

Troubled Families

Presentation for PL 2 meetings

Policy context

Recognising the current economic downturn and its consequences on children and women, in particular, the European Commission adopted in February 2013 the Recommendation 'Investing in Children-breaking the cycle of disadvantage'¹. Among others, the Recommendation provides guidance to EU countries on how to tackle child poverty and social exclusion through actions such as: quality childcare, family support and benefits etc. One of the first principles mentioned in these documents is 'access to adequate resources – support parents' participation in the labour market' (Recital 2.1).

1. OFFENDERS' FAMILIES

Findings from the Systematic Review

As illustrated many times, offenders are most often recruited from disadvantaged families and marginalised communities. Yet, most of the time penal or social interventions tend to focus exclusively on the end result of the accumulated disadvantages – the offender. The majority of research seems to follow the same trend – to focus on how families are affected by offending behaviour or how the family social capital can be utilized to support desistance. For instance, Martinez and Abrams (2013) conducted a metasynthesis of US literature on the importance of the informal social support for the returning young offenders. It concluded that 'family members provided the support and comfort of "the ties that bind" but with potentially unrealistic expectations and re-enactment of old roles and negative dynamics' (p. 169). The authors concluded that the burden of high expectations and the suffocating nature of care can restrict the access of the young ex-offender to a new identity.

Other studies demonstrate how offending can impact on family life. This is most obvious in sex offending cases where the sex offenders are met with a lot of employment barriers and face severe subsequent financial hardship. Moreover, family members living with ex-sex offenders are more likely to experience threats, harassment, stigmatisation and differential treatment by neighbours, teachers or other relevant ones (Levenson and Tewksbury, 2009). In sex-offending cases, it seems that the most effective method of intervention is multisystemic therapy as opposed to individual therapy. Borduin et al. (1990), for example, followed sixteen adolescent sexual offenders randomly assigned to either multisystemic therapy or individual therapy. They concluded that

¹ Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/c_2013_778_en.pdf

multisystemic therapy is more effective than the individual one due to its emphasis on changing behaviour within the offender's natural environment.

Hunter et al. (2013) conducted, in the UK, a rapid evidence assessment examining how interventions targeting offender's families can have an impact on reoffending and other intermediate outcomes (employment included). Although they used quite large inclusive criteria, they were able to identify only 29 studies published in English after 1992 that cover offender family and other intimate relationships. Out of this already small number, only three studies were looking at family support services. Methodologically speaking, these studies were considered as 'none scalable' since they did not fit to any level of scientific quality, as defined by Cook and Campbell (1979). As for the employment or employability, the authors concluded in line with Borduin et al. (1990) that a holistic approach which includes offenders and their immediate systems of support could lead to desistance and other positive intermediate outcomes.

In 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government in the UK ran an assessment of evidence regarding the impact of family interventions in the UK. In so doing, the Department evaluated the impact of projects like Dundee Families Project and other Action for Children projects that were developed in partnership with local authorities. Most of the interventions were associated with significant reductions in anti-social behaviour (8 out of 10 families reported reduction in this area); decreasing the risk of homelessness (in 80% of the families); and reduction in other risks to the community (in 88% of the project cases). Between 2007 to 2012, National Centre for Social Research (Natcen) collected information from the families that benefited from family intervention and reported significant improvements in reducing anti-social behaviour (59%); disengagement with crime (45%); reduction in truancy (52%); and also in solving employment or training problems (with 14%). The same results are reported from the families exiting the services in 2008 and in 2012. This data demonstrates consistency in reaching positive outcomes at the moment of exit.

In 2001, Natcen conducted an impact analysis by tracking a comparison group of families who were similar but did not benefit from family interventions. The conclusion was that families belonging to the treatment group reported half of the anti-social behaviour problems. Although it was not measured, it is possible that the other positive outcomes were also more present among the treatment group rather than in the control group. Evidence collected by Natcen also shows that the improvements in anti-social behaviour; education; and family functioning are sustained after 9 to 14 months from the programme exit. Qualitative research also supports this conclusion (Nixon et al., 2008).

Based on these evaluations, the Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) concludes that, in order for a family intervention to work effectively, five factors are crucial:

1. a dedicated worker, dedicated to a family,
2. practical 'hands on' support,
3. a persistent, assertive and challenging approach,

4. considering the family as a whole – gathering the intelligence,
5. common purpose and agreed action.’ (p.15)

Findings from the Platform 1 event

The lack of targeted interventions for offenders’ families was also noted when analysing the returns from the survey. The number of returns speak for itself: only 12 interventions were recommended for this sub-theme. Moreover, as mentioned in the workshop report on offenders’ families *‘employment is not the prime target when working with offenders and their families. (Employment) is a spin-off of a broader intervention’*. This can be also interpreted as a positive point since one of the most important success factors identified by the experts was the holistic approach for both the offender and the family. Linked to this principle is the coordination and the non-fragmented nature of the intervention. Other important success factors were: intervention tailored to the family, cooperation with other institutions, interventions based on clear objectives and procedures.

Only three interventions were selected to be invited to the Platform two workshop:

- Integrated outreach support – UK
- Integration of the members of the family of high-quality social risk into the labour market – Lithuania
- Family space (Spazio Famiglia) – Italy²

One of the first observations related to these interventions is that they do not target specifically offenders’ families, but individuals and families excluded from the labour market. Integrated outreach support – UK, for instance, addresses multiple disadvantages of offenders and their families. The first objective of the Integration of the members of the family of high-quality social risk into the labour market – Lithuania – is to encourage families with high social risk to participate in the public life and in the labour market.

Therefore the focus is not the individual, but the whole family.

Recognizing that offenders and their families have numerous and complex needs, two of these interventions start their activities with a comprehensive needs assessment activity covering dimensions such as: housing, training, education, childcare, income and so on. Based on this exercise, the project staff design individual tailor made interventions. Since the needs are very diverse, the activities or the services provided within these interventions are also very diversified: training, education, job placement, mentoring, incentives to seek employment, motivational work, coaching, use of social enterprises and so on.

One of the main challenges of these interventions is the coordination. In this respect, at least two interventions mentioned among the difficulties that

² In the final report, all these best practices will be presented in the Annex following the structure that we will provide in Platform 2 meetings.

coordinating between partners and funders was a difficulty at least in the early stages of the project life.

Integrated outreach support – UK was externally evaluated and the findings are very encouraging. It seems that the integrated approach developed by the pilots have proved to be effective in addressing the barriers faced by the ex-offenders and their families. Vocational training, work experience and employer brokerage can play an important role in strengthening the ex-offender's position in the labour market, especially for women. When it comes to innovation, the evaluators identified the following elements:

- '- the delivery partnership between YSS (Youth Support Service) and FIP (Family Intervention Programme);*
- co-location of offender and veteran support;*
- a holistic intervention model for working with women, which included*
 - personalised work experience;*
 - delivery through a social housing provider;*
 - the development of a new course in enterprise peer coaching;*
 - the establishment of a peer-led social enterprise for working with ex-offenders.'*

Combining comparative research with study visits, Integrated Outreach Support – UK identified a number of potential innovative practices with a transnational vocation:

- foster families for adult resettlement from long-term custody,
- combining job support with employer engagement,
- family conferencing services,
- mentoring,
- social enterprises for women,
- self-employment,
- through the gate approach etc.

Overall, the identified practices confirmed and extended the findings from the systematic review. They also demonstrated the huge potential for innovation in this area.

Findings from the Interviews

Both experts interviewed for this subject emphasised that working with offender's families should start from the principle that the family is a social system ('as a whole group'). An interesting perspective was provided by one of the experts who stressed that the best interest of the child should be used as a main principle in the family interventions. Therefore, even when employment is the final aim of the intervention, issues such as time spent with the child, good parenting and so on should be taken into consideration. While most interventions in this area work exclusively with the mothers and the children left outside the prison, the experts stressed that working with the imprisoned fathers is also important:

'The child, if he has two parents, they need both to be strong and able to have an appropriate relationship with the child'. (expert from UK).

By providing the prisoner with appropriate employment services while in prison (e.g. education, vocational training, job placements etc.); he/she can preserve the self respect and the sense of identity. These both can help the relationship with the child.

As in other interventions with vulnerable groups, the role of the employer is crucial. In this case, in particular, employers would need to be more flexible to accommodate family crises, prison visits and childcare arrangements. In order to better explain the particularities of this group and also to support employers in getting and staying engaged, they can be organized in different networks. Family Friendly UK³ scheme may be a good example of how employers may be mobilized in working with different categories of vulnerable people.

Further more, when working with offender's families stigmatizing and labelling should be avoided. Families should be treated as vulnerable families that need help in different respects. Even using the word 'offender' may be stigmatizing.

Because having a family member behind bars is a traumatic experience (some specialists even compare this experience with bereavement), in most cases before moving into employment, families need emotional support and coaching in order to deal with the emotions first. It is only after this stage when an integrated plan – that would include both parents – for moving closer to employment could be designed.

Developing trust and working with emotions were actually identified as main areas of improvement for ex-offenders interventions. Designing accessible interventions for all the members of the family was also mentioned as an area that can be improved. Accessibility may be developed in many ways. It can be developed around the prison visiting space or it can developed through the support groups or information centres organized around the local authorities. As one of the experts suggested, these services can be advertised in *'toilet cubicles, in public places such as libraries, supermarkets, schools, children's centres, doctors' surgeries, health clinics, petrol stations, shopping malls etc. so that families can record the information discreetly'* (expert from UK).

One of the experts summarised in a few sentences how an ideal intervention should be designed:

'Accessible and holistic for both parents and the family with the view of what is best for the child and its employability and

³ More information is available at:

<http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/Pages/Category/family-friendly-uk-scheme>

emotional parenting capacity. If you can merge that together that is great and not stigmatized in terms of support.' (expert from UK).

Conclusions on offender's families and suggestions for the future

Although it is severely affected by adverse consequences of offending, the offenders' family is not yet fully analysed in the literature as a natural system that needs intervention in order to develop or grow. The research accent is still placed on the family as instrumental in reducing re-offending. In spite the fact that research shows that supporting the functioning of the families generates important improvements in the employment area (Natcen, 2012), there was no single empirical study or practice identified in Europe on employability or employment of offender's families. There is already a handful of evidence that family-systemic interventions covering more than just employment can lead to success but there are still many unanswered questions. Involving all the members of the family into the intervention – including the imprisoned one – is essential for a systemic intervention.

Another critical element of a successful intervention with offender's families is the childcare system. In most cases, women are outside the prison with their children while men are inside 'doing' time. If the mothers are to be moved towards employment a lot of attention should be given to children. As one of the respondents asked: 'Where is the quality of parenting?'. Another element that seem to be missing from the interventions with the offender's family but emphasised in the interviews was the emotional support that the family needs in these circumstances:

'... we know that families of prisoners suffer huge emotional trauma as a result of imprisonment. So to expect them to go straight away into work without some kind of support is really asking too much.' (expert from UK).

In these circumstances, peer support or coaching seems to be essential before starting any employment intervention.

One important question raised in the workshop discussions was when, by who and how should the offenders' family be contacted? When is the best time to do that? Is the visiting centre a good place for this operation? The Family Space (Spazio Famiglia) project demonstrated that yes, the visiting centre or the waiting room of a prison could be a good place to engage with the family under some special conditions. But isn't it too late? What happens in case of female offenders with small children under their care? By the time the prisoner is entitled to receive visits some months went by and numerous negative events could've take place. What happens when the prisoner does not receive visits? How can these families be contacted? How can the sometimes associated stigma is extended to the whole family be avoided? Some respondents usefully suggested that the word 'offender' should be skipped all together. We should only speak about disadvantaged families. Closely linked to this question of when and where the family should be contacted is the issue of accessibility. As one of

the respondents stressed this can be the main obstacle for an intervention targeting families under huge pressure. Because the lack of time, emotional trauma and lack of resources, these families can not invest much in searching for the services they need. Therefore these services should be organized as close as possible (to avoid travel issues) and as open and friendly as they can be in order to encourage individuals with sometimes low self esteem and stigma issues to get in contact with them. Maybe the information centres within the local authorities is an answer.

Another challenging but resourceful suggestion coming from the experts is to design interventions with disadvantaged families taking as a starting point the 'best interest of the child'. By doing that, all objectives will follow a certain set of priorities and a different dynamic of the family system. As it can be seen there are still many questions to be answered at both practice and research levels.

2 MULTIGENERATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT/LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

Findings from the Systematic Review

The so called '**intergenerational culture of worklessness**', defined as 'three generations of families of where no-one has ever worked' (p. 2), was put to the test by MacDonald et al. (2013). In doing so, they selected 10 families from Glasgow (UK) and 10 families from Middlesbrough (UK) where there was at least one family member of working age and out of full-time education who had never had a job. Forty-seven people across twenty families were interviewed and the conclusion was that 'intergenerational worklessness' is a political concept rather than a sociological one. With all their effort to locate twenty families where three generation have never worked, the authors were not able to do so. Even two generations of extensive or permanent worklessness in the same family is a rare phenomenon (Shildrick et al., 2012). This made the authors describe the search for 'intergenerational culture of worklessness' as 'hunting the Yeti and shooting zombies' (MacDonald et al., 2013: 1). Although they were not able to find evidence for the 'culture of worklessness' that is passed from one generation to another, they describe how the impact of complex and multiple problems, rooted in the long-term experience of deep poverty can distance people from the labour market (Shildrick et al., 2012).

In this context, the concept of 'intergenerational unemployment' seems to be a political notion or theoretical construct rather than an empirical one. Therefore, it can be usefully replaced with a broader concept with a more solid empirical support – the **long term unemployed**. The definition of this concept depends largely on the geographical or legislative frameworks. Different states define long-term unemployment differently. For instance OECD and the European Union (EU) define long-term unemployment as referring to people who have been unemployed for 12 months or more⁴. The same concept is defined in the US

⁴ Definition available at: <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/factbook-2013-en/07/02/02/index.html?contentType=&itemId=/content/chapter/factbook-2013-58-en&containerItemId=/content/serial/18147364&accessItemIds=&mimeType=text/html>

as including those who have been unemployed more than 27 weeks⁵. For the purpose of this paper we will use the EU definition of the concept.

In June 2013, OECD released the report *'Tackling Long-Term Unemployment Amongst Vulnerable Groups'* where a set of useful recommendations was produced. These recommendations were based on an online survey among Public Employment Service in Europe and outside Europe and a collection of good practices or learning models. Most of the recommendations focused on the approach or the context:

- Understand the area and the context – use of the labour market intelligence,
- Strategic leadership – the development should be a part of a strategy and not in isolation,
- Target limited resources to those most in need,
- Seek sustainability and added value,
- Person-centred – develop personalised interventions, involve mentors or coaches,
- Make training and support work-focused and engage employers – combine paid employment and work experience with training to build up skills and develop attachment to the labour force.
- Joined-up offer – pull together provisions (such as advice, placement, training, welfare) under a single banner.
- Partnership – interventions should be based on strong partnerships between local communities and organisations.
- Involve workplace representatives and trade unions – involve mentors and 'buddies' in helping people overcome problems in an unfamiliar work environment.
- Embrace changing public sector roles and finance mechanisms – involve the state in the co-production of interventions with people and for people.
- Evaluation and dissemination – lessons are captured through evaluation and disseminated in an active manner.

Another useful contribution of this report is on innovative financing. In their report, the authors detail some modern funding examples such as: payment by output or results, incentive and reward systems, contracting out, private or social enterprises, using loans to replace grants, social investments and social impact bonds. If the first forms of financing are self-explanatory the social impact bond may need some explanation. By social impact bond (SIB) the investors pay for the project at the start, and then receive a payment based on the results achieved in the project.

The report also gave a few examples of 'wacky finances': social media, peer-to-peer and crowd funding.

Some of these findings are confirmed by the empirical research. Korsu and Weglenski (2010), for example, demonstrate that the urban spatial factors are

⁵ Definition available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bureau_of_Labor_Statistics

very strongly connected to the employment problems experienced by low skilled workers. The research based on data collected from the Paris-Ile-de-France area shows that, all else being equal, a 'low skilled worker faces higher risks of long term unemployment if he/she suffers from poor job accessibility and if he/she experiences long term exposure to high poverty neighbourhoods.' (p. 2301). The importance of connecting labour force to the demands of the local employers was also underlined by Clarke (2014). While acknowledging the impact that welfare-to-work, workfare and work-first approaches (all of which focus on moving unemployed to the first labour opportunity as soon as possible) have on the employment, the author also warns that a large proportion of those captured within these approaches remain trapped in 'secondary' labour markets where work is low skilled and low paid. This means that they often bounce from welfare support to work and back again or being confined to in-work poverty. Moreover, Clarke (2014) used participant observations and semi-structured interviews with participants in a call centre training programme and concluded that as many other programmes delivering welfare-to-work contracts the schema benefited those who were most employable or 'job ready'. Being focused only on developing technical and impression skills, the programme failed to develop soft skills that are crucial in moving into employment (e.g. self confidence, language confidence, IT skills etc.) and also neglected the support of transitioning into work. In this respect, it seems that the Human Capacity Development (HCD) approach that focuses on assisting the participants to overcome their individual barriers to employment are very beneficial for the long-term unemployed. Evidence suggests that benefits associated with introducing alternative activities, such as voluntary work-based placements are very effective in moving individuals into employment (Lindsay and Sturgeon, 2003). Another criticism of the programme was the 'one-size-fits-all' approach that fails to deal with the complex needs of the unemployed. This observation confirms that the conclusion of the above mentioned OECD (2013) report that suggests that a person-centred approach is more beneficial in promoting employment among the long-term unemployed.

As the labour market is becoming more and more integrated at the European level, the phenomenon of long-term unemployment among immigrants seems to become visible. Using data from Eurostat, OECD and the conclusions of the studies published in five Western European countries (Italy, UK, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium), Reyneri and Fullin (2011) conclude that immigrants are penalized in the transition to and from unemployment. Less immigrant penalization can be found in those countries where the employment protection legislation is stricter, the labour demand is more focused on low skilled jobs and the welfare state is less generous for the unemployed.

Findings from the Platform 1 event

35 surveys were assessed under the Long-term unemployment sub-theme. Based on the evidence collected in the systematic review, and also on the criteria set by the experts in the workshops, the following five practices were selected as best practices in this area:

1. Growing Lives – UK
2. WAW trajectory. An integrated approach to work, poverty and welfare – Belgium
3. Supporting people: housing support programme – UK
4. Choices Plus – Northern Ireland, UK
5. Social Cooperative Enterprise – SCE – Greece.

In addition to these five best practices, another three practices were selected on the reserve list:

1. Restart 2 Transfer of Innovation Project – Northern Ireland, UK, Germany and Lithuania
2. Working in Handsworth and Shard End – UK
3. Essential Skills programme – Northern Ireland, UK

Although not all of them target explicitly long-term unemployment, all share the common objective of preparing unemployed people for the job market or assist them to move to employment. As they all deal with 'hard to reach' vulnerable people with long experience of unemployment, all these interventions were classified as long-term unemployment programmes/projects.

Most of the principles mentioned in the OECD report (2013) were also confirmed and developed further in these practices. The person-centred approach, for instance, was mentioned in almost all the practices selected for the Platform 2 workshops. The bottom-up design and the need for a flexible approach were mentioned in four out of the eight best practices selected.

The experts working on this particular sub-theme also emphasised the importance of using IT tools to collect information about the needs, the strengths and the progress of individuals undertaking a programme. The Whole System Approach Toolkit as a monitoring and evaluation tool seems to be one of these tools (see Support people: Housing support programme in England and Wales). Also related to the personalized approach, experts noted that involving the individual in designing the interventions and also in decision-making is crucial for a successful intervention. In this respect, incorporating the motivations and the aspirations of the unemployed people into the trajectories towards employment seem more than welcome. Involving employers and the local communities were also mentioned as important success factors. However, more independent evaluations should be conducted on these practices to ensure objectivity and validity.

Findings from the Interviews

Both interviewees gave examples of best practices that assume to a large extent the principles identified in the systematic review as principles of best practices:

- well structured,
- well designed interventions,
- value-driven approach whereby all project staff share the same mission and values,

- mentoring and employer brokerage,
- use of social enterprise,
- combining labour skills and non-labour skills training with real work experience.

The 'whole person' approach was captured by one of the respondents under a different name. As he stressed, all interventions should start from 'what do you need?' and then form a wrap around system of intervention around the vulnerable person to address all these needs.

Although the final goal of the intervention should be the employment, the soft outcomes should not be neglected. It may be that for some hard to reach people getting close to employment is a huge progress. Therefore, self-esteem, planning skills, taking instructions, working with colleagues etc. are not to be neglected when it comes to employment of long term unemployed. As a way of delivering these services, one of the experts mentioned 'one-stop-shop' approach where all the services are available in the proximity and where a case manager negotiates and coordinates all the inputs.

As a way to improve the current practices the respondents stressed different points. One point was connected to evaluation and measuring success. In order to ensure sustainability, projects need to be independently evaluated. States – either central bodies or local authorities – should be informed or even involved in these evaluations. Once the projects showed success, the states should be ready to take them over and mainstream them. If a project demonstrated success that means that this is a good and effective way of spending taxpayer's money. States should play a more active role in designing, co-funding, implementing and evaluating the interventions. By doing so, the state can take a more informed and more responsible decision about how to spend money on effective interventions. Another role that states should play is in connection to employers. It is only the state that can offer financial incentives to the employers to take vulnerable people onboard and keep them for a long time. States can also support the activity of the social enterprises. As suggested by one of the experts, social enterprises can be a very good and fast solution for the hardest to reach vulnerable people (e.g. single mothers, drug addicts, ex-offenders etc.). States can also set up a fund or a grant system that can sponsor disadvantaged people start small businesses.

One improvement in this area is that the social enterprises could be closer to the mainstream companies so where possible they can transfer employees from the protected environment to the open labour market.

As one of the respondents suggested most of these recommendations or success factors may very well apply to other interventions or other groups of vulnerable people. Indeed, as we have noted in the sections above there is a lot of common place for all these interventions at the level of principles, at least.

Conclusions on Multigenerational unemployment/Long-term unemployment and possible ways to the future

It seems that when working with long term unemployed people special attention should be paid at making them 'job ready'. In this respect, developing soft skills (such as confidence, self esteem, planning etc.) and training play an important role. Moreover, as suggested in the literature and the practices selected, the local employment landscape is crucial. Creativity in designing new jobs at the local level may also help in socializing vulnerable people into the working culture. In this respect, one of the experts interviewed made some very useful suggestions:

'... establish even better ways of employment designed for their special needs and capabilities, e.g. casual, short-term jobs; support little jobs they already do, such as neighbourhood help in shopping, moving, gardening; establish formal structures to create casual jobs at this informal level for people who would not be able to deal with a permanent job, but also full-time jobs for those who want to work full-time' (expert from UK).

However, moving people to the first job available should not be the final destination. As emphasized by Clarke (2014) low paid and low skill jobs can be only the front door of the labour market. Once inside, people need to be supported to move up towards more complex and better-paid jobs. In this respect, mechanisms to support people in employment should also be available for the most disadvantaged people. Work 'buddies' or mentors could be very beneficial in this direction.

As suggested by research, and also in the best practices (see Social Cooperative Enterprise-SCE- I change), self employment or setting up social enterprises can also be effective ways to move long-term unemployed people into the labour market. A word of caution should be made in this respect, though, regarding the need for coaching and mentoring to support motivation but also assist individuals in navigating through the economic forces. Getting these social economy structures closer to the mainstream labour market can also be identified as a good way for the future.

As mentioned in the recent studies, in the times of economic downturn, finances play an important role in starting up new initiatives and in sustaining them. Most of the descriptions of the best practices mentioned 'budget cuts' or other financial difficulties as main obstacles. In this respect, the experts involved in this sub-theme suggested that creative funding might be a solution: personalised budgets, pooling funds and so on.

Furthermore, as mentioned by one of the respondents in the interviews:

'...support of the existing structures that are based on local initiatives and are already working well by permanent funding, not just on short term basis.' (expert from UK)

As emphasised in some of the European Commission documents, effective and evidence-based initiatives should be mainstreamed and not left with short-term financial bases.

The relationship between Europe, Member States and the local communities could also be re-configured in a way to stimulate states to be more active and more responsible for the sustainability of the good projects. In this respect, one of the respondents suggested a more present role for the state in deciding what projects should be funded but also in the implementation, evaluation and the continuation of those with strong evidence of effectiveness and value for money:

‘So before you even get the funding from Europe you need the State to say “ok, I`m part of this” for the beginning of it, not “Ok, I`ve read your project and I think it is a good practice; now you are asking me to invest money on it.” ... And I think they need to be at the beginning in it, they need to be a part of it. The part of the project co-funding requires you to approach the state and then you get them involved and you get a sense for them right at the beginning. Not only is it helpful for the individuals but is also helpful for the European funding too, “why I am investing in this exactly?”’ (expert from Northern Ireland).

It may be that a stronger partnership with the State (e.g. employment services, local authorities etc.) could lead to more responsibility towards public expenditure and more sustainability for effective interventions.

3 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Findings from the Systematic Review

In England and Wales the anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) was introduced in 1998 as a civil order made against a person who has been shown to have engaged in anti-social behaviour. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, anti-social behaviour is defined as follows: ‘caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household’.

As a concept, anti-social behaviour has a rather vague definition. For Berger (2003), for instance, anti-social behaviour is a behaviour that causes damage to society, whether intentionally or through negligence. According to this definition, some of the legal actions undertaken by financial investors might be seen as anti-social. The literature seems to be concerned with how informal (warning letters, contracts etc.) or formal court-based interventions impact on subsequent behaviours. The relationship between anti-social behaviour and employment was explored briefly in the literature dedicated to family interventions (see the Offender’s families section). Based on this literature, it seems that families and systemic interventions are effective in reducing anti-social behaviour while improving the employment and education situation (National Centre for Social Research, 2012).

Another empirical study that looked at anti-social behaviour and employment was conducted by Agnew (2013) who evaluated the impact of two diverse projects based in the East of England and funded by the Department of Children

Schools and families (DCSF). The aim of these two projects was to provide positive opportunities for young people while also reducing the anti-social behaviours, helping young people enter education, employment or training. One project delivered its activities from Monday to Friday and the other one was active during Friday and Saturdays nights. The management structure in both locations involved steering committees with members drawn from key agencies: police, education, welfare, probation etc. Both projects involved sport-based activities (e.g. football, dodgeball, street dance etc.). The projects also aimed to motivate young people to volunteer for other activities such as: life skills development, one-to-one career and emotional support etc. The evaluation concluded that, while both projects managed to comprehensively exceed the headline target of engaging with a particular number of young people, there were some key learning points:

1. Strong and active engagement of all stakeholders seems to be essential.
2. The location of the project has to be familiar to the participants.
3. Evaluation has to be based on clear and concrete expected outcomes.

The lack of good quality data about reoffending or other hard results, like employment, prevented the author to advance strong conclusions. However, based upon the participants' feedback and the level of participation among young people, these projects were considered at least partly successful.

Findings from the Platform 1 event

After debates, the following best practices were selected:

1. The Pathways Project – UK
2. Tomorrow's Women Wirral – UK
3. Toolkit for Life – UK
4. Reintegration of addicted people into society and labour market in the salad bar – My Guru – Lithuania
5. Youth Advocate Programme – Ireland

As reserve best practices the following three interventions were selected:

1. New meaning-New Horizon – UK
2. Meeting Place 2020 – Sweden
3. Progetto Re-Start – Italy

What seems to be common for these projects is the continuous adaptation to the needs of the users and the existing budget. The adaptation was mentioned in almost all the selected practices. Words like: bespoke, personalised, tailor-made, mobile working etc. were mentioned to suggest that 'one size fit all' intervention are not recommended.

However, the adaptation is most of the time in terms of content and not in terms of the concept. As one of the descriptions emphasised:

'The project is re-branded and personalised to suit the school but the concept and delivery is the same'

Another example of adaptation to the user's needs is the place of the interventions. For instance, the intervention with young students at risk takes

place in school and the intervention with women offenders takes place in a female only centre.

Other crucial elements of the projects are the strong support of the stakeholders and the ownership of the users. Involving users in the design of the intervention and the continuous adaptation of the project during its lifecycle seem to be important to ensure success. Stakeholders can be from the public sector (schools, probation service etc.), to the NGO or the private sector (employers). As one of the descriptions stressed:

'Multi-agency working enabling support for complex and multiple needs'

Working in partnership was mentioned by all the selected practices. However, in most cases they listed the agencies or the organizations that cooperate in that particular intervention without describing how and when they cooperate, who ensure the governance, how decisions are made and so on. As illustrated several times in the literature (see Gunter and Harding, 2013) these aspects are crucial especially when dealing with many partners.

Another learning point from the selected practices is that in designing an intervention it is essential to pay attention to the local institutional and social architecture. For instance, in the Reintegration of addicted people (Lithuania) the developers succeeded to bring together drug addiction services, inclusion services, local authorities and the local social businesses. By doing so the developers are able to provide comprehensive services connected to employability and employment but also an optimum environment for blended learning – combining theory and practice in the same place (the salad bar).

During the debates the aspect of innovation was also touched. In this respect, the experts were of the opinion that the virtuous circle of innovation, practice and learning can be useful. In several cases, the developers provided evidence of testing new ways of delivery or new contents, observed how they work in practice and learnt from this. Later, this learning documented new changes and adaptations (see for instance The Pathways Project - UK). As it can be noted, innovation is mainly associated to processes and adaptation and not necessarily to new devices or programmes.

Innovation can also be observed under the financial section. In some cases the sources of funds are very diverse. For instance, Progetto Re-Start (Italy) has funded its activities from the local municipality, private banks and other foundations. Opening up for new sources of funds, mixing them under one single project and managing them can be considered innovative.

Findings from the Interviews

When asked to describe the best practice in the field of anti-social behaviour, the experts described practices that combine training/education with working experience and practices that are based on individual offers (treatment) within a group context. The last point is important in particular because the group can

provide individuals a context where they can learn about the others, other strategies and ways to solve problems. They can also act as resource by providing help and suggestions for those in need. By doing so, the individuals can grow self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation to keep searching for solutions. As one expert suggested:

'... people are learning more about other people as well, the troubled families, the antisocial behaviour with manic depression And interesting thing happens' (expert from The Netherlands)

Closely linked to the group experience, the experts emphasised the importance of providing experiences that grow and maintain motivation. Some useful suggestions came up in this direction when the experts were asked to 'dream' about an ideal intervention. Two of these suggestions seem important:

- to provide short-term incentives for those making progress (*'I think we should see progress before we reach our goals'*). People need to be rewarded for getting into and staying in the programme. Most of the people, and offenders, in particular, live on a here and now basis (*'For our clients it is very difficult to see long term goals. They want to see direct results'*). In this case they need small rewards to keep them interested and motivated into the programme.
- allow people to make mistakes. Especially people with behavioural problems; this suggestion can be of a significant importance. Most of the ex-offenders or offenders de-escalate or commit less severe crimes. Instead of putting them back into prison or expel them from the programme we should acknowledge the small progress they have made from more serious to less serious crimes. Before waiting to see if they will stop offending within 5 or 10 years and then clean their record; we should acknowledge and reward shorter periods of time of crime-free lifestyle. As one expert stated: *'it is not a Monopoly game'*

Conclusions on anti-social behaviour and possible ways to the future

As anti-social behaviour is a new concept in both ways legal and sociological, research on how interventions on anti-social behaviour relates to employment is not yet fully developed. More studies need to be conducted, especially focusing on the relationship between anti-social behaviour and different variables, employability/employment included. It is possible that the relationship between anti-social behaviour interventions and employment to work in both directions: people with anti-social issues to become more law abiding as a consequence of employment interventions and the law abiding citizens to be more employable as a consequence of a more stable residence and the absence of the obstacles (e.g. stigma etc.).

Since anti-social behaviour is a concept that applies mainly to youth and it is also associated to a certain extent to offending it is worth applying the learning points from these two fields to the anti-social behaviour domain.

The suggestions formulated by the experts in the interviews have a great potential for innovation. It would be useful to pilot some interventions that incorporate short-term incentives and also flexibility in dealing with mistakes.

4 EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

Findings from the Systematic Review

Education and training has become crucial in a changing world where the nature of employment has been transformed in many European countries. For instance, in the UK some structural changes impacted on the number of available jobs in different sectors of the economy. The largest increase in employee jobs has been in banking, finances and the insurance industry (from 2.7 million in June 1981 to 5.4 million in June 2006). Significant increases were also in education, health, public administration, distribution, hotels and restaurants. In contrast, the extraction and production industries (agriculture, fishing, energy, water, construction and manufacturing) showed a combined fall of 43% in the same period of time (Office for National Statistics, 2007).

This dramatic decline in manual jobs and the rise of knowledge-based jobs has led to an increased demand for graduate-level skills (or equivalent) (Farrall et al., 2010). For example, in the US, for adults, 70% of job openings that pay a living wage require moderate-to-long-term post-secondary education, vocational education or both (Employment Policies Institute, 2000). According to the European Commission, by 2020, 16 million more jobs in Europe will require high qualifications while the demand for low-skilled jobs will drop by 12 million (European Commission, 2010). This structural context defines those with no proper education as 'unemployable'. If this under-education is combined with other vulnerabilities such as criminal history or mental health problems, the prospects of employment are low.

The European Commission has responded to these challenges through the Europe 2020 flagship initiative called Youth on the Move and the 2012-2013 Youth Opportunities Initiative. Both these documents aim at unleashing the potential of young people and call for a more concentrated action from the states authorities, social partners, employers etc. to tackle youth unemployment. Special provisions of these documents refer to pathways back to education and training and also to a better contact between education and employment. In order to monitor the youth situation in Europe and allow for European comparison, the European Commission has introduced new statistical indicators such as NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) rate.

Good short to medium-term results are obtained under certain conditions and with some beneficiaries by short-term skills training programmes. An example of such a program was the Career Workforce Skills Training (CWST) in the US, based on a partnership between four community colleges and the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Oregon. The programme was conceived to provide a post-secondary training option that would result in improved employment outcomes for vocational rehabilitation consumers. The program

was also set up to support and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. Flannery et al. (2011) evaluated the program using a longitudinal follow-up and concluded that certain student and programme factors were associated with positive employment outcomes. Female, older participants and those receiving financial help were more likely to complete a certificate, be employed at exit and maintain employment for at least 90 days. On the contrary, individuals with psychiatric disabilities and other skill barriers were less likely to obtain positive outcomes.

The issues of readiness and employability were also tackled in the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme in the UK. The programme targeted those who are not in education, employment and training (NEET). E2E can be defined as a market-led programme that offers work-related learning opportunities for young people considered not ready to enter employment, an apprenticeship or other forms of further education and training. E2E was a publicly funded programme and it was delivered by a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations. The learning comprises three core areas: personal and social development, basic skills development and vocational development. Each of these stages is aligned to the level of development of the learners.

The study of Russell et al. (2011) focuses upon the lived experience of E2E learners drawing on data from an ethnographic research of E2E programmes conducted during 2008-2009 in two neighbouring local authorities in Northern England. The study was conducted in four case study sites with all three forms of organisation included (public, private and voluntary). The ethnography involved 87 hours of observations and 58 tape-recorded and transcribed interviews with learners, managers, tutors etc. In terms of employability, the great majority of the learners reported benefits such as acquiring vocational qualification, increased confidence and improved basic skills. However, these benefits were qualified in two ways. Firstly, for most learners E2E directly enhanced employability in a limited way, largely for routine and semi-routine work requiring few or no qualification. Due to the learners disrupted school career, the road towards 'knowledge-based' employment would be long and fragile. Secondly, learners directly entering the job market faced intense competition from the adult workers and also from other young people with higher levels of education and personal capital. Therefore the ability of E2E to deliver employment, rather than employability, was severely constrained. In the concluding section, the authors call for reconciliation between accessible learning with opportunities for progression to employment or mainstream education. Furthermore, the relationship between low-level vocational education and other areas of the educational system needs to be carefully considered.

In 2012, Eurofound published an analysis of the labour market situation of young people in Europe with a special focus on NEET. Although the report acknowledges that Member States employ a huge diversity of measures to support NEET into employment or education, the authors identified a number of principles that could be considered as good practice:

- 'Policy measures have to be diversified, tackling different issues along the

pathway to employment and paying attention to vulnerable groups that are more likely to cumulate multiple disadvantages.

- Especially important is to take the labour market readiness of the beneficiaries into account. While those more ready will profit from initiatives that are strongly grounded in the needs of the labour market, others need to address personal barriers first before participating in employment programmes.
- Young people have to be set on a long-term, sustainable pathway. It is not enough to find short-term solutions. They need good-quality, stable and sustainable employment. This includes equipping them with qualifications needed for successful labour market integration.
- The involvement of a range of stakeholders in the design and delivery of youth employment measures is essential. In particular, a strong level of engagement with employers and their representatives is needed for measures that focus on fostering their beneficiaries' employability.
- Youth employment measures should be client-centred, not provider-focused. This means catering for different pathways, for example, from mainstream learning to tailored, supported learning.
- Successful policies are innovative. They introduce new ways of reaching out to their target groups, with outreach activities forming an important part of efforts to engage disfranchised young people, while incentives, 'branding' and marketing campaigns can be useful in the context of more universal youth employment services'. (p. 2)

A further reflection is provided by Thomson (2010) who argues that **NEET** is a social category defined by structural factors and social inequalities. Indeed, as noted by Spielhofer et al. (2003), there are three overlapping categories of NEET: those with low attainment (e.g. few or no qualifications), those with difficult personal circumstance (e.g. alcoholism, drug abuse etc.) and the disengaged or socially marginal (e.g. lacking confidence or with 'barriers to progression' such as parenthood). In this context whereby most of the determinants are socially defined, the individualisation or placing the responsibility only on the individuals seems to be wrong. Individual level solutions cannot justify social inequalities. Subjective factors are important but they are embedded in objective conditions such as local structures or opportunity, the social distribution of the educational achievement and the labour markets. Therefore, there is a need for a stronger approach to social exclusion that would focus also on inequalities within education, the effects of unequal access to economic, social and cultural capital throughout childhood and young adulthood. Increasing social mobility and developing choices may be good ways to proceed in reducing social inequalities.

Findings from the Platform 1 event

After the debates in the PL 1 meeting, five practices were selected:

1. Choose your future – Poland
2. Toolkit for life – UK
3. Europe value added training – UK, Italy, Norway and Cyprus
4. Reintegration of addicted people into society 'My Guru' – Lithuania

5. ESF OP Fight against discrimination (POLCD) – Spain

Another three practices were selected as reserves:

1. Choices Programme – Portugal
2. Meeting Place 2020 – Sweden
3. Action Plan Youth Unemployment – The Netherlands

In some of the descriptions education was approached from a larger perspective and not necessarily as connected to school or employment. For instance, in Choose your future – Poland teenagers and youngsters were trained to understand and tackle the learnt helplessness and also other social and financial issues such as: how to save money, what are the children's rights and so on. The Meeting Place 2020 – Sweden provided non-formal and cultural activities that target primarily self-confidence, life structuring and other general skills. By developing these soft skills, the developers provided training and education that is directly relevant for the life of the vulnerable groups, and therefore relevant for the employability of these people. Furthermore, some of the developers were concerned with testing and evaluating different ways of providing education on these life skills. Once they were assessed as successful, they were mainstreamed so that many vulnerable people could benefit from them. This in itself is an innovation, since many specialists from the local community and also beneficiaries are involved in developing a new way of providing social and economic education. Families could play an important role in many ways: as facilitators to contact the youth, as co-workers or even as recipients of the educational interventions. Topics like learnt helplessness, discrimination and so on can be better understood if debated within the school, family or community context.

ESF Operational Programme Fight Against Discrimination – POLCD – Spain combines support (including income support) for vulnerable people with partnerships with local and national employers and also with a national campaign that aims at raising awareness on the consequences of discrimination. Combining top-down with bottom-up initiatives, the intervention deals with the most pressing issues associated to a free and just access to the job market. Choices programme – Portugal is also concerned with discrimination. Most of the projects that are funded through this programme aim at increasing school success, promoting vocational training and employability, developing civic engagement, promoting digital inclusion and fostering the empowerment of the participants.

Other interventions approached education more closely at the intersection between employers and vulnerable people. For example, Toolkit for Life – UK trains, coaches and provides mentoring and advocacy for young ex-offenders while at the same time works with employers to engage with this vulnerable group. Reintegration of addicted people into society and the labour market in the Salad bar 'My Guru' covers also training and support for ex-drug users while providing direct access to either the free labour market or to a social enterprise – The Salad Bar.

European Value Added-Training explored new ways of informal, non-formal, pre-vocational and employability programmes based on the feedback provided by the socially disadvantaged people and previous best practices.

Findings from the Interviews

Both experts interviewed for this subject stressed the importance of an intervention on education that has as a starting point the local context and the local networks. Two types of interventions were mentioned under the education headline: prevention of the early school leaving and the support for the school to work transition. In both these interventions the local features of the labour market are important. Involving local employers in the network was also mentioned as an important success factor. Another important player mentioned by one of the respondents is family. Parents and siblings can play a significant role in motivating and supporting young people to go back to education and live a responsible life. School should be also part of the network. As one of the respondents stressed: 'school can create the problem but it can also solve the problem' (expert from Italy). Indeed, one of the factors associated with school drop out is underachievement or school failure. Youth with this sort of negative experience are difficult to pull back to school. Therefore, as literature and also one of the experts seems to suggest, education intervention should not look like school interventions. On the contrary, they should look as far as possible different from a traditional school and take place in 'neutral and easily accessible meeting places' (expert from Ireland). This observation implies that teachers involved in these initiatives need to forget to a large extent the traditional school role and embark on a new role that is much closer to the labour market.

The relationship with the employers and the other stakeholders should make the education highly relevant for a future real job or even facilitate the transition towards a real job. These jobs can be regular ones but they can also be 'casual jobs' (e.g. helping neighbours, gardening, shopping for vulnerable people etc.). Moreover, individuals with required skills can also be supported to set up their own businesses.

Although the final aim of the intervention is getting into employment, interventions should not neglect the development of the soft skills that are needed for finding, getting and keeping a job (e.g. team work, following the procedures etc.).

Both experts interviewed mentioned the importance of 'permanent' or 'long-term' funding. The outcomes of education are not easily measured on a short timeframe. Therefore, long-term commitment is advisable if long-term and sustainable outcomes are expected.

Thinking about education from the employment perspective may provide more room for innovation. As one of the experts puts it: 'we (educators) have some ideas and some dreams about jobs'. If we involve more employers, economists, anthropologists and so on in designing employment interventions we might reach a more complex and multi-cultural result. Replacing the social and the

education mind-set with an entrepreneurial one may give us more realistic and more adapted answers to our questions.

Conclusions on education problems and possible ways to the future

Based on the literature and the selected surveys we can conclude that education for vulnerable groups is a large social construct that should incorporate fundamental topics such as human rights, social and life skills, discrimination and so on while at the same time should cover skills, values and attitudes directly linked to the labour market. One strong learning point is that these education-based interventions should be immediately followed by concrete working experiences either on the free market or in a protected environment. In providing these opportunities, local partnerships with employers seem to be essential. Local authorities and agencies could contribute significantly in mainstreaming those interventions that proved to be effective. As a way of delivering these projects, empowerment and the involvement of the users and the stakeholders proved to be very successful.

However, none of the submitted interventions provided evidence that once the job placement was finished more supportive activities are still available. As stressed by Thomson (2010) and Russell et al. (2011) vulnerable people need continuous support to maintain and progress into the career. This job progression towards more knowledge-based or complex positions seems essential from at least two perspectives. First, progression could be a sign of job adaptation: people enter a job, become better and better in doing that job and, as a consequence, they move up into the career path. Secondly, progression could be associated to better income and less risk of in-work poverty. This would decrease the probability of the person bouncing back into unemployment. Supporting vulnerable groups into employment may be the next step in the new generation of employment programmes.

Since the education deficit is mainly a subject affecting youth, it will be useful to look at this section in dialog with the conclusions for the NEET.

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