EMPLOYABILITY REVISITED. MAPPING THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORK IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Introduction

Established in January 2018, the Youth@Work Strategic Partnership on Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship is an institutional alliance of 11 Erasmus+ National Agencies (NAs), 4 SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres (SALTOs), as well as the Resource Centre for the European Solidarity Corps. Coming together under a joint strategy, supported by the Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) budget line of the Erasmus+ programme, means that NAs and SALTOs can follow a common vision, work collaboratively and increase the impact of their work. Its members are:

- Erasmus+ National Agencies from Turkey (the leading NA), Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, North Macedonia, Poland, Spain, and the UK.
- SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres representing Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (based in Poland), South East Europe (based in Slovenia), Euromed and Good Practices (based in France), and Training and Cooperation Resource Centres (based in Germany).
- Resource Centre for the European Solidarity Corps (based in Austria).

The partnership organises a variety of knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and networking activities each year, creating new initiatives, as well as building on existing actions. All the activities of the member NAs and SALTOs that were previously linked to the themes of youth employability and entrepreneurship now come under the umbrella of Youth@Work, such as conferences, training courses, study visits, online courses or publications. This creates a coherent approach for NAs, builds synergies and increases impact and dissemination. Importantly, it also establishes a stronger voice at European level to represent the contribution of youth work on these themes, and to enhance European policy visibility for the work of the partnership and its member NAs. The NAs and SALTOs want to develop and make visible the actions and impact of the Erasmus+ programme in the areas of youth employability and entrepreneurship, and through Youth@Work they see the opportunity to create the weight and coherence of evidence needed to achieve this at both national and EU level.

The objectives of Youth@Work are to:

- Provide visibility and enhance the role of youth work in the youth employability and entrepreneurship ecosystems.
- Support the contribution of Erasmus+ towards the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027), and other European youth employability and entrepreneurship-related policies.
- Strengthen the cooperation and synergies between local, regional, national and EU initiatives on youth employability and entrepreneurship, and support peer learning.
- Increase the development of sustainable partnerships, good practice, quality projects and foster innovation.
- Reinforce the contribution of youth work and of Erasmus+ , particularly the acquisition of competences and recognition among our target groups.
- Enhance understanding and promote the use of EntreComp, DigComp and other European competence frameworks to be developed by the European Commission, as well as of Youthpass.

For these objectives to be reached, Youth@Work has identified detailed target groups which reflect the broad engagement needed for employability and entrepreneurship themes: non-profit, public and private sectors, as well as young people (with a special focus on those with fewer opportunities and special needs).

In line with the above goals, Youth@Work has devised the current study on youth employability and entrepreneurship, which is intended to critically examine young people's relationships with the world of work, public policies that address youth employment and entrepreneurship, and the contribution of youth work in this process. In the first part, the study looks at the challenges faced by young people in the labour market: from unemployment and precarious labour, to entrepreneurship by necessity. It is followed by a review of policies in the area of youth employment and entrepreneurship, coupled with an identification of the benefits of public policies, as well as the inadequacies and the tensions this generates. The literature reviewed (from research to policy documents) informed an original survey, aimed at actors from the youth sector and based on quantitative and qualitative questions. The responses from over 400 participants served as a basis for imagining alternatives and possible ways forward in the actions of youth organisations.

The study calls for youth organisations in general, and Youth@Work in particular, to engage critically with the 'employability' discourse that permeates policy environments. It argues that employability is valuable, as it enables young people to exercise many social roles. However, youth work is wider in scope. The study proposes revising the employability agenda in ways that are responsive to broader social purposes and to the wider personal goals that young people may have. We hope readers will find the study worthwhile and the arguments engaging.

1

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF WORK

M.C. PANTEA

This chapter will look at several of the challenges faced by young people in the labour market: from unemployment and precarious work, to entrepreneurship by necessity. It argues that young people's situation in the world of work is shaped by structural limitations that call for policy interventions. Later, it is suggested that by concentrating efforts on preparing young people to navigate an unfriendly labour market, youth work may overlook the very structural dysfunctions that cause unemployment or in-work poverty, for instance. This chapter lays the ground for proposals suggesting youth work actors and National Agencies on Youth take on board young people's concerns and advocate for youth-responsive policy-making processes.

Youth unemployment

In the context of the economic recession (and its aftermath), young people represent one of the main risk groups. In comparison with other age groups, young people have been hit the hardest; their unemployment rates are still increasing, long after the economy has started to grow again (Verick, 2009; ECB, 2014). Young people face disproportionately high labour market risks: from a higher likelihood of losing a job and long-term unemployment, to higher employee turnover and a growing number of precarious jobs (Verick 2009; O'Higgins 2010; Scarpetta et al. 2010; Kazjulja and Roosmaa, 2016). For instance, as of 2017, the global youth unemployment rate was at 13%, which is three times higher than the adult rate of 4.3% (ILO, 2018). As a result of the financial and economic crisis, the rate of youth long-term unemployment (12 months or longer) has steadily grown in the EU, from 3.1% in 2008 to 7.1% in 2013 (Eurostat, 2018a). As of 2014, the average EU unemployment rate of young people, in the 15-29 age group, was 18.9%- more than twice as high as in the 30-59 age group, where the rate was 8.7% (Kazjulja and Roosmaa, 2016).

Youth unemployment has always been there. However, there are several ways the current situation differs from the youth unemployment of previous generations. Research has identified an increase in long-term unemployment among young people whose parents experienced unemployment during previous recessions (O'Reilly, 2015). For those entering employment, the risk of precarious work is high. Moreover, many tend to remain at the lower end of the occupational spectrum for longer than previous generations (Standing, 2011).

Unemployment has different causes. Structural unemployment occurs when workers have skills that are no longer in demand by employers, because of structural changes in the economy, although unemployment and vacancies may co-exist (ETF, 2012). The restructuring of the economy changes the distribution of employment by sectors. In Ukraine, for instance, as of 2014, services represented the majority of the labour force (62.7%), followed by industry (20.2%) and agriculture (17.1%) (ETF, 2018a).

Technological unemployment refers to the loss of jobs due to technological change (i.e. automation and other labour-saving technologies). Indeed, the demand for skills is often interpreted as an effect of technological advancements alone. However, more recent evidence shows that changing consumption demands and countries' industrial structure (such as Britain's large finance sector), also have skills implications (Green, 2016).

Education matters, but schools alone cannot always ensure (quality) employment. In Georgia, for instance, undereducated young people are less likely to enter NEET situations, in comparison with their peers with intermediate education (especially VET graduates) and university graduates, who face the highest risk of being not in education, employment or training (ETF, 2018f). In Azerbaijan, every year, around 40% of those finishing secondary education enter the labour market without a specific qualification (ETF, 2018g). In Egypt, educated women may still be unemployed because of cultural barriers and their preference for more stable (but lower paid) jobs in the public sector (ETF, 2018e). Recent research (Rokicka et al., 2018) finds significant differences in unemployment rates by

Unemployment has different causes:
some skills are no longer in demand;
different economic sectors emerge; automation;
new consumer demands;
countries' industrial structures.

Education matters, but schools alone cannot always provide a safety net against unemployment. Cultural barriers may prevent women's employment in many North African countries.

educational attainment in a majority of CEE countries: a moderate variation in Baltic states, while the effect of education on young people's labour market situation is much greater in Poland, Slovakia and Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, Hungary and Lithuania, for instance, the relative duration of time spent being employed was twice as low among young people with a lower educational attainment, in comparison to those with a medium level of education.

In-work poverty

Youth employment is generally perceived as an important indicator of a healthy economic climate. Yet, it is not necessarily a way out of poverty: many (young people) can hardly make a living, even though they are working. The concept of 'in-work poverty' incorporates a definition of work and a definition of poverty. According to the EU-SILC, people are at risk of in-work poverty if they work for over half the year and their annual disposable household income is below 60% of the national household median income level (Eurofound, 2017).

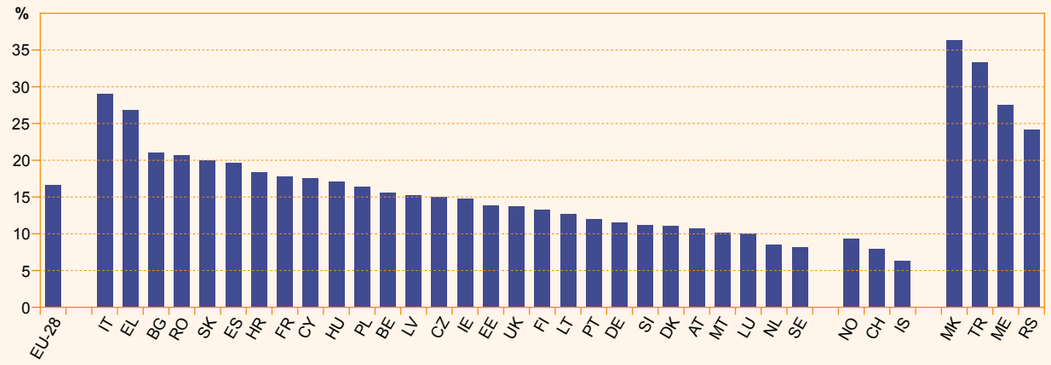
As of 2016, the EU average was 9.6% for the entire working age population, with a percentage of over 12% for young workers (18-24) (Eurostat, 2018b). In Spain and Romania, the share of young workers at risk of poverty was over 20% (ILO, 2016). Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Portugal and Poland also had higher than EU average rates of in-work poverty (Eurostat, 2018b). The lowest rates[1] were in Finland (3.1%), the Czech Republic (3.8%), Belgium (4.7%) and Ireland (4.8%) (Eurostat, 2018b). With very few exceptions (Czech Republic, Germany, Cyprus, Hungary), men have a slightly higher risk of experiencing in-work poverty than women (in general, by 1-2%). The discrepancy was the highest in Romania: 6% in 2106: men (21.5%) and women 15.2%).

Some research suggests that, although unacknowledged in policy, there is a significant demand for workers prepared to undertake 'flexible', low-paid, low-skilled work, requiring few or no qualifications (Ecclestone, 2002; Keep and James, 2010; Atkins, 2013). The political demand for 'more jobs' has to take into account the actual quality of employment. According to Şenyuva (2014), policies aimed at reducing unemployment must also look at issues such as work-life balance, freedom from all forms of discrimination, precarious working conditions, self-fulfilment, social and personal development. Whilst many young people face difficult economic and social conditions, some young people are more vulnerable than others (i.e. young people leaving care, ethnic minorities, LGBT, migrants and refugees, young people from the criminal justice system, young people with disabilities).

Employment is not necessarily a way out of poverty. Political calls for 'more jobs' need to take into account the quality of employment.

[1] Data is for the general population of active age.

Young people (aged 20-34) neither in employment nor education and trainig, 2018



Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_20).

Young people in NEET situations

The World Bank estimates that worldwide, 40.7% of young people between 15 and 29 years of age are in NEET[2] situations, mainly due to three risk factors: (i) low education, (ii) living in remote areas and (iii) gender (ETF, 2018e). Despite efforts made, in the EU, as of 2015, both the youth long-term unemployment rate and the NEET indicators were still worse than the 2007 pre-recession levels: 12%, after a 2007 average of 11% (see Graphic 1). The only improvements in the rate of young people in NEET situations were registered in Germany, Latvia, Malta, Sweden and the UK (The European Committee of the Regions, 2017). Eurostat data indicates a large variation in the NEET rate across Europe, with higher rates in southern and eastern regions. Also, some countries have a rather homogenous NEET rate within their borders (Denmark, Germany, Greece, and Italy) whilst others have large regional differences (France, Romania, Spain, UK).

Young people in NEET situations do not form a homogenous group. Close to half take care of children or other family members; less than one-tenth are inactive due to illness or disability and a similar number have given up a job search or work in the informal economy (Kazjulja and Roosma, 2016). Young women between 25-29 years of age have the highest rate of NEET representation (ETUC/ ETUI, 2014). On the positive side, however, since 2007, the rate of early school leaving has decreased at EU level (The European Committee of the Regions, 2017). The level of vulnerability among young people in NEET situations is very high for those leaving care (Brown, 2015) and the criminal justice system, for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers trying to secure a workplace in Europe. Many face difficulties in accessing the labour market due to the level of education, discrimination, poor language proficiency, an unfavourable economic climate or a combination of the above.

In Maghreb countries, the evolution and percentage of young people in NEET situations differs considerably. In Algeria, the proportion of young people (15-24) not in employment, education or training is high (27.6%), with a disproportionate representation of girls (36.3%) (ETF, 2018b). Egypt has a similar proportion of young people in NEET situations (27.6% in 2016). Although there is progress in women's em-

[2] Not in education, employment or training.

ployment, gender and urban/rural residency account for a major difference: two out of three young women in rural Egypt (69.7%) and more than half of young women in urban areas (60.4%) are NEET. Yet, as few as one in eight young men in urban areas (13.2%) and a tenth of young men in rural Egypt (10.5%) are NEET (ETF, 2018e). In Tunisia, the rate of young people in NEET situations is increasing annually, reaching 51.6% in 2015 for those in the 18-24 age bracket (ETF, 2018d).

Countries in the Caucasus have a different profile: in Georgia, there are no major gender disparities in youth unemployment, yet, young females are more prone to be in NEET situations (not in employment education or training): 33.2% vs. 23.2% for young males (ETF, 2015). Interestingly, however, it is not the less educated young people who are more likely to be in NEET situations, but those with an intermediate education (especially VET) and university graduates (ETF, 2015).

It is not only gender that influences the risk of being in NEET situations, but also the way gender intersects with regions and urban/ rural residency.

The relationship between the level of schooling and NEET situations is not straightforward. High literacy rates may be necessary, but not sufficient for youth employment. With a youth literacy rate of 96.8% among the 15 to 24 age group, Tunisia has made significant improvements in literacy and schooling (ETF, 2018d). Yet, the rate of young people in NEET situations is high. Ukraine too has almost universal (99.2%) enrolment rates in secondary education (UNESCO, 2014 cf. ETF, 2018a). However, over 40% of firms in Ukraine have declared that they face problems related to employees' education (ETF, 2012). Croatia, Georgia and Turkey faced below average, but still severe, problems with workforce skills. At the other end of the spectrum, probably because of the high expansion of university education and a perceived level of over-education, fewer companies in Montenegro had difficulties finding skilled employees (Sisevic, 2011; ETF, 2012).

The demographic structure of the population and the recent refugee crisis pose challenges in tackling the situation of young people in NEET situations. With over 60% of its population under 30 years old, Jordan faces strong demographic pressure in education, health, employment, housing and infrastructure (ETF, 2014). The Syrian refugee crisis has added to this complexity. 60% of Syrian refugees over the age of 15 have never completed basic schooling, and only about 15% have completed secondary education, compared to 42% of Jordanians over the age of 15 (ILO, 2015).

Under-employment as precarious work

Recent years have witnessed a departure from full-time, stable work. There are several ways of describing this process. There is the concept of under-employment, which denotes situations where employees possess skills beyond the level of qualification needed to perform the job, where they do temporary/part-time work involuntarily or they remain idle. Eurofound and ILO use 'non-standard employment' as an umbrella-term, in order to denote: i) temporary employment; ii) part-time and on-call work; iii) temporary agency work and other forms of employment involving multiple parties; iv) disguised employment relationships and dependent self-employment (ILO, 2017).

Whilst people have always started low and climbed up the occupational ladder to reach the top, at present, young people face a higher risk of remaining at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy for longer than previous generations did (despite being more educated). Moreover, they expect a life of unstable labour and unstable living (Standing, 2011). The concept of 'precarious labour' reflects such situations. According to Standing (2014), those doing precarious labour ('the Precariat') have class characteristics, namely: (i) distinctive labour relations (i.e. insecure employment, agency work, incomplete contracts); (ii) distinctive relations of distribution (that is: income is money only, with few if any other benefits, such as paid leave); (iii) distinctive relations with the State: fewer and weaker civil, cultural, social, political and economic rights (i.e. unionisation; the right to vote in their companies). Work across the entire employment spectrum (from manual work to the highly skilled IT specialists and consultants) carries the risk of becoming precarious.

Temporary employment is a non-standard employment form where young people are overrepresented, especially in Europe, where half of young workers were in temporary employment in 2015 (CICOPA, 2018). The border between temporary employment as a choice, and temporary employment as a precarious form of work is hard to draw. Often, temporary employment is a solution of choice: it enables young people to experience different working environments, to develop competences, to combine work with education. A recent European study on young people in the labour market (EXCEPT, 2017) indicates there are several advantages that temporary employment brings. First, it can address poverty or deprivation in the short term, despite being associated with lower wages than permanent employment. Second, in the medium term, it may act as a 'stepping stone' into continuous, permanent employment. However, the benefits of temporary employment are fragile, unless supported by strong policies that regulate fixed-term employment in a similar way to permanent employment (EXCEPT, 2017). Such policies need to protect temporary employees from an 'excessive flexibilisation of their contracts' by opportunistic employers who seek to use fixed-term contracts as a 'flexibilised secondary labour market' (EXCEPT, 2017:8). Strong policy regulation is needed in order to prevent harmful socio-economic consequences in the long term, notably major economic risks in old age due to poor pension contributions.

Zero hours contracts are a type of employer-employee relationship without the employer having any obligation to provide continuous work or pay. They are used in northern Europe and in the UK, where 2.8% of all people in employment have 'zero hours contracts' as their main job, with 33.8% of them aged 16-24 (CICOPA, 2018).

The benefits of temporary employment are fragile, unless supported by strong policies that regulate fixed-term employment in a similar way to permanent employment (EXCEPT, 2017).

Over-education[3] is a form of under-employment and an unprecedented feature of a precarious labour market (Standing, 2011). Recent, large scale research looked for patterns in over-education among European countries, based on as many as 30 factors (McGuinness et al., 2015). Whilst the structural forces influencing over-education are very complex (from migration to the use of temporary workers), it emerged that over-education increases in peripheral countries and remains lower in new European states. No evidence was found of particular country groupings (old, new, peripheral countries). Some states (Poland, Romania, Cyprus and Bulgaria) have over-education independently of all other countries (McGuinness et al., 2015). Labour market turbulence that increases the risk of precarisation is higher in countries with low labour market regulation and weak social security systems (Gangl, 2004) and in the Anglo-Saxon countries, more so than in parts of continental Europe (Bassanini, 2010). Even higher instability has been witnessed in the transition economies, where previously subsidised industries disappeared (ETF, 2012). The conflicts in the Western Balkans and the creation of new states brought about increased labour market turbulence (Bartlett, 2008 cf. ETF, 2012). Labour market turbulence that increases the risk of precarisation is higher in countries with low labour

[3] By and large, defined as 'the extent to which an individual possesses a level of education in excess of that which is required for their particular job' (McGuinness et al., 2015).

market regulation and weak social security systems (Gangl, 2004).

For the post-Communist countries, transition involved an additional layer of instability, which produced a reconfiguration of social positions and prestige. According to Pollock (2010), in the South Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan), young people experience a 'feeling of precariousness' created by a major drop in the formerly high status and wealth of certain professions. The large size of the informal sector in the transition economies of the Eastern European partnership countries adds to the complexity (ETF, 2012). This has been linked to: (i) the reduction of the public sector, previously a source of secure employment; (ii) privatisation and the restructuring of state enterprises; (iii) land reform and subsistence agriculture; (iv) the increased bargaining position of employers, which has enabled them to enforce informal arrangements (ETF, 2011: 18).

Whilst 'precarious work' is a useful concept in the Global North and in the wealthier countries of the South, it may be that the concept of informal work is more pertinent in the global South, where the absence/ lack of implementation of standard laws and social benefits is more pervasive (Evans and Tilly, 2016). Indeed, the highest incidence of informal work is in developing and emerging countries, where it affects 96.8% and 83.0% of employed youth respectively. Again, young people are overrepresented. Worldwide, three out of four employed young people work in the informal economy, in comparison with three out of five employed adults (ILO, 2017). Informality is relevant (although less extensive) in developed countries, where slightly less than 20% of working young people are in the informal economy (ILO, 2017).

In some countries, the reasons for under-employment are cultural. Despite some improvements, in several Maghreb countries, women's labour market participation remains low. In Algeria, for instance, male employment reached 61.2% in 2016, but women's employment is as low as 13.3%. Young women (16-24) are disproportionately affected, with an unemployment rate increasing to 49.9% in 2016 (up from 38.1 in 2011). Importantly, because of family obligations and a more vulnerable labour market position, their participation peaks at age 25 to 29 and then gradually reduces with age (ETF, 2018b). In Lebanon, a youth unemployment rate of 18% for males and 20.4% for females is accompanied by a high influx of foreign workers and a large number of skilled Lebanese seeking employment abroad (ETF, 2018c).

Digitisation and the labour market

Many of the changes that have occurred in the labour market are being attributed to digital technologies (see technological unemployment, above). Online platforms allow companies to hire part-time or temporary workers as 'independent contractors' or 'freelancers', in ways that externalise the social risks. For many young people, the 'gig economy' (or 'crowd work') has the advantage of being a secondary source of income, flexible and self-organised. Yet, for many others, its unpredictability and absence of progression are major deterrents. The 'gig' economy creates an environment where young people are faced with insecure contracts and a lack of career progression (Pollock and Hind, 2017). Over 1.5 billion people com-pete for highly mobile jobs, many of which are temporary (Beynon, 2016). They are rapidly growing in high-income countries and have a disproportionate impact on young people (CICOPA, 2018). On the one hand, digitisation brings increased opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship. On the other, these are new forms of precarious work ('digital taylorism', cybercariat, crowd work cf. Huws, 2003. The debate on the advantages and disadvantages of platform work is opening up.

Clearly, jobs are not for life anymore and the emerging technologies will require new skills, or render previous ones outdated. However, there are large variations, from country to country, in the types and rhythm of change, including technology-driven transformations. For instance, an ILO analysis shows a broader move towards services at the same time as a decline in the number of young people employed in manufacturing. However, the nature, speed and scale of sectoral shifts and digital innovation adds nuance to the global picture. For instance, Africa, Asia and the Pacific regions have not undergone a disproportionate move towards

Good policies can mediate the negative impact of technology on employment.

the service sector, as experienced in other regions (ILO 2017).

The impact of digital technologies on the labour market also depends on a country's level of industrialisation. For instance, globally, digital technologies are highly concentrated in developed countries (CICOPA, 2018). But even there, the trend is not linear. Research suggests that once IT investment reaches a point of saturation, the skills demand declines relative to the adoption stage (Green, 2016; ETF, 2012). For instance, in the US, despite the use of 'cognitive tasks' in the labour market, the employment rate has not increased since 2000, when the IT investment was at its highest (Beaudry et al. 2016). It is expected that other developed economies will follow the same pattern (Green, 2016). In Europe, large scale research leans away from the tendency to assume that CEE labour markets and youth transitions are homogenous (Rokicka et al, 2018). There are as many differences in the labour market situation of young people in CEE countries as there are between countries such as Austria, Italy, the UK and Finland (Rokicka et al, 2018).

Despite its attraction, the idea of predicting the impact of digitisation and automation on young people's working lives is difficult. On the one hand, we need to consider the uneven rhythm of technological change across the globe and the disappearance of some jobs ('technological unemployment') or their relocation from developed countries (CICOPA, 2018). On the other, automation and digitisation may not only replace employment in certain areas, but also increase job opportunities in some emerging sectors where people will need to work alongside robots, at least in the adoption stage. Besides, the new information technology (IT) needs an increasingly well-educated workforce (ETF, 2012; Green, 2016), able to perform non-routine cognitive tasks: the so called 'skill-biased technical change' (Violante, 2008). Research suggests that at the current level of technological innovation, machines mainly replace human labour in the middle of the employment chain. Machines are complementary to labour at the top end, and neutral with respect to labour at the bottom[4] end, where the manual and low-skilled jobs take place (Fernández-Macías, 2012). These differences in the impact of technology on employment, call for different employment regulations, able to neutralise the polarising effects of technological change (Fernández-Macías, 2012). States and organisations (through managerial strategies) can mediate this effect of technology on employment (Green, 2016).

There are different theories on the types of skills required in the labour market in the context of technological advancements. The idea of job polarisation or the 'hourglass economy' has gained predominance. It says that labour markets are being divided: with poor-quality jobs at the bottom and high-quality jobs at the top, while mid-level positions are squeezed in the middle. However, the theory of the 'hourglass economy' was recently challenged by the discovery that across Europe, we are witnessing a 'plurality of patterns', depending on the degree to which states allow unprotected, unregulated labour contracts to become a practice (see Fernández-Macías, 2012). Accordingly, it is not digitisation per se that causes precariousness, but the institutional arrangements and policies that enable precarious employment to happen (Prosser, 2015; Standing, 2016; Roberts, 2016). There is increased awareness that 'it is the political power of capital that supports the use of technology to destroy jobs, facilitates firm restructuring that weakens workers' positions, scales back labour standards enforcement' (Evans and Tittley, 2016: 657).

[4] According to Green (2016), labour substitution by robots is expected to be greatest at the lower end of the skills spectrum.

It is not digitisation per se that causes precariousness, but poor institutional arrangements and policies that enable precarious employment to take place.

Entrepreneurship by choice vs. entrepreneurship by necessity

There are many definitions of entrepreneurship: from Schumpeter's narrow concept of 'creative destruction', to the broader, non-economic approaches such as 'entrepreneurship for life' (EU Skills Panorama, 2012). Entrepreneurship has attracted high policy expectations as a tool for stimulating economic growth, alternative employment and economic dynamism in adversity. It benefits from a generally positive perception among young people as well (Eurofound, 2015; 2017). Despite the high EU policy interest in youth entrepreneurship, there are large differences between EU Member States in barriers/opportunities to setting up new businesses, as well as different labour market conditions. Although half of the young population in the EU considers entrepreneurship a desirable career option, the percentage of those actually starting an entrepreneurial project is lower, when compared to other parts of the world, such as Brazil, China, India and the United States (Eurofound, 2015). Moreover, the fact that some decide to migrate and start an entrepreneurial activity elsewhere (i.e. the United States), suggests that barriers to success in Europe are considered too big (Eurofound, 2015).

Research distinguishes between opportunity versus necessity entrepreneurship, the first being associated with the creation of more growth-oriented businesses (Fairlie and Fossen, 2018; Margolis, 2014). Self-employment is often used as a proxy for entrepre-neurship. Yet, it is often closer to bogus employment than to entrepreneurship, because it is the effect of 'push' factors, oriented towards subsistence (ETF, 2012). Half of all workers in the developing world are self-employed, without this being necessarily linked to high productivity, growth or innovation (Margolis, 2014). Self-employment is typically not covered by labour laws or employment-based social security (CICOPA, 2018). Importantly, the economic sectors with the highest percentage of independent workers are some of the most precarious (i.e. construction cf. Eurofound, 2015). The share of youth self-employment is 15% or more in Italy and Greece, while in Germany and Denmark it is 3% or less (Eurofound, 2015). The average number of 'independent workers' in Romania, Greece and Turkey is higher than the EU average (PIAROM, 2017). The self-employment of women and minorities is often an expression of an unfriendly labour market.

The association between entrepreneurship and unemployment is not that clear-cut. There is no convincing evidence that self-employment among young people leads to better youth labour market performance (Jones et al, 2015). Research seems to indicate that

Self-employment is not always a reliable indicator of entrepreneurship. The highest percentage of independent workers is in one of the most precarious economic sectors (i.e. construction cf. Eurofound, 2015).

the age of the business proprietor is 'the primary single determinant of business survival', with business ventures started by older entrepreneurs surviving for longer (Cressy, 1996 cf. Eurofound, 2016; van Praag, 2003; Lin et al, 2000). However, Eurostat data shows higher average growth rates for businesses started by young people (aged under 30), measured in 2002 and followed up in 2004 (Eurofound, 2016).

Young women entering entrepreneurship face both barriers that are similar to the ones they face in employment, as well as some barriers that are specific to entrepreneurship. They need to overcome entrenched stereotypes and the fear of failure that feed weak self-confidence. Entrepreneurship is highly dependent on women's ability to access finance, to reconcile business and family issues, and to access information and business- specific networks which are male-dominated. Often, women entrepreneurs cluster in sectors with low capital investment and, as a consequence, the opportunities to grow are reduced. However, they have a social impact, as they are more active in the areas of health, social-work activities, services or education (EC, 2014d). Young women need to overcome limitations brought about by both gender and age. Barriers of this kind explain why, despite women making up 52% of the total European population, and despite an increasing trend, as few as 34.4% of self-employed people and 30% of start-up entrepreneurs in the EU are women (EC, 2018b). Women's weaker entrepreneurial participation is an important economic loss, but also a loss of creative potential.

Young people tend to be critical of conventional, profit-maximising entrepreneurship and want to have a social impact. Social entrepreneurship is an appealing idea to many young men and women. However, they have to overcome major barriers, as social entrepreneurship has to compete on the market alongside conventional entrepreneurship entities that do not assume a high commitment to social values. Worker cooperatives are examples of social entrepreneurship. Ideally, they are owned and controlled by their members (stakeholders, not shareholders) who make decisions democratically (CICOPA, 2018). The importance of worker cooperatives for the quality and stability of jobs is often overlooked, despite being a solution to several dilemmas: 'In worker coops, rather than fearing how machines might take work away, workers can imagine how they could use those machines to make their lives easier – in ways better and fairer than the investor-owners would' (Schneider, 2018). Moreover, according to the ILO, cooperatives are one of the most resilient business models in times of crisis (ILO, 2009). Research shows cooperatives have a survival rate equal to or higher than other businesses and retain higher employment rates; they tend to be more productive and more stable financially, as more profit remains inside the enterprise, in comparison with other types of business (Pérotin, 2014). However, for the time being, the legal barriers to opening and to running a cooperative in the EU are the highest, when compared to South America, Asia etc. (CICOPA, 2018).

Notwithstanding all of the above, entrepreneurial education and much non-formal learning has a focus on individual, small business creation. The idea that ownership and management can be shared is rarely incorporated into the entrepreneurial training, which has the individual (and not the group/community acting entrepreneurially) at its core.

Not all social problems can be 'solved' through market solutions. Issues such as youth homelessness and drug addiction also remain insufficiently addressed due to budget cuts and cost-benefit performance measurements in social services. New approaches, such as activism, may create the necessary pressure for social/institutional change. Activism, however, requires (pro)active citizens, able and willing to take action towards creating social justice. Young people's activism may range from daily, small-scale acts of rebellion: from boycotting a company selling products made through the use of child labour, or signing petitions, to highly visible forms of collective action, such as protests or social movements. Activism marks the difference between 'good citizenship', which involves a level of conformity, compliance with the status quo and 'fitting in', and 'active citizenship' which includes young people's predisposition to act for social change (Coussée and Williamson,

2011; Kiilakoski, 2014). Activism is an expression of democratic practice that involves a certain level of 'civil disobedience'. It is highly political. Despite having a legacy of youth activism, youth work has now a difficult relationship with the concept.

Cooperatives are one of the most resilient business models in times of crisis (ILO, 2009; Pérotin014).

2

IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

M.C. PANTEA

This chapter builds on the previous section on the labour market situation of young people. It starts with a short discussion of the major economic implications (immediate and long-term). These have, by far, been the most extensively researched effects. There is increased evidence showing how a marginal employment status affects young people's financial stability and their housing situation, for instance. The chapter will try to complement this area of investigation, by looking at the non-economic implications. Thus, it builds up the argument that young people's marginal status in the labour market influences the civic and political space they inhabit. Un-/under-employment is not just about work and economic growth. It also has a bearing on democracy.

Economic implications

Europe's young people do not share the wellbeing levels of previous generations (EC, 2015; OECD, 2015; Pollock and Hind, 2017). Concerns over ways to avoid a 'lost generation' penetrate policy discourse at the highest level (EC, 2015). Young people face higher risks of income poverty and more often report living in materially deprived households than those aged 30-59 (EXCEPT, 2017). Moreover, subjective indicators of poverty reflect difficulties in making ends meet among 40% of young people in Europe (EXCEPT, 2017). Many are likely to experience increased dependence on family, financial debt, a strong sense of insecurity and low self-esteem (Pollock and Hind, 2017). There is a high variation in the incidence of socio-economic disadvantage across Europe, with Greece, Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria facing higher youth unemployment and income poverty, while Scandinavian countries are better positioned with regard to material deprivation and subjective poverty (EXCEPT, 2017). Weak engagement in regular, paid employment also has obvious economic implications in the long term. It affects material accumulation and the opportunities this enables: from independent housing and family formation, to decent living in old age (O'Reilly, 2015; Eurofound, 2014).

Learning implications

Unemployment deprives young people of the opportunity to learn on the job and thus to acquire new skills (Gregg and Tominey, 2005). It may be, for instance, that those already in employment, acquired while working the skills expected of new entrants from day one (Green, 2016). This is particularly relevant for CEE countries (except for Slovenia and Estonia), where young people's participation in lifelong learning is rather weak, without many opportunities to overcome the gaps in their education (Rokicka et al., 2018).

Employment matters. However, the potency of the discourse on employability risks overlooking the other functions of learning, aside from its work-related value. According to Gewirtz, these also include personal fulfilment, citizenship, social inclusion and social justice (2008).

Implications for wellbeing and health

Unemployment has 'long-term scarring' effects with respect to wellbeing and health (EXCEPT, 2017). Young people at the margins of the labour market are more likely to experience a 'vicious downward circle', characterised by a poor sense of recognition, value and well-being (O'Reilly, 2015). Recent European research found that unemployment even has a negative effect on partners, and that the effect is stronger in cases where the male partner loses his job (EXCEPT, 2017). Unemployment, with its consequences on housing and impoverishment, can increase the probability of health compromising behaviours, such as substance abuse, alcohol consumption and smoking (Youth Partnership, 2016; EXCEPT, 2017). It can lead to subjective insecurity (O'Reilly, 2015) and even mental health problems, such as loneliness (Aaltonen, 2018), as well as depression and suicidal thoughts (Youth Partnership, 2016). Moreover, research suggests that the consequences of unemployment at a young age can extend over a lifetime, in ways that are detrimental to both mental and physical health (EXCEPT, 2017).

An important implication for those in precarious labour is a fragile work-based identity. When moving from one workplace to another, young people are

Unemployment deprives young people of the opportunity to learn on the job and thus to acquire new skills (Gregg and Tominey, 2005).

When in precarious employment, young people miss an important opportunity to develop durable relations and a sense of belonging.

deprived of the opportunity to develop a sense of 'being good at' doing a certain job. Interestingly, research focused on identity issues associated with white collar work, and looked less at those with 'practical interests' (Winch, 2003; Simpson et al, 2014). It is a matter of debate whether consumption or other processes/ behaviours replace the identity function of work.

In general, young people's health transitions are under-researched and provide mixed evidence (Pollock and Hind, 2017). Further large scale studies on the implications of the current labour market status upon young people's health are much needed. Williamson and Wulff insightfully call for a broader understanding of health, in ways that go beyond conventional indicators such as body mass index, alcohol and exercise habits and incorporate the notion of healthy participation and citizenship (2016).

Gender implications

Research indicates that the transformative nature of work is at odds with the traditional notion of masculinity, associated with risk-taking, physical labour, adventure, an element of danger and courage (Rogers, 2000; Connel, 2001; Reeser, 2010). A perceived 'crisis' in male roles has been attributed to changes in the labour market (Beynon, 2002), with the shift from manual, physical work to services. Arguably, young men feel social pressure to undertake traditional, masculine work tasks, whilst 'heavy industry' has collapsed and has been replaced by a growing (and feminised) service sector that requires 'soft skills' (Beynon, 2002). For young women, on the other hand, the changing labour market strengthens gender roles (e.g. the focus on the provision of care, at the expense of personal autonomy).

Civic implications

Standing (2011) depicts the precariat as 'denizens' (a concept from ancient Rome, denoting someone who has a more limited range of rights than citizens do). Precarious workers (i.e. interns, temps, subcontracted workers, those on part-time and casual contracts) do not have the same voting rights in firms' decision making as 'the citizens' (those employed on a full- time and permanent basis). They may not enjoy the same rights and social protection measures: from pensions, health insurance, medical leave and paid holiday to trade union membership and the right to strike. For the precariat, labour is instrumental (for living), opportunistic (taking what comes) and precarious (insecure) (Standing 2011: 22-23).

When in precarious employment, without stability or career prospects, people do not feel they belong to an occupational community that shares a social memory, status and a sense of reciprocity (Standing, 2011). A sense of belonging matters for identity-building, for mental health, but also for social conscience and civic action. Workplaces have always enabled people to form and consolidate relationships, to gain a sense of cohesion. This tends to change, as labour turnover is often very high, teams are short-lived and the work is project based. The jobs recruitment culture also values change and mobility. In certain contexts, workplace stability may even have a bad reputation (Sennett, 1998). Young people enter and leave working teams without spending sufficient time there to gain a sense of belonging and to connect emotionally with their colleagues of different generations. Besides, they often enter in marginal positions, as temporary workers, interns or part-time employees in organisational cultures that are less inclusive with those who are not 'the salariat'[1].

Community building takes time. Trust building takes time. Besides not having the opportunity to develop long-term relationships in the workplace, young people do not have enough time to dedicate to what they consider to be meaningful pursuits (i.e. community-based actions, volunteering/solidarity, political actions). They work unsociable hours and, most often, longer than the standard 40-hour working week. As a consequence of young people's extended schedules, communities become less vibrant and there are fewer chances to exercise participation and citizenship.

Digital technologies influence the jobs market, but they can also influence the way young people engage socially. Youth work can counterbalance the negative effects, in ways that bring people closer to the profoundly human issues that connect us all. It can play a role in highlighting the structural policy implications that make labour markets what they are, and that – as seen above - may not be a direct consequence of technology alone.

Implications for volunteering

Many young people in search of decent employment resort to volunteering, which has been shown to have 'transformational benefits' that exceed the expectations of those involved (Hill and Russell, 2009). Volunteering has been associated with increased awareness of community and diversity, and with involvement in socio-political action (Roker and Eden, 2002). Its benefits are considered to include everything from inter-generational solidarity, to community cohesion, health, self-esteem and economic development. However, the changing labour market situation of many young people has implications for volunteering. There are at least three potential changes that need to be anticipated/analysed. First, there is a risk that volunteering is used as an 'employability tool', which compromises its civic value. Young people 'certainly perceive volunteering as enhancing their employability' (Hirst, 2001). However, recent research on large samples in the UK and Sweden, suggest that 'too much has been made of the link between volunteering and employability' (Ellis Paine et al, 2013), as a causal direct relationship between the two is at best, weak or mixed (Ellis Paine et al, 2013; Petrovski et al., 2017; Hill and Russell, 2009). Organisations need to be cognisant of this expectation and to calibrate the promise of volunteering in ways that do not depart from the civic principles. Second, given the budget cuts in the social services sector, there is a risk that volunteering is used as a replacement for paid staff. This carries implications for both the values of volunteering, for employment, for the social dynamics between volunteers and paid staff and, probably, for the quality of the service provided. Third, volunteering may be used by young people as a replacement for the employment they cannot secure, often because of disability or an unfriendly labour market. Organisations need to handle these situations with an awareness of the social benefits of volunteering, but also of the vulnerabilities involved when young people with fewer opportunities volunteer, as they find the routes to employment hard to navigate. Standing up for their right to work may be part of an organisation's actions.

The changes in the labour market are not only a 'work thing'. They extend into young people's capacity to exercise citizenship, to be socially mindful, to value diversity, to build a sense of community.

[1] According to Standing, 'the salariat' is the group of those who are in stable, full-time employment, who benefit from employment security, pensions, paid holidays and non-wage bonuses. They are concentrated in large corporations, government agencies and public administration, including the civil service.

'Generational differences, often referred to in public debates and used in political discourse, is a myth' (Hajdu, 2015: 7).

Changing values of work?

There is a lot of controversy surrounding young people's work values. Media accounts about 'millennials' being 'lazy and entitled' abound. However, the empirical evidence on generational differences is mixed. Based on extensive comparative research ondifferent age cohorts, the FP7 STYLE project concluded that 'in contemporary Europe, generations are not divided significantly in their work values' (Hajdu and Sik, 2015:6). Moreover, this large scale research emphasises the lack of generational differences with regards to the centrality of work, employment commitment or work values in evaluating a job. When compared with factors such as gender, industry and occupation, the role of 'generation' turned out to be very small. The search for generational gaps appeared to be 'futile' and close to a 'myth', as 'in contemporary Europe, all generations follow a similar age trend, i.e. as the younger ones become older, their work values change similarly' (Hajdu and Sik, 2015:7; Kowske et al, 2010). Besides, in a comparison between the EU15 and post-socialist countries, Hajdu shows minor differences in work-related extrinsic values (i.e. 'good income', 'security' and 'flexibility') and intrinsic values ('interesting work' and having a job which is 'useful to society'). One such minor difference is the importance of job security (stable in the EU15 countries), which increased significantly in the 90s in the post-socialist countries, because of high economic insecurity.

Socio-political implications

The changes that have come about in the labour market, in particular the rise in temporary, contingent forms of work and the erosion of traditional 'career ladders', generates the idea among young people that organisational structures cannot help them and that self-reliance is the only way of navigating the labour market (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005; Kalleberg 2011 cf. Eidlin 2016). This mindset undermines young people's trust in institutions. It also carries the risk of diminishing social trust, as young people have to compete with each other for the jobs that are available. The possibilities for them to act jointly in representing their interests diminish. Unlike working class formation, it is very unlikely that young people inhabiting precarious labour market positions will gain a sense of commonality. Fierce competition and less cohesion are among the major adverse implications of decreased opportunities of finding a fair and fulfilling job. Ultimately, precarious work is shameful, Standing argues, and this hinders the prospects of precarious workers acknowledging their status and discovering a sense of commonality. People do not stand out creating alliances or communities based on their labour market status. So far, the Precariat is not 'a class in itself', but 'a class-in-the-making', in need of 'reviving an ethos of social solidarity' (Standing, 2011: 155).

Young people doing precarious work have to move from one workplace to another, without the chance of developing a sense of 'being good at' something. They can only develop weak occupational identities. For instance, many young people are more likely to talk about their jobs as 'working at [the name of the company]', rather than naming their occupation. The recent policy focus on vocational education aims to counterbalance the volatility of occupational identities, by reviving the importance of crafts and trades for the economy and for the people involved. Yet, as many young people are the second generation to experience a fractured relationship with the labour market, the early formation of vocational aspirations is weakened. Many experience a sense of insecurity, amplified by their parents' declining capacity to inspire them through viable occupational models.

Social trust decreases, as young people feel they have to compete with each other for the jobs that are available.

Young people who are marginalised are more likely to distance themselves from society's traditional structures and institutions, to feel disempowered and disengaged (Pollock and Hind, 2017).

It is close to a truism that (young) people who are marginalised and excluded in some way are more likely to experience society as something external, to distance themselves from society's traditional structures and institutions and to feel disempowered and disengaged (Pollock and Hind, 2017). They may develop antisocial lifestyles, and negative sentiments can turn to hostility, such as a growing attraction to the anarchic, anti-democratic ends of the political spectrum (Powell and Scanlon, 2016; Şenyuva, 2014). To Harvey, the urban suburbs with increased unemployment are 'cold sites of roiling unrest' (2013: xi). Although it is difficult to infer direct causality, there are reasons to relate young people's labour market position with situations of significant political instability. After examining the youth-led protests across Europe, Williamson suggests that'new alliances amongst the young' are likely to emerge, because of the prolonged marginalisation and disengagement of those 'traditionally socially disadvantaged' combined with 'new forms of disaffection and marginality amongst those who hitherto have not experienced exclusionary processes or conditions' (2014:6). Alternative forms of participation, such as anti-austerity movements and the 'Indignados' and Occupy movements, contest conventional models of political action and their corresponding institutional arrangements (Sloam, 2014). The Anonymous phenomenon, embraced by some young people, symbolises their alienation from the public realm (2016).

In North Africa, for instance, an extremely high youth unemployment rate of 23.4% in 2010 was considered a major (yet, not exclusive) cause of the popular uprisings and rebellions (ILO, 2011). The high number of young people in NEET situations in Tunisia, for instance, generated political concerns about the risks of social instability and radicalisation. In 2017, a new law made schooling or a work placement compulsory for every young person up to the age of 18 (ETF, 2018d).

Policy implications. What can go wrong with 'employability'?

Youth unemployment is not a new phenomenon; it has always been there and it has always been higher than the general unemployment rate (Şenyuva, 2014). Depending on the root causes that are identified, policy solutions will follow. When the problem is found at the structural level, policy solutions transform institutions and target social, economic and political shortcomings. But when the causes are attributed to the young people themselves, policies aimed at 'fixing young people' in order to 'fit' the existing structures, are more likely to follow.

The discourse on 'employability' has permeated the policy making process at all levels: from the high EU strategies, to the very local interventions addressing the link between young people and the labour market. However, employability is an under-defined policy concept. A systematic review of employability literature between 1960 and 2014 identified as many as 16 employability conceptualisations (Williams et al., 2015). The variety of definitions and the influence of 'employability' across policies and interventions, in-dicate that this is a timely issue. Unlike 'employment', 'employability' has the major advantage of reflecting a process that unfolds over time, allowing greater insight into how young people's relationship with the labour market develops (Tomlinson, 2017). There are, however, several negative implications that the focus on employability may have.

It risks locating the source of the problem within the individuals

Employability is a multifaceted construct that may be understood from a societal perspective (i.e. employment rates), from an organisational perspective (i.e. whether supply meets demand) and from an individual perspective, as an indicator of one's 'opportunity to acquire and to keep an attractive job' (Thijssen et al., 2008: 168; Tomlinson, 2017). Despite the policy relevance of the first two layers (society and organisations), the focus on an individual's employability is gaining prominence. Employability (and 'the acquisition of skills') has become the centre of an individual's investment (Grazier, 1998; Williams et al, 2015).

Indeed, many of the interventions currently being proposed come from a mindset that locates the problem at the individual level. For instance, young people themselves are considered responsible, and need to learn how to navigate a labour market whose way of functioning remains unquestioned. They are also persistently offered career counselling and training. A crude rationale behind this would be that – unlike previous generations – many young people are under-employed because they may not know how to properly present themselves in an interview situation, or how to tailor their CVs. One can imagine that once they know how to do it properly, youth underemployment may go down. Yet, statistics on labour market demand show that this can be far from the case.

Young people are exposed to a discourse that frames their employability as a 'choice' related to their 'motivation'. The pervasive culture of 'making yourself more employable' has the individual, and the idea of competition, at its core. Young people perceive that they are competing in a labour market that is ruthless and is not available to all. Some are better positioned than others to embrace opportunities for professional development and personal growth. Taking a gap year, and being able to do a quality internship, are

Young people perceive that they are competing in a labour market that is ruthless and not available to all. This reduces opportunities to cooperate.

'employability' choices that not all can afford. Furthermore, despite recent inclusion policies, the percentage of people with disabilities in work in many European countries is lower now than it was 40 years ago. For instance, in the 1970s, 75% of men with disabilities and no qualifications were employed in Scotland, in comparison with 38% in the early 2000s (Riddell, 2014). Many of the differences within the young generation remain insufficiently addressed, while the inter-generational differences have gained prominence (Steve Roberts, 2015).

Youth research has criticised the tendency to attribute to young people the responsibility for their own employment destiny. Cort and Mariager-Anderson argued that motivation has become a 'societal narrative': 'everybody has to be motivated for lifelong learning in order to stay afloat in the global economy. If people fail, individual motivation is the problem, not the labour market and its incessant and indisputable demands. The global labour market is perceived as a natural force, where it falls upon the individual to strive to survive through education, which, however, may no longer be a safe float, as more jobs become precarious' (2016). The force of the structural constraints that shape young people's working lives, goes largely unacknowledged. Or, as argued in Standing: 'Having a temporary job is fine if the social context is satisfactory. But if the global economic system requires a lot of people to have temporary jobs, then

Many of the interventions currently being proposed come from a mindset that locates the problem at the individual level.

'… even the most seemingly employable person may experience difficulty finding a suitable job in an unsympathetic labour market.' (Clarke, 2008: 269).

policy-makers should address what makes them precarious' (2011: 15).

Addressing the structural foundations of un-/under-employment is not unprecedented, however. It is within the capacities of the State. According to Ken Roberts, 'the decades of relatively full employment were the result of governments prioritising full employment' (Roberts, 2016: 478), whilst for Standing, precarisation will stop when states want it to stop (2011). In a similar vein, Şenyuva argued that the search for explanations should move up from the youth-only level, towards a systemic approach that examines the whole socio-economic system, which is obviously failing young people (2014).

It over-emphasises skills

Employability carries with it an unprecedented focus on skills. Nevertheless, one cannot dispute the idea that skills acquired through education and training, do indeed contribute to social mobility, justice and equity. A major element of criticism, however, is that the focus on skills tends to avoid questions related to inequality, power and privilege in the field of work, and in the process of learning those skills (Brown, 2003; Brown et al., 2008; Leitch Review of Skills, 2006; Keep and Mayhew, 2010). When the focus is on skills, the importance of social class, gender and ethnicity in the labour market is not acknowledged. The individual young people are considered solely responsible for their employment destiny.

Skills can 'deliver' desirable social goods, such as social mobility, only in the presence of structural opportunities for labour market progression. Yet, the labour market enables more horizontal mobility (changing one job for another), and less vertical mobility (progression within the same workplace). Over-qualification is a manifestation of these processes. This is why youth studies advise moving beyond skills as a social and economic panacea and towards more 'clarity about what, on their own, skills can deliver, and which problems they can and cannot solve' (Keep and Mayhew, 2010: 573).

For instance, young people's level of control in the workplace does not depend on the level of skills they possess. The assumption that more skills will necessarily lead to greater employee influence at work is incorrect (Gallie, 2013: 339). What matters for increasing employees' control, are national institutional arrangements, such as policies enacted by governments, employers and unions (Gallie, 2013; Prosser, 2016). Several examples are a legal framework for internships, and regulations relating to probation periods and subcontracting. When the legal framework for internships is unclear, for instance, without any clear standards for working hours, remuneration and educational quality, young people may be used as extensions of, or replacements for, regular staff (YFJ, 2011; O'Reilly, 2015). A systematic change in the quality of internships can hardly come from bellow, from the young people themselves. The European Youth Forum has proposed guidelines and has called for regulatory frameworks in order to ensure quality internships in Europe (YFJ, 2010; 2014). Powerful organisations representing young people's interests can play a role in demanding regulatory frameworks for non-standard employment and internships.

But there are signs that the discourse of skills is in crisis. Several policy areas, which previously focused on promoting the role of skills, have started to ques-

'If the real problems lie elsewhere, […] then further increases in skills and qualifications are unlikely to transform the outcomes (Keep and Mayhew 2010: 572).

tion the viability of those approaches, by looking at the actual demand, and skills utilisation in the workplace in Australia and the UK, for instance (Keep and Mayhew, 2010). The UK Commission for Employment and Skills for instance, calls for greater policy attention on building an economy that needs more skills as the supply of skilled labour is growing faster than the number of high-skill jobs (UKCES, 2009).

We need more clarity about what, on their own, skills can deliver, and which problems they can and cannot solve (Keep and Mayhew, 2010).

Besides the elements of the economic context that may or may not require people with certain skills, not all of those with certain skills can benefit from the same labour market outcomes. Labour market rewards are not equally distributed to those possessing certain skills. Despite the seduction of the discourse on meritocracy, people's gender, ethnicity, age and cultural background matter (Tomlinson, 2017).

'Employable' vs. 'unemployable'?

To be sure: the concept can be useful in creating a (still very broad) understanding of what an organisational area of concern is. However, there is no clear dichotomy between those who are 'employable' and those who are 'unemployable'; employability is not an either/or, absolute term (Tomlinson, 2017). 'Employability' is neither located in the individual, nor in the world of work. It is a continuously negotiated process, where social, psychological and economic elements intersect. Indeed, it depends on an individual's attributes and skills. Yet, it may well be that in any given period, the labour market dynamics are such that young people with otherwise good skills (arguably 'employable') are not employed. Employability is highly context-specific, continuously negotiated and contested. It changes from one generation to another, from one geographical space to another. What made somebody employable ten years ago, cannot 'guarantee' employability now. Somebody can be 'employable' in one region, but not in another. Or, s/he may be 'employable' for a certain job, yet make other choices (Tomlinson, 2017: 12). Ultimately, questions arise over what the opposite of employability is and under which conditions it can manifest itself; where the line between 'being employable' and 'being unemployable' lies.

It risks overlooking the fact that young people are more than just 'working subjects'

The discourse on employability overemphasises the economic role of young people at the expense of many other identities and responsibilities. Young people are important, not only for their economic role. In the final analysis, the crisis is not only economic. It is not only that employers cannot find employees with the 'right' skills, at a cost they can afford/offer. The crisis is social, political and civic too. But some of these have economic foundations. As argued by Harald Hartung, the Head of Youth Policy and Programme Unit at the European Commission, 'jobs are important, but not the sole answer to guaranteeing the inclusion of young people and ensuring their sense of belonging to the communities in which they live' (EKCYP, 2016: 11). Yet, when the institutions surrounding them speak the language of 'employability' almost exclusively, then a major aspect of young people's identities is being overlooked. In a context where a major focus across different sectors, including non-formal education and youth work, is aimed at increasing employability, institutions need to be reminded that young people are more than working subjects. The next sections will build on this argument. They will first map out the policy environment related to employment and entrepreneurship, where youth work tries to make a contribution (Chapter 3), and then analyse the complex relationship between youth work and employability (Chapter 4). Lastly, several proposals for a stronger institutional stance on behalf of young people will be made.

3

POLICY APPROACHES TO EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THEIR CHALLENGES

D. POTOČNIK

This chapter will present a review of the policies aimed at combating youth unemployment and fostering youth entrepreneurship in Erasmus+ Programme Countries, i.e. EU, Turkey, North Macedonia and Serbia, as well as Partner Countries neighbouring the EU, i.e. the Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership and South Mediterranean Countries, and the Russian Federation. This chapter will also identify the benefits of public policies on the youth status in the labour market, as well as inadequacies and tensions between the goals set out by policies, and the labour market status of young people. Lastly, the review will inform the process of moving towards youth-friendly and effective employment and entrepreneurship policies.

A review of European and South Mediterranean[1] policies on employment

Contemporary generations of young people differ from previous ones as a result of the increasing pace of social change they are experiencing. At the same time, they have also been hit by one of the most widespread economic crises of the modern era, which has led to the precarious status of many young people. Such circumstances have yielded a large number of studies on youth in economic crises, using sophisticated indexes to measure inequalities. Even so, it is very difficult to find solutions to the social, economic and political crises that affect young people today. It is even harder to measure the cumulative process of the inequalities experienced by young people throughout the course of their lives. A triangle of policy-makers, practitioners and researchers is trying to reinvent policies to combat youth inequalities, both at the national and international levels, and employment and entrepreneurship policies are a crucial component of this. Since our focus is on a geographical area that is much wider and diverse than the analyses that only look at Europe, we will present the policies that are generally aimed at enhancing the labour market prospects of citizens in general, not just of young people. The main reason for such an approach lies in the wide diversity of policy measures devised at the national level, which cannot all be reviewed here. Such an undertaking would carry a risk of omitting some of the more prominent measures, and describing all the measures would need a separate study, due to the comprehensive nature of the material.

Historically, we can trace European employment policies back to the 1950s, when the workers in the coal and steel sector were benefiting from 're-adaptation aid' in the European Coal and Steel Community. At the level of financial instruments, the European Social Fund (ESF) was created in the early 1960s, as a principal tool in combating unemployment. In the 1980s and early 1990s, action programmes on employment focused on specific target groups, and a number of observatory and documentation systems were established, like the European Employment Observatory and the European Employment Policy Observatory. In 1993, with the launching of the White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment, the Member Countries formed a more uniform stance towards the urge to boost employment, which was followed by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999 that enhanced the social dialogue. In 2000, the European Council agreed on the new strategic goal of making the EU 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world' (the Lisbon strategy), embracing full employment as an overarching objective of employment and social policy, to be achieved by 2010. After Europe was caught by a serious economic crisis starting in 2008, and a surge of unemployment, the Europe 2020 strategy was adopted in 2010, together with the introduction of the European semester, as the main tool for coordinating financial and economic policy.

Employment and entrepreneurship measures are part of the Europe 2020 strategy that is implemented through the European semester, an annual process promoting close policy coordination among EU Member States and EU Institutions, and consisting of four steps:

- Employment Guidelines are common priorities and targets for employment policies proposed by the European Commission, and agreed by National Governments.
- The Joint Employment Report (JER) is based on: I) the assessment of the employment situation in Europe, II) the implementation of the Employment Guidelines and III) an assessment of the Scoreboard of key employment and social indicators. It is published by the European Commission and adopted by the Council of the European Union.
- National Reform Programmes (NRP) are submitted by National Governments and analysed by the European Commission for compliance with Europe 2020.
- Based on the assessment of the NRPs, the European Commission publishes a series of country reports, analysing Member States' economic policies, and issues country-specific recommendations.

[1] The title refers to the geographical scope of the countries, not the strategic and political associations of those countries.

The policy steps concerning employment on a more general level were followed by the adoption of the revised guidelines for employment policy in 2018. The 2018 guidelines are aligned to the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and target four domains:

- Boosting demand for labour (job creation, labour taxation, wage setting);
- Enhancing labour and skills supply (including targeting youth and long-term unemployment);
- Better functioning of labour markets (with a specific focus on labour market segmentation);
- Fairness, combating poverty and promoting equal opportunities for all.

A strong focus on youth employment emerged in parallel with the 2008 economic crisis and the Lisbon strategy, where one of the most prominent roles is performed by the European Youth Guarantee, established in 2013. It aims to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. Other prominent Europe-wide actions in the field of enhancing youth employment prospects include the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (launched in July 2013), Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships (March 2014) and Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market (2016).

The above listed policies are supported by several European funding instruments, primarily the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Youth Employment Initiative (the total budget of the Youth Employment Initiative - for all eligible EU Member States - is €8.8 billion, for the 2014-2020 period). There is also the EU programme for employment and social innovation (EaSI) 2014-2020 and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), supporting people who lose their jobs due to structural changes in world trade patterns. For the next long-term EU budget, 2021-2027, the European Commission proposes to further strengthen the Union's social dimension with a new and improved European Social Fund, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and a more effective EGF. The ESF+ Regulation will integrate the current ESF, YEI, and EaSI, with ESF being complementary to other funds (such as the EGF and Erasmus+).

European Voluntary Service (EVS) had a major impact in the 1996-2018 period, offering quality opportunities for volunteering to young people. The year 2016 was marked by the establishment of the European Solidarity Corps for young people, providing the opportunity to obtain skills and knowledge via volunteering, traineeships and employment under the Erasmus+ programme, and by the adoption of the New Skills Agenda for Europe initiative. The latter brings together 10 key actions to equip citizens with skills relevant to the labour market (e.g. upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults, supported by the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways for Adults). The Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships of March 2018 focuses on abandoning a practice of unfair paid apprenticeships that does not provide trainees with upgraded skills and knowledge.

To continue the reflection on the Erasmus+ Programme's contribution to youth employment and employability, we should elaborate on the concrete steps taken by Erasmus+ National Agencies (NAs) that have been focusing on these topics since the beginning of the programme in 2014. The contribution of NAs is placed under the Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA), a budget line of the Erasmus+ Programme dedicated to National Agencies, which encompasses a range of conferences, seminars, training courses, online platforms and publications, enabling NAs and the SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to collaborate and share best practices across Europe. TCAs enable NAs to complement the support that they provide to youth employability and entrepreneurship by granting projects through the 3 Key Actions of the Erasmus+ Programme.

Supported by the TCA budget line, 11 NAs, 4 SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres and the Resource Centre for the European Solidarity Corps joined forces under a transnational institutional alliance entitled "Youth@Work Strategic Partnership on Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship", launched in January 2018.

The members of Youth@Work decided to take a different approach, compared to their previous individual strategies, and launched the partnership with the aim of better supporting youth employability and entrepreneurship by working collaboratively, based on a common strategy. The Strategic Partnership's plan includes introducing new, innovative TCA initiatives, whilst building on and continuing previous youth employability and entrepreneurship-focused projects. It targets professionals, who are active in supporting youth employability and entrepreneurship, and young people, with a special focus on those with fewer opportunities, such as NEETS, migrants, refugees, women and professionals working for and with them. The activities of the Strategic Partnership target representatives of various sectors and fields in order to create synergies that can enhance the employability of young people: the public sector (e.g. national and local administrations, vocational education and training (VET) institutions, youth employability and entrepreneurship support structures); the private sector (e.g. SMEs, investors, social enterprises, incubators, accelerators, trade unions); and the non-profit sector (e.g. NGOs, youth associations/clubs/councils, private foundations, universities and think tanks).

A European Commission publication, *European Semester Thematic Factsheet: Active Labour Market Policies*, (2016a) identifies the following active labour market policies:

a. Counselling and job-search assistance as highly personalised measures[2], which are mostly useful for the short-term unemployed.
b. Subsidies to employers that can contribute towards bringing them into contact with the unemployed and job-seekers, and provide an opportunity for those employers to test out prospective employees at lower than full wage costs.
c. Direct employment/job-creation schemes.
d. Training, which usually has strong positive long-term effects, but is expensive. The analyses (ref.) have shown that general programmes contribute to a better matching of skills with jobs, while (certified) vocational training programmes (workplace-based or combined with school-based training) have been shown to be very effective in facilitating the transition from education into work.

[2] Includes advice combined with a range of potential types of support, like vocational training, job-search assistance, 'motivation' courses and social support, according to the assessed needs of the jobseeker.

In the context of training and obtaining new skills, it is important to note that the majority of young people entering the labour market nowadays belong to the 'digital natives' generation. It is often assumed that they possess transversal skills and take part in non-formal training, but this is not always the case. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to provide quality opportunities for participation in non-formal learning and to provide the mechanisms for validation of the knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal settings. Such aims are also supported by the Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, which states that:

> the validation of learning outcomes, namely knowledge, skills and competences, acquired through non-formal and informal learning, can play an important role in enhancing employability and mobility, as well as increasing motivation for lifelong learning, particularly in the case of the socio-economically disadvantaged or the low-qualified.

Furthermore, the Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Council of the European Union 2012) urges the implementation of the goals underpinned by the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, which calls for the development of competences to achieve economic growth and employment. The accompanying flagship initiatives, Youth on the Move and the Agenda for new skills and jobs, emphasise the need for more flexible learning pathways that can improve entry into and progression within the labour market, facilitate transitions between the phases of work and learning, and promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Moreover, a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications established Europass, a European portfolio which citizens can use to better communicate, record and present their competences and qualifications throughout Europe. Following

this, the Resolution on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field invited Member States to enable the identification of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning, with a view to their recognition in the labour market. This is also embraced in the Statement by participants of the Symposium on "Recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education in the youth field". This stipulates that "non-formal learning/education should be recognised for all the competences gained and the benefits it provides for the well-being of society and individuals, and not only for its contribution to employability and the labour market". Furthermore, the EU Strategy for Youth — Investing and Empowering. A renewed open method of coordination, addresses youth challenges and opportunities and calls for better recognition of skills acquired through non-formal education. A renewed EU Youth Strategy proposed by the European Commission for 2019-2027 asks for a commitment to youth work, in order to further improve its quality, innovation and recognition, and to allow other sectors to capitalise on the potential of non-formal learning.

In the Council of Europe, the promotion of non-formal learning/education is a priority within its Agenda 2020 on youth policy, notably as a means of ensuring young people's access to education, training and work. In addition, one of the pillars of the development of quality standards in education and training, the Youth Work Portfolio, the Youth Department of the Council of Europe organised an event, Bridges for recognition, and published a corresponding publication. It has also published the first edition of the Council of the European Union working paper Pathways towards Validation and Recognition of Education, Training & Learning in the Youth Field, backed by the working paper Pathways 2.0 towards Recognition of Non-Formal Learning/Education and of Youth Work in Europe, updated by the Youth Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum.

To reduce the risk of long-term unemployment, it is important to adapt the mix of activation measures and their institutional settings to the prevailing economic conditions. The challenge is to ensure that spending on activation measures remains effective, even in an economic climate where the creation of jobs is difficult; the precise balance between 'train first' versus 'work first' approaches needs to be considered. As recommended by the experts who authored European Semester Thematic Factsheet: Active Labour Market Policies, it is best to design features that help to maximise the benefits of active labour market policies:

1. Targeting unemployed people who have limited employment opportunities (e.g. the long-term unemployed, to minimise the risk of a deadweight loss), but also groups with a considerable potential increase in productivity (e. g. young people without work experience, who have been unable to find a job within a certain timeframe).
2. Ensuring that the subsidised period increases employees' productivity, e.g. through an effective training component and coaching.
3. Introducing conditions to increase the probability that the employment relationship will be extended beyond the subsidised period (e.g. checks that the beneficiary is still employed by the firm at a certain point in time after the end of the subsidy, and/or that gross or net job creation is taking place in the firm).
4. Regular monitoring and assessment of subsidised firms and their hiring behaviour, and of beneficiary workers.

To reduce the risk of long-term unemployment, it is important to achieve a balance between "train first" versus "work first" approaches. This requires a careful analysis of the social and economic preconditions and potential outputs.

A more effective analysis of the impact of the employment programmes between the different countries requires the establishment of regular systemic and comparative evaluations.

Employment policies in the Euro-Mediterranean region have some resemblance with the above European policies and measures. Differences are due to the wide variety of labour market conditions across the region. A historical overview brings us back to 1964, when Algeria, Morocco, Jordan and Turkey ratified the ILO Employment Policy Convention of 1964 (No. 122) which provides the overarching normative framework on employment policy development and implementation. Convention No. 122 calls on Member States "to declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment". The Barcelona Process, which started in 1995 with the building of a new regional relationship in the areas of peace and stability, economic and financial partnership and social, cultural and human partnership, continued with the second important pillar: the first Euro-Mediterranean Employment and Labour Ministers' Conference, held in Marrakesh in 2008. Both of these mark the beginning of a new, more interconnected policy phase, directed at employment and entrepreneurship. The Marrakesh conference resulted in the following agreements: 1) governments should work together at regional level and learn from each others' experiences and best practices, while taking into account the specificities of each country and 2) their actions should prioritise active policies directed at young people.

When discussing measures at national level, we can cite Tosun et al. (2017: 599-600) who emphasise that many EU Member States have decades of experience with active labour market policies (ALMP); Denmark and Sweden were among the first to embrace ALMP, soon followed by Finland and France. In comparison, the Baltic States are a group of countries with significantly less experience with ALMP than the Nordic States. To a certain extent, the Baltic countries still have a 'former USSR' type welfare regime, which resembles conservative welfare regimes, but with lower public spending levels than the Western European types (Tosun et al., 2017). According to the 2014 European Training Foundation publication (ETF) *Active Labour Market Policies with a Focus on Youth*, some of the South Eastern European countries seem to focus on training (Albania), some on public works (Kosovo), and some on wage subsidies (Bosnia and Herzegovina) or start-up incentives (North Macedonia). It is difficult to compare the impact of these programmes between countries, as systemic and comparative evaluations are scarce. One exception is an evaluation of the training programmes offered by the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR), which was conducted by the World Bank and coordinated by the Turkish government. According to the ETF, the ALMP provision in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia) is fragmented and complex (World Bank, 2013). Moreover, the available reports do not seem to provide information that can be systematised and compared across countries. The ALMP implementation in the ETF partner countries in Eastern Europe (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine) indicate that the introduction of ALMPs is a very recent process in this

region, and that participation and public spending on these types of policies is rather low (European Training Foundation, 2014).

When considering the impact of labour market policies, we can agree with a statement made by Yoon "[…] in general there is stronger emphasis on supply-side active labour market policies, combined with benefit conditionality and sanction regimes. Given that structural deficits have contributed to a high rate of youth unemployment, there should be a higher level of demand-orientated support to create new jobs. Furthermore, policies to increase the occupational and geographical mobility of labour would be beneficial" (2018: 42). According to Gregg, both the public and the private sector have to join forces to aggregate demand and create new jobs (2014).

Based on an analysis of employment policies in Italy, Ricucci et al. suggest that a flexible system of work policies should have two streams: "1) the orientation to work; 2) the guarantee of a more efficient and rapid match between demand and job offer", which is closely related to the educational system (2018: 36). The inter-relationship of employment and educational policies is identified by Debono (2018: 33), who notes that policies aimed at increasing and improving youth employment are often directed at education and training, even at the level of compulsory schooling (Debono, 2018: 33). However, over-emphasising the educational component, as already discussed in the previous chapter, often leads to the over-qualification of young people who become caught in a vicious circle of training and re-training.

In order to enable a holistic approach to the employment status and well-being of young people, it is essential to establish the interconnectedness of employment and other policy areas.

The links between employment and other policy areas are often not scrutinised enough, and there are missing measures that would enable a more holistic approach to the employment status and well-being of young people. Potočnik (2018: 31) elaborates on the public policy inadequacies, which can be found on a much wider scale than in the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. This illustrates how few measures there are that interlink social policies with employment policies, which is coupled with no specific training directed exclusively at people with disabilities or young people with a criminal record, and almost no existing subsidies for housing.

As suggested by Zapała-Więch (2018: 47) "[..] structural factors result in the need to provide long-term incentives and implement innovative measures, sufficient for the dynamic changes in the labour market". First of all these require "[…] the providing of specialist and interdisciplinary support for youth from disadvantage groups, including tools oriented towards psychological and motivational support, advice or assistance to the whole family, in order to influence the environment and provide long-lasting improvement". Furthermore, as recognised by Boutsiouki (2018: 63), a results-oriented approach demands a long-term vision, and assessment tools that would ensure the ongoing monitoring of activities, which should present a solid basis for "[…] the introduction of timely corrective interventions in order to secure positive outcomes."

Effective employment and entrepreneurship interventions require long-term solutions and vision.

The ILO 2010 publication illustrates the cases of Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Syria and Turkey, highlighting that the ILO Global Employment Agenda, with its ten core elements, provides the framework for country-level design of employment policies. Furthermore, the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation recognises the importance of a commitment

To enhance the impact of ALMPs, regular monitoring, and a constant flow of information from local to central institutions, is required.

by countries to place full and productive employment, and decent work for all, as central objectives of their national and international policies. In recent years, employment promotion has increasingly become a priority for the governments of these countries, and quantitative and qualitative aspects of employment issues have been taken on board by national agendas and development frameworks. Efforts being made by the selected countries are, of course, different in scope and nature, with Turkey, Algeria and Morocco at the forefront of the policy measures development.

The ILO publication (p. 41) notes that there has been substantive progress made in these countries, in terms of conceiving and implementing labour market policies, and suggests that there should be further improvements to ensure their impact, through better design, and through the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of those policies. This is especially required in terms of regular monitoring of ALMPs and a constant flow of information from local to central institutions, and vice-versa, where decentralisation needs to be synchronised with effective coordination and guidance at the central level. Furthermore, concerning the outcomes within the labour market, Ayadi, Rim et al. (2017) have examined how regional integration can provide both short- and long-term solutions to the employment crisis in the Euro-Mediterranean region, leading them to conclude that domestic labour markets have failed to create sufficient employment opportunities –particularly for young people and women, including graduates.

Policies enhancing youth entrepreneurship

Since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008, entrepreneurship has been attracting more and more attention at the European level. Entrepreneurship has been related to many social and economic goals: from personal development, to economic growth, increased youth employment and innovation. Entrepreneurship attracts high expectations, in terms of responding to new economic challenges, job creation and fighting social and financial exclusion. Still, as already discussed in the previous chapter, youth entrepreneurship may also be driven by less acknowledged reasons, such as necessity and as an alternative to a discriminatory labour market. However, we can fully agree that youth entrepreneurship is far from a universal solution which can cure the youth unemployment crisis or solve all of society's inadequacies, because only a minority of young people will have the right skills, attitudes (Eurofound, 2015) and enabling circumstances to become entrepreneurs.

Limitations aside, encouraging youth entrepreneurship and innovation is one of the strategies for enhancing the European economy, as targeted by the *Youth Guarantee* and *the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan*. *The Action Plan* and its key actions are followed up by the European Commission through the

Only a minority of young people will have the right skills and attitudes to become entrepreneurs; therefore, youth entrepreneurship should not be seen as a universal solution which can cure the youth unemployment crisis or solve all of society's inadequacies

competitiveness and industrial policy and the Small Business Act governance mechanisms. The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan identifies three areas for immediate intervention:

1. entrepreneurial education and training to support growth and business creation;
2. removing existing administrative barriers and supporting entrepreneurs in crucial phases of the business lifecycle;
3. reviving the culture of entrepreneurship in Europe and nurturing a new generation of entrepreneurs; focusing on new groups that offer great entrepreneurial potential in Europe (e. g. women and migrants). The potential held by women, and the obstacles that prevent the realisation of this potential, is also emphasised in *the Policy Brief on Women's Entrepreneurship.*

Sheehan and McNamara (2015:3) identify three main types of support for entrepreneurial endeavours: 1) financial ('hard') support; 2) non-financial ('soft') help and 3) hybrid (which has elements of both financial and 'soft') support. A review of national entrepreneurship strategies and the provision of assistance, leads us to the conclusion that prospective young entrepreneurs are mostly provided with aid in the form of financial assistance, based on the business plan they provided when applying for funds. Help is not so easily accessible in the preparatory phase, when the young person is only starting to develop their business idea, and is mostly provided in the case of start-ups, or highly innovative and competitive grants. Likewise, there is some help and guidance in the initial phase of running a business, but cases of continuous monitoring and easily-accessible help throughout the different stages of entrepreneurial activity are less prominent.

Measures addressing youth entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean countries resemble those proposed at the European level. The European Committee of the Regions has produced a publication entitled *Youth Entrepreneurship in Mediterranean Partner Countries*, providing an overview and analysis of youth entrepreneurship, and policies to promote it, in seven Mediterranean partner countries: Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco and Turkey. Youth entrepreneurship is presented as a desirable outcome in the labour market status of young people of this region, due to the following factors: 1) the entrepreneurial activity can have a social purpose, creating hope for the future and counteracting the development of social unrest and radicalisation and 2) by creating income-earning opportunities, it has the potential to reduce migratory pressures that result from uncertain economic prospects and relatively low incomes, especially for women who often have few opportunities in traditional forms of employment (2018: 5).

The findings suggest that "the business environment in the region is not conducive to the establishment of new start-ups by young entrepreneurs" (p. 1). Young people, especially young women, have scarce 1) knowledge about business start-ups; 2) support in the form of information and advisory services; 3) access to finances and 4) access to premises, where they can launch and nurture their new business start-ups. Additionally, the business environment in this region offers relatively little support for the growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, due to the weak culture of entrepreneurship, insufficient knowledge of how to start and run a business, and an environment that does not encourage business start-ups. This is further worsened by the weak capacity of the local and regional authorities to support youth entrepreneurship (p. 15). Nevertheless, numerous measures and initiatives have been conceived and implemented by central governments, civil society or the private sector, with some international donor assistance. Support offered to young entrepreneurs and young self-employed people in the Mediterranean Partner Countries comes in the following forms:

1. information, advice and assistance by national and regional authorities, civic society organisations and international organisations;
2. subsidies offered by national governments, venture capital funds and international donors;
3. structural support from national and regional authorities, the private sector, civic society organisations and international organisations; assistance from local and regional authorities, private businesses, civic society organisations and from international organisations (European Committee of the Regions, 2018)

The core of youth entrepreneurship programmes is limiting, because the focus is on high potential and innovative projects, excluding disadvantaged young people.

A review of policies and programmes under entrepreneurship in Italy (2016) noted that "[…] the effectiveness of national, regional and local measures and actions to promote inclusive entrepreneurship development in Europe can be hindered by a fragmentation of responsibilities, resources and strategies, and a failure to understand the goals of inclusive entrepreneurship" (p. 3). Therefore, employment- and entrepreneurship-related actions require wise coordination and balancing between various policy areas. Furthermore, programmes and policy measures for youth entrepreneurship tend to support those who are university educated and have business ideas that are related to innovation, social innovation, scientific research or high tech, neglecting young people who would like to start a business on a smaller scale, or those interested in social impact. Also, alternative business models, such as cooperatives or associations, often seem marginalised in the policy thinking on how entrepreneurship unfolds. As indicated by the European Youth Forum (2011: 2), "the lack of finances and resources available, as well as an unfortunate and woeful lack of support from educational and governmental structures, means that young people often find entrepreneurship to be a sector that is simply too difficult or even impossible to break into". Another conclusion that needs to be highlighted from *A review of policies and programmes under entrepreneurship in Italy*, is that administrative settings sometimes put a significant burden on young people who are just starting out in the business sector (OECD; 2016)). Therefore, a simplification of the administrative and tax regimes is a very important requirement, to create an enabling environment for young entrepreneurs.

As already noted, the majority of programmes that promote youth entrepreneurship provide 'hard' support, with little guidance through the process of establishing a business. This can diminish young people's chances of success in the business sector (Eurofound, 2015). As well as the scarce provision of guidance, young entrepreneurs are also very vulnerable when starting a new endeavour, and would benefit from obtaining new information, institutional support, initial capital, and generally, more structured help (European Youth Forum, 2011: 3).

Administrative settings sometimes put a significant burden on young people who are just starting out in the business sector. The lack of finance and resources available, as well as lack of support from educational and governmental structures, means that young people often find entrepreneurship to be a sector that is simply too difficult or even impossible to break into (OECD, 2016).

National entrepreneurship education strategies should be accompanied by a viable implementation plan and well thought-out legislation.

Entrepreneurial learning is frequently on the European agenda, pushed forward as a tool for enhancing youth prospects, not only in the area of entrepreneurship, but in all areas of young people's lives. Eurydice (2016) and European Commission (2017) studies both confirm that all EU Member States have one or more national guidelines regarding entrepreneurial learning and/or entrepreneurship. Furthermore, country reports indicate that there is an observable positive impact for young people, as they become empowered to take the future into their own hands. However, the later study found that entrepreneurial education mainly exists at the level of formal education, and that not all national entrepreneurship education strategies are translated into legislation –some appear to be manifestoes, rather than strategies.

There are several ways of incorporating entrepreneurial education into formal education. In several Member States, the national strategic objectives for entrepreneurship education are embedded in national curricula (Finland and Portugal). The Finnish strategy is fully embedded at all levels of the education system; the Portuguese national entrepreneurship strategy is directed mainly at higher education and promoting start-ups among higher education graduates. Other countries have in place a strategy for promoting entrepreneurial learning in a broader sense (the UK). The third mode of providing entrepreneurial learning is by engaging young people through non-formal learning within civil society organisations (France). However, the major actors and stakeholders have to be very careful when devising plans to introduce entrepreneurial education; it should not be done at the expense of other subject areas, like civic education or education in the humanities.

Even after embracing entrepreneurial learning and coming up with a business idea, a young person is not very likely to succeed as an entrepreneur. As recognised by Eurofound (2015: 39), many of the interventions targeting young entrepreneurs are by their nature small-scale and temporary, with limited financial resources and highly competitive selection procedures. A more youth-tailored approach requires the optimal use of resources, and long-standing motivational support, especially in the pre-start-up phase of the entrepreneurial endeavour. And, crucially, young entrepreneurs need a "[…] youth-friendly, enabling, encouraging and supportive" business environment (European Youth Forum, 2011: 3).

Sheehan and McNamara (2015) problematise quality of life and the self-sustainability of the businesses conceived by the young people. They suggest that the self-employed, on average, work longer hours, compared to employees, have lower median earnings, compared to employees, and are more 'at risk' in terms of lacking social security safety nets (i.e. health insurance, pensions and childcare). The European Parliament (2013) confirms that self-employed workers are discriminated against and / or are less well

Encouraging young entrepreneurship requires building a youth-friendly, enabling and supportive business environment. Efficient support to young entrepreneurs needs a phased approach, with particular emphasis on support in the pre-start-up phase and long-standing networking.

Research indicates that SMEs have a high failure rate, and youth entrepreneurship may be another one-way route towards precarious jobs.

protected in some countries, owing to higher social security contributions, or conversely, to lower social security contributions, which give a lower level of social security insurance.

Clark and Drinkwater (2000), after reviewing entrepreneurial settings and the success of the self-employed, indicate there is a high probability that the youth who are 'pushed' into self-employment by life's necessities are 'distressed self-employed' and may not have entrepreneurial intentions (as already elaborated on in the previous chapters of this study). To support this finding, we can cite Sheehan and McNamara (2015: 12) who say that "this type of 'false', 'shadow', 'bogus' or 'disguised' self-employment has been on the rise and is a matter of concern across the EU". Therefore, we have to be cautious and differentiate between 'the self-employed' and 'entrepreneurs', who in general are more likely to be in a situation where they create additional financial value that surpasses what they need in their everyday lives. In other words, the self-employed are more often under the influence of 'push' rather than 'pull' factors (Schjoedt and Shaver, 2007), which may also result in the lesser success of their businesses. Moreover, the self-employed may not perceive themselves as being entrepreneurs or business owners since "self-employment is more a form of employment than a form of business ownership" (OECD and European Commission 2013: 19).

Sheehan and McNamara (2015: 14) acknowledge that additional difficulties in understanding the different situations of the self-employed and entrepreneurs "[…] arise in the absence of defining economically dependent self-employed where only some European countries define this as an 'intermediate category' falling between self-employed and employees". Spain is recognised to use this category, via *the Spanish Self-employed Workers' Statute* from 2007, which provides an extensive legal framework enabling employment rights, not subject to sector type or whether the self-employed worker has employees or not. Furthermore, we have to make a clear distinction between the self-employed with and without employees, where the latter may serve as a proxy for 'bogus entrepreneurship'.

Summarising the challenges in the area of youth employment and entrepreneurship policies

A significant number of young people nowadays face greater obstacles in achieving an independent and fulfilled life than their parents did. The unstable labour market situation does not help, prolonging young people's financial dependence on their extended families and hindering their access to independent living, a good quality of life and a feeling of well-being. Petmesidou and González-Menéndez (2015) identify a number of tensions linked to policy implementation and innovation in the area of youth employment and entrepreneurship:

1. A fragmentation of the system and an accumulation of policies that are often without clear connections or an overarching coordinating structure.
2. High centralisation of policy making in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship, which does not allow for initiatives from the regional or local level and is often coupled with excessive bureaucracy. It is closely related to the structural inability of the policies to respond to very local, highly specific contexts, which results in inadequately designed interventions and sub-optimal outcomes.

3. Institutional rigidity and path dependency, which create policy inertia and no incentives for active policy cross-learning between administrations, and a limited availability of funds for policies outside the script provided by the national government. A significant clash between comprehensive reform initiatives, and the very centralised and monolithic structure of the institutions to implement these reforms, is a factor in hindering any serious structural change.
4. The scarcity of reliable, comprehensive and comparative long-term data on the implementation and evaluation of the interventions, which could serve as a basis for evidence-based policy, is a feature of a number of the countries in the EU, Eastern Europe, South Eastern Europe and Mediterranean region.
5. A lack of reforms that simultaneously consider both the educational system and the labour market specificities results in diminished work prospects for young people.

The tensions in the area of youth employment and entrepreneurship policies listed above can be supplemented by the numerous ones identified earlier on in this chapter. First of all, at the level of implementation, a significant deficiency is related to policies that are only seldom accompanied by action and implementation plans which include monitoring the labour market progress of each individual and devising individual professional development plans. The interconnectedness of employment and other policy areas is often not sufficiently scrutinised, and there are missing measures that would enable a more holistic approach to the employment status and well-being of young people. Moreover, in a number of countries, efficient career guidance systems are not incorporated into educational institutions and start later than they should. Children usually form their predominant career aspirations by the age of 10 (Schoon, 2001), while the career guidance, if it exists, usually starts at the age of 12 or 14, almost immediately before the children have to make a choice about their secondary education. Furthermore, policies aimed at increasing and improving youth employment are often directed at education and training, even at the level of compulsory schooling, which often leads to the over-qualification of young people who are caught in a vicious circle of training and re-training. With regard to entrepreneurship, help is not so readily accessible in the preparatory phase, when young people are just starting to develop their business ideas, and it is mostly provided in the case of start-ups or highly innovative and competitive grants. Likewise, there is some help and guidance available in the initial phase of running a business, but cases of continuous monitoring and easily accessible help throughout the different stages of entrepreneurial activity are less prominent. Young people, especially young women, have scarce 1) knowledge about business start-ups; 2) support in the form of information and advisory services; 3) access to finance and 4) access to premises where they can launch and nurture their new business start-ups. Most youth entrepreneurship programmes focus on high potential and innovative projects, excluding disadvantaged youth. Additionally, the business environment frequently offers relatively little support for the growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, due to a weak culture of entrepreneurship, insufficient knowledge of how to start and run a business, and an environment that does not encourage business start-ups. This is further worsened by the lack of resources within local and regional authorities to support youth entrepreneurship. These adverse conditions are worsened by administrative structures that put a significant burden on young people who are just starting out in the business sector. The research data clearly shows that businesses started by young people have a high failure rate, which means just another one-way route towards precarious jobs. Moreover, young people forced into self-employment by necessity, to provide a minimum level of income – 'false', 'shadow', 'bogus' or 'disguised' self-employment– is a phenomenon that has been on the rise and is a matter of concern across the EU.

In view of all of this, the only conclusion to be drawn is the need to change models of conceiving and implementing youth policies that should be aligned to the new context. Although European policy (both from the European Commission and the Council of Europe) is well established, and tries to monitor progress at national level and the various national policies on youth in the area of "making a living", i.e. employment and entrepreneurship, it is very difficult to create reassuring conditions to improve the status of young people and allow them to realise their aspirations. In other words, since policy and initiatives occur at the "real" national/regional/local level, the European Commission and the Council of Europe already face difficulties in implementing "traditional" policies. Therefore, bridging young people's aspirations with existing institutions may demand a kind of hybrid space that needs to be formed around common interests. In this regard, we can say that the way forwards could rely on two prerequisites: 1) governments at the international, national, regional and local level are advised to be more inclusive towards young people and abandon the 'tokenistic' nature of policy-making; 2) international organisations and national and regional/local authorities would achieve better results if they employed public consultations in the policy-making process, which could provide the young people with an opportunity to express their desires and aspirations; 3) civic society organisations could take on a more proactive approach in shaping national policies and moving beyond the NGO sector and 4) evidence-based policy, embraced by almost all levels of government, should be employed to boost the status aspirations and prospects of young people in the labour market. These components, among others, call for the involvement of youth work in devising policies for employment and entrepreneurship, as well as in their implementation and evaluation, which will be elaborated on in the following chapter of this study.

4

YOUTH WORK IN THE AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

D. POTOČNIK

The previous chapter reviewed policy responses to youth unemployment, i.e. policies directed at enhancing youth employability and entrepreneurship. It opened a discussion on the need to establish hybrid spaces where new types of productive cooperation between organisations performing youth work, and other stakeholders can be further developed. This chapter sets itself at least four objectives:

1) to briefly review the contributions of youth work to youth employment and entrepreneurship;
2) to generate a typology of actions that can be found in youth work and that contribute to the improvement of young people's position in the labour market;
3) to highlight the contributions that are unique to youth work and 4) to examine examples of good practice developed in employment-and entrepreneurship-related youth work.

Brief overview of youth work contributions to youth employability and entrepreneurship

Almost a decade after the 1st European Youth Work Convention (2010), it is incontestable that youth work contributes towards enhancing youth employability, an entrepreneurial mindset, and the general labour market position of young people (Kiilakoski, 2014; European Commission, 2014a; European Commission, 2017). The undisputed value of youth work lies in its capacity to engage young people, even those who are difficult to reach, and to help build their resilience, by developing attitudes, values, knowledge and skills. The European Commission recognises that "youth work can play a key role in reaching out to all young people, including youth with fewer opportunities. It helps in supporting reintegration, through its close and informal contacts with young people, its youth-friendly outreach and its ability to encourage young people to make contact with the authorities" (2014a: 19).

The value of youth work in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship lies in its ability to simultaneously improve both wellbeing and employability.

There is a long history of youth work delivering individual support in the form of career guidance and counselling. This is in line with tackling different aspects of employment and developing instruments and policies that could potentially contribute towards reversing an accumulation of multiple disadvantages for vulnerable young people (Eurofound, 2012). The Council of the European Union (2013) adopted the Conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people, emphasising that "quality youth work supports young people's participation, development and progression in a way which affirms their strengths, enhances resilience and competences and recognises their potential to build individual, communal and social capital" (p. 5). The value of youth work in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship lies in its ability to contribute simultaneously towards both wellbeing and employability.

Youth work contributes to the employability of young people by enhancing their problem-solving, creativity and innovation skills.

The European Commission (2018) recognises the huge potential of youth work to reach and empower young people: young people attracted to youth work activities benefit from the opportunities to embrace problem-solving approaches, creativity and innovation, which can all help them in establishing meaningful life patterns and satisfaction. Despite the widely acknowledged benefits of youth work and non-formal learning, youth work still has to struggle for recognition. Furthermore, as pointed out by the European Commission (2014a: 6), the wide range of competences gained through youth work is not limited to so-called 'soft' skills, whilst the acquisition of transversal skills contributes towards innovation and creativity.

The European Commission states that youth work contributes to young people's employability by: 1) developing skills that are in demand on the labour market; 2) developing specific skills and behaviours that are required to secure a job; 3) gaining experience in the practical application of skills and competences in a real environment and 4) supporting career choices as well as job searches and suitability (2014c: 146). The Institute for the Future (2011) has identified 10 skills likely to be required in the labour market in the year 2020, which could potentially be gained through youth work activities:

- Sense making (interpreting the underlying meaning of expressions);
- Social intelligence (connecting with others);
- Novel and adaptive thinking (finding new solutions and responses to unexpected circumstances);
- Cross-cultural competences, or cultural intelligence (ability to operate in diverse cultural settings);
- Computational thinking (translating data into abstract concepts);
- New media literacy (critically assessing and developing content);
- Trans-disciplinarity (understanding concepts from different disciplines);
- Design mindset (representing and developing tasks and work processes);
- Cognitive load management (discriminating and filtering information);
- Virtual collaboration (working in virtual teams).

Skills, knowledge and attitudes gained through engagement in youth work activities present a valuable contribution to the personal portfolios of young people.

Involvement in youth work cannot usually be equivalent to actual work experience, although taking part in certain youth work activities can give young people an experience that is a valuable contribution to their personal portfolio. "This is particularly the case for those youth work activities where young people take leadership or ownership of organising and managing activities, either over a certain period of time, or for a more substantial activity" (European Commission, 2014c: 147). The competences that young people gain through non-formal learning in youth organisations are crucial for developing entrepreneurial skills (the European Youth Forum, 2011: 5). This view is also supported by the OECD and the European Union (2012: 12), who state that non-formal learning increases the awareness of entrepreneurship as a career option and develops a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are conducive to entrepreneurial behaviour.

Over the past decade, the European Commission has comprehensively considered different aspects of entrepreneurial learning, which has, among other things, resulted in the development of EntreComp and the related publication *EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework* (2016b). The EntreComp framework proposes a shared definition of entrepreneurship as a competence, and aims at reaching a consensus among stakeholders and establishing a bridge between the worlds of education and work. It is set to become the reference point for fostering the entrepreneurial capacities of European citizens, consisting of three interrelated and interconnected competence areas, which will develop the 15 competences along an 8-level progression model and result in 442 learning outcomes.

The Council of Europe (2007), when discussing intercultural learning and youth work, states that youth work primarily aims at enabling social integration and personal growth, while enhancing active citizenship

One of the reasons entrepreneurial learning is seen to be so suitable for tackling youth unemployment is because entrepreneurship has the potential to create employment, not just for the entrepreneurs themselves, but for others as well (European Commission, 2014a: 51).

and improving employability. The acquisition of transferable skills, like life skills, civic skills or social skills, is acknowledged as being an objective of youth work. However, youth workers and youth work organisations have historically been quite hesitant to mention words associated with entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2015), which will be discussed in the following section. Still, as emphasised by the European Commission (2014a: 51), "one of the reasons entrepreneurial learning is seen to be so suitable for tackling youth unemployment is because entrepreneurship has the potential to create employment, not just for the entrepreneurs themselves, but for others as well" (2014a: 51). It does not only mean direct job creation, but also recognising the potential of other people and initiatives involved. Such undertakings often result from youth work activities that extend the benefits of non-formal learning, networking and social dialogue far beyond civic society organisations, to include joining global platforms that have a critical view of current social and economic processes and manpower to initiate change[1]. In order to provide further support for the advancement of youth employability and entrepreneurship, there is a need to start resolving some of the tensions that stem from the employability- and entrepreneurship-related demands that are increasingly imposed upon youth work, which is one of the core topics of the following section.

The complex relationship between youth work, employability and entrepreneurship

Policy-makers have to be mindful of the dangers of diminishing the necessary social and pedagogical room for youth workers to genuinely engage with (groups of) young people, to co-analyse their situations and to question contemporary society, if policy is too strongly focused on measurable outcomes.

Increasingly, youth work also has to respond to great challenges that come from other areas and that are contrary to its primary goals. There are, for instance, demands or expectations that youth work should significantly contribute to resolving social issues that are not part of its traditional practice, such as increasing the potential of youth employability and entrepreneurship. Youth worker practitioners are often not prepared for such steps. Coussée argues that youth workers cannot avoid at least partially tackling such social problems. But he also poses crucial questions: "[…] Can they really solve huge social problems rooted in economic inequalities and social injustice with rather modest interventions in the individual lives of young people? Could it be that this formalisation of the informal learning processes is counterproductive? Could it be that these increasingly outcome-focused youth policies ultimately restrict the necessary social and pedagogical room for youth workers to genuinely engage with (groups of) young people, to co-analyse their situations and the social and historical disposition of their lives, and to question current society? As a consequence of this shift, the call for more efficient youth work seems paradoxically to lead to youth work that is more difficult to access for those who need it most" (2012: 7-8).

One of the major shifts in youth work, discussed in the context of youth labour market prospects, has occurred in relation to entrepreneurial learning and a demand that youth work should contribute to the development of youth entrepreneurial potential. In order to tackle challenges related to enhancing youth employability via entrepreneurial learning and fostering business incentives, it is important to transcend the 'narrow' meaning of entrepreneurship that is focused on economic competences; entrepreneurship has to be understood in its broader sense as a set of skills and a way of thinking that help turn ideas into action, such as spotting opportunities, creativity, problem-solving and risk-taking, rather than business knowledge alone (European Commission, 2015; 2014). Somehow, a different critical perspective on entrepreneurial learning in 'everyday' youth work activities is also expressed by researchers (Kiilakoski, 2014: 29): "The ethos of youth work […] does not seem to value entrepreneurial qualities. The perspective of peer-relations, intra-generational relations and a role in civil society is emphasised. The aim is not only to socialise young people into existing structures, it is

[1] Examples of such undertakings are based on citizen entrepreneurship that aims at creating spaces for a more collaborative economy.

If carried out without concern for potential harmful consequences, entrepreneurial education risks subjecting young people to a 'you can do it' attitude, which can deepen their economic vulnerability. There is a great risk of causing more harm than good if pushing them into entrepreneurship without sufficient preparation and enabling external conditions (Pantea, 2014).

also about empowering them to act as citizens. It is unclear if the perspective of entrepreneurship would contribute to this process."

Importantly, not all young people have the capacity, or can take on the responsibilities and consequences of failure, or the risky steps that an entrepreneurship endeavour embodies. Still, there is 'a window of opportunity' for adding entrepreneurial content to youth work: by learning about entrepreneurship, young people also learn about commercialisation and have an opportunity to develop a critical stand towards negative elements of entrepreneurship that are contrary to the benefits of the wider community. And no less importantly, entrepreneurial learning and problem-solving skills do contribute to the resilience of young people, and can be translated into other areas of their lives, over and above the professional sphere.

To resolve the tensions between youth work and the demands put before youth work in order to enhance youth labour market prospects, we have to place greater trust in the capabilities of young people and help them to develop a new understanding and new types of entrepreneurship that can combat current mainstream trends and achieve a positive impact for the individuals and for society. This implies that there should be enabling social, infrastructural and financial assistance, and professional and youth-friendly guidance, to allow the young people to benefit from entrepreneurial learning, and eventually develop their business ideas or achieve employment which is beneficial to their wellbeing.

We have to be mindful of the fact that young people and youth work professionals should not be solely responsible for entrepreneurial learning and/or establishing businesses. Policy- makers and public institutions, as well as encouraging financial aspects, should also contribute towards motivating young people to embrace entrepreneurial mindsets. This does not necessarily mean that they will in any sense become self-employed or employ other people. The European Youth Forum (2014: 6) emphasises that: "While youth work and youth organisations have no role in replacing basic public services, such as education, health or social services, youth organisations should strive to work together with these services to provide young people with the drive, the skills and the enthusiasm to take the initiative and bring their own solutions to societal challenges."

Enthusiasm for youth entrepreneurship aside, we can agree there is an increased risk in youth work becoming instrumentalised for reasons that are not inherent to its basic purposes and ethos, as expressed by Siurala (2016b: 133): "In many countries, youth

There is an increased risk of youth work being instrumentalised for reasons that are not inherent to its basic purposes and ethos.

Youth organisations, together with other sectors, should strive to work together, to provide young people with the drive, skills and enthusiasm to take the initiative and bring their own solutions to societal challenges. (European Youth Forum, 2014: 6)

work has become an instrument of political priorities to combat youth unemployment, juvenile criminality, drug use and marginalisation. As a result, youth workers […] have claimed that youth work has lost its capacity to implement its ethos." To paraphrase Williamson, Coussée and Basarab, various activities that can be subsumed under "youth work" and contribute to youth employment and entrepreneurship are covered "[…] with a very differentiated field of practices where everybody is doing some kind of youth work: through associations, movements, state provision (clubs and street work); from a therapeutic perspective to projects with cultural aims or the promotion of adventure and the outdoor life; sometimes adult-led and sometimes self-governed by young people, with many points of organisation, governance and planning in between" (2018b: 182). Therefore, if entrepreneurial components are being incorporated into youth work uncritically, they may contribute towards further 'compartmentalisation', as discussed by Coussée (2010).

We can finish this section by citing Coussée who, after thoroughly discussing the youth question and the social question approach, and the system/lifeworld antagonism of youth work, recognises that youth work is a social construction "[…] as a transit zone between the lifeworld and the system, focusing on individual development and smooth integration into existing society. […] This way of approaching youth work opens up perspectives to foster social cohesion and at the same time accept diversity." (2012: 8-10) These conclusions of Coussée are in line with the ones reached by Coussée, Williamson and Verschelden, who state that, "the recognition of an oxymoronic identity can help youth workers cope with the inherent dilemmas they have to face in practice, but most probably it will not prevent youth work from being utterly dependent on the political priorities arising from economic circumstances. Perhaps a more feasible way out would be the explicit renewal of the recognition of youth work as a third socialisation environment inbetween the family and school." (2012: 260)

Typology of youth work actions in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship

The main aim of this sub-chapter is to identify the basic types of actions performed by youth work in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship. The first

The recognition of an oxymoronic identity can help youth workers cope with the inherent dilemmas they have to face in practice, but most probably it will not prevent youth work from being utterly dependent on the political priorities arising from economic circumstances (Coussée, Williamson and Verschelden, 2012: 60).

part of the analysis will identify types of actions and provisions for young people in search of a (better) job and entrepreneurial opportunities, while the second part will present the results of an online survey, with examples of good practice. In general, civil society associations (CSOs), responding to calls for funding for projects and programmes in the areas of enhancing the employability and entrepreneurial success of young people, organise actions towards:

1. improving self-management in the labour market (skills of applying for a job and negotiating working conditions), which can be organised either via group work (e.g. workshops) or via an individual approach (e.g. coaching);
2. identification and documentation of competences;
3. information and counselling – raising awareness of job opportunities;
4. enhancing the skills and knowledge required in the labour market via mentoring and training or traineeships.

The actions can be carried out via the following schemes, which can be combined and overlapping:

1. organised youth associations, which offer individual support or work through project activities;
2. youth clubs / positive activity provision;
3. youth work providing additional / specialist support within an existing (formal) service;
4. one-stop-shop approach or a job club that works with vulnerable young people who are unemployed and who are often not comfortable seeking help from formal services, such as public employment service;
5. outreach / detached youth work;
6. online information and advice services.

CSOs provide the following types of employability and entrepreneurship actions, directly related to education and training, which are often overlapping:

- advice or coaching on the transition from education or inactivity into the labour market;
- training in the 'transversal skills' required in the labour market (communication and presentation skills, etc.);
- training in specific skills and knowledge required in the labour market (e.g. entrepreneurial and management skills);
- exchanges and job shadowing.

We can identify several priorities of the funding schemes targeting employment and entrepreneurship actions:

- targeting disadvantaged young people;
- preventative youth work and youth facilities;
- ensuring quality youth work;
- evidence-based practice;
- developing a system or infrastructure to support youth work.

When it comes to the start-up support available at European level, as already analysed in Chapter 3 on policy, we can recognise:

1. Measures providing financial support exclusively, in different forms (for example: grants, one-off subsidies, loans, conversion of unemployment benefits into monetary incentives, or tax and social insurance contribution exemptions and reductions);
2. 'Soft' support, including entrepreneurship training, advice or coaching, and expert mentoring;
3. A combination of financial incentives with complementary assistance measures;
4. Awareness-raising initiatives and various entrepreneurship support measures linked to the education system, specifically targeting younger age groups;
5. A range of support services with the necessary infrastructure for candidate entrepreneurs, particularly in the innovation and high-tech sectors.

When talking about financial incentives and coaching for supporting young entrepreneurship, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs needs a mention. This is a European exchange programme for entrepreneurs initiated by the European Union in 2009. The programme seeks

to give an opportunity to new or aspiring entrepreneurs (NEs) to gain first-hand, practical coaching from experienced entrepreneurs (HEs) running a small- or medium-sized business in Europe. It also aims to facilitate exchanges of experience between NEs and HEs in the European Union and other participating countries, including Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Iceland and Turkey. The officially- stated aims of the Erasmus+ programme in entrepreneurship are:

1. to provide on-the-job-training for new entrepreneurs in small- and medium-sized enterprises;
2. to foster the sharing of experience and information between entrepreneurs;
3. to enhance market access and the identification of potential partners for new and established businesses;
4. to support networking between entrepreneurs.

The main sectors where the applicant entrepreneurs in the Erasmus+ programme matched include:

1. Promotion / media;
2. Education services;
3. Architecture / construction;
4. Consultancy;
5. Tourism;
6. ICT.

A report on Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs provided feedback on the results of the programme, emphasising that "the programme reinforces individuals' entrepreneurial attitudes and equips the candidates who participate with entrepreneurial skills and competences that are invaluable for their future or newly-established businesses. Participation in the programme also showed that it contributes directly to the creation of new companies, with more than a third of the aspiring entrepreneurs going on to create their own businesses after the exchange" (2017: 1).

5

YOUTH WORK IN THE AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

D. POTOČNIK AND M.C. PANTEA

Methodological framework

The "Youth@Work" Strategic Partnership on Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship in the Erasmus+ Youth National Agencies coordinated a study on the actions and modes of cooperation between civil society organisations and other stakeholders in the areas of youth employment and entrepreneurship. The purposive sample included organisations identified by the Erasmus+ National Agencies or SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres as active in the field of youth employability and entrepreneurship. Each of the project partners targeted at least 10 organisations, and the call was also put out to applicants of the Youth@Work Kick-Off Conference that was held in Istanbul from 25th-29th June 2019.

The online questionnaire (the quantitative part of the survey) included the following elements to enable a wider and better-informed picture of the contribution of youth work to youth employability and entrepreneurship in the European (both Erasmus+ Programme and Partner countries) and Euromed Partnership countries:

1. Country of work, type of organisation and level of their work;
2. Year of establishment and number of employees;
3. Areas of activity;
4. Sources of funding;
5. Information on the partner organisations and modes of cooperation;
6. Participation in policy consulting and policy-making.

The survey included four open questions aimed at capturing the respondents' own proposals for change, in relation to the way NGOs/ state institutions/ private companies/ EU policies address employability & entrepreneurship issues. The survey also asked for examples of practice in the field of employment and entrepreneurship.

Youth work activities that target young unemployed people, especially young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs), can be identified across Europe and the Mediterranean region, and our survey aims at mapping some of these projects. As acknowledged by the European Commission (2012: 25): "It is by no means a simple task to create a constructive dialogue between the non-formal education sector, the formal education sector, and the world of business and employers. Each domain has its own aims and purposes, different imperatives, priorities and perspectives, all of which make a meeting of minds and agreement difficult to achieve." The examples of practice derived from the current survey will demonstrate that stakeholders in different sectors have found a multitude of models to establish constructive cooperation which is in the interests of the young people.

Results of the quantitative survey[1]

Before analysing the results of the quantitative part of the survey, it should be noted that the sample of this survey was a purposive one, meaning that the respondents took part in it when enrolling for the 2019 Youth@Work Strategic Partnership conference. Therefore, the results are, to a significant extent, based on the responses of the contacts and networks of the National Agencies who are members to the Youth@Work Strategic Partnership. Despite these methodological constraints, the results obtained are highly valuable, as they come from countries across the Youth@Work Strategic Partnership and include 433 individual responses. Figure 1 presents a structure of the sample, with regard to the type of the organisations represented by the respondents. As expected, the majority of the organisations belong to the civil sector, followed by educational institutions and national or regional governing structures, while other types of organisations are represented to a lesser extent. These results are both unsurprising and intended: a network of the beneficiaries of the national agencies is certainly wider than the network of their

[1] The section was authored by Dunja Potočnik. The questionnaire can be found in the Annex to this study.

partners at other levels; also, we were mainly targeting our questionnaire at civil society organisations, in order to gain as many youth work contributions as possible, and enhance the potential of youth employment and entrepreneurship.

The next important insight (Figure 2) suggests an almost equal distribution of the organisations between those at the international, national and regional or local level. The said finding supports our intention to try and ensure the analysis was evenly covered by contributions from organisations at different levels. This is especially important in the later analysis on the qualitative input from the respondents, and their proposals for more meaningful activities aimed at improving youth labour market and entrepreneurial prospects.

When planning for the survey, we assumed that the sample would, to a significant extent, be made up of small- or medium-sized organisations, as such organisations are the most likely to seek assistance from the national agencies. Our assumption turned out to be realistic, as shown in Figure 3.

Around one quarter of the organisations can declare to have a significant number of staff, or over 50 employees. The rest of those represented in our sample probably struggle with many everyday tasks, especially those which have fewer than five employees. Those organisations are the most strongly represented in our survey, comprising around one third of the sample.

Regarding their year of establishment, 54% of the organisations were set up before 2008, meaning that they have considerable experience in the field. A further 24.9% were established between 2009 and 2014, while one fifth (21.0%) were relatively young organisations, with a track record of less than five years. This indicates that the majority of the organisations might need active assistance from the national agencies and other partners of the Youth@ Work Network.

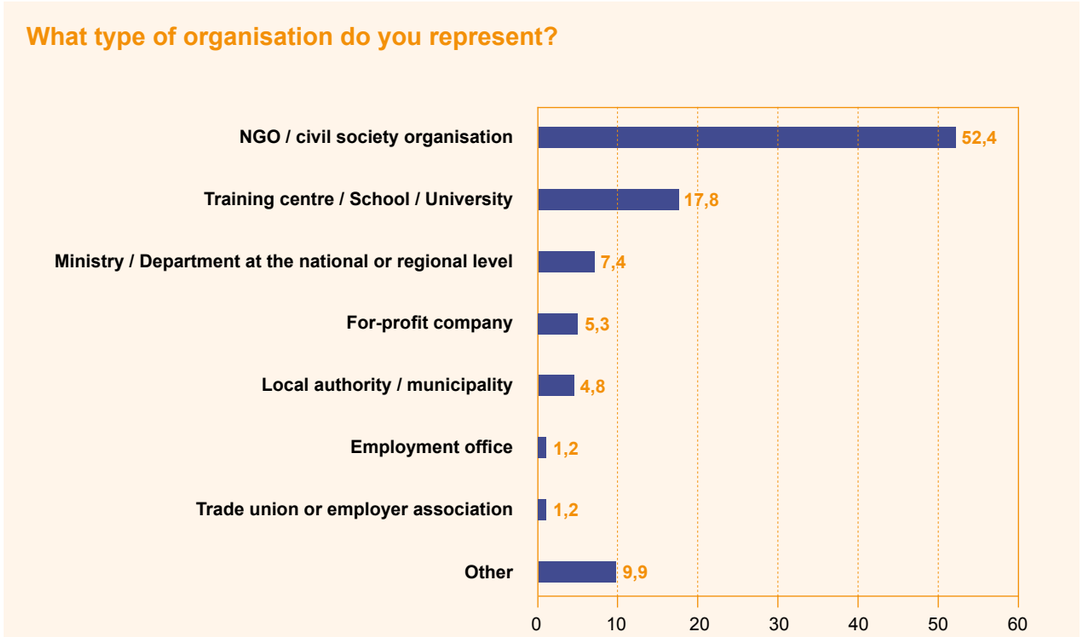


Figure 1: Types of organisations represented by the individual respondents (%).

Figure 2: Level of the organisations represented in the sample (%).

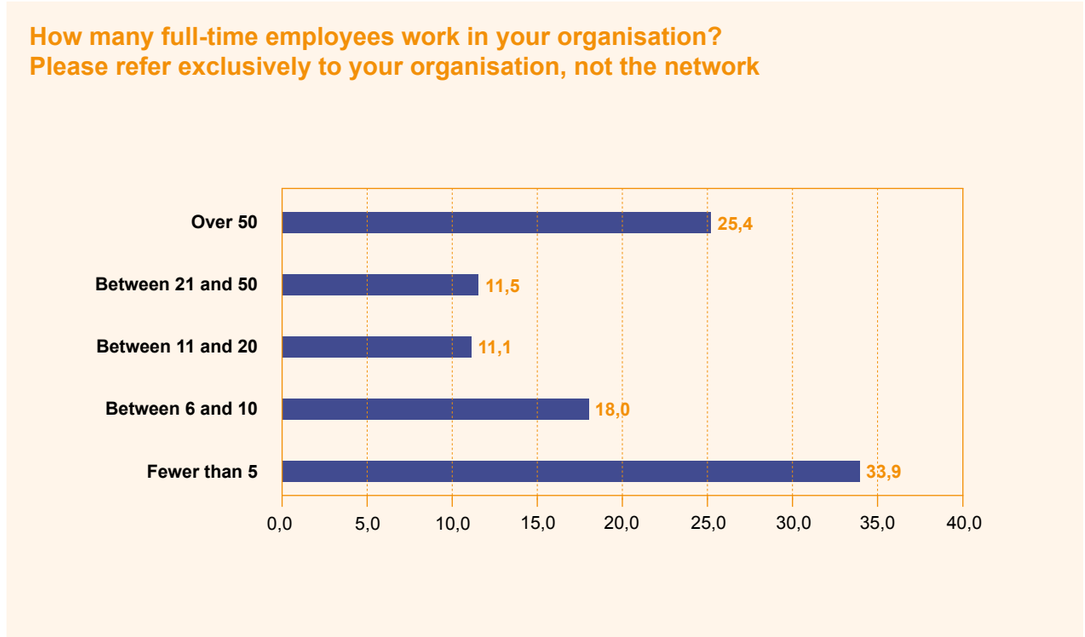


Figure 3: Number of employees in the organisations that individual respondents belong to (%)

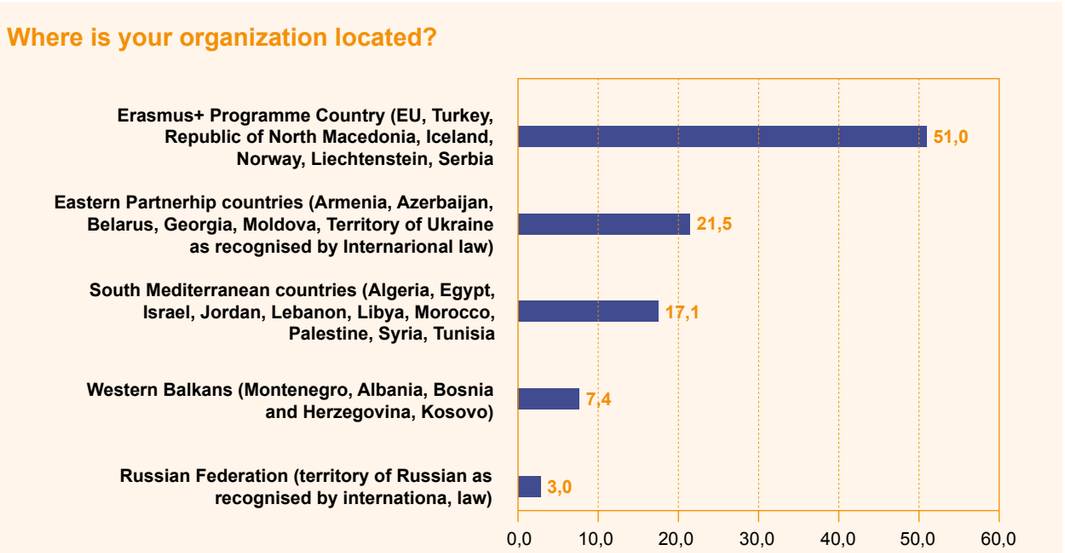


Figure 4: Regional distribution of the represented organisations (%)

The regional distribution of the organisations (Figure 4) also follows an expected pattern, with the most visible representation from the Erasmus+ Programme Countries, while the organisations from the Russian Federation were the least aware of the Youth@Work Strategic Partnership, its conference or the survey. However, as will be shown later, the survey also helped us to understand actions targeting youth employability and entrepreneurship in the Russian Federation. This is presented in the review of examples of practice in these fields.

As well as the structure of the organisations in the sample, which mainly consist of civil society organisations and educational institutions, there are also the main areas of activities of those organisations (table 5). The structure is reflected in the fact that the primary aim of more than one third of the organisations is to educate young people, while only one sixth of the organisations have youth employment and entrepreneurship as their primary focus. Such results are understandable, as employment and entrepreneurship may emerge as a wide-ranging issue, even within types of education and training that do not primarily intend to influence youth employability and entrepreneurship.

Activities in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship (Figure 6) present an extension of the already described data, as the majority of activities are placed in 'non-formal education'. However, assisting young people in entrepreneurship is also a prominent activity, and corresponds to the answers in the qualitative part of the survey. Examples of practice will be reviewed later on. Policy-making is the least prominent activity, which indicates that the organisations have a relatively weak position when it comes to actively devising policies. This leads us to some recommendations, which will be proposed in the final section of this report.

According to previously analysed data, only 32.8% of organisations are regularly consulted on youth employability and entrepreneurship policies by policy-makers. The greatest share (44.1%) are only occasionally included in policy-making in these fields, while a considerable 23.1% of organisations do not have any

Figure 5: The organisations' main areas of action (%).

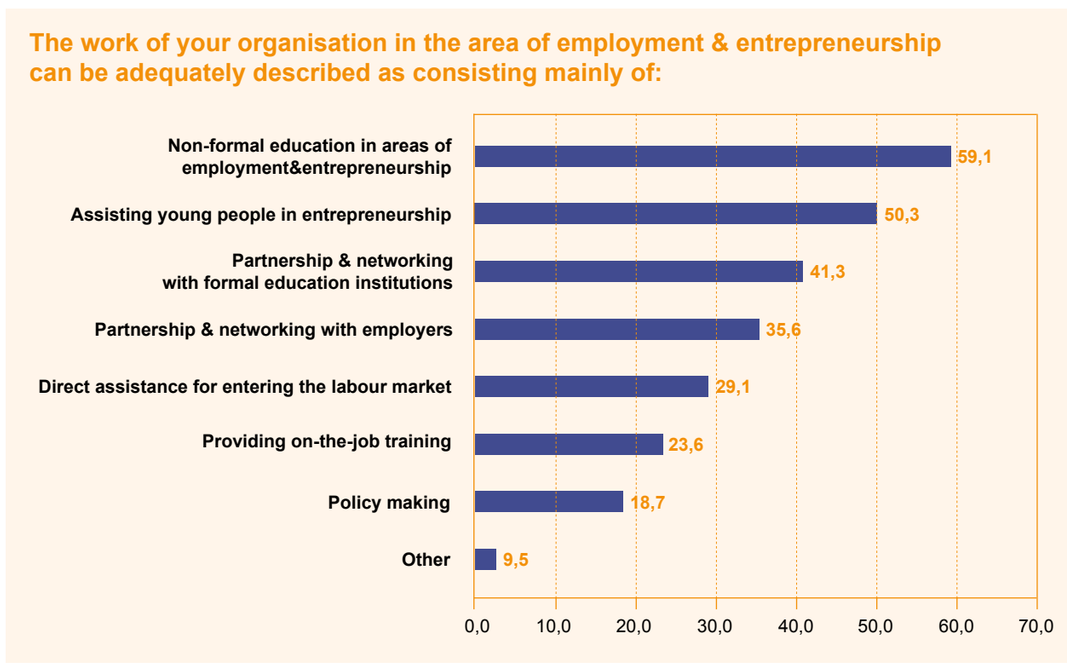


Figure 6: Activities in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship (%)[2]

[2] Multiple answers were possible.

Figure 7: Sources of funding of the civil society organisations represented in the survey, in 2018 (%).

experience of being consulted on youth employability and entrepreneurship policies. Hopefully, the results of our survey, and especially the qualitative part, will open up a new space for cross-sectoral cooperation and inclusive policy-making that will enhance young people's prospects on the labour market.

The importance of including the various organisations in policy-making becomes even more pronounced when looking at the results of their sources of funding in 2018 (Figure 7)[3].

The source of funding, and the use of those funds, is often closely connected to the extent of an organisation's impact on policy-making in the field, especially if financial means are scarce. The data indicates that organisations are heavily reliant on donations, either from international or national sources, while a small number of organisations confirm that their financial sustainability is not dependent on direct external funding.

[3] N = 333.

A review of examples of practice

In the final part of the online survey, respondents were invited to contribute to a body of knowledge on activities enhancing youth employability and entrepreneurship, by filling in a template consisting of 11 questions[4]. Out of 40 templates received by the researchers, there were 17 cases from 14 countries: there are three cases from Finland, two from Spain, and the following countries are represented by one example each: Azerbaijan, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Moldova, Morocco, Poland, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. This distribution means that the Western Balkan region is the only one that is not present in the review of examples of practice in youth employment and entrepreneurship.

The cases have been divided in four categories, with one case covering activities aimed at the direct employment of young people (only), eight examples of enhancing entrepreneurship, one case directed at both employment and entrepreneurship and seven examples of education and skills development. The completed templates can be found in the Annex to this report, while the clustered cases will be presented in this chapter by the type of organisation(s) implementing them, the type of intervention, the outcomes, and the lessons learnt. The survey also gathered insights into the target groups of the actions and into the competences acquired through the activities.

[4] The template can be found in the Annex to this report.

Actions aimed at direct employment

It is not surprising that actions aimed at the direct employment of young people are scarcely present in this study; nowadays job offers mostly rely on internships. This is also the case with the example of practice presented here, from Azerbaijan, which is an internship programme coordinated by a ministerial department at regional level. However, one very important detail differentiates this example from 'standard' internships: the internship programme lasts for only 3 months, and if the employer is satisfied with the intern, the intern gets a contract. This scheme has been successfully employed for the past seven years in civil society organisations, as well as in the governmental and private sectors. As a conclusion, we will quote a main lesson emphasised by one of the proponents of this model:

If you want to do something for your community, you just need to be a part of the community and think about it a bit deeper.

Actions enhancing youth entrepreneurship

The civil society organisations proved to be the driving force in enhancing youth entrepreneurship, at least in the cases presented by the organisations from France, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Poland, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. There was only one governmental organisation that presented a case of entrepreneurial action. The range of activities had very diverse target groups: from secondary school and university students, to 'classically' unemployed youth, to NEETs and drop-outs, young migrants and refugees, young people with entrepreneurial aspirations, and youth workers. As regards the level they worked at, there were three international networks, three organisations acting locally, one national and one exclusively local organisation that coordinated the models leading to better entrepreneurial outcomes for the young people.

Based on the contributions from the respondents, we can start describing this field of action by depicting the atmosphere in which these types of projects mostly occur:

> The project aims to gather youth workers, leaders and youngsters with an entrepreneurial spirit in order to empower young people and motivate them to find their passion in life and turn it into action. We aim to create a safe learning environment where young people will be able to learn and experiment with ideas, methods, skills and tools, bringing them closer to innovative entrepreneurship.

There was a very wide range of problems recognised as an impetus for an action or project targeting youth entrepreneurship:

1. high youth unemployment;
2. high prevalence of NEETs among the youth;
3. not enough or a low level of undergraduate students' awareness of entrepreneurship and the possible opportunities to create their own business;
4. lack of awareness among young entrepreneurs of the possibilities of using state support for the development of their own business;
5. lack of effective professional communities of entrepreneurs;
6. scarce job offers for young people.

Interventions and projects aimed at enhancing the entrepreneurial potential of young people and helping them realise their aspirations and start their own businesses, covered different levels of formalised help. This included everything from training courses, to help in devising business plans, and assistance in fulfilling infrastructural and financial requirements for a successful business endeavour. The project coordinators also provided help in networking, stating that their

> […] goal is to give each young person who has a mesmerising idea a real chance to meet with his/her future clients, suppliers, lenders, partners… and discuss the project in front of professional consultants.

The majority of activities under this section offered training courses and/or individual consultancy to young, aspiring entrepreneurs. A smaller number were based at universities, targeting students, while others were project-based and were open to a wider group of young people. A successful model that was showcased several times in the survey of the Youth@Work Strategic Partnership consisted of a three-stage approach: a training course in the form of a seminar, a workshop or hands-on experience with established entrepreneurs, followed by a case competition, where the most successful business plan by the young people was awarded with a grant to start their own business.

The outcomes of the activities in the domain of youth entrepreneurship were measured by both quantitative and qualitative indicators. The quantitative indicators involved keeping statistics on project management and visibility, and on the participants to the projects and programmes. Data was also extracted from the questionnaires on the participants' satisfaction with the activity and on their achievements after the activity ended. The qualitative indicators were more difficult to capture, as they included information on the established networks of potential partners in future businesses, the business plans of the aspiring entrepreneurs and the development of online platforms for communication, resource-sharing and exchanges (i.e. Basecamp).

According to the testimonials of the survey participants, there were multiple benefits to the entrepreneurship-targeting actions, starting with raising awareness among the young people of their own potential and of the opportunities to fulfil the requirements for successful business conception. Coupled with these, there is strong support for the conclusion that this type of action contributes to the development of the skills, especially the transferable skills, needed to successfully navigate the labour market. The participants of the projects and programmes in the field of entrepreneurship largely benefited from networking with students and young people, and widening their networks into the circles of prestigious entrepreneurs. The positive outcomes are also linked to the utilisation of mentorship programmes, under the supervision of businesspeople who helped the young people develop their ideas into credible and realistic business plans, ready to be applied on the real market.

The development of business ideas into real endeavours depends not only on advice from mentors, and financial and infrastructural assistance, but also on the skills of the new entrepreneurs. Therefore, the entrepreneurship programmes are highly appreciated for giving young people the opportunity to obtain new skills, especially soft skills required for managing their own businesses. These skills can range from critical thinking, to communication and presentation skills, teamwork capabilities, financial literacy, and project funding, management and evaluation skills.

It is noteworthy that the provided examples of practice in fostering youth entrepreneurship only encountered a limited number of obstacles. The first is related to the diverse backgrounds of the programme participants, where some of them lacked certain skills and demonstrated only vague business ideas. The second difficulty is linked to the poor timing of the project steps, especially in cases where there was too long a gap between two project activities. Moreover, proponents of activities in the field of youth entrepreneurship emphasised that they had to invest great effort into engaging mentors into the programmes, due to the lack of stable financing and the fact that a significant share of work done by the mentors was *pro bono*. The fourth major difficulty stems from insufficient support from public organisations and a lack of cross-sectoral cooperation. We can say this is a 'standard' difficulty faced by all actors involved in youth work. It presents an area where, first and foremost, good will needs to be demonstrated from the stakeholders in various sectors and at different levels. An ultimate goal should be better labour market prospects for young people, which affects not only the youths themselves, but society in general.

The participants in the entrepreneurship programmes, who filled in the template, stated that there was a dilemma that could affect the outcomes and quality of the entrepreneurship programmes for the young people in the long run. Organisers are increasingly challenged by a hard-to-reach balance between an increasing interest by young people in the entrepreneurship programmes, and the decreasing quality of those programmes, as they become more readily available. This imbalance requires meticulous planning and financial and organisational support from both the public and private sectors, along with detailed selection criteria and an evaluation of the outcomes.

Actions targeting both youth employability and entrepreneurship

There was only one case that brought together actions directed at both employability and entrepreneurships, and this came from Finland and was coordinated by the municipalities. It is a complex system of identifying the needs of the local labour market, targeting the beneficiaries and devising an intervention. In its first phase, the project identifies the needs of the business world at the local level, before the focus is turned to the vocational schools. The students of those schools are then tested in order to gauge their expertise and potential for further development of their skills and knowledge. This can then be matched with the requirements of the local labour market or geared towards entrepreneurial incentives. Using the words of one of the project actors:

> The project highlights the method of co-creation in solving the bottlenecks of transition phases. The project also observes the model development from a preventive perspective to stop unemployment happening in the first place. This is done by integrating processes which have previously taken place in separate sectors of educational and employment services.

Challenges recognised during the project implementation phase relate to operating cultures that are constantly changing in two different organisations –the education system and the employment services– coupled with the lack of a common electronic information system and the poor flow of information. Moreover, although Finland is, in European terms, respected for its well-established system of youth services at the local level, the respondent stated that project efficiency is hindered by fragmented youth services and poor accessibility of those services for some young people.

Actions comprising educational and training activities

Five countries whose seven examples of practice in the field of educational and training activities were presented in the templates –Finland (two cases), Spain (two cases), Malta, Moldova and Turkey– reveal that the resources and ideas leading to activities that contribute towards better knowledge and skills for young people, are evenly distributed between civil society organisations and higher education institutions, with a slightly better representation from the civil scene. More concretely, as there were three civil society organisations, and one informal youth group, the insights suggest there are new 'forces' emerging as proponents of the described schemes. Regarding the level of the organisations, four were national, while international, regional and local organisations were each presented by one organisation.

The majority of the programmes described in this section are marked by early intervention, like the preapprenticeship programme, that is oriented towards students between 14-18 years of age who have been expelled from the ordinary education system. There are also programmes for young people with learning difficulties, like dyslexia, or for young people with physical disabilities. Moreover, these programmes engage young people at risk of different types of social exclusion, e.g. youth from distant, rural communities. The programmes, which often include an educational component, raise awareness of career planning and development, and promote entrepreneurship as an alternative career path. Career options brought about by these types of programmes are also more life-changing to new groups of excluded, or potentially excluded young people, like young immigrants and refugees, who are especially vulnerable to potential labour market failures.

Activities that were elaborated on in the template included several ways of increasing the skills and capacities of young people:

1. self-awareness workshops;
2. team building activities;
3. high-skilled professional training;
4. social consultancy analysis;
5. service-learning projects;
6. home interventions.

Apart from the young people being less prone to boredom, less demotivated, and more likely to develop their knowledge and skills in various fields, increasing their chances of employment, the described projects and programmes have listed some very impressive results. These include a lowering of the drop-out rate from 40% previously, to 10%, with 70% of students continuing their studies and having access to the labour market. Moreover,

> some of the participants, shortly after they finished the programme, got their first internship experiences and for senior year students, some of them, via the network they created through the programme, were employed by companies shortly after their graduation. Also, some of the participants were attending next year's application phases as facilitators and mentors.

This can be recognised as an added value of the programmes and projects in the field of education and training, since they attempt to create an enabling environment where young people can be empowered and feel able to assist their peers, who are in a similar situation to the one they previously experienced. We can cite one of the coordinators of such a programme, who emphasises that they are:

> providing a new hybrid space, both a learning set up and a professional framework. We design learning ecosystems for youth, companies and educational institutions to create a collaborative community to embrace the problems of the world and build solutions. We want to promote learning-by-doing activities to change education for the needs of the current students in a more agile way.

Apart from above listed positive results, two significant challenges were tackled in the case descriptions: 1) maintaining the interest of the young people in training activities and ensuring that they remained members of the network and 2) scarcity of funds, which threatened the sustainability of the projects. In the words of one of the programme coordinators: When the funds were cut off, all the gathered knowledge and network was lost. Even though the project team tried to turn it into an enterprise, it didn't work as it had done with funds, since the socio-economic level of the participants wasn't enough to cover all the training materials and expenses.

We will finish this section with a quote from the templates, which can serve as an introduction to the final chapter of this report, leading to some recommendations on how to ensure better labour market prospects for young people.

> Investing in education is an investment over time. The results are not instant.

Results of the qualitative survey[5]

The online survey contained several open questions asking respondents to propose changes at each of the four levels: NGO/ State/companies/EU policies:

> Given the chance, what would you change in the way (1) youth NGOs; (2) the State and its institutions; (3) companies deal with youth employment & entrepreneurship?

> Given the chance, what would you change in the way youth employability & entrepreneurship are being addressed by EU policies?

Over 20% of the 433 respondents provided input for each of the four questions. Overall, there were almost 400 narrative responses provided. They varied from concise, very specific proposals for change, to more elaborate accounts. All contributions were read and organised according to the type of change they proposed. Data interpretation was facilitated by the use of Nvivo10-qualitative analysis software that helps in the management of large narrative data. This section presents the main ideas for change, as proposed by research participants. Obviously, the order does not suggest any sense of priority.

[5] The section was authored by Maria-Carmen Pantea

Q: Given the chance, what would you change in the way youth organisations deal with youth employment & entrepreneurship?

The suggestions put forward by the participants broadly fell into two main types of actions. One set of responses proposed changes aimed directly at young people: *listening to and getting to know young people better, helping young people adapt to the labour market, empowering young people to act for change*. A second set of responses proposed changes directed towards youth NGOs, with the purpose of transforming their practice at a structural level. The direction chosen by the respondents reflects different ways of locating 'the problem' and implicitly, different philosophies of change and different ways of taking action.

Changes directed towards young people

Around 20 out of the 94 responses focused on finding better ways to assist young people facing problems in the labour market. The contributions suggest, however, different visions of their needs and possible roles. According to research participants, there are several ways NGOs can act: from listening to young people more and treating their concerns with empathy and care on the one hand, to more politically-driven actions, meant to empower young people to gain a voice and act for change. In between the responses grounded in the *ethics of care and of empowerment*, there was a large set of contributions in favour of helping young people adapt. This approach often saw the present as unfavourable, yet unchangeable.

Listen and care	Help young people adapt	Empower young people to act
promoting empathy[6]	helping to find appropriate employment for youths	to engage young people more actively in local self-governance as well, in order to take their challenges from first hand to decision-making bodies.
try to understand their perspectives	make employment opportunities more visible to young people	raising more awareness about laws and institutional mechanisms they can/should use in cases of unfair treatment.
gaining an in-depth knowledge of participants' needs and priorities	offer more training and initiatives that highlight the importance of entrepreneurship, to encourage young people to choose this option without hesitation	
	workshops on the topic: "Creating a useful CV", and "Job interview simulation"	
	Help young people understand how they can transfer their skills, gained through volunteering and in leadership, into the workplace.	

[6] Excerpts from participants' responses.

The above options confirm that many roles within youth work are, indeed, possible and the field is undergoing a process of negotiating those roles, amid the many expectations directed towards it from the social, economic and policy areas.

Influencing change at the level of youth organisations

Sometimes, responses conveyed a certain level of dissatisfaction with the efficiency of current activities/ interventions, if not a need for a shift of paradigm. A large majority of responses were in favour of more structural changes at the level of youth organisations themselves. Many of these changes referred to the development of competences of the staff. The proposals come as a reaction to the high turnover in youth organisations and the short institutional memory, but also to the need for novel ways of assisting young people in the world of work. The proposal for more high-quality training for NGO staff ranked high. A prevailing theme related to the need for external, fresh insight, able to challenge entrenched practices that have proven to be less responsive to new problems. Whilst for some respondents, the source of 'expertise' was an organisation recognised as outstanding (i.e. involved in a flagship initiative), for others, reliance on other professional communities (e.g. external/ foreign experts) or untapped social groups was part of the solution:

> NGOs are often very specialised, looking to hire people with a lot of experience, languages, studies, etc., instead of maybe investing in training young, motivated people with other skills. This leads to a situation where the labour market in social NGOs is restricted to a hyper-educated sector, without including or giving value to any other layer in society that could provide other competences as well. It's a very competitive sector, as with any other, but it could be thought out differently, particularly since one of the roles of the third sector in civil society is to break down differences and build up a fairer world. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at community/grassroots/local level, fewer than 5 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

> Bring in expert trainers and expertise from abroad. Make their training and seminars as interactive and fun as possible. (For-profit company, working at national level, 6-10 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

The topic of employment & entrepreneurship opened the way towards more reflective and self-critical insights. Many responses moved from being concerned about measuring effectiveness in terms of scale, towards being concerned about the significance of change and the value of learning from failure. This was linked to the need for more autonomy in relation to donors' agendas and a return to 'what makes us deeply human'. The need to go back to authentic relationship-building and care emerged as an alternative to the recent expectation of 'equipping young people with skills':

> There are so many NGOs that strive to help kids by teaching social skills or offering job training activities through workshops, and then show on their website how many kids they have reached. But most of our youth growing up in disadvantaged communities don't lack inspiration or social skills, they lack role models and adults who actually believe in them and are there for them unconditionally. We need to provide sustainable relationships between mentors/coaches and our kids in need, to actually guide them towards empowerment, instead of just giving them a couple of tools or network events. I believe youth NGOs should change their focus from the number of kids reached and activities offered, to impact and long-term change. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at community/grassroots/local level, 6 – 10 full time employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country)

Part of a similar worldview was the need for youth NGOs to be 'where young people are'. This was expressed with reference to the regional discrepancies between rural and urban areas, but also between capital cities and the rest of the country. Indeed, the above concern extends to a larger part of the NGO sector, where the growing requirements for organisations to provide evidence of their effectiveness have been identified as a major threat (EC, 2014). Several consequences have already been identified. These include: greater difficulties for smaller organisations in meeting the requirements; loss of the social capital

aims of youth work, in preference for more quantifiable outcomes, and a focus on meeting the targets and working with those young people more likely to demonstrate positive outcomes, which excludes 'hard to reach' groups (EC, 2014b: 185).

Several respondents called for stronger selection criteria for entrepreneurship projects. These opinions emerged as a reaction to the tendency to implement projects that respond uncritically to short-term, donor-driven priorities. A rigorous selection of applications, based on specialised business analysis and a concern for sustainability and social impact, was considered desirable:

> We see that a lot of money is being invested in ideas which come, not in a genuine way, but in what I call the "carpe diem" strategy. The candidate in most cases does not apply because he/she genuinely believes in his/her idea and has thought it through, but mostly to seize the opportunity. With NGOs having projects to implement, and fearing reporting FAILURE to the donor, the process goes on, but with little result. So, in my opinion, this should change: grants for entrepreneurs should be stricter, applications should pass through different filters, and support grants should be given only to the ideas which have a clear business model. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at national level, fewer than 5 full time employees, Western Balkans country).

Overall, there were many contributions written in general terms that lacked a clear proposal for change. However, they had in common a sense of urgency and an imperative to act:

> The main aspect that I would suggest is changes in the approach. The same tools and approaches have been used for many years. There is a clear need for new methods, as the pace of development is very fast, and currently we are preparing young people, not even for the present moment, but for the past. The only way to effectively work is, of course, to concentrate on the present moment, but with a clear vision for the future. What is the future of employment and entrepreneurship going to look like? […] What do they have to do now in order to be prepared for that etc. etc.? These questions are being left out of the planning and implementation of NGOs. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at national level, 6-10 full time employees, Eastern Partnership country).

Many responses conveyed a compelling call for youth organisations to become more strategic in their actions, in ways able to influence policy change. This was accompanied by a sense of disillusionment over the way young people in general and youth organisations in particular are included in the policy-making processes. The need to be more proactive was often articulated:

> Participants working in the youth field should be treated as stakeholders to produce youth policies and actively participate in the decision-making processes. (Ministry/ Department at the national or regional level, 6-10 full time employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

> I believe one of the best ways NGOs can deal with employment & entrepreneurship is to create a national strategy and coordinating body to be able to share responsibilities for maximum outcomes. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at national level, fewer than 5 full time employees, Eastern Partnership country).

> The youth NGOs could carry out more projects to make the State and its institutions aware of the way they deal with it. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at international level, 21-50 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

> I would change the influence of youth NGOs in the decision-making process by increasing their active involvement in drafting and giving recommendations to the local strategy on youth unemployment. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at community/grassroots/ local level, fewer than 5 full-time employees, Western Balkans).

Whilst for some respondents, the relationship with the government carried the risk of interference and should be avoided, for others, stronger links with the authorities were needed, in order to be part of the policy solution. The proposals for policy roles had, at times, a high level of detail that extended far beyond the organisations' current level of influence. One example refers to the potential role of youth organisations in the process of drafting 'employability development plans for every region'. Overall, the above diversity of responses to the

roles of youth organisations confirms that 'youth work continues to evolve to reflect changing society' and it tries to position itself actively as a 'service working to prevent as well as remedy problems' (EC, 2014b: 70).

Q: Given the chance, what would you change in the way the State and its institutions deal with youth employment & entrepreneurship?

12 out of the 94 entries referred to particular incentives for supporting youth employment & entrepreneurship. The underlying rationale was the need for the State to ensure all young people have access to opportunities, irrespective of socio-economic status, ethnicity, level of education, gender, or rural-urban residency. Invariably, respondents articulated the expectation for the State to act based on social inclusion principles: to reallocate resources, to put in place incentives and to enforce regulations that minimise the impact of market failures upon the most disadvantaged. Targeted interventions were preferred to universalistic ones. Whilst further research may be needed to substantiate these policy choices, it is certain that respondents were concerned about young people falling through the nets of support:

> The State and institutions need to invest in the basic needs of youths who are at risk of social exclusion: structure, love, discipline, and unconditional care. Invest in prevention and understand the only way to create sustainable change is not by giving a lot of kids a little bit, but by giving a lot to the youths who need it the most. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at community/grassroots/local level, 6 – 10 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

Research participants were in favour of fiscal incentives to support youth entrepreneurship and overcome the 'stigma of failure'. Other proposed support measures focused on the provision of micro funding opportunities for young and female entrepreneurs in rural areas, tax reductions in the first years after opening an enterprise, as well as investment in business support measures, such as mentoring. Grants for assisting exceptionally gifted and innovative young people in turning their ideas into reality were also considered necessary. Respondents were in favour of further support for international opportunities, which were seen as personally rewarding and 'disruptive' in ways that opened up innovative professional avenues.

Tax incentives were proposed for employers hiring and retaining vulnerable groups, including young graduates. However, more research participants were in support of stronger regulations than in favour of fiscal incentives for employers. Moreover, many answers contained a high dose of criticism over companies' opportunistic use of incentives. Stronger enforcement of binding regulations was proposed, in order to avoid profit maximisation at the expense of young people's employment security, for instance. Traineeships and internships appeared particularly relevant to respondents, and laws regulating these increasingly popular forms of work were considered highly necessary.

An important need for change expressed in the survey, referred to the need for states to fight against corruption. Concerns over the implications of nepotism and corruption for youth employment & entrepreneurship ranked high:

> A very difficult topic, as every government over the past 30 years has failed spectacularly when dealing with youth employability & entrepreneurship. Frankly, there is no generation of politicians in sight that is able to deliver progress in these areas. The levels of corruption and anti-economic behaviour are high and difficult to eradicate. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at sub-national level, fewer than 5 employees, Western Balkans).

> Nepotism, corruption, political partisanship etc., are only a few of the phenomena which are harmful to the majority of youngsters. These phenomena produce a lack of hope and vision, as well as a lack of reaction, as most don't feel powerful enough to make a change. As a result, the majority end up not being judged on a merit basis by the institutions, and they are unfairly treated by the private sector. Even with such a situation, very few cases are reported to the Labour Inspectorate, due to the lack of trust in public institutions. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at national level, fewer than 5 full-time employees, Western Balkans).

Ten respondents proposed changes in formal education, especially in relation to innovative teaching methods, the widening of access to universities, and community involvement. The inclusion of education on social entrepreneurship in vocational education and training (VET) emerged in several responses, in order to counterbalance the almost exclusive preparation for employment among those in VET. Many called for more consolidated educational and vocational counselling for pupils, and career guidance for students. Several proposals were in favour of incorporating elements of career education at very early levels of the educational track:

> In my opinion, the main reason for unemployment in our country is not choosing the right profession at an early age. The first thing the government should do, is help young people choose the right career path by providing free consulting services in schools. The second thing is to provide youths, who were unable to continue with their education, with vocational training, to help them gain skills so that they can support themselves. The third thing is to create more opportunities for talented young people, both in governmental and private organisations and institutions. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at international level, over 50 employees, Eastern Partnership country).

Overall, according to respondents, states face a crisis that is not only economic in nature. It is also expressed as a 'crisis of vision', of innovative ideas and approaches in dealing with highly complex problems. Institutions were often considered in need of being 'upgraded': more connected to a 'global mindset', more practical in their actions and less trapped in bureaucratic routine. As a response, research participants called for long-term policies, instead of short-term, politically-driven goals, and demanded that states prioritise young people's needs over those of the market actors:

> To be honest, there is no real plan for the youth (not so proud to say it). None of them really supports the youth. Young people see leaving the country as the only option, and that is a real problem. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at national level, 6-10 employees, Western Balkans).

> I'll change the attitude of the State to the youth, towards considering their interests in making labour and employability policy. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at national level, fewer than 5 full-time employees, Eastern Partnership country).

A sense of crisis of voice and representation was often expressed in ways that prompted action. It was not only that young people felt they weren't listened to, but also that their potential contributions to the dialogue of change seemed overlooked. As many organisations' representatives were themselves very young, the narratives had, at times, very personal underpinnings, including a rejection of tokenistic participation:

> I would change the weak and negligent attitude which a few state institutions currently show towards youth employability and entrepreneurship, by encouraging them to integrate into their election programme a real plan for youth employment, organised roundtables, debates and discussion tours with young people. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at community/ grassroots/ local level, fewer than 5 full-time employees, Western Balkans).

> They should not see us as inexperienced, just because we are younger. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at international level, 21-50 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

> Should listen to young people in a structured and planned way on the topics indicated, so as to create measures inspired by their needs and not by the needs that decision-makers think young people have. (Training centre/school/university, working at international level, 21-50 full-time employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

Respondents were in favour of increased cooperation with governmental institutions and called for cross-sectoral cooperation in order to 'bridge gaps'. However, they expected youth organisations to be invited to take part in meaningful processes of change. Responses contained weaker indications of proactive strategies to reach governmental actors and to claim a stake in the policy-making processes, for instance: 'We are expecting to be involved in the state's and institutions' strategic plans/action […]. For now, our NGO has not been invited to any state activity on that topic'. In addition, youth mainstreaming in policies and institutions, as well as increased cooperation with the

research community, were considered necessary in order to find out what works and what does not. Several expectations of increased legitimacy of non-formal learning at national level were linked to European processes of professional recognition of youth work. The State was called on to play a mediating role between the entrepreneurial community, companies, young people and educational institutions, in ways that resonate with social inclusion principles. At the other end of the spectrum, some respondents argued that 'cooperation' with state institutions had strings attached and had to be avoided in order for youth work to maintain its independence and professional legitimacy.

Q: Given the chance, what would you change in the way companies deal with youth employment & entrepreneurship?

An overwhelming message referred to the need for companies to 'offer young people a chance'. This was further explained as: (i) a revision of the demand for experience; (ii) more work-based training; (iii) a general sense of trust in young people's capacities to add value in the workplace. Several respondents positioned youth employability in the broader context of businesses looking for productivity and profit, which means lower recruitment and integration costs. 'Rampant de-industrialisation and neo-liberal policies' added to the complexity. Under these circumstances, many considered that decent employment for young people was 'hardly achievable'. Although research participants were cognisant of the fact that 'companies are for profit', calls for more socially responsible and inclusive practices were often articulated:

> An open minded vision of the business is needed, with an inclusion perspective and an awareness of how companies are building our society. The more we include criteria such as equality, inclusion, fair salaries, etc., the more we are guaranteeing long-term success, at least for small and medium-sized businesses. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at community/ grassroots/local level, fewer than 5 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

Many respondents called for the private sector to invest more in training that is not only company-specific, but transferable across the industry. This would not only increase the chances of young people gaining a wider overview of the options available, but would also help them move up the occupational ladder. This process is often difficult to new entrants. Calls for companies' more responsible collaboration with schools and universities were often articulated. At times, respondents criticised unprincipled practices in industry, such as bogus work placements:

> We need more open companies, with a greater readiness to accept young people. According to our experience, most of them are ready to sign an empty piece of paper for practical work without the person even being present, instead of welcoming them in and trying to involve them in the process. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at international level, fewer than 5 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

Concerns over unpaid internships were articulated in comments from different countries, where the level of regulation was weak and/ or legislation unprepared for the so-called 'grey areas' of the labour market. But worries over infringements of legislation were also highlighted. Thus, several respondents referred to situations where companies deliberately sought to eschew the obligation to pay employees' pension taxes, to respect working times, to pay decently or to allow for a work/life/study balance. On two occasions, unfair recruitment practices based on nepotism and corruption were expressed by respondents from the Balkan region: 'In my country, companies mostly only hire relatives'.

Persuading organisations to act in a socially inclusive manner was a prevailing theme in the survey. In practical terms, this referred to attentive training and mentorship, hiring people at risk of social exclusion, accepting new entrants. Whilst these are regular processes in many companies, a more profound shift of perspective was considered warranted:

> But also, not just by opening up jobs or internships for this specific target group, but through investing in mentorship and tutorship. We shouldn't create opportunities out of pity, but give youth the tools to become positive leaders of change for themselves and their communities. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at community/grassroots/local level, 6-10 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

> Companies must be more socially responsible, return more to the community, support various beneficial communal initiatives, not only those which secure them profits, but others too. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at sub-national level, fewer than 5 employees, Western Balkans).

Several respondents connected meaningful social responsibility with novel structures, such as 'research and development' departments, grants for start-ups or ways to integrate social dimensions within each company. By and large, respondents considered it important for companies to invest in youth entrepreneurship, in particular in relation to: (i) innovation; (ii) external entrepreneurial initiatives and (iii) 'intrapreneurship' (employees acting entrepreneurially within the same company). Importantly, however, a respondent who 'tested the associative side and the entrepreneurial side' raised several concerns related to the need for supportive legal measures for companies that assume certain social and sustainability goals:

> Companies with some of these social goals should be allowed to benefit from the same rights and benefits as associations. They must be included in the networks […] Associations should also be subject to accompanying objectives and not be financially so free. (For-profit company, working at international level, fewer than 5 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

None of the 89 responses to the question referred to the potential tensions involved when youth organisations partner with the business sector. Despite a strong sense of criticism over the profit-maximising ethos of many companies, NGOs' cooperation with this sector was, in general, well-received. Responses contained no indication of potential dilemmas that might arise when small organisations, that prioritise social inclusion, principles of cooperation and solidarity, work with large companies that value bold competition and measurable outputs.

Q: Given the chance, what would you change in the way youth employability & entrepreneurship are being addressed by EU policies?

By and large, responses to the above question did not have the same sense of urgency that characterised the input into the previous questions. A high number of respondents argued that EU policies in the area of employability & entrepreneurship were realistic, yet progressive and ambitious. There were ma-ny positive statements on the Erasmus+ Programme, seen as a 'great opportunity for students to build their capacities and a great tool for improving employability'. Calls for the continuation of the Programme were repeatedly articulated. Several respondents argued that what may sometimes appear as an 'EU policy problem' may actually be one of national/ local implementation:

> Our problem is more local. We are trying to follow the EU policies, but the core problem is in the country. Not clear what we have to change. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at international level, fewer than 5 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

> I would probably pay special attention to cases of policy enforcement, how policies are implemented at local level, depending on the development level of different countries. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at sub-national level, 6-10 employees, Eastern Partnership country).

Some respondents made a case for a stronger sense of European identity among young people, a necessary basis for policy-making processes of a more specific nature:

> I believe that one of the major problems is the differences between Member States. There is an urgent need to create a common identity among young people in the European Union, based on common values and respect for others. Only when we reach this level will we be in a position to generalise action plans. (Training centre/school/university, working at international level, 21 - 50 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

The proposed policy changes referred to 'more educational priorities in EU policies', more focus on research and entrepreneurship and 'more regulations':

> I would also replace soft regulations with harder ones in some cases. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at international level, fewer than 5 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

Many respondents proposed changes in relation to the EU grant-making procedures. They referred, for instance, to the need to reciprocate the expectation for the NGOs to have partners from the industry, with a proposal for the SME to partner with youth organisations in the calls that apply to the private sector:

> In most cases where there are calls for young people, there is an encouragement/recommendation to link up with SMEs, but there are also many calls for SMEs that do not encourage them to partner up with youth organisation, so this is not a two way partnership. (NGO/ civil society organisation, working at international level, fewer than 5 employees, Erasmus+ Programme Country).

Other proposals for change referred to: (i) more funding mechanisms (including non-grant) specifically tailored to young and female entrepreneurs from rural areas; (ii) increased visibility of EU funding for entrepreneurial education in rural areas; (iii) a comprehensive online platform connecting EU projects in the area of entrepreneurship from different countries; (iv) interest-free loans for entrepreneurial initiatives.

Several contributions called for a move away from a focus on training, awareness-raising activities and capacity-building projects, towards a decisive focus on their sustainability. A stronger focus on the actual way a project generated employment, knowledge transfer, or policy change was considered needed. A more radical change referred to the replacement of 'entrepreneurship' with 'social entrepreneurship' across all the EU grant-making mechanisms.

A shift away from funding new ideas towards an emphasis on replicating what proved to be valuable, was considered timely. The rationale behind this was that there is already a consolidated set of practices, ideas and ways of proceeding that legitimise replication and further support. Several responses suggested a genuine preoccupation with new ways of adding value to what is already established 'good practice', as an alternative to a continuous search for novel ideas that cannot be replicated because of poor funding. One proposal was in favour of a system that facilitates the influence of highly experienced organisations through greater support for work visits.

Several respondents confirmed the willingness of organisations to collaborate across sectors, but also stated a need for stronger EU policy mechanisms able to facilitate these processes. Youth employability & entrepreneurship sits at the intersection of several sectors and institutions. Many respondents were in favour of taking part in complex dialogues able to voice and reconcile different priorities, yet, doing so in a context that had policy mechanisms behind it. The actual way such policy processes might unfold was not always explicit, but the expectation for it seemed compelling.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Youth employability & entrepreneurship in the broader context

It is hard to dispute that young people face disproportionally higher labour market risks than previous or current older generations. These risks range from the higher likelihood of losing a job and long-term unemployment, to higher employee turnover and a growing number of precarious jobs (Verick 2009; O'Higgins 2010; Scarpetta et al. 2010; Kazjulja and Roosmaa, 2016). Experts in the field are also close to unanimous about main causes of youth unemployment: an imbalance between supply and demand, with regards to skills and job offers, the disappearance of some occupations and the emergence of new ones, automation and robotisation, new consumer demands and changes in countries' industrial structures.

The abundance of youth policies in the areas of employability and entrepreneurship may lead to the conclusion that the current policies are a safe basis for significant improvement in the youth labour market status and young people's prospects. However, policy-making processes need to navigate environments shaped by recent grand themes, such as flexibilisation, employers' claims of a 'skills mismatch', fierce competition, and the 'war for talent', to name a few.

This study explored the roles of youth organisations and tried to deconstruct some prominent concepts that can actually hinder youth labour market prospects. It did so by noting that the focus on an individual's employability, places the onus for poor labour market prospects on the young people themselves. It explained, for instance, how skills, CV writing, and interview presentation are all seen as individual responsibilities. It argued that policies on youth employment are often directed at education and training (Debono, 2018: 33), and put less focus on the demand side. Yet, poorly regulated workplaces allow for precarious employment. Emphasising a demand for 'more' jobs sometimes loses sight of the fact that young people need quality jobs, ones that helps them achieve self-fulfilment, and develop personally and socially, jobs that provide them with a relatively good work-life balance, and, very importantly, jobs that keep them in good physical and mental health.

The study argued that the over-emphasis on the educational component is related to youth over-qualification, as young people become caught in a vicious circle of training and re-training, upskilling and reskilling. By its disproportionate focus on skills, the concept of employability maintains an ever-present sentiment that young people are 'never good enough' and, ultimately, responsible for their own 'failure'. Nevertheless, this logic overlooks the fact that young people are more than just 'working subjects'. This is where youth work needs to play a role.

A similar narrative can also be found in the approaches to youth entrepreneurship, including related policy incentives. Here, young people are required to adapt to fierce competition and start self-employment actions, very often without adequate support and with unrealistic expectations from the administrative bodies/authorities that create such policies. Analyses make a distinction between opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship, the first being associated with the creation of more growth-oriented businesses and the second as a response to unfavourable employment opportunities (Fairlie and Fossen, 2018; Margolis, 2014). Moreover, there is no convincing evidence to suggest that self-employment among young people leads to better youth labour market performance (Jones et al, 2015). It is, thus, not by chance that self-employment is often a characteristic of labour markets with unfavourable employment policies for certain groups: young people, minorities, young mothers etc.

The unstable position of young people in the labour market, coupled with public policies that are not supported by adequate infrastructure or budgets, results in numerous adverse implications. One such implication is unfavourable prospects for personal and economic independence. Previous research has shown that young people tend to stay longer in the parental home, with poor opportunities to create their own families and live independently (EC, 2015; OECD, 2015; Pollock and Hind, 2017). Concerns over a 'lost generation' have started to emerge (EC, 2015a), as young people face higher

risks of income poverty and more often report living in materially deprived households than those aged 30-59 (EXCEPT, 2017a). Equally important is that young people are also losing out on learning opportunities, as unemployment deprives them of the opportunity to learn on the job and thus acquire new skills (Gregg and Tominey, 2005). These economic and educational implications have long-term effects on well-being and health, especially mental health (O'Reilly, 2015; Youth Partnership, 2016; EXCEPT, 2017a). They also create fragile work-based identities, as young people have fewer chances to develop coherent images of *who they are* professionally and *what they are good at*.

The exclusion of young people from opportunities to become productive and well-balanced members of society has serious repercussions for their civic engagement and for prospects of societal development at large. Standing (2011) depicts precarious workers (i.e. interns, temps, subcontracted workers, those on part-time and casual contracts) as 'denizens' (a concept from ancient Rome, denoting someone who has a more limited range of rights than citizens do), which means that they may not enjoy the same rights and social protection measures as their employed peers. A list of the rights they might be deprived of includes pension benefits, health insurance, medical leave, paid holiday, trade union membership and the right to strike. It may also result in a loss of trust in public institutions, and consequently, a decline in participation and sense of citizenship. In turn, this contributes to young people distancing themselves from society, and may generate 'new forms of disaffection and marginality amongst those who hitherto have not experienced exclusionary processes or conditions' (Williamson, 2014: 6). Thus,our societies are experiencing new groups of 'disadvantaged' young people, and they have to find solutions for them.

The above complexity of risks connected with joblessness and precarious employment calls for more diverse and more coordinated policy measures. However, when considering the impact of labour market policies, we can agree that 'there is stronger emphasis on supply-side active labour market policies combined with benefit conditionality and sanction regimes and […] there should be a more sufficient level of demand-orientated support to create new jobs' (Yoon, 2018).

Raising awareness of a suitable mechanism to assist young people in their positioning in the labour market can also be extended to the area of entrepreneurship-related policy-making. Contrary to 'prescribing' entrepreneurship as a panacea, only a minority of young people will have the right skills and attitudes to become entrepreneurs, which makes youth entrepreneurship only partially suitable for solving the youth unemployment crisis. What is more, the provision of support for aspiring young entrepreneurs often consists only of financial assistance, based on the business plan they provided when applying for funds (Sheehan and Mc Namara, 2015:3). Help is not so readily available in the preparatory phase, when the young person has only just started to develop their business idea, and it is mostly only provided in the case of start-ups or highly innovative and competitive grants. Cases of continuous monitoring and easily accessible help at the different stages of entrepreneurial activity are less prominent, which leads to the conclusion that "[…] the effectiveness of national, regional and local measures and actions to promote inclusive entrepreneurship development in Europe can be hindered by a fragmentation of responsibilities, resources and strategies, and a failure to understand the goals of inclusive entrepreneurship" (OECD & European Commission, 2016: 3).

Even where there is optimal support, youth entrepreneurial initiatives do not have a high success rate, as concluded by the European Parliament (2013). Also, there is a high probability that young people who are 'pushed' into self-employment by life's necessities are 'distressed self-employed' and may not have entrepreneurial intentions (Clark and Drinkwater, 2000; Pantea, 2014). These situations have been labelled as 'false', 'shadow', 'bogus' or 'disguised' self-employment (Sheehan and McNamara, 2015: 12). The self-employed are more often under the influence of 'push' than 'pull' factors (Schjoedt and Shaver, 2007), and these young people may not perceive themselves as entrepreneurs or business owners since "self-employment is more a form of employment than a form of business ownership" (OECD and European Commission 2013: 19).

Summary of Youth@Work survey findings

Against the above backdrop, the Youth@Work Strategic Partnership aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how actors from the field of youth work related to the recent changes in the area of employment & entrepreneurship and how they saw possibilities for improvement. With this in mind, the current study included an online survey, distributed to all applicants[1] at the Youth@Work Kick off Conference, Istanbul 25-29 June 2019, and to relevant organisations identified by the member Erasmus+ National Agencies and SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres. The survey explored the experiences of organisations/state institutions and companies in the area of youth employability & entrepreneurship, as well as their proposals for future roles and actions in the youth work field. The online survey contained several open questions, asking respondents to put forward proposals to address youth employability & entrepreneurship at each of the four levels: NGO/state/companies/EU policies. 433 respondents filled in the online questionnaire, and approximately 20% of them also provided suggestions for change.

Survey participants stressed that the state and its institutions have to ensure all young people have access to opportunities, irrespective of socio-economic status, ethnicity, level of education, gender, or rural-urban residency. According to many respondents, states face a crisis that is not only economic in nature, but also includes a 'crisis of vision', of innovative ideas and approaches in dealing with highly complex problems, such as youth employability. Many called for long term policies, instead of short-term plans, and were in favour of prioritising young people's needs over those of the market. At the same time, some respondents shared their trust in the value of cross-sectoral cooperation. Also, the inclusion of entrepreneurial learning at all stages of education, financial incentives aimed at supporting youth entrepreneurship, and overcoming the 'stigma of failure', emerged as desired state actions.

[1] Representatives from the youth NGO sector at local, regional/national and international level, from state and policy authorities and from the business community.

Responses targeting the way companies deal with youth employment & entrepreneurship called for them to 'offer young people a chance' by: 1) reviewing their demands for experience; 2) offering more work-based training and 3) developing a general sense of trust in young people's abilities to add value. But respondents also warned about 'grey areas', such as companies trying to maximise their profits by ignoring the obligation to pay pension taxes and fair wages or respect their employees' work-life-study balance. Survey participants were asked about what changes they would propose for the way youth employability & entrepreneurship are being addressed by EU policies. This question did not prompt as many calls for action as the previous ones, and the input was not as critical in nature. The vast majority of respondents favoured the EU's policies and actions in the field of youth employment and entrepreneurship. Major proposals for change were in relation to a more open dialogue when devising new policies, and more open EU grant-making procedures (i.e. more easily accessibly funds, co-coordinated through cross-sectoral cooperation).

As the largest majority of respondents came from youth work organisations, the greatest number of responses contained recommendations for change at the NGO level. The input broadly referred to two main layers: one targeted organisations' direct work with young people, yet in different ways - from helping young people 'fit in' and adapt to an (otherwise) unfavourable labour market, to the empowerment of young people, allowing them to act for social change. A second layer of actions referred to structural transformations in the way organisations work, including a shift of paradigm. These responses called for youth organisations to become more strategic in their actions, in ways that are better able to influence policy change. Research participants often expressed a sense of disillusionment over the way young people in general, and youth organisations in particular, are included in policy-making processes, and argued in favour of a more proactive approach towards NGO involvement.

Overall, the qualitative part of the research suggested a very diverse picture of what youth organisations could/should be doing in the current social and economic climate. Responses reflected different ideological outlooks: from uncritical actions that take the la-

bour market as a given, to underlying questions about the utilitarian processes that reduce young people to a mere 'labour force'. From views calling for action to change an unjust *status quo*, to recommendations for NGOs to act entrepreneurially and be 'more business-like' (e.g. partner with the business sector and think in terms of measurable outputs to be delivered). Needless to say, whilst some respondents called for stronger links with the state and deeper policy involvement, others questioned the strings attached to these processes and valued greater autonomy. This bewildering scene can be regarded as another expression of youth work's 'perpetual identity crisis' (Coussée, 2009: 6). It reflects its continuous search to position itself as an area facing contradictory roles and ambitious expectations: from leisure, to direct assistance for the most disadvantaged, from youth empowerment, to efforts to make young people 'fit in'.

The final stage of the online survey included a call to participants to contribute to a body of knowledge, by describing an example of practice in the field of employment & entrepreneurship. The provided cases have been divided into four categories: 1) those covering (only) activities of direct employment of young people; 2) activities enhancing entrepreneurship; 3) activities targeting both employment & entrepreneurship and 4) projects that encompass education and skills development. Entrepreneurship programmes were highly appreciated for giving young people an opportunity to obtain new skills, especially the soft skills required for managing their own businesses. One element that was recognised as an added value of the programmes and projects taking place in the youth sector, was the creation of enabling environments, where young people can assist their peers who are in a similar situation to one they previously experienced themselves.

Possible ways forward

It was argued that inadequate tools, promoted by public policies in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship, open a window for a new 'player' in the field, a player which has been present for a long time, and whose contributions are 'incontestable' (Kiilakoski, 2014; European Commission, 2014a; European Commission, 2017). Yet, again, as emphasised by Coussée (2012), there are high expectations that youth work should significantly contribute to resolving social issues that are not part of its traditional remit. This includes improving outcomes for youth employability and entrepreneurship, although youth workers and youth work managers are often not prepared (or qualified) for such a step. All things considered, what roles can the youth work community play in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship, given the above dynamics, actors and competing priorities? Based on the survey and a review of the literature, the next part will outline possible implications/ways forward for a renewed agenda on youth employability and entrepreneurship.

Revising our understanding of employability

This study highlights the need for a stronger institutional stance on behalf of young people, as their voices often remain poorly articulated or incorporated into policy processes. The study proposes an 'employability revised' agenda. It calls for the adding of nuance to the conventional employability agenda (read: more jobs, more young people in jobs, skills for jobs), by highlighting the limitations of these discourses. For instance, many jobs are precarious, many young workers are actually poor, internships are often poorly regulated and many young people are actually overqualified for the jobs they have. As the research data shows, the current generation of young people is more highly educated than any generation before it, yet at the same time, is at greater risk of becoming impoverished or socially excluded. The precarious situation in the labour market is not just an economic issue. It affects many other areas of young people's lives, including social trust and civic engagement.

Thus, there is a need for youth organisations to engage critically with the 'employability' discourse which permeates policy environments. There is, for instance, a need to ask what is missing from this agenda. It may be that an uncritical focus on employability hinders us from seeing other ways of playing a meaningful social role. The Youth@Work Partnership is in many ways better positioned to question the prevailing discourse on employability. It can position itself as an entity that is genuinely interested in the quality of employment[2], in order to ensure that young people enjoy the enabling circumstances needed to exercise citizenship and be socially mindful. Youth employability is high on national policy agendas. But the Youth@Work Partnership may play a role in reminding the other actors involved that young people are more than just a 'labour force', and that an agenda focused on 'employment rates' alone is insufficient, as it overlooks the actual quality of employment and risks simplifying young people's social contributions.

Being proactive in influencing policy change

The European Commission recognises that 'youth work can play a key role in reaching out to all young people, including youth with fewer opportunities. It helps in supporting reintegration, through its close and informal contacts with young people, youth-friendly outreach and ability to instil trust in young people to get in touch with authorities' (2014a: 19). Many survey respondents expressed the need for youth organisations to play a more active role at policy level and to be part of decision-making processes that lead to structural change. In this regard, the National Agencies represented in the Youth@Work Strategic Partnership are optimally positioned to support organisations in the field, in having a more coherent voice and a policy impact. This would mean, for instance, raising policy awareness of the limitations of the 'employability' discourse, and shifting the focus from the individual's (in)ability to adapt to precarious working conditions, towards the responsibility of the public and private sectors to co-create measures and incentives with young people, so that they can act as productive, responsible and active members of their societies. More contacts with the policy- making community and strategic actions for policy change on behalf of young people can be part of this process. Alongside conventional actions, these actions may also include more proactive and innovative ones, such as campaigns based on a manifesto, through new or reinforced institutional partnerships.

[2] Not merely the 'quantity of employment', as many national policies may focus on.

Acknowledging the tensions in entrepreneurial learning through youth work

Entrepreneurial learning in youth work is an issue that is both celebrated and divisive (Pantea, 2015; 2018). One side of the argument is that entrepreneurship is not just about business, but a broad range of competences (see the notion of 'entrepreneurship for life'). The other side of the argument holds that entrepreneurial education ultimately serves the interests of a business, although it is presented as a process of 'personal development' (Smith, 1999). According to this view, several values that sit at the core of youth work (citizenship, solidarity, care for the disadvantaged, cooperation etc.) are challenged by the self-centred notions of competition, boldness or a disregard for those who have a different opinion –aspects which are often part of mainstream entrepreneurial learning.

Nevertheless, entrepreneurship is an appealing idea for young people and for youth organisations alike. Whilst young people can easily be attracted to the idea of becoming entrepreneurs, youth organisations need to be aware of the need for more consolidated expertise when providing entreprenerial learning. EntreComp can help youth organisations to understand entrepreneurship competences and form a basis for entrepreneurial learning. Indeed, Youth@Work aims to adapt EntreComp for the youth work field. This process of adaptation can support youth workers to appreciate, in a more informed manner, the extent to which their efforts can support the development of entrepreneurship competences among young people (assessed against the 15 competences listed in EntreComp). It can also help them in assessing the limitations of their own roles and competences.

Given the complex environments in which young entrepreneurs have to work, youth organisations need to acknowledge that they can only support young people to a limited extent, and that other experiences and information are necessary. Embracing a totally pro-entrepreneurship ethos may transfer a biased view onto the young people. Encouraging them to 'choose this opportunity without hesitation', as stated in one survey response, is indeed hazardous and unprincipled. There is a risk, for instance, that disadvantaged young people will be made more vulnerable, if they

become involved in an entrepreneurial process without sufficient resources (capital, knowledge, networks of influence, information etc.) or with unrealistic expectations. Youth@Work Partnership can reassure youth organisations that a project that leads to young people making an informed choice not to become an an entrepreneur is as valuable as one that ends with young people deciding -in an informed way– in favour of taking that path (von Graevenitz et al., 2010). Furthermore, we need to impart the idea that not all social problems have entrepreneurial solutions, and show that other ways of acting as organisations are both possible and necessary.

Beware of instrumentalisation

A major concern in the youth work community is the danger of becoming instrumentalised for purposes that are not inherent to youth work and its social mission. One such example is the expectation that youth work will fill in the gaps left by inadequate state interventions in the area of youth employability & entrepreneurship. Indeed, a 2014 EC report identified as a threat the 'growing expectation that youth work delivers in what had been other traditional formal sectors' (EC, 2014e: 185). This concern was not reflected in the responses provided by the current survey, which appeared, on the contrary, to embrace roles that have traditionally been part of other sectors. Provision of career guidance is such an example, as this requires specific experience that youth organisations may not have. Best intentions are not enough, and there are career counselling processes that may cause young people more harm than good. The increased tendency to see volunteering as a pathway towards employability, with a focus on the 'skills acquired' at the expense of its civic value, is another expression of this utilitarian ethos. Awareness of the risks of instrumentalisation and 'mission drift' may be needed among organisation staff, as well as in the donor community that holds such expectations. As argued in Coussée (2010), organisations need to move from a pedagogical focus on methods and techniques: *how to do* things, to the structural question of: 'are we doing the *right* things'? With the support of Youth@Work Partnership, this exercise of reflection may help organisations find nuanced answers to external pressures and problematic expectations.

Creating space for non-measurable but meaningful change

A growing concern among survey participants was the increased requirement for organisations to provide evidence of their effectiveness, and to focus on the scale, rather than the significance, of change. Previous reports, including EC (2014b), identified several potential consequences, if this trend continues. These included: more difficulties for smaller organisations in meeting the requirements; loss of social goals, in preference for more quantifiable outcomes; a focus on meeting targets and working with young people who are more likely to comply or yield positive results. Study participants called for a greater emphasis on authentic relationships and care, as an alternative to the habitual concern of 'equipping young people with skills'. Yet, youth organisations are limited in their ability to create such a change by themselves, as they feel the need to comply with funding requirements that are often focused on scale and 'market-like' indicators of impact. The Youth@Work Partnership can, however, play a role in legitimising non-measurable, yet meaningful, expressions of change.

Advocating for proper evidence

A recent meta-analysis of the active labour market programmes (ALMP) that have been in place over the last 30 years, found that 'the effect of ALMPs on young people is weaker, or even negative, compared to effects on other age groups' (Taru, 2016: 14). It shows that the success of an ALMP is highly context-dependent, and there is no single best or worst type of intervention (Taru, 2016). The Youth@Work Partnership, through its National Agencies, can play a role in advocating for proper evidence that minimises bias and provides reliable information about young people. This is important, as methodologically weaker evaluations tend to overestimate the effects. That is: they show the situation as being better than it actually is (Betcherman, G. et al. 2007; Taru, 2016).

Legitimising learning from failure

Youth organisations strive in competing environments, where being successful, and proposing activities that can be regarded as 'good practice', are seen as paramount. The challenges facing young people in employment and entrepreneurship are, however, unprecedented and the risks, high. The notion of 'good practice' is, on the other hand, always contextual and in need of more systematic research in order to be put forward as a model of practice or 'evidence'. When is a practice declared *good*? Based on what/whose criteria? And compared to what? Is participants' feedback, based on self-completed questionnaires, relevant enough? What about the long-term outcomes? How can they be measured? To what extent is a particular *good practice* transferable into other cultural setting or other groups? Why does it work and who does it work for? What does not seem to work and why? Although the reporting of practices that appear unsuccessful is shared between youth workers (and others), learning from failure is, in fact, learning and it helps in building up the notion of 'evidence'. The Youth@Work Partnership is better positioned to legitimise the value of learning from failure, and to propose the rigorous and transparent reporting of activities (for an example of structure, see Pantea, 2013).

Signalling new forms of vulnerability

During the economic recession and its aftermath, some subgroups have been harder hit than others: for instance, young men working in severely impacted sectors, such as construction (Verick, 2009), or those whose parents are long-term unemployed (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Other examples of increased disadvantage are young people leaving care who fall through the support nets, or those experiencing intersectional discrimination (when one person experiences multiple disadvantages simultaneously, due to gender, disability, ethnicity, class etc). Given the differentiated levels of vulnerability, research suggests that policymakers need to make use of 'targeted crisis interventions' (Verick, 2009). These need to be based on a detailed knowledge of the local/national situation of young people. Based on closer relations with the research community, the Youth@Work Partnership can play a role in signalling increased or emerging forms of vulnerability in certain sub-groups of young people.

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WEB SOURCES

Agenda 2020
Agenda for new skills and jobs
Competitiveness and industrial policy
Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio
Employment Guidelines
Entrepreneurial education and training
Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs
Erasmus+
Euromed Partnership
Europass
Europe 2020
European Alliance for Apprenticeships
European Commission: Country reports
European Commission: Country-specific recommendations
European Employment guidelines
European Youth Forum
EXCEPT: Social exclusion of youth in Europe: Cumulative Disadvantage, Coping Strategies, Effective Policies and Transfer.
ILO: Global Employment Agenda
National Reform Programmes
New Skills Agenda for Europe
OECD: Citizen Entrepreneurship
The Barcelona Process
The EU programme for employment and social innovation (EaSI) 2014-2020
The Europe 2020 Strategy
The European Coal and Steel Community
The European Employment Observatory
The European Employment Policy Observatory
The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund
The European Pillar of Social Rights
The European Semester
The European Social Fund
The European Solidarity Corps
The European Youth Guarantee
The first Euro-Mediterranean Employment and Labour Ministers' Conference, held in Marrakesh in 2008
The Lisbon Strategy
The Small Business Act for Europe
The Social Dialogue
The Youth Employment Initiative
UNIQUE Learning Badges
Youth on the Move
Youth Wiki: Employment and Entrepreneurship: Career Guidance and Counselling

ANNEXES

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Youth@Work Strategic Partnership on Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship of Erasmus+ National Agencies. Study on youth employability and entrepreneurship

Hello,

The “Youth@Work” Strategic Partnership on Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship of the Erasmus+ Youth National Agencies is conducting a study on the situation of young people in the labour market, including entrepreneurship and the implications for youth work. You may have received this invitation because your organisation is among the ones identified by each National Agency and SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centre as very active in the field of youth employability and entrepreneurship. The invitation to fill in the questionnaire is also open to all eligible applicants to the Youth@Work Kick-off Conference in Istanbul 2019.

The questionnaire will take no more than 15-20 minutes to fill in. All responses will be anonymous. If you need further information concerning this study, please contact Maria-Carmen Pantea at pantea@policy.hu or Dunja Potočnik at dunja@idi.hr. The questionnaire is open until 10 March 2019.

When responding, please have in mind the activities related to youth employment and entrepreneurship carried out by your organisation/ institution in 2018.

Thank you so much for your efforts and collaboration!

1. What type of organisation do you represent?

1. Ministry/ Department at the national or regional level
2. Local authority/ municipality
3. Trade union or employer organisation
4. NGO/ civil society organisation
5. For-profit company
6. Employment office
7. Training centre/School/ University
8. Other. Please specify

2. At what level does your organisation work?

1. Community/grassroots/local
2. Sub-national (e.g. regions within country)
3. National
4. International

3. How many full-time employees work in your organisation? Please refer exclusively to your organisation, not the network.

1. Fewer than 5
2. Between 6 and 10
3. Between 11 and 20
4. Between 21 and 50
5. Over 50

4. Where is your organisation located (please check the countries)?

1. Erasmus+ Programme Country (EU, Turkey, FYROM, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, Serbia)
2. Western Balkans (Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo)
3. Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Territory of Ukraine as recognised by international law)
4. South Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia)
5. Russian Federation (territory of Russia as recognised by international law)

5. When was your organisation established?

1. Before 2008
2. Between 2009-2014
3. After 2014

6. Before focusing on the area of youth employability & entrepreneurship, what was the main area of action of your organisation?

1. Social inclusion
2. Participation in civil society
3. Education & training
4. Health & well-being
5. Voluntary activities
6. Youth & the world
7. The organisation has always had youth employability & entrepreneurship as a main area of action
8. Not applicable

7. The work of your organisation in the area of youth employment & entrepreneurship can be described as consisting mainly of (please select maximum three):

1. Direct assistance for entering the labour market (including counselling)
2. Assisting young people in the area of entrepreneurship
3. Non-formal education in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship
4. Providing on-the-job training
5. Partnerships & networking with employers
6. Partnerships & networking with formal education (e.g. schools, universities)
7. Policy-making
8. Other. Please specify

8. Is your organisation CONSULTED on youth employability & entrepreneurship policies?

1. YES, regularly
2. YES, occasionally
3. NO

9. **Given the chance, what would you change in the way youth NGOs deal with youth employment & entrepreneurship?**

10. **Given the chance, what would you change in the way STATE and its INSTITUTIONS deal with youth employability & entrepreneurship?**

11. **Given the chance, what would you change in the way COMPANIES deal with youth employability & entrepreneurship?**

12. **Given the chance, what would you change in the way youth employability & entrepreneurship are being addressed by EU policies?**

13. **For NGOs only: in 2018, the main source of funding came from:**

    1. Donations
    2. Local authorities
    3. National allocations/ grants
    4. EU funding
    5. International funding
    6. Financial autonomy based on entrepreneurial projects
    7. Other, please specify

15. **Please, add if there is anything you would like to share, maybe a good practice example of improving youth employment and entrepreneurship in your country, or local community.**

16. **We are very keen to learn from your experience in the area of youth employability and entrepreneurship. Would you be available for a brief telephone conversation about your work? If yes, please write down your email/ telephone number.**

CASES STUDIES

CASE STUDIES (in alphabetical order of the projects' titles)

I) Creation of rural centres for young people and adult education

Country
Republic of Moldova

Name of the organisation
Association "Mostenitorii"

Type of organisation
NGO/ civil society organisation

Level
National

Population and problem addressed
On 1 January 2018, the youth unemployment rate in the Republic of Moldova was around 63%. This means that in Moldova, only 3 out of 10 young people are active in the labour market. The NEET youth level (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) is also very high, at around 25%. The phenomenon of unemployment and the lack of jobs is felt particularly in rural areas. Young people from rural areas move to urban centres, and do not return to their villages, due to a lack of jobs, lack of infrastructure, lack of development opportunities, etc. Rural youth are more anxious and insecure, they require support to find information on vacancies, training in CV writing and interview presentation, and mentoring and coaching on how to start a business.

Purpose
The purpose of the project is: supporting the personal and professional development of vulnerable groups of young people from Balti city and the rural localities of the northern region of the country by providing training and consulting services in the field of employment and/or entrepreneurship as a form of self-employment.

Education plays an essential role in combating poverty and ensuring sustainable economic growth, but in order to capitalise on this opportunity, it is necessary to ensure both equal access to education services and their adequate quality. But due to limited means, especially in rural areas, young people from disadvantaged categories have little access to education programmes offered by state structures.

In this context, a potential solution of the given situation is the organisation of Youth and Adult Training Services, through the creation and development of Youth and Adult Education Centres in Balti and rural areas.

Intervention
In 2015-2018, within the rural libraries of the northern region of the Republic of Moldova, a network of about 20 Youth and Adult Education Centres was set up to provide information and consultancy services in various fields, including employment and launching your own business. Training courses had the following themes: crochet, embroidery, tailoring, strawberry growing, currant growing, rabbit breeding, children's massage, information technology, launching your own business, managing your own business, marketing strategies, staff selection and development, how to motivate staff, etc.

The project was divided into five consecutive stages, that were similar each year:

- First stage: needs assessment for youth training;
- Second stage: recruitment of the trainers;
- Third stage: setting up educational groups;
- Fourth stage: the training itself;
- Fifth stage: the practical application of knowledge learnt (in employment/business start-up).

We taught the young people how to make use of various tools and techniques, to facilitate their professional and entrepreneurial activity, such as: SWOT analysis, Lean Canvas, PEST analysis, BCG matrix, profitability threshold, etc.

Together with the young people, we organised study visits to the guest houses of the Republic of Moldova (Orheiul Vechi, Butuceni, Trebujeni, Chiscareni). As a result of these study visits, two girls were employed as managers at a guest house, and one of the boys intends to open up his own guest house.

Outcomes

During the period under analysis, the following results were recorded:

- a network of about 20 Youth and Adult Education Centres was set up, based in rural libraries in the northern region of the country;
- a database of about 30 national and local trainers was created;
- about 30 training courses for young people and adults were organised and carried out;
- about 30 curricula and course materials were developed;
- about 20 business plans were developed;
- about 5 people launched their own businesses (currant growing, rabbit breeding, embroidery, etc.);
- about 300 people were informed / trained annually.

Young people formed / developed their knowledge and skills in various fields. They increased their chances of employment in the workplace. They became more competitive on the labour market.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice

The participants mentioned that Youth and Adult Education Centres were becoming a necessity in their communities, and that the proposed services corresponded to the young people's goals, namely: economic empowerment, social welfare, professional advancement, establishment and consolidation of social relations.

Investing in education is an investment over time. The results are not felt instantly. Therefore, during the training, there was always the risk that participants might abandon the courses. We have always tried to use interactive methods and provide useful information and meetings with entrepreneurs and employers, to stimulate the interest of young people.

I visited educational centres in Germany where I saw that beneficiaries paid a symbolic fee for the course. In the Republic of Moldova, due to the very low standard of living, this is not possible.

In order to make the employment of young people more efficient, you have to work together with social partners: educational institutions, employers, legal-institutional environment, associative environment.

From a comparative analysis of international policies and practices in the field of youth employment, we selected the most relevant examples that could be implemented in Moldova: combining basic training with applied training (Denmark); including entrepreneurship education in school and university curricula (Lithuania, Austria, Slovenia); granting tax and financial incentives to employers (Finland, Italy).

For us, the members of the association, the biggest challenge and dilemma was to keep the young people interested in the training, and to encourage them to launch their own businesses. Perhaps the greatest challenge for every young person was to be able to conquer themselves. Training participants developed communication skills, entrepreneurial skills, organisational skills, group working skills, etc. After participating in the project, they became "confident of their own abilities", "open to knowledge", "communicative", "informed", etc.

As a project manager, I developed communication skills, in negotiating with course participants and stakeholders, as well as problem solving and decision-making skills, etc.

Further sources of information
(websites of use for interested practitioners)
AO Mostenitorii (on Facebook)
https://aomostenitorii.wordpress.com/despre-mostenitorii/

Contact Person
Veronica GARBUZ – project manager

II) Developing Entrepreneurial Abilities Laboratory (DEAL)

Country
Greece

Name of the organisation
Association of Active Youths of Florina (www.oenef.eu)

Type Of Organisation
NGO/ civil society organisation

Level
International

Population And Problem Addressed
In a period of economic recession, with the phenomenon of social exclusion and unemployment (especially youth unemployment), with limited permanent, full-time and formal work, people who do not have the necessary qualifications and work experience cannot easily find a job. Under these circumstances, the social economy appeared to be an option as an additional source of employment, since it generates jobs, meets social needs and very often includes the socially excluded.

Project DEAL aims to gather youth workers, leaders and youngsters with entrepreneurial spirit, in order to empower young people and motivate them to find their passion in life and turn it into action. We aim to create a safe learning environment where young people are able to learn and experiment with ideas, methods, skills and tools, bringing them closer to innovative entrepreneurship. Special emphasis will be given to developing their key competences

Purpose
The aim of the project, including both events, is to equip youth workers, youth leaders, project managers, youth who are involved or plan to be involved in social entrepreneurship initiatives, with the necessary tools and competences for social entrepreneurship. The project aims to ensure an entrepreneurial approach to solving social and environmental problems and to encourage and support the development of a new generation of social entrepreneurs. The activities will ensure an entrepreneurial approach, to address issues challenging communities and to encourage and support the development of a new generation of social innovators and social entrepreneurs.

The training is tailored in a way that can be used by the youth work and educational communities (transferring know-how and being able to coach and support youth entrepreneurial initiatives), but also for youth who would like to start their own social enterprise. Ideally, we are expecting to have the same participants at both events, although the events are also designed to be independent of each other.

Intervention

Project structure & details
This project consists of two interconnected activities: the first one is a seminar and the second is a training course. The concept relies on creating a solid basis for the participants, with regard to social economy and social entrepreneurship, and then training these participants to use practical tools and enhancing the competences they need for entrepreneurial processes. We encourage the participation of youth workers who work with young people with fewer opportunities, and as well as youth with fewer opportunities themselves.

Activity 1 - seminar (5 working days)
The seminar will allow us to create a solid basis with regard to social economy and social entrepreneurship. At this stage, we will explore the background and definitions of social economy, what a social business is and is not, identify different models of social business, showcase different practices and assess success factors, and invite keynote speakers from academia and from the field, to give intriguing, useful and critical input, and present a competence model for social entrepreneurship from which participants can assess themselves. Furthermore, we will address Erasmus+ , but also other funding opportunities for social business start-ups and for social entrepreneurship education. The seminar will give participants the necessary information, and will allow them to go through a period of self-reflection, so that they feel ready and comfortable to move on to the second stage: the training course.

Activity 2 - training (6 working days)
The training course will focus on giving participants the tools to create their own social business plan. This will take place through the presentation and practice of different relevant tools, but also through workshops on particular key entrepreneurial competences. The input, depending on the profile of the participants, their needs, learning preferences but also the dynamic of the group, as developed during the seminar, might involve theory, tools and competences.

Outcomes
We expect the following outcomes:

- Achievement of the learning objectives of the two events as described above;
- Creation of business plans by the participants (individuals or groups);
- Creation of a manual for youth social enterprises start-ups;
- Development of an online platform for communication, resources sharing and exchange (i.e. basecamp);
- 3-months of coaching by the trainers for the participants, that will bring their business plans to fruition;
- Visibility of the project and dissemination of the results through a strategic media plan

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice

What works?
The seminar creates a common understanding amongst the participants on the topic of SE. The training course provides an opportunity to go a step further and develop a realistic business plan that can be put into practice.

What are the main functioning/positive elements of the intervention?
The very positive fact is that participants finish the project with a social business idea ready to be applied to the real market.

What does not work?
If you have totally different groups between the two events it can create an obstacle in terms of common language and common understanding of SE. Also, the long time gap between the 2 activities might influence the process. We suggest the period in between the two activities is no longer than 3 months.

What would you change, if the activity were to be repeated/ carried out with another group?
Support the participants to help make their business plan ideas come true! Create a structure, or use an already existing one (e.g. a hub or incubator), that participants will have the opportunity to test, so that they can develop their ideas in a safe environment.

What are the challenges & dilemmas in relation to the activity you carried out?
The different needs that each community has and how to combine the common ones in order to get participants into teams and develop a common business plan. So the dilemma was: "Do we set the environment that their business will exist in, or do they choose on their own?" Is it a real market case or a utopian idea?

What were the competences developed by the main actors in the project?
Participants will be encouraged to start thinking out-of-the-box and find alternative ways of turning ideas into practice, to use critical thinking and examine an issue from several angles.

Participants will be encouraged in the direction of bold, innovative thinking, risk-taking and putting their plans into action. Through simulations, participants will be able to interact, exchange ideas and solve problems.

Finally, participants will be responsible for their own learning, helping them become aware of the life-long learning element. They will also be provided with the tools to help them through the process, from analysing their own needs, to planning and self-assessed learning experiences.

Further sources of information (websites of use for interested practitioners)
https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/training/developing-entrepreneurial-abilities-laboratory.5747/

Contact person
Konstantinos Stergiou: stergioukon@gmail.com

III) DysTeam, DysPlay, DysCuss Youth Exchange

Country
Malta

Name of the organisation
Dyslexic Teens Dialogue youth group

Type of organisation
informal youth group

Level
National

Population and problem addressed
This project was designed for young people with learning difficulties, with a particular focus on young people with dyslexia. Dyslexia is a learning difficulty which affects the learning/school experience of students, as the main difficulty is accessing text, i.e. reading and writing. Young people with dyslexia could find that their learning is compromised due to their difficulties, thus making them vulnerable and at a disadvantage, compared to the general youth population. It is very possible that they leave school without formal qualifications and hence find it difficult to get a job or access higher education. Studies confirm that dyslexia affects approximately 10% of the population.

Purpose
The purpose was to offer opportunities to young people with dyslexia, who were participating in the project. There were many activities which were aimed at increasing self-esteem and encouraging public speaking. The participants were even given language preparation in the months before the project. The aims of the project were to guide and provide these young people with skills, to help them access to the jobs market and higher education. Workshops were held during the weeks in Malta and Italy to provide practical tips on completing the Europass CV and developing interview skills, together with the acquisition of personal skills to access services and for self-advocacy. The young people were also given the opportunity to meet and talk to local entrepreneurs who have a dyslexia profile and who have been successful in setting up their own businesses.

Intervention
The activities and workshops held during the project were organised and coordinated with the young people themselves. Their input from the very start of the year-long project was important, first and foremost, to make the activities youth-friendly. This ensured that all the activities in the project were fun and accessible to the participants, and that success could be achieved, and learning through informal methods was maximised. Young people were given the opportunity to contribute directly, even while the project was under way. For example, during the workshops about employment and entrepreneurship, the young people themselves prepared role plays showing the skills to be developed for successful interviews, and another role play depicting mistakes made during an interview. They also explored how to start a business or form a company, using a business idea that they generated themselves during the workshop.

One successful method of intervention carried out during the project consisted of daily evaluations with the young people. These interventions were held verbally, and in this way, they were dyslexia- friendly, as there was no reading or writing involved. The evaluations carried out at the end of each day offered space for the empowerment of the young people in the project, by allowing them to present their own input, to practise public speaking and to share and listen to ideas and feedback from the others. The evaluations were varied, and we used dyslexia-friendly materials and methods, involving group work and individual interventions.

Outcomes

The outcomes were measured, using qualitative indicators, through the feedback received from the young people themselves. I am including some of their own feedback below, which was given to us in English.

"As we grow, we face new and different challenges, and it is up to us to be ready and set to face them. During this project, we worked on preparing ourselves to leave our comfort zones, gearing up for higher education and for stepping into the jobs market world. The workshops didn't just prepare us for all this, but also connected us and motivated some of us to take on new challenges, which hadn't been thought of before. Projects like these bring out much more than one expects: characteristics and aspects that won't be seen anywhere else. The final days can confirm all of this". **Kurt, Malta.**
"What I took from the project: this project gave me the opportunity to voice my concerns with regards to education and learning disabilities and I was also able to make new friends which I wouldn't have made if I hadn't attended this project". **Madeline, Malta.**

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice

What works? What are the main functioning/positive elements of the intervention?

The mix of activities, both indoors and outdoors, ranging from visits to voluntary organisations, to arts and crafts in the countryside, together with the real life experiences of entrepreneurs and young people with dyslexia who continued to study, were all mentioned as the highlights of the project weeks in Malta and Italy.

What would you change, if the activity were to be repeated/ carried out with another group?

Workshops would be spread over more days, with more language practice, to allow the participants to communicate better; also, preparation for the adults who accompanied the young people taking part.

What are the challenges & dilemmas in relation to the activity you carried out?

One dilemma that affected the project was the different contexts, with regard to employment and higher education opportunities in Malta and Italy. The different scenarios faced by young people in both countries is notable: in Malta, unemployment is at a record low, while in Italy, especially in the southern regions, there is an unemployment problem, especially for young people. Trying to meet the needs of both groups in this area was one of the challenges of this project.

What were the competences developed by the main actors in the project?

As a result of this project, the participants were better prepared to face the world of employment and to access higher education. This was one of the most tangible results of the project, as a number of participants felt encouraged to continue studying.

Through the workshops, they developed skills for effective CV writing and interview skills, plus an awareness of entrepreneurship and how to market themselves and their talents. An unexpected result of the project was the advocacy with policy-makers and the dissemination to the public in general, as a result of meetings which were held with journalists and policy-makers in Italy and Malta. Our project was featured on the internet and in magazines in Malta and in Italy, giving visibility to our aims and to the opportunities given, through EU funding, for young people's projects.

Another useful skill developed during the project was the acquisition of language skills: Italian for the Maltese and English for the Italians. Most participants were encouraged to continue studying the respective languages, thus developing new competencies for their future employment and personal lives.

Youth testimonials

"It was a great experience and opportunity. I made lots of new, close friends, especially with the Italians. I was myself, as I was surrounded by people who were like me, which gave me a sense of comfort. The leaders we had were amazing, and helped us communicate with each other. It is an experience I will never forget, and if another opportunity like this pops up again, I will definitely take part in it again." **Lisa, Malta.**

"Erasmus+ was a thrilling experience. Throughout the days, our leaders where very helpful, especially when it came to communicating with the foreigners. Due to this experience, I got to make new friends, and I am still in contact with some of them." Julia, Malta."I enjoyed all of it, I got to know more people and made new friends and memories. I also visited some places I hadn't been to before, and spread awareness about dyslexia." Liam, Malta."As we grow, we face new and different challenges and it is up to us to be ready and set to face them. During this project, we worked on preparing ourselves to leave our comfort zones, gearing up for higher education and for stepping into the jobs market world. The workshops didn't just prepare us for all this, but also connected us and motivated some of us to take on new challenges which hadn't been thought of before. Projects like these bring out much more than one expects: characteristics and aspects that won't be seen anywhere else. The final days can confirm all of this." Kurt, Malta."What I took from the project: this project gave me the opportunity to voice my concerns with regards to education and learning disabilities, and I was also able to make new friends, which I wouldn't have made if I hadn't attended this project." Madeline, Malta."Quella offerta dall'Erasmus è stata un' esperienza a tutti gli effetti formativa. A partire dai laboratori, principalmente incentrati sul mondo del lavoro, ma anche il semplice migliorare un lingua straniera, come in questo caso: l'inglese. Senza contare lo scambio di opinioni, sorrisi che c'è stato fra tutti iragazzi partecipanti". **Michele, Italy.**

"E' stata l'esperienza più emozionante che abbia mai vissuto, il ritrovarsi in un paese estero che non conoscevo minimamente e il dover parlare una lingua studiata e praticata solo sui banchi di scuola, il comprendere le proprie abilità attraverso delle attività ben organizzate ed entusiasmanti, ma soprattutto il legame che si è creato tra le persone che erano parte del progetto, che è diventato inscindibile durante il progetto e che alla conclusione ha lasciato un vuoto incolmabile tanto da lasciare un grande desiderio di tornare per rincontrarci." **Gabriele D. G., Italy.**

"Il progetto è stato molto divertente e istruttivo, grazie ad esso ho fatto molte amicizie e ho potuto notare miglioramenti nella lingua inglese." **Marco, Italy.**

Con questa esperienza e attraverso le varie attività, ho appreso che ogni DSA percepisce le difficoltà in maniera differente e le affronta secondo le proprie competenze sviluppate. Durante il percorso sono state evidenziate le nostre abilità che hanno fortificato il nostro essere.
Non abbiamo trovato solo strumenti ma abbiamo trovato un ambiente accogliente e rassicurante, in quel luogo dove non ti senti diverso ma speciale e comprendi che non sei solo a lottare contro l'ignoranza. Comprendo quanto la consapevolezza di aver un supporto da chi ti può ben capire e avere un confronto con essi ti permette di avere una marcia in più e poter diventare anche un punti di riferimento. **Erica, Italy.**

Further sources of information
(websites of use for interested practitioners)
https://www.facebook.com/DTDMalta/?tn-str=k*F

Contact person
ms Mary Rose Formosa – Project Coordinator.

IV) E.Y.E.S: Eurasia for Youth Entrepreneurship and Social business

Country
France

Name of the organisation
Eurasia Net

Type of organisation
NGO/ civil society organisation

Level
Sub-national (e.g. regions within country): Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region – France

Population and problem addressed
In 2014, the youth unemployment rate for under 25s within the EU reached the 22.8% threshold. The issue of the employability of young Europeans calls for the establishment of innovative collective action. The social economy and social entrepreneurship –"Social Business" in European terms– are positioned as sustainable alternative solutions to the multiple challenges of the economic, social and environmental crises.

EYES accompanies young people into social entrepreneurship. We identify projects and enable the promotion of Social and Solidarity Economy initiatives (ESS) in 6 countries (Romania, Greece, India, China, Vietnam and France). We allow a dozen young countries to develop their ideas in the pre-project, with interactive work sessions carried out by professionals.

In France, the winner of the best project, selected by a jury (composed of ESIA Intermade, the Master ESS and net Eurasia), participated in a seminar in Vietnam to share their experiences.

Purpose
The purpose of these projects is to promote the employability of young Europeans by empowering them to be autonomous and to fully develop their potential as active citizens, able to make proposals and contribute to the employment of tomorrow. By creating such synergies, the Social Solidarity Economy is an approach that links active citizenship and provides professional perspectives for European youth.

EYES is a youth entrepreneurship contest implemented in 6 countries (Romania, Greece, India, China, Vietnam and France) that enables ten young people to develop their ideas through interactive work sessions carried out by professionals. The best project selected by the jury in these six countries has the chance to participate in a seminar in Vietnam, where the winners have the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas on the social economy.

Intervention
Our action is called C-E.Y.E.S: Civil Involvement of European Youth via Entrepreneurship and Social Business. The social economy and social entrepreneurship –"Social Business" in European terms– is positioned as a sustainable alternative solution to the multiple challenges of the economic, social and environmental crises.

The European consortium brings together various partners involved in the project: Odrzivi Otok (Croatia), Continuous Action (Estonia), Eurasia Net (France), Interacting SL (Spain), Youth

Center of Epirus (Greece), On Advent Association (Romania), EPEKA (Slovenia), Zlavod Odtiz (Slovenia), CESIE (Italy) and Munterwegs (Switzerland).

At the European level, the preparatory phase of the project identified best practice on the subject of youth entrepreneurship and the Social and Solidarity Economy in each partner country. In each country, three youth workers with youth groups carried out research on Youth and SSE plans, in order to be able to offer examples of methodology and create Youth and SSE projects. Best practices in each country were synthesised into project sheets, and Eurasia net created a guide with the best EHS practices and transferable methods.

Regionally, a European seven-day seminar was held in Marseille in May 2016. The seminar, based on the principle of peer-to-peer transmission, was a time of encounter and exchange on citizen engagement issues and development projects in the field of the Social and Solidarity Economy.

Outcomes

Our results can be broken down into four points:

- R.1: Discovery of the ESS and its potential volunteers.
- R.2: Volunteer participation in local and international ESS projects.
- R.3: Construction of a professional project for the volunteers.
- R.4: Creation of a repository of good practice, shared between volunteers and local and international partners.

The quantitative and qualitative indicators are:

- Activity report: It includes the main project accounting documents and information related to E.Y.E.S shares, its future prospects, its strategy and the milestones of the year.
- Event participation: To communicate our know-how, promote services and strengthen our position.
- Other indicators like websites, volunteer impact questionnaires, registration sheets, training certificates, mission contracts and a sheet or booklet accompanying the volunteers.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice

Our internal and external organisation works well because:

- 100% of volunteers participated in the E.S.S forum.
- 100% of volunteers participate in civic training before departure.
- 100% of volunteers are involved in a project during the local phase and the international phase.
- 100% of volunteers are accompanied and helped in the search for their professional project.

What would you change, if the activity were to be repeated/ carried out with another group?

We would change things about our C-E.Y.E.S seminar in Marseille.

- Regarding the preparation of the seminar, 65% of participants were satisfied.
- Concerning the content of the seminar and its structuring, 6% were very satisfied, 47% satisfied and 23% moderately satisfied. The same applies to the agenda for the week: 75% satisfied.
- The general organisation of the seminar was appreciated by 65%, and moderately appreciated by 35%.

- 66% of participants said that the seminar was successful, while 17% rated it as moderately successful and 15% as unsuccessful.

What are the challenges & dilemmas in relation to the activity you carried out? What were the competences developed by the main actors in the project?

Internally, the main difficulty was registering as an organiser and a participant. The challenge for Eurasia net was to provide expertise in the specific field of E.S.S., although the purpose of the seminar and the overall project was not to provide training to participants, or respond to their problems, but rather to create a dialogue, a network of similar structures within the framework of social entrepreneurship. It was also a matter of valuing these structures, to inspire and stimulate new projects and new entrepreneurs over the longer term.

Further sources of information (websites of use for interested practitioners)

Contact person

Website: https://www.eurasianet.eu/
Contact person: piombostefan@gmail.com / stefan.eurasianet@gmail.com

V) Finding your competence identity through peer mentoring

Country
Finland

Organisation
Juvenia - Youth Research and Development Centre

Type of organisation
Higher education institution

Level
National

Title of the project/intervention to be described as the 'good practice' example

Population and problem addressed
We used this method with young people who were either high school or university students, but it would be very suitable for other groups as well. The goal is to help the young people find their individual competences (also those acquired by means other than formal education or work), thus forming a clear competence identity for themselves. This will help the young people form an idea of a suitable career path, based on their individual competences.

Purpose
The main idea is that everyone has competences that they don´t think about when choosing a career or applying for jobs. Perhaps someone who has played sports for their entire life is a great team player, or perhaps someone who has helped raise their younger siblings is used to taking responsibility for others. We try to get the young people to recognise these hidden competences in themselves, and to apply them when choosing a career. This is especially important with young people who think they have no skills at all.

Intervention
As a method for recognising people's competence identity, we use a stairway model of peer mentoring. For example, this could mean that senior university students mentor junior students, while these junior students mentor high school students. So you always receive mentoring from someone who is in a more advanced position than you are, but is still your peer. The mentors also learn about their own competences by working in a mentoring position. The mentees do a lot of reflective activities, for example they build competence maps for themselves. We also believe in learning by doing, so the mentees will do a project under the supervision of the mentors, they will find their individual competences in the process, and afterwards will reflect on what their strengths were. This will connect them to their competence identity.

Outcomes
We are doing this as a pilot project, that only began at the beginning of 2019, so we don´t yet have any results for the mentoring programme. However, it will be measured by how many people took part in the mentoring activities and by the feedback from those participants.

Main lessons learned/implications for practice (max. 300 Words)
As previously stated, the mentoring programme is still a work in progress, and we have yet to see concrete feedback and results from it.

Further sources of information
(websites of use for interested practitioners)
https://www.xamk.fi/en/rdi/juvenia-centre-for-the-development-and-research-in-the-field-of-youth/

Contact person
Antti Rantaniva
RDI Specialist
Juvenia - Youth Research and Development Centre
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VI) Future Entrepreneurs of Poland - Entrepreneurial Pre-Incubator Programme

Country
Poland

Name of the organisation
My Future

Type of organisation
Non-profit foundation

Level
International

Population and problem addressed
This project addresses three major problems in conventional education:

1. Too much focus on hard skills for entrepreneurial development of students.
2. Unrealistic expectations as to how quickly you can realistically improve soft skills.
3. Missing insight into good learning and good teaching.

The research into typical education styles and methods shows us that we too often focus on improving hard skills, when we teach young people. This is wrong, because it is soft skills that we use for doing business, for inventing and for leading. Primary findings also show that hard skills are more “gradable” and “measurable”, compared to soft skills, such as personality traits and collaboration skills.

We believe that we must have a much earlier start and a much more practical approach to teaching and learning than is currently recognised. Explaining why we must do this, and how we can, will equip young people from a younger age with a realistic chance of walking the path towards either starting their own businesses or taking on a role as a change agent in a company. We target our teaching at 16-18-year-old individuals, with a built-in desire to learn. We challenge them. We use a practical and down to earth approach to learning.

Purpose
The main purpose of the project is to bridge the gap between carrier and education, by providing an opportunity for youth to meet and work with entrepreneurs and to improve the quality of informal teaching methods for young people in Europe. Sub objectives: a) increase the potential of non-governmental organisations and people involved in working with youth, through acquiring knowledge from the Danish Institute For Applied Knowledge, and creating the pre-incubator programme FEP, b) strengthen international collaboration and exchange of good practice between organisations in Poland and Denmark by creating long lasting pre-incubator programmes, which focus on entrepreneurship, c) increase the level of practical knowledge and soft skills (communication, team-work, courtesy, integrity etc.) through workshops.

Intervention
The Future Entrepreneurs of Poland is a joint venture between My Future and the Danish Institute for Applied Knowledge. During four-days of workshops on the theme of “entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship”, FEP provides useful knowledge and interactive hands-on experience to young people, allowing them to learn useful skills to kick off a future career or studies. The programme includes a case competition and Grand Finale, where the winning team are awarded with a prize. The FEP programme is tailored towards young people in the 16-18 age group and includes youths from different backgrounds. The programme has been tailored to the target group and offers a range of soft skills that have been analysed as being important for companies and society, according to research. The duration and timing is convenient for the target group and the desired learning outcome. The workshops include an intense 4 days of work, initially Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, where the first two days are from 17:00-21:00 and the remaining two are full days, from 09:30-17:00. The event locations are made easily accessible to all the stakeholders. The programme is free of charge for the direct target group; it includes breakfast and lunch as well as beverages during the events. The only expense from the participants’ side is to cover transportation costs to the event. The soft skills that FEP helps to apply are “outgoingness”, “ability to listen and reflect”, “likability”, “handling pressure”, “courage” and “care”. As soft skills are hard to define and too square we believe to impact others. How this works can be studied under the umbrella of dynamic capabilities. Specifically, “asset mass efficiencies” and “time compression diseconomies”. In plain words this means that soft skills help to efficiently acquire hard skills and that starting point must be earlier than commonly targeted in similar initiatives in the market.

Outcomes
My Future has successfully implemented a pilot project and has created a plan for practical workshops which allow young people to acquire soft skills and practical knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. After various evaluations, the programme had exceptionally high satisfaction scores (98% of participants were satisfied). Moreover, the entrepreneurs involved stated that such a programme will help to bridge the gap between education and the professional lives of young people. They also found the programme to be very relevant for themselves, as it helped them to better understand the needs and problems that young people face. The workshops gained a lot of attention, and education representatives in Denmark are now discussing whether they should become an elective course where the ECTS would be awarded.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice
one of the main benefits for the programme participants is the opportunity to network with students from different backgrounds and schools. According to the field research conduced by My Future, students from different schools very rarely have a chance to network with each other and exchange ideas and experiences. We believe that the development of the FEP programme, with the approach of ‘learning by doing’ has increased the entrepreneurial skills of young people. Additionally, we believe that FEP, to some extent, bridges the gap that exists between companies and young workers. Moreover, young people very often lack soft skills and practical knowledge. We believe that the young people acquired more skills, which will give them better prospects for employment. As with any initiative, there will be limitations and constraints. We are fully aware that four days of workshops won’t bring about a revolution, neither for society, nor for the individuals. We find it very important to distinguish this intellectual output from the usual false promises of what a seminar or two can do for a company or for a person. Such offers are already available in the market, and we have previously provided information suggesting that 90% of this is inefficient. We commit fully to the research of Jarvis and others. Lifelong learning is the key.

Further sources of information
(websites of use for interested practitioners)

Contact person
Founder Natalia Rozanska hello@my-future.info`
+48 516081542
Website: www.my-future.info
Research/ Intelectualoutput: https://www.my-future.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/FUTURE-ENTREPRENEURS-OF-POLAND-E-guide-English-version-.pdf

VII) Je suis Africa

Country
Morocco

Name of the organisation
Association of Foreign Students Alumni in Management

Type of organisation
NGO - it is an association which belongs to the National School of Business and Management, Settat

Level
Community/grassroots/local

Population and problem addressed
We may ask repeatedly in conferences, seminars, official contests and meetings why young people are not involved in entrepreneurship, even though they are aware of today's issues, they are more open to new technologies and highly qualified to adapt to business trends. We noticed that young people lacked two main things that may prevent them from getting into the entrepreneurship network: professional coaching and funds. And that's what "Je suis Africa" provides.

It is an event aimed at young people, regardless of their background, who have innovative, realistic and coherent project ideas. Our goal is to give each young person with a mesmerising idea, a real chance to meet his/her future clients, suppliers, lenders, partners… and discuss the project in front of professional consultants. The consultants are meant to guide each young project holder, enabling them to enhance their business models and make them more effective and worthwhile.

Purpose
Our principal motivating factor is that we are the youth, and we noticed that we were not participating in our society, in decision-making about youth. That's why we formed an association of young people for young people. We are more concerned than other organisations, and are the most likely to propose effective and fitting solutions. We also rely on our diversity. We believe that diversity empowers teams and leads to creativity and enrichment.

So, we are pushing for youth integration into society, either via entrepreneurship, or via other professional and cultural projects and activities.

Intervention
AFSAM, Association for Foreign Students and Alumni in Management, Settat, organises an annual competition under different themes related to entrepreneurship in Africa, in order to find viable and accessible solutions to fund some of the projects created by young entrepreneurs.

This event allows participants to exchange ideas around a round table on the most viable solutions for funding projects and creative ideas. The project had the following objectives:

- Motivating young people to take the first steps along the path of entrepreneurship;
- Giving them the tools to reach adequate and accessible funding;
- Showing them the success keys of entrepreneurship;
- Making youth entrepreneurship a means of fighting against unemployment and a source of economic and social development.The fourth edition of "Je suis Africa" took place this year

on 6th March 2019. The event was the flagship event of the AFSAM (Association of Foreign Students ENCG, Settat). It was held at two distinct times: First, a conference that featured four high-caliber professionals to address the theme of “Young talents in Africa: between entrepreneurship challenges and immigration opportunities”. The speakers were:

- Zakarya Kartti: IT entrepreneur.
- Tarik Benmansour: Professional coach and risk analyst.
- Daname Kolani: Quantitative finance consultant.
- Ousmane Faye: Scientific researcher.

The second part of the event was an entrepreneurship competition open to all young project holders. These young people had the opportunity to present their pitches in front of the public and a jury in under 7 minutes, to win Je Suis Africa 2019.

The winning teams of the competition were:

- 1st prize: Darfood, Enactus ENCG Settat
- 2nd prize: Nagary, AFSAM3rd prize: Agro-Mar, Enactus ENCG Settat

Outcomes

A lot of positive outcomes were recorded this year. First of all, the winning team, Darfood, continued their activity and launched their project in Settat. Their project helped a group of women earn a sustainable income by cooking traditional meats of the region. Those meats are commercialised thanks to Darfood staff, who are a group of young business students. Darfood started to generate cash and spread smiles to limited-income families in Settat.As well as this, project holders started to build professional relationships and partnerships with professionals. A lot of coaching meetings were set up after the event. And thanks to this coaching, participants have enhanced their business strategies and created their own business networks.

Main lessons learned/implications for practice

Here is a list of seven lessons that we learnt from organising “Je suis Africa 2019”. We’ve learnt over and over via things we never assumed possible. The position of ‘event planner’ continually makes it onto the list of the most stressful jobs - and for good reason. Still, if every challenge is an opportunity to learn, event planners have doctorates. Here are the life lessons that these event planners have learnt well:

- Your intuition is often right. If you have a nagging feeling that something will go wrong, you’re probably correct. Prepare for it. Along those lines...
- Be prepared. Event planners and the Boy Scouts know all about that.
- You can’t please everyone, especially on their wedding day.
- Youth is our most valuable asset in society.
- Companies and professionals need be collaborative, so just contact them.
- Be humble.
- Hard work always pays off...if you’re not looking for it to. After all, a watched kettle takes a really long time to boil.

FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION
(websites of use for interested practitioners)

CONTACT PERSON

Contact our association in Afsamclub@gmail.com

VIII) Job Pathways Finland

Country

Finland

Name of the organisation

City of Tampere Employment Services, Job Pathways Finland project (Project will be executed in accordance with the Six City Strategy by a project consortium of the Espoo, Helsinki, Oulu, Tampere and Turku municipalities, as well as three universities of applied sciences: Tampere, Turku and Metropolia. Each city focuses on complementing its own existing service pallet with customised actions.)

Type of organisation

Local authority/ municipality

Level

National/Sub-national (e.g. regions within country)

Population and problem addressed

15,000 students. The project is implemented in a vocational school.

Purpose

First, the project identifies the needs that businesses are likely to have in the future, and seeks ways to respond to those needs. Identification is done through improved dialogue with employers. Second, the project identifies job applicants’ existing expertise and potential, options for development as well as the support necessary for the transition phase from education to working life. This customer-oriented approach should result in more effective and focused services.

Intervention

Municipalities are facing a situation which is likely to change their future role in promoting business and providing employment services. Cities, together with their stakeholders, are developing models that correspond to changed structures and are seeking new ways to meet the needs of a changed labour market and customers.

Outcomes

The project highlights a method of co-creation in solving the bottlenecks within transition phases. The project also observes the model’s development from a preventive perspective, to stop unemployment happening in the first place. Additional support is given to students who are reaching the end of their studies. This is done by integrating processes which have previously taken place in separate sectors of educational and employment services. The crucial point is to encourage customers / target groups to become active agents. Furthermore, the participation of employees and job seekers in the development work is an important starting point for the project. The project has started to build career and recruitment services for two organisations, namely the City of Tampere Employment Services and a vocational school.

The aim is to promote student employment, e.g. knowledge-based job placement, career counselling incl. identifying, visualising and marketing your expertise, and simple entrepreneurship. Study interruptions will offer only a reduced model of early intervention. The model will be built in collaboration between different organisations.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice

The main challenge has been operating cultures that are constantly changing in two different organisations. A lack of common electronic information systems, taking into account the GDPR privacy settings. Youth services at different levels are fragmented, so it is appropriate to summarise the role, to make services appear to young people in a consistent and efficient way.

FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION
(websites of use for interested practitioners).
https://www.hel.fi/helsinki/en/administration/enterprises/employment/

IX) KariyerIST Career and Entrepreneur Center and Training

Country

Turkey

Name of the organisation

KariyerIST Career and Entrepreneurship Center

Type of organisation

NGO/ civil society organisation

Level

Community/grassroots/local

Population and problem addressed

The problem that was addressed by the project was the inadequate awareness of career planning and development among young people studying at universities in Istanbul and neighboring cities. Additionally, due to the fact that there was a huge surplus of graduates seeking jobs, compared to the number of jobs available in the market, the project included entrepreneurship training and promoted entrepreneurship as an alternative career path.

Purpose

The underlying problem was the lack of career development and counselling given in the universities within formal education. Examining the situation at the time when the project was started, most university graduates were applying for jobs in fields other than their chosen professions, and the drop-out rate in the universities was high. To change this situation, and offer career counselling in a different context, away from a formal education setting, and to encourage students to acknowledge their needs and skills better before dropping out of college, the project idea was created.

Intervention

The intervention phase included a series of training sessions for selected university students. The project was funded for 3 years, and at the beginning of each year, applications were open for university students and selected students, who were required to attend courses to be delivered for the upcoming year. The courses included “Career Check-Up”, which was a specifically designed test to understand the students’ skills and interests, communication strategies, conflict management, design thinking, introduction to marketing, project development, drama, digital tools, and others. In addition to the courses, the project also invited professionals in the field to deliver field-specific talks for the participants. At the end of the year, selected participants were matched with professionals for a mentorship programme that lasted 2 months. At the same time, there was an elective “project management cycle” training and at the end of that training, the participants, under the guidance of the facilitators, applied for funds for a social project. That was everything the project included for each year.

Outcomes

Shortly after finishing the programme, some of the participants gained their first internship experience and for senior year students, some of them, via the network they created through the programme, were employed by companies shortly after their graduation. Also, some of the participants attended the following year’s application phases as facilitators and mentors.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice

The training part, mentorship, and talks with professionals worked quite well. In particular, professionals from the field used the talks to look for talent for their companies, since they knew that the participants had been selected and trained up to a certain level. Also, I can honestly say, as a former participant, that mentorship with sector professionals helped quite a lot of people who didn't know what they could do with their skills and interests.

For the non-functioning part, I can say that being solely dependent on funds was problematic since, when the funds ran out, all the gathered knowledge and network was lost. Even though the project team tried to turn it into an enterprise, it didn't work as it had done with the funds, since the socio-economic level of the participants wasn't high enough to cover all the training materials and expenses.

I'd change the funding system, first and foremost. If you can convince state officials that this system can work as an alternative career centre within universities, there would be no need to depend on funds provided for a specific period of time. The location of the training is also important. It should be somewhere outside to give participants a chance to experience nature, maybe agriculture, and an open-air working atmosphere can definitely help participants.

For the last question, I can say that the main competence that was developed by participants was some of the soft skills needed for business life in Turkey. Participants also developed their social entrepreneurship and initiative-taking skills.

Further sources of information
(websites of use for interested practitioners)

Contact person

https://www.linkedin.com/company/career-pass/?originalSubdomain=trhttps://twitter.com/careerpass_

X) NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training - a challenge for Europe

Country

Romania

Name of the organisation

Asociatia Tineri pentru Europa de Maine (Youth for Tomorrow's Europe Association)

Type of organisation

NGO/ civil society organisation

Level

Sub-national (e.g. regions within country)

Population and problem addressed

The target groups involved in this project are children and teenagers who are in danger of becoming NEET or who are already a part of this category. They are of various ages (10-19 years old) and face difficulties that could lead to them giving up on education. In these conditions, it is very hard to find a job, start a family or become independent.

Our project involves partners from Wales, Finland, Sweden and, of course, Romania. The activity we are presenting as a 'good practice' example was carried out during one of the international meetings, organised with the beneficiaries (children and young people in danger of becoming NEET from the 4 countries) and partner representatives.

Our organisation organised and presented it as a tool for promoting entrepreneurship as an alternative to unemployment. It can be applied to people of all ages, social categories and professional training.

Purpose

More and more young people from all over Europe are becoming part of the NEET category. This happens because a lot of children and youngsters abandon their education before completing compulsory cycles, and this has a negative impact on their lives.

Due to the fact that they are not in education or other types of training, they cannot find a job or earn a living for their families or themselves. In such cases, they can develop anti-social behaviours or even became part of criminal organisations.

Entrepreneurship is a proper alternative for these young people. We, as youth workers and representatives of educational institutions, try to teach them that they can use their creative potential and hobbies to start a business and become independent. In this way, we offer them the chance to explore these ideas, by using exercises to stimulate their entrepreneurial spirit.

Intervention

One of our most successful activities in the area of project management and entrepreneurship is called How to build a tower. The exercise is suitable for people of all ages and social categories; we applied it in the aforementioned project: NEET – a challenge for Europe, and in many other projects and activities. Furthermore, it is fun, easy to play and it comes with a lot of benefits for those who take part:

- It develops the participants'soft skills (team work, emotional intelligence, empathy and more), and it develops their key competences (communication in their mother tongue or, if it's done in an intercultural environment, it enhances their communication in a foreign language, IT competences, maths / finance competences, initiative and entrepreneurship and more)
- Participants can work on their skills and knowledge in the fields of project management, business administration, resource planning, leadership and other aspects.

This exercise can be carried out by teams made up of a minimum of 4 people and a maximum of 5-7, depending on the size of the group we are working with. The teams' main task is to build a tower with the given resources: 25 sheets of paper, duct tape, rope, a stapler, some staples and scissors. The tower has to be 1.8m tall and has to be able to stand upright by itself until the final evaluation.

Once the teams are established, each of them has to choose a representative to receive the materials and communicate with the ''financer'' (the facilitator becomes the financer).

Each team receives the same set of materials and instructions. The members can request more resources, if they think that what they have received is not enough to complete the project. Time is also a resource, but they have to communicate with the facilitator in an official way. In the end, the facilitator conducts an evaluation session based on given questions.

Outcomes

As we mentioned before, this exercise has a lot of benefits for the participants. First of all, it guides them through the process of managing a project with European financing, or their own business. Then, it teaches disadvantaged youths how to communicate, work in a team, be true leaders and more. This means that they can develop their skills, knowledge and attitudes, so that they are prepared to integrate into the labour market.

We know that this method is very effective, thanks to the feedback received from participants. After every workshop, we ask them to tell us what they liked, what they didn't like, what could have been better, how they would have done things if they were in charge and more. Apart from discussions, we ask them to fill in evaluation questionnaires with questions for every aspect (facilitator, duration, interactivity, lessons learnt, applicability and more).

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice

The overall method is very effective and it stimulates the participants' entrepreneurial and civic spirit in a fun, learning-by-doing way. Personally, I think that its most positive aspect is its versatility and adaptability, as well as the fact that it can promote the importance of becoming independent in a world where disadvantaged people have opportunities, but lack proper information and education.

Everything works, but it could be better if children and young people learnt how to communicate, knew practical ways of making things work and knew how to address people at various levels (for example, how to write an official letter, what to do if they are implementing a project, how to manage their resources and more).

I wouldn't change anything, because I think that the tool is effective with all target groups. Besides, it is easily adaptable, so it can be replayed in a lot of different situations. In my opinion, the biggest challenge is to make the participants want to become part of a team. Nowadays, people don't seem very keen on getting involved in this type of activity, even if it is beneficial to them. It's very difficult to take youngsters out of their comfort zone and stimulate their 'citizenship' spirit.

However, it's up to us to find ways to make children and young people more willing to stand up for their rights and build a better future, regardless of their difficulties. This is why it's very important to use non-formal education methods, like the one described above: How to build a tower.

We already mentioned the competences developed by our tool:

- Communication in the mother tongue and foreign languages
- Team work
- Maths and science competences
- Tech knowledge
- Peer learning and learning to learn
- Entrepreneurship and initiative spirit
- Other associated skills, knowledge and experience

Further sources of information
(websites of use for interested practitioners)

Contact person

There isn't any resource website, but there are a few auxiliary materials which we will put at the disposal of those interested in using the method. In fact, these are a part of the tool's logistics, but the process can be fully understood by those who are involved in it.

In case you need more information, you can contact: Mandruta Andreescu, CEO and Youth Worker at Asociatia Tineri pentru Europa de Maine (Youth for Tomorrow's Europe Association) from Targoviste, Romania.
Email address: mandrutza_andreescu@yahoo.com
Mobile number is +40727068515.

XI) Radical Learning Lab: An international learning network for teampreneurship

Country
Spain

Name of the organisation
Teamlabs

Type of organisation
Higher education institution

Level
International

Population and problem addressed
We base our work on young people, and on building 21st century skills, to allow them to create their own professional path. We believe in collaboration and team work to find solutions to the big problems in society: unemployment and the ability of young people to fit into the labour market are the problems we want to focus on most.

Purpose
Teamlabs provides a new hybrid space, which is both a learning set-up and a professional framework. We design learning ecosystems for young people, companies and educational institutions, in order to create a collaborative community to embrace world problems and build solutions. We want to promote learning-by-doing activities, to change education to meet the needs of the current students in a more agile way.

Intervention
We have a 4-year academic programme entitled “Leadership Entrepreneurship & Innovation”, certified by the University of Mondragon. We have 350 teampreneurs at two basecamps, in Barcelona and Madrid. Our educational system and environment is both a community and an institution. We have based our methodology on a Finnish model called ‘Team Academy’, that we have reproduced ourselves. We travel on Learning Journeys all around the globe, to Barcelona, Madrid, Berlin, Helsinki, San Francisco, New York, Shanghai, Mumbai… We build international partnerships to both host our teamcompanies and to create new basecamps and reproduce our learning business model.

Outcomes
Our community has already made more than 5 million euros. 300 people have accomplished the educational programme over the past six years and we currently have 750 people in our community of learners. 35% of the teampreneurs outside the program now have built their own companies, creating at least 200 jobs. Some of them have been identified in the ‘30 under 30 list’ - one in 2017, and three in 2018.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice
We have almost 10 years of experience, but there is still a lot of work to do. The autonomy of the young people to build their own learning path is no doubt the best insight and the most difficult way of creating the educational model. If this model were to travel, we would need to understand the culture and socio-economic setup of the place where it were to be developed and take place.

For both learners and facilitators, this model is a learning path, to build up skills and become 21st century professionals. We PRACTISE what we believe and we believe that “the unknown is coming”; we don’t know what the future holds, but we want to help create it and be a part of it. We are now part of a movement of doers, entrepreneurs and social activists, contributing towards a better world. The dilemma is that we need more people with the will and mindset to create more people with that mindset. The process designs the process.

Further sources of information (websites of use for interested practitioners)
www.teamlabs.es

Contact person
Berta Lázaro
berta@teamlabs.es

XII) Academic Business Incubators

Country
Ukraine

Name of the organisation
YEP Starter & Phil Bot team

Type of organisation
Startup Incubator

Level
International

Population and problem addressed
Ukraine struggles with youth unemployment. Young people tend to emigrate or not look for a job, as they become disillusioned with the economic situation in Ukraine. So, enthusiasts from Ukrainian and Moldovan universities, backed by Estonian mentors, founded the YEP Startup Incubator, aimed at generating a startup culture. Startups are a perfect way to deal with youth unemployment, as young people are interested in the outcome of their work, and often either achieve success, or gain the skills needed for employment. During a period of continuous economic stagnation, the students helped to open academic startup clubs in many of the major universities in Ukraine. The participants are usually, but not necessarily, students, with bright ideas but little experience. The clubs are organised by successful young entrepreneurs and volunteers.

Purpose
Young people in Ukraine can't find suitable jobs, and the goal was to encourage them to put their energy into their own enterprises and initiatives, under the guidance of a startup incubation programme. Young people need to become aware of the startup ecosystem in Ukraine, to gain practical skills and knowledge, and get involved in real entrepreneurship activities. This will help them step up and become part of the economic system.

Intervention
YEP Startup Incubator has branches in major universities in Ukraine, mostly in Kiev and Kharkiv. It also has a branch in Moldova. These branches act as academic startup clubs, where students get to know the basics of the startup ecosystem in Ukraine. These are called YEP!Club.

Next comes YEP!Starter, a startup incubation programme, which helps teams of enthusiasts to develop their own enterprises, from the ideation to an actual product. It operates in Kiev, Kharkiv, and Kishinev. I myself am a participant of this stage and, with my team, we are working on a startup called Phil Bot – a service for meeting new people based on compatible psychotypes. At YEP!Starter we have formed teams, taken advice from mentors and experts, received crucial feedback on the most important topics concerning our startup, and conducted market research.

The next initiative is YEP!RunUp, a startup acceleration programme, which helps enterprises that made it through the previous stage, to reach their full potential, by providing financial and legal help. These are the main actions of the YEP. It also maintains partnerships with lots of influential organisations and companies (e. g. MFA of Estonia, Deloitte, Cisco, etc.), in order to secure funding and receive mentorship.

Outcomes
Under the YEP!Club programme, YEP currently has more than 25 academic clubs in two countries. Hundreds of participants have finished the YEP!Starter programme, which is now repeated every new semester. At least 13 startups have successfully completed YEP incubation and acceleration programmes and are now YEP residents, which means mutual cooperation and PR activities. YEP is supported by a number of respected organisations, companies and government agencies (MFA of Estonia, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Deloitte, Cisco, Garage48, Beetroot Academy, Lucky Labs, etc.). YEP also has more than 3500+ likes on its Facebook page. And if more indicators are needed, I can present them at a later date.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice
Among the most effective instruments are PR activities aimed at the academic environment. Students from universities all over Ukraine want to join the programme, and it usually receives a few times more application requests than the programme can accept. Furthermore, the incubation and acceleration definitely work: dozens of successful startups and teams have been formed at YEP, proving this point.

Some of the organisers' ideas can't be brought to fruition, due to a lack of interest from some government institutions, so this part currently doesn't work properly.

The activity will definitely be repeated, and the change needed the next time it runs is an expansion of its scale: more clubs, more participants, more mentors. But this requires a lot of effort and resources.

One of the dilemmas is that if you invite more participants to the incubation programme, the efficiency of the training will decrease. YEP is currently trying to maintain a balance.

The main actors in the project have achieved an extremely important goal: they are living proof of the existence of a free, successful, startup incubation programme in Ukraine. These competences and experiences cannot be underestimated, and can serve as an example to encourage other similar projects.

Further sources of information
http://www.yepworld.org/en/
https://www.facebook.com/yepincubators/

Contact person
ANDRIY ZAIKIN (CEO)
https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100001156833521

XIII) Strengthen your roots to Finnish Society (Juurru Suomeen)

Country
Finland

Name of the organisation
Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Type of organisation
Higher education institution

Level
National

Purpose
The aim is to give guidance and support to students who are immigrants (refugees etc.), in co-operation in two educational institutions (vocational institute and University of Applied Sciences – Business College Helsinki and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences)

Population and problem addressed
More and more immigrants will be needed in the Finnish labour market in the future. At the same time, many international students already residing in the country, and those who have moved here for other reasons, may find it difficult to work because of a lack of Finnish language skills and possible prejudices. How can the postgraduate and working life skills of immigrants be improved? A project launched by the Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce is looking for solutions in cooperation between Business College and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences.

Intervention
The project's teaching experiments took place during the 2018-2019 academic year. During the autumn semester of 2018, courses were organised involving students from both institutions, some of which were designed and implemented in collaboration with teachers from both institutions.

The themes of the courses were related to seeking employment, entrepreneurship, networking and working in communities. Among other things, students received guidance in creating a CV, making a video CV, and setting up a LinkedIn profile. Participants of the mentoring course had their own work life coaches, with whom the students met monthly and reported on their meetings. The students wrote a 'Juurru Suomeen' blog and created a magazine. Students also organised various events, participated in out-of-school events and visited different organisations. All project activities were in Finnish. There were teachers of relevant topics, Finnish language and communication from both institutions.

The basic idea of the project is that language teaching is integrated into everything and no separate Finnish language courses are organised. Thus, all teachers are also language teachers, i.e. language-based teaching is implemented within the project.

Outcomes
Analysing the results of the project is still to be done, but from the teachers' point of view, it can already be said that one of the best things has been getting to know some great colleagues from the different units of your organisation and from the neighbouring school. The networks will surely survive, and the co-operation will continue. Working with students has also been a great pleasure. They have learned how to communicate in Finnish in working situations. We are also very confident that if the students get good guidance from the study counsellor, they will remain motivated to study.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice
What works? Working with the students in a group runs smoothly, and they learn a lot from each other in a multicultural group. Learning the language at the same time as other relevant subjects is a good way to learn.

What are the main functions/positive elements of the intervention?
What does not work? It's always difficult to combine different working cultures. Before institutions start working together, it is important for all the participants to get to know how the system works. We should ask: "What should we know before we start working with your students?"

What would you change, if the activity were to be repeated/ carried out with another group?
I would like to become more familiar with the curriculum of the co-operating institute. People who work together need to know the "basics of the working culture" from each other. This will provide better understanding.

What are the challenges & dilemmas in relation to the activity you carried out?
Students come from different backgrounds and we should try to find the most relevant topics to teach.

What were the competences developed by the main actors in the project?
Learning how to teach Finnish for working purposes for immigrants living in Finland, and studying at a Business College and the University of Applied Sciences. Learning how to develop co-operation between institutions from different levels.

Further sources of information
(websites of use for interested practitioners)

An article written (in Finnish) about this project:
https://jyx.jyu.fi/bitstream/handle/123456789/62979/Yrityst%C3%A4%20uralle%21%20%E2%80%93%20Maahanmuuttajat%20jatko-opintoihin%20ja%20ty%C3%B6h%C3%B6n%20toisen%20ja%20korkea-asteen%20yhteishankkeessa.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

A blog written by students who participated in the project (in Finnish):
https://juurrusuomeen.blogspot.com/

News about the start of the project:
http://www.haaga-helia.fi/fi/uutiset/kauppakamarilta-huomattava-lahjoitus-haaga-helian-koulutuksen-kehittamiseen#.XKdgXSBS-uV

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences:
http://www.haaga-helia.fi/en/frontpage

Business College Helsinki:
https://en.bc.fi/

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XIV) Student Internship Programme- STP (Tələbə Təcrübə Proqramı - TTP)

Country
Republic of Azerbaijan

Name of the organisation
Executive Power of Binagadi District, Baku city

Type of organisation
Ministry/ Department at the national or regional level

Level
Sub-national (e.g. regions within country)

Title of the project/intervention to be described as the 'good practice' example

Population and problem addressed
The problem is youth unemployment. As we know, young people, especially university graduates, are keen to begin their careers, but in our community, if you do not have experience in a related sphere, it is very difficult to find a job. So, we had a high number of unemployed young people. As a part the social life of our community, we began to think about how to solve this problem and came up with the TTP (STP) programme.

Purpose
The main purpose the programme was to provide young people with experience, to help them find a job. Our main role was to coordinate between different organisations and the young people. We began to look for partners and finally made agreements with organisations from the private and government sectors.

Intervention
The programme worked like this: We found private and government organisations which had vacancies. We reserved the vacancies and announced the internship programme for 2-3 months on our website, looking for practitioners to fit those vacancies. We receive a lot of applications and some of the candidates were invited to interview. A representative from each organisation participated in the interviews. At the final level, we selected the practitioners. The practitioners then began work. During his\her 3 months, transport costs, lunch and phone expenses were paid for by the organisation. If the chair of the organisation was satisfied with the practitioner, after 3 months, the practitioner became a paid worker.

Outcomes
It is almost 7 years since we began the TTP programme, and we are glad to say that hundreds of practitioners now work as paid workers in the private and government sectors, and even in ministries.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice
If you want to do something for your community, you just need to be a part of that community and think about it a bit deeper. Sometimes, problems seem very hard, even though they are not that big.

Further sources of information (websites of use for interested practitioners)
Website: https://edumap.az/category/t%C9%99crub%C9%99-proqramlari/

XV) SYW – Sustainable Youth Work. From volunteers to entrepreneurs

Country
Italy

Name of the organisation
Glocal factory

Type of organisation
Ngo/ civil society organisation

Level
National

Population and problem addressed
SYW addresses youth workers (YWs) who deal with disengaged and excluded young people and provides them with a cultural and sustainable – i.e. business-oriented - approach in order to overcome this issue in the best and most effective way possible. This is possible thanks to the free, online Training Curriculum built up by SYW. It includes 1) a MOOC with three modules on 'Active Participation', 'Social Inclusion', 'Project Management' and 'Sustainability', 2) a digital compendium with ready tools to plan and implement a youth project and 3) an app – currently being designed - to allow international work and exchange. The project has been carried out in three EU countries (Poland, Italy and Spain) and in three African countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana and Kenya) on the outskirts of the cities where the associations involved are located. All the tools are available in English, French, Polish, Italian and soon in Spanish too.

Purpose
SYW is the successor to CultNet, which ended in December 2018. CultNet addressed the lack of training in youth work and aimed at providing youth workers with an innovative tool to improve their skills and work. The focus was the use of art and culture as the best tools to use, to foster active participation among young people with fewer opportunities. During CultNet's lifetime, we realised two things: 1) Youth workers and young people often have great ideas, but they can't implement them and, if they can, they can't sustain them for a long period of time. They lack entrepreneurship skills! 2) International exchange is one of the most appealing and powerful ways to involve young people and improve youth work. SYW was born to address these needs, through an exchange between the business and young cultural world, and an online tool (an app), to guarantee continued international exchange beyond money.

Intervention
CultNet is an Erasmus+ project involving three partners from Italy, Poland and Burkina Faso. The partnership was enlarged in the following SYW project with partners from Spain, Ghana and Kenya. During the two years of CultNet, we built up a MOOC and a digital compendium with the aim of improving youth work and especially the use of art and culture for the engagement and inclusion of young people. Ten examples of good practice were selected, and interviews were carried out on MOOC contents, i.e. 'active participation, 'social inclusion and 'project management'. Then, the video material was integrated with theoretical reading material and practical exercises. A certificate is sent out after completion. The course provides YWs and young people with easy, field-based skills and tools to manage a successful youth project, which means not only being volunteers, but also young entrepreneurs!

SYW wants to improve this aspect with international work and official recognition. From now to September 2019, the partnership is building up 1) a 4th module for MOOC on how to apply a business-oriented model to a youth project/event, 2) a mobile app to allow online, free, international work (as in the case of the EU projects CSI and youth mobility). The app allows YWs to meet, introduce themselves, work together and share content in order to do a good job during the mobility period itself, 3) a Memorandum of Understanding with a learning institution, to get them to adopt the whole training path proposed by the project, in order to increase official recognition of skills achieved through youth work. Both the projects are based on a collection of good practice and technological work, and they are implemented in many EU and African Countries. Both have been tested by YWs themselves. This guarantees that they will be replicated in many different contexts.

Outcomes
The outcomes of the projects are:

- To improve the quality and sustainability of youth work, providing YWs with entrepreneurial skills.
- To create a network of international youth organisations that are active around these topics, and to provide this network with smart tools to allow them to cooperate in an active and effective way.
- To increase cooperation among sectors such as the cultural industry, start-up incubators, businesses and the young volunteering world.
- To increase the recognition of skills achieved through non-formal learning and activities.

16 associations were involved in sharing their experiences to build up the MOOC, 60 YWs in the experimentation of the MOOC, 200 were involved in the dissemination event, and 20 YWs in the mobility activities.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice
The mobility activities, the collection of good practice, and their inclusion in the MOOC, are the main positive and functional elements of the project, together with the involvement of the target itself (i.e. YWs) to test and improve the products. They really worked!

We found some difficulties in applying the same tools and approaches to African organisations that we had used for European ones. We didn't realise they had no wi-fi or were even illiterate. But we overcame these problems together with the people involved, and that was a good moment to grow as a project and as a partnership.

I would involve more people (also supporters) and I would disseminate the project results in universities and educational institutions too.

The main challenge was to transfer the course to an African country, as explained above. The main dilemmas were: "Do YWs really want an online course to improve their skills? Do they need entrepreneurial skills? Are we answering a real need?" The project itself answered these questions positively. But above all, I learnt that the most important thing is not to just follow your ideas, but to adapt them to the context and the target, and build up the project together with them.

The main actors in the project developed the following competences: 1) working in an international team to implement something interesting for everyone, 2) planning, managing and

implementing a project/event for and with young people, using culture, 3) sustaining the project/event. They learnt that a good idea is not enough in itself; you need the tools and the competences to make it real, effective and successful.

Further sources of information
(websites of use for interested practitioners)
WEBSITE: http://cult-net.eu/
FACEBOOK: https://www.facebook.com/yedu.eu/?eid=ARCp_-_zA1Q75Set3bqwvGsrXL-QgYZ4sWxB70MDrXuh1-ayQ9Rzv3pJwWmIAacx7I-bmMpa9Hdmpp9R

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XVI) Sustainable neighbourhoods

Country
Spain

Name of the organisation
Fundación Tomillo

Type of organisation
nGO/ civil society organisation

Level
Sub-national (e.g. regions within country)

Population and problem addressed
Our pre-apprenticeship programme is oriented towards students between the ages of 14-18, who have been expelled from the ordinary education itinerary. When they come and start working with us, they feel emotionally shattered as a result of years of academic failure and demotivation.

Most of them are at risk of social exclusion. They come from underprivileged southern districts of Madrid, where economic issues, family structures and dynamics, or social circumstances make it difficult for them to gain access to opportunities, such as good jobs or excellent vocational training.

Purpose
As a second chance school, we focus both on personal and professional development.

Our projects are designed to depart from the personal sphere. This is evidently the most pressing matter when youngsters have been rejected from the educational system, normally accused of being the ultimate agents of their own failure. This is one of the main ideas we are fully committed to deconstructing.

Moreover, in vocational training, it is obviously common to work on the professional sphere, since the ultimate goal is to integrate underprivileged youngsters into the labour market. We train them as specialists in different vocations. Specialist teachers and corporate volunteers work together to widen their aspirations and generate opportunities and competitive leverage.

We also work on a third sphere, which implies higher expectations: the intention is to create socially aware citizens, as well as workers. We use Sustainable Development Goals as a tool to be integrated into the project.

Intervention
The project addresses different issues in its various phases:

- Self-awareness workshops. We design a series of workshops at the beginning of the year, aimed at transforming the young people's perception of themselves as useless adolescents or victims (a thought which, to some degree, they are perfectly entitled to) to individuals who are self-aware and comfortable with their strengths and areas needing improvement.

- Team-building activities. Once we have reinforced our students' own identities, we start working with them as a group. Cooperative work is absolutely crucial from a collective leadership perspective and is a key factor in this phase.
- High-skilled professional training. Together with specialised companies in the energy sector, we develop a shared curriculum that goes beyond government standards and raises student expectations. In particular we train them as specialists in energy efficiency.
- Social consultancy analysis. Students analyse social issues in their own communities that they can help to resolve, using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Since the SDGs provide a perfect framework to understand the social challenges that we face this century, we use them as an essential tool within the project.
- Service-learning project. Students design a solution that can address any of the SDGs or phases of the project. Service-learning methodology enables us to trigger and facilitate the process through meaningful learning.
- Households interventions. This is the final outcome of the project. Students go into community households to implement energy solutions that help families living in fuel poverty to save up to 20% on their electricity bills.

Outcomes

- The students are less prone to boredom, demotivation or disruptiveness.
- The project improves their self-perception and the perception that the community has of them.
- The school drop-out rate falls to 10% (the average drop-out rate at this level is about 40%).
- More than 80% of the students that participate in the project manage to graduate.
- 70% of students continue their studies or gain access to the labour market.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice

The most positive element of the project is the students' empowerment, which helps them change their mindsets. They improve their community, while changing themselves.

From our point of view, the project may be excessively guided. A service-learning project should have a performance margin defined by the students.

If another organisation were to carry out the project, the household interventions might be different: they could focus on energy efficiency, household automation, smart cities, social awareness, etc.

We develop six different competences: emotional intelligence, communication, critical thinking, cooperative work, initiative and citizenship.

Further sources of information
(websites of use for interested practitioners)
http://tomillo.org

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XVII) You are an entrepreneur

Country
Russian Federation

Name of the organisation
Institution established by the state in the Novosibirsk region: "Agency for youth initiatives and support."

Type of organisation
This is a regional institution, established by the state, and supported by the Department of Youth Policy at the Directorate of Youth Policy in the Novosibirsk region Ministry of Education.

Level
Sub-national (e. g. regions within country)

Population and problem addressed
The target groups of the programme are the following:

- High school students (mainly from specialised educational institutions)
- University students
- Beginner entrepreneurs

The problems addressed are:

- Not enough, or a low level of, undergraduate student awareness about entrepreneurship and possible opportunities to create their own businesses.
- Lack of awareness among young entrepreneurs about the possibilities of using state support for the development of their own businesses.
- Lack of effective professional communities of newcomers and experienced entrepreneurs in the Novosibirsk region.
- Lack of jobs for young people in the Novosibirsk region (and, as a consequence, a youth outflow, especially from rural areas).
- The setting and socio-economic context that the programme is implemented in.
- The financial and economic crisis and its consequences in Russia (2008—2010) and in Siberia as well, especially in the private sector of the economy. So the programme was started in 2010.
- High levels of unemployment (in particular, among young people).
- The federal and regional governments have started to take on the role of drivers of the Russian economy, as a powerful force to overcome the crisis.

Purpose
The purpose of the programme is to support youth entrepreneurship and promote entrepreneurship activities among young people. Motivating factors included:

- Popularisation of entrepreneurial activities among young people, creation of an entrepreneurial environment.
- Mass involvement of young people in business activities.

- Creation of a system of non-formal education to allow young people to acquire business skills.
- Creation of a professional and social partnership system at the local and regional level, to motivate and support young entrepreneurs and help them survive in a market economy.

Intervention

Every year, some of the programme's projects change. I've been involved as an expert on this programme since 2018, so I will give a detailed description of an intervention from that year. If needed for a future conference, I could also provide a complete analysis of the full nine years of the programme in the Novosibirsk region.

The most significant parts of the programme were the following actions:

- Selection of talented young people, including schoolchildren, students, beginners, and experienced entrepreneurs.
- Introduction of participants to the system of training courses available to them, for example: "You are an entrepreneur | Junior"; "You are an entrepreneur | College"; "You are an entrepreneur | Students"; "You are an entrepreneur | Classic"; "You are an entrepreneur | Plus"; "You are an entrepreneur | Online"; the acceleration programme "Initium" - guidance for young innovators". As well as this, our work includes some specific projects for our region, such as: "Mentoring for young entrepreneurs" (the main idea of this project is collaboration between newcomers and experienced entrepreneurs, to share successful experiences and help beginners resolve real issues. For example: how to create and support the image policy of your own business, how to find social, media and commercial partners for the development of your own business, staff management and motivation etc.).
- The training course: "Generate a business idea!" The "Business Consulting" project (which was provided mostly online, on the website of the "Agency for youth initiatives and support" (апминсо.рф)
- The informational project: "You are an entrepreneur/stories", organised in conjunction with the Development Committee of the Novosibirsk regional branch of "SUPPORT OF RUSSIA"
- In addition to training courses, the programme holds the municipal and regional stages of the "Young Entrepreneur of Russia" competition and the "Young Millionaires of Siberia" congress.In addition, a series of round tables, open lectures, and forums of an interdepartmental nature are held.

Outcomes

The most important outcomes of the programme are the following:

- Youth awareness of small business support and development programmes in the Novosibirsk region is expanded through information dissemination by print media, the Internet, television, outdoor advertising, conferences etc., creating the right conditions to obtain practical entrepreneurial skills. (Indicators include: the number of publications, reviews on social networks, number of new participants in projects and events; quantity of events; existence and availability of a system of non-formal education for young entrepreneurs). In 2018, there were more than 240 informational publications, and more than 4,000 young newcomers to the programme in the Novosibirsk region. We've held 46 events, 9 training courses (more than 300 educational hours) and have had 1,506 training course participants.

- The active involvement of young people in business activities, reducing social tensions (indicators include: the quantity of small business entities; new workplaces created by newcomers; sustainable motivation of young entrepreneurs to develop their businesses; the presence of successful businesses set up by young entrepreneurs). The number of small businesses grew, due to the number of enterprises created by young people in the Novosibirsk region in 2018: 151; young entrepreneurs systematically receive the support of senior colleagues, mentors and other professionals. In 2018, more than 100 experts were involved and there were 12 success stories (you can find them on the main page of our programme on the agency's website (written and video testimony, where young entrepreneurs talk about their businesses and the significance of the "You are an entrepreneur" programme for their success http://xn--80aqlffcr.xn--p1ai/). If needed, I can prepare some of that video in English for the presentation).
- The creation of a community of entrepreneurs in the Novosibirsk region. (Indicators include: positive results from the collaboration between beginners and experienced entrepreneurs; regular events, including those initiated by the entrepreneurs themselves; support and implementation coaching of young entrepreneurs; a growing network of partnerships and inter-agency cooperation in supporting young entrepreneurs; opportunity to participate in activities of similar communities in other regions of Russia). In 2018, we had more than 25 tutor/entrepreneur pairings, working on the basis of continuous cooperation; there were more than 740 consultations with existing entrepreneurs, both in person (individual or group consultations) and remotely (by email, telephone, Skype etc.). The 32 most active and successful entrepreneurs had the opportunity to participate in 'All Russian' forums, seminars, conferences and training events in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development and Labour in the Novosibirsk region, as well as other ministries and departments.

Main lessons learned/ implications for practice

The idea of system maintenance and support definitely works (informational, organisational, social partnership support). The mentoring idea also works very well, as does the combination of a multi-level training system with a joint mass events (it allows you to create continuity and form a community of entrepreneurs). The creation of new jobs is one of the most positive elements. The idea of hierarchical inclusion also works (local-regional-national levels of events) and was one of the many positive elements.

A certain difficulty was felt in the task of forming partnerships with institutions and public organisations involved in the development of entrepreneurship. Some plans for inter-departmental cooperation did not work, due to the imperfection of the legal framework of youth policy in Russia in general and in the Novosibirsk region in particular (for example age restrictions, inability to participate in large grant competitions without an NGO and others). For now, this programme does not work with self-employed youngsters…it is the great task for us for 2019. I have already taken the first step, creating and supervising a local project for this target group at a youth centre. It will be finished in June, so we will see.

Sometimes it was difficult to find and motivate mentors, as they worked pro bono. I think we need to create and provide some interesting study courses for them too, as well as a system of incentives. We should definitely survey the entrepreneurs, to find out what we need to do to improve some of the training courses. As well as this, I would ensure that the methods used for different groups were more clearly differentiated. I would add a separate training session, dedicated to grant-writing for active entrepreneurs.

What were the competences developed by the main actors in the project?

- Searching for and testing out promising ideas for their own businesses.
- Searching for social, commercial, media partners for the own businesses. Networking competences.
- Creating and promoting their organisation's image at the local, regional, national level.
- Resolving real cases.
- Business information support.
- Skills of self-presentation and interaction with partners, authorities.
- Basic soft skills of the 21st century.
- Budget planning, personnel management and others.

Further sources of information
(websites of use for interested practitioners)

ВК: vk.com/molpred_nso
Instagram: molpred_nso
Web site: апминсо.рф

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