Review of EU-funded projects (FP5-7, H2020)

(on the themes of youth/young adults, lifelong learning, adult education, employment, social exclusion)

In this review I focus on:

1. Specific themes/problems/dilemmas being investigated in the projects, research questions and objectives, methods (if unusual) and the way of formulating impact strategy (outputs → outcomes);

2. Recommendations for further research (gaps in knowledge, forecasts etc.)

OVERVIEW

This review looks into 25 EU-funded projects under the FP5-7 umbrella selected from the CORDIS database by the following tags: *youth/young adults, un/employment, lifelong learning, adult education and social exclusion*.

Among them there are 14 ongoing projects (LLLIGHT'IN'EUROPE, GOETE, CUPESSE, STYLE, NEUJOBS, INSPIRES, SAHWA, POWER2YOUTH, GLOBE-A, LOCALISE, LocalYouth, YOUTHUNEMPLOYMENT, MYPLACE, YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS) and 11 completed projects (YOYO, EUMARGINS, LLL2010, INCLUD-ED, WORKALO, GRAPPLE, EU4ALL, YOUNEX, UP2YOUTH, EDUMIGROM, FEMIPOL).

7 projects are large-scale (NEUJOBS, STYLE, CUPESSE, EU4ALL, LLL2010, MYPLACE and INCLUD-ED), 11 are small-to-medium scale (YOYO, GOETE, EUMARGINS, EDUMIGROM, YOUNEX, INSPIRES, LLLIGHT'IN'EUROPE, LOCALISE, SAHWA, POWER2YOUTH and GRAPPLE, FEMIPOL), and, finally, 6 are small-scale projects (LocalYouth, UP2YOUTH, YOUTHUNEMPLOYMENT, GLOBE-A, WORKALO, YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS).

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Some preliminary observations

- Large-scale projects seek to accumulate and map comprehensive **existent data on employment, youth, adult skills and adults education** (the first three domains seem to be more visible in the reports) in order to foresee **possible future developments** of the European labour market specifically in regards to **young people** (CUPESSE, STYLE, NEUJOBS). Socioeconomic and ethnic segregation, gender and age (i.e. biographical disadvantages) are of particular focus:

    - youth unemployment and social exclusion of **SEM youth** (SAHWA, POWER2YOUTH)
    - youth unemployment and social exclusion of **Roma population** (e.g specific work package in NEUJOBS, WORKALO).
    - youth unemployment and social exclusion of **immigrant youth** (STYLE, LOCALYOUTH).
    - + elderly and women

- The concept of **transition** (or pathways of transition) is central to many studies. Transitions are seen on two levels:

    - on the societal level (e.g. NEUJOBS)
    - and on the individual level (to adulthood, parenthood, employment, to civic, cultural and social integration etc.) (EUMARGINS, YOUTHUNEMPLOYMENT, SAHWA, STYLE, YOYO, YOUNEX, LOCALYOUTH, GOETE). There is a particular concern related to the emerging **education-to-work transition** patterns (ambiguous, intermittent, de-standardized, prolonged) and particularly among young adults from vulnerable social groups (e.g. YOYO).

- Interrelations between workplace **LLL and innovation** are of particular interest (e.g. LLLIGHT'IN'EUROPE, INSPIRES).

- Some project focus on **motivation to LLL**, specifically among young people with biographical disadvantages (YOYO, LLLIGHT'IN'EUROPE, GOETE)

- There is a particular focus on **entrepreneurship** among youth (as it is believed to be one of the solutions to stimulate stagnating EU labour markets) (e.g. CUPESSE, STYLE)

- Along with an already conventional focus on skills (e.g. studies based on PIAAC data), many projects shift their attention to work- and education-related **networks** that youth at risk significantly lack (which consequently prevents access to better jobs and education). (EUMARGINS, LOCALYOUTH)

- Many studies focus on exclusion (incl. exclusion from the labour market) of young adults with biographical disadvantages (YOUNEX, EDUMARGINS, INCLUD-ED, POWER2YOUTH)

    - e.g. some evidence (e.g. GOETE, EUMIGROM) suggest that **differentiated education systems with early choice of track create bottlenecks and lower accessibility**, specifically for those who are encouraged to choose the track early (e.g. ethnic youth). This

often leads to frustrations caused by multiple transitions to 'correct' earlier decisions further in the course of life.

YOYO, *2001-2007*

Youth Policy and Participation. Potentials of participation and informal learning for young people's transitions to the labour market.

Small or medium-scale focused research project
Tags: school-to-work transitions, motivation for LLL

Publication: *Report*

The project was concerned with the **de-standardisation of young people's transitions to work** and the way in which this **affects their citizenship status and their motivation to engage in lifelong learning**. The project aimed to investigate the conditions under which policies succeed in motivating young people to engage in their transitions [*so-called 'yo-yo'-transitions between youth and adulthood, a socio-political vacuum without clear social status*]. Analysed case study projects showed that participation can be an important way to enhance motivation if it means choice, flexibility, open outcomes, space for experimentation, trust, holistic support, rather than a focus on individual deficits; in short: **non-formal education that allows for the development of reflexive learning biographies.**

>In regard to motivation YOYO considers **two levels of policy: hard and soft** (with a specific focus on the latter). The 'hard' policy sectors – education, training, labour market and social policies – where individual motivation is seen as an expected contribution of young people while de-motivation is addressed as an individual deficit. The 'soft' sector of youth work in contrast aims to enhance young people's motivation by providing opportunities of active influence according to subjective need and interests. However, this is mainly restricted to the areas of leisure, culture and associational life.

Recommendations for further research:

- A **longitudinal perspective** in the evaluation of transition systems could assess the sustainability of the impact of participatory policies on young people's transitions.
- **Interdisciplinarity** in terms of relating to separate policy fields and research perspectives which intersect young people's transitions.

[LLLIGHT'IN'EUROPE,](#) 2012-2015

Lifelong Learning, Innovation, Growth and Human capital Tracks in Europe

Small or medium-scale focused research project
Tags: LLL, workplace learning, innovation, enterprise level, human capital
http://www.lllightineurope.com/

WP 1: [Understanding of the Lifelong Learning strategies in 50–60 successful enterprises](#)
RQ 1: How do successful enterprises actively employ lifelong learning for their competitive advantage?
Key Notion: Strategic human resources management

WP 2: [Understanding of the Lifelong Learning policies in 15 public policy trails](#)
RQ 2: **Which public policy environments facilitate Lifelong Learning for such enterprises and entrepreneurs?**
Key Notion: Policy trails

WP 3: [Understanding the relationship between Lifelong Learning and innovation in companies](#)
RQ 3: **How does Lifelong Learning interact with and promote innovativeness on the enterprise level?**
Key Notion: Opportunity identification competence

WP 4: [Understanding the skill of Complex Problem Solving (CPS, PIAAC and skills)](#)
RQ 4: How much of which skills do European adults actually have?
Key Notion: The learning model

Interim results:
- Higher CPS skills tend to be measured in people employed in more complex work environments. This finding is robust to controls.
- CPS skills are correlated with the level of education, intelligence, socio-demographic characteristics, personality traits and learning attitudes.
- CPS skills contribute to predicting wages even after controlling for differences in education, work experience, socio-demographic characteristics and intelligence.

Thus, preliminary evidence indicates that CPS skill is an important indicator of LLL activities, and has an economically important effect on lifetime earnings.

WP 5: Understanding the sources of skills
RQ 5: What are the actual learning mechanisms in adult life that lead to these skills?
Key Notion: Complexity identification

Objective 6: [Understanding the outcomes of skills](#)
RQ 6: What are the causal effects of these skills on growth, competitiveness and social cohesion?
Key Notions: Skill mismatch, continuing education, migration and income inequality

[GOETE](), 2010-2013

Governance of Educational Trajectories in Europe. Access, coping and relevance of education for young people in European knowledge societies in comparative perspective

Small or medium-scale focused research project
Tags: knowledge society, LLL, young adults, relevance of education, educational trajectories, school
www.goete.eu

The GOETE project is concerned with understanding how education systems deal with the changing relation between education and **social integration in the knowledge society**, it analyses young people's **educational trajectories**. Applying a **life course perspective** it asks how young people's access to different stages of education is regulated, how coping with forms and demands of education and lifelong learning is facilitated, and if and **how education is relevant for the future lives of young people.**

- Is education accessible throughout the life course?
- Can education be coped with (is it manageable for all)?
- Is education relevant subjectively for the individuals as well as systemically for societal functioning?

Extracts from findings

From Final Report, p.41: '**The current emphasis of education lies on preparing young people for the labour market ('employability') and developing their human capital**. **Other meanings and outcomes of school education are being devalued.** This contributes to the alienation of children and young people from their individual learning processes which lack of tangible user value. Both individual development as well as a collective socio-cultural benefit of education are addressed by political rhetoric but not systematically addressed by educational practice in school. **This is especially problematic in the case of socially disadvantaged young people for whom school may represent the only way of being able to avert social exclusion, and to access the full benefits of citizenship**.

From Final Report, p.41: **Differentiated education systems create bottlenecks and problems with regard to accessibility**. The simple rule: **there is 'no differentiation without hierarchisation'** shapes the way institutions and their representatives (have to) function. (...) Solution can be found in postponing differentiation and decision-making. Students are 'forced' to make changes at a very young age which lead in many cases to frustrations, disappointment, and **multiple transitions to 'correct' earlier decisions**. This can be viewed as a waste of much time and effort.

[NEUJOBS](),2011-2015

Employment 2025: How will multiple transitions affect the European labour market (with a focus on women, Roma, the elderly, immigrants)

Large-scale integrating project
Tags: *employment, IDSS (of a sort), labour market, foresights, migrants in labour market, Roma, women, eldery*
[www.neujobs.eu]()

The objective of NEUJOBS is t**o imagine future, or rather various possible futures**, under the conditions of the socioecological transition (and incorporating other key influences), map the **implications for employment** overall, but also in key sectors and relevant groups and **integrate all of this together under a single intellectual framework**. It will do so by combining EU-wide studies based on existing datasets with small-N comparative research dealing with one or more countries. Furthermore, the output will be a mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis, foresight activities and policy analysis.

The objective is to analyse future possible developments of the European labour market(s) under the main assumption that European societies are now facing or preparing to face **four main transitions** that will have a major impact on employment, in particular for some groups in the labour force or sectors of the economy.

1. The first is the [socio-ecological transition (SET)](). It is a transition **from one socio-ecological regime to another**, where the regime is defined as "a specific fundamental pattern of interaction between (human) society and natural systems". For example, agrarian or industrial societies are socio-ecological regimes.
2. The second is the **societal transition** produced by the combination of population ageing, low/falling fertility rate, changing family structures (increase of non-marital unions, patchwork families and single parents), urbanization and growing female employment. Four main groups are indentified as key actors in this transition: **women, elderly, migrants, Roma.** As far as they are concerned, NEUJOBS will:
    *   model the impact of the demographic change on labour supply
    *   predict employment in sectors producing goods and services for the ageing population
    *   assess to what extent changing family structures and increase in labour participation impacts on care-giving for dependents
    *   assess the impact of changing demand on the employment in health and long-term care sector, and its impact in terms of creation of new jobs
    *   analyse changes in occupation structure and the possibility of implementation of more flexible working time arrangements
    *   deepen the knowledge in the following fields relating to females' position on the labour market
    *   examine differences in the labour market position of the second generation migrants
    *   study the possibility of (re)integrating Roma in their labour market in a rare comparative perspective with a special look to legitimacy and efficiency issues of European social inclusion policies in domestic and transnational context.

3. The third transition concerns **'new territorial dynamics'.** The spatial structure of an economy is determined by the balance between agglomeration and dispersion forces. The former refers to the advantages that ensue from the dense concentration of economic activity. On the other hand,

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dispersion will be encouraged by congestion problems, the higher rents and wages paid by firms in urban centres, or the desire to minimize environmental externalities. New ways of transporting ideas and information are likely to affect both the agglomeration and dispersion effects.

4. The fourth is the **skills transition**. Not only Europe, but all developed economies are in the middle of a major transition in skills, where education and skills matter, more than ever, for employment and wages. The transition has several dimensions and four in particular will be studied:

    -   The first one is **massification of higher education** as a way of producing radically higher number of potential knowledge workers, coupled with considerable uncertainty about the optimal skills, structure of education systems and courses.
    -   At the same time, the emergence of **new "green" skills** related to the socio-ecological transition and technology is observed.
    -   Thirdly, while there is a general consensus on the need for **lifelong learning approach to the upgrade of human capital**, highly uneven not only between member states, but across different groups, with the low-skilled having particularly limited access, thus compounding the pre-existing inequalities.
    -   Lastly, there is a continuing inequality in the initial education system

[STYLE](), 2014-2017

Strategic Transitions for Youth Labour in Europe

Large-scale integrating project
Tags: *youth unemployment, labour market policies, vulnerable groups*
www.style-research.eu

STYLE is a research project that aims to examine the **obstacles and opportunities affecting youth employment in Europe**. The aim of this project is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the causes of very high unemployment among young people and to assess the effectiveness of labour market policies designed to mitigate this phenomenon. The overriding aim of this project is to conduct a comparative EU wide analysis on **youth unemployment that is sensitive to gender, ethnic and class differences** and the **historical legacies** of multi-level institutions shaping relevant policies. Six substantive research WPs focus on issues of

- **Labour market mismatch in terms of education and skills as well as geographical mobility**;
- Family and cultural barriers to employment and,
- The opportunities and consequences of self-employment and flexicurity.

Objectives:

i. Achieve a critical mass of resources in collaboration with stakeholder communities
ii. Provide a critical evaluation of the performance of countries and regions
iii. Assess the prospects for policy transfer mechanisms
iv. provide a critical review of the **mismatch in supply and demand**
v. **examine the consequences of mismatch in terms of labour mobility and migration for young people within the EU**
vi. analyse the nature, rate and success of business start-ups and self-employment for young people
vii. examine the cultural context of family organisation and the pathways to enhancing independence
viii. map out the voices of vulnerable young people by identifying their different values and aspirations
ix. analyse the nature and mechanisms of flexicurity regimes and how they contribute to overcoming youth unemployment
x. advance the knowledge base by publishing an 'International Handbook on Strategic Transitions for Youth Labour in Europe'

[CUPESSE](), 2014-2018

Cultural Pathways to Economic Self-Sufficiency and Entrepreneurship: Family Values and Youth Unemployment in Europe

Large-scale integrating project
Tags: *young adults' unemployment, social and cultural capital, skill mistmatch, entrepreneurship*
[*www.cupesse.eu*](http://www.cupesse.eu)

The CUPESSE project is dedicated to the **comparative analysis of youth unemployment** in Europe. By taking issues related both to the **demand and supply sides** into consideration, the project aims to obtain a **comprehensive picture of the causes and consequences of unemployment among young people** as well as to formulate policy strategies and recommendations for addressing this ever-growing issue.

The first objective is to obtain a more refined understanding of the supply side of young adults' employment by concentrating on **how the intergenerational transmission of norms, values and social axioms in the context of family organization influences the economic self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship of young people.** The concept of entrepreneurship is of particular relevance for youth unemployment and has been on the agenda of European educational policies for some time. According to the European Commission, entrepreneurship is important for job creation and the overall economic climate in a country (European Commission 2003), which is why the Europe 2020 strategy highlights entrepreneurship as an important tool for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (European Commission 2010). Despite this emphasis policymakers place on entrepreneurship, **we know surprisingly little about the factors driving or impeding such activity, particularly among young people.** In fact, several reports emitted by EU institutions emphasize the need to better understand the fundamentals of entrepreneurship in order to govern entrepreneurial activities more effectively (e.g. European Commission 2003, 2012).

The second objective is to examine how both supply side factors and demand side factors affect the employment situation of young people. In this context we are particularly interested in assessing the **degree to which employment-related attitudes** (e.g. loyalty, commitment, self-esteem, motivation and reliability) **and skills** (such as work-related knowledge acquired through education and training) **of young adults match with the demands and expectations of employers.**

The third objective is to understand **the long-term implications of youth unemployment,** including its effects on both individuals and on the society as a whole. The importance of this objective is furthermore underscored by the fact that policy decisions generally involve not only a consideration of the potential benefits but also the costs societal groups must bear, something which could lower their acceptance of new legislation and therefore complicate problem solving. If, however, policymakers and the public have access to reliable information about the long-term effects of young adults' unemployment, even very costly policy measures have increased chances of success.

The fourth objective is dedicated to the investigation of the extent **to which three typical labour market policies – flexicurity policies, policies supporting business start-ups and self-employment and policies promoting education and training platforms – are embraced by the EU Member States**. We moreover seek to assess the impacts of these policies on the employment situation of young people.

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EUMARGINS, 2008-2011

On the Margins of the European Community

Small or medium-scale focused research project
Tags: *young adult migrants, social exclusion (with a focus on employment)*

The research focus is on **inclusion and exclusion of young adult immigrants** in seven European countries. The extents to which different groups of young adult migrants are socially included or excluded, and the factors that facilitate inclusion or help cause exclusion is a vital issue for young adult immigrants, the nations they have joined, and the European Union whose policies have facilitated large volumes and rapid rates of change in migrant flows. Our central concept is that there are a range of factors that inhibit, or encourage, the abilities of individuals and groups to make the **transition from excluded to be included within societies.** The principal aim of EUMARGINS is to identify and prioritise those factors that matter most (for specific young adult migrant groups and in different countries as well as for all young adult migrant groups and across Europe) and to lay a foundation for recommendations that can assist the transitions from exclusion to inclusion, particularly focusing on dominant factors of **unemployment/jobs and the related education aspects.** (e.g. Norwegian context, HIOA)

As a result of our research, the following observations for social inclusion policies are drawn:

- There is a wide **diversity in experiences of inclusion and exclusion among young migrants** and descendants ranging from high success in the labour market and private life to marginalisation and exclusion from all major areas of formal participation. Structural conditions of the host country (including citizenship legislation, migration policies, integration policies or lack thereof, structure of the educational system and labour market), as well as migrants' demographic, socioeconomic and socio-cultural characteristics play an important role here. Therefore, policy solutions must take into account the specifics of each national setting as well as target the most vulnerable groups of young migrants in each country.
- **Our research show that migration status, class, ethnicity, religion, age and gender are all factors that interact and create segmentation and segregation along specific lines.** More often than not several of these factors influence the processes of inclusion or exclusion of young migrants. Ethnic and socioeconomic segregation often overlap and multiple discrimination appears at the conjuncture of ethnicity, religion and gender.
- Politics of identity: words, frames, categorisations and discourses play an important role in determining the structural and socio-cultural terms for inclusion or exclusion. **Categories such as 'immigrants' are created and racially scripted forms of personhood that come to life at a particular conjuncture.**
- **Education and labour market integration are the policy areas that play the most important role** for young migrants and their descendants in their double processes of simultaneously entering a new country and entering adulthood.

YOUNEX, 2008-2011

Youth, unemployment, and exclusion in Europe: a multidimensional approach to understanding the conditions and prospects for social and political integration of young unemployed

Tags: *social and political exclusion of unemployed youth, coping with unemployment*
Small or medium-scale focused research project

The project focused on the social and political dimension of youth lives and investigated t**he effects of unemployment on the exclusion of young people from the social and political spheres**, including their civic and **political participation**, as well as the consequences on their **well-being.** This multidimensional project adds understanding of the conditions and prospects for social and political integration of young unemployed in Europe.

EDUMIGROM, 2008-2011

Ethnic differences in education and diverging prospects for urban youth in an enlarged Europe

Small or medium-scale focused research project
Tags: *youth, ethnic minorities, social exclusion, minoritisation, second-generation migrant, Roma youth, social inclusion through education, school, adolescent identity formation*

The aim of the project was to study how **ethnic differences in education contribute to the diverging prospects for minority ethnic youth** and their peers in urban settings. The project has recognized the role of education in the processes of **'minorisation'**; how schools operate in their roles of socialization and knowledge distribution and contribute to reducing, maintaining or deepening inequalities in young people's access to the labour market, further education and training, and also in different domains of social, cultural and political participation.

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Recommendations from the joint report (EUMARGINS, YOUNEX, EDUMIGRON), 2011

(**YiPPEE** (young men and young women in public care beyond compulsory schooling); **CSEYHP** (homeless young people); **EUMARGINS** (young adult immigrants in seven urban-metropolitan areas); **EDUMIGRON** (young people at the turning point of leaving compulsory education in multi-ethnic urban communities); and **YOUNEX** (unemployed and 'precarious' youth))

'Europe 2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth´ set a triple goal for European youth policies: **(1) to create more opportunities for youth in education and employment; (2) to improve access and full participation of all young people in society;** and (3) to foster solidarity between youth and society.

The policy evidence from research on youth with disadvantaged backgrounds revealed a social divide in opportunities and access to full participation of European young people and in social solidarity. Young people with disadvantages face a glass-ceiling that impedes their personal aspirations in their life careers. Even if they have ambitious goals concerning education or professional life, as the research has revealed, they can only achieve these (if at all) with delay because of less opportunities, lower access and less solidarity between these young people and society compared to society's 'contract' with the general youth population.

Based on numerous recommendations drawn from the research results, *the social divide can be narrowed by political acknowledgement of the special social and educational needs of these groups of children and young people who have to carry a range of disadvantages (dysfunctional or non-supportive family, ethnic minority or migrant backgrounds, institutional and structural barriers), the early prevention of social exclusion (e.g. risk-buffering educational systems reducing inequalities) and elaboration of reinsertion measures supporting youth transitions to independent living.* This conclusion refers to the need for a complex mosaic of inclusive educational and labour market policies combined with supportive welfare policies, an activated civil society, and last but not least the empowerment of young people's agency from an early age, by encouraging participation and citizenship in a supportive and secure social atmosphere.

More specific recommendations include:

- **Reduce statistical invisibility of young people with disadvantaged backgrounds** by creating EU wide indicators (e.g. the number of young persons in public care for 12 months or more at age 16–18 years, their placement type, educational qualifications, etc.).
- **Collect comparative statistics** annually at national and local levels using EU indicators both about the situation as well as monitor the developments of policies in the area; suggest improvements in the existing legal schemes.
- **Support qualitative research** that gives young people at risk a voice and enables them to reconstruct their resources and coping strategies and to improve the understanding of their struggles for social inclusion (**visualise them as active social actors)**.
- Improve collaborative efforts of schools, welfare agencies, vocational training and labour market institutions, NGOs and the families of youth with the aim of **reducing** their **yo-yo effect** (dropping out of school, college course, and training).

- Reconsider and **revise the age limits** that exist in administrative systems **in the light of the changing situation** of young people (for example, extended time in education, the growing importance of tertiary education, an increasing dependency on parents, the precariousness of the labour market). Policies relating to young people are often constructed on age boundaries (most often at, or around, the legal age of 18) and not to the special transitional needs of young people; policy endeavour should be **disconnected from age thresholds and restrictions and connect more directly to the particular needs** facing more disadvantaged young people as they navigate various routes in their transitions to adult life.

- Highlight the particular needs of young people with disadvantaged backgrounds who are **below and over different legal thresholds**, yet who need more institutional support during transition periods towards independent housing and financial self-sufficiency (when, for the majority of young people, this support is given by their families of origin).

- The groups of youth with disadvantaged backgrounds (the migrants/ethnic minority groups, homeless, those from public care) face a **glass ceiling in relation to their potential aspirations** and positive life careers **due to their biographical disadvantages** – low coping capacities and often the poverty of their families of origin; the 'closed' nature of local communities and lack of proficiency in the host country's language amongst migrant families.

- **Neighbourhood-based actions** of informal and non-formal learning addressed to all ages and for both migrant and non-migrant community members can broaden the solidarity of society and link migrant or ethnic minority families to it.

- **Ethnically mixed-schools** are the best environments for pupils, leading to positive development and high performance, while educational segregation leads to downgrading expectations and performance, and reproduces inequalities. When ethnic separation into Roma or Muslim schools happens on a voluntary basis, it may have positive impacts on education and self-esteem of students.

- As the labour market demands even higher qualifications for many jobs, the **prioritisation of post-compulsory education** is necessary. Young people need the **support of trusted adults** (such as teachers and social workers), who can be a stable point of encouragement and counselling for young people with disadvantaged backgrounds, and contribute to broadening their educational horizons. *(From a poor 'disadvantaged' background and a dysfunctional unsupportive family, with a migrant background, taken into public care, facing poor prospects, s/he was provided with properly resourced 'compensatory' support from an early age – in school, leisure time, and later with careers advice, training opportunities, and labour market prospects. There were 'critical people at critical moments', and access to a 'trusted adult'. Help with education and accommodation in early adulthood was made available. That supportive framework responded to the individual's basically conventional aspirations, motivated and strengthened the exercise of their voice and commitment, enabled them to make positive choices and resist negative pressures, and led to engagement and inclusion, civic and personal responsibility, human dignity, and a meaningful life.)*

- **Evidence or evident?** Notwithstanding the evidence from the research studies, there was a concern that many of the issues raised were already well-documented. The question was no longer whether or not we know, but what we will, or can, do about it. There is a wealth of knowledge about the growing 'youth divide', both between and within the countries of Europe. Increasingly, concern is expressed about the extent to which labour market futures are commensurate with educational qualifications achieved. There is a recurrent issue of young people being 'stifled by their own past' – despite all personal efforts and wider support systems, they are still sucked back into the comfort zones of familiarity.

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- **The intersection of inequalities.** Half a century ago, drawing on Merton's theories of social structure, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) wrote about blocked opportunity structures and how young people 'resolved' them in different ways: through crime, retreat, resistance and rebellion. The conference repeatedly drew attention to the clustering of problems: rarely do 'disadvantaged' young people suffer from a single disadvantage, they almost invariable experience multiple challenges in their lives.   These include: violence and discrimination; educational underachievement and unemployment; family illness, family conflict and a lack of family support; running away, substance misuse, criminality and criminalisation.   The old 'grand narratives' of inequality – gender, race, disability, geography/locality – have certainly not disappeared in a tide of post-modernity, but are powerfully present in these research studies.   They reinforce the point that, without interventions that can create 'turning points' in these young people's lives, typical and indeed predictable paths of social exclusion will persist.

[INSPIRES](#), 2013-2016

Innovative Social and Employment Policies for Inclusive and Resilient Labour Markets in Europe

Small or medium-scale focused research project
Tags: *emplyment policy, vunerable groups, resilience and inclusiveness of labour markets in EU, innovative policy, historical review (from 2000), policy learning*

The INSPIRES project comparatively assesses the **resilience and inclusiveness of labour markets** in European countries, it identifies **innovative policies** that have contributed to resilience and inclusiveness and it analyzes strategies of policy learning that facilitate the development and transfer of these innovations within and across European nation states. In order to do so, it analyzes in-depth the **evolution of labour markets policies, employment policies and social policies**. Moreover, it qualitatively and quantitatively assesses the labour market position of vulnerable groups from 2000 onwards. INSPIRES covers eleven countries from all European welfare traditions: Mediterranean, Eastern-European, Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and the continental regimes.
INSPIRES intends to isolate the impact of national policies from the structural demographic, social and economic characteristics on labour market resilience. Building upon this analysis, it tries to identify **processes of policy learning and innovation that occur in the interactions between policy makers, politicians, non-profit organizations, trade unions, business associations and other stakeholders at the European, national and regional level.** The outcomes of INSPIRES contribute to facilitating policy learning and innovation processes across territorial and sectoral boundaries and to the creation of inclusive and resilient labour markets in European countries.

One of the deliverables is [the map](#) developed by the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. It depicts the analysis of the **total population, youth, migrants and older persons across 29 European countries** and lists **state-level data on two main aspects of labour market resilience: unemployment rate and at risk of poverty and social exclusion**.

SAHWA (2014-2016)

Empowering the young generation: towards a new social contract in South and East Mediterranean countries

Small and medium-scale focused research project
Tags: *SEM youth, transition to adulthood, youth employment, 'resident generation'*

Young people in the South and East Mediterranean area are enduring multiple transitions. In addition to the political and socioeconomic transformations, there is the **transition to adulthood** from the famous tripartite division of the life cycle in preparation for professional life, working life and retirement. The project will articulate the concept of **triple transition**, **taking into account political transitions, socio-economic transitions, and "invisible" transition such as cultural trends and emotions related to youth and the insecurity about the future ("resident generation")**.

POWER2YOUTH, 2014-2017

'Freedom, dignity and justice': A comprehensive approach to the understanding of youth exclusion and the prospects for youth inclusion and overall change in the South and East Mediterranean

Small/medium-scale focused research project
Tags: *youth exclusion, SEM youth*

The 2010-2011 youth-led wave of protests in the South and East Mediterranean could be described as the coming on the scene of a new generation united by a shared experience of marginalisation and by new ways to protest and act. Important as this phenomenon could be for **the future of the SEM**, it still escapes the main frames of analysis utilised by academic research. Youth studies in the SEM, while producing important findings and insights, have failed so far to give a multi-dimensional and comprehensive understanding of the economic, political and social disadvantages faced by youth in the region and of the possible evolution of young people's role in national or regional developments.
This project aims at filling this important gap in our knowledge of the SEM by offering a comprehensive multi-level, interdisciplinary and gender-sensitive approach to the understanding of **youth in the region.** POWER2YOUTH will explore the root causes and complex dynamics of youth exclusion, while investigating the factors fostering youth inclusion.
Building on a conceptualisation of youth that gives prominence to youth as potential agents of change, the project starts out from **the assumption that youth exclusion is the result of unequal power relations in society**, inasmuch as effective youth inclusion can only be fostered by a bottom-up process of transformation of the systemic inequalities that lead to exclusion in the first place.

GLOBE-A, 2012-2015

Globalisation and the Education of Adults

Tags: *adult education, globalization*

The proposals objective is to identify and examine **how globalisation processes are redefining the nature and scope of adult education** in response to global challenges by asking the following research questions:

1. How do political entities, interest groups and other actors influence the transnational policy development process and how, in turn, do they respond to transnational policies in adult education?
2. How does international cooperation affect state policies concerning adult education, planned and implemented, in three socio-economic and political systems that are representative of the North-South division?

GLOBE-A challenges traditional categorisations applied to studying adult education in Western societies or in transition and less developed countries and attempts to reconceptualise existing relations between adult education, policy analysis, and political and social science. The study adopts a mixed-method design, were new empirical data will be of qualitative nature, while existing quantitative data will play a supportive role, and it follows a comparative approach that combines a vertical and a horizontal perspectives. The vertical perspective explores how the global and the local mutually shape each other by looking at the flow of policies between transnational entities, regional organizations and local governments. The horizontal perspective examines interactions and disjunctions across sites in Europe, Northern and Latin America by exploring how changes in transnational, regional and local policies influence educational practices in multiple sites.

INCLUD-ED, 2006-2011

Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education

Integrated Project
Tags: *social exclusion, educational trajectories, vunerable groups*

INCLUD-ED analysed educational strategies that contribute to overcome inequalities and promote social cohesion, and educational strategies that generate social exclusion, particularly focusing on vulnerable and marginalised groups. Europe needs to identify these strategies that will in turn be used by policy makers, education managers, teachers, students and families, and contribute to shape new policies to meet the Lisbon goals.

LLL2010, 2005-2011

Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: The Contribution of the Education System

IP - Integrated Project
Tags: *knowledge-based society, lifelong learning, social inclusion*
Key publications:
Lifelong learning in Europe Equity and efficiency in the balance
Lifelong Learning In Europe National Patterns and Challenges

Despite the consensus about the centrality and desirability of lifelong learning the concept has a wide range of meanings. Formal systems for its delivery are diverse and vary at national and regional levels and for particular social groups. For the implementation of Lisbon strategy comparative research on the manifestations of lifelong learning policies and practices and relevant individual experiences are needed at European, national and local level. LLL2010 focuses on **the contribution of the education systems to the process of making lifelong learning a reality and its role as an agency of social integration**. We try to better understand the **tensions between the knowledge-based society, lifelong learning and social inclusion in the context of enlargement of the EU and globalisation**; provide an empirically based **analysis of lifelong learning policies** in Europe and their implications for different social groups.

Some of the key findings:

1. **European Union and national level policies too instrumentalist**

As in EU policies, there is a general trend across the countries of lifelong learning policies focusing on labour market issues. The more common approach is to assume that the key to overcoming exclusion is to ensure the excluded have the capacity to return to employment. The evidence is that insofar as the latter strategy is intended to address inequalities, it has limited success.

2. **Adult formal education very diversified across countries**

While up to day, **all attempts to operationalise formal adult education in a way useful for comparative statistics have remained limited in their results, the barriers for standardisation become a starting point for fruitful comparative research**. There is a clear line is drawn between the 'liberal', 'non-formal' adult education organised by a broad range of societal actors and the 'formal' education. Diversification could come from two different sources. Firstly, a broader range of institutions – including for-profit training providers – could become entitled to provide formal adult education. Secondly, a much broader range of educational activities could become entitled to be formal adult education.'

3. **Patterns of participation of adults in formal learning illustrate different motives**

The increasing reach of the global market-place is placing intense pressures on many economies and societies. Among its effects are intensified disparities of income, wealth and power. Lifelong learning is often seen as providing a mechanism for addressing some of these problems. **However, in general, patterns of lifelong learning appear to reflect, rather than challenge, these inequalities.**

4. Individual motive to re-engage in formal learning as an adult

The motives for participation in formal adult education are much broader than those for adult education in general. Personal fulfilment and social upgrading (obtaining a diploma) score higher in the participants' reported motives. This indicates the specific value of formal adult education.

Extrinsic motives to participate in formal adult education differ more between countries than the other motivational dimensions. Adult learners in Eastern European countries score higher on extrinsic motivation than their counterparts in Western European countries.

5. **Access of disadvantaged groups could be fostered by introducing alternative settings**

There are very many different groups considered when concepts on disadvantaged, marginalised or underrepresented learners are used. The extent to which these groups have been considered as needing support in overcoming barriers in access to and during their studies, as well as the practical help offered, is highly different across institutional settings and contexts. Decentralised community based locations for learning, such as community lifelong learning centres provide examples of progressive outreach strategies for reaching marginalized communities and individuals. Still, outreach strategies will only work when other barriers such as finance and lack of proximity to the educational institution are overcome.

6. **Bridging between formal and non-formal learning necessary**

For those traditionally alienated from the formal school system, the non-formal educational sector can serve as a key bridge towards social inclusion. Its climate tends to be more inviting, informal and flexible for learners who are often extremely intimidated by the thought of 'going back' for more education after usually negative experiences of schooling from the past. The arrangements for recognising non-formal and informal learning are weak in the majority of countries. Some countries have well developed systems of accreditation; however, it was noted that assessment required for accreditation may discourage certain people from engaging with learning, thus potentially increasing social exclusion.

7. **Supportive learning environment crucial for adult learners**

The satisfaction of adult learners is strongly determined by the **quality of their classroom environment.** The most influential aspects of classroom environment are the students' active involvement, teacher support and flexible organisation of the courses. In order to obtain high-quality learning environments, the adult education sector needs well-trained professionals who can work in secured and continuous employment positions.

8. **Fine-tuning for specific contexts**

There is **obvious need for systematic integration of the four core lifelong learning goals – social inclusion/cohesion, active citizenship, employment, personal fulfilment** – pervading European Commission and Council documents also into nation states policies, structures and practices for lifelong learning. It is recommended that the EU Commission consider leading a process for the development of agreed **structural, process and outcome indicators for access to lifelong learning – for formal and non-formal education, including prison education.** These proposed European level indicators would also require a review process to examine their implementation and development across European countries. There is a clear need to continue the development of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), encouraging links to national qualifications frameworks, especially those that provide an effective system for recognising non-formal/informal learning and to develop mechanisms that allow qualifications to 'transfer' between EU countries based on EQF.

9. **No easy targets**

There is a need for EU to lead the process of clarification of the criteria to ascertain socio-economic disadvantage given the **observed tendency**, especially in some Central and Eastern European countries, **for targeting to occur for more easily identifiable target groups like those with a disability or from an ethnic minority – in contrast with groups experiencing socio-economic disadvantage**.

[LOCALYOUTH](#), 2013-2015

Re-linking suburban youths in Madrid and Paris. The "new localism" and the rol of social and ethnic networks in the integration of youth from immigrant origin

Tags: *youth (16-29), community/social networks (as substitute for poor welfare policy in terms of educational and work opportunities)*

In global European cities, **youth from immigrant origin** who live in disadvantaged areas are **disconnected from the networks likely to offer them educational and work opportunities**. However, in these poor areas, the negative structural conditions contrast with the capacity of action led by the social networks. We are witnessing the **rebirth of localism** as a way of condemning the weakening of the Welfare State. There are no comparative studies among North-western and Southern European countries that focus on the principal role played by the civil society in the socialization of youngsters in **peripheral neighborhoods.** LOCALYOUTH therefore fills a need for comparing the situation of youths between 16 and 29 years in two banlieues of Paris and two barrios of Madrid by taking into account the collective action taken in these environments at a grassroots level. Through an in-depth study of four integration projects of urban and social development a critical evaluation shall be performed on the role played by community networks. An analysis of the importance of the ethnic and gender dimension in the composition of those networks will also be done. In summary, LOCALYOUTH offers news keys of analysis to understand and demonstrate a shift towards a new localism and identify the elements (inside the ethnic and local community) that help or limit the upward mobility of youth from immigrant origin.

[YOUTHUNEMPLOYMENT](#), 2012-2015

The Political Economy of Youth Unemployment

Tags: *long term unemployment among youth, youth*

While an urgent concern at the global level, **youth employment** is not only an issue for developing countries: in recent decades, both developed countries and countries in transition have seen their **labour markets incapable of integrating newcomers**. Youth unemployment is nowadays a crucial issue in the EU policy agenda. Several policy instruments have been designed to improve the labour market integration of young people, but up to now, the situation of youth in employment has not substantially improved. At the European Union (EU) level, the biggest challenge is to significantly increase participation rates in employment so as to limit, as much as possible, the effects of an ageing population, and overcome the negative economic consequences of a declining European labour force. Moreover, these structural features of the unemployment in EU and Eastern Europe have been exacerbated by the recent recession following the international financial crisis. Many young people involved in temporary work will most likely loose their jobs due to the fact that labour market reforms have been implemented in most countries looking at flexibility side only (and not also at the security side). This poses several policy questions:

1. How policy intervention might prevent some particularly weak young people to fall into long-term unemployment or temporary work experiences?
2. Is the springboard effect of temporary work contracts universal or is it linked to particular contractual conditions, such as type and length?
3. **Which kind of labour active policy programmes or passive income support schemes should be implemented in order to reduce youth unemployment?**