only 2.6% of the firms had conducted introductory training (of young people without previous work experience) during the past year. There is a mismatch between the mostly industrial specializations offered in the vocational schools in the country and the orientation of the Bulgarian economy towards dominating development of the services sector. What is lacking is an established system for research and monitoring of the qualifications needs of the state, private and non-governmental sectors.

#### *- gender inequalities*

Gender inequalities in Bulgaria are not as strongly present as in countries with conservative socio-political regimes. Bulgarian women have a lower share among the early school leavers than men and in the recent years they have been achieving higher educational levels than men. At present women comprise 57% of the student body in colleges that give a diploma for a "specialist", 52.2% of the student body among those studying for a bachelor's and master's degree and 51% among the Ph.D. students (NSI, 2004a). These data, however, do not mean that gender does not create disadvantages among youth in the country during their integration into the labour market. Young women comprise only 38.2% of the student body in vocational schools which limits their opportunities for finding a job after graduation. Women concentrate in specific occupations and specific sectors in the labour market and this phenomenon is linked with their lower pay and their circumscribed career development. According to JAP (2002) there is a significant gender pay gap - women earned 28% less than men in 1997. Young women are also underprivileged in their access to continuing vocational education and training given the lack of support for reconciliation of paid employment and child care for working mothers in terms of flexible

working time and place and the prevalent gendered division of household labour.

*- ethnic inequalities*

Among race, gender, ethnicity and immigration status that shape the particular constellations of disadvantage in different European countries, ethnicity has the greatest influence on the opportunities for social integration of youth in Bulgaria. Most disadvantaged are young people coming from families of ethnic Roma (between 4% and 10% of the population) and ethnic Turks (around 9.4%). Belonging to such a group means several times higher risks for early school leaving, long term unemployment and poverty (JIM, 2005). While more than half of the ethnic Bulgarians have secondary education and a fourth of them – higher education, only a fourth of ethnic Turks have secondary education and higher education is completed by only 3% of them. For the Roma group less than one out of ten has completed education higher than basic (secondary and higher combined).

Table 2. **Economically active population according to educational level, based on the census in 2001(%)**

Completed education	Bulgarians	Turks	Roma
Basic	20.7	53.0	44.9
Secondary	53.0	23.7	
Higher	23.7	2.7	7.2

Source: JIM, 2004

The illiteracy rate shows the same tendency – 0.4% among Bulgarians, 3.5% among Turks and 12.7% among Roma which share has increased by 50% between the two censuses. According to expert estimates cited in JAP (2002) half of Roma youth of compulsory schooling age have never been to school. The opportunities for finding work for young Roma and Turks in Bulgaria are also severely limited. In 2003 unemployed were 17.3% of ethnic Bulgarians, 48.4% of ethnic Turks and 52.9% of ethnic Roma. The World Bank (2002) data on poverty rates in 2002 defines as poor 5.6% of Bulgarians, 20.9% of Turks and 61.8% of Roma. The accumulation of disadvantage in the transition from school to work of minority youth in Bulgaria has structural and institutional reasons among which discrimination plays a significant role as shown by research reports (ASA, 2003; Mitev, 2002).

*- regional differences*

Differences among the regions in the country also create disadvantages affecting the educational achievements and employment prospects of youth. Children from rural areas leave the educational system on average three years earlier than their counterparts growing up in urban areas. Among the six regions in the country the most undeveloped is South-central, followed by North central and Northwest (JIM, 2005). The coefficient of economic activity is lowest in the Northwest – 41.9% and highest in the Southwest where it is 54.0%. Even greater differences exist among the separate areas and among the municipalities within one area. In 2004 the level of youth unemployment is in the range from 20% in Gabrovo to 33% in Stara Zagora and Smolian (MLSP, 2005). Regional differences in educational and employment prospects for the young are

particularly important in Bulgaria in view of the low geographical mobility inside the country – the share of young people who have never been out of their own settlement is increasing (JAP, 2002; MBMD, 2005). The young in Bulgaria in search of a job are more inclined to leave their home country and go abroad than to move to another region inside the country with better economic prospects (Mitev and Matev, 2005). This is largely due to the high housing costs which young people have to bear outside of their parental home in comparison with the low remuneration of jobs available to the young in the labour market in Bulgaria. The total emigration flow out of the country for the period of social transition since 1989 has been estimated at 10% of the labour force (JIM, 2005) and the emigration intensity has been the strongest in the age groups 15-19 and 20-29.

*- segmentation of the formal labour market*

Young people aged 16-24 are as a whole disadvantaged at the labour market in Bulgaria. Among the employed, young people are over represented in the low-paid and low qualified jobs and elementary occupations. According to MLSP (2003) the highest share of young people are those employed in the industry – 24.7%, trade and repairs – 21.8% and hotels and catering – 13%. In the hierarchy of occupational groups starting highest with managerial positions and ending lowest with low-skilled workers, young people are concentrated in the groups of low skilled employees in the service sector, as guards and in trade (27.4%) and as low-skilled workers (18%). The report of the group of experts (Damgor, 2002) established that the demand of youth labour force (aged 18-29) was greatest for sales workers and demonstrators; waiters and bartenders; and operators of sewing and embroidering machines. According to their employment status most young people were employed in the private sector (83.1% of all employed youth), then those employed in the state sector (15.9%); self-employed are 6.7% of young men and 1.6% of young women; employers are 1% of young men and only 0.3% of young women. Significant is the share of young people working as unpaid family workers – 4.6% (Ibid.). The data about the very low shares of young women among the employers and self-employed indicate their disadvantaged position in comparison with young men.

*- constellations of unemployment*

In Bulgaria like most other European countries unemployment is predominantly a youth phenomenon along with education. According to Eurostat data from the Labour Force Survey in 2004 the youth unemployment rate (the %age of the 15-24 year old labour force) was 24.4% and the rate was higher for young men (24.9%) than for young women (23.8%). The youth unemployment ratio (the %age of the 15-24 year old population) in 2004 was 7.5% (8.6% among men and 6.3% among women). Compared to other European countries Bulgaria has the specificity of combining lower youth unemployment ratio (EU25=7.5%) with considerably higher youth unemployment rate (EU25 = 18.6%). This signifies a low activity rate among young people in Bulgaria which can be attributed to the unfriendly labour market, discriminating against the young.



Another specific feature of youth unemployment in the country is that young men are more often unemployed than young women. This is in contrast with the model in the South European countries like Spain and Portugal where unemployment among young women is considerably higher than among young men. Especially disadvantaged are the young who are *looking for a job for the first time*. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (2003) employers in the country are unwilling to hire workers and employees without work experience and to invest in their training. Characteristic feature of the model of youth unemployment that has been established in the labour market in Bulgaria is its *long term character*. Among the unemployed youth in Bulgaria 65% have been unemployed for over one year – the highest share compared to the other European countries according to Eurostat data. Especially high is the share of the young unemployed with low education (in 2004 over 65% of the young unemployed were young people with elementary or lower education) and without any previous work experience. The unemployment rate among youth with higher education is not that high in Bulgaria as it is among this youth group in Portugal or Spain for instance. Nevertheless there is no official data on how many of those with university degrees are employed in the field of their university specialty and how many of them work in low-skilled jobs in trade, services or as private guards.

#### - *status0* group

There is a considerable youth group being formed in the country that comprises of young people with *undefined status (status0)* who are not part of the regular education system, do not attend courses for additional qualification, do not have a job and are unregistered as unemployed in the labour offices. However, it has not attracted the attention of policy makers or researchers. We can deduce the size of this group of young people indirectly from the mismatch between the data of the Labour Force Survey conducted by the National Statistical Institute and the data from the register of the Employment Agency.

Table 3. **Unemployed youth according to the Employment Agency (EA) and the National Statistical Institute (NSI)**

2004	NSI	EA	Difference
I quarter	79100	75907	3193
II quarter	76600	66116	10484
III quarter	77200	63639	13561
IV quarter	84000	61921	22079

Sources: [www.nsi.bg/Labour/Labour.htm](http://www.nsi.bg/Labour/Labour.htm);

Employment Agency 2004 Monthly Statistical Forms

During the fourth quarter of the past year there were 22,000 young people who were integrated neither into the educational system nor into the institutions of the labour market. Surveys on young people show that factors for shunning registration at the labour bureaus are the required long period of previous work experience during which one must have made deposits in the state insurance fund, the small sums of unemployment benefit and the lack of trust that the labour offices offer good job positions (Kovacheva, 1999, MBMD, 2005).

*- constellations of precariousness*

Another direction of the trend toward a segmentation of the labour market is the precariousness of employment in the form of temporary labour contracts and part-time jobs. Even though young people in the country are easier to find in the forms of insecure employment than other age groups, on the whole such flexible forms of labour are underrepresented in Bulgaria according to the data from Eurostat (2004) Labour Force Survey, comprising less than 10% of the employed youth. The Labour Code limits the opportunities for temporary contracts while the low salaries discourage job seekers, even when students or parents of young children to take up part-time jobs (Kovacheva and Tang, 2003).

The typical pattern of precariousness in Bulgaria, similar to the situation in some of the post-socialist countries, as well as in Greece and Italy, is the concentration of young people in the sector of undeclared work. The informal employment consists of numerous forms among which the most wide spread are the unpaid work in a family business, work with an employment contract albeit with false contents which means that social insurance is paid on a small part of the stipulated wage and the rest of the wage is paid in cash (according to MBMD this concerns about 25% of young people), and most commonly work without a labour contract. Hidden employment has been identified in the JAP (2002) as a significant problem of the established structure of the labour market in Bulgaria, estimated to account for 20% to 36% of the GDP in 2000, placing the workforce in precarious low productivity jobs, without employment protection. According to the Labour Force Survey in the forth quarter of 2004 about 10% of young people are employed without a labour contract while Vitosha Research (2004) determines their share to be 17% in 2004. When we add the students combining studies and work, and the agricultural workers, (as both groups work mostly without a written contract), the real share probably will turn out to be twice as big. These forms of employment in a state of high unemployment rate and poverty not only provide income for young people but allow them to gather skills and social contacts which can serve them in their transition to the formal economy. Nevertheless, there is a danger that this hidden employment will be a trap that young people will not be able to escape from for their entire career because the acquired skills are not recognized officially during the search of a new job and the lack of social insurance payments prevents the young from accessing the system of social support.

*- poverty*

In Bulgaria as in the other European countries we can witness the extreme consequences of putting young people in a disadvantaged position at the labour market – most of all these are poverty and multiple



disadvantages of vulnerable groups. Data from Eurostat (2004) show poverty (measured by income below 60% of the average income in the country after tax and social support payments) among the age group 16-24 in the European Union to be 15% while for youth in Bulgaria it is 13%. Young people in Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal and in the East European countries of Slovakia and Romania are much more disadvantaged compared to the other age groups in the population of the respective country. In Bulgaria young people are protected from this extreme consequence of unemployment mainly by the generous parental support rather than by the state financial assistance. School and university graduates without any work experience are not eligible to receive unemployment benefits as first job seekers. There is no official statistical information in our country on what share of the young people receive social support for poverty but according to experts from the Agency of Social Assistance very few young people rely on state aid. There is also no official data on the average age for leaving the parental home but it can be claimed that in case of financial difficulties young people continue living with their parents both before and after forming their own families thus reducing their housing and food expenses and therefore, reducing the risk of falling into poverty.

#### *- multiple disadvantage*

The weak support from the state against the risks of youth transitions creates a strong dependence of young people on their parents and an intergenerational reproduction and transmitting of disadvantage. When the parents themselves are poor and lack resources to assist the next generation, then the young people encounter greater risks. Roma youth in Bulgaria are such a disadvantaged group in which poverty as well as early school leaving, lack of professional qualification, informal labour, bad health, early pregnancy and other problems pile up creating high barriers in front of a successful integration into society (Mitev, 2002). Other groups that suffer multiple disadvantages are young people who are disabled physically, have mental health problems, live in social care centres, or come from single parent families. The homeless, those addicted to drugs and the victims of forced prostitution or trafficking abroad form especially vulnerable groups in present day Bulgarian society (JIM, 2004).

## 2. Policy dilemmas

The constellations of disadvantage in young people's transitions to adulthood are dealt with a multiplicity of strategies, programmes and measures in each country, which are referred to as policy mixes in this study. The two main axes differentiating between the national strategies devised to create employment pathways for the young are individualised versus structure-related and preventive versus compensatory approaches. The key policy dilemmas are whether to focus on strategies adapting individuals to the demands of education, training and labour market or on reforms oriented toward making structural opportunities more accessible and appropriate to young people's preferences, and whether to develop preventive measures addressing risk factors or give preference to solutions trying to alleviate accumulated problems.

One of the achievements of youth policies in Bulgaria in recent years is recognising youth as a group in a disadvantaged position in the labour market. After the noticeable participation of young people in the mass demonstrations and student strikes at the beginning of the transition – the early 1990s youth became invisible on the political scene in the country and other groups were defined as vulnerable and in need of social support. In the 15 years of market reforms the Bulgarian society matured enough to notice the high youth unemployment, the increasing group of school drop-outs, the mismatch between the educational qualifications received and the job skills demanded at the market for labour. Today we can define the dominating strategy in Bulgaria with regards to the problems of youth integration as a structural approach that recognizes the existence of social inequalities which put youth in disadvantage instead of treating young people as personally responsible for their situation.

In Bulgaria while there is a structure-related understanding of youth disadvantage, the policy is not consistently built upon such an approach and it is mixed with an individualising methodology, that is, measures which place the blame for educational or labour market failure upon the individual. The youth policy in the country is combining both preventive and compensatory strategies with the latter taking a dominance. While preventive, structure related approaches are more suited to the situation of accumulated disadvantages in youth transitions, we consider that individualised and compensatory solutions are also necessary for those young people who fall through the net of preventive and structure-transforming measures.

The analysis of the policies in support of disadvantaged youth in this paper follows several major axes: funding, investment in human capital, active labour market policies, empowering the individual, and coordination and integration of policies.

#### *- funding*

The choice of the policy approaches is obviously dependent on funding among other factors. An effective preventive policy requires more resources than remedial measures. In Bulgaria the range of programs and measures is severely limited by the financial resources that are available to the state as well as the general economic conditions and unfavourable structure of the labour market. In terms of GDP shares of expenditure on education and active labour market policies (ALMP) Bulgaria falls in the group of countries with low resources provided for education while it belongs to the group with medium degree of investment in ALMP.

Table 4. **Investment in Education and ALMP as % of GDP in 2002**

Education ALMP	Low (< 5%)	Medium (5 – 6%)	High (> 6%)
Low (< 0,5 %)	GR (4 – 0,22) RO (3,53 – 0,17) SK (4,35 – /)	AT (5,67 – 0,41) PL (5,6 – 0,02) PT (5,8 – 0,40) UK (5,25 – 0,06)	SI (6,02 – / )
Medium (0,5 – 1%)	BG (3,57 – 0,56) ES (4,4 – 0,55) IT (4,75 – 0,51)		FI (6,4 – 0,7)
High (> 1%)			DK (8,5 – 1,6)

Source: Eurostat, 2002

Funding is an obvious factor for the success of a certain policy but more importantly it signifies the importance attached to the problem by policy makers. The low share of investment in education at a time of increasing numbers of school drop-outs, severed links between vocational training and economy and underdeveloped system for life-long learning indicates that the state has not fully grasped the graveness of the situation with educational attainment of young people.

*- increasing human capital*

Considerable limitations can be found in the sphere of policies for creating and amassing human capital in Bulgaria. What this policy field is lacking are structure-related reforms to widen the access of young people to quality education and making it more flexible and relevant to their varied types of motivation and de-standardised transitions. In view of the rising need for a flexibility of the system of education, the neglect of non-formal education is highly unsuitable. There are not enough efforts and programs for stimulating more young people to stay at school longer and achieve vocational qualifications. There have been attempts for introducing financial stimuli such as offering free snacks at school and free textbooks to elementary school children but these are not enough to reduce the impact of social inequality and prevent dropping out. The educational system in Bulgaria does not provide counselling directed at early identification of problems and influencing young people's educational decisions such as the 'total counselling' in Slovenia or 'Connexions' in the UK.

A positive tendency is the strategy for integrating the children with special needs and children from ethnic minorities into the comprehensive school system in which assistant teachers are employed to help these children. The reforms, nevertheless, are far from meeting the needs of society to intervene and reverse the process of increasing illiteracy and early school leaving. The general quality of education is falling which is measured by the decrease in the achievements of Bulgarian students in the European studies PISA. There is a lack of a system of monitoring the quality of education as well as a system which identifies in due time the students at risk of dropping out of school and providing them with specialized help in the form of the resources such students need. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is striving to compensate for the inadequacies of the educational system by instituting a program for those youth who drop out of school. The program aims to teach them literacy, offer professional training and provide employment but it has too small a scope to cover the deficiencies of the educational system.

The programs in Bulgaria aimed at offering vocational training are also not able to overcome the mismatch between the qualifications demanded and the qualifications supplied especially in terms of skills for the labour market. Employers do not have enough incentives or experience in offering internship positions to young people while they are still in school or immediately after graduation. There is also no established system for support and control over employers and interns. As with the general education, the system of vocational training is highly inflexible and does not ensure the participation of the curriculum development of state and private employers and nongovernmental organizations from the third

sector, besides the educational experts. In our country educational institutions like vocational schools and universities are noticeably shrinking from their responsibilities for young people.

*- increasing young people's access to the labour market*

In the field of strategies combating unemployment, the policy in Bulgaria relies on a combination of preventive measures known as active labour market policies (ALMP) and compensatory measures, mostly associated with benefits. While in some countries unemployment benefits are universal, in Bulgaria they are linked only to previous employment period with paid social security benefits while excluding first-job seekers and youth who have worked without a registered employment contract. The JAP (2002) assesses the current system of unemployment benefits as not ensuring a sufficient coverage of the unemployed, among which young people are among the most underprivileged. An advantage of the employment policy in Bulgaria is the trend toward increasing the funding for ALMP since 2000 which has already resulted in reducing the unemployment rate, both general and youth rate. Among the ALMP the focus is on company based training directed to registered unemployed youth and on subsidies for employers for hiring young people without work experience. Job creation and self-employment schemes are also available although not particularly targeting the young. Less focus is placed on measures directed toward deregulation of labour market entry thus reducing the costs of hiring young people or on antidiscrimination policies aiming at lifting barriers for ethnic minority youth.

Insufficient efforts are made to increase the access to employment for such a disadvantaged group as the young Roma. The JIM (2005) underlines that the elimination of discrimination on ethnic grounds (especially discrimination against Roma) should be one of the main priorities of the Bulgarian government. Several programmes have been devised in this direction: The Framework Programme for Equal Integration of Roma into Bulgarian Society and the National Action Plan for its implementation, The Minority Integration Section of the Government Management Programme and the creation of the National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues (NCEDI) and Regional Councils on Ethnic and Demographic Issues in 2003. Effective since 1 January 2004 is the Protection against Discrimination Act which incorporates European directives and establishes mechanisms for protection. However, the NCEDI does not have real power to fully influence decision-making processes, nor administrative and financial capacity to successfully fulfil its mission (JIM 2005). The first conference on the Roma Inclusion Decade 2005-2015 in Sofia in the spring of 2005 has not yet had a sizable effect in the development of effective programmes for social integration.

*- empowering the individual*

Encouraging the individual capacity for decision making and life management is still undeveloped in Bulgaria. The country shares the all-European trend of policy orientation toward activation of young people, that is, mobilizing individuals to engage more actively in the process of their own labour market integration and wider social inclusion. The dilemma that faces policy makers in this field is whether to rely on external pressure and negative sanctions or to encourage active job seeking by

offering more opportunities and support for individual choices. The approach that the country applies to the key mechanism of activation policies, the individual action plan (IAP), is very narrow. It limits activation to labour market integration only and relies mostly on negative incentives and young people's extrinsic motivation. Restricted benefit entitlements and removal from register are the main mechanisms used in Bulgaria to prevent long-term unemployment, while IAPs in Denmark, Finland and Slovenia are based on offering a wide range of educational and training options and individual counselling and rely on positive incentives and intrinsic motivation.

Individual orientation and counselling for young people are not a major activity of the labour offices. Individual plans for action are being introduced for each young person but the measure does not take into account the inexperience of the staff with working with young people or their enormous workload – for instance, there is no statistics how many individual plans each staff member has to prepare together with the young person and how many meetings between them are needed for this purpose. As the JAP (2002) pointed out, there is a need for a change of the dominant culture in the public employment services – from a widely administrative approach to a client oriented approach. Besides, there is no established system for cooperative work in creating IAPs together with other expert institutions and specialists – educational, social, medical or other. In the activities of the institutions there are no efforts made to recognise the individual needs and opportunities in order to motivate young people to participate in the preparation and execution of these individual plans for action. As a result, the possible unintended 'side effects' pushing young people into inactivity are not taken into consideration. Limiting activation to job placements and measuring its success by the increase in the numbers of young unemployed who have taken a job does not account for the duration of the employment gained, nor for the personal satisfaction with the income and working conditions. Under the conditions of a significant spread of informal and undeclared work, such activation policy might lead to de-motivation and disengagement.

#### *- coordination of policies*

There have been attempts in this sphere to raise the level of cooperation between the different institutions whose aim it is to facilitate the youth transitions. The role of a coordinator of the youth policy in the country is played by the Agency (former Ministry) of Youth and Sport which is trying to coordinate the activities of 14 ministries based on the Strategy for National Youth Policy for the period 2003-2007. In the first Yearly Youth Report developed in 2004 with the objective to present the latest state of youth, the main priorities of state youth policy, the accomplishments so far and the future activities concerning youth in Bulgaria, what has been emphasized is the activities of the state institutions but there is no systematic effort towards cooperation with the civil sector. The agency does not have enough personnel and authority for effective work. What is needed is a capacity for institutional flexibility and reflexivity as well as a greater level of decentralization and autonomy of the staff who work on youth policy. It is not noticeable that there are any efforts to achieve the engagement of the financial and economic policy on regional and local

level with the social support for youth transitions. The potential of youth organisations and the voluntary sector as a whole is not taken into consideration as a resource of youth policy.

In Bulgaria tripartism is the legal principle of the employment policy and the vocational education and training policy. Various tripartite councils function at the national, regional and levels but their activities are far from reaching an effective model of integrated activities based on the involvement of different types of actors (from the state, market and civil society), and in different policy sectors (not only employment and training, but also social protection, health, housing). Even in the field of vocational training, where the need of communication and integration of different actors seems self-evident, the created networks remain rather formal and do not provide the effective restructuring of the system. Thus the JAP (2002) identified an acute need for developing a strategy for continuing training in close cooperation with the social partners in order to ensure curricula tailored to companies' needs, as well as raise the employers' awareness of the importance of training.

### 3. Good practice in policies for supporting disadvantaged youth

Policy measures depend for their success upon a wide range of economic, cultural and institutional circumstances. Instead of listing the success factors applicable in all countries, in this chapter we outline two measures that have had a positive effect on the youth labour market situation in Bulgaria. Exchanging good practice examples between different national contexts is a form of sharing experiences and mutual learning.

In Bulgaria it was difficult to select the programmes which could serve as 'good practice' due to a significant flaw of the Bulgarian model for assisting youth transitions - the lack of systematic monitoring and assessment of the strategy and the applied programmes and measures. The active policy of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is in the process of assessment while the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Education and Science are still on the stage of developing a system of indicators for such assessment. Similar is the situation with support programmes and measures offered by the non-governmental sector. Independent evaluation of the implementation and outcomes features very rarely among the projects devised and carried out by voluntary associations and non-for-profit organisations in the newly developed civic sector in the country (Michailov, 2005). We chose to present two examples on the basis of consultations with experts.

#### *- national programme 'Computer training for young people'*

The programme is a mainstream example in the field of labour market policy, with a national coverage, one of the most popular programmes among unemployed young people. The programme started in 2003 and each consecutive year the number of young people involved was higher than the previous. In essence, the programme is directed toward the employability of the young unemployed through IT training. Its main tasks are:

- To provide computer training for the young unemployed
- To offer apprentice places in the real economy for them
- To train trainers for the programme in order to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.

The target group of the programme are young people with secondary and university education registered as unemployed in the labour offices. An important aspect is the voluntary principle of involvement which means that the young are not forced by fear of losing their benefits or rights of registration if they are not willing to enter the course. That is why the interest and aspiration of the young to get involved in the programme is a clear indicator that the programme meets client needs. They enrol in training courses and then for the top ten per cent the labour offices provide placement as 'trainees' with employers in the real economy. The training of the unemployed young people is conducted according to a curriculum based on the modern accomplishments in the field of information and communication technologies in cooperation with Microsoft and the Bulgarian-German centres for vocational training based in Bulgaria.

The employers are stimulated to provide training places by receiving the following sums for the time of the apprenticeship but not longer than 6 months: full pay for the apprentice, the social security benefits, and the benefits for the yearly holidays. The young people receive a training wage as well as sums for travel if the training is done outside of their own town or village. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has planned programme evaluation after the first three years, but the main tools being six-month and yearly reporting forms and surveys with the participants – young people and employers. According to the officers involved in the recruiting of young people, to whom we talked in May 2005, this programme enjoyed a lot of interest among young people aged up to 29 and there were not enough places for all those wishing to enrol. The share of the involved in the programme from the registered young unemployed is very small, but still this is one of the big programmes of the Ministry targeting young people in particular. Young people acquire skills for work with Microsoft Office (Windows, Word, Excel, Outlook Express, PowerPoint), for work with data bases and the Internet. These are basic skills which however are not provided by schools and universities for all students, only for those in the specialised departments. There is no information to see how employers outside the programme evaluate such qualifications, they would surely require much higher skills if their business is in the IT sector. These skills are an advantage for the young if they apply for jobs in other economic sectors.

The program can serve as an example of "good practice" in terms of having youth participation rate of 121% higher than planned in 2005. While the participation of 1470 unemployed young people has been planned, the yearly form of the Employment Agency reports that 1780 participants have been trained. Additionally 138 young people have been placed in apprenticeships receiving employment contracts for six months. These activities were realised with a smaller sum than the planned budget. This was due to the fact that the Vocational Training Centres and colleges chosen in the tender had made offers for smaller sums. Another achievement of the programmes is that it ensured the involvement and

coordination of activities of 13 institutions in the program realization which is a good step toward a coordinated and integrated youth policy.

*- 'Encouragement of employers to open working places for training in order to provide vocational qualifications and/or practice to unemployed people aged to 29'*

This is another mainstream example of policy targeting the young unemployed. Unlike the previous one, this is a measure fixed in paragraph 41 of the Law for Encouraging Employment. Its coverage is the country as a whole and all young people have equal access to the preferences provided with it. The Law for Encouraging Employment was adopted in 2001 at the height of the unemployment in the country a very high share of which was youth unemployment. Public debates pointed at the mismatch between qualifications offered to young people in the labour market and the demands of the quickly changing economy. Employers did not feel administrative or morally obliged to provide training places and preferred to recruit experienced personnel from other companies rather than employ school graduates looking for their first job.

The main objectives of the measure are:

- to provide employment for unemployed young people aged up to 29 for 6 months in order to achieve experience in real work settings, and
- to offer training for attaining a certificate for vocational qualifications.

Under the measure employers receive significant subsidies for 6 months for each young person employed on a half day basis plus all due social insurance benefits, payments for yearly leaves and others. The employers are obliged to provide a labour contract for at least 6 months and this opening should be on top of the monthly personnel number in the company, and to pay up to the minimum salary if the young person is employed on a fulltime basis. The target group of the measure are all young people aged up to 29 independently of their educational level, qualifications and previous work experience. They receive an employment contract for six months and additionally may receive training for vocational qualification. The main institutions implementing the programme are the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Employment Agency. Employers are defined as being the main partners of the state in the measure. The social partners in the face of employers' organisations, trade unions, local municipalities are also involved.

This is a permanent measure set up by the Law. Each year the state budget allocates money for it and the sums increase slightly each year. The young people included in the measure develop their practical skills and increase their experiences and the employers train them at the particular workplace according to their own business needs. The measure is flexible as it reflects the view point of the employers, rather than following a preset educational curriculum. The success of this measure lies in the interest of the employers and the young – since its start it provided employment for two and a half times more young people than the planned number. The popularity of the measure among young people and employers lies in its capacity to increase the competitiveness of businesses and to improve young employees' career prospects.



## 4. Conclusions

In the course of Bulgaria's transition from the centrally planned to a market economy young people as a whole turned to be a vulnerable group in the newly formed labour market. The economic liberalization itself did not create new bridges from education to employment to replace the former system of state allocation of graduates to jobs. Problematic became not only the transition from school to work but also the passage from one educational stage to another and the acquisition of the necessary skills for the new economy. In our opinion the main flaws in the system for supporting youth transitions in Bulgaria are the lack of preventive policy against dropping out of school and leaving the educational system without acquiring qualifications, the lack of a system for training and apprenticeship in a real setting with modern equipment, the lack of a system for monitoring the qualification demands of the real economy (state, private and nongovernmental sector), and the lack of individualised counselling for young people with complex needs, which to build upon their own perspectives and motivation. While the country has traditions of state support from the previous regime and accomplishments of successful interventions after the regime change, such as the chosen structural approach towards youth disadvantage and the wide range of programs and measures addressing specific groups among young people, it still has not built a system of assessment and monitoring according to established and socially approved indicators of the programs and measures in the educational, labour, housing and family policies that target young people. The potential of social research for monitoring the tendencies in the transitions of young people and casting light on youth values, aspirations and life plans as well as their expectations and satisfaction with the programs and measures of youth policy has not been sufficiently used.

A comprehensive policy aiming to enhance the social integration of young people should address the problems which young people face in a holistic way, integrating approaches across different sectors. To prevent poverty and social exclusion among the young, the country's youth policy still needs to find the appropriate mix of social protection and assistance measures with education, training and employment policies. A lot of the specific disadvantages of young people in Bulgaria are caused by the particular economic situation in the country, the slow development of the service sector, the lack of investments and job creation. Assessing policies for disadvantaged youth in Bulgaria requires taking into account the importance of the integration of economic and youth policies if they are to have a sustainable effect on youth social inclusion. Inclusion has to become a hard criterion in national, regional and local economic policies in the same way as policies for disadvantaged youth aim at economic effect among others.

Focusing on disadvantaged youth in this study does not mean neglecting young people's own resources for personal development and societal innovation. Young people's attitudes and expectations have to be made visible and taken into account in devising and evaluating policies. Youth policies can be effective when built upon the active participation of young people in the sense of choice and decision-making in their own and society's transitions.

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## Denmark

This article is divided into two parts. The first one giving an overview on what is considered disadvantaged youth regarding un-employment and education in Denmark. Within the first section the contextual settings, the educational system itself and the problems the Danish Society are facing are introduced.

The second part of the article presents 3 different kinds of Best Practices. These include a new Guidance-counselling initiative, the productions-schools and the activation policy. The three “best practices” are chosen as being broad and substantive political initiatives, which potentially are offered to large numbers of young people endangered of being marginalized. Focus is on a presentation and clarification of policies targeting young disadvantaged people, while small scale projects and special efforts in this area are left out.

**Key words:** Youth, Youthpolicies, Unemployment, Education, Disadvantaged, Guidance & Activation

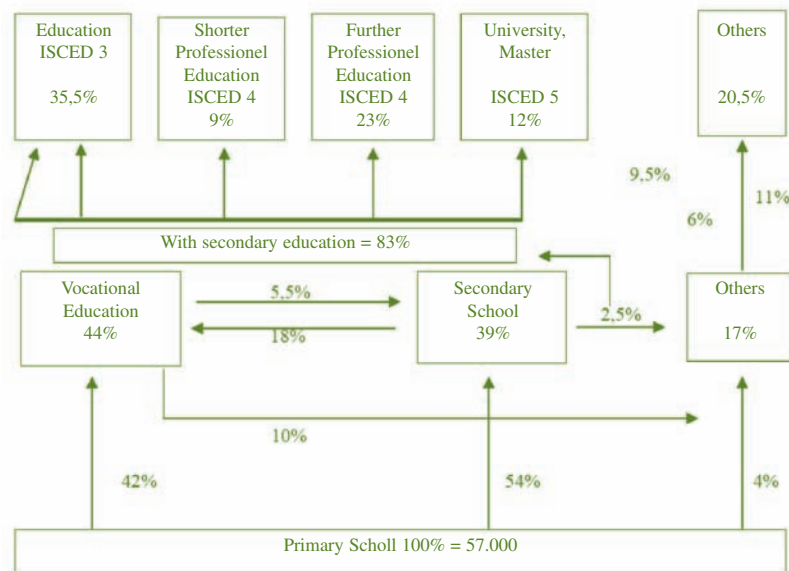
### 1. Disadvantaged in Denmark

Whether young people become disadvantaged in Denmark depends on how they are able to handle the increasing individualised demands. Young people with few resources often fail, why personal, educational, social and economic factors are important in terms of becoming disadvantaged or not.

- The key indicator for disadvantaged youth in Denmark is education; **Young people are considered disadvantaged if they do not have an education.**
- Denmark is a society based on knowledge and it is therefore **at least** essential to achieve **a secondary school degree**. Today 83% of the population achieves a secondary education and in the government platform 2005 it is formulated that at least 85% should achieve a secondary school degree in 2010 and 95% in 2015.

(1)  
The article is written by Torben Bechmann Jensen from a cooperative effort done by the three authors mentioned. The original reports and working papers has been part of the European project done during 2005 for the European Commission, under the name “Disadvantaged Youth”. Full report is: Walther et al.: “Thematic Study on Policy Measures concerning Disadvantaged Youth” [www:ec/European union, social/social, youth inclusion. 2005](http://www.ec/European union, social/social, youth inclusion. 2005).

**Figure 1:**  
Model of Educational  
system



The profile of the youth leaving compulsory education in the year 2000  
(Source: Danmarks Statistik & UNI\_C Statistik of Analyse)

This model shows that 79,5 % of youth leaving compulsory education in 2000 will get an education with employment qualification.

- More and more people (literature and debates) call attention to the fact that the challenge in this regard is more **maintenance** than recruitment (2). The main problem is not primarily to get the young people to start an education, but to keep them from leaving the education system before time, which is reflected in policies such as the Counselling and guidance reform (3). (see second part.)
- In spite of the fact that young people in general could be said to have more opportunities and resources today, the **increasing expectations and demands in the educational system and the labour market** (i.e. the gymnasium reform, individualised action plans) causes young people with lack of resources (social/cultural or intellectual) to become more disadvantaged (4).

The result is a slowly **polarisation of a week and a strong youth** which means that the disadvantaged becomes more disadvantaged as a consequence of this development where people with academic skills are given priority. An estimated number is that 20% of the youth generation is at risk of becoming disadvantaged. (5)

In Denmark **social heritage** still plays an important role regarding the ability to be successfully integrated in the educational system and the labour market, especially regarding young people with other ethnic origin. (6)

The percentages of early school leaving and young unemployed are higher among the young people with other ethnic origin than Danish (hereafter Ethnic minority). Twice as many ethnic minority young people drop out of

(2)  
"frafald til fastholdelse"  
(Dropout for Containment)  
published by the Ministry of  
Education, 2005  
[pub.uvm.dk/2005/frafald](http://pub.uvm.dk/2005/frafald)

(3)  
Lov om vejledning om valg af  
uddannelse og erhverv, LOV nr.  
298 af 30/04/2003

(4)  
Lov nr. 95 af 18/02/2004 and  
"Hvad Virker", ("What works")  
published by the Ministry of  
Education in 1999  
[www.pub.uvm.dk/1999/hvadvirker/1.htm](http://www.pub.uvm.dk/1999/hvadvirker/1.htm)

(5)  
Koch I. & Bechmann Jensen T:  
"Anonym Rådgivning af børn  
og Unge" (Anonymous  
Counselling of children and  
Young people), Sikon, Cph.  
1999

(6)  
[www.social.dk/det\\_sociale\\_system/forskning/Forskning\\_om\\_negativ\\_social\\_arv.html](http://www.social.dk/det_sociale_system/forskning/Forskning_om_negativ_social_arv.html)

secondary school (7). Social and cultural background seems to play an important role on whether the individual can meet the increasing demands and expectation in the educational system and at the labour market (8).

In Denmark factors such as geography seems to play a minimal role as an indicator for disadvantaged youth. Being a small country, most young people leaving compulsory school either travels on a daily base or moves to a nearby region to study further. The only exceptions is Islands more isolated (i.e. Bornholm) from where, young people seeking education after secondary school might have to move from their home/living area to be able to attend.

## Youth un-employment

Table 1. **Youth Unemployment in Denmark: Percentage of unemployed workforce (Rate):**

	Total	Men	Women
<b>2003</b>	<b>9,9</b>	10,7	9,1
<b>2004</b>	<b>8,2</b>	8,8	7,5

Fuente: Eurostat

Table 2. **Percentage of unemployed population (Ratio):**

	Total	Men	Women
<b>2003</b>	<b>6</b>	6,2	5,9
<b>2004</b>	<b>5,6</b>	6,2	4,9

Fuente: Eurostat

Table 3. **Unemployment rates by highest level of education attained (%) in 3rd quarter of 2003 between the age 15-24:**

	Male	Female	Total
ISCED 0-2	13,2	9,4	<b>11,5</b>
ISCED 3-4	7,0	9,1	<b>8,1</b>
<b>Total</b>	10,8	9,8	<b>10,3</b>

Fuente: Eurostat

Table 4. **Unemployment rates by highest level of education attained (%) in 3rd quarter of 2004 between the age 15-24:**

	Male	Female	Total
ISCED 0-2	9,0	7,0 u	<b>8,2</b>
ISCED 3-4	9,0	7,9	<b>8,4</b>
<b>Total</b>	10,5	7,5	<b>9,1</b>

Source: Eurostat. U= Uncertain data see Eurostat for further explanation.

The focus in Denmark is not youth unemployment but young people without education.

**The demand for uneducated labour force is decreasing** and the level of education seems to be the most important aspect in predicting subsequent labour market integration in Denmark.

The **change of work forms** also creates a risk of becoming disadvantaged. Various forms of non-standard work such as part-time jobs and contract work are supplanting full-time jobs.

Many people, especially young people, have difficulties being integrated in the labour market in full-time jobs, but are instead hired in non-standard jobs characterised by insecurity and lower salary.

(7)  
"En ny chance til alle", (New Chance for everyone)  
published by The Ministry of Integration, 2005  
[www.inm.dk/publikationer/En\\_ny\\_chance\\_til\\_alle/index.htm](http://www.inm.dk/publikationer/En_ny_chance_til_alle/index.htm)  
and the NAP Denmark 2004

(8)  
[www.social.dk/det\\_sociale\\_system/forskning/Forskning\\_om\\_negativ\\_social\\_arv.html](http://www.social.dk/det_sociale_system/forskning/Forskning_om_negativ_social_arv.html)  
(Research on negative Social Heritage)



In Denmark there is no definition of a **youth labour market**, but some branches of trade involves more young people than others. In hotels and restaurants more than 50% of the Employees are under the age of 30 (9).

## 2. Policies regarding disadvantaged youth

Education is the crucial qualification for entering the labour market, why **most policies concerning disadvantaged youth are aimed at school and education**. Everybody regardless of their social and economic heritage should have the opportunity for education (10).

This education policy must be seen in a global context, where education and knowledge play a dominant role according to competitive power regarding national interests. But the increasing tendency to individualisation involves a dilemma, when the increasing struggle for competitive power not only means a differentiation but also marginalization (11).

*Secondary education (in general):*

- **Decentralisation of secondary education** – decentralisation in this context both applies to the use of grants and largely also to the establishment of the contents of the secondary education programmes. It is the aim of this decentralisation to make the education system more flexible, to improve the quality of the programmes and support an optimal resource allocation.
- **A common structure** for ordinary secondary education and vocational education has been introduced to make it possible to **transfer credits** for parts completed in one programme to other programme(s) (12). This can be seen within a European context, in which a system of combining modules of education makes it possible to change directions and to build ones own education. One problem arising from this is, that learning is split up into more specialised courses - not necessarily containing competencies in general except competencies in certain fields or themes, individually organised. A problem connected to this is, that the responsibility on the quality of education moves from the single educational institution to a responsibility of either the individual herself or the educational system as a whole.
- Introduction of **reforms** in general within secondary education (13).

About the gymnasium reform it is said, that this to a greater extent will individualise secondary education and focus will be on individual learning processes and project work, and less collective classroom-teaching. The question is which consequences this will have for disadvantaged youth, whether it will mean further pressure and consequently widen the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged youth.

*Vocational Education:*

The Danish vocational education system alternates between school education and vocational training, which means, that **there exists no distinctly vocational training** (14).

(9)  
Danmarks Statistik (Statistics of Denmark)

(10)  
[www.social.dk/det\\_sociale\\_system/forskning/Forskning\\_om\\_negativ\\_social\\_arv.html](http://www.social.dk/det_sociale_system/forskning/Forskning_om_negativ_social_arv.html)

(11)  
Retention in Vocational Education in Denmark -A best practice study published by The Ministry of Education 2005  
[pub.uvm.dk/2005/retention/](http://pub.uvm.dk/2005/retention/)

(12)  
Retention in Vocational Education in Denmark -A best practice study published by The Ministry of Education 2005  
[pub.uvm.dk/2005/retention/](http://pub.uvm.dk/2005/retention/)

(13)  
LOV nr. 95 af 18/02/2004

(14)  
Retention in Vocational Education in Denmark -A best practice study published by The Ministry of Education 2005  
[pub.uvm.dk/2005/retention](http://pub.uvm.dk/2005/retention/)

“Vocational” education is in general organised in one of the following two ways:

- **School-based:** In which education starts in school. After 1/2 to 2 years the pupil applies for apprenticeship in a company and finishes the education in the company (15).
- **Practice-based:** The student signs in a contract with the company before attending school education. Education alternate afterwards between practice and academic education (16).

The total number of students who were enrolled in vocational education was in 2004 97.496 whereas the majority chose the school-way (17). There are approximately 44% of a year group that chooses a vocational education (18).

To ease the transition from vocational school to labour market, **initiatives considering apprenticeship** have been established. The background for these initiatives is the fact that some students, especially ethnic minority students, have difficulties in finding an apprentice place. This is a problem because of the fact, that apprenticeship is an important and integrated part of the education. Because of limited access to apprenticeships, students drop out of education. The aim is therefore through dialogue with the labour market to create more new places. Finally in those cases where the demands for apprenticeships are greater than the supply, work shops in the schools have been established as a replacement for apprenticeships in companies (19).

The problem is that the number of apprenticeship-placements is dropping. There are 9000 fewer apprenticeships in 2005 than in 2001 (20) and the numbers of apprenticeships based within schools are rising:

Table 5. **Development in vocational education; Number of pupils**

Year	1998	2004
School-based	25712	17775
Practise-based	57506	71974
School-based apprenticeships	1524	7747

Source: Danmarks Statistik

The government reckons to **reintroduce vocational training i.e. apprenticeship without academic education** in order to minimise dropouts especially among ethnic minority youth, who represents a large percentage of dropouts (21)

60 % of ethnic minority youth drop out, whereas the percentage dropout for ethnic Danes is 32 %. As mentioned earlier, mainly due to the fact that there are problems in providing apprenticeship placements for ethnic minority young people. The willingness to work for integration of ethnic minority youth in Danish companies is doubtful. However the problems also have to do with the lack of motivation or even trusting that it is possible getting placements among young immigrants. They seem to give up in advance as they know from peers and others which difficulties they are facing (22). Another possible explanation could be the lack of relevant support from families (23) and the interest of ethnic minority youth to earn money as soon as possible, being involved in legal or illegal business.

(15)  
Retention in Vocational Education in Denmark -A best practice study published by The Ministry of Education 2005  
pub.uvm.dk/2005/retention

(16)  
Retention in Vocational Education in Denmark -A best practice study published by The Ministry of Education 2005  
pub.uvm.dk/2005/retention

(17)  
Danmarks Statistik

(18)  
Ministry of Education.

(19)  
Ministry of Education.

(20)  
Danmarks Statistik

(21)  
The Government Platform 2005

(22)  
Ungdomsforskning årg. 3, nr. 3 & 4, Dec. 2004; Unge i tal og tekst

(23)  
It is often necessary to be familiar with the Danish education system and labour market to support a young person in his or her education in a realistic and relevant way.



- **A new guidance reform** came into force the 1st of August 2004. The primary reason for this initiative is the fact that it shall be much easier to find and chose respectively education and occupation. The main target group for this reform is disadvantaged youth. This because of the acknowledgement that young people with few or fewer resources to a greater extend, need help in navigating through a more and more individualised education system. Ideally the Danish education system represents a democratic system where everything is possible to everybody, but practically it seems that the individualised education system demotivates young people with few resources, because they might be overwhelmed by all the existing possibilities and demands (24) or because the individual possibilities are in contradiction to their perception of how the better opportunities are actually distributed, meaning, that cultural and social background still plays a major role. Through extensive guidance it is therefore sought to guide the student through education which seems to be a necessary prerequisite in order to become a fully member and participant of the Danish society.

In accordance with the regulations (25) disadvantaged youth are young people between 19 and 25 years old, who are not in education or in job. Young people whose life situation suddenly changes, young people with physically or psychological handicaps, people who attend special classes or receive special education, people with heavy social problems and not least ethnic minority youth.

Because of the fact that the reform is new, there is no statistics considering the distribution of the different groups in the counselling system except for the distribution of ethnic youth. Figures from Copenhagen Youth Counselling show that ethnic youth account for 26.8 % of the distribution in Copenhagen. However it must be taken into account that ethnic minority youth represent a larger percentage of youth in general in Copenhagen, which of course to some extend distorts the overall picture. Another explanation for the apparently large number could be the fact that the new guidance reform specifically is targeted towards disadvantaged youth, among these ethnic minority youth, and therefore one could argue, that the measure has worked for this particular group. In continuation of this argument different initiatives illustrate that much is done to reach ethnic youth in terms of counselling.

(24)  
"De skal selv finde ud af det, og det er der mange der ikke magter - om udsatte unge i en individualiseret tid" (It is up to themselves to find out - on youth at risk in times of individualisation) (2005), Noemi Katznelson

(25)  
Lov om vejledning om valg af uddannelse og erhverv, LOV nr. 298 af 30/04/2003

(26)  
"udsatte unge i erhvervsuddannelserne" (Youth at risk in Vocational training) (2005), Noemi Katznelson

In many municipalities there exist special counselling centres only for ethnic youth. Here, the counselling is often managed by counsellors with another ethnic background than Danish, which promotes a better understanding considering life conditions etc. Further more there exist a lot of web-based guidance offers specially targeted ethnic youth. In spite of this wide range of counselling and guidance opportunities ethnic youth still represents the highest drop out rate - especially in vocational education structures (26).

The problem in most cases is that the guidance offers only become offers to those pupils who by them selves actively seek information and counselling, i.e. more strong pupils/youngsters, both socially and academic, and it can thus be questioned whether ethnic youth really have an educational choice. It certainly depends on their individual competencies.

- In some municipalities this **guidance obligation has been exceeded**. There

are municipalities, which provide active reach-out counselling considering further education possibilities, and labour market situation up to two years after the pupil has left primary education. In addition young people who face special difficulties in their transition from primary school are offered a more personally organised counselling. Counselling is offered until the student has reached a gratifying situation (27). "Gratifying" is the official criteria, but this of course can be interpreted in different ways. Optimally both the counsellor and the young person are satisfied with the pathway and means chosen, but in the end of the day also any placement relevant or irrelevant to the young individual could be seen as "Gratifying/satisfying" from a bureaucratic level.

- The increasingly de-standardised transition from education to labour market, results as mentioned above, in an increased individualisation, where more and more decisions has to be taken alone. The strong focus on responsibility for own learning disregards the need for a strong socially and culturally ballast to deal with this kind of responsibility which exist within individualised educational structures. **This individualisation is reflected in the implementing and use of individualised action plans.** In general individualised action plans are implemented in many contexts, among these within compulsory school settings, under guidance settings both on local and regional levels, and at employment services. Competencies of the pupil in question are described and aims are put up. Thereby it should be possible early to identify weak and strong aspects of the pupil and find ways and methods to act upon these.
- The government (inspired by the PISA results) reckons to introduce more tests in primary education in order to identify academic weak pupils as early as possible. But as it is often pointed out regarding these kinds of tests, the question is whether these test actually tell us something about competencies of the pupil or simply tells us something about the pupils skills in test-taking.

#### *Activation:*

**A special effort towards disadvantaged youth regarding activation came into force the 1st of January 1999 (28).** Young people without qualifying education are activated much earlier than before, and the activation profit is halved in order to motivate the young people to (re)-enter education or labour market. The effort seems to have worked, regarding statistics but not necessarily individually. The number of unemployed young people has dropped. More Young people on welfare benefits are implemented in the educational system or on labour market after this new legislative reformulation and the number of young people on activation welfare have dropped:

(27)  
Ungdommens  
Uddannelsesvejledning,  
(Educational guidance of  
Youth) Silkeborg Kommune.

(28)  
Arbejdsmarkedsreformens 3.  
fase, (Labourmarket Reform, 3  
rd. fase) jf. Ministry of  
Employment and  
[www.ams.dk/publikationer](http://www.ams.dk/publikationer)

Table 6. **Number of unemployed aged 18- 29:**

Year	1984	2004
Men	66006	17710
Female	55836	33563
<b>Total</b>	<b>121842</b>	<b>51273</b>

Source: Danmarks Statistik

NB. Even though the amount of unemployed young people seems to have dropped dramatically, it has to be taken into account that the overall number of people aged 18-29 has decreased significantly over the past 20 years. Approximately there are 20 % less people in the age group in 2004 than in the mid 80`ies. (Source: Danmarks Statistik.)

The activation of unemployed young people started in the late eighties as the "Youth Effort" and special policies for people under 30 still exists, but the policies had such a huge impact on the unemployment rate, that activation policies now exist for all unemployed. In the overall picture people being activated are angry or at least sceptical towards the activation- policy. For a number of years it was in everyday language referred to as "Stupid at work" instead of the official name "young at work" (young and stupid are close in pronunciation in Danish). The scepticism stems from the attitude, that people activated often feels forced into (more or) less relevant work or schemes, not really being taken seriously and not leading to any real opportunity to be integrated in ordinary work/education. Officially the activation policy is regarded as successful. People being activated do not count as unemployed in the unemployment statistics.

One can argue that the Danish activation policy is a success because of the fact, that it is implemented to a great extend. But when quality is evaluated instead of looking upon the quantity of the effort, it is questionable whether activation can be evaluated as a success when used as a **coercive measure**. Therefore different (often local) initiatives are established in terms of turning the activation effort into a **participation** process. This means that the activated to a greater extend have influence on his/hers activation course.

Disadvantaged youth, i.e. young people without a secondary education or without any contact to the labour market, can be activated in an education course in a **production school** (29). Young People below the age of 25 can regardless of whether they receive unemployment benefits from the state or activation benefits from the local authorities be activated after a period of three months of unemployment. 30 hours per week are offered, but the education provided at production schools is not formally qualifying for neither jobs nor further education, but gives instead the pupil alternative learning experiences (30).

### *Summarising*

The newly formed Government has published their Government platform 2005, which include several reforms concerning education and therefore also youth unemployment. The major goal is that everybody should finish a secondary education. The government will accomplish this by:

- Create more placements (apprenticeships, financial state-supported work in companies)
- Reward firms, who create extra placements (apprenticeships)
- Reintroduce Practice Apprenticeship (Where schooling can take place in the firm).
- Reduce school leaving, especially in vocational schools
- Focus on the responsibilities of the parents

(29)  
See best practises

(30)  
"Produktionsskolerne i Danmark  
- et resume",  
(Productionschools in Denmark  
- a resumé)  
www.undervisningsministeriet.dk  
and Annex IV in this report.

- Increase the responsibilities of the municipality
- The unemployed shall be referred to education or job instead of unemployment benefit (activation)
- Increase the possibilities to bring along qualification in vocational schools for ethnic minority youth
- 10th. Grade shall be targeted to qualify transition of disadvantaged pupils to secondary education (Young people in general should move on to get a youth education after finishing 9th. grade)

In the Implementation and update report on the NAP/Inclusion (31) as well as in the Government platform many initiatives are designed as either "sticks or carrots", meaning for instance that benefits are cut down or the tolerance of letting pupils stay in school (10th.grade) or young people in education is lowered. Young people are activated earlier than before and pupils/young people are obliged to make action plans from primary school and onwards. On the other hand more opportunities for counselling, guidance and freedom to choose educational path are provided.

The main concern regarding education is double and focused on both providing enough opportunities for young people to get an education as well as trying to speed up the time used in the educational system.

As "sticks" and "carrots" are often used at the same time, it is hard to be certain of the impact of a single initiative. The overall picture is easily blurred in a way, which makes both evaluation and necessary adjustments difficult.

Even though within the Government Platform and the NAP/inclusion, intentions are good regarding further inclusion of disadvantaged people - a number of points could be mentioned, regarding the possible implicit problems.

Denmark has a fairly long tradition for trying to implement the idea of Life long Learning as well as trying to tailor an educational program individually regarding both young and adult people (32). Many efforts has been carried out regarding social and cultural projects, the former "Open Youth Education", the Production schools etc. as well as implementing a pedagogy involving non-formal learning and more participation from pupils/students. This approach has to be seen as a result of a longer development.

During the past 5-7 years and especially after the new liberal government came into power in 2001, this perspective is mixed with a more radical view underlining the societal need for more young people to be formally educated and qualified in a shorter period of time. As predictions for the future tells that larger proportions of the population will reach the age of pension and withdraw from the Labour Market and that the number of young people entering the Labour Market will decrease (33), some kind of panic seem to have entered into the administration.

Continuation schools (in which young people attend after finishing primary school for one year living together with peers in the school), 10th grade in primary school, alternative ("Free") schools etc. are put under pressure. As these kinds of schools having a non-formal learning curricula and serving as a room for personal and social development are not in a direct manner

(31)  
The NAP/Inclusion 2003-2005  
Denmark June 2005

(32)  
National actions to implement  
Lifelong Learning in Europe,  
Eurydice 2001

(33)  
The NAP 2004 and  
Government Platform 2005

qualifying youth formally, they are regarded as an extra service, which is not efficient enough.

Therefore initiatives are taken, that only disadvantaged young people should enter these alternative practices, whereby the often very successful combination of disadvantaged youth and youth with more promising futures is getting spoiled or harder to maintain.

Regarding the ethnic minority youth, the challenges of education and employment seems to be very hard to handle. Both regarding males and females and especially the young ethnic minorities females, many young people do drop-out of the education system.

For a lot of ethnic minority youth no problems arise, but for a large number there seems to be a mismatch of the educational system and both the ethnic background of people as well as their (both young people and their parents) trust in the Societal efforts and possibilities.

In many respects Denmark increasingly holds a very strict attitude towards ethnic minorities regarding both entering Denmark and regulating behaviour as they have entered. Even though the amount of ethnic minority immigrants in Denmark is not very high in comparison to a number of other European Countries (app. 8 percent) and even though the Danish education system is known for displaying tolerance - the challenge to Society of integrating ethnic minority youth is big.

The dialogue with young people and understanding of the situation in which ethnic minority youth is confronted seems to get less and less priority. Instead more and more demands are put on also ethnic minority youth for entering and finishing a qualifying education and assimilate to a Danish reality (Labour Market demands as well as social behaviour). Employers are more reluctant to employ ethnic minority youth both in general as well as regarding apprenticeship placements. In Public Schools in Copenhagen some portions of ethnic minority youth are transferred to other schools to lower the percentage of pupils with other ethnic origin than Danish - which heavily contradicts the principle of a free choice of public school. Limits are put on housing companies regarding the percentage of "foreign people" living in certain buildings etc. The threat of punishing ethnic minority people (and in some respects even their families) for acts of criminal behaviour by sending them back to where they (or their families) originate from are parts of the ongoing public debate from politicians.

Individual considerations appear to be taken less important regarding ethnic minority youth than regarding youth in general.

Ethnic minority Youth could be seen as caught up between the wishes and aspirations of parents, peers and Society, all pointing into different directions.

Both Ethnic minority and Danish disadvantaged youth are facing a political atmosphere, which is changing direction towards more demands put on the individual in order to gain good possibilities.

### 3. Best Practices

Best practices mentioned in the following part 2 are chosen as being broad and quantitative substantive political initiatives. A number of more limited projects and initiatives are taken separately across the Country and quite a number of these could be seen as more pedagogical well-structured, planned and carried out. On the other hand many of these projects only have a limited number of young people involved as well as the ongoing praxis of the projects are vulnerable regarding getting financed and secured (34).

#### *Guidance and counselling*

1st of august 2004 a new Danish Guidance Reform came into force. The primary reason for this initiative is, that the intention to make it much easier for young people to find and choose education and occupation, respectively. The guidance considering secondary education is placed under the municipalities, while guidance considering professional education and occupation is gathered under the regions. In continuation of this new initiative, a new common guidance education is supposed to replace former guidance education forms in order to qualify the training of counsellors. The main aims of the reform are:

- Guidance shall help ensure that choices of education and career will be of greatest possible benefit to both the individual and society.
- Guidance shall take into account the individual's interests and personal qualifications as well as the anticipated need for qualified labour and self-employed businessmen.
- Guidance shall be targeted especially at young people with special needs for guidance.
- Guidance shall contribute to a reduction of drop-out rates.
- Guidance shall contribute to improving the individual's ability to seek and use information about choice of education and career.
- Guidance shall be independent of institution- and sector specific interests.
- The qualifications and competencies of guidance counsellors shall be improved.

In order to optimise the qualifications of the counsellors, a Centre of expertise for guidance has been established under The Ministry of Education. Activities in the centre has, among others to do with: Collecting examples of best practice, initiating analyses, surveys and experimental activities, coordination among different types of services and quality development.

The specific training of guidance-counsellors is carried out as one common training programme, offered by 6 Centres for higher education. The Training programme is equivalent to 6 months full-time studies. Minimum entry requirements for participants are that they have completed 2-year higher education programme and have 2 years of relevant working experience.

Content of the training programme includes training courses in guidance

(34)

For a particular interest in some of these initiatives and the societal conditions they have, see Walther et al. 2006

theories, methods, ethics, ICT, etc. Training courses in labour market conditions, the education system, development of society and business, etc. And finally the programme includes training courses in different target groups, human development, learning theories, etc.

There exists no specification at the moment on how many cases each counsellor shall manage.

\* Two types of guidance centres are established.

**46 youth guidance centres where guidance in relation to transition from compulsory to youth education is offered.** Municipalities fund and have the overall responsibility for the centres. At each centre a manager employed is responsible for the daily management. The centres are obliged to cooperate with primary/lower secondary schools and youth education institutions in the area, regional guidance centres and local business life and public employment services.

**7 regional guidance centres offers guidance in relation to transition from youth education to higher education.**

The majority of the centres are consortia of different educational institutions. They are obliged to cooperate with partners in their regions such as youth education and higher education institutions, youth guidance centres and social partners and industry and commerce.

Even though the centres are placed regionally they are obliged to manage nationwide counselling. The guidance ought to be independent of region-, sector- and institutions interest. It is expected that The Ministry of Education annually will spent 39 million Dkr. (5.5 mill. Euro) running the activities.

In addition a national guidance portal is established [www.ug.dk](http://www.ug.dk), where information about education, training, labour market issues, professions and possibilities abroad are given. Every student is given a personal log-on and possibilities for a-mail based enquiry service are given.

Finally a national dialogue forum is established ultimo 2003. The main aim of this forum is to secure a dialogue across sectors and to develop the level of quality in Danish Guidance and counselling. 3 times a year 11 members and representatives from 12 organisations and 5 ministries meet to discuss the actual guidance taking place.

In order to evaluate and to quality control the new guidance reform, a quality-control-system has been established. The findings are published on the internet, where findings and results from the different centres can be compared. The system evaluates and controls methods, employee qualifications, effect and results of activities.

Evaluation of this quality-control-system concludes that a tightening of objectives are needed, especially when it comes to disadvantaged youth. The conclusion is that activities and objectives are not clearly directed towards disadvantages youth, which is one of the main aims of the new guidance reform. However it is too early to make manifest conclusions because of the fact, that the guidance system it self has not yet been evaluated, only the quality-control-system has.

Regarding guidance and counselling, specific numbers following the new guidance reform on how many young people who have access to and who uses this are hard to get any overview of. Therefore following figures are estimated annual figures based upon figures from August 2004 - December 2004.

Table 7. **Young people from 15-19 years in youth counselling in Copenhagen**

	Pupils in numbers	Percentage
In education	5316	73,3%
In job	718	9,9%
Target group	1223	16,8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7257</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Youth counselling, Copenhagen December, 2004

Citizens between 15-19 years old in Copenhagen in total = 22.606

Table 8. **Young people in counselling distributed over language in Copenhagen**

Language	Pupils in numbers	Percentage
Pakistani/Indian	348	4,8%
Turkish/Kurdish	255	3,5%
Arabic	436	6,0%
African	143	2,0
Yugoslavia	237	3,3%
Other languages	525	7,2%
Danish	5313	73,2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7257</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Youth counselling, Copenhagen, December, 2004

As the figures above illustrate, there seem to be some problems in reaching marginalised youth, when it comes to guidance and counselling. This in spite of the fact, that the target group for the new guidance reform is disadvantaged youth.

In principle - most public guidance and counselling services are accessible for all young people, depending on their involvement in the education system and personal situation.

For some young people however guidance and counselling is not used or young people do not pay much attention to the service or the help they are receiving.

Reasons for not using the guidance service or for paying less attention can be many. Especially for disadvantaged youth - the guidance system sometimes provide poor guidance or counselling - i.e. regarding further education - when a counsellor points to an educational lower level for ethnic minority youth or especially for ethnic minority women. The gaps between the individual wishes of an education as well as individual competences and the ones counsellors point to in the guidance service might be very big.

This could be seen as a problem also stemming from policies for disadvantaged, where lower education opportunities as for instance social and health assistants are widened in order to absorb disadvantaged people.

When the guidance and counselling system is closely attached to the educational system it can be regarded as not very trustworthy, as the counsellor might at the same time be part of the teaching staff - and thereby



be seen as somebody talking from the perspective of the institution - no matter whether this is the case or not.

It seems that a growing part of the ethnic minority in Denmark have scepticism towards or even show distrust in authorities or public administrative systems.

Other guidance and counselling services - mainly the ones acting more autonomously are experiencing an increasing number of immigrant youth, who seek guidance and counselling.

In that respect one tendency is clear. If people are expected or even obliged to have guidance/counselling - disadvantaged youth (and especially ethnic minority youth) seems to be underrepresented. On the other hand guidance and counselling services sought on a voluntary basis and most often done in settings outside formal institutions attract more disadvantaged youth (including ethnic minority youth, which in these settings are overrepresented compared to the overall percentage).

### *Production schools*

In 1980 a special initiative developed under the Ministry of Education to combat youth unemployment was taken. The initiative resulted in a new school form and a separate legislation came into force in 1985 (Act of production schools).

The production schools exist under a national framework but each school is free to interpret, construct and concretise aims and activities in order to meet special regional demands.

Even though the productions schools belong under the Ministry of education it also effects labour market situations. Young people who do not complete a youth education are offered new and different education possibilities and thereby they hopefully later will be integrated on labour market (35).

At the moment there exist around 100 production schools in Denmark and 1769 pupils are in 2005 enrolled in this form of education. The number of pupils has since 1st of January 2005 been decreasing because of the fact that the legislation has been reformulated so that only pupils who belongs under the production schools legislative target group can participate in this education form.

Before this new legislation came into force, the production schools were admitting a broader group of pupils, which means that "strong" pupils whom are considered strong enough to be integrated in traditional education system, were admitted to these schools, mostly as a result of poor (or lack of) guidance from school and education counsellors. This acknowledgement has resulted in a lawfully obligation for school counsellors to consider whether the pupil in question is included in the primary target group i.e. academic weak pupils or whether other (qualifying) alternatives than production schools should be taken into consideration.

The production schools are funded through partly municipal funds: A basic grant is given by local authorities or/and by the county council. The grant is obligatory in the establishment of the school and the amount of the obligatory grant is the same across municipalities. Local authorities can

(35)

An alternative to production-schools, more into arts and media were The Open Youth Education, which unfortunately were closed down in 2005. For details regarding this school form, see Walther et al. 2006

however give optional additional grants. In 2004 the municipal funds made up 43.824 EUR.

The other funding is through state funds: State subsidies are given towards running costs, including education costs, building costs etc. State subsidies are fixed according to annual finance budgets. In 2004 the State funds made up 9.958 EUR per one-year nomination.

Pupils are not entitled to ordinary grants (SU (36)), but receive a “school-grant” from the school, which is to be considered as payment for working with production outputs. For pupils under 18 years the grant is 67 EUR for pupils over 18 years the grant is 134 EUR pr. Week, which is comparable to the “SU”. The grant is considered a taxable income. If the pupil is late or do not show up, the school can make a reduction in the payment.

For pupils in activation specific rules exist considering the distribution of funds between municipality, state and employment service.

Through education the main goal is that each pupil get the opportunity to develop ones own life competency. Focus is not only on academic skills but also and in particular on social, personal and physical skills. Life competency is achieved through lifelearning and through a qualifying process. Life-learning is a psychological adoption to norms, values etc. existing in society. It is a “hidden” curriculum or process which is often difficult to verbalise and to predict and organise.

The qualifying process is a process where knowledge and more formal skills are acquired. The two learning processes are organised through two forms of teaching: Workshop teaching and ordinary teaching. Every young individual is free to organise an individual course which fits to the student in question. The course can always be changed in the process. For some students it is more important to develop social and personal competencies, for others a strengthening of knowledge and skills seems most important. Courses are organised according to meet the individual qualifications sought by the young person. The qualifying process is not only formal which is seen in other educational contexts but do also involves in- and non-formal learning.

**The primary target group is young individuals below the age of 25 who has not started or finished a secondary education.** In the beginning productions schools were only for young unemployed. Now everyone without a secondary education can be accepted on the schools.

Young people below the age of 25 can regardless if they receive unemployment benefits from the state or activation benefits from the local authorities be activated after a period of three months of unemployment. 30 hours per week are offered.

From the 1st quarter of 2004 to the 1st quarter of 2005 there has been a decrease in the annual pupil activity on 5 %. This is primarily because of the fact that admission with state funds only applies to students who are considered to be in the target group. Whether the student is considered within the target group or not is a decision, taken by a counsellor according to the new guidance reform.

(36)

Most students in Denmark are entitled to receive a study grant from the State (SU). It is only barely enough to live on, but can be supplied both by cheap loans and a limited earning from working. The study grants are fixed depending on age and time of studying. The system is introduced in order to make it possible for anyone – regardless of family

- Young people within the target group are regarded as belonging to one of the following groups:
- Young people having difficulties in acquiring academic skills and difficulties in getting a qualifying education.
- Young people who has started but never finished a youth education, neither in gymnasium nor vocational.
- Young people with massive social or behavioural problems.
- Young people who of one or another reason can not find their way into the ordinary education system.

The production schools are built upon the idea that learning takes places through production work shops. The basic premise is learning by doing. Everything which is produced or manufactured is most often getting sold no matter if the product is a material product, a service product or for instance music- and plays. The important thing is that the young people get recognition for their work.

It is also important that each task fits the student in question. The task shall both be challenging but also reinforce sense of confidence, which means that the task must not be too difficult, but at the same time difficult enough to motivate and facilitate learning.

Different workshops are offered depending on the specific school. Examples are carpeting, canteen, building construction, electronics, fitness and health, administration, tourism, textile, media, drama, metalwork etc. The workshops are coordinated both with each other but also with other production schools and the local community.

In addition to practical or thematic workshops students are taught math, language, ICT etc. All classes are voluntary. Finally the students can do 4 weeks apprenticeship in public or private contexts or participate in an exchange program. The apprenticeship period can be prolonged if the young individual is regarded and feels that he or she benefits from it.

Every young individual participate continuously in the organisation of his or hers stay at the school.

No testing or exams are held and new students can start any time during the whole year. Students can parallel with their stay at the school attend classes in a qualifying education, up to 12 hours per week. This is an opportunity widely used.

The production schools are independent institutions and are established locally or regional and are regulated by Ministry of education. Each school has a committee, a school principal and teachers. The Minister of education invigilates and supervises the work at the schools.

The productions schools are a result of a long term policy and exist under a well established framework. A continuously evaluation is taking place because of the state supervision. In addition OECD made an evaluation report in 1994 where they concluded that the production schools are

succeeding in motivation and challenging the young people in ways the formal education system can not.

A quantitative study carried out by the Ministry of Education shows that 35 % of those pupils who attended the productions schools across the country in 1997-1998 are today integrated at labour market, 34 % are in education, 16 % are unemployed, 6 % are on leave, whereas information about the remaining 9 % is unknown. About 1/3 are doing the same job/education today as they did right after leaving the production school, whereas the rest has changed their path.

If you look upon 1998 re-absorption results for the same group of students shows that 1/5 are involved in SU entitled education, 1/5 are involved in other educational settings, 1/5 are integrated at labour market, 1/5 are either unemployed or in activation, whereas no information exist for the remaining 1/5.

The duration of stays at the schools seems important considering future paths. 50 % of students, who were involved for three months to 1 year, started an education right after leaving school, whereas Students who stayed for less than 3 months to a grater extend became unemployed.

#### *Activation*

#### **Policy environment of good practice.**

The activation programmes are parts of the Act of Active Employment Effort (Law no. 419 10/06/2003) and belongs under the Ministry of employment. Activation programs started as an initiative for young unemployed (Youth Effort) but are now effective for all unemployed with capacity of work, but there are special rules for activation of young people.

#### **A) Structure**

The employment effort is distributed among two parallel systems. The insured unemployed belong under the governmental employment service (AF) and the uninsured belongs under the municipality, which refer the unemployed to the governmental employment service (AF). Notice that this system will change as a result of a structure reform change in 2007, when the counties will be closed down.

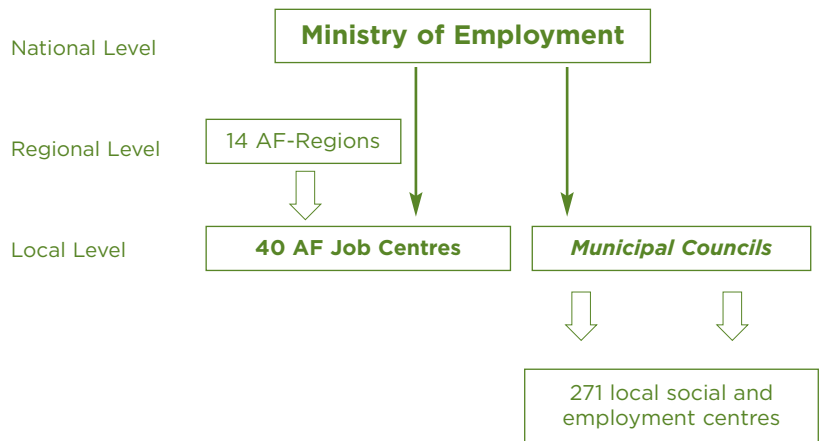
#### **The governmental employment service:**

The governmental employment service (AF) has 40 job centres situated all over Denmark. Each of the 14 counties has a governmental AF-region, which survey the efforts of the job centres. Each region holds a labour market council where different labour market partners are represented.

#### **The municipality:**

271 local social and employment centres which belong under each municipal council exist.

#### **2.3 The system today:**



## Economy

### Activation rules

In Denmark you are obliged to participate in activation otherwise your benefit will be deprived.

#### The Danish unemployment benefit-system (the insured):

If you are under 30 years old you have the right and duty to activation after 6 month unemployment and 12 month if you are older than 30.

Activation under the unemployment benefit system (the Government) can consist of an individual action plan, an individual education plan, apprenticeships or (further) education.

#### The Danish social benefit system:

People under the age of 30 have the right and duty to receive an employment offer not later than after 13 weeks of social benefit. (People over the age of 30 have the right and duty to receive an employment offer after 12 month).

- If you are unemployed under 30 and without an education that gives you permission to an unemployed insurance when the activation last 18 month and at least 30 hours per week.
- If you are unemployed under the age of 30 with an education the activation shall last 6 month at least 30 hours per week.

Activation under the social benefit system (The municipalities) can consist of guidance, action plan, job training, job rotation, education or voluntary work.

## Percentage of young people in the two benefit system for at least for 6 month in 2004

### • The Danish unemployment benefit system (the insured):

18-19 Years old	0,03 %
20-24 Years old	1,43 %
25-29 Years old	3,75 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,3 %</b>

Source: Danmarks Statistik

### • The Danish social benefit system

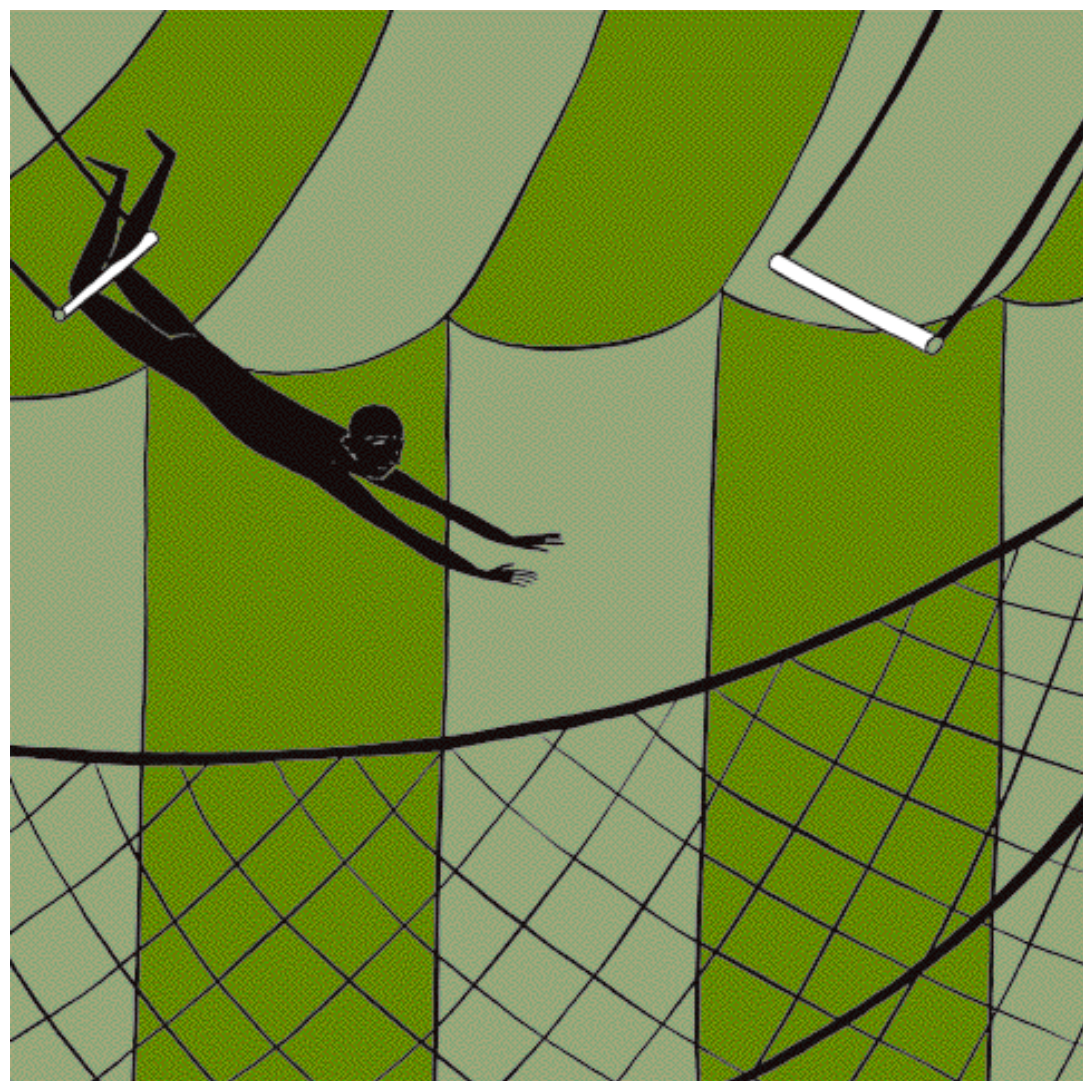
18-19 Years old	3,13 %
20-24 Years old	4,77 %
25-29 Years old	4,42 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,36 %</b>

Source: Danmarks Statistik

These numbers do not include young people receiving salary grants

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## Disadvantaged Youth in Slovenia

Despite transition, Slovenia managed to preserve a relatively stable economic situation. However, during the transition period, the risk of poverty increased, particularly for the unemployed, and social inequalities increased (Stanovnik, 2004: 318-320). It expanded the network of public educational institutions that provide programs ranging from primary education to university undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as various forms of assistance for children and young people coming from socially more vulnerable. The intense problematization of early school leaving during the past decade has led to the establishment of a relatively dense institutional network that offers alternative educational options for early school leavers and also encourages participation in various educational programs. This was one of the factors that influenced the decline in the dropout rate in the past decade. Another important factor is a great significance ascribed to education, so parent's expectations regarding their children's education have increased and, as a result, they have been putting in more effort to ensure the realization these expectations.

**Key words:** Youth, life situation, uncertainty, drop-outs, education, unemployment, counselling

### 1. Social vulnerability of young people

The life situation of children and young people is nowadays accompanied with increasing social and cultural uncertainty, particularly as regards the future. The individualization of the growing-up process multiplies the number and extent of risk decisions and life paths for all young people (Beck, 1997, Baethge, 1989). The most, concentrated risk is faced by those young people who do not enjoy suitable economic and social support from their families, those who dropped out of school or face long-term unemployment (Ule, 2000). While in the past social disadvantage was the 'fate of the class,' it has now become an individualized, personal fate. This leads to new forms of the social exclusion of young people creating new experiences and forms of poverty (Heckman, 2006). In addition to the lack of material means and unemployment problems, this new type of poverty is also determined by the lack of alternatives and imagination as regards alternative lifestyles. As a result, such a person becomes increasingly excluded on the general level. This means that today socially threatened young people as well as those who face long-term unemployment lack the important agents of social immunity, i.e. the sources of collective socio-cultural creativity, group self-help and peer solidarity.

In contrast to the situation that characterized previous decades, studies in Slovenia showed that young people today face the greatest number of problems precisely within the most important areas of life that affect their social promotion and the growing-up process (Ule, 1995). The intricate web of 'objective ambiguities' of the life situation causes difficulties to an increasing number of young people who try to plan and manage their



lives; it forces them to continually search for the temporary balance between the opposing tendencies, requirements and expectations. All these social contrasts and difficulties confronted by young people increase their *social and psychological vulnerability* (Ule, Rener, Mencin, Tivadar, 2000). Socially vulnerable young people are mainly those with educational or socialization deficits, and those lacking strong links with informal support networks. They lack suitable springboards needed for an independent transition to adulthood.

The social vulnerability of young people intensifies with the increase in the number of difficulties and unsolved problems that feed one another, for example, poor school success, low level of education, poor job prospects, material, social, emotional and health problems. Structural traits of the socially vulnerable young people generally intertwine with cultural and interactional aspects e.g. less emotional and social support in the immediate and wider circle etc. (Ule, Rener, 2001). Despite this, greater social vulnerability of young people does not have only negative implications. It may increase young people's sensitivity to the sources of possible identity and social problems, meaning that they experience greater stress which they have to endure and process positively (Walther, du Bois-Reymond, Biggart 2006). Also, it compels young people to start to develop early the strategies of coping with problems.

## 2. Educational system in Slovenia

The assessment indicating a favourable situation of young people in Slovenia compared to that in other EU member states is based primarily on the large percentage of young people integrated in the educational system and a large percentage of those who, after completing the compulsory education, gain at least basic qualifications. Compulsory education starts in Slovenia at age 6 and lasts 9 years. After the completion of the 9-year compulsory programme the student selects secondary school. The decision is voluntary in principle. The choice is, however, restricted by the number of available places. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places, the decisive selection criteria are the results achieved during the last three years of compulsory education.

All students who completed a general secondary or vocational secondary education programme and passed the final 'matura' examination may enrol in higher programmes at universities or polytechniques. Roughly speaking, virtually all children who complete elementary school enrol in a vocational or other secondary school programme. However, certain percentage of children leaves school before completion (early school leavers). In 2003, the share of students who enrolled in post-secondary/upper secondary, professional and university courses amounted to somewhat more than 42% of the generation age 19 to 26, and somewhat less than 35% of the generation age 19 to 28. More than 72% of all students were full-time students (1).

The majority of children and young people with special needs are integrated into the regular educational programmes which are not

(1)  
Source: Statistical Office of RS  
(2005) - iobračevanje  
<http://www.stat.si/doc/statinf/2005/si-163.pdf>

specially modified. One of the key goals of the educational system reform in the 1990s was the introduction of integrated education. Accordingly, regular schools were scheduled to introduce professional assistance and programmes whose implementation would be modified to meet the needs of children with special needs, modified programmes designed to ensure an equal educational standard, specially designed programmes that do not ensure an equal educational standard, special programmes and educational programmes.

Transfer between individual programmes is possible. The education of children and young people with special needs is regulated by legislation for the entire period of schooling, from the pre-school institutions/kindergartens and elementary schools to general secondary schools and vocational and professional schools (including higher professional schools); legislation also stipulates the provision of equipment and tools needed by the students with special needs..

### 3. Labor market and youth unemployment

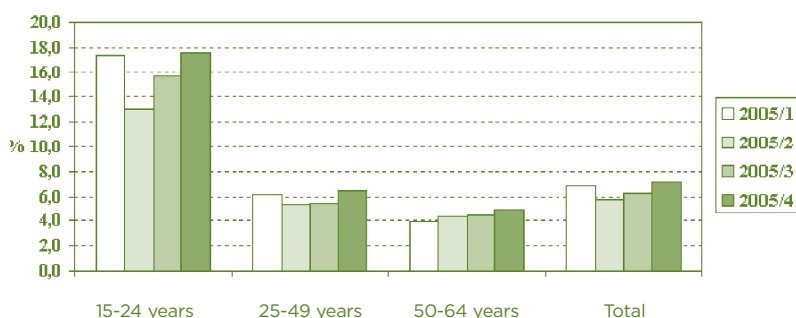
Although in terms of employment policy Slovenia proved somewhat less successful, the unemployment rate among young people in Slovenia is still around the EU average .

Table 1. **Structure of registered unemployed persons by age group (in %)**

Age group	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	July 2006
18 years or less	0,5	0,5	0,4	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,2
over 18 to 25 years	21,2	22	21,9	23,1	22,5	20,5	16,9
over 25 to 30 years	11	12,1	13,5	15,1	16,3	17	17,3
over 30 to 40 years	16,6	16,6	17,7	18,4	18,6	18,9	19,3
over 40 to 50 years	23,4	23,2	23,5	22,2	21,4	20,6	20,8
over 50 to 60 years	26,2	24,4	21,7	19,8	19,9	21,6	24,2
60 years or more	1,1	1,2	1,2	0,9	1	1	1,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Labour Force Survey, SURS

**Figure 1:**  
Unemployment rates by  
age groups



Source: Labour Force Survey, SURS

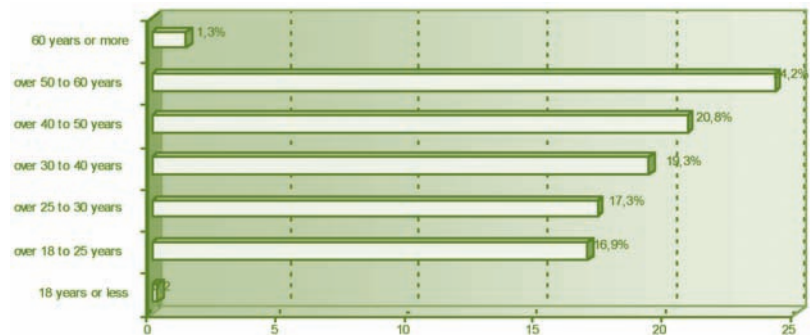
Two issues that continue to be problematic are fixed-term employment (recently, as much as 3/4 of all new employment vacancies, in all age groups, were based on a fixed-term contract) and a large percentage of long-term unemployed young people (in Slovenia, the long-term unemployment is considered to be one lasting more than a year). These

two issues raise the questions of how the labour market should be regulated and whether the measures arising from the active employment policy have been effective.

Slovene labour market is in comparison to other European markets relatively inflexible. For many years lifelong full-time employment was the only existing form of employment, however, recent changes introduced into the legal framework and active employment policy are directed towards increasing the flexibility of the labour market. Whatsoever, the self-employment is the most common form of flexible employment (11.1% of all employment in 2001), followed by temporary employment (i.e., fixed-term contracts) which figure is constantly growing and has reached 10.5% in 2001. By contrast, the share of part-time employment is still relatively low, only 6.6% (Kanjuro-Mrâela, Ignjatović, 2004).

Nevertheless, the needed flexibilisation is achieved mainly on account of young people, aged between 15 and 24. Their share is in comparison to other categories importantly higher, especially, in case of temporary employment, whereas the young people represent as much as 37,9% of all temporary employment (in 2001). It has to be added also the fact that temporary employment is becoming the most common form of employment. The data are showing that almost 70% of all new employment is temporary (2). Overall, activity rate of young people aged 15-24 was according to Labour force survey (the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 2004) 39.6% and the employment/population ration 34%. The unemployment rate was in the same period 14% (3)

**Figure 2:**  
Structure of registered unemployed persons by age group (in %) July 2006



Source: Labour Force Survey, SURS

Young people entering the labour market do not enjoy special privileges. Although formally they have equal status as adults, their options are limited because of the lack of work experience, which is frequently a requirement that must be met to obtain the job. No studies have been conducted about the transition to the labour market. The modalities of transition described below are based on indirect data.

The most frequent mode of transition following all stages of education is a direct transition to the labour market either through fixed-term full-time employment, contractual work, temporary employment or grey economy. According to our estimates, 70% of young people with vocational, general secondary or university education belong in this category. This flexible type of employment, according to rough estimations, lasts from 1 to 3 years. It is highly likely that the following stage is a permanent full-time job (4).

(2)  
Source: Statistical Office of RS (2004)  
<http://www.stat.si/doc/statinf/2004/si-150.pdf>

(3)  
Source: Statistical Office of RS (2005)  
<http://www.stat.si/doc/statinf/2005/si-163.pdf>

(4)  
Source: Employment Service of Slovenia, Annual Report ESRS, 2002, 2003

The second type of transition is temporary unemployment, which places these persons in the first-time job seekers group. This transition is especially typical of the redundant labour force i.e. persons with specific types of education (students who completed general secondary school and administrative secondary schools, and graduates in social sciences and the humanities at the university level). The unemployment lasts from half a year to three years on average and it is typical of approx. 20% of young people (5).

Many of those who cannot find a job that matches their qualifications eventually take on any job, which places them into the first category mentioned above. According to the data of the Institute of Macroeconomic Analyses, the share of young people with university education who cannot find jobs is increasing. If they register with the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS), they have the option of being included in various active employment policy measures, on the basis of an employment plan, which is a standard procedure for all unemployed persons. ESS provides counsellors who assist in the preparation of the employment plan, as well as in-depth individual assistance given by professional counsellors-psychologists.

Although the economic growth in Slovenia increases employment opportunities, owing to the excessively low productivity, the impact of economic growth on employment is weak. Our point of view is that the main weaknesses of the Slovenian system of transition arise from the unsuitability of the educational system, which does not change sufficiently fast, and from the dominant preconceptions of adults and young people alike about professional opportunities and social reputation (absence of reputation) of certain types of education and professions.

In connection with this, we should also mention the widespread practise of informal paid work – this is work through Student Job Agency. This option, on the one hand, helps young people to alleviate their financial problems and gain work experience, but since this type of work is subject to different regulations than regular work, they can neither obtain the employed person status nor enjoy the rights arising from that status (e.g. this period of work is not counted as the years of service, they are not insured against unemployment nor entitled to compensation during the maternity leave, the child-care leave etc.). Since this type of “employment” is less expensive for the employers, it is very popular among them, but working students are competitors to regular-job seekers, particularly highly educated first-time job seekers who are a costly labour force. The share of part-time employments among young people has also been on the increase.

Young people do not have a sufficient choice, nor can they freely combine learning contents. Also, the educational systems responds too slowly to new educational needs and new forms of knowledge acquisition. Accordingly, it has been “producing” an increasing number of educated young people with poor job prospects. Other factors that contribute to the inadequacy of transition to the labour market are a haphazard system of traineeship for young, first-time employees, and a rigid hierarchy of job

(5)  
Source: Employment Service of Slovenia, Data Basis of Unemployment People for the Year 2004

roles. Consequently, mainly the entry-level jobs are offered to young people, and since they are not interested in these they prefer to wait for a “better opportunity.” As a rule, access to higher positions or better-paid jobs is dependent on the network of informal connections, meaning that education or the quality of applicants is of little relevance. At the moment, self-employment opportunities for young people are few and support for this type of undertakings is similarly lacking.

The issue of transition to adulthood is not particularly emphasized in the public sphere or by policy makers, except in connection with family policy, low fertility, and prolonged dependence of young people on their parents. Similarly, employment of young people is not an issue that attracts much attention, or in other words, it is subsumed into the general effort to reduce unemployment.

Certain problems connected with the transition from education to employment could be mitigated by ensuring that young people are better informed about the labour market demands and by enabling them to develop job-seeking skills. For the time being, this task is left to schools but it is not defined in the curricula. Recently the media have been devoting more space to the debate about the implications of this policy for employment, safety of employment, educational policy and so on. For example, polemical responses were provoked by the presentation of the Minister of Science and Education who announced that the ministry would work towards regulating the enrolment at universities, and towards redirecting young people from social sciences and the humanities to natural and technical sciences. Another announcement that stirred public debate was that of the Minister of Education about the prioritisation of enrolment in vocational and professional programmes.

Critics of this policy objected that it revived the discourse and the mistakes of the former ‘socialist’ educational reform, i.e. ‘directed education,’ which tried to subordinate the educational system to the labour market demands and eventually produced catastrophic results. Critics are of the opinion that educational trends cannot be changed forcefully and with haste. In addition, they argue that changes in the educational system should be accompanied with changes in economy, which would create stable jobs in the technical sector that would be more interesting for young people.

#### 4. Early school leavers

Early secondary school leavers are students who have not completed successfully the secondary education within five years of the enrolment (Gerlina S., Polak M., 1998). Slovenia uses the definition of the European Commission based on the close approximate to the dropout rate, which is an indicator obtained through the internationally comparable Labour Force Survey. According to this indicator, the dropout rate is defined as a share of population aged 18 to 24 who have attained the ISCED2 level of education or lower and are not included in any educational process or training schemes.

Although accurate data on early school leavers in Slovenia is not available, the number of students who have completed education suggests that the dropout rate has been on the decline during the last ten years.

Table 2. **Total drop-out by school type for three generations, (in %)**

	Drop-out gen. 91*	Drop-out gen. 92*	Drop-out gen. 93*
One to two-year vocational programmes (level II complexity)	21.3	29.4	31.9
Two and three-year vocational prog. (level III. and IV. complexity)	26.8	18.6	16.6
Professional programmes and vocational-technical programmes (level V. complexity)	14.9	12.8	11.9
Total: all vocational and professional programmes	20.4	16.2	15.0
General secondary school programmes – gymnasium	5.9	7.0	6.5
Total: all secondary school programmes	17.2	14.1	13.0

\*Entering the vocational programme or secondary school programme in the year 91, 92, 93

Source: the report entitled Vocational and Professional Education in Slovenia 2000, p. 7

There are two key factors that influenced this downward trend during the past ten years. First, the issue of early school leaving has been intensely discussed. The result has been the establishment of a relatively dense institutional network that enables early school leavers to re-connect with the educational system. In addition, education is treated as the crucial factor of social mobility and even social security, so parents from all social classes strive to ensure that their children attain a high level of education (according to the 2002 census, 46.7% of all 20-year olds were integrated in the educational system at ISCED 5B and 5A levels (6)).

One symptomatic factor in Slovenia is that the greatest number of early school leavers is found on lower vocational education levels, but this cannot be unambiguously attributed to the low abilities of these children or their socio-economic status. With the exception of lower vocational education, on all other levels male early leavers outnumber female early leavers. According to many indicators, women achieve better school results than men. The share of young women who continue with their education after completing a secondary school is greater than that of young men, and they also complete higher and university level programmes faster than men). The 2002 census data also confirm that women prevail in the group who expressed a wish to complete specialist undergraduate, higher or university studies, and in addition, slightly more women than men wish to complete post-graduate programmes (7). Despite success and educational ambitions, women have less choice on the labour market – unemployment among young women is greater than that among young men.

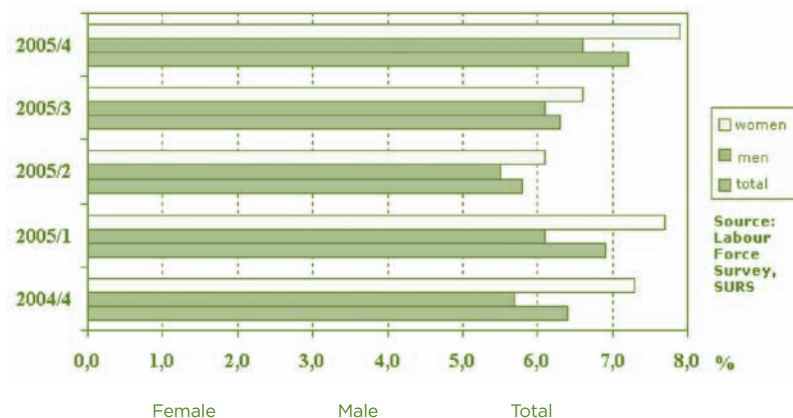
(6)

Source: Statistical Office of RS (2002)  
<http://www.stat.si/popis2002/si/default.htm>

(7)

Source:  
[http://www.stat.si/pub\\_moskizenske\\_kazalo.asp](http://www.stat.si/pub_moskizenske_kazalo.asp)

**Figure 3:**  
Unemployment rates  
by sex



Source: Labour Force Survey, SURS

Various researchers treat differently the link between early school leaving, on the one hand, and socio-economic background of children and education level of their parents, on the other. However, those studies that do see it as the causality relation point out that early leavers come from larger families, that their parents attained lower educational levels, that their family circles offer less stimulating atmosphere and that their upbringing is less consistent (Ule, Kuhar 2003). Since early school leaving is a consequence of the history of failures, we should point out that one important factor contributing to the failure at school is inability to enrol in the selected programme and it is also the result of it, since success at school is a decisive admission criterion in schools where the number of available places is lower than the number of students who want to enrol.

The link between the early school leaving, unemployment and poverty is particularly conspicuous in the case of the Roma population, who constitute a segment in which the majority of unfavourable factors become combined. Their socio-economic situation is bad; their level of education is low on average; and finally, the majority population is burdened by extremely negative prejudices against the Roma, which represents an insurmountable obstacle for Roma job seekers. Inevitably, the victims of these unfavourable circumstances are the Roma children, since the very beginning of schooling. In addition to these problems, another fundamental obstacle, or rather the key problem, is the fact that the Romany language is not the language of instruction in schools. Education legislation indeed stipulates that schools should employ a Roma assistant, but the implementation of this provision has been slow so far.

The 2002 census data and research findings also show that, in addition to the underprivileged Roma, also the members of other ethnic groups from former Yugoslavia have less favourable position on the labour market. The rate of unemployment among this group is greater than the average unemployment rate in Slovenia. The research data indicate that this cannot be attributed to the lower educational structure of this group. The unemployment rate among women in this category is significantly higher than the rate among the general population (Klopčič, 2004).

In answering the question about the predictive factors that are associated with disadvantage, we would like to avoid the stigmatisation of specific social groups. Links are not monosemic and, in addition, we do not have reliable relevant data at the. However, there are several qualitative studies that primarily stress the extremely difficult situation of the Roma. They are definitely the most underprivileged group in.

## 5. Pushed-pulled

Generally speaking, 'activation' has an important role within social and employment policy. It started in late 90s (more precisely in 1998, when revised Employment and Unemployment Insurance Act - EUIA was codified). However, the nature/character of Slovene activation tends to be more 'positive' than 'negative', including both - trainfare/learnfare and workfare (welfare-to-work) elements. The employability of those excluded from the labour market is at the forth and their (previous) labour market position is relatively secured (via legally defined suitable and appropriate employment). Nevertheless, there are also emphases on preventing the abuse and reducing dependency on social benefits.

We could say that Slovene activation is more similar to the one introduced in France (so-called "insertion policy") than in the UK ("workfare policy"). Nevertheless, available information based on statistical data and analyses are showing that activation in terms of activating unemployed people to actively seek employment and participate in active employment policy measures (i.e., so-called activation measures) is more effectively implemented in case of young jobseekers that in case of elder, especially those more difficult-to-employ (Kopač, 2004). That is due to the society's perception (and also of employment advisors) that young people can find a job and has to accept it, even though it might be of 'lower' quality. Sanctions for not complying to the 'activation' requirements are the same for all categories and are related to the erasure from the unemployment register, which in turn has consequences for the entitlement to unemployment benefits, social assistance, health insurance and participation in employment policy measures. Nevertheless, more effective implementation of activation in case of young people is also related to more frequent use of sanctions.

An unemployed person registered with the Employment Service has the obligation to draw an employment plan with the assistance of counsellor within two months of registration at the latest (8). The employment plan defines the goal of employment, job seeking activities and the type and form of needed assistance. In addition, the employment plan determines the form of mandatory reporting to the Service and times and address at which the unemployed person will be available. By signing the employment plan, the unemployed person accepts all agreed obligations. Failure to fulfil these obligations and agreements defined in the employment plan may lead to the removal of that person from the register; new registration is possible after the period of six months. In this case, the person loses the rights arising from the unemployment insurance policy and is not eligible to receive other types of aid.

(8)

Source: Zakon o socialnem varstvu (Social Security Act) [http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis\\_ZAKO4082.html](http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis_ZAKO4082.html)



On registering with the Service, all job seekers are invited to visit the counsellor with whose collaboration they draw up the employment plan. The plan includes all job-seeking activities and other activities that could contribute to it. The plan is drawn within two months of registering. The employment plan is based on the employment opportunities determined with regard to the applicant's knowledge, experience and skills. The applicant's wishes and needs are taken into account as much as it is possible. The Employment Plan is a tool used in planning the activities that lead to employment, realizing and monitoring of all activities agreed upon in the plan, appraising the progress.

The Employment Service of Slovenia promotes the individual approach - every job seeker draws up the employment plan in collaboration with the counsellor. Persons who take professional psychologist's service receive individual counselling. Recently, group workshops have been introduced, although every person is invariably treated individually as well. Young people have choice, but it is not unlimited. The decision is dependent on many factors, and the solution must be acceptable for the Employment Service as well, since resources are limited. At any rate, the choice is limited by the demand on the labour market, for example, some jobs are not available (9).

## 6. Best practices

Like most European countries Slovenia, too, has been facing the problems of increased dropout rates and difficulties in reintegrating young people into education, training and employment. There is also a growing awareness that not all young people find their place in the education and vocational training system.

Our model - Measures for drop out prevention - identifies three major categories of factors significant for dropping out of school. They are pupils related, family related and school related. The likelihood of a pupils dropping out of school increases as the combination of all risk factors. Solution to the complex problem of dropouts cannot be achieved by the schools alone. The problem must be addressed by the whole society. The model provides measures that go beyond the school and require a team approach- partnership of pupils, teachers, family, business, local institutions and the others. Model introduces a wide range of measures aimed at the early detection of possible problems right from the earliest stages; measures specially designed to stimulate the whole personal and educational development of the pupil. Family support play a crucial role in pupils education. Involving families in setting goals, making decisions, monitoring progress and outcomes is one of the model's significant object. Our model so enables a variety of forms for parents to interact with teachers, pupils and also with other parents.

National vocational qualifications and modular education combine the path, which will also derive several new approaches in decreasing number of young people without any vocational qualification in the labour market. Law on National Vocational Qualifications has been approved in 1999. It

(9)  
Source: Employment Service  
of Slovenia, Annual Report  
ESRS, 2002, 2003)

enables an individual to gain vocational qualification within the certificate system, as also the one gained from the regular school system. Now it seems that the framework has been set - so national vocational qualification can be achieved, based on previously obtained knowledge and skills of an individual. Beside that, foundation for the preparation of educational programmes within lower secondary and secondary vocational educational system has been approved in 2001. One of the main new outcomes of this foundation is the modularisation of the educational programmes. We can acknowledge that quite large number of young people cannot complete existing vocational education programmes, mainly because programmes are too demanding, or we cannot motivate them enough to complete the education. With this module-based platform we will be able to encourage both adults and young without any formal education to successfully obtain new qualifications.

#### • Total Counselling

The basis for the Total Counselling program, aimed at young people who left (or quit) school early and have not subsequently joined active employment policy programs, have been laid down by the project with the same name, part of the Leonardo da Vinci project funded by the EU. The new service is taking young people's whole life-situation into consideration while providing the service. In addition, the aim of the programme is to provide a common platform where specialists from different fields of work, can go beyond the usual boundaries of their professions and work towards the common goal of assisting young people.

The target group are young people between 16 and 25 who have dropped out from the educational system and have not registered with the Employment service, so called young people with the 'status zero' position (in numbers, 5000 every year). The responsibility for the implementation of total informing and counselling has been undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Sports (10). The Centre for Vocational Education and Training is responsible for the coordination and development of activities on the national level. The organizations implementing these activities on the regional level were selected through a public tender. Total counselling activities comprise information, counselling, representation, evaluation, monitoring and training, and various methods of work.

On starting his/her work, a counsellor establishes contacts with all important institutions that could lead him/her to the target group, or could be of assistance later in dealing with the target group. During the initial two months, the counsellor establishes contacts with counsellors working for primary and secondary schools in the region, the Centre for Social Work, the Employment Service, Counselling Centres, sports clubs, youth organizations, health institutions and governmental and non-governmental organizations. The counsellor maintains and expands these contacts continually. Individual counselling consists of the following stages:

- The counsellor establishes the first contact, meaning an appropriate counselling relationship with the early school leaver.

(10)  
Source: Ministry of Education and Sports  
[http://www.mszs.si/slo/solstvo/posebne\\_potrebe.asp#predstavitev](http://www.mszs.si/slo/solstvo/posebne_potrebe.asp#predstavitev)

- The counsellor and the client reach an agreement about the inclusion (verbally or in a written form) and thus also about the duties and the rights, goals and expected results.
- The counsellor helps the client to identify the obstacles and his/her strong points, i.e. potentials that can be mobilized in resolving the existing situation.
- The counsellor helps the client to define the goal and shape activities that should gradually lead to that goal.
- The counsellor monitors the entire process of counselling and assesses the success (or lack thereof) of each counselling process as a whole.

Counselling proceeds from the relationship established between the counsellor and the client, and this relationship is based on an equal footing (meaning that each may object if disagreeing with a proposal of the other). The counsellor and the client commit themselves to confidentiality. The role of the counsellor is to create room and a suitable atmosphere, and to empower the client to consider all the options and thus take the best decision possible in the given moment.

The program covers the period from September 2004 to the end of 2006. The sum earmarked for the implementation of these activities is 321.666 €. The monitoring of the service is carried out every three months. The first data based on the monitoring in implementation period (March-September) show that there were 143 organizations included in the ISM network; there were 852 information-oriented interviews conducted and 372 counselling sessions. All in all 920 young people were reached by the service in the first six months. Young people continually evaluate the work of counsellors and report on how their needs were met during the counselling process. They also propose changes that would make them fully satisfied with the counselling service. The monitoring group collects these suggestions and upgrades the concept. Evaluation looks into the wider effects of these activities on the inclusion of young people in the educational system and the labour market.

#### • Program 10.000+

Program 10.000+ is an active employment policy program formulated on a yearly basis by the ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Sports, in cooperation with other key institutions responsible for human resources. Program was designed to enable unemployed persons to receive formal education and national vocational training (certificates), and in this manner to enhance their employment prospects, to enhance employment opportunities, educational level and skills, and to reduce professional and structural disparities <sup>(11)</sup>. The strategic goals of this program is the reduction of the percentage of long-term unemployed persons to 40% and the percentage of unemployed persons without vocational education to around 25% until 2006.

The priority is given to unemployed persons without vocational education, especially young people up to 26 years of age, unemployed persons with

(11)

Source: The Report Vocational and Professional Education in Slovenia 2000

vocational or professional education, who cannot find a job in their field and have been registered with the Employment Service of Slovenia for more than 6 months. The basic condition for inclusion was the formulation of an employment plan prepared by the unemployed person and professional employment counsellor. A proposal to include an unemployed person in this program could be put forward by the Employment Service or the unemployed person himself/herself. The Employment Service is also responsible for the assessment of the justifiability of such an inclusion.

The funding for this governmental program is provided by the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The Ministry of Education and Sports covers the costs of the vocational and professional educational programs for departments consisting of unemployed persons, as well as the costs of the primary education for adults. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs covers from its budget the costs of school fees for the participants, then the costs arising from the rights to which they are entitled, other costs of the implementation of the Learning Assistance program and the costs of the program promotion, evaluation etc.

In the school year 2003/2004 the costs for one department were 15.732 EUR for one school year for secondary vocational education and 15.188 EUR for one school year for secondary professional or technical education and grammar schools. The minimal number of participants required to set up such a department is 15 and the maximum is 25; in the case of primary education for adults and vocational education with the employer (the dual system), this number is 15. The minimal number of participants required to obtain funds from the said ministries is 20, or 15 for the primary school programs and vocational training with the employer (dual system).

In the school year 2003/2004, 7,525 participants were included in the Program 10,000. Of these, 4,265 persons were younger than 26 years. Of the total number of 7,351 unemployed persons included in formal educational programs, 5,221 (71%) participants were successful. Of these, 2,495 (34%) acquired a new vocational or professional education, 30.7% found jobs (767 persons), and 2,726 (37%) successfully passed all exams in the past year. The number of successful participants increased (data are based on the date of program completion), which is a result of better monitoring on the part of expert team and the quality of the Educational Assistance programme.

Among the activities carried out by the Employment Service in preparation of the inclusion of unemployed persons in the Program 10,000, especially worthy of mentioning are the following:

- group informing and motivation of unemployed persons,
- in-depth individual counselling and assistance with the planning of professional goals and employment plans for newly registered unemployed persons;
- team-based approach to unemployed persons with the participation of employment counsellors; owing to the low self-confidence and their

negative experience with past schooling, it is usually difficult for unemployed persons to re-enter educational programs.;

- the regional branches of the Employment Service and employment offices, working in cooperation with employers, organized introductory presentations of various occupations.

In accordance with the Employment and Insurance Against Unemployment Act, by joining this program the unemployed person acquires the status of a participant of an educational program. This means that such a person is no longer registered as an unemployed person and his/her rights ensuing from the insurance against unemployment. Learning assistance is an integral and necessary part of Program 10,000, since the majority of participants who are unable to overcome the obstacles on their own would lose their hearts. Experience shows that participants postpone the most difficult exams as long as possible. The participants of the program will have to be continually encouraged to seek employment by training them to develop job-seeking skills and by stimulating self-initiative.

## 7. Conclusion

The educational position of young people in Slovenia is relatively favourable for the time being, although data on completed education and participation in educational programs obscure certain specific problems. However, the position of young people on the labour market is rather unfavourable, as is obvious from the data showing a large percentage of long-term unemployed young people and those employed part-time or for a limited term. This assertion is also supported by the trends on the labour market, the characteristics of active employment policy, and the fact that unemployment is related to a high risk of poverty. All this calls for a careful consideration of the future regulation of the labour market and a thoughtful planning of social security policy. Since the number of unemployed persons who are also first-time job seekers has been increasing during the past few years (as has the number of highly educated persons in this group), it will be necessary to revise the active employment policy program by adding the programs targeted at this category of the unemployed.

According to the research findings in Slovenia (Ule, Kuhar, 2003), education is increasingly resembling a serious work process; it comprises increasingly greater portion of childhood and youth and extends beyond the limits of formal schooling to the areas of leisure time and various out-of-school activities. Investment in the education and development of young people is becoming an increasingly larger item in the family budget, while the performance at school and out of school has become the main criteria of family success. Thanks to protective networks created by parental support, young people become increasingly dependent and non-autonomous. Young people in Slovenia are characterized by increasingly longer period of economic dependence on the family, caused by difficulties related to employment and a prolonged period of schooling. Alternative types of employment and part-time jobs cannot protect young

people from socio-economic dependence on adults, because these forms of employment are time-limited and available only to a small number of young people.

Consequently people perceive the social world as incomprehensive, unpredictable and full of risks which they experience as individual, particular crisis rather than the effects of the processes beyond their reach. In line with this, a loss of job appears as individual responsibility, failure at school as a result of insufficient effort or abilities, youthful deviations as a lack of firm family upbringing or values. Similarly, young people do not perceive social exclusion as an objective or given state, but rather as a lack of social recognition and their own inability to change the situation. Such feelings are typical of those who have no their own source of income, are unemployed, have experienced the disintegration of the family and have no quality social networks to rely on. The concept of social exclusion, as it has become widely accepted today, does not imply any interpretative challenge to the global structures of power and distribution of social wealth.

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$$2x + 3x + 4 = 16$$

$$5x = 16 - 4$$

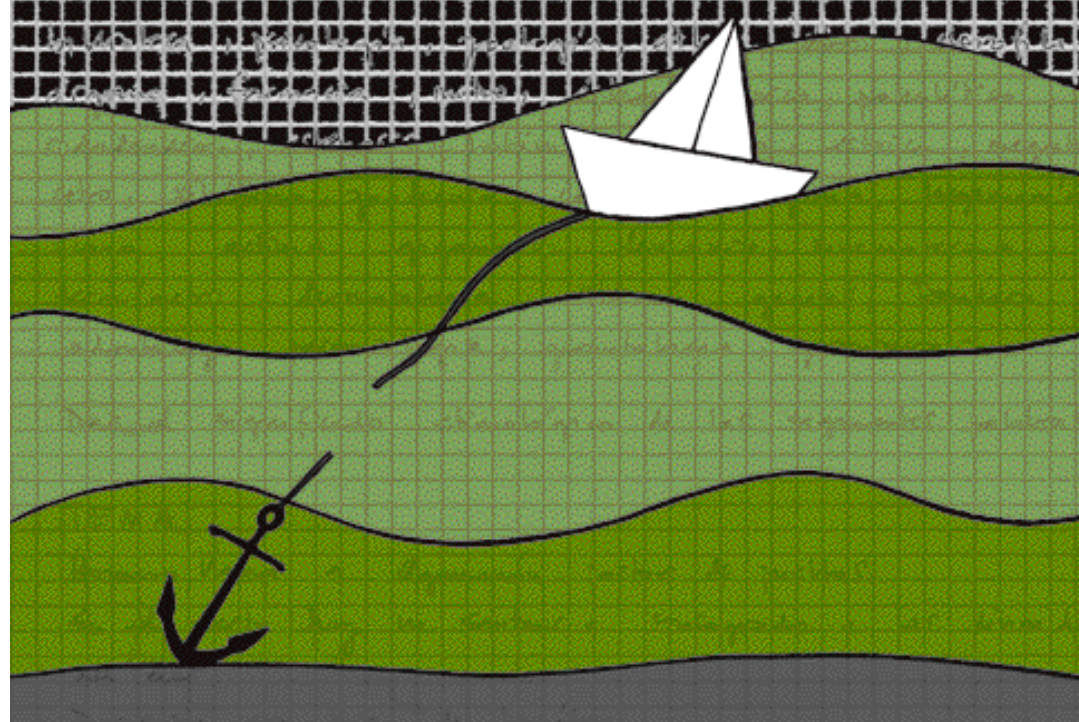
$$5x = 12$$

$$x = \frac{12}{5}$$

## Exercício de animação

Um barco está navegando no mar.

A correnteza está muito forte.



## The constellations of disadvantage become visible in Spain

In this article we will present two of the most important aspects that affect young people nowadays: the early school leaving and the precariousness of the labour market. The high rate of early school leaving shows that there is a rejection of the education system, but also the disadvantaged situation in which many young people live.

Society has relied on education as the most efficient way to overcome social differences. However, reality proves that educational institutions do not have the answer, since the current causes of the disadvantage do not have their origin in educational institutions. Early school leaving positions young people in a disadvantaged situation for their insertion into the labour market. Insisting on the real causes of this disadvantage needs a comprehensive policy to be developed and directed to family, school, the social environment and, above all, to those who suffer such a situation.

What we are going to present next are some thoughts carried out by the investigation group AREA for the development of the European project “Thematic study on policy measures concerning disadvantaged youth”, coordinated by the Group IRIS.

**Key words:** constellation of disadvantage, disadvantaged youth, precariousness, early school leaving, absenteeism from school, academic failure, inclusion, exclusion, vulnerability, social capital...

### 1. Introduction

“Disadvantaged youth” is not easy to define because it includes a heterogeneous group of people. If one investigates “disadvantaged youth” in the Spanish scientific bibliography, the analysis of the situation and the causes of this “disadvantage” predominate. This analysis focuses on social and economic structures: segmentation of the labour market, inequality of opportunities in the educational and training field, territory, place where they live, whether they belong to an ethnic minority or to a disadvantaged social class...

In the investigations made in the pedagogical or social-work field, the importance of the individual view is stressed to analyze the repercussions, the strategies of the system to increase motivation, and measures that are approved or used in order to increase the abilities and interest of young people for their education and search for work.

When it comes to the issue of the situation of the disadvantaged youth, some researches use concepts such as social exclusion/inclusion, “work disaffiliation” (Castel, 1990), “social disqualification” (Paugman, 1993), and “social branding” (Goffman, 1981).

A specific definition that facilitates the use of these concepts is preferable



when it comes to empirical researches. The most common definition uses the concept *disadvantage* as a synonym of social exclusion/inclusion. The approval by the European Commission of programmes to fight against social exclusion and poverty promoted studies that used the concept of social exclusion. However, since the approval of National Action Plans for Social Inclusion (1) the use of the concept “social inclusion” has spread. We consider that the concept “disadvantage/disadvantaged” is based on diverse causes and dimensions and also that the situations of social inequality always take place in a particular territory. These situations depend on gender, social and family networks, age, level of education, ethnic group, labour insertion, health-care system, etc.

Social differences are expressed in many ways but it is in the field of education, at work, in family situations and in the economic and cultural resources that people have acquired, where differences are really noticeable. Whereas some can have access to a certain level of wellbeing, some others cannot or find it difficult to meet their basic needs.

These differences are also evident when people and social groups try to give an answer to social disadvantages. Some of them are aware of these disadvantages and able to act from the very moment they appear. Others are either not aware of them or have to wait for the social service to give them an answer or offer them a solution.

Next, we are going to explain the situation of disadvantaged young people in relation to two different fields: the educational/training field and the labour market field. Later on, we will describe two different experiences that could be seen as “good practice” if we consider both, the results we obtained and the fact they take place on a local, as well as on a national level.

## 2. Education as a constellation of disadvantage.

Education has been seen in its different stages as the most valuable way for society to overcome social differences. However, reality has shown us that the situation of social disadvantage, especially the one that affects young people, has to do with multiple causes that do not allow school/education alone to find a solution neither for the causes of inequality nor for the inequality itself.

As a result of different educational models promoted by different political parties, four organic laws have been passed in the recent history of Spain in order to structure the education system (LGE, LOGSE, LOCE and LOE). These changes have caused a situation of certain educational instability and social mistrust towards the education system. To overcome this mistrust is one of the objectives pursued by the LOE (2006).

The General Law of Education (LGE, 1970) tried to satisfy the demand of the labour market, which required qualified labour force to deal with the economic development the country was experiencing (White Book). The most conservative groups of the old Franco regime managed to impose a segregationist and classist law that favoured private and religious education, while the resources to invest into the extension of public

(1)  
The Action Plan II for Social Inclusion in the Kingdom of Spain 2003-2005 was proposed with the objective of a coordinated and comprehensive support for vulnerable people and groups. This plan names the groups of disadvantaged people and the respective measures. The concepts “vulnerable people” and “disadvantaged people” are used indistinctly.

education were insufficient. Although the aim of this law was to provide compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 years old, the reality turned out to be quite a different thing, as all around Spain there was a high number of children who did not get any schooling at all.

The establishment of democracy in Spain came along with changes in the education system. The educational precepts of the Spanish Constitution (1978) contained in the article 27 were developed by the LODE (2), the LOGSE (3) and in the LOPEG (4). In these laws the right of the citizens to education, the structure of the education system and their participation in the development, control and evaluation of the educational activity were developed and covered. Between 1985 and 1995 the three main objectives of the pedagogic reform policy were: universalization of the public service, democratic management and no-discrimination of users by means of diversified attention to pupils.

The LOGSE (1990) made education compulsory up to the age of 16, chose a comprehensive education system and harmonized the incorporation into the labour market thanks to a new design of vocational training that has not been modified since 1990.

Later on and as a consequence of the conservative party coming into power (1996-2004), the education system was modified through a new organic law (LOCE, 2002), that once again promoted a selective and segregationist education that favoured private and religious education. This law did not totally come into force as the arrival to power of the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) in 2004 meant it was partially stopped. The new government started a new process to elaborate a new organic law that regulated non-university education. The LOE (2006) was passed after a long process of social participation and got a large parliamentary support, which made the implementation process possible during 2006-07.

The model of organization chosen by the Kingdom of Spain combines different institutions: institutions supported by public funds (public and state assisted institutions), by private funds (private institutions), and by a management model based on competence distribution between the Central Government, Regional Governments and Local Corporations.

The comprehensive school that has been implanted in Spain aims to give an answer to the new social situation by introducing and developing mechanisms that make up for the potential differences in origin. It also aims to offer the same opportunities to every pupil regardless of his/her social class, purchasing power, gender, ethnic group, religion, etc. This type of education wants to be as inclusive as possible, in spite of the fact that in our society there are not enough deeply rooted cultural traditions to accept differences.

The changes that have taken place in the labour market, family, migratory movements, the configuration of multi-ethnic societies, the globalization of economy, the introduction of new technologies, the recent incorporation of the females to the labour market, the changes in couple relationships and buying habits... are making all of us get closer to each other. The social

(2)  
Organic Law for the Right to Education (LODE), 1985

(3)  
Organic Law for the General Planning of the Education System, 1990.

(4)  
Organic Law for the Participation, Evaluation and Governance of Education Centres, 1995.

changes, the fragmentation of the society, the loss of certainty on which modern society has relied have made that the school context is nowadays defined by complexity, loss of certainty, not-knowing how and where to go regarding contents, methods and structures. The presence in education centres of young people with diverse interests, motivations and school biographies places some of them in a disadvantaged situation. This situation might have existed before or appeared in the education centre itself. In any case, these young people need assistance, always having in mind the principle of “diversity” and “multi-culturality”.

During the last years, Spain has experienced a considerable growth of its population with regard to its quantity, as well as its structure and the existence of foreign population. If in 1999 Spain had 40.202.160 inhabitants (748.953 of which were foreigners), it had 44.108.530 inhabitants the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2005, 3.730.610 being foreigners (8.5% of the total).

Table 1. **Population in Spain, sorted by gender and age group. 2005. 2005**

	Total Both genders	Porcentaje Both genders	Porcentaje Males	Porcentaje Females
	2005	2005	2005	2005
<b>Total</b>	43.141,40	100	100	100
<b>0 to 4 years old</b>	2.201,00	5,1	5,3	4,9
<b>5 to 15 years old</b>	4.524,50	10,4	10,9	10,1
<b>16 to 24 years old</b>	4.784,80	11,1	11,5	10,7
<b>25 to 64 years old</b>	24.523,10	56,8	58,1	55,7
<b>Over 65 years old</b>	7.108,10	16,5	14,2	18,7

Source: National Institute of Statistics (INE)

Out of all the population, 8.420.476 are people enrolled in school during the course 2005/06. These students were irregularly distributed, as public schools have 66.83% of non-university pupils, whereas the private/state-assisted schools only have 33.17%. With regard to university, 90.4% study in public universities, whereas private universities and those run by the Church have 9.6%.

13.57% of the students (1.142.713) are in post-compulsory secondary education (upper secondary and vocational training). 43.97% of the students that are in post-compulsory secondary education (502.472) are in vocational training and 56.03% (640.241) are in upper secondary. 1.442.081 people are in university, 17.12% of all people in education.

Of the figures we have given, we would like to emphasize the educational polarization that exists in Spain between public/state assisted-private education, the students who are in upper secondary versus those who are in vocational training, as well as the increasing importance private university education is experiencing.

Schooling of immigrant population is one of the main objectives of the education system, because it was designed to meet the needs of a much more homogeneous and closed society than the one we have today.

In Spain education is compulsory for children and young immigrants between 6 to 16 years old, regardless of their legal situation, because the legislation of “minor’s rights” is being applied instead of the law on aliens: *“Foreign minors in Spain have a right to education. Foreign minors who are in a risk situation*

or under the protection of the competent civil service have a right to health care, even if they live in Spain illegally" (Art. 10.3. Constitutional Law 1/1996, from the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, legal protection of the minor, Art. 10.3. Partial Modification of the Civil Code (BOE nº 15, 17-01-1996).

The number of young immigrants in the education system has grown considerably during the last decade. We have gone from 53.213 students in the year 1994-95 to 457.245 in 2004/2005. Currently, they represent 6.45% of people in no-university education (6.937.177 pupils (5)).

Table 2. **Distribution of non-university pupils. Course 2003-2004**

	Total pupils	% Foreigners	% Nationals
Pre-primary education	1.425.593	5,85	94,15
Primary education	2.469.616	8,07	91,93
Special education	28.898	6,19	93,81
Lower secondary Education	1.855.726	6,7	93,3
Upper secondary education	648.428	2,96	97,04
Vocational training	463.796	3,33	96,67
Social guarantee	45.120	8	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.937.177</b>	<b>6,45</b>	<b>93,55</b>

Source: CIDE (Ministry of Education and Science). 2006

Immigrant pupils come from all over the world: South America (44.81%), Africa (19.07%), EU (13.49%), rest of Europe (12.83%), Asia (4.64%), Central America (3.76%), North America (1.10%), Oceania (0.25%). Most of them are provided education in public centres (81.57%) and few of them in private centres that might be supported by public funds or might not.

The number of university students went up during the year 2003-04 to 35.409 people, that is 2.3% of all university students. Out of them, 19.3% are PhD students.

Although Spain is among the developed countries in the world, it has serious deficiencies related to the level of education of its population in comparison to other countries around it, as we can see in chart 3.

Table 3. **% of population with regard to the level of education of adults, sorted by age group. Year 2003 (6)**

	Lower than upper secondary		Upper secondary		Higher education	
	25-34 years old	25-64 years old	25-34 years old	25-64 years old	25-34 years old	25-64 years old
Germany	15	17	63	59	22	24
Austria	15	21	70	64	15	15
Belgium	22	38	39	33	39	29
Denmark	14	19	51	49	35	32
<b>Spain</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>
Finlandí	11	24	49	43	40	33
France	20	35	42	41	37	23
Greece	28	49	48	33	24	18
Ireland	22	38	41	35	37	26
Italy	40	56	47	34	12	10
Luxemburg	32	41	50	44	19	15
Netherlands	24	34	48	42	10	24
Portugal	63	77	21	12	29	11
United Kingdom	29	35	38	37	28	28
Sweden	9	18	51	49	16	33
OCDE average	25	34	46	42	29	24

Source: MEC (Ministry of Education and Culture). Education Indicators. 2005

(5)  
Source: Bulletin CIDE #14, July 2006: "The foreign student body in the Spanish education system (1994-2005). MEC

(6)  
Figures refer to the year 2003 and are the last ones officially published by the MEC (Ministry of Education and Science).

Spain is the second country whose population aged 25 to 34 has more citizens (40%) who have an academic level lower than compulsory secondary education (certificate of success in lower secondary education or lower). This figure has been beaten only by Portugal (63%). Between the country that has least young people (25-34 years old) who have a secondary education certificate or lower, Sweden (9%), and Spain, there is a differential of 31 points and of 54 points with Portugal.

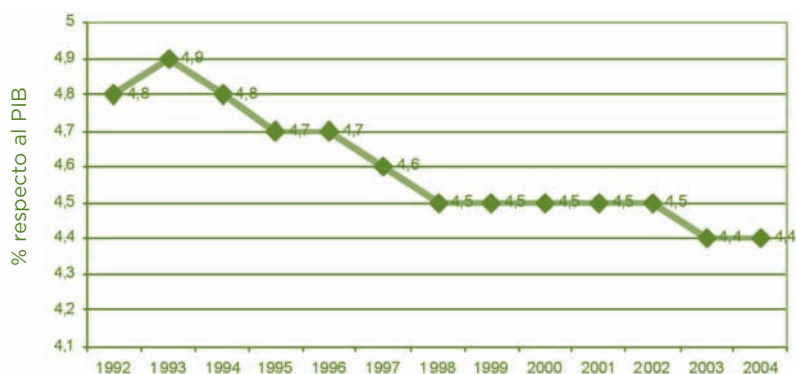
With regard of post-compulsory secondary education (in Spain vocational training, upper secondary or its equivalent) we are in the same place as Portugal. 22% of the people have a certificate. The difference between the country that holds the first place (Austria with 70% of graduates) and Spain is of 48 points. Between the first (Austria) and the last (Portugal with 21%) there is a difference of 49 points.

In relation to university education, Spain holds a better position in comparison to the nearby countries, as the country that has the highest number of graduates is Finland (40%), followed by Spain (38%). The country with the least graduates is the Netherlands (10%).

The figures show that there is no doubt Spain does not have a logical school structure (pyramidal), since the percentage of graduates in university is similar to the one of population that has a secondary education certificate or less than that. The difference between secondary and university education also reflects the lack of technical experts and people with a post-compulsory secondary education certificate, which has consequences in the labour market. The differences in relation to countries such as Germany, Finland or the United Kingdom are obvious and have repercussions for the industry and the labour market in general.

The Spanish results are not indifferent to the investment effort in education that public administrations have made. During the decade 1992-2002 (process of implementation of the LOGSE) the education administrations (7) made irregular and decreasing investments in relation to the GDP. The boost that was given at the beginning of the implementation of the LOGSE was progressively restrained and reduced as you can see in chart 1.

**Figure 1:**  
Development of public  
expenses for education in  
relation to GDP



Source: Educational Indicators 2004. MEC (Ministry of Education and Science)

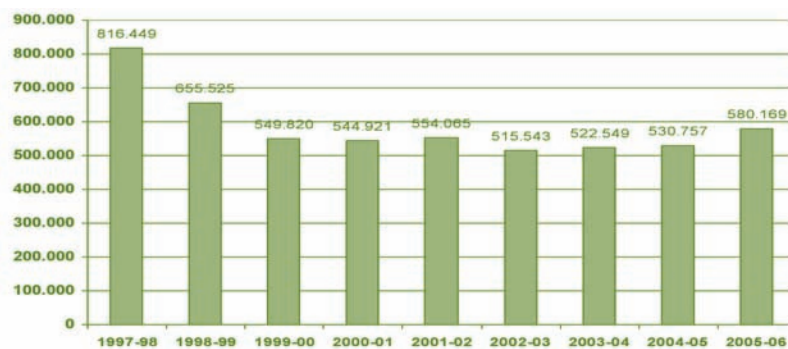
(7)  
1992-1996 governed by PSOE  
(socialists) and 1996-2004 by  
Partido Popular  
(conservatives).

At the same time the LOGSE was introduced in Spain, the country was affected by an economic crisis between 1991 and 1992, and recovery symptoms began to appear at the end of 1995. Recovery process and growth existed until 2001, when on the horizon appeared once again some economic “storm clouds” that, however, did not turn into a new economic crisis.

In 1993 and despite the negative effects of the crisis for the Spanish economy, the highest percentage ever of GDP was invested in education. The economic recovery and its repercussions on the GDP after 1996 did not affect the education, as the GDP percentage invested kept on falling despite the economic growth. The conservative government, opposed to the education system currently in force, had to work on its implementation after 1996. At the same time, they focused their interests on the defence of a new education law that was passed in 2002. The differences between those who had political responsibility of taking care of the implementation of the LOGSE and, at the same time, did not want the education system that was currently in force made it possible to take decisions that were favourable to private/ state assisted/ religious education. On the other hand, public education became less and less popular. Public education started receiving less money; whereas private/state assisted education got more and more money and had more freedom or room for decisions.

We can find prove of this, although it is not the only aspect, through the substantial decrease of grant holders (students who need extra economic support and are in a socially disadvantaged situation). There was a decrease of 41.11% between 1996 and 2004, since in the year 1996-97 (first budget of the *Partido Popular*) there were 887.242 grant holders and in 2003-04 only 552.549 (Chart 2).

**Figure 2:**  
Evolution of the number of trainees in the period 1997-06



Source: MEC (Ministry of Education and Science). Data and figures 2005/06.

The progressive decrease of economic resources allocated to education, the scarce development of rules and the increase of economic agreements with private education institutions has as a consequence that public education does not get the necessary resources (although these had already been reduced) to meet the various demands of pupils by means of different ways foreseen in the norms. For instance, reduce the number of pupils in every classroom, increase the Programmes of Social Security and groups of curriculum diversification, as well as a higher number of teachers who are to assist those students with specific needs, incorporate new professionals to the centres as e.g. social workers, introduce new ways to help disadvantaged students... The weak support of the education administration to pupils and disadvantaged young people left the way

open for them to leave school too early and progressively, because the education system could not meet their needs and requests.

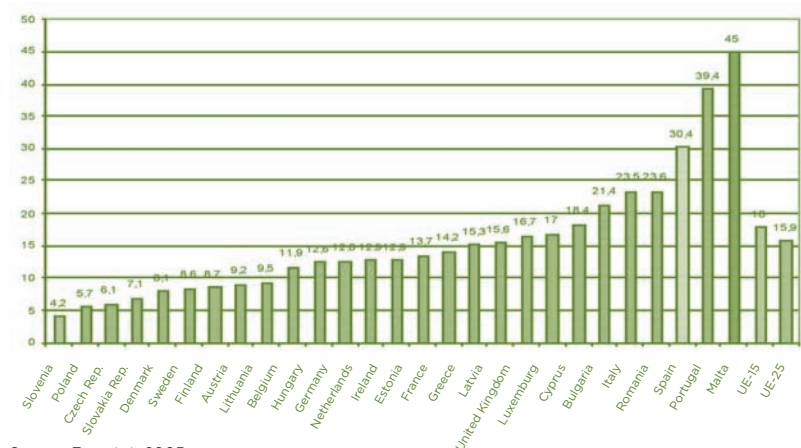
The reports about the Spanish education system carried out by the OCDE (Education at Glance: OCDE indicators), also known as the PISA reports (2000 and 2003), the education indicators of the MEC (ministry of Education and Science) and the ones published by Eurostat reveal that early school leaving and the number of young people who do not get an elementary school certificate (compulsory secondary education) is one of the worst problems of the education system. This problem also weakens the foundations on which the new economy and the knowledge society are based on.

The Spanish society did not really get to know about the first PISA report. The government/authorities did not take corrective measures to put a stop to the negative results and the high dropout rate from school of young people. The negative results the Spanish education system got were used for political interests to justify the need of substituting the LOGSE for a new law (LOCE) without taking extra measures and urgently finding an answer to the new situation. The results the students got in the second PISA study (2003) were hardly any better than the last ones, although the majority of the Spanish society neither meets the requests of the education nor gives an answer to them yet.

Although the early school leaving is not exclusive of the Spanish education system (Lisbon Strategy 2000), it is an alarming fact in European countries, because the high number of young people that drop out from school find it harder to start working and are more likely to be vulnerable or excluded from society. Something that proves this concern is that the representatives of the European governments that got together in Lisbon in 2000 do not want the European average to be higher than 10%.

Spain is the second country in the EU-15 (an average of 18%) that has the highest rate of school dropout (30.4%). Only Portugal has a higher rate (39.4%). The country that has the lowest in the EU-15 is Denmark (8.1%). If we compare Spain with the EU-15 (15.9%), it occupies the third place, after Malta (45%) and Portugal (39.4), whereas Slovenia (4.2%) has the lowest early dropout rate (see Chart 3).

**Figure 3:**  
Early school leaving in the  
UE 2004

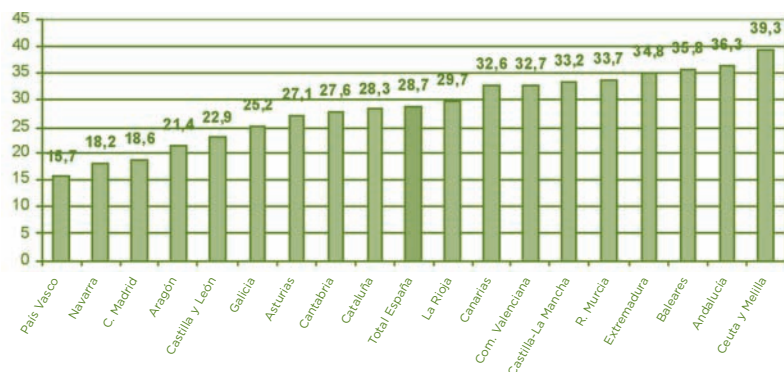


Source: Eurostat. 2005

After five years of the twenty-first century, Spain is the only country whose dropout rate has not decreased, but has even grown.

According to the education indicators (2006) of the Ministry of Education in 2003, the lowest dropout rates are in regions such as the Basque Country (16%), Navarre and Madrid (both of them have 18%), Aragón (21%) and Castilla y León (23%). (Chart 4)

**Figure 4:**  
Early school leaving in  
Spain 2003



Source: MEC. Education indicators. 2006

The highest percentages are in Ceuta and Melilla (39%), Andalucía (36%), Balearic Islands and Extremadura (both of them have 35%). With regard to gender, more males than females drop out early from school in all regions: Males in the Balearic Islands, Ceuta and Melilla (45% and 44% respectively), and females in Ceuta and Melilla and Andalusia (34% and 30% respectively). Both genders present lower rates in the Basque Country, Madrid and Navarra.

It is less usual for females than for males to drop out from school, and it is more usual for children whose parents only have an elementary school certificate to drop out than for those whose parents have a higher level of education. However, it is in secondary education where the dropout rate has increased.

The fact that children can start going to school later than they used to do before, temporary jobs, high rates of unemployed young people, the growing number of immigrants and diversity of pupils in schools, the growing early school leaving rates, academic failure, rejection of the education system of a high number of young people... require that the education system applies specific measures in order to help pupils to overcome situations of disadvantage during their school time and prepare them for their working life.

In the new Spanish social reality some important concepts appear, such as the disappointment of young people with the education system, boredom, lack of motivation, eagerness to leave school as soon as possible and start to work. Young people do not want to realize (sometimes just do not want to accept) neither the sense and the importance of the education for their future working life nor the importance of getting a certificate.



### 3. Work: integration or disadvantage factor?

Work has traditionally been considered as the most important factor for the social integration of young people. The transition of young people to work reveals the knowledge, the social capital and the know-how and social skills they have acquired during their school time. Although in Spain it is not absolutely necessary for low qualified workers to have a certificate, the shortage of jobs makes the requisites to get one as well as to preserve it more demanding. It is generally known that those who do not get a job have fewer possibilities to enjoy goods and services. This situation can be improved thanks to the social policies the state carries out with unemployment subsidies, promotion of the education or various ways to offer social protection.

Labour insertion is closely associated to the qualification young people receive at school. That is why early school leaving and/or the low level of education some young people have contributes to have a more precarious transition to work. When young people leave school they have to choose between having a job that is most of the time temporary or precarious, being unemployed or trying to improve their qualification in a vocational training centre, occupational houses, Social Guarantee Programmes, going to an adult school, doing an occupational training, taking different courses... all of them supported by the Public Employment Services and developed out of the schools.

Young people leave school with very different backgrounds depending on the family or institutional support they have received. They try to find their way in a labour market that is aggressive, as it offers them temporary jobs and precariousness and insecurity in both, their present and future life.

Spain's unemployment rates have decreased during the last decade although young people, the immigrant community, females, ethnic minorities and "disadvantaged and vulnerable people" are still the most affected ones.

Table 4. **Evolution of unemployment rates, sorted by age**

	1992	1996	2000	2003	2004	2005
16 to 19 years old	42,6	52,2	33,6	30,9	29,08	27,70
20 to 24 years old	36,2	38,2	23,4	30,9	19,46	16,15
25 to 54 years old	17,2	19	11,9	10,1	9,46	7,67
Over 55 years old	9,4	11	8,5	6,4	6,68	5,54
<b>Total</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>21,7%</b>	<b>13,4%</b>	<b>11,2%</b>	<b>10,56</b>	<b>8,70</b>

Source: INE (National Institute of Statistics). Labour Force Survey and Ministry of Work and Social Affairs.

If in 1992 we had an unemployment rate of 20%, this same rate has been lowered to 8.70%. The unemployment has decreased in all age groups, but the most affected ones are still young people aged 16 to 24. The unemployment rates do not affect males the same way they affect females, as the percentage of unemployed young females doubles the one of males. The female unemployment rate, that was 27.3% in 1992, was 12.2% in 2005, whereas males' unemployment rate, that was 37.9%, reached 7% in 2005.

As we can see in table number 5, unemployment affects to a lesser extent young workers who have higher education, whereas those young people who have a level of education lower than that (illiterates, primary education or first years of secondary school) are the most affected ones.

Table 5. **Unemployment rates: young people and level of education. 2005**

	<b>Total unemployed people</b>	<b>16 to 19 years old</b>	<b>20 to 24 years old</b>	<b>25 to 29 years old</b>
Total	9,16	29,15	17,04	11,18
Illiterates	21,67	68,38	32,2	22,15
Primary education	10,51	34,61	18,84	15,51
Lower secondary education, training and labour insertion	11,14	28,79	17,54	12,04
Upper secondary education, training and labour insertion	8,79	25,06	16,02	9,78
Training and labour insertion with secondary education certificate	7,12	16,16	11,35	7,7
Higher education, except PhD	6,86	18,2	17,07	10,82

Source: INE (National Institute of Statistics), Labour Force Survey, IV 2005

If we take a look at how unemployment generally behaves, considering the level of education of the unemployed population, we can see the rates are lower in the case of those people who have higher education levels. That is why the unemployment rate of those with an elementary education level is 43.58%, whereas the rate of those with a higher education levels is 6.86%.

The level of education young people achieve affects the time it takes them to find their first job. The study carried out by the union *Comisiones Obreras* “*Young people and Unemployment*” (2003) confirms that the higher the level of education, the fewer months it takes to find a job.

The number of months someone who has only gone to primary school needs to find a job (40.6 months) is almost the double of the months someone who has a higher education needs (22.9 months). However, the Youth Report Spain 2004 (INJUVE) reduces the waiting time until finding a job. According to this study, unemployed young people go through 10 months of waiting on average, and only 8.6 months when considering young males and 11 months when considering females. Young people who are older than others or those who do not have a high education level are more likely to be unemployed for a longer time. Young people who only have gone to secondary education need 11.1 months to find a job and those with a university degree only 6.5.

Table 6. Duration of unemployment, sorted by age group and level of education

	Total	Level of education			
		Primary Education	Lower secondary E.	Upper secondary E.	Higher Education
Base (N= )	(491)	(28)	(231)	(130)	(98)
Less than 1 month	2,3	4,0	1,4	2,3	4,1
1 to 2 month	22,3	29,3	22,8	21,1	20,6
3 to 5 month	15,6	14,0	13,8	22,0	12,1
6 to 11 month	16,1	14,8	15,2	11,1	23,8
12 to 24 month	16,8	7,4	19,3	16,3	14,8
Over 24 month	6,5	12,3	7,2	8,3	1,0
Not answering	20,4	18,3	20,2	18,8	23,6
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Average (nº of months)	10,0	10,7	11,1	10,6	6,5

Source: Youth Report Spain 2004. Leaving unemployment and ability to choose / opportunities depending on level of education, p. 266

According to the *Youth Report Spain 2004* the great majority of young people who have not finished primary education would accept any job, whereas only 8.7% of those with a university degree would accept any job.

One of the things that also affects young people in the field of work and makes them more vulnerable are temporary contracts the labour market offers them. From 1998 to 2005 the rate of temporary work has always been higher in the case of females than in the case of males and, moreover, it has always been higher than 30%. In 2005, this rate has reached 33.3%. Considering the gender, it has affected 31.7% of males and 35.7% of females. (INE:EPA (Labour Force Survey): 2006). During this period (1998-2005), the rate of temporary work has only been reduced a 0.5%.

The law 63/1997 gave tax privileges to both private and public institutions that hired young people indefinitely. However, during the period 1998-2005 there has been a decrease (-1.9%) in the number of indefinite contracts in private institutions, whereas there has been an increase of 6.8% in the number of indefinite contracts in public institutions. The figures by the end of 2005 are 35.2% in the private sector and 25.1% in the public sector.

Temporary work affects groups of all ages, regions and economic sectors, but it is especially concentrated on young people aged 16 to 19. Between the years 1998/2004, people of this age have experienced an increase of the rate of temporary work of 56.23 points, whereas the age group of 20-29 has experienced a decrease.

Table 7. Development of the temporality rate depending on age and sector

	Age				Private		Public		
	16-19	20-24	25-29	< 30	> 30	< 30	> 30	< 30	> 30
1998	26,34	69,78	47,93	59,20	21,91	59,68	25,24	54,54	12,83
2004	82,57	62,12	44,42	53,24	24,22	52,13	26,57	64,22	16,32
Dif/	+56,23	-7,66	-3,51	-5,96	+2,31	-7,55	+1,33	+9,68	+3,49

Source: INE. EPA. Elaborated by UGT. Page 10 (The Achilles heel in the Spanish work market. UGT. Madrid. 29th of April 2005)

The labour market also has a very high accident rate, which positions Spain among the highest rates in the EU-15. According to the figures of the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, in 2005 890.872 people suffered an accident while being at work and 935 lost their lives. This means there has been an increase of 19.148 accidents and a decrease of the deadly accidents by 21.

Table 8. **Accidents during work sorted by type of contract. 2005**

	Total accidents		Deadly accidents		
	2004	2005	2004	2005	
<b>TOTAL</b>		871.724	890.872	968	935
Indefinite contracts		410.489	418.708	506	463
Temporal contracts		459.013	470.792	455	468
Not classified		2.222	1.372	7	4

Source: MTAS (Ministry of Work and Social Affairs). INEM (National Institute of Employment). Annual Statistics 2005.

Depending on the type of work contract, workers who are hired temporarily suffer more accidents, some of which are deadly (see table 8). Proliferation of subcontracting, scarce tradition of protecting measures in work, little preventive education of workers and young people and not exhaustive inspections are some of the causes.

#### 4. Some answers for disadvantaged young people by public services

All kinds of social disadvantages are concentrated in the education system as education faces numerous demands and contradictions by the people who take part in it. The education system neither has the resources nor the possibility to solve the disadvantages, not even partially, as they need a more comprehensive policy promoted by different institutions.

The education system meets the needs of the student body with what is called “attention to diversity”. The new regulating law of non-university education (LOE, 2006) promotes more measures. Thanks to that, education needs of students can be met. Among these measures we would like to mention: the education support for young people who have psychic/ physical problems or have a lower education level than the one they should have in theory, curriculum adaptation or diversification, development of programmes for initial professional qualification. These programmes substitute Social Guarantee Programmes of the LOGSE and will promote and make guidance and counselling of students that want to integrate into the labour market easier. Social Guarantee Programmes are widely accepted by students and have proved to be an effective measure to prevent and/or decrease early school leaving. In 2005, 44.883 participated in measures in educational centres.

Public institutions such as the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, local corporations or the private initiatives through non-profit NGO’s have also given legislative, training and welfare answers addressed to disadvantaged young people. We are now going to present two initiatives that we consider have quite satisfied young people’s needs: the first of them is on

a national level and run by the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, “Workshop schools and Trade workshops”, the second one is on a local level, we are talking about the attempt of Sagunto to reduce absenteeism during compulsory education.

a) “Workshop schools and Trade workshops”.

The programme of **Workshop schools and Trade workshops** is part of the active employment policy promoted by the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs and is defined as a dual system of training-employment. The difference between both of them is the length of the programme: Workshop schools last two years and Trade workshops one year.

These projects were born in 1985 and pursued three objectives: reconstruct monuments, rescue old jobs from the past, train young people for a later labour insertion, promote the social integration of young people, promote employability by creating strategies to seek a job by oneself and also promote business culture to promote self-employment. After two years of testing, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs approved these projects on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March of 1988.

The labour situation in which these programmes were developed needed a higher personal qualification of many young people who had dropped out of school and either had no working experience or had difficulties to start working.

These projects have a first stage (8) of theory training and another one of training and work together. During the first stage students get an occupational vocational training and some money as a grant, whose quantity has varied along the years. During the second stage (9) the “working pupils” complete their training with working practice and are hired with a contract of training.

The pupils taking these courses are selected by the Public Employment Service (10) and the promoting company. The minimum requisites that are required are the following:

- To be at least 16 years old but not older than 25.
- To be unemployed and registered at the Public Employment Service (11) of any region.
- To fulfil the requisites required for a training contract.

To belong to a group that has insertion difficulties, such as females, disabled people, someone who is getting unemployment benefits or has been unemployed for a long time.

The number of young people participating in the courses during the last decade was 469.660, distributed among those who have taken the courses; the number of programmes has been 12.847, as we can see in the following table:

(8)  
During the first stage they have a work contract of six months.

(9)  
During the second stage they have a training contract of 6-18 months and daily perceive 75% of the minimum wage

(10)  
The transfers to the regions started in 1997 and were first carried out in Catalonia and Galicia the 1st of January 1998.

(11)  
The transfers to the regions started in 1997 and were first carried out in Catalonia and Galicia the 1st of January 1998

Table 9. **Number of projects per year (12)**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Workshop schools</b>	949	941	1.043	1.021	1.106	973	971	907	788	873
<b>Trade workshops</b>	450	347	468	458	374	356	288	194	181	159
<b>Number of participants</b>										
<b>Pupils in Workshop schools</b>	39.883	40.143	44.636	42.909	44.868	36.888	36.404	32.350	27.220	27.481
<b>Pupils in Trade workshops</b>	13.544	10.336	15.814	15.211	10.214	9.436	7.345	7.065	4.357	3.556

Source: INEM (National Institute of Employment), 2006

To attend Workshop schools and Trade workshops no academic certificate is required. However, when finishing the programme, participants receive a certificate in which you can see which course you have taken, how many hours of theory-practice and training you have received and a basic education certificate of the Ministry of Education and Culture for those who do not have it.

The expenses of the whole project (salary of the technical staff, national health service, insurance for accidents, material, grants...) are subsidized by the Public Employment Service and the promoting company. After May 2004, salary expenses of pupils were co-subsidized with European funds, with the same percentage as training expenses: for Objective I regions 65% and for other regions 40%. In 2005, 494.91 millions of euros were spent. (Table 10)

Table 10. **Total expenditure by year (in millions of euros)**

Years	Millions of euros	Years	Millions of euros
1996	250,55	2001	452,90
1997	271,28	2002	472,89
1998	314,51	2003	475,72
1999	353,62	2004	493,76
2000	411,38	2005	494,91

Source: INEM (National Institute of Employment)

The INEM (National Institute of Employment), the employment services, or the regions are responsible for the evaluation of these programmes. The labour insertion of young people is evaluated six and twelve months after the programmes have finished. After 1997, this evaluation system was completed by having the participants filling out some questionnaires. The results are highly satisfactory in relation to labour insertion, as in 2003 it reached 76.84%. (Table 11)

Table 11. **Labour insertion rates sorted by year and gender**

Year	Males	Females	Total
1996	65,85	44,18	58,84
1997	73,89	51,28	66,71
1998	75,95	57,56	69,73
1999	78,63	56,43	69,38
2000	83,04	66,50	76,96
2001	82,49	67,90	77,19
2002	81,75	67,16	76,61
2003	82,43	67,20	76,84

Source: INEM (National Institute of Employment), 2006

(12)  
Statistics do not include information about Catalonia (with management transferred since the 1st of January 1998), due to lack of available data.

Promoting employment with Workshop schools and Trade workshops has led to highly satisfying results. A proof for that is that, during 2005, 1.032 projects that needed an investment of 494.91 millions of euro were carried out. The number of participants was 31.037 people in 2003, and 82.43% found a job.

#### **b) Intervention programme against municipal school absenteeism (13) in Sagunto (14).**

In Spain, there are a lot of initiatives on a local basis that try to favour school and social integration of pupils. To reach the objective they focus on certain activities: reduce school absenteeism (masked or intermittent), school failure and early school leaving, through the application of measures that favour integration of pupils and collective intervention of parents, children, teachers and public services.

The Programme against municipal school absenteeism (15) of the town of Sagunto (60.000 inhabitants) aims to reduce the absenteeism from school, especially during secondary education. It is being carried out in six public centres of secondary education and aims to offer actions to prevent, detect and reduce the absenteeism from school by focusing on the four main causes of the absenteeism: the child himself, the family, the school and the social environment.

(13)  
Absenteeism can be understood as "the sporadic, frequent or total, and not justified absence of a minor who is registered in school and has to attend classes because of age reasons. This absence might be of his/her own free will or his parent's due to family conflicts and/or socio-economic and cultural imbalance deriving from typical differences within the education system when it is about handling intercultural students, due to not applying compensatory measures, or to the lack of institutional involvement to motivate in a positive way. All this could entail negative effects in the children's socialization process.

(14)  
Information in [www.sagunto.es](http://www.sagunto.es)

(15)  
Some concepts similar to the one of absenteeism could be "lack of schooling" or even "early school leaving". It is understood that in a lack-of-schooling situation the minor is not in a school community and an administrative record of registration in an educational centre does not exist, whereas by "desertion or early school leaving" we understand that although the minor is registered in school, he stops going to class for periods of different duration or definitely.

The programme is based on the Bill of Children's Rights passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1959, on the Spanish Constitution of 1978 (article 27 and 39), on the statute of autonomy of the Valencia Community (1982) and on the law of local regime (April, 1985), which in its article number 25 offers the local government the possibility to:

*"...Participate in the organization of the education and cooperate with the education administration in the creation, construction and support of public educational centres as well as to take part in their management and the monitoring of compulsory education..."*

This programme has been created for students of compulsory secondary education who do not go to their education centres, minors with behaviour problems and difficulty to adapt to school, those who run the risk of dropping out from school, minors who are no longer provided schooling and those who have left school too early.

Not going to school very often hinders that the student has a normal education process. If this absence is very long, it could even prevent him from having the necessary education for his personal and professional development and, as a result of that, end up being in a socially disadvantaged situation.

Absenteeism from school is a consequence of many and variable circumstances. Even if we seek to define the causes they all interact and feedback with each other. That is why both, a global and interdisciplinary action is needed in the different fields where the causes arise, as well as the coordination of different professionals who are involved in the programme.

All the actions they carry out are focused on the young people who do not go to school. They are individually dealt with, by specific workers of the programme (social workers and educators). Teachers, family and municipal social services collaborate, too. The coordination, design of strategies, taking them into practice and the evaluation of the progress needs everybody's participation. The dropout of the project of any of the actors makes its failure very likely.

This project has found a high degree of acceptance due to the fact that the methodology they use has very effectively reduced the absenteeism from school.

Every single intervention needs a concrete and personalized plan to be designed. Everybody takes part in its elaboration, development and evaluation.

The personalized plan for every student who does not go to school includes an *educational intervention*. Improving education, orientation and guidance to promote a change in the attitude of the child towards school reality is one of the main objectives. An effective intervention also requires that the personalized plan of every child consider the causes of absenteeism as a previous step to the interdisciplinary establishment of the needed protocols.

The self-assessment the members of the programme regularly carry out has to be done in addition to an external evaluation of the development of the programme, with quantitative and qualitative analysis, to confirm and consolidate the changes in order to ease this disadvantaged situation.

After the experience during the school years 2002/03-2004/05 in which the programme was established/introduced the demand of public centres has increased, as the results have been positive. During the three school years (2002-2005), 6% of the pupils (5.701 students) have been helped and 346.584 € have been invested.

Regarding the results, the need of individual attention, the combination of ordinary schooling and specific treatment, as well as regulated and non-regulated education, with the creation of adapted ordinary education centres during, before and after school time is to be emphasized. It is also necessary to promote and develop quantitative and qualitative curriculum adaptations, design training and education itineraries based on a theoretical and appropriate learning and practical experience.

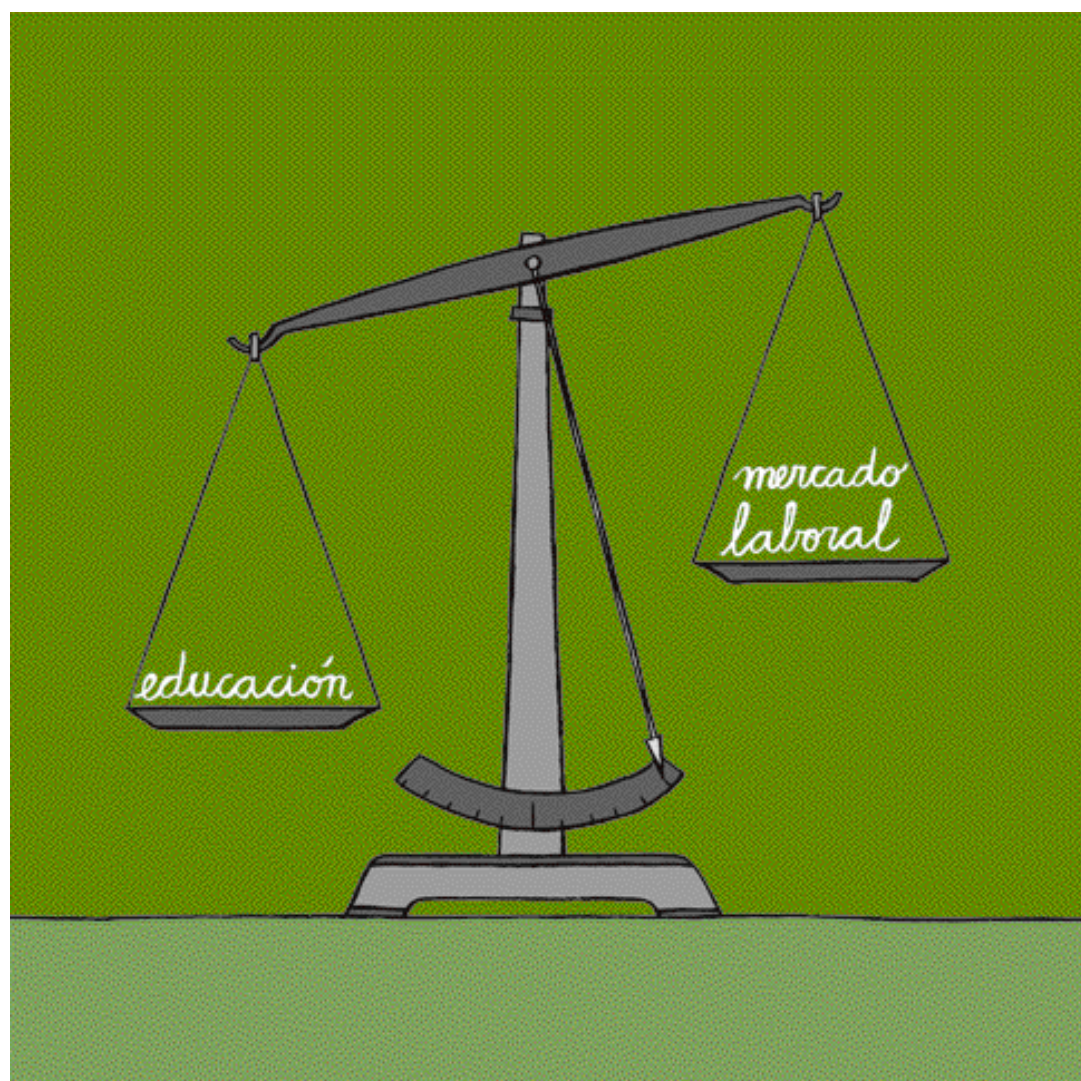


## SUMMARY "GOOD PRACTICES"

	"Workshop schools and Trade workshops"	Intervention programme against school absenteeism
Framework	Courses for the promotion of employment of young people in the framework of occupational training.	Local intervention programmes to control and decrease early school absenteeism.
Action field of policy	Labour policies	Education, equality and social integration policies on a local level.
Participants/funding	2003: 39.415 pupils 2004: 31.577 pupils 2005: 31.037 pupils	2003: 103 pupils 2004: 124 pupils 2005: 108 pupils
Funding	2003: 475,72 millions of € 2004: 493,76 millions of € 2005: 494,91 millions of €	2002-2005: 346.584€
Pilot or long-term	Long-term	Medium and short-term
Where?	National level	Local level
Main objectives	Projects to promote employability, social integration, social insertion and maintenance of monuments.	Offer alternatives to prevent, detect and decrease school absenteeism. Intervention on the causes of absenteeism and early school leaving.
Target group	Young people between 16 and 25 years old that have left the education system and are not successful in seeking a job or belong to groups with special difficulties.	Young people between 12 and 18 years old in a school in town, the family and the social environment.
Main activities	Vocational training, counselling, development of abilities and knowledge to seek a job, promotion of self-employment.	Control, detect, counselling and design of measures for personalized intervention in the context of young people, family and education centres.
Main actors	Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, Public Employment Service (INEM and regions) promoting entities and NGO's.	Education centres, social services, family, companies.
People related to the programmes	Pupils and clients, teachers, professionals, workers of promoting entities.	Pupils, families, teachers, experts, local government representatives and certain persons of the social environment.
Main activities	Theoretical and practical training, counselling, monitoring, evaluation and administrative tasks	Support and counselling for young people that do not go to school, with behavioural problems, risk of social marginalization, labour and educational guidance.
Length of the project.	Programmes have duration of 12 to 24 months. They do not allow participants to participate in other programmes.	Programmes are carried out during the academic course, although some young people require monitoring during the whole or various years.
Acquired abilities	Theoretical training, practical training and acquisition of knowledge about computers (computing teaching: 30 hours).	Self-confidence, assessment of the importance of academic training
Future plans	Continue and extend the programmes.	Continue and extend the programmes.

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## Early school leaving in Finland – a problem solved?

Finland belongs in a European perspective to the countries that have low early school leaving, with over 90% of young people obtaining post-compulsory qualifications. Still, Finland belongs to the countries with high youth unemployment rates. The unemployment rate of 20% is 4% higher than that of other EU countries and 10% higher than among the average OECD country. Finland has reduced an already low rate of early school leaving by modernising vocational training, improving access to these and intensifying counselling and co-operation between and within schools. However, early school leaving remains a problem for more vulnerable groups and particularly in the metropolitan area. Practices for preventing dropout from school are being developed and the focus is on individual plans and on intensifying collaboration inside the school and between different sectors in the community.

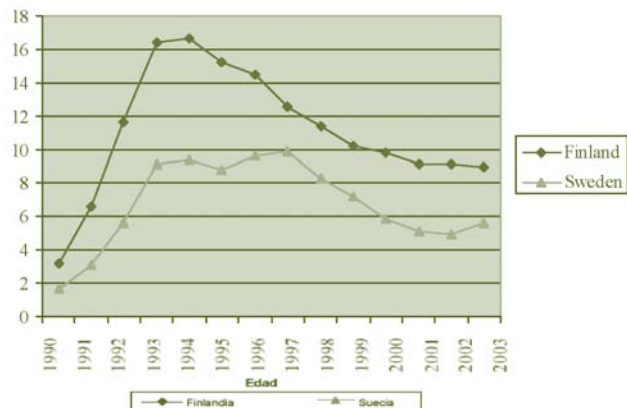
**Key words:** early school leaving, unemployment, disadvantaged groups, individual orientation plans

### 1. Introduction to early school leaving in the Finnish context

#### 1.1 The development of youth unemployment

After a period of strong economic growth, Finland experienced a sharp economic downturn in the beginning of the 1990s, with rapidly rising unemployment rates. The change in Finland was dramatic, as unemployment increased from 3% in 1990 to 17% in 1994. Even if the peak was reached in 1994, unemployment has remained high compared to the situation of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Despite a small decrease in recent years, unemployment is still substantially higher (see Figure 1) than in the other Scandinavian countries and equal to the average level of unemployment in OECD countries (OECD 2004). The situation among young people has been even more difficult and in 2003 youth unemployment was still 22%, although it has decreased from the peak in 1994, when it was 31% (Malmberg-Heimonen 2005).

**Figure 1:** Unemployment in Finland and Sweden (15–64), 1990–2003 (OECD 2004)



In 2004 the overall unemployment rate was 8.1% (Statistics Finland 2004). The unemployment rate among young women is higher than among men, but long-term unemployment is more usual among men. Youth unemployment in Finland is more than the double, as high as 20.7% in 2004. Even though the unemployment rate is higher among youth, the long-term unemployment rate is lower. Youth unemployment is 80% comprised of "newcomers", which means that breaking into the labour market is the main problem. In Finland in the 1990s, youth unemployment rose at a higher rate than was average across the EU countries, the OECD countries or Nordic Countries. It has remained at a high level since. The unemployment rate of 20% is 4% higher than that of other EU countries and 10% higher than among the average OECD country. However, long-term unemployment among the youth is, at 11%, lower than the average across Europe.

Young people enter the labour market relatively late in Finland. This is due to delays in beginning studies and to long study times (National Action Plan 2005). The increase in education standards has confirmed the assimilation between the educational degree and labour-market opportunities. During the 1990s and onwards it has been almost impossible to get a job without some sort of education certificate. Gradually we have arrived at a situation where education has become almost inescapable, but it is still, however, not sufficient for what is needed for entry into the labour market (e.g. the need for work experience) – especially among youth. Vanttaja & Järvinen (2004) explain this by means of job competition theory. Firstly, the certificate is a signal of the educability of the individual: the capability to learn new things and information. Secondly, the more of an education the job seeker has, the less the employer needs to educate at their own expense.

Regional differences of health and well-being have always been significant in Finland. The gap is the widest between sparsely-populated areas and urban centres. However studies have found out that young people do not reflect the same area-related urban-rural differences that appear among adult population. Even though children grow up in very different circumstances the school-system prevents exclusion and health disparities among the young, at least to same extent (Paju 2004). Today the unemployment rate in some regions of northern and eastern Finland is more than three times higher than that of growth regions. The regional disparities among youth unemployment (15-24) is almost the same as the overall unemployment.

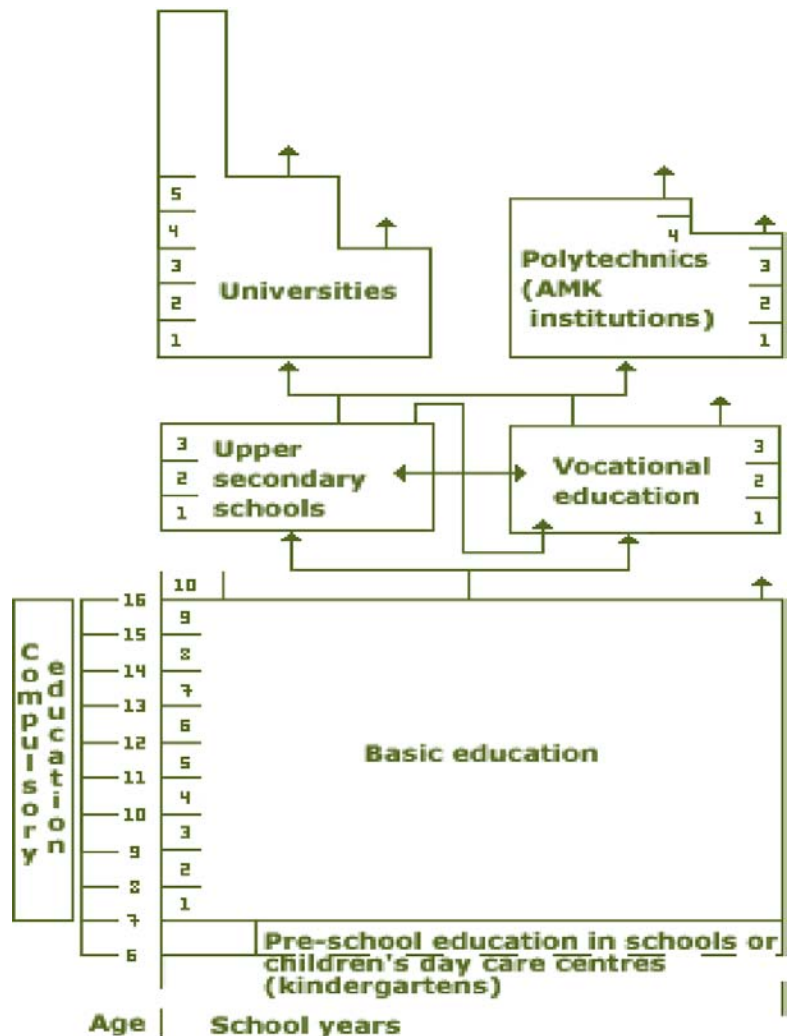
## **1.2. The early school leaving situation - some background indicators**

In a European perspective Finland belongs to the countries that have low early school leaving, with over 90% of young people obtaining post-compulsory qualifications. Finland also has a comprehensive school system, training is mainly based in schools but linked to the labour market and there is only a weak effect from parent's low educational level.

The comprehensive school is a nine-year system providing education for all children of compulsory school age. Every Finnish citizen is required to complete this education. Comprehensive school ends once a young person has completed the curriculum of the comprehensive school or when ten years have passed since the start of their compulsory education. Post-

comprehensive school education is given by general upper secondary schools and vocational schools. The upper secondary schools offer a three-year general education curriculum, at the end of which the pupil takes the national matriculation examination, which is the general eligibility criterion for higher education. The Finnish higher education system is made up of two parallel sectors: universities and polytechnics. The universities rely on the connection between research and teaching. Their basic purpose is to perform scientific research and to provide higher education connected with it. Students at universities may take a lower (Bachelor's) or higher (Master's) academic degree and also academic further education, consisting of licentiate and doctoral degree. Universities also arrange further education and open-university teaching. The polytechnics are usually regional higher education institutions which provide instruction in subjects from several sectors, and which emphasize a connection with working life. The degrees they provide are higher education degrees with a professional emphasis.

**Figure 2:** The Education System of Finland





In Finland in 2004, 10% of 16-year-olds did not continue with their education. In 1995 the school leaving rate was at its highest, at over 15%. In practice almost everyone finishes compulsory education in Finland, with only about one hundred per year leave before getting the exam. In post-compulsory education some will already leave school in the beginning of the program and some later. About 7–8% does not continue directly after the compulsory education to post-compulsory. The drop-out rate has fallen in both secondary vocational training and at polytechnics.

About 12 per cent of students drop out of secondary vocational education and 7 per cent from polytechnics every year. The drop out rate is lower at upper secondary school and universities. Some of the dropouts go directly to studies in other fields, while some find work and continue their studies at a later date. (National Action Plan 2005).

Low early school leaving correlates with the comprehensive school systems, training is largely school based but also has relevant practical elements taking place in companies; links to the labour market are close or at least becoming closer. Social inequality is relatively low while the connection between the education of the parents and that of the children is less strong compared to other countries. Katja Komonen (2001), one of the foremost researchers on school leavers in Finland, emphasises that dropping out from school has often been seen as being related to educational or social exclusion, or exclusion from the labour market. However it needs to be emphasized that dropping out of post-compulsory education doesn't always mean dropping out from all kinds of education; usually it means a change of path. In fact only a small group of the school leavers will be the real risk group. Many change education, get pregnant, serve in the military etc.

In terms of early school leaving, the problem is greater in the metropolitan areas where new forms of multiple disadvantages are found. The metropolitan areas have typically exhibited problems in collaboration between different sectors and a lack of functional mainstream systems. There also seems to be a tendency to exclude more problematic groups from schools, even though the official aim is to integrate everyone into mainstream schools. Cuts in the welfare system have led to a lack of resources in the education system (e.g. educational support) and excessive class sizes.

Vanttaja & Järvinen (2004) have studied whether dropout from education and work, in the age range of 16–18, is related to future education, socio-economic position, income level, and family life. Their study showed that the connections between family background and dropping out are clear. The young dropouts were mostly from low-income families, less educated, and - from a labour-market perspective - in a weaker position than the population on average. The risk of drop out of children born to higher educated people seems to be much lower. It has also been shown that home and social backgrounds affect on the choice of later careers.

Likewise, gender also has an influence on later career paths. The differences between women and men appear to be very clear after upper secondary schooling, both in terms of the labour-market situation and salary incomes.

Women more often continue their studies after the upper secondary school but men usually get obtain a "higher" position and receive a higher salary further down the career path. Exclusion risks are also more prevalent among men than women (National Action Plan 2005).

### **What are the key problems in transition from school to work?**

In general, dropping out of further education in Finland is not a big problem; it is far more typical of students with special needs (e.g. behavioural problems). Nevertheless, the drop out phenomena and exclusion from the school system is problematic both from the individual and the social perspective (Veijola 2003).

Finland is well-known for the high level of education among the population and the quality of basic education. Finnish students have a good standard of knowledge when you look at the results from the PISA-research. For instance, Finnish 15-years-olds had the best scores in the OECD for reading; as well Finns top level scores in mathematics and science. Geographical differences in performance were relatively small. Differences according to socio-economic background were found, although these were not as marked as in other countries. This is in large part due to a comprehensive and equal school and daycare system, but also to the high qualifications of teachers. According to a recent evaluation (Koulutuksen arviointineuvoston julkaisu 2005) the equality in basic education has strengthened and differences among schools have diminished. Basic education offers the majority a safe learning environment and working conditions are generally good. However, research from the late 1990s claims that the youth in Finland enjoy school less than in other Nordic Countries or in the United States. WHO research from 2004 has paid attention to the negative attitudes among Finnish young 11-15-year-olds compared to other countries (Järvinen & Vantaja 2004).

Gender differences are evident. The modern school favours girls to some extent and there is a need for different learning methods particularly in regard to boys. There are also criticisms of the compulsory school because it does not sufficiently support young people who have special needs or who need special education or some extra counselling. The transitional stages, such as at the end of the compulsory school, are very critical and there is still a lack of emphasis during these phases.

Young people enter the labour market relatively late in Finland. This is due to delays in beginning studies and to long study times (Finland's National Action Plan 2005). The increase in education standards has confirmed the assimilation between the educational degree and labour-market opportunities. Young people face still enormous problems in entering the labour market. A lack of working experiences makes it harder to find a job. In the labour market during the past 15 years, fixed term contracts have become much more common among young people than among the rest of the population. This is especially a problem among women (Järvinen & Vantaja 2004, Nyssölä 2002). In a European perspective Finnish young people aged 18-24 more often work in a non-standard job (Harslöf 2003). The rate of self-employment among 15-24-year-olds is very low (under 2%).



Research points out many of the young people today are satisfied to work part-time for many reasons, such as studying, taking care of children or not wanting a full-time job. According to the study of Järvinen and Vanttaja (2004), quite few work part-time because of the lack of availability of full-time work. At the same time as atypical work can give young people the opportunity of different work experience, there are also several problems with this type of employment, including low pay, non-existent unemployment benefits or health insurance, and dangerous working conditions. These types of employment can be a step towards social exclusion and labour force marginalisation (Hammer 2003). This has been further corroborated in another recent study (Moisio 2005).

Financial problems and poverty are strongly related to unemployment. Only around 25% of the young unemployed receive income-related unemployment benefits. The biggest problem is precarious careers (e.g. fixed-term contracts and part-time work). According to Moisio (2005), poverty among children has grown during the last ten years. This is related to the economic recession and the young age group who entered the labour market in the 1990s. A total of 12% of children is regarded as living in poverty and their proportion has grown more than among the adult population.

Young people can fall off the administrative landscape and are not registered as unemployed or/and do not start any further education. There has been a growing awareness of this hidden unemployment particularly among the young age groups, though there have been no definitive statistical evidence of this phenomenon.

### **Preventing youth unemployment and early school leaving in Finland**

#### **A) Labour market policies**

The last decade has been a period of special labour and social measures for young people in Finland. Extensive labour market reforms were carried out in late 1990s and early 2000s. It was argued that present labour-market policy increased passivity among unemployed workers, employment offices dealt only with a small percentage of the workplaces available. A new emphasis was made on individual activation plans, follow-up interviews with unemployed, job search programmes and increased conditionality regarding the receipt of unemployment benefits.

Activation is seen as another form a way to prevent the exclusion of youth (Veijola 2003). Counselling and guidance are part of the public service for unemployed young people. This includes vocational and personal guidance, which involves drawing up of educational and employment plans. Individual action plans are also emphasised in the active rehabilitative work. The unemployed person and the authority will together review the work/education history and then concentrate on the actual current situation. It results in a plan or an agreement with agreement on the aim and actions towards increasing employability. One new aspect with the Act of Rehabilitative Work (2001) is that the unemployed are obliged to participate in an individual service process, not only simply an education- or job-offer as has been the case (Ala-Kauhaluoma et al. 2004). The Act is part of an active social policy reform in which the right to a minimum security is linked more

closely to work. A structural reform of the public employment service was also carried out: the services and resources of those who are most difficult to employ are collected to the new labour force service centres. At the same time, the service models of the employment offices are developed in order to solve the problems regarding the matching and availability of labour, and to organize better employer and jobseeker services.

**Figure 3:** The structural reform of public employment services



Further measures in order to decrease the overall structural unemployment, especially long-term unemployment and youth unemployment, were introduced as part of the Employment Programme launched by the Government for the period 2003–2007. The programme agreed an educational and social guarantee for young people. According to the guarantee, every unemployed young person is offered a training/trainee work or a workshop place after 3-months of job seeking. The measures provided should focus on individual job-seeking plans. The target of the Ministry of Labour for 2006 is that individual job-seeking plans are being made for 90% of the young unemployed before the 3-month point of unemployment. In 2003, the respective rate was only 13%. The Government has decided to allocate EUR 50 million for the activation of the young unemployed in the context of the State budget for 2006.

#### B) Education system policies

In relation to early school leaving, Finland has met the overall EU target for 2010, although the male rate remains below it. Finland has reduced an already low rate of early school leaving by modernising vocational training, improving access to these and intensifying counselling and co-operation between and within schools. Furthermore, there has been a focus on intensifying local and regional co-operation and increasing collaboration between administrative bodies. The reduction of school drop-outs has been accelerated as the educational institutions have changed over to performance-based financing in vocational education (Finnish National Action Plan against Poverty and Exclusion 2005)

Currently school leaving is high on the political agenda and there are

different plans on intensifying special support systems in school. The political target is that at least 96% of those leaving comprehensive school in 2008 will begin general upper secondary school, vocational education and training, or voluntary additional basic education during the same year (education guarantee). The figure for 2003 was 94.5%. Measures include increasing remedial teaching, special needs education, guidance counselling and pupil/student welfare services, developing immigrant education and training and realising the education and training guarantee.

There are, however, no comprehensive national policies for practice against early school leaving. Various projects have been tried out and developed during recent years. They are funded either by the European Social Fund (ESF) and/or administrated by the National Board of Education. Their aim is to prevent early school leaving and search for practices that give best results and could therefore become permanent.

The school supports the students in formal learning in many ways. Special education, remedial education, student counselling and student care is provided. However, according to the recent evaluation of basic education (cf. Koulutuksen arviointineuvoston julkaisu 2005) the need for special education is much greater than the schools have been able to offer. During the period 1997–2004 the number of pupils in special education has doubled. In 2004, altogether 7% of children were in special education, of which 69% were boys. Part-time special education was received by 21% of pupils and remedial education by 15%. There is also a need for more non-formal learning, where practice is more integrated and this concerns particularly boys.

Workshop activities to reduce early school leaving have been very successful. The workshops are cross-sectoral activities, which at their best also cover the grey zones, those areas that fall between administrative sectors. They make use of the special expertise of each sector—youth, education, social affairs and labour—combining them in a new way for the good of the client.

The students have learned to take care of themselves and their studies and to become enthusiastic about their studies and future when regular work and routines have been established. Young people were motivated by the opportunity to concentrate on a profession that interested them (Liimatainen-Lamberg, 1996)

The preventive measures in the employment administration are broader in Finland than in the rest of the Nordic countries. Different forms of guidance services and follow-up services are developed—including individual careers guidance services—as well as web-based information on vocational, educational and training options and support for career decision-making. However, there is a need to intensify collaboration inside the school and between different schools (for example compulsory and vocational education), with the families, with other authorities like child welfare and youth centres (Linnakangas & Suikkanen 2004).

## Good practices on preventing youth from dropping out of school

An important means of EU policies to influence national policies is the identification of good practices. This study will try to identify and cluster constellations of disadvantage and corresponding policies to single out factors of success and failures. It needs to be said that with regard to good practice we not only refer to measures that have been operative for some time and are thoroughly evaluated but also more recent examples, even if they have not yet been fully evaluated.

It is of course difficult to single out examples of the many good practices that exist, but we have focused on examples of both preventing youth unemployment as well as school drop-out at the same time that we have focused on more structural long-lasting reforms. Some of these have not yet been evaluated but are in the process of evaluation. Nevertheless, structural reforms are not often mentioned when it comes to good practices even though structural reforms are necessary elements in enabling developments of good practices. In a Finnish context one structural reform needs to be emphasized before going into good practices, namely the Youth Society Guarantee. Examples of good practices are the Early Rehabilitation Trial for Adolescents and the labour force service centres.

### *The Youth Society Guarantee*

The youth society guarantee, which aimed at reducing and preventing youth unemployment, was introduced as part of the Employment Programme launched by the Government for the period 2003–2007. In this intersectoral employment programme, the labour authorities have the principal responsibility for implementing the society guarantee for unemployed young people while the education authorities are responsible for the education and training guarantee.

The Youth Society Guarantee is composed of intensified labour services, intersectoral service co-operation, labour market measures and programmes for young people. The guidelines for the services were approved by the Ministry of Labour in December 2004. The main target group is young people (< 25 years) who have been unemployed for three months. (In 2005 16.8% of young people <20 years had an unemployment that lasted over 3 months, while the equivalent was 35,1% for young in the age of 20–24). The main aim of the guarantee is that every young unemployed person should be offered a place in further education, practical training, or a workshop activity after a period of three months unemployment. It is hoped that the transition to further education will be more effective, the application system will be easier, student- and vocational counselling will be intensified, and more practical information about working life will be made available. The aim is for 96% of those who finish compulsory education to continue in upper secondary education and for the workshop-activities to be permanent, both by 2008.

The society guarantee includes intensified co-operation between education and employment, the school, and the labour market. The educational authorities are responsible for the education and for the transition from education to employment by e.g. developing student and education

counselling. The labour authorities are responsible for the whole youth society guarantee. Young unemployed under 25 are the participants of the project. The youth society guarantee should offer youth services that focus not only on employment but also on multiprofessional services. Employment agencies are meant to employ youth counsellors and establish a youth-team. The measures provided focus on individual job-seeking plans and the target is that individual job-seeking plans are being made for 90% of the young unemployed before the 3-month point of unemployment. In 2003, the respective rate was only 13%. The evaluation of the youth guarantee service will be monitored by the employment agency every third year. In 2006 the Ministry of Labour and different regional offices will evaluate the youth unemployment situation and the implementation of the youth society guarantee.

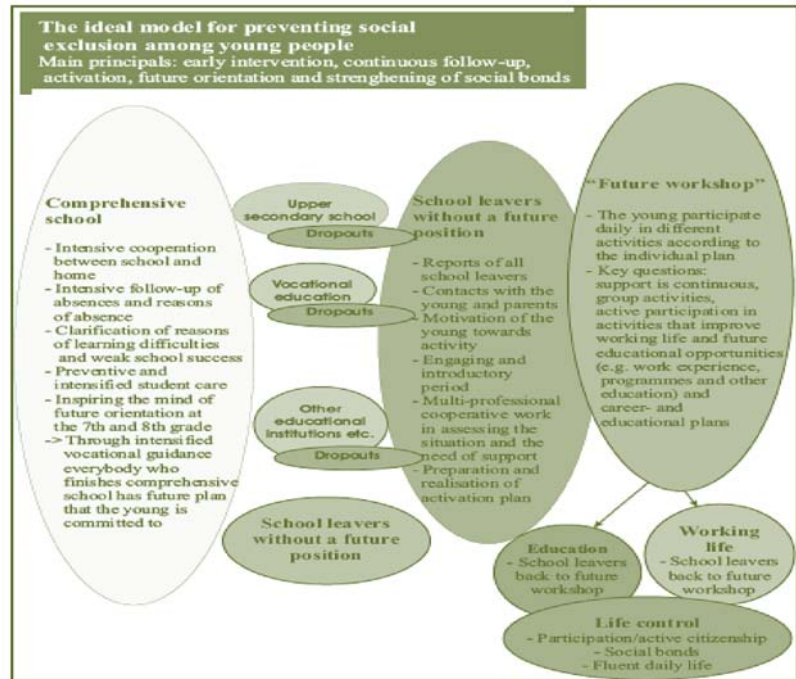
#### *Early rehabilitation trial for adolescents*

The Working group on Active Social Policy proposed in its memorandum a three-year trial early rehabilitation for 15-17-year-olds at serious risk of social exclusion. The Social Insurance Institution (SII) working together with municipal education, the employment, social and health, and youth administrations have put the proposal into effect by arranging a rehabilitation trial for adolescents (2001-2003) involving 18 projects. The target group of the trial was young people who had dropped out of comprehensive school or vocational education or who were likely to drop their studies or end their comprehensive school early because of low grades. One objective of the trial was to develop and disseminate good models of co-operation and action. The trial aimed to 1) survey the need for legislative reforms in operations and financing, and 2) to create a permanent service model for young people at risk of social exclusion. The trial showed that there existed professional skills that there exist professional skills and a strong endeavour in municipalities to support young people at risk of exclusion. There were good prerequisites for cross-sectoral co-operation. However, problems were posed by poor co-ordination, by an undeveloped co-operation culture, scarcity of resources and lack of obligations and agreements related to the division of labour and responsibilities. The trial also showed that it is possible to do some preventive work within the framework of existing resources, but full-time employees are needed to co-ordinate the co-operation. In addition, some legislative amendments are needed to eliminate the factors hampering co-operation and to motivate young people to plan their education and work careers (Suikkanen, Martti & Linnakangas, 2004).

This ideal model is based on the experiences of the rehabilitation trial, the memo of the working group on Active Social Policy and the aims of the rehabilitation trial, and also partly on youth research, information from different research projects and practical experience. The basis of the suggested model is that it could be realized and incorporated as part of the existing service system. The model can be adapted to suit the different service systems in the municipalities.

The school has a central position in identifying those young people in need of support. Ongoing conversations with young people are important, as well

**Figure 4:** The ideal model for preventing social exclusion among young people (Suikkanen, Martti & Linnakangas 2004)



as engaging their enthusiasm and actually accompanying them to a student care group before it is too late. The aim is to prevent social exclusion among the young at an early stage. The employment office is reasonably good at screening unemployed young people but the problem is that those at risk do not sign up as job-seekers. Screening through local networking has given very good results.

In the ideal model, support of the youth should be based on multi-professional work. The central feature of support is to engage the young person, develop a confidential relationship and to get the young motivated. The aim is to make an activation plan and support the young person to make a vocational choice or find an interesting and suitable education. Continuous individual counselling processes are important.

The fundamental problem in the legislation is that young people between 15 and 17 who are in the need of support do not covered sufficiently social benefits. A young person in the transition phase who has completed or left comprehensive school, upper secondary school or vocational education without any future plan will be left alone with no resources. Some structural changes based on the experiences of the rehabilitation trial should be made.

#### *'One-stop-shop' Service Centres and a youth experiment called "the Hoist"*

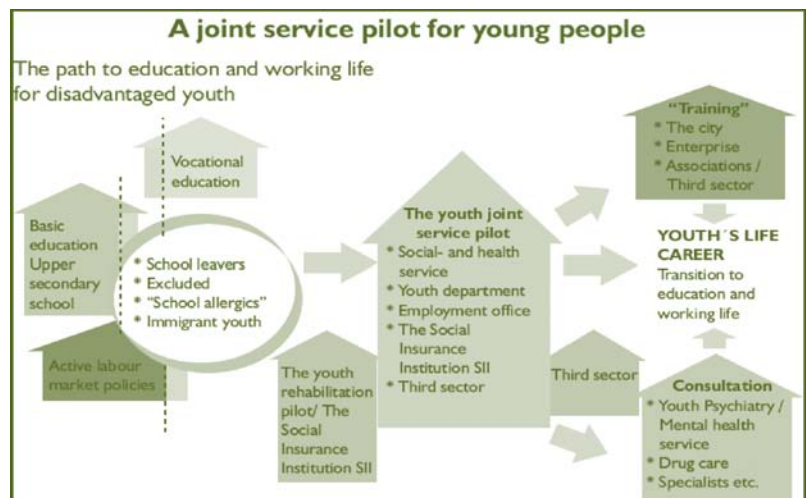
An important development in the strategy to help hard-to-serve job-seekers in Finland has been to collect the relevant authorities together as a one-stop-shop to solve the problems. These kind of joint-service centres have been created by the employment offices, the municipalities, and the Social Insurance Institution together at local level on an experimental basis in 2002

and 2003. The number of one-stop-shop service centres will be increased to 40 by 2006 (currently at 36) and the concept will be developed further and established on a permanent basis. Probably the most important part of this new development is the creation of a new service structure with possibilities for the networking of other public services within an integrated model. The strength of these centres is their large capacities to buy external services and support for their clients. However, these centres have not yet succeeded in reaching young people, as the majority of participants are still over 25. Nevertheless, there are examples of centres which are focussed on young people. According to the Youth Society Guarantee the one-stop-shop service centres are encouraged to establish youth services teams or departments when appropriate. Basic services for unemployed young people are always provided at the Public Employment Service.

The joint service centre Vinssi was one of the Ministry of Labour's joint service experiments for youth in 2002-2003. In January 2004 the activity was established on a permanent basis. Vinssi is a co-operation between the employment, the city of Lappeenranta and the Social Insurance Institution's joint service point for youth. The multi-professional team consists of one-stop-shop instructor/adviser, special one-stop-shop advisers, social workers, social instructors, employees of the social insurance institution, youth instructors, and joint service secretaries.

The Hoist (Vinssi in Finnish) is meant for young people under 25 that need counselling and support in education, working life and building a future. The young people are mostly directed to the pilot by the employment office, the social- and health authorities or by the Social Insurance Institution. Among the young people referred are the unemployed, school leavers, outsiders, "school allergics" and immigrants. There is also a service point that offers services for young people, parents, for organisations and for those who work among the young. From this service point one can receive information about hobbies, studies, living, economy and health.

**Figure 5:** "The hoist" – a joint service pilot for young people



One aim of the joint service centre is to be accessible where the young can get information, counselling, and support for education, working life and questions about life control. Also of importance is receiving co-operation from different authorities, both active and functional. The client should be the most important thing, not the bureaucracy.

The operation model is based on teamwork by multi-professionals, and the young people together with the authority find the solutions for their problems in relation to education and working life. The process includes four steps: 1. Interview 2. Activation plan 3. Offer of rehabilitation 4. Continuous follow-up and 5. Portfolio. The young person is called for an interview, where the situation is assessed and an activation plan is made up for the future. The purpose is to find adequate work, education, rehabilitation or something else that is suitable for the young client. The basis of the activation plan is the motivation of the young. The plan is followed up and supported individually. The target is that at least 60% of the clients should get a more permanent solution for their situation after the pilot.

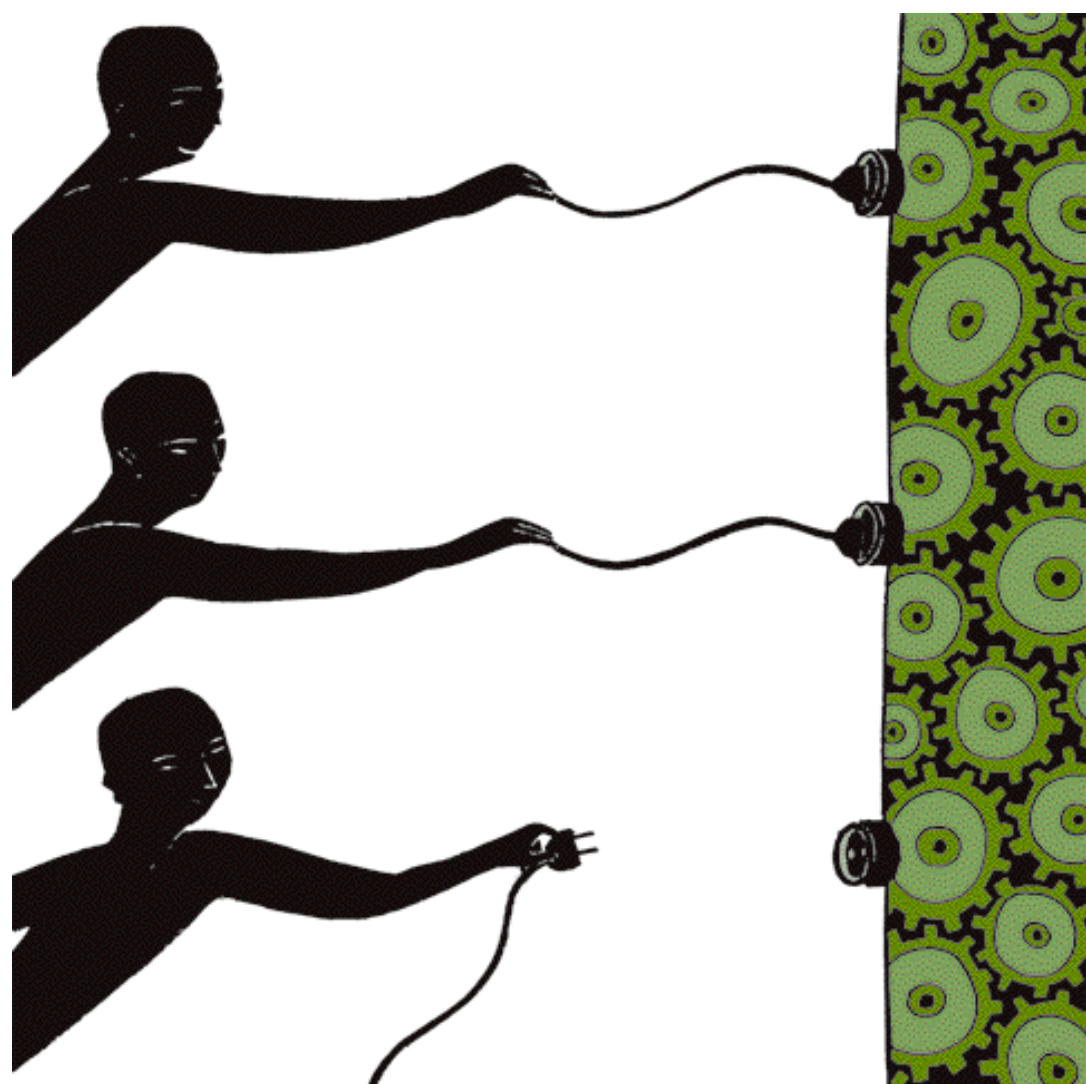
During the first period in 2002 there were 153 clients at the service center, with a total number of visits of 1484. The process can be very long depending on the nature of problems and the increase of multi-problems among the clients. For many young people, the path to education or work is very long. The evaluation of the service is monitored according to directions from the Ministry of Labour. This includes following up the young persons portfolios, which contain details on living costs, visits to the one-stop-shop, plans etc. A more thorough evaluation of the outcomes of the services is being performed.



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## Dealing with Disadvantage: an overview of the United Kingdom's policy response to early school leaving, low attainment and the labour market

The paper presents an overview of the mainstream policies aimed at disadvantaged youth in the United Kingdom, focusing on those aspects of policy that aim to reduce early school leaving, raise attainment and tackle youth unemployment. After providing an introductory overview of the UK context and broad policy approach within this area, the paper then examines in detail two of the major policy initiatives that have been introduced by the 'New Labour' government, the Connexions Service and the New Deal for Young People. The paper concludes by highlighting how recent initiatives have had some level success, but their sole focus on the supply-side, and young people's lack of skills and job readiness, ignores the deeper structural inequalities in UK society and the labour market.

**Key words:** young people, youth policies, labour market, Labourism and its policies, structural inequalities

### 1. Introduction

The paper presents an overview of the mainstream policies aimed at disadvantaged youth in the United Kingdom, focusing on those aspects of policy that aim to reduce early school leaving, raise attainment and tackle youth unemployment. After providing an introductory overview of the issues and policies within this area, the paper then examines in detail two of the major policy initiatives that have been introduced by the 'New Labour' government, the Connexions Service and the New Deal for Young People. Over recent years within the United Kingdom there have been many policy reforms within the broad area of disadvantaged youth policy, some of these reforms have been adopted nationally, whilst others remain specific to the UK regional contexts. It is not possible within the confines of this paper to highlight the different directions of policy that have been taken throughout each of the UK regions, instead the focus will be on those policies that operate at the UK national level or those that are specific to the English context. <sup>(1)</sup>

(1)  
From 1999, following the extended devolution of power to the regional parliaments educational policy outside of England is the responsibility of the devolved national assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, who have continued to develop their own distinctive educational policies. Employment and social services policy however remain the responsibility of UK national government. However, following the collapse of the political process in Northern Ireland, since 2002 all devolved policy in Northern Ireland has reverted back to London ministers, with the suspension of devolved power.

### 2. UK Context in Relation to Early School Leaving and Unemployment

Until relatively recently the large majority of young people in the UK left education at the age of 16, at the end of compulsory schooling, and made direct entry to the labour market and experienced few difficulties in securing regular employment. However, with the changes to the occupational structure

and the large shift from the manufacturing to the service sector, that occurred throughout the 1970's and 1980's there has been a sharp decline in the availability of jobs for early school leavers. Participation in post-compulsory education and training has risen steadily, with 87% of 16 year olds currently participating in some form of education or training, although participation rates fall steeply with age thereafter (DfES, 2005a) (2).

The UK has also witnessed large increases in participation in higher education, where there has been considerable success in achieving expansion, with the aim of achieving 50% participation by 2010. Despite these general increases in educational participation, participation at the post compulsory level remains well below the level desired by government, with lower levels of achievement among a minority of young people and significant levels of educational disengagement at an early stage. Participation in post-compulsory education and training in the UK is strongly linked to levels of attainment at examinations at age 16 (GCSE's) and females now outperform males at all levels of education in the UK, both in terms of qualifications (Table 1) and levels of participation.

Table 1. **Attainment at age 16 in England & Wales:  
Percent achieving 5+ GCSE's at Grades A-C (2004)**

	%
Males	49
Females	59
White	55
Black	34
Asian (All)	55
- Indian	72
- Pakistani	37
- Bangladeshi	45
- Other Asian	65
Other Ethnic	59
Not Stated	48

Source: Youth Cohort Survey, Cohort 12, Sweep1

Although in many EU national contexts the subject of educational disadvantage is strongly linked with ethnic minorities in the UK this relationship is not straightforward. Although some racial groups experience educational disadvantage certain ethnic groups outperform British Whites (Table 1). On average young people from a Black or Pakistani/Bangladeshi ethnic background achieve lower levels of attainment than British Whites, whilst those from Indian or Chinese backgrounds have the highest level of attainment of all ethnic groups. Different levels of attainment among ethnic groups may be partially a reflection of variations in socio-economic composition. Analysis of attainment at age 16 shows that after controlling for deprivation the higher levels of success among Indian and Chinese pupils for both the deprived and non-deprived groups remains above average. Among the deprived population White British, those from Traveller, Irish Heritage and Roma backgrounds have the lowest levels of attainment, whilst those from a deprived Black ethnic background perform slightly better than comparable whites, the performance of the non-deprived Black population is

(2)  
Figures apply to England only.

also well below the national average. The underachievement among young Blacks is seen to be most acute among Black Caribbean males (DfES, 2006).

Unemployment among young people in the UK experienced a dramatic rise from the mid 1970's and continued at a high level during the 1980's due to successive recessions and economic restructuring associated with the decline of the manufacturing industries. Since then, it has fallen dramatically both as a result of increasing educational participation combined with a recent period of relative economic stability with slow but sustained economic growth. In Spring 2004 overall unemployment reached its lowest rate since 1975, with levels of unemployment among young people typically following the adult rate albeit at a higher level. Current levels of unemployment are lower than the EU average (Table 2), with a Labour Force Survey (LFS) unemployment rate of around 12% among 18-24 year olds although it is significantly higher among 16 and 17 year olds who have left education (25% LFS), who represent about 6 per cent of the age cohort.

Table 2. **ILO unemployment Rates United Kingdom (October to December 2005)**

	%
All 16-17 Years Olds	25.0
Males (16-17 Years)	27.7
Females (16-17 Years)	22.3
All 18-24 Years Olds	11.8
Males (18-24 Years)	13.6
Females (18-24 Years)	9.8

Source: ONS Labour Force Survey

Whilst it is common for young people of all educational levels in the UK to experience a spell of unemployment during the initial transitions from education to employment, albeit of relatively short duration, longer-term difficulties in the labour market tend to be perceived as concentrated among the least qualified, this is supported by analyses of people of working age which shows a direct relationship between educational level and unemployment rates. (3) Analysis of long-term unemployment in Spring 2003 (defined as over 12 months) shows younger workers (18-24 years) for both men and women, are less likely to be subject to long-term unemployment. For men 38% of men aged over 50 and over were unemployed for 12 months plus, while for 18-24 year old men the respective figure was 15% (Begum, N. 2004).

Reflecting the pattern of the labour market as whole, and contrary to the picture in much of the rest of Europe, in the UK unemployment is slightly higher among young males compared to females, among 18-24 year olds 13.6% and 9.8% respectively. In terms of ethnicity, some ethnic minority groups experience above average levels of unemployment in particular Blacks and those from Pakistani/Bangladeshi backgrounds.

(3)  
Unemployment: by highest  
qualification, Spring 2003. ONS:  
Labour Force Survey

### 3. Policy approach to educational disadvantage and the labour market

At a broad policy level the focus has been on raising educational achievement to ensure international competitiveness, centred around a policy discourse on building skills for the knowledge economy. Employability and social exclusion policies have focused very much on the supply side, aiming to tackle the perceived skills deficits of young people. At the lower end of the attainment spectrum there remains a minority of young people who leave school with minimal levels of qualification success, at a level perceived to be below that required for employability in the modern labour market and employer groups have frequently criticised a deficit in basic skills among school leavers. The government aims to tackle low post-16 participation and has set itself a target of increasing participation at age 17 from 75% to 90% over the next ten years. There is also a particular concern with a group of young people often referred to as 'Status Zero' or the preferred term among official discourses in the UK of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) as well as the comparatively high levels of teenage parenthood. The term 'Status Zero' was first coined following research conducted by Istance et al (1994) and was used to refer to 16 and 17 (4) year olds who were not in education, training or employment, following changes that were made to welfare benefits in 1988, which meant that this age group were no longer entitled to receive unemployment benefits and therefore officially denied the status of unemployed.

UK policy in relation to disadvantaged youth is not only linked to concerns over educational underachievement and unemployment, but reflects wider policy concerns over criminality among young people, and their risks of long-term social exclusion and welfare dependency. The strategy is concerned with reducing disadvantage through ensuring employability with an analysis that stresses the importance of education and training, and one that balances young people's welfare rights with responsibilities. For example, stringent conditions are applied to access welfare benefits and Active Labour Market Policies include sanctions for non-compliance or insufficient job search efforts. Although the 'New Labour' government in the UK has no explicit policy in reducing class based inequalities, debates over inequality have tended to be conducted in the context of social exclusion agendas and building a world-class economy. The political response has often been framed in terms of poverty is not an excuse for educational underachievement and if some can succeed, so can others. Never the less increasingly educational strategy documents have explicitly acknowledged the link between poverty and educational attainment and considerable policy efforts have been placed on preventative approaches aimed at tackling disadvantage in the pre and early years of schooling.

(4)

In the UK the official discourse refers to NEET and in this case they refer to a wider age range of 16-18 year olds.

The work of the Social Exclusion Unit, a policy think tank based within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been an influential body in promoting a more coherent holistic approach to policy aimed at disadvantage youth, rather than the largely disjointed approach to policy

across different government departments that had tended to predominate in the past. In particular its influential report produced in 1998 'Bridging the Gap', provided a detailed research based analysis of the NEET group and subsequently led to the development of the Connexions Service in England (See below).

Personal advisers and local partnerships formed between a range of agencies have been at the heart of the delivery of many of the new policy developments, advisers providing one-to-one support and a single point of contact for disadvantage young people, with the aim of brokering additional services according to their clients needs through a range of local inter-agency partnerships involving the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Increasingly policy reforms have attempted to build policy on evidence-based practice, and major programs have only been rolled out nationally following local pilot projects and thorough research evaluation. This has led to an evolutionary policy approach, with the continual reformulation of policy as difficulties or other issues have emerged. In particular, this has resulted in greater flexibility at the local level, albeit set within the boundaries of centrally national prescribed policy frameworks. Target setting in the form of clearly specified quantitative indicators and the sharing of best practice have been other major features of recent policy, although the overemphasis on the former has sometimes been criticised in creating too much focus among practitioners in the achievement of targets rather than promoting a more individualised approach.

Before taking a more detailed assessment of two of the major policy developments aimed at tackling youth unemployment and educational disadvantage, the New Deal for Young People and the Connexions Service a number of other related recent developments in policy in the UK that are aimed at reducing disadvantage are worthy of comment.

Successive reforms have been made to the qualification system in the UK in order to promote and cater for educational expansion and have led to the development of a qualification framework that offers diverse and flexible patterns of attainment with coherent routes for progression within the vocational, general and academic post-compulsory educational provision. During the compulsory years in England students follow a National Curriculum up to the age of 16, they progress through compulsory education in year groups and students rarely repeat or skip school years. Recent attempts have been made to reduce the level of prescribed subjects within the National Curriculum in order to allow the option for more vocational options in the 14-16 curriculum. Concerns have been expressed that the curriculum has focused too much on the more able majority of pupils at the expense of the lower attainment group. At the post-sixteen level despite numerous reforms, the UK has continued to struggle to establish a quality and coherent system of work-based vocational training, which continues to be perceived of low status in relation to the general or academic routes. Although influenced by, but not solely confined to concerns over the more



disadvantaged group, a major review of educational provision for the 14-19 age group has recently been undertaken, which led to the White Paper '14-19 Education and Skills' published in February 2005 (DfES, 2005b).

The proposals contained in the White Paper represent a major reform of the 14-19 curriculum and assessment and is to be phased in over a 10 year period. Many of the proposals contained within the White Paper focus on those young people who face barriers to learning; such as those who drop out because existing qualifications and learning styles do not suit them, those with personal problems outside of school and those with specific learning difficulties. It has proposals to ensure a greater focus on English and Mathematics to ensure all young people are equipped with the expected standards in these basic skills by the age of 14. Some of the proposals however have been criticised for failing to follow the original working groups recommendations to break down the vocational and academic divide by replacing existing qualifications with a single unified Diploma available over four levels (Tomlinson, 2004). Instead the proposals propose to retain the academic examinations (GCSE's and A Levels), but aim to provide alternative specialised diplomas in 14 vocational areas covering each occupational sector of the economy, available at three different levels and developed in conjunction with employers. The flexibility over the duration of study, which currently tends to be restricted to age cohorts will be increased to reflect the different pace of learning styles.

Economic incentives have also been used to encourage young people to remain in education in the form of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). This is a means tested allowance based on the family household income and was recently expanded to cover vocational training as well as school-based education. The Allowance is aimed at 16-18 years who are studying a post-compulsory educational course and has three levels dependent on household income and is available to all those with a household income under 44,000 Euro. Around half the age population should qualify for a payment of between the equivalent of 15 and 45 Euros each week. Dependent on their progress young people can receive up to a further total of 740 Euros in additional bonuses over the duration of their course. (For an evaluation of EMA's see Middleton et al, 2003).

A number of strategies have also been introduced to tackle disadvantage associated with a young persons ethnic background. In particular, in 2001 the Prime Minister commissioned a Strategy Unit to look into the reasons behind Ethnic Minority employment disadvantage. The Strategy Unit report led to a number of detailed recommendations including the creation of a cross-departmental Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force, which was established in 2003 and incorporates Government ministers and other key stakeholder groups. Although the remit is not specific to young people the Task Force aims to monitor progress in relation to reducing discrimination across different government departments and implement a range measures to provide greater support for ethnic minorities education and employment outcomes (Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force, 2004). Although this represents a commitment on the part of national government to tackle

discrimination among ethnic groups, and progress has made in implementing the recommendations of the Strategy Unit it is too early to assess the quantitative impact of the ongoing strategy in reducing ethnic minority disadvantage.

#### 4. The Connexions Service

The Connexions Service in England was developed following the 'Bridging the Gap' Report, which was an assessment of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) conducted by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 1999). The report identified two main sets of factors associated with non-participation, educational underachievement and disaffection, and family disadvantage and poverty.

Connexions was developed as a mainstream programme and is aimed at 13-19 year olds and its introduction coincided with a reform of the old careers guidance and youth service. Prior to its introduction there had been major concerns about the ineffectiveness of the proliferation of agencies working with young people at risk from social exclusion and a lack of coordination of these services. In this respect, the Connexions Service represented an attempt to tackle the issue of educational disadvantage through a holistic joined up policy perspective. While the policy departmentally falls under the remit of the Department of Education and Skills there is a broader concern with young people's transition to the labour market and social inclusion. Underpinning the overall aims of the Connexions Strategy is a desire to increase the level of skills among young people and improve on the UK's comparatively poor performance in terms of post-compulsory participation in education and training. There are also a number of more specific policy concerns within the Connexions strategy, in particular a concern to reduce the number of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET), reducing teenage parenthood and impacting on young people's involvement with crime (DfEE, 2000). The underlying theme behind Connexions is that if young people become disconnected from schooling and further education, and therefore the labour market, they are likely to pose significant problems in terms of crime, family breakdown, teenage pregnancy as well as being a significant drain on the welfare state.

At the heart of this service is a new occupational profession of Connexions Personal Advisers. The aim of the role of Personal Advisers is to provide a single point of contact for the delivery of support to young people across a wide range of issues, and therefore the role is not solely restricted to providing advice on education or the labour market. The programme objectives are both broad and narrow and this is reflected in the fact that although it is a universal service aimed at all 13-19 year olds, a three-tier level of support is provided depending upon young people's individual's circumstances. As a service it aims to provide general career, education and training advice for the majority of young people with minimal intervention, with more specific intervention for those deemed most at risk. For those whom are deemed at risk of disengaging from education more in-depth

guidance is provided, while among those with multiple problems it aims to provide intensive and sustained support. Personal Advisers have been recruited from a range of professions including the former Careers Service, youth and social workers.

Aside from providing generalised career advice to the majority, among those at risk of disengaging the aim is to provide holistic support to those with multiple problems and end the fragmentation of services for young people at risk. Personal Advisers provide a single point of contact for an individual young person and broker advice or support from a range of other agencies depending upon the young persons needs. In other words, if Personal Advisers cannot directly assist a young person the idea is that they broker advice from other related agencies. In this respect, Personal Advisers have a generic role in that they need to be knowledgeable about local provision across a range of services such as education and training, housing, welfare benefits and a range of health issues. Advisers are based within different locations including: schools, colleges, specialist Connexions Centres or 'One-stop-shops' and outreach work in the community is also common.

Although overall responsibility and the funding for Connexions lies within the remit of the Department of Education and Skills, it is delivered at the local level by 47 Connexions partnerships across England. Partnership working at the local level is seen as central to the work with an expectation of involvement of the statutory, public and voluntary sectors. These local partnerships are intended to be responsive to local needs and are either led by newly formed private companies or through Local Authorities. They consist of a high level board of directors who are responsible for strategic planning that include representatives from the main statutory, public, private and voluntary communities involved in youth support, while Local Management Committees oversee the day to day delivery of the programme. Aside from the local aspect of the programme a centrally run Connexions Direct Service also provides a range of other services to young people. There is a web-based information point that provides information on a range of issues (Careers, education and training, health, housing, rights, money, personal relationships etc), and Connexions Direct Advisers are available seven days a week from 8am until 2am to provide confidential advice to young people utilising a range of communication media (Telephone, SMS, on-line chat). If deemed appropriate Connexions Direct Advisers may refer callers to Personal Advisers based in their own local area.

The introduction of the Connexions Service represented a radical change in the structure and delivery of guidance services for young people in the UK. It is a highly complex programme both in terms of structure and delivery and highlights some of the challenges in developing a cross-sectoral or holistic approach to disadvantaged youth policy (Walther et al, 2005). Aside from this holistic approach there are many other good practice elements built into the design of the programme. These include involving young people themselves in its design and delivery, learning and sharing from best practice, and encouraging personal advisers to be reflective in the work that they do.

The programme has been subject to an intense range of centrally set performance targets, as well as evaluations and research programmes at both the local and national levels. One of the main government targets was reduce the numbers in NEET by 10 per cent between 2002-2004. The official estimates of the number of 16-18 year olds in the NEET group at the start of this period was 10 per cent, since then, over the target period it fell by 14 per cent, although there were significant local variations (DfES, 2004c). Questions have however been raised over the difficulties in attributing this directly to Connexions, rather than other broader changes within the education and training system and other socio-economic factors.

Other evaluations and research into the Connexions service have revealed a range of issues. Overall the research has shown that the programme is viewed positively both by young people and other stakeholders involved (DfES 2004a; DfES 2004b; Deakin et al, 2004; Joyce & White, 2004) as well as assisting in a significant improvement in inter-agency working. The success of the programme is seen as dependent on the effectiveness of local partnerships and the evaluations have highlighted in some cases difficulties in overcoming traditional boundaries of work between agencies and other cases a resistance to holistic working practices. In addition there have been a number of problems in implementing the programme, with problems of the recruitment and resourcing of the number of Personal Advisers required. This particularly impacted upon the universal aspect of the service and evaluations have indicated that general careers guidance to the majority has become patchy and problematic, as Advisers focus on the most disadvantaged groups. Personal Advisers and young people have also often reported a lack of time to deal with issues effectively due to the high level of caseloads (Auditor General, 2004; Hoggarth & Smith, 2004).

Other criticisms that have emerged relate to the way in which deep structural inequalities within the UK are rendered invisible through the way in which Connexions addresses social exclusion at the individual level (Colley & Hodkinson, 2001) and the implicit surveillance role of the strategy whereby partner agencies are intended to share information to help track and identify those that might be deemed at risk. This has led to concerns about civil rights issues and some agencies have been reluctant to share information citing Data Protection legislation (Coles et al, 2004).

#### • The New Deal for Young People

One of the other major reforms that has been introduced in the UK is the 'New Deal for Young People', it focuses on an older age group than Connexions, focusing on those aged 18-24 years. It was launched by the 'New Labour' government as one of its flagship policies when it came to power in 1997. It was the first of a series of major welfare to work reforms that aimed to tackle unemployment and reduce social exclusion and a perceived culture of welfare dependency, in-line with what has been termed the 'third way' political objectives of the social investment state (Giddens, 1998). The main aim of the programme was to increase the employability of

the young unemployed, help them into jobs and to reduce long-term dependency on welfare benefits.

The proposals were in line with the recommendations of the EU Lisbon summit whereby all young people aged between 18 and 24 in the UK are required to enter the 'New Deal for Young People' following a period of 6 months continuous unemployment. The programme was initially funded through a one-off tax on the privatised national utilities such as gas, water, telecoms and electricity that had been privatised by the previous Conservative administration and is supplemented by EU funding through the European Social Fund (ESF).

In the UK all persons over 18 years old are independently entitled to basic unemployment benefits or social assistance in the form of the 'Job Seekers Allowance', regardless of previous contributions through paid work or family circumstances. With the introduction of the New Deal for Young People, following 6 months unemployment participation in the programme became mandatory, and those who fail to cooperate can be sanctioned through the withdrawal of their welfare benefits. To give some idea of the scale of the programme total participation in Great Britain during March 2005, was 72,790 persons and the national budget for 2004 amounted to £170 Million (€246 Million).

The programme consists of three key stages a 'Gateway' period, the 'New Deal Options' and a 'Follow Through' period. On entry to the New Deal each participant enters the Gateway, which is designed to last up to four months. Here each participant is allocated a 'Personal Adviser' who provides personalised guidance and assists in the drawing up of an action plan tailored to the needs of the individual's personal circumstances and to provide help with job search and vocational guidance. Many young people leave the programme during this Gateway phase and successfully enter unsubsidised employment, but for those who fail to find employment within the specified period they are then required to enter the next stage of the programme the New Deal options. There are four New Deal Options: A period of six months subsidised work experience with a participating employer, who is paid a subsidy of £60 per week (€86) towards wages; a full-time education or vocational training option attending a course of up to a year which leads to a nationally recognised qualification (up to the equivalent UK level of ISCED 3), which is intended to address those with limited educational qualifications or deficits in basic skills; or to take a place on a voluntary work programme or on an environmental task force. Those entering the voluntary or environmental task force options receive an additional payment of £15.38 (€22.50) in addition to their unemployment benefit.

The 'Follow Through' stage provides continuing support for the young people while they are in one of the New deal options in order to aid completion of the option and further support is provided from Personal Advisers if they return to unemployment after the New Deal.

Certain young people with specific disadvantages are entitled to enter the programme prior to the normal 6-month unemployment requirement and since its initial conception as a programme for young people, New Deal provision has been developed to cater for a range of other groups including lone parents and the disabled, although in these specific cases participation is voluntary. The duration young people spend on the New Deal is largely dependent on their success of finding unsubsidised work, around one in ten young people leave the New Deal before they even have a first interview with an adviser, a small majority leave during the 4-month Gateway period, with around one in five leaving the programme from the 'Follow Through' at the end of the options.

In assessing the effectiveness of the New Deal for Young People, much of the research evaluation relates from the first two years of operation and the early impact of the programme. During this period, analysis of the outflows from unemployment indicate a reduction of between 35,000 and 40,000 in unemployed youth, with no clear adverse effect on other groups of workers and an estimated 15,000 in jobs as a result of the New Deal (White & Riley, 2002). Overall the macro evaluations indicated a welfare gain to the economy as a whole, after taking account of a reduction in benefit payments and higher taxation raised through employment, this was worth about £3 (£4.40) for every £5 (£7.32) spent, with an annual cost for each person in employment estimated to be between £3,000 (£4,392) and £7,000 (£10,238) (White & Riley, 2002).

Results of qualitative research with participants, employers and those involved in the delivery of the programme show the scheme is viewed positively (O'Connor et al, 2001; O'Connor et al, 2000; Elam and Snape, 2000). New Deal advisers, like Connexions advisers represent one of the more innovative aspects of the programme and overall they have been well received by young people, however the relationship between the young person and the adviser has been found to be crucial to young people's good or bad assessment of the programme (Millar, 2000). The main success of the programme has been assisting those who are job ready with additional assistance in job search and careers advice. Although many of these young people are likely to have found jobs without assistance, the macro evaluation however has found that some jobs were directly created through New Deal and there was a reduction in the period spent unemployed. The programme has been less successful in helping those with multiple barriers to employment and success has also been disappointing in relation to ethnic minority groups. The conditions in the local labour market are also relevant for the success of the programme (Hoogvelt & France, 2000; Turok & Webster, 1998) and the programme overall has experienced a relatively buoyant period in the UK's economic history. Never the less a significant proportion of young people do not gain jobs through the New deal and there is evidence that many were entering the programme for a second or third time (Finn, 2003). Recognising the variation in local conditions that may impact on the success of the programme, recent developments have led to greater flexibility at the local level, whereby there is more discretion and increased budget flexibility for District managers to decide what training or

support is needed to address local problems and meet individual needs. A number of additional initiatives have also been added in pilot areas to assist those with specific or multiple problems associated with employability (DWP, 2004). 'StepUp' for example, is a one year subsidised job placement targeted at high unemployment areas and there are other initiatives aimed at those with a history of drug-use, ex-offenders, homelessness or alcohol problems

Some criticisms have emerged in relation to the inappropriate placement of young people in the New Deal options and a perhaps undesirable hierarchy has also emerged within the options, with young people favouring the subsidised Employment and Education or Training options, over the Voluntary or Environmental options, which have become perceived as a last resort for those who cannot be placed in one of the more preferable options. With the high demand among young people for the employment option, one of the challenges has been to promote greater employer involvement in the programme and various attempts have been made to achieve this with mixed success.

The Full-time Education and Training options have also experienced some difficulties. One of the challenges has been developing the adequate provision of appropriate courses, with sufficient flexibility that is required in order for young people to be able to enter and leave a course dependent on the period they enter New Deal, rather than according to normal periods of study (Tavistock Institute, 1999). Course provision has therefore tended to focus on relatively short-term courses focusing on basic skills and prevocational provision and there have been difficulties over completing some vocational courses over the prescribed maximum of 52 weeks for which funding is available. Some better-qualified young people also resent the fact that they cannot use the option to gain higher-level skills as the provision is generally restricted to courses equivalent to ISCED 3 or below (Millar, 2000).

The mandatory participation and the use of benefit sanctions has been another controversial aspect of the programme. It has been argued these sanctions are only applied in the most extreme cases, but in total around 13,000 young people in Great Britain are sanctioned each year, mainly for failing to attend a place on a training scheme or employment programme or for losing a place through misconduct (DWP, 2005). Some however have argued that the New Deal sanctions may actually be counterproductive there is little evidence to support the view that unemployed young people lack the determination to find work and without strong family support the withdrawal of benefits may leave young people few options other than the engagement of crime or the informal economy (Furlong et al, 2005).

## 5. Conclusion

For the past several decades the UK has put considerable efforts into raising post-compulsory participation in education and dealing with issues surrounding youth unemployment. While many of these initiatives in the past

have proved outstanding failures, in recent years there has at least been a serious attempt to tackle some of the issues associated with disadvantaged youth, and one that is based upon evidence-based practice. While some of the results of evaluations have shown some positive developments and also display elements of good practice, they have operated at a time when the UK economy has been relatively buoyant. However there is less evidence to show how it is improving the situation of the least qualified and those from the most disadvantaged families, although the parallel efforts of tackling disadvantage at the pre and early years of schooling will take some time to show whether they impact on long-term outcomes.

Virtually all of these initiatives have focused on the supply-side, and in this respect implicitly put the emphasis on young people's lack of appropriate skills, lack of job readiness or their unrealistic aspirations. Contrary to such a premise the vast majority of young people in the UK show a great readiness to enter the world of work, and certainly compared to many of their Southern European peers are very quick to downgrade their occupational aspirations, often entering occupations for which they are well over-qualified in order to get an initial foot on the employment ladder. Such a policy approach fails to acknowledge the deep-seated inequalities in UK society and the regional and local distribution of employment opportunities. In one particularly critical review over UK policy since the 1970's, Roberts (2004) argues that educational expansion in itself may be part of the problem and how new initiatives such as the Connexions and the New Deal have done little to reduce young people's risk of unemployment. Although he acknowledges unemployment rates among 18-24 year olds are lower now than they were in the early 1990's, he highlights how the pace of decline among this age group has been slower than the workforce as a whole. Instead he argues for a return to job creation programmes, the one solution with a proven track record, but one he concedes will be dismissed under 21st century conditions, where such artificial measures will be perceived as blunting the countries competitive edge in a globalising economy.



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## Disadvantaged Youth in Europe: Constellations and Policy Responses

Young people all over Europe have benefited less from inclusion and active labour market policies in recent years than the overall population. Therefore the social inclusion of disadvantaged young people is high on the European agenda. This article presents the main findings of a study commissioned by the European Commission on policies for disadvantaged youth in 13 European countries and focuses on three issues: the constellations of disadvantage in youth transitions from education to employment, an overview of policies applied in the countries involved and the conclusions to be drawn from a cross-national analysis. The concept of disadvantage developed in the study is based on the assumption that "old" lines of social inequality like gender, ethnicity and social class nowadays mix with new lines of segmentation. As a consequence, it is argued, that policies for the inclusion of young people need to be designed in an integrated way with a biographical and life-cycle perspective as the underlying principle.

**Keywords:** Disadvantaged youth, Europe, Youth unemployment, Early school leaving, Transition from education to work

### Introduction

Over the past few decades young people's transitions from education to work have become increasingly de-standardised and have been made an important focus of policy and research. While the changes have had an effect on all young people, it is clear that some young people are more vulnerable than others to risks of social exclusion such as unemployment, precarious employment and early school leaving. The European Commission's Joint Report on Social Inclusion published in May 2004 <sup>(1)</sup> has identified disadvantaged youth as a strategic target group and defined both increasing labour market participation and tackling disadvantages in education and training as two of the seven key policy priorities. The European Pact for Youth adopted in spring 2005 as part of the revised Lisbon Strategy <sup>(2)</sup> ascertains the social integration of young people as a means for sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe. It builds upon the first cycle of implementation of the White Paper 'A New Impetus for European Youth' <sup>(3)</sup> which launched numerous initiatives for enhancing young people's participation and active citizenship. It was acknowledged that in order to move forward it is required to achieve consistency between the policies and activities targeting young people through a new level of cooperation between social partners, most notably educational and training bodies, youth organisations and regional and local authorities <sup>(4)</sup>. In their search for convergence, EU policies apply a model of mutual learning where best practices from single countries are meant to guide other countries. The important question in this respect is whether and how practices and policies can be transferred to other contexts. One often

(1)  
European Commission (EC),  
2005a

(2)  
EC, 2005b

(3)  
EC, 2001

(4)  
EC, 2005c

overlooked factor in this exercise is the definition of success. What means successful policies for disadvantaged young people? Do we measure success only in terms of labour market outcomes? Is it the most cost-efficient measures? Or do we need to define success in a broader way?

This contribution draws on the results of a Thematic Study, the DG Employment and Social Affairs commissioned in 2004 (5). This study aimed at enhancing the understanding of disadvantage in young people's transitions from school to work and the policy approaches developed, applied and evaluated within the enlarged EU context. It provided a comparative analysis of risks in youth transitions and policy interventions for social inclusion in 13 countries. From the countries involved Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the UK display noticeable problems with the inclusion of either unemployed youth or early school leavers while Austria, Denmark and Slovenia are referred to as contrast countries with a better performance. The study made use of three main sources: national reports devised along a standardised questionnaire by national experts following policy seminars and consultations with representatives from the academic community, policy makers and stake holders in each country, Eurostat data mainly from the Labour Force Survey in 2004, and descriptions of policies presenting good practices according to a common structure. A wealth of comparative and contextualised information was gathered about the multiple forms of barriers blocking the social integration of young people. Over thirty models of policy interventions were evaluated as good practice and analysed in more detail by the national experts from the thirteen countries participating in the study. The Thematic Study first identified and clustered key problem constellations in the countries involved; second, assessed current policies and their (mis-)match with problems in each of the countries; third, analysed factors of success or failure of policies for disadvantaged youth; finally, developed recommendations of how the processes of decision making and policy implementation may profit from 'good practice' while considering context-bound specificities. This paper focuses on three issues: the constellations of disadvantage in youth transitions from education to employment, an overview of policies applied in the countries involved and the conclusions to be drawn from a cross-national analysis.

(5)  
see Walther, Andreas and Pohl, Axel: Thematic Study on Policy Measures concerning Disadvantaged Youth, Tübingen 2005. The study was coordinated by the authors on behalf of IRIS e.V., Institute for regional Innovation and Social Research, Tübingen/Germany. More information on the study can be found at: <http://www.iris-egris.de/projekte/dis youth>.

(6)  
Eurostat definitions were applied according to which early school leavers means the 18-24 year olds without upper secondary qualifications while the youth unemployment rate refers to young people out of work who actively seek a job (whether registered or not). The youth unemployment rate refers to the share of unemployed among the 15-24 year old labour force ([www.eu.int/eurostat](http://www.eu.int/eurostat)).

## Objectives and key concepts

The study focuses on two key issues for young people in Europe: youth unemployment and early school leaving. (6) Figure 1 lists the countries involved in the study according to their levels of unemployment and early school leaving in 2004 with youth unemployment ratios ranging between of 5.6% in Austria and Denmark and 14.2% in Poland. Rates of early school leaving range between 4.2% in Slovenia and 39.4% in Portugal (Eurostat data).

The objective to investigate social disadvantage with regard to the phenomena of youth unemployment and early school leaving was broken down into four key questions:

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of disadvantaged youth?
2. What are the key problems of the transition of disadvantaged youth from school to work?
3. What impact do both inclusion and active labour market policies have?
4. What are the causes of success or failure of policies to support disadvantaged youth?

The analysis was based on an understanding of disadvantage in youth transitions that can be summarised as follows:

- Sociology of youth (7) has established that youth transitions in the countries members of the EU are becoming prolonged, more complex and individualised, without clear-cut trajectories. Even more dramatic has been the shift from the orderly and strictly controlled passages typical for large groups of young people living under the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe into the flexible and diversified trails in the developing market societies (8). Young people in present day European societies face more choices and greater risks under the influence of globalisation which destroys the clear markers of the past and creates insecurity and changeability. In the situation of uncertainty and growing individualisation, young people can no longer rely on collective patterns and need counselling and advice that take into consideration the complexity of (post)modern life.
- As a consequence *social inclusion* needs to be analysed in a holistic way as the relationship between social structure and individual agency and is broader than labour market integration. *Disadvantage* is conceptualised in the study as a result of the interplay of socio-economic structures, institutional measures and individual strategies. The analysis of the national reports in the present study reveals that problems leading to disadvantage arise at various points of youth transitions such as school problems, leaving school before the obligatory age or without qualifications, meeting with a lack of access to training or mismatch between qualifications and labour demand, lack of entry routes into the labour market, falling into poverty, losing housing security, breaking partnerships, and as a result limited citizenship. All these barriers to social inclusion are produced and reproduced by individual, structural and institutional deficits. Disability and type of motivation feature most prominently among individual factors. Socio-economic inequality, poverty rates, labour market situation and economic development more generally, rates of unemployment and long-term unemployment, gender and ethnic inequalities, migration status are all structural factors that affect the social integration of young people. Institutions such as school and training systems, employment offices and social security systems themselves can create barriers or enforce misleading trajectories (9).

(7)  
Furlong and Cartmel, 1997;  
Walther, Stauber et al, 2002;  
López Blasco et al, 2003;  
Catan, 2004

(8)  
Ule and Renner, 1998; Machacek,  
2001; Kovacheva, 2001

(9)  
Walther, Stauber et al, 2002

## Constellations of disadvantage

The study's perspective on constellations of disadvantage means that prevalent clusters of unemployment and early school leaving are examined – including also crosscutting aspects of precariousness – in the different countries. 'Old' structural categories of inequality according to class, education, ethnicity and gender need to be analysed according to new lines of segmentation and transition structures that lead to 'new' forms of disadvantage. It is therefore important to relate socio-economic indicators with the variety of forms of disadvantage. The most important aspects in this respect are as follows:

*Social inequality* influences the way in which parents can support their children's educational careers; high social inequality (measured by the Gini-coefficient) correlates with high early school leaving in particular in Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain while in Austria, Bulgaria, Greece and UK the relationship is weaker; these findings correspond to the recent PISA studies of the OECD.

*Structures of education and training* differ in the following respects:

- in the way social inequality is reinforced or balanced;
- how early school leaving is distributed according to different routes;
- whether integrated national qualification systems allow for transfer between general, vocational and higher education; how individual learning needs are acknowledged;
- and to what extent vocational routes are school- or company-based.

This relates to general *labour market structures* and employment prospects according to which pupils and school leavers assess the use and value of investment in education; however, contracted labour markets and structures of mismatch between education and the labour market – reinforced by age-related segmentation due to young job seekers' lack of experience – have different effects. While in Slovakia and Poland young people stay in education to avoid unemployment ('discouraged workers' effect also relevant in the UK), in Italy or Spain (as well in Portugal) they prefer to leave education as soon as job opportunities arise even if they are precarious and/or in the informal economy. Correspondingly, in some countries early school leavers display well above-average levels of unemployment (Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Slovakia, Slovenia, UK) whilst in other contexts particularly in Southern Europe but also in Denmark, Poland and Romania they are not over-represented among the unemployed. In most cases higher education is a worthwhile investment at least in the long-term, school leavers with post-compulsory education but weak family resources are more likely to become disadvantage the longer their job search fails.

*Ethnic minority* and *immigrant youth* are particularly affected by early school leaving although the picture is highly differentiated across Europe which makes comparison difficult. In many cases disadvantage is mainly ascribed to cultural factors (e.g. language, values) although it should also



be taken into account that most immigrants and ethnic minorities have a lower socio-economic status and institutionalised discrimination includes a higher risk of school failure (or being placed in special schools where these exist for those with learning difficulties). In terms of labour market opportunities the effects of educational disadvantage are multiplied by discriminatory practices from employers and also by barriers to benefit from active labour market policies. Unclear legal status increases risks of being trapped in precarious jobs.

The role of *gender* is another determinant which requires differentiation: across Europe early school leaving is primarily a male problem; in terms of youth unemployment the picture varies between Southern European countries (as well as in Austria, Poland, and Slovenia) where females are disadvantaged and Northern European countries (plus Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia) where unemployment rates of young men and women have been reversed, partly due to the economic shift towards the service sector. Young women are in general more likely to experience disadvantage resulting from precarious work arrangements. Inactivity rates also remain higher for young women while gender pay gaps and restricted upward mobility continue to persist.

*Regional disparities* are less pronounced in terms of early school leaving than in the case of youth unemployment. This relates to rural-urban divides but also to the imbalance between dynamic centres and stagnant peripheries, the most striking example being the South of Italy where youth unemployment rates exceed 60%. In addition, regional or spatial differences also affect access to infrastructures such as access to education and labour market services.

Contexts differ with regard to the *duration* of unemployment; in opposition to widely held belief that youth unemployment is normally of a shorter duration in most countries more than one third of the unemployed young people have durations exceeding 12 months (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia).

Social disadvantage is not limited to early school leaving or unemployment. Various forms of non-standard work can serve to extend disadvantage after labour market entry and into later stages of the life course. The Labour Force Survey established high precariousness of youth employment although in different patterns in different countries. Risky employment among youth takes the form of temporary contracts in Spain, Poland, Finland and Slovenia. It takes the form of part-time work in Denmark and undeclared work in Greece, Italy and the two accession countries. The dominant patterns of non-standard work are related in no linear way to the poverty rate among youth in each country which is low in the Nordic countries and Slovenia, medium in Austria, Bulgaria and Poland and high in the rest of the countries in the study. The study shows that disadvantage increasingly includes working young people when they are accompanied with restricted access to social security which causes precariousness in the later stages of the life course. The deregulation of the labour market does not mean automatically increasing chances of social integration when not linked to quality employment.



The study identified one group at particular risk of social exclusion in most European countries. It is formed by young people not in education, training or employment and not registered as unemployed in the labour offices, often referred to as 'status zero' group (10). Whilst it is difficult to assess methodologically, one approximate indicator may be the difference between those recorded as 'inactive' (excluding those in education or training) with high rates particularly in Bulgaria, Romania, Spain and the UK. Potential reasons for disengaging from the transition system are limited benefit entitlements, lack of trust in public employment services, pressure and degrading treatment by institutional actors, alternative options such as informal work. Potential factors are a limited access to benefit entitlements, low trust in the effectiveness and integrity of public employment service, experience of bad treatment by institutional actors, and alternative options such as informal work. There is no reliable data about this group in many of the countries and one of the recommendations of the Disadvantaged Youth study is the creation of a joint data set on European level about the status of young people, including inactivity and non-registered work.

For a smaller group of young people, unemployment can be seen as part of a wider context of '*multiple disadvantage*'. Causalities are difficult to determine in so far risk-laden lifestyles (e.g. drug use) can be strategies of coping with limited life perspectives, while contributing further to the dynamics of marginalisation (e.g. bad health, homelessness). However, constellations of poverty and segregation as experienced by Roma communities especially in Bulgaria, Romania or Slovakia also nurture vicious circles of deprivation.

*Poverty* does not only concern those without work – depending on access to benefit entitlements – but increasingly also the employed. According to the European average the poverty rate among young people is higher than the overall average (19% compared to 16% in 2001), differing between 10% in Slovenia and 25% in Italy. In particular among young people, atypical employment – mainly *fixed-term contracts* and *part-time work* – has increased in some contexts to well over half of the youth labour force (especially in Finland, Poland, Slovenia, and Spain). In Northern European countries in particular this most often coincides with young people's choices, whilst in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe young people are more often forced to accept these jobs as the only opportunities available; undeclared work also plays an important role in Greece and Italy and is also gaining importance in Central and Eastern Europe.

There are clear links between social inequality, educational level and (un)employment, but the situation is more diverse and complex than expected with regard to education and unemployment or between unemployment, employment and precariousness. In fact, structural, individual and institutional factors act together in the reproduction of disadvantage.

(10)  
Williamson, 1997

## Policy approaches across Europe

What policies are being put into practice to tackle disadvantage in youth transitions and to what extent are they successful? How do they interpret the task of renewing employment pathways for young people and how are they compatible with the need to become broader and more diverse? A systematic overview of policies needs to distinguish between structural, institutional and individual levels of intervention in order to avoid that disadvantage is ascribed to young people's individual deficits and the individuals are held personally responsible. A first level of differentiation therefore is between

- structural versus individualised measures; and between
- preventative and compensatory measures.

A second level differentiates sectors of intervention: school, training, and active labour market policies, which refer to two main policy discourses: lifelong learning and activation. These discourses stand for a shift from policies oriented towards a standard life course that was sustained by the State, especially through the regulation of education, work and welfare. Arguably, structural unemployment has caused a shift towards labour market flexibilisation while responsibility for learning and finding work are being shifted to the individual's responsibility. This trend means that disadvantage is primarily addressed at the individual level while the distinction between prevention and compensatory intervention is becoming increasingly blurred.

### *School-related measures*

Among policies aimed at *preventing* early school leaving, first of all *school reforms* need to be highlighted. A minimal reform is to simply extend the duration of compulsory education (Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain), whilst making general and vocational curricula more relevant to labour market demands is an issue in all countries. Other countries aim to make school, training and university in general more inclusive by increasing permeability between routes (Denmark, Finland) and developing national qualification frameworks (Slovenia, UK).

*Educational allowances* are aimed at reducing the impact of social inequality. Entitlements are universal in Denmark and Finland where education is an element of citizenship; they can be means-tested (especially in the UK but also in most other countries, albeit at very low levels) or, as a negative incentive, tying family benefits to children's school attendance (Portugal, Slovakia). Another very basic approach is the provision of free meals and school books for disadvantaged groups like the Roma (Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Slovakia).

Within regular school a low-threshold approach to inclusive education is *counselling* to identify problems and influence individual educational decisions. Quantitative coverage and quality differ between teachers with an advisory function, social work in schools, and specialised school staff providing counselling for all pupils as a means of coping with learning

demands; good practice are the municipal counselling system in Denmark or the total counselling network in Slovenia because they start from the individual's needs.

Increasingly special needs pupils are given more *support teaching* in terms of personalised education, additional (specialised) staff and flexible classroom procedures. In the case of ethnic minorities *assistant teachers* from the same community are trained and employed (Romania, Slovakia) or methods of intercultural education are applied as in the Austrian practice of 'Team teaching' in commercial schools. Inclusive education however also needs to be included into general teacher training (examples relate to including the Roma in Romania and Slovenia). At the same time it needs to be highlighted that in some countries special education still relies on a segregated system of special schools where often ethnic minority youth are over-represented (especially Slovakia but also Austria, Finland, Poland).

*Second chance* and *evening schools* address those who have already left school in a compensatory way. Programmes have to be compatible with work or family and they often apply formal teaching and non-formal learning as well as vocational practice.

Among those countries with low levels of early school leaving such as *Denmark*, *Finland* and *Slovenia*, approaches can be characterised as structural and preventative. The main policies are reforms increasing the permeability of qualifications and the design of national qualification frameworks, educational allowances and personalised counselling also play a key role. Among the countries showing the largest decline *Greece* applies primarily individualised support teaching and compensatory approaches, with 6% of the 14-24 year olds enrolled in evening schools; the *UK* combines diversity within upper secondary educational provision, education allowances and intensified counselling. In *Poland* and *Slovakia* low levels are the result of widening access to higher education, although limited access to labour market entry may have adverse effects in the near future.

### *Training*

The case of *Austria* is explained by reference to *training* which is a policy area that relates both to early school leaving and youth unemployment. The dual system of apprenticeship system provides a high share of school leavers with access to upper secondary qualifications, which provide direct links to the labour market. While such a system has developed historically, and is embedded within the national economy and culture, and in this respect it cannot easily be transferred to other contexts, however most countries aim to increase and upgrade vocational routes. Four main types of measures can be discerned:

All countries try to modernise and upgrade *vocational education and training (VET)* to overcome low qualification levels and labour market mismatch. While some countries have introduced small-scale *apprenticeship systems* (only in Portugal and UK this extends to upper secondary qualifications), others aim to modernise *school-based VET*. In

fact, the case of Denmark shows that this does not exclude work practice and the involvement of employers in the steering and delivery of VET.

In contrast, *preparatory and pre-vocational measures* aim to compensate for socialisation and learning deficits; only some measures provide certification, whilst others focus on personal competencies and practical learning with an inherent risk of becoming mere holding patterns. Good practice are 'Getting Connected' (UK) and the 'Production Schools' (Denmark) as they leave young people with the space to experiment and to learn by doing; the 'Vocational Preparation Courses' (Austria) are good practice in accrediting pre-vocational education which leads to later apprenticeship training.

*Labour market training* is distinguished from VET as it primarily addresses the unemployed in a compensatory perspective. It is often steered by employment services and does not always lead to regular qualifications. In fact, in some cases their scope is limited to the provision of work experience and the creation of a subsidised low wage youth labour market. Whilst this can be a first step towards creating a training "culture", quality standards need to be monitored as well as the extent to which they provide actual bridges into regular work (Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, UK).

*Recognition of informal skills* can balance a lack of formal qualifications and provide access to further education or employment; good practice are national qualification systems (see above) and the Portuguese 'Recognition, Validation and Certification Centres'.

There is an apparent contradiction between the increase of vocational routes and the fact that the phenomenon of dropping out is more common in vocational than in general education. Apart from the differing quality of vocational routes also the fact needs to be considered that weaker pupils tend to vocational rather than general or academic routes. Measures have to ensure that training schemes provides individuals with relevant skills rather than being simply 'more of the same'. This can be reached through a combination of counselling, job creation or work experience as well as by extending provision beyond the manufacturing sector to include the service sector.

#### *Active labour market policies*

Policies that address youth unemployment have undergone a dramatic shift from passive to active labour market policies (ALMP). However, assessment of long-term effects is difficult and there is a lack of research which considers non-labour market related factors, in particular for young people with multiple disadvantages. An indicator that at least highlights how efficient ALMP's are in reaching unemployed youth (without assessing the quality of outcomes) is the development of long-term youth unemployment over time (see Figure 2).

Activation combines approaches of personalised counselling with incentives for active job search and/or training. Incentives can be negative in terms of reducing benefit levels and applying sanctions such as cutting

or suspending benefits in the case of non-compliance or positive in terms of choice between different options or activation allowances exceeding benefit levels. Individualised action plans are the operative basis of activation policies. Here, approaches can be distinguished in terms of coverage, but also in quality, whether they primarily aim to recruit young unemployed for ALMP measures or aim to counsel and empower individuals to become reflexive actors of their own biographies. Relating the dimensions of incentives and counselling together five different models of activation are evident:

- supportive activation based on universal benefit entitlements and counselling aimed at personal development in a holistic perspective; priority on education (Denmark, Finland);
- workfare (coercive activation) characterised by a priority of employment; counselling aimed at recruitment and controlling compliance by sanctions (UK, partly Slovakia);
- limited activation due to limited benefit entitlements; counselling primarily as means of recruitment, partly complemented by multi-disciplinary and coordinated services (Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Slovakia; in Bulgaria and Romania low coverage of PES);
- no basis for activation due to low coverage of PES and virtual lack of benefit entitlements of young people (Greece, Italy).

In all models, the success of counselling depends on the options of progression available.

Apart from education and training (see above) important measures in this respect are *subsidies* for employers. A first type is aimed at school graduates (first time job seekers), often with upper secondary and higher education, which play a key role in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe (but also the New Deal in UK) to compensate problems of mismatch and age and gender segmented labour markets. A second type aims to provide long-term unemployed with work experience (Denmark, Finland, UK, Greece, Portugal). A negative side effect of subsidies is that regular jobs may be replaced and displaced thereby contributing to a hidden deregulation of youth labour markets (see below).

*Job creation* is aimed at making young people's transitions more independent from the demand side of the labour market by creating additional work opportunities. While job creation in the public sector is decreasing, *self-employment* programmes have increased especially in contexts structured by age and gender segmented labour markets (e.g. Greece and Italy). *Job creation in the third sector* is regarded as a successful way to engage with the more hard-to-reach groups and those with disabilities, health or psychosocial problems (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Italy, Poland).

*Deregulation of labour market entrance* through a reduction of labour protection and the promotion of atypical work may be seen as a structural and preventative way of increasing access to the labour market. However,

except for some countries where this has been accompanied by social rights (Denmark, Finland, Slovenia) this is closely related to an increase in precariousness, especially in the case of Portugal and Spain where although youth unemployment has fallen poverty rates have increased.

### **Success factors: an integrated approach**

The overall focus of the Thematic Study was to provide evidence for a youth based approach to inclusion and active labour market policies, therefore contributing to the objectives of the European Youth Pact. In the following a comprehensive policy model for the sustainable inclusion of disadvantaged young people is outlined starting from the normative and conceptual level and ending with specific factors of policy implementation and delivery.

Both the life-cycle perspective on youth transitions and the constellations of disadvantage in which structural and individual factors are interlinked require a holistic approach that coordinates different policies within a framework of *Integrated Transition Policies* (11). A policy perspective may speak of 'mainstreaming youth', however, lessons learned from gender mainstreaming imply the risk of standards and awareness developed through positive action fading away. Is 'youth everywhere' really better than 'youth nowhere'? Or under what conditions? This means that mainstreaming youth requires both: specific approaches as well as mainstreaming mechanisms. According to the White Paper on Youth the key to such an approach is the principle of citizenship and one that is based on individual entitlement to support that allows for autonomy, meaningful education, training and employment and active participation. Relating participation to the transition from school to work requires that firstly young people are involved in the process of policy-making (not only restricted to leisure time facilities); second, young people need to be endowed with negotiation rights towards institutions, an aspect that is not covered in most countries' interpretation of activation.

Integrated Transition Policies require a cross-sector perspective that starts on the macro-level. Inclusion and active labour market policies can only improve young people's lives if

- *school systems* share accountability for the life chances of young people as well as for social disadvantage;
- *social policies* enable families to assist their children in achieving relevant skills and qualification;
- *economic development* includes binding social criteria as regards training and employment for young people affected by social disadvantage.

More specific, five key success factors of policies for disadvantaged youth can be identified:

*Funding:* Sustainable inclusion measures require sufficient funding to cover all those who need support in their transitions from school to work, as well

(11)  
cf. López Blasco et al, 2003

as providing quality services in terms of sufficient, trained staff, accessible premises and allowances as positive incentives. A comparison of national expenditure on education and (overall) ALMP as a percentage of GDP shows significant differences. Table 1 shows a clear relationship between expenditure for education and early school leaving, both in positive and negative terms, which also has consequences for unemployment. While this is less obvious with regard to ALMP expenditure, expenditure on social protection also needs to be taken into consideration, especially in relation to families, child and individual (not insurance-based) benefits.

*Coordination:* To allow mainstreaming Integrated Transition for youth policies need to be implemented and delivery coordination among different policy levels as well as the state, market and civil society. In this respect, the balancing of power differentials among national policies on the one hand and youth organisations on the other are crucial, because they give young people a voice (here also trade unions need to play a greater role) and provide them with opportunities for non-formal learning (12). Trust among partners also depends on partnership not merely being imposed as a condition for access to funding. In contrast, training policies reveal the necessity of positive incentives to increase the engagement of economic actors and effective coordination requires flexibility both on the policy level and within measures.

*Access:* Inclusion and active labour market policies are only effective if they actually reach their target groups. Especially immigrant and ethnic minority youth as well as young women both are often under-represented in measures – or they profit less in terms of meaningful outcomes. Access depends first on the coverage of measures, which itself is dependent on funding. Second, it requires the decentralised distribution of measures that allows for low-threshold access. Third, access requires reliable communication networks between institutions as well as between young people and institutions. Fourth, access depends on the conditions of attendance: flexible or unconditional access helps to ensure that individuals do not remain excluded from meaningful support due to bureaucratic rules. Fifth, anti-discrimination policies may be a tool to claim improved access (and supply) for immigrant and minority youth, as well as according to gender and age. Finally, the persistence of the phenomena of status zero suggest that limitations are not only structural and administrative, but also related to a lack of perceived value of the measures in the eyes of potential participants.

*Reflexivity:* If policy implementation and delivery requires higher flexibility as suggested above this also implies different processes and procedures within policy-making, by which the effects and side effects in each individual case are reflected upon rather than simply monitored (and evaluated ex-post). A higher reflexivity of institutional actors first requires changing the mechanisms of evaluation to become more comprehensive and to include qualitative and longitudinal elements as well as being integrated within everyday practice. Second, it requires a higher level of trust in the interaction between young people and institutional actors so that users feel able to give direct feedback whether they find the help offered meaningful or not; rather than resulting in strategic behaviour and

(12)  
Walther et al., 2006

in some cases eventual disengagement.

*Empowerment:* Empowerment in the sense we use the concept is best understood as an approach centred on the motivation of individuals, in this case the motivation of young people to actively engage in their transitions. Motivation requires first the identification with a goal and second a feeling of control in reaching this goal; therefore relating subjective and structural factors. With regard to disadvantaged youth, motivation requires trust towards institutions and professionals, spaces for self-experimentation, (non-formal) learning approaches that start from the individual strengths and interests rather than demanding the compensation of individual deficits (13), and finally and most importantly, the possibility of choice. Active participation within inclusion and active labour market policies in this respect is a paraphrase of empowerment. Empowerment therefore cannot be restricted to including young people in any kind of measure but implies that they are provided with rights and resources that enable them to take over responsibility for their transitions.

## Conclusions

In so far as the Thematic Study is embedded in the context of the Open Method of Coordination of the EU Social Inclusion Process concluding remarks need to be made with respect to the possibilities of mutual learning that arise from comparative policy assessment. On the one hand, it is obvious that mechanisms of path dependency set clear limits to the potential to learn from good practice from a different national context. On the other hand, mutual learning creates a space in which national policies both are influenced by alternative concepts and approaches and also come under the pressure of legitimacy in cases where performance is poor. Such spaces may be further developed in terms of assisting single countries in the search for functional equivalents for good practice that is being successful in other contexts. In order to increase institutional reflexivity however, this implies that mutual learning is not organised top-down only, but also involves national as well as local, public, private and NGO actors.

The presented study has clearly shown that a key factor for the success of policies is defining policy objectives by starting from the individual's life perspective and needs – instead of from an institutional perspective and narrow institutional considerations – with sustainable social integration as the key objective. Acknowledging the structural barriers in front of youth integration, the programmes and measures in support of disadvantaged youth should build upon the biographical perspective of the young person, their subjective orientations, values and skills and allow them to act as key actors in their own transitions, their own social integration. Individual motivation to participate or drop out of counselling, education, training or employment determines the sustainability of policy initiatives. The focus on the individual does not mean to put the blame for failures upon the young person but employing the resources of the individual in the changeable and de-standardised process of growing up and achieving autonomy. When setting the objectives and assessing the implementation of measures, it is important that the possible 'side effects' (14) are taken

(13)  
Pais and Pohl, 2004

(14)  
see Biggart et al, 2002 and  
Mørch et al, 2002



into consideration and policies across sectors are coordinated. A sustainable labour market and social integration of an individual requires the individual support measures such as psychological stabilisation, health-related interventions, solving of housing problems and others besides and often prior to the job search. A highly effective tool for the individualised approach is the face-to-face counselling, acknowledging the perspective of the individual in coping with transition problems not only in the school-to-work passage but also in wider life. Successful social inclusion implies not only fulfilling institutional criteria of placing individuals into training or jobs but also giving access to subjectively meaningful life.

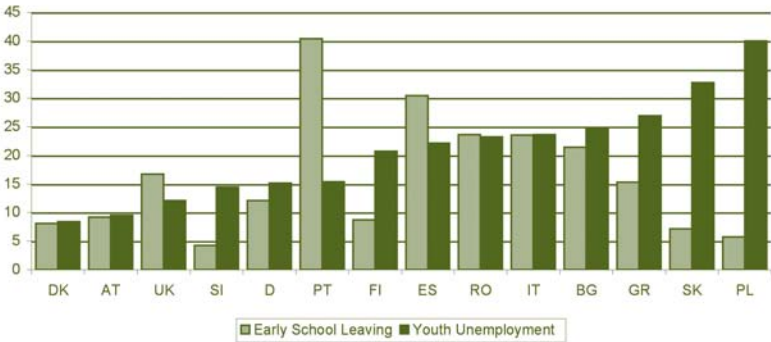
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**Figure 1:** Early school leaving and youth unemployment in 2004  
(Source: Eurostat, LFS)



**Figure 2:** Long-term unemployment (>1 year) among young unemployed under 25 years in 2000 and 2004 (Source: Eurostat LFS)

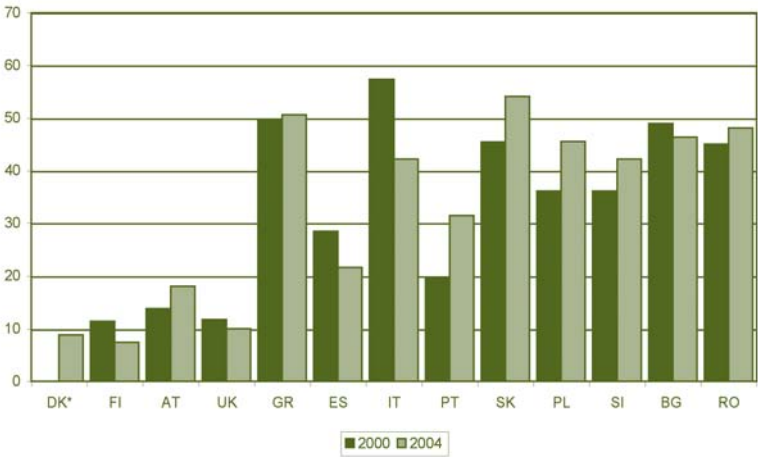


Table 1. **Expenditures on education and ALMP 2002 as % of GDP (Eurostat, OECD)**

Education ALMP	Low (< 5%)	Medium (5 – 6%)	High (> 6%)
Low (< 0,5 %)	GR, RO, SK	AT, PL, PT, UK	SI
Medium (0,5 – 1%)	BG, ES, IT		FI
High (> 1%)			DK



## Counselling as structuring and acting in processes of social and labour insertion of young people: “Deliberating from praxis”.

Social renewal is currently shifting around the so-common foundations that were adopted during the Industrial Era. Its main aim is to build up a post-modern and post-industrial society that demands new approaches towards the interpretation of social phenomena. Youth as transition to adulthood remains conditioned by its intrinsic transformations, thenceforth nothing stays alike. Due to the countless different ways young people live today, it is important to build up brand-new structures that can substitute, rearrange, and carry out the supporting power once achieved by systems, such as families, schools, vocational training, and social institutions in general, which are so worn-out today. These structures located close to areas where young people usually hang out, must be followed by actions that can respond thoroughly to their individual needs. Education is substituted by counselling as well. It becomes the cornerstone for young people throughout their period of transition, particularly for the most disadvantaged.

**Key concepts:** post-modernity, individualization, freedom, choice, life conditions, counselling, autonomy, positive reinforcement, communicative competence.

### 1. Introducción

Today's modern society is intrinsically leading to the transformation of most social systems. Hence economic as well as political, labour market as well as family, and the whereabouts where these are inserted. As Bauman (2002:45) points out, private issues are becoming more and more public and public issues more and more private. Notwithstanding, supporting systems for the integration of young people into social life have become, for some, a sort of “failure”. This has meant the breakdown of mechanisms that once were weighty allies in the integration process of young people into their adult life: such as their families, schools, vocational training, labour market, as well as socializing agents responsible for their arrival to adult life. The picture of chain production where all workers carried out a task to obtain a (common) product utterly depicts the socialization process in which young people were formed, modelled into adult life. The situation today resembles, however, a large billboard filled with mending assorted electrical signs where young citizens, now consumers, must pay careful attention to all distinct sorts of information, worth for the multiple highways of optionality, multiplicity and selection-election.

The current article intends to introduce an urge for the creation of resourceful back-ups, both for the systems that supported (in the Industrial

Era) the transition to adulthood (structures). Also, the actions, strategies, and activities once developed by socializing agents inside an implicative setup and whose purpose is to integrate new generations into (the adults') society. That is, we long to urgently create structures that will cover off, depending on the case, rearrange, or correct the actual structures and establish the strategies of action, responsible for covering, depending on each case, rearranging and correcting those traditionally adopted (education) which have been referred to as counselling. It is high time to ignore those expired structures (the breakdown of the institutions, expressed by G.Simmel and used by Vecchi 2005:19) which have turned, for many young men and women, into an obstacle rather than into a backup, such as family, schools and companies. Equally important is to change the concept of education for one such as counselling, accompaniment, support and advising, which, at last, adjust better to the conditionings of life pro-imposed by post-modernity or by the Post Industrial Era. Moreover, we ought to wonder about the purpose to attain, which in the past was clear: it was reaching adulthood, integrating new generations into societies with a national identity. Would it be possible today to talk of a more fuzzy purpose—less common— if we intend to talk about the individual “project of life”? Bauman puts it as: “Identities are now freely released and it is time for concrete men and women to catch them through their means and intelligence” (2005:68).

## 2. Social transformations go hand in hand with the new living conditions of young people

The current times that we live in are mainly characterized by all the profound changes which society must undergo. More decisive and much deeper than what they apparently seem: changes in the technological field have led to the crashing of borders. Today being in touch with someone who lives on the other side of the globe is an e-mail or phone call away. Likewise, global means of transportation have allowed people from all over, to travel elsewhere in a brief period of time; from India, Japan or Australia, North and South America. The distances once insurmountable today have been reduced, so contact with outer cultures becomes normal.

Also the economy has destroyed national barriers. The capitals are floating around and they escape controls imposed by the States. During the Industrial Era capitals became a key-factor for the stability of the State and jobs, however today it does flee both the control of the State and the working class. Today, we talk about outsourcing of those capitals, and therefore of the jobs. The interceding force of the State lacks yielding. Capitalism is no longer linked and committed to work, the State, or the working class: “The state itself has no longer importance, nor desire, to maintain its solid and impregnable marriage with the nation” (Bauman,2005:65).

The spoken media such as radio, essays, newspapers, and imaginary ones like television, movie industry or documentary programs, etc. show us in real or pre-recorded broadcastings whatever is going on in any given place and town. Funny times along with funny scenarios are presented together or in

consecutive sequences. Whatever we consider as ours, such as our habits, values or ways of living are not unique. They are neither the best things although we consider them as such. Rather, they are something among other things. Thus, our religion is not unique nor the best. Our faith is not the only faith, nor the best one. It is one little thing among many others, and so are our habits and folkloric traditions. Everything turns into relativity and we do not know for certain that whatever we acquaint is better. It does not have to be so. That is, worlds presented at the same time for the eye of the audience sometimes dissociated, sometimes associated with the viewers, for it is of their interest. Whatever happens in any society, economy, inquiry or investment structure is directly linked with the daily life of its citizens.

Moreover, the democratic organization of society implies the freedom to think, to feel, and prize things as desired. There is no unique way of thinking regardless of the efforts. People are free, therefore the leading freedom to think, and so the freedom to act. Also the way to think eases diversity of living, which is demonstrated in several aspects of life.

If in the past, people were determined by their habits, religion, culture or even by their nation. Today instead everyone decides what is better and what is more valued to them (see Canteras, 2003: 179ff).

By that, we the people become what we have been longing for to become and no one can order us what we ought to believe, think or do. As a result everyone is responsible for themselves, responsible for their acts, beliefs and values. There are, then, as many worlds as people, as many visions as people, as many values as people and as many ways of living as people there are. No one will pay attention to people's daily routines or to their family's opinion, nor to the community or society which they belong to.

Together with responsibility, thinking and acting autonomy, there emerges some sort of solitude, some lack of bonds, a lack of common sense, everyone manages themselves as they can. Nothing and nobody can be substituted. This is the way life is, and so is our positioning in it.

### 3. Life standards instead of common values

For want of common values, society offers life standards. That is, life samples that are rather common with exigencies of behaviour turned into fashion, into ways of dressing... Oh, poor that young boy/girl who will not comply with the model! She/he will not be able to achieve new clothes that will fit. Brands predetermine values. Values that have been pined by tedious and subtle publicity. The place that once was occupied by believes, habits and general social values is now filled with fashion, pseudo-values, and appearances. One is what one consumes, dresses, and spends. Reality is now virtual and images now replace reality (reality shows).

Additionally, the knowledge that was considered stable in science until not so long ago, has also become provisional knowledge. Science and technology are continuously changing, making life faster and impossible to be controlled. When we have managed to use a cell phone properly, another



model comes out newer, faster, and more useful. Everything seems to be driven to its expiration, everything is fluid, and everything runs and transforms itself. Even sciences have branched out, so it is no longer known what basic knowledge is. Every little thing changes so quickly, nobody knows for sure what young students must learn, regardless of the plans to assert untouchable contents.

All these transformations that take place in social life have imminent consequences in education. Parents feel rather insecure, they do not know what to do, what to teach their children, which values are good to be transferred. They are aware that the past does no longer interest their children. Also, that they interact better with television, friends, even with teachers at some ages, but not with their own parents. Apparently, parents seem to have lost their authority and whatever they now learn has rather nothing to do with what they learned (1). The same sort of insecurity is affecting teachers from all educative levels. Everything is now questionable, anything will do... contradiction is now part of reality, there is no external instance to us that can determine what is right or what is wrong, no reference that my values are better than your values and vice versa.

#### 4. A society of individuals busy with their own business.

Individuals, now more than ever, are concerned only about themselves. The social institutions are no longer appreciated. Its norms and values are questioned, the society of the chemistry possesses an explosive potential. Because the Industrial Era deflected into a progress of consensus that has enabled both technical and economic development during the first period of the Industrial Era "there where the contract of security has been infringed globally and systematically, respect towards progress is no longer unquestionable" (Beck, 1994:23), progress as such, then, remains questioned.

Thus, it is rather not awkward to talk about a society that is "in permanent crisis". Some speak about a society that has undergone a silent and almost imperceptible revolution. Consequently, double consequences arise. First, individuals are relegated to themselves; therefore citizens must be self-sufficient. Social manners, rituals, habits, shared values, social control and solidarity loosen up their interesting approach as well as their relevance in this society whose individuals mind their own business only. Once more, successful concerns depend on the range of opportunities offered by society itself.

The process of remarking individuals' paths has been referred to as "process of individualization". Individualization implies that people can flee numerous social pressures, countless conditionings of the social medium. They can also freely develop their own lifestyles, without querying someone else's opinion.

Being free, singular and having a broad range of living customs is what second- modernity society brings us. At the same time, however, individuals are trapped inside; they cannot seek help or counselling for their individual situation. Social norms, common lifestyles, and religious and/or moral bonds are no longer appreciated, legitimate or influential. The progress treaty that

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Reading the Organic Law for Education BOE nº 106, of 04-05-06 will facilitate a different view of teaching when compared to the LOGSE, that was predominant in Spanish education throughout the nineties.

in the past characterized the industrial society no longer works today. Individuals ought to invent their own lives, write their own life story (Beck,2001), create identities “until further notice”, or as Bauman puts it (2002:210) cloakroom identities, while the show is on.

## 5. The lack of connection, of sense, and anchorage, demand new structures for young people.

Young girls and boys, who are relatively well established in society, find themselves in large social conditions of break-off. That is, breaking with common life conditions, with regularities proportioned by tradition, family, group of reference, clan, etc. They end up alone facing an individual destiny, along with the risks, conditionings and contradictions of modern society. As a member of society, of a global and fragmented society, boys and girls aimlessly feel relegated to themselves, with everything that goes along with it.

The relegated young people may not find a society of multi-options attractive, without the lineal transition of school-education-studying, working without “the typical trilogy of life” as Timmermman (1998:19) puts it, “getting ready for (professional) life”, “professional activity” and “retirement” (from work). Therefore, they may fall into the arms of cults, or into all sorts of ideologists. As it has been observed in national and international research, they may also hide in private values such as family, personal relations, their closest groups of reference, equal or coeval. Some even may hide themselves in consumption or get to refuse the value of work in a society where working becomes the main way to produce income.

With no security, no safe future, youngsters will hardly establish their own democracy, therefore they will yield to new and older totalitarian regimes.

In this sense, the new creation of supporting structures becomes important, as shown recently in our publications (Hernández/López: 2001, Hernández 2001:119) and international congresses (Pamplona, 2000, 2002, Copenhagen, 2005). We intend not only to build up a certain working and emotional stability for young people in general, but we also desire to catch the attention of social phenomena that go mainly beyond mere jobs. Particularly for young people who, as it has been stated in the latest sociological research (2), do not have the same starting conditions at their disposal.

The great amount of disadvantages indicated in this number of the magazine “Juventud” are currently affecting a relevant number of young people in Spain. Sometimes these young people have been put down by school and have not made proper choices selecting their job. Sometimes they simply didn't have the supporting network of families and surroundings, so they were forced “to be themselves”, forced to manage themselves alone, with no proper economic, social or even psychological conditions.

While the biography of young people has diversified, in some institutions, schools, educational systems, employment centres, the “normal representation” of transition is still currently in force, moreover with self-

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From 1993 to 2003 the INSONA team at the Departamento de Trabajo Social in the Universidad Pública de Navarra carried out the assessment of vocational training and continual training mainly addressed at young people and participated in different researches about young people in Navarra (1997, 2000, 2004 y 2005), in joint projects with other international researchers (1995-1998; 2000-2002).

blame. If youth is understood as moratorium after childhood, and the status of adults as a stable working position and a family, driven towards work for men and towards the family by women (Walter/Stauber 2002: 11ff), sometimes I wonder if the failure of the Lisbon Strategy in regards to young people might be related to the fact that wanting to structure comes out as response to young people's needs, or that not even the proposed actions have taken into account what we call "perspectives of the subject". If as some authors like Bauman, Giddens or Sennet point out, society is washing its hands off individuals, no matter how much we insist on "employment plans" or strategies of action. Nonetheless, if the person is not taken into account, if the vision of the world is not taken into account, if internal motivations are also not taken into account, then good words, plans and means will be broken as if they were stamped against a wall and will never reach the desired point. We are totally aware, through the theory of systems, that social systems as well as living systems turn impervious when they feel threatened, that is, they tend to protect themselves from external influences.

Expectations created through the LOGSE after the creation of the Management Department in the school system, followed by attention to diversity as well as other similar measures, have not turned out as first envisaged. I am afraid that new counselling towards education at the LOE, which insists on educating towards freedom, responsibility, democratic live, solidarity, tolerance, equality, respect and justice, may end up being meaningless, unless it is accompanied by a proper education of or support to the teachers. In my experience of training teachers, training parents, coaching (3) as well as advising school management, I have bumped into keen teaching professionals, who were unfortunately not prepared enough to face these types of activities. I have bumped into threatened and insecure teachers, "un-authorized" by parents who are also "un-authorized"—all of them threatened by harsh bureaucratic and exigencies of success, for it is commonly known that in order to score in life a good education is needed, but first setting the bases at school in order to survive. All this provokes such degree of uncertainty that, most frequently, parents and teachers cannot act but in an authoritarian or inhibited style, simply to survive inside a school system that not only "sickens" students, as Mannoni already states (1990), but that is turning into a playground for psychiatric traumas, stress, and burnout of teachers. Consequently, schools are today, more than ever before filled with tension, grave conflicts among students, sometimes between students and teachers, sometimes even among teachers, management, and parents themselves.

**\*\*Featuring Sennet's (2002:28 ff) conversation with Rico\*\*.** He is a young manager, father, and has been fired. He has had to move out and change places many times. He thinks he is responsible for his luck. However in the conversation he is never asked: Why do you blame yourself for your luck? No one digs deeper into the wound. People, especially young people, tend to believe the official discourse of capitalism. A capitalism fled from social dimensions whatsoever, fled from any social bonds or any links with the State and, through the State, with people and workers. It makes us believe that individuals are responsible for their health-state, their education, their jobs, and ultimately for their luck.

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We know as coaching; the new management counselling process. Coach is the expert who actually advises. The author of the article has been coaching in several schools and social companies for more than 10 years. He has also trained teachers and counsellors in their tutoring and counselling tasks.

Sennet puts it this way: “He (Rico) can’t do much. However, he himself feels responsible for what has happened (being fired) that is beyond his control; literally, he carries the problem as somebody carries his own cross”. Rico happens to be the prototype of the modern worker. The symbolic value of Rico’s story is its universality.

As Kückelhaus (4) (1982) once put it “living was never easy”, however what really makes our current times different from before Sennet specifies it (2000: 30-31): “...uncertainty exists unthreatened of any historical disaster; however it is totally integrated in daily routines of a strenuous capitalism. Instability is rather normal, and Schumpre the businessman makes a good example of ideal “Everyman”...the slogan reading “nothing on the long run” confuses any planned action, fades trusting bonds and commitments, and tear the will apart from behaviour.”

This is certain to most people. Therefore for these young people, mainly for those unemployed, who dropped out of school at early stages, and who suffer all sorts of social drawbacks, some of the consequences are considerably earnest. These young people are not relieved by any new measurements recorded in the “European Youth Pact”, if new structures aren’t previously set up. I myself already once referred to it in an earlier article (see *Revista de Juventud, Injuve*. nº52, 2002: 126) “structures of local support” which must be aimed to reinforce personality, inner motivation of young people, reinforcement of their own resources, (self)-determination of their own objectives and also aimed to make them become “confident” people. But being so, as Bauman (2002:39) reminds us “is not an option, but it is rather a goal”. Young people have nothing to do but be free, although it is not so simple, for ultimately they are constantly reminded that if they are not lucky in life, it is their own fault because they are being dumb, negligent or careless, etc. There comes the ambivalence; either being oneself as an illusion, or being just “oneself”, “individually” as the author says (2003:40) “just like the practical and realistic capacity to self-reaffirming themselves”. It is exactly there where the ambiguity turns into positive approaches towards support and work for young people.

We are not longing to transmit obscure views in regards to young people’s lives. Instead what we try to do is highlight certain mechanisms which use slogans and advertisings to root into society. This biased publicity first gives out solutions to society, and later on they will blame the individuals themselves for not choosing the offered opportunity. Consequently, the number of young people, men and women, that end up left behind, as Bauman (2005) says in “wasted lives” increases more and more or fade away in the silent statistics of drug abuse, countless depressions, anorexia, and bulimia and multiply the cases of harassment among children and adults. We rather share the preoccupation with the European Commission when it says: “European youngsters (...) are the most affected ones by economical transformations, demographic imbalance, globalization and cultural diversity. They are asked to make up new social relations, and new ways to show solidarity. They are asked to get over differences and take something from it, all this in a moment where doubt is all around” as Castells (1998) says. However we think: there are other possibilities and alternatives; doing what has never been possible, that is, turning the person into the focal point, with

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Kückelhaus hold in Aachen in 1982 conversations with heads of different private institutions for education of adults. One of them was the author of the current article. Kückelhaus was a student of A. Einstein, he was an architect, a philosopher, a therapist, a mystic, a great figure whose works are known for its originality, as well as for his admiration and devotion to Heraclitus.

his/her potentials and his/her resources.

In fact, research has shown (see, Informe Juventud España 2004 and Informe Juventud en Navarra 2004) that regardless of the complex social and economic context, young people possess larger adjustment abilities. They also develop their own surviving strategies, such as living with parents—even if employed— working, studying to improve skills to be better qualified, flee home (women case) at 20-23 when psychological and/or financial support is no longer available.

We consider that we can and we must create structures, but also promote actions that will support and strengthen young people's personalities in cultural, social and working processes. We pick up the original idea set out in the White Book on European Youth: "National and European political leaders are in charge to ease adjustment and to reinforce surviving strategies of younger generations, making them a legible part of society" (European Commission, White Book: a new boost for European youth, 2001)

## **6. From supporting structures to individual counselling for young people**

Inside social structures there are actions aimed to satisfy the need of the members of a society. These structures, as Giddens once remarked, are previous to people and tend to flee the individuals who created them. They enable us to carry out actions, but at the same time, they also constrain them, sometimes even, they might go against the purpose for which they were firstly created. Sometimes I wonder if school has actually enabled young people to fulfil their goals in the cultural, social and working field or, if instead, school has become a barrier. That is, I wonder if the system, the educational structure does no longer respond to the 21st century society, but does respond to the necessities that a great deal of young people do no longer possess.

Anyhow, it is certainly not the proper time nor place to settle this discussion, although it would be quite worthwhile. Rather, what we have observed is that the LOE's principle of diversity, and the early "Plan de Acción Tutorial" (General Law of Education of 1970 and the subsequent ones) are responsible for transforming those structures. Some authors referred to this in the 90's as a closed system, in terms of "total societies" as Goffman says, that are close to prisons, hospitals and some other similar institutions.

In this sense we believe it is high time to renovate, change or complement, in any case, develop new structures that will enable young people to immerse themselves in the labour market, having in mind their subjective perspective. Similarly, we need (flexible) structures that can be able to take on those functions that will help young people individually. Thus, we do need structures that feel close to those youngsters, at school, at work, at general social services or at any other place where they might go, such as boys-and-girls clubs, leisure-time institutions, massive events destined to young people, etc.

Full dedication in assisting and counselling processes is not always totally required. It is rather similar to the task done (or that could be done) by

professionals at school. Hence, together with school tasks they would perform counselling and tutoring tasks.

In the Biotech-dual (5) Project, which we talked about in number 38 of the “Revista de Estudios de Juventud” (1996) we developed a tutoring system, in the scientific sense of the concept. The project consisted on reintegrating back to society 22 young boys and girls, over 17 and 19 years old. The tutoring system included teachers at class or similar (19 teachers), 2 women in charge of tutoring at the centre where academic learning was taking place, the heads of the training process in the companies where the pilot experience was first started. Obviously, all that was supervised by a University tutor belonging to the coordination team, a lady in charge of coordinating tutorials and their suitable locations (see, Hernández/López 1998: 87-176). Summing up, we created a tutoring network that was able to help young people in any chosen location.

## 7. Counselling by supporting and positively reinforcing young people's personalities

Proper structures also need actions. This means that passing norms and laws that refer to the construction of structures is not enough. Including concepts, more or less popular, such as counselling, tutoring, transversality, diversity, personality, and other similar ones, hide behind meaningless fashions. They have no tradition, no study, no experimentation, no training nor any testing beyond. From my experience training tutors for schools, school counsellors, advisers for conflicts and labour relations, internationally known as supervising, (see, Hernández 1991, 2001, 2003, 2005) and other professionals (social workers, social educators) I am aware that without a proper investigation that acts as guarantee, these professionals find themselves facing a huge task in case they might feel prepared. In fact many teachers from different courses openly admitted that they do not long for being tutors, although they are obliged by the system. If they could avoid it, they would do so. I am definitely against the fact that these tasks can be accomplished without proper training, without proper experimenting and continuous study. Moreover, if teachers are forced to do tutoring, it will become a drawback for the tutoring process itself. It is time to take education systems seriously, because sometimes it turns to an obstacle rather than to any sort of aid for their labour and social integration. This hypothesis about work might clash with other established hypotheses, which do not always happen to be more proven than the other ones. Some of these originate in the idea that if youngsters do not reach their self-imposed goals on graduating from High school or finding a job it is due to their own fault. This should reassure the conscience of many of the people in charge, since the hypothesis would leave them out of any fault. Latest tendencies on blaming subjects, blaming the individuals for their misery is quietly overspread, as many post-modern authors are remarking. Social contradictions become individual tasks. Free from drawbacks of tradition, from social roles, individuals in our society remain unprotected, “the individual became fragile and vulnerable as never before” (Bauman 2006:10).

Developing young people's identity in current times has turned into a

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The Biotech-Dual project carried out by INSONA from the Dpto. de Trabajo Social de la Universidad Pública de Navarra between 1995 and 1998, in the frame of the European Youth Program, was considered by the E.U. as one of the best 10 works ever done in Spain. It was led by the author of this article. Its main goal was to introduce dual training, which is a German training program, in Navarra. There were 22 participants over 17 and 19 years old who had been expelled from school, jobless and lacked education. All of them were later reintegrated into work or education, some of them even combined both. They actually reintegrated themselves (see, Hernández/López 1998).

massive task to the individuals themselves. Education, broadly speaking, far beyond school, workplace, relations with social institutions is no longer up-to-date because there no longer are common aims, or common values, or common beliefs, or common traditions. Also, there are no more defined social roles such as man, woman, youngster that are prearranged and that can be useful for young people to be guided. In these new circumstances and differentiated social conditionings, it becomes rather impossible to commonly fulfil an education project. If there is no common goal, where should the education action be aimed at? Individualization, as Bauman (2002:37) says, simply consists on “changing human identity from something that has been “given” into a “task”. This task is exactly the goal of counselling. Following, I want to show what is counselling and the abilities that it requires.

## 8. The objective of counselling is that young people know themselves

Let us start this section with a short example from my practice of teaching social workers. Juanita is a 14-year old girl who has been interned in a youth attention centre because of consumption and traffic of narcotics. Currently she has to fulfil a sentence of two months in an internment centre. She is prohibited to have connections to the outside of the centre before moving to the open treatment phase. One of the social workers in the centre, - one who has a good relationship with the girl - bumps into Juana on the street when she is strolling around with her boyfriend, although fulfilling the strict internment period. The girl has fled the centre. After the effusive greetings the professional helper is left with a dilemma in between the institution, that demands the girl should be denounced, and the girl's plead that she should not be turned in and that the police, the internment centre chief nor her family should be informed. The social worker is inclined to choose the first option, to notify the centre so that eventually someone will go and take her back. Her argument is “I had to fulfil my duties”.

Here is the story so far. The reader may imagine the professional's as well as the escaped girl's anguish. The social worker's intervention is “normal” as she has to comply with the demands of the institution, but she has also lost a golden opportunity to act otherwise. How? In my task as a teacher of social workers, I invite you to reflect. My first question is, how do you feel with your intervention?

- Bad, replies the social worker.
- What does bad mean for you, I ask her.

The worker tells me that she was feeling as pressed against a wall. To put it in Wazlawickian terms (Palo Alto School) she was tied from both sides (the double tie). She has no solution, whatever she does will be wrong. If she tells nothing to the centre, then the institution may punish her. If she denounces the girl, she will lose her confidence.

The discomfort indicates that she did not do as she should have, because

even believing she was doing right (formally), she knew she was “betraying” the girl. The case could no longer be remedied, but what could be learned for the future, for similar situations?

The social worker was left without an alternative behaviour to act with, because she was in the field of “obligations”. If she would place herself in the field of possibilities, she probably would have found other options of intervention. During the reflection session we search for alternatives of conduct that would strengthen the personality of the “runaway girl”. This means a conduct not from the educative perspective which supposes an objective (more or less shared) as to the direction of education, but from the establishment of counselling. Counselling focuses its intervention in the person of the subject and in his/her way to live and value life, its happenings, its phenomena, their decisions and eventually their will. An analysis of the case from the educative perspective would lead us to find that the girl has broken laws (imposed) and for that she must be punished and in any case to be taken again to the correctional institution. This way, she will think, there will come a moment when she ultimately accepts it and will end up adapting to the rules of society. Which rules and why? This is the question.

I can imagine that someone would answer to this question saying that the girl must fulfil the norms of coexistence, the norms of health and utterly the institution and the social workers also have to substitute her will for “her own good”. However, we all know that there can be no change without the will of the person who “has to” change. Moreover we know that the imposed change is more likely to close the systems, social and also the living - as are those of persons -, making the change impossible or even reaffirming the unwanted behaviour. Despite all this, we act as if the hypothesis of pressure, sanction and punishment were very effective “weapons”.

The counselling we favour, stems from the freedom of the girl, even if she is an internee. It stems from her willingness to change or it will not be decisive. This is why we can take advantage of her desire and anxiousness to liberty for our helping work, to move from an individuality *de jure* to a *de facto* in which according to Bauman (2002: 44) “ the subject should take control of his/her destiny and make decisions according to what he/she really wants to do”. On top of that, the case shows the resources the girl has: a great capacity to achieve what she wants. Mocking surveillance, mobilizing the police and her own family she has surpassed all objectives in order to be together with her boyfriend. Can we consider her strategic capabilities and skills of action as important elements of her personality? Without a doubt we can. She has proven thus with her escape from the centre in spite of the surveillance, teachers and other personnel. The unexpected encounter with the teacher would have been an opportunity to do things otherwise. A great occasion to tell the girl that when she wants to achieve something, she is a professional in doing so. To praise her capacities, her skills and her practises and even to negotiate her return to the centre in exchange of not saying anything, thus establishing conditions and security to the girl's return. With this action, a base would have been laid to the change of objectives: rehabilitation from drug consume. When she wants to achieve something she achieves it.



The contract as an instrument of reinsertion would have been another peculiarly interesting instrument in this case, reciprocate engaging in determined actions. In an article such as this there is no room for a more ample reflection, but it is clear that counselling means creating a change by leaning on positive aspects. It dispenses with the negative interpretations of people's lives, takes into account their personal and individual valuations and constructs its future action with the little advice the counsellor offers the patient.

## 9. Communicative abilities decide upon the type of assessment young people will need

In order to do so, it is utterly necessary to go deep into the scene, into the map of reality (6) that the person in need holds about life, about the world and society, as well as his/her own self-conception and conception of others. It will be only from that point, after sharing his/her space that the counsellor will be able to act properly, so that the person extends, modifies and changes the map.

As it was mentioned in one of my latest publications (López/Hernández 2001:54) during the counselling period, the focal point is not "the information that the counselling team has, or the fear that we all (as professionals or adults) can feel in regards to the situation of the young people, nor is anything external to them...Hence, we do intend so much that young people receive large amounts of information about the outdoor situation. Instead, we as counsellors and educators, must try to see what the young person comprehends and values in his/her life, his/her feelings, hopes, fears... This way the counsellor will be aware of the inner world of the youngster, therefore, the youngster will know him/herself more accurately". The exact same guidelines go for all professionals who can or could somehow be in relation with the youngster, in processes of socio-labour immersion. Defining counselling this way, means that the centre is constituted by young people themselves. Reason for which we happened to wonder about the abilities that are required to manage this job, this professional practice which, following, will briefly be summarized in three aspects: Learn how to listen, learn how to listen to oneself, and learn how to strengthen positive aspects of young people's personality and help them to develop strategies that will permit to reach their goals. All these capacities are called "communicative competences" (Hernández 1991 and 2000). They require as well processes of study, drifting apart from clients and their personal situations so they can manage (themselves in) their own troubles (see Hernandez 2005: 367 and others).

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The authors Bandler y Grinder (1980: 27) held the neuro-linguistic view. They say that "each one creates a representation of the world where we are living, that is, a map, a model used to generate our behaviour".

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## MATERIALS

Young people and constellations of disadvantage in Europe



## Selection of documentary references Young people and constellations of disadvantage in Europe

This list includes books, magazine articles and documents obtained from different sources, which have been recently added to and selected by the data base of the Youth Institute Library.

Should you be interested in obtaining any of these documents, you may request a copy of those photocopiable materials, in accordance with the current legislation, or you may also carry out other retrospective researches by sending your enquiries to: BIBLIOTECA DE JUVENTUD. Marqués de Riscal, 16.- 28010 MADRID. Tel.: +34 913637820-1; Fax: +34 913637811. E-mail: biblioteca-injuve@mtas.es

You may also check this magazine or previous issues of Magazines on Youth Studies, as well as the Library News section, on the Institute web page: <http://www.injuve.mtas.es>

### **Bajo nivel de instrucción de la juventud.** — [S.l.]: [s.n.], 2001

In: Socioprofessional international today. — no. 41 (August-September 2001); p. 159-160

It provides data on students who drop out from school in the European Union, and it especially highlights the level of education in Italy as one of the lowest ones in Europe.

### **Colectivos desfavorecidos en el mercado de trabajo y políticas activas de empleo** / Lorenzo Cachón Rodríguez (Director), Yolanda Alfaro Peral, Jesús Cruces Aguilera. Madrid Complutense University. — Madrid: Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, 2004. 318 p.: tables. — (Reports and Studies. Employment series; 21). Bibliogr.: p.313-318

One of the main objectives of the community social policies in the battle against social exclusion and one of the frameworks to be boosted in employment, both for the main role it plays in people's lives and in social roles, as well as for the great transformations suffered in the European employment systems, which make some groups become marginalised. ISBN 84-8417-166-3

### **De los programas de garantía social a los programas de iniciación profesional: pensamiento del profesorado y del alumnado** / coordinated by Antonio Sánchez Asín. — Barcelona: Laertes, 2004. 120 p.: graph. — (Psychopedagogy; 109)

A theoretical study about legal and psychopedagogical mechanisms underlying and determining social and professional exclusion in students,

through the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data obtained with questionnaires given to secondary school students and teachers on the implementation of the Vocational Training Research Programmes of the University of Barcelona.  
ISBN 84-7584-524-X

Gericke, Thomas

**Duale Ausbildung für Benachteiligte: eine Untersuchung zur Kooperation von Jugendsozialarbeit und Betrieben** / Thomas Gericke. — München: Deutsches Jugendinstitut, 2003. 144 p.: tab. — (Übergänge in Arbeit ; 3)  
Research for professional cooperation between those young people in worse conditions and businesses, where the conclusions drawn show that the small and medium companies obtain better results when they train their young employees in their post, thus obtaining a highly-qualified work force, as the training centres do not offer such specific courses.

Chisholm, Lynne

**Education, employment and the situation of young people** / Lynne Chisholm.

— [S.l.] : s.n], 2001. 5 h.

Contribution to the public audience on youth. European Parliament, Youth, Educations, Media and Sports, 24 April 2001.

Based on different recent studies made by the European Union on youth, several conclusions are presented on the transition of education to employment in young people, their addition to the work force and the appropriateness of their studies to the current demands of the labour market.

**El fomento de cualificaciones claves a través de las actividades deportivas entre jóvenes desfavorecidos** / Claudia Tunsch... [et al.] . — Liubiana: Slovenia Sports Office, 2005. 181 p.

On the cover: "Job & Sports" network In order to achieve the social adaptation of young people, it suggests the implementation of an integration system through professional expertise in sports activities that will help them get an attractive job and rejoin society.

ISBN 961-91512-5-9

**El fracaso escolar: una perspectiva internacional** / coordinators: Alvaro Marchesi, Carlos Hernández Gil. — Madrid: Alianza, 2003. 334 p. — (Alianzaensayo; 206) Research promoted by the Spanish Modernisation Foundation.

The complex coordination between education and work focuses on proposals made by international experts, who have gathered to find an explanation for the failure that over 30 per cent of young people encounter as they are not able to go beyond secondary education.

ISBN 84-206-2955-3

Marchesi, Álvaro

**El fracaso escolar en España: Documento de trabajo 11/2003** / Alvaro

Marchesi Ullastres. — [Madrid]: [Alternatives Foundation], D.L. 2003. 46 h. Photocopied sample.

It intends to approach the understanding of school failure from a multidimensional perspective (sociocultural, familiar and educational), and makes several proposals to try to compensate for the difficulties found in learning and school failure in Spain.

ISBN 84-96204-08-1

**European youth forum recommendations on: social protection and young people in Europe** / adopted by the General Assembly Brussels/Bruxelles (Belgium) 19-21. October 2000. — [Brussels]: [Jeunesse Youth Forum], [2000]. 6 h.

Assembly 0708-2K- FINAL

If gives results of the recommendations made in terms of social protection for young people provided in the European Youth Forum. Some of the recommendations made offer training and education courses to obtain better professional integration, promote health and good habits and avoid social exclusion, by offering strong social assistance in the countries of the European Union.

Haji-Kella, Mohamed

**Formation à l'émancipation des responsables de jeunesse minoritaire au niveau européen** / par Mohamed Haji-Kella . — [S.l.]: [s.n.], 2001  
In: Coyote. — no. 4 (juin 2001); p. 11-14

A new factor in working with marginalised sectors of young people consists in training for emancipation. However, this kind of job does not make sense, especially at a European level, if its participants do not trust it and do not feel identified and battle against the types of personal, cultural and social oppression.

**Gesundheit und Behinderung im Leben von Kindern und Jugendlichen** / Horst Hackauf... [et al.] . — München: Deutsches Jugendinstitut, 2002. 562 p.: tables. — (Materialen zum Elften Kinder- und Jugendbericht; Band 4).  
Bibliography

Research about young people and teenagers in Germany, which analyses the factors affecting youth regarding health and social welfare, family relations, educational situation, development of identity, action of social and health services, etc., paying special attention to the situation of those young people in worse situations.

ISBN 3-87966-424-2

**Get in!: report on the Youth Convention on Social Exclusion and Employment** / organised by the European Youth Forum at the European Economic and Social Committee on 21 February 2000. — [Brussels]: [Jeunesse Youth Forum], [2000]. 75 p.

The idea is to organise a convention on social employment amongst young people, which arises from the existing concern in the European Youth Forum about unemployment amongst the young, late emancipation and low levels of social participation on behalf of young people in



political decisions. Therefore, a forum is created to exchange ideas, and participants state how they see the future of Europe, and especially how it will influence work. The key words are: geographical mobility, temporality and professional instability, and the increasing social integration amongst emigrants.

Ministry of Work and Social Affairs

**II Plan nacional de acción para la inclusión social del Reino de España:**

July-2003 - July-2005. — Madrid: Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, General Subdirectorato for Publications, [2003]. 52 p

This second plan, in accordance with the European objectives for battling against poverty and social exclusion, is aimed at promoting participation in employment, access to resources, goods and services for everyone, acting in favour of the people and groups in the worst conditions and motivating all public and private agents in this field.

Anderson, Mette

**Immigration youth and the dynamics of marginalization / Mette Anderson**

Young. — v. 11, n. 1 (2003); p. 74-89. ISSN 1103-3088. Bibliogr.: p. 86-89

It explores the tradition, process of marginalisation and social inequality affecting young people in Norway and other societies in north-eastern Europe. Aside from the typical aspects about social inequality, amongst others, here it presents the important topic of respect between majorities and minorities.

**Including all with the “Youth” programme: An inspirational booklet. —**

Luxembourg: European Community Official Publications Office, 2004. 32 p.: phot.

The European Commission, in cooperation with the Centre for Training Resources (SALTO) and National Agencies, has published an “inspiring brochure” on the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the Youth Programme. It contains some advice and tips on “work for the inclusion in the field” and samples of good practice through social integration, volunteer work, informal training, creativity and intercultural dialogue.

ISBN 92-894-5680-9

<http://www.salto->

[youth.net/static/downloads/toolbox\\_downloads.php/234/including-all\\_en.pdf](http://www.salto-youth.net/static/downloads/toolbox_downloads.php/234/including-all_en.pdf) Access to the full text

Fitzpatrick, Suzanne

**Including young people in urban regeneration: a lot to learn / Suzanne**

Fitzpatrick, Annette Hastings and Keith Kintrea. — Bristol: The Policy Press, 2000. 37 p. Bibliogr.: p. 37

Study of twelve social initiatives carried out in Great Britain aimed at young people aged 16 to 25 who are living in deprived urban areas, and whose objective is to change their environment. The studies analyses the relation between the needs of these young people and the objectives proposed, the effectiveness of the mechanism used to involve people in

these initiatives and the real participation of young people in decisions in order to change their living conditions.

ISBN 1-86134-119-9

**Indicateurs généraux sur le passage de l'école à la vie active: le passage de l'école à la vie professionnelle chez les jeunes Européens: partie I /**

Communautés européennes; Eurostat. — Luxembourg: Office des Publications

Officielles des Communautés Européennes, 2003. 7 h.: graph. — (Theme 3: Population et Conditions Sociales; 4/2003). Preceding tit. Statistiques en bref Also available in English on the Eurostat web.

It studies the transition of young people in their training stage towards professional life. The indicators obtained allow to establish a comparison between the processes for social integration in different European countries. As general results we have that educational training does not match the demands of first jobs, which are usually unstable and temporary.

**Inserción social y profesional de personas desfavorecidas.** — Luxembourg: European Community Official Publications Office, 2003. 13 p. — (Leonardo da Vinci. Good Practices; 6)

The Leonardo da Vinci projects are experimental projects carried out by the European Union, by a group of experts and professionals concerned about providing - in their field of specialisation - answers to very specific needs, such as the insertion process for people in worse conditions in Europe.

ISBN 92-894-2175-4

**Integration de tous les jeunes dans la société par l'éducation et la formation. Volume 2: compendium des projets /** Commission Européenne.

—Luxembourg: Office des Publications Officelles des Communautés Européennes, 2000. 202 p.

Collection of some projects from each of the fifteen members of the European Union whose objective is to socially integrate young people through education and training. Each project makes a brief description of its contents, the material and human resources used and the integration in the project of associations and organisations.

ISBN 92-828-7631-4

Conference Integration de Tous les Jeunes Dans la Societe Par L'éducation et la Formation. 1998. Brussels

**Integration de tous les jeunes dans la société par l'education et la formation. Volume 1: Actes de la conférence.** Bruxelles, les 7 et 8 mai

1998. — Luxembourg: Office des publications officielles des Communautés européennes, 2000. 189 p. Including annexes

The different contributions made to the debate on the integration of young people in society through education and training, where the main topic is what policies to apply in order to solve the issue of the situation of those young people dropping out from school. Additionally, it analyses

the different preventive strategies in the heart of educational systems, as well as several topics dealing with pedagogical intervention, new technologies, validation and certification, etc.

ISBN 92-828-7633-0

Pluja, Marta

**Jóvenes: vivir un mañana diferente** / Marta Plujá . — [S.l.]: [s.n.], 2001

In: Cáritas. — no. 420 (October 2001); p. 18-21

It deals with the initiative posed by the Cáritas charity to train young teenagers from destructured social and family environments, with a high rate of school failure, psychological flaws or learning difficulties, but who have a clear idea in mind: the need to work; various workshops are organised where aside from a job they learn about new values.

ISSN 1138-2139

Bendit, René

**Jóvenes en situación de desventaja social: políticas de transición entre la construcción social y las necesidades de una juventud vulnerable** / René

Bendit and Dermot Stokes. Youth studies magazine. — no. 65 (June 2004); p. 115-131 . ISSN 0211-4364. Bibliography

The educational treatment of young people in worse conditions involves a clear definition of the different types of groups that can be included in this definition, while evaluating the risk of mistaking ones for others and achieving the opposite result.

<http://www.mtas.es/injuve/biblio/revistas/pdfs/numero65/temas4.pdf>

Access to the full text

Ballesterio, Fernando

**La brecha digital: el riesgo de exclusión en la Sociedad de la Información** / Fernando Ballesterio. — Madrid: Retevisión Foundation, 2002. 174 p.:

graph. — (Retevisión Foundation Library) Bibliogr.: p. 173-174

Analysis of the influence of new information and communication technologies in today's society, where it approaches three key elements that act as catalysers in this transformation of a post-industrial Information Society: the technological revolution, known as the new economy and globalisation. Measures are offered to overcome this digital gap that will appear shortly due to the existing inequality to access this new dimension.

García Montalvo, José

**La formación de los jóvenes** / José García Montalvo and José M<sup>a</sup> Peiró. — [S.l.]: [s.n.], 2001. In: Human capital. — no. 8 (Feb. 2001); p. 1-8.

Monographic issue Tables Bibliogr.: p. 8

It makes an analysis of the evolution of the educational levels of young people and assesses several aspects connected with studies in order to understand the transition of the educational system into the labour market. Thus, it approaches aspects such as the unemployment rates for the different educational levels, the causes why a large number of young people have not been able to study what they wanted to, the reason why

they drop out, etc. This study includes samples of young people from the Community of Valencia and the cities of Madrid and Barcelona.

Viñuela Hernández, María Paulina

**La formación para la transición a la vida activa** / María Paulina Viñuela Hernández Parents and teachers. — no. 272 (Nov./Dec. 2002); p. 18-23. ISSN: 0210-4679

Several comments are made about certain aspects on training for employment (such as Vocational Training Centres and Workshops, the National Plan for Professional Training and Insertion -FIP-, Social Guarantee Programmes) that allow us to approach the professional transition process for young people who have completed their primary education but have difficulties to continue their training or to find their first job.

Davia Rodríguez, M<sup>a</sup> Angeles

**La inserción laboral de los jóvenes en la Unión Europea: un estudio comparativo de trayectorias laborales** / María Ángeles Davia Rodríguez. —Madrid: Economic and Social Council, 2004. 249 p. — (Studies; 164)

Young people have encountered a professional scene where instability is the main character, as opposed to the fixed jobs that used to be common for the previous generations.

The failure of education, permanent professional rotation and few expectations in the future are the most popular topics in this PhD. ISBN 84-8188-223-2

**La integración sociolaboral de jóvenes tutelados.** — [Murcia]: [General Youth Management], D.L. 2001. 147 p.

Collection of different experiences carried out in the field of socioprofessional insertion, within the Youthstart initiative of the European Social Fund in the national territory, which are aimed at young people undergoing social difficulty.

Cachon Rodriguez, Lorenzo

**Las políticas de transición: estrategia de actores y políticas de empleo juvenil en Europa** / Lorenzo Cachón Rodríguez. Youth Studies Magazine. — no. 65 (June 2004); p. 51-63 . ISSN 0211-4364. Bibliography

A comparative study through six European countries of the different paths followed in the implementation of educational policies to access employment for young people in those countries, with the stages, professional qualification levels, flexibility of the salary cost and the results obtained.

<http://www.mtas.es/injuve/biblio/revistas/pdfs/numero65/temas4.pdf>  
Access to the full text

Yndigegn, Carsten

**Life planning in the periphery life chances and life perspectives for young people in the Danish-German border region** / Carsten Yndigegn Young. — vol. 11, no. 3 (August 2003); p. 235-251. ISSN 1103-3088

Description of the situation of young people living in the Danish-German border, where they suffer the risk of becoming marginalised, as only some of them move to urban centres to improve their life opportunities, whereas the majority just accept the opportunities they find in their neighbourhood, as a result of the changes involved in globalisation.

**Los jóvenes europeos recién salidos del sistema educativo y los efectos de la inadecuación de los empleos en el mercado de trabajo**

Report on international socioprofessional information. — no. 96 (June 2003); p. 49-57

The transition from school to active life is often considered as a "temporary ritual" through which young people start in the professional world. This transition is developed in stages and is a stressful and uncertain period.

Firstly, young people who complete their studies have to compare themselves with those who already have a position in the labour market in order to get one of the posts available. In addition, these young people often find jobs that are not really suitable for their qualifications.

**Misleading trajectories: integration policies for young adults in Europe? /**

Andreas Walther, Barbara Stauber [eds.]... [et al.] . — Opladen [Germany]: Leske + Budrich, 2002. 194 p.: graph, tab. Bibliogr.: p. 179-189

Comparative analysis of the situation of young people in Europe and the different policies carried out in various systems in the European Union for the social addition of this group. It makes a specific study on educational terms, by analysing concepts, perspectives and trajectories in each country, as well as their advantages and disadvantages and the relation of training and the labour market.

ISBN 3-8100-3450-9

Lannelli, Cristina

**Origines sociales, niveau d'instruction et conséquences sur le marché du travail: le passage de l'école à la vie professionnelle chez le jeunes Européens, partie III /**

Cristina Lannelli. — Luxembourg: European Community Official Publications Office, 2002. 7 h.: graph. — (Statistiques en bref. Population et conditions sociales; Theme 3- 6/2003)

Research describing graphs and analysing data shown by the majority of European young people who have completed their training between the ages of 18 and 24. Comparative analyses are made between the training levels of young people in different countries of the Union, and other variables are analysed, such as the influence of parents in training and the degree chosen, as well as in the professional future of their children.

Vries, Hayo de

**Participation des usagers aux services d'aide à la jeunesse: realentie par l'insuffisance de l'éducation et de la formation des éducateurs sociaux [ou des travailleurs sociaux]? /** par Hayo de Vries. — [S.l.]: [s.n.], 2001

In: Coyote. — n. 4 (juin 2001); p. 15-17

An essential objective of social educators working with European young

people who are suffering from social marginalisation is to make them active citizens. Using the opportunities offered by the "Youth" programme regarding the number of projects it is carrying out with young people, several ways of promoting participation are studied.

Reiter, Herwig

**Past, present, future: biographical time structuring of disadvantaged young people** / Herwig Reiter Young. — vol. 11, no. 3 (August 2003); p. 253-279. ISSN 1103-3088

Description of the problems encountered today by young people in worse conditions to create a prosperous future and establish stable life conditions in a society undergoing constant change.

**Políticas activas de empleo**/ Jean-Michel Bonvin... [et al.] Social policies in Europe. – no. 11 (July 2002); p. 5-142 Monographic work Bibliography It contains: Market and democratisation: an intentional convergence? / Jean-Michel Bonvin; The crisis of the nineties / D. Koob; Active policies in the work market / J.P. Tabin...

Given the current circumstances of temporality, precariousness and instability in the European labour market, the authors wonder whether it is possible to design a professional insertion that does not involve the threat of the cancellation of social financing for ephemeral stimulation, becoming stable, qualified and sustainable employment. It also questions the role of the government in socioprofessional and active employment policies.

Soriano Diaz, Andrés

**Procesos y factores de exclusión social juvenil: bajo el eje de la desigualdad** / Andrés Soriano Díaz. The young: youth studies magazine. — no. 14 (May-August 2001); p. 96-109. ISSN 1405-406X. Bibliography It presents how economic globalisation causes the dissolution of the state of wellbeing and how the social exclusion process starts there. It considers that capital, as a social block, surpasses the National Status and therefore is not willing to be subjected to the restrictions of accumulation of economic benefits configured from social pacts, which define them as wellbeing pacts. It is believed that those social groups in worse conditions as a result of destructuring process are formed by young people, women and the least qualified sectors.

**Regional labour force differences among young people in the European Union: (3/2001/E/nº 7)** / A.E. Green, D.W. Owen and R.A. Wilson. — [Luxembourg]: European Commission, 2001. 109 h.: tab., graph. — (Eurostat working papers. Population and social conditions; Theme 3) It researches on the conception of transition from education to work, affected by demographical, social and economic factors, and it also studies the evolution of youth employment in the last few years, where the unemployment rate, precariousness and the high percentage of qualified labour force has made professional integration a difficult task for most young people in the European Union. It describes, on the other

hand, the work force according to regional variations and the professional profiles on regional economy.

European Union Council

**Resolución del Consejo y de los Representantes de los Gobiernos de los Estados Miembros Reunidos en el Seno del Consejo: de 14 de diciembre de 2000 relativa a la integración social de los jóvenes, (2000/C 374/04)**

. — [s.l.]: [s.n.], [2001] 3 h.

Extracted from the Official Diary of European Communities (2000/ C 374/04)

Legal text made by the European Union that regulates in favour of the social integration of young people in member states. The objective is to fight social discrimination and favour the integration of young people in the community, through the improvement of their life conditions and the development of social policies in terms of education, employment, participation and health.

Wolbers, Maarten H. J.

**School leavers in Europe and the labour market effects of job mismatches: youth transition from education to working life in Europe, part II** / Maarten H.J. Wolbers . — Luxembourg: European Community

Official Publications Office, 2002. 7 h.: graph. — (Statistics in focus. Population on social conditions; Theme 3/2003)

Population on social conditions; Theme 3/2003)

The school-employment transition is a process filled with uncertainty and disappointment.

Aside from luck and professional experience, we must add the difficulties found to get a first job and the mismatching between the theoretical training of the young and the reality present in the labour market. In many cases the concept learned does not match the particular experience to be developed at work.

**The Second chance schools: the results of a European pilot project /**

Directorate General for Education and Culture = Les écoles de la deuxième chance: resultats d'un projet européen / Direction Générale Éducation et Culture. — [Brussels]: European Commission, [2000?] 126 p.: tab. Text in English and Spanish. Annexes

Report analysing the results of the European project entitled "Schools for a Second Opportunity" (1996-2000) in the different countries of the European Union.

Report analysing the results of the European project entitled "Schools for a Second Opportunity" (1996-2000) in the different countries of the European Union.

It is a pilot project carried out by various teaching centres that have young people who did not complete Secondary Education for social and educational integration, and who decide to start studying again.

**Together: guía para la motivación por el aprendizaje y prevención del fracaso escolar** / European Commission. — Madrid: Puente de Vallecas Municipal Association, 2003. 64 p. Version in Italian, Portuguese and English.

The increasing school failure has motivated the publication of a guide to coordinate various factors intervening in the learning process: the family,

the school, the environment, the media... it also establishes the addressees, objectives, contents, methodology and resources suitable for their realisation.

Aguilar Manjon, Ana M<sup>a</sup>

**Trabajo social y personas sin hogar** / Ana M<sup>a</sup> Aguilar Manjón... [et al.] . — [S.I.]: [s.n.], 2001 In: Social work today. — Monographic work (second semester 2001); p. 5-157 Monographic work

Includes: European document: A verdict on social exclusion and the homeless / Regional Committee of the E.U.- Social action with the homeless in Spain / Ana M<sup>a</sup> Aguilar Manjón.- The homeless in the Madrid Integration Programme / Josefina Vegas Barriuso.- Approximation to reality by the homeless in Madrid through different studies. / M<sup>a</sup> Jesús Utrilla Moya.- Legal framework of attention to the homeless / Darío Pérez Madera.- The homeless: from exclusion to insertion / Esperanza Linares Márquez de Prado...

Monographic work about the homeless that deals with this problem from different perspectives, offering from the European verdict about social exclusion and the homeless to the experience in Shelters, including the legal framework for the attention to the "homeless". The idea is to learn about the situation of this broad and varied group and promote ways towards integration.

ISSN 1134-0991

**Transiciones modernizadas y políticas de desventaja: Países Bajos, Portugal, Irlanda y jóvenes inmigrantes en Alemania** / Manuela Du-Bois-Reymond... [et al.]. — [S.I.]: [s.n.], 2002 In: Youth studies magazine. — no. 56 (March 2002) ; p. 55-75 Tables Bibliography.: p. 77-86

It revises the vulnerability patterns and the risk of social exclusion attached to the corresponding transition systems and the policies aimed at enabling professional integration. Different national reports have been studied, integrating three levels for analysis: the institutional level (the role of the state in educational policies, training and labour market), the ideological level and the biographical level (how the young experience the changes in educational, training and professional systems).

ISSN 0211-4364

Du Bois-Reymond, Manuela

**Transiciones tipo yo-yo y trayectorias fallidas: hacia las Políticas integradas de transición para los jóvenes europeos** / Manuela du Bois-Reymond and Andreu López Blasco. Youth studies magazine. — no. 65 (June 2004); p. 11-29. 0211-4364. Bibliography

The policies for the integration of the young in the professional world have undergone significant changes in relation to previous decades that lead towards the opposite effect to social integration. For this reason it has become necessary to revise these transformations and search for other policies adjusted to current demands.

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**Young people and contradictions of inclusion: towards integrated transition policies in Europe** / edited by Andreu López Blasco, Wallace McNeish and Andreas Walther. — Bristol: The Policy Press, 2003. X, 292 p. Critique on current youth policies on education and employment carried out in Europe, which evaluates effectiveness through confrontation with experiences, needs and guidance of young people.  
ISBN 1-86134-524-0

**Youth unemployment and health: a comparison of six European countries** / Thomas Kieselbach [ed.] in collaboration with Kees van Heeringen... [et al.] . — Opladen [Germany]: Leske + Budrich, 2000. 232 p.: graph., tab. Vol. 1 of the YUSEDER programme. Including annexes. Bibliogr.: p. 207-227  
Empirical analyses on long-lasting youth unemployment and its consequences on social health, based on the situation of three countries in the north of Europe and another three in the south. In the comparative study it analyses the concepts of unemployment, training, interest and social integration.  
ISBN 3-8100-2762-6

**Youth unemployment and social exclusion: comparison of six European Countries** / Thomas Kieselbach [ed.] in collaboration with Kees von Heeringen... [et al] . — Opladen [Germany]: Leske + Budrich, 2000 320 p.: graph, tab. Bibliogr.: p. 285-314  
Comparative report on youth unemployment and social exclusion in the north and south of Europe, where it studies the difficulties of integration for young people, both in society and professional life. It analyses the most important risk factors in each country, social policies for youth and the development of the labour market for this group, distinguishing between the male and female unemployment rates.  
ISBN 3-8100-2939-4

**Youth unemployment and social exclusion in Europe: a comparative study** / Torild Hammer [ed.]. — Bristol: Policy Press, 2003. 233 p.  
Comparative report on youth unemployment and social exclusion taking place in the European Union. It analyses the difficulties regarding social and professional integration for young people, the risk factors threatening them and the policies required to avoid encountering these situations.  
ISBN 1-86134-368-X paperback

**Youth, the "underclass" and social exclusion** / edited by Robert MacDonald. — London: Routledge, 2000. 228 p. Index. Bibliogr.: 198-221  
Analysis of the youth sector in Europe and especially the British one, which is one of the lowest social classes, immersed in marginalisation, unemployment and crime.  
ISBN 0-415-15830-3

COLABORATION

Young people and constellations of disadvantage in Europe



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policies in different welfare state regimes. In Harriet Bradley and Jaques van Hoof: *Young people in Europe. Labour markets and citizenship*. Bristol: Policy Press.

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Recent publications: López Blasco, A. (2006) "La familia como respuesta a las demandas de individualización: ambivalencia y contradicciones" (Family as a response to the demands of individualization: ambivalence and contradictions) In: *Papers Revista de Sociología* nº 79, 2006 pp.263-284; López Blasco, A. (2006) "Transitar hacia la edad adulta: constelaciones de desventaja de los jóvenes españoles en perspectiva comparada. Una Proyección hacia el futuro" (Towards adult age: constellations of disadvantage of Spanish youth from a comparative perspective. A projection towards the future). In *Panorama Social*: (2006) nº 3.; López Blasco, A., Cachón, L., Andreu, J., Comas, D. Aguinaga, J. Navarrete, L. (2005) *Informe Juventud en España 2004 (Youth Report Spain 2004)*. Madrid, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, INJUVE and López Blasco, A., McNeish, W. and Walther, A. (eds.) (2003) *Contradictions of Inclusion: towards Integrated Transition Policies in Europe*. Bristol: Policy Press.

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