



WORKING ON WORK

for all

A booklet on how to understand youth unemployment and use Youth in Action projects as tools to support the access of young people with fewer opportunities into the labour market.

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SALTO-YOUTH
INCLUSION
RESOURCE CENTRE



WORKING ON WORK

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SALTO-YOUTH STANDS FOR...

...‘Support and Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the **Youth in Action** programme’. The European Commission has created a network of eight SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the EU Youth in Action programme, which provides young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences.

SALTO’s aim is to **support the implementation of the European Youth in Action Programme with regard to** priorities such as Social Inclusion, Cultural Diversity and Participation. SALTO also supports co-operation with regions such as EuroMed, South-East Europe or Eastern Europe and The Caucasus and co-ordinates all training and co-operation activities, as well as information tools for National Agencies.

In these European priority areas, SALTO-YOUTH provides **resources, information and training** for National Agencies and European youth workers. Most of these resources are offered and disseminated at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net. Find online the European Training Calendar, the Toolbox for Training and Youth Work, the database of youth field trainers active at European level (Trainers Online for Youth or TOY), links to online resources and much, much more...

SALTO-YOUTH actively **co-operates** with other actors in the European youth field, among them the National Agencies and Co-ordinators of the Youth in Action Programme, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers and training organisers.

THE SALTO-YOUTH INCLUSION RESOURCE CENTRE WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/

The SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre (based in Belgium-Flanders) works together with the European Commission to support the inclusion of **young people with fewer opportunities** in the Youth in Action programme and through that to contribute to social cohesion in society at large. SALTO-Inclusion also supports the National Agencies and youth workers in their inclusion work by providing training, developing youth work methods, disseminating information via its newsletter, etc.

Besides this focus on inclusion, the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre also carries out **horizontal tasks** on behalf of the whole SALTO network, such as the Trainers Online for Youth (TOY) database, SALTO-YOUTH.net website developments, publications (for example Making Waves booklet about visibility, dissemination and exploitation of project results).

 For more information and resources, have a look at the Inclusion pages at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/

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UNEMPLOYMENT

**I DON'T HAVE A JOB
BUT I'M WORKING
ON IT**

Loesje

INTRO

The SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre's mission is to stimulate the **Inclusion of ALL young people** within the European Commission's Youth in Action programme and through that to contribute more widely to social cohesion in society.

The European Commission's **Inclusion Strategy** for the Youth in Action programme (2007-2013) lists a number of obstacles that young people can face, which prevent them from taking part in international mobility, Youth in Action projects and active participation in society at large. These can include:

- **Social obstacles:** discrimination, limited social skills, anti-social behaviour, (ex-)offending background, parenthood at an early age etc.
- **Economic obstacles:** low standard of living, low income, dependency on social welfare, (long-term) unemployment, homelessness, debts, etc.
- **Disabilities:** mental, physical, sensory or other.
- **Educational challenges:** learning difficulties, early school-leaving or leaving with low or no qualifications etc.
- **Cultural differences:** immigration or refugee backgrounds, belonging to national or ethnic minorities, challenges related to linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion etc.
- **Health problems:** chronic health problems, severe illnesses, psychiatric conditions, mental health problems, etc.
- **Geographical obstacles:** living in remote rural or hilly areas, small islands or peripheral regions, urban problem zones, less serviced areas, etc.

👉 Find the **European Commission's Youth in Action Inclusion Strategy** at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/InclusionStrategy/

In line with the European inclusion strategy, SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre provides resources (training tools, publications, information) for people and organisations supporting young people with fewer opportunities (inclusion workers, National Agencies etc) and provides opportunities for capability and competence building through exchange and reflection on practices as well as training.

Over the years, SALTO Inclusion has focused on various target groups, bringing together youth workers who work with groups of young people dealing with specific obstacles, such as disabilities, gay/lesbian/bisexual orientation, young ex-offenders, young people from rural and geographically isolated areas as well as challenging urban settings, young ethnic minority women etc. The know-how on these topics has been compiled for respective practical **Inclusion FOR ALL publications**, which can be all found at: <http://www.salto-youth.net/inclusionforall/>

In the course of its mission, SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre is dedicated to taking action to pave the way for more young people with fewer opportunities to become involved in the Youth in Action programme.

There are obviously many different ways to look at unemployment and different underlying theories, including perspectives of economy and sociology which help to understand the phenomenon of unemployment in society, as well as those more in the area of social psychology, focusing on the issues of attitude and behaviour of people who face unemployment and thus making more evident the so-called individual perspective on unemployment.

In its action plan, SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre has decided to approach the issue of unemployment through the perspective of possible contribution and additional value, which non-formal learning and the Youth in Action programme can more specifically bring to young people who face unemployment.

SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre, in co-operation with the National Agency of Youth In Action programme in Portugal, organised an international training course “Unemployment: I don’t have a job but I’m working on it” which took place in Guimarães, Portugal, in June 2009 (<http://www.salto-youth.net/tcunemployment>).

This training focused on developing youth workers’ skills to use the Youth in Action programme as a tool to enable better access to the labour market through developing the key competences of youth.

The idea of the course was driven by the fact that young people with fewer opportunities (and especially those who left their studies at an early age) often lack the necessary competences and experiences in order to enter or stay in the labour market. At the same time, non-formal learning which takes place within the frame-work of youth projects (in the Youth In Action programme and beyond) provides very valuable learning experiences for young people, e.g. communication and the ability to work in teams, developing the habit of staying involved in an activity on a regular basis or at least for some time, taking responsibility etc.

Also, there are different tools developed within the frame-work of the European youth programme to support the recognition and transfer of these learning experiences to young people's further studies or the labour market, Youthpass being the main instrument in this respect.

Unlike previous courses, when dealing with the complex phenomenon of unemployment, the course and this publication do not take the "target group approach". It would be indeed extremely difficult to clearly identify and characterise the target group of "unemployed youth". Unemployment, unfortunately, affects young people from different backgrounds, at different moments of their lives and in different circumstances. Additionally, talking about "unemployed youth" somehow contributes to stigmatising this group of people.

However, this "phenomenon approach" is not to neglect the fact brought up by many research findings that unemployment affects some young people more, possibly due to the fact that they come from a minority background, people with disabilities, with fewer educational opportunities.... In this light, the more we know about the youth population as such – their situation, interests, the challenges they face etc. - the better it helps us to direct relevant policies and youth work practice to respond to the "real" needs of young people. In this respect, youth research and specifically the initiative of the European Commission to commence production of European Youth Reports (the first published in 2009) is of great importance. However, in the current publication we have decided not to focus on the statistical – as rapidly changing - point of view on youth unemployment, hoping that it would still be considered in the preparation of further actions, to guarantee an evidence-based approach.

We hope that exploring "youth unemployment" as a complex phenomenon will allow us to understand it better, to find more efficient strategies to fight against it and to use –together with other tools- the Youth in Action Programme to improve the access of young people with fewer opportunities to the labour market. In any case, youth employment together with social inclusion are highlighted as issues of the European youth strategy, as well as continuing to be priority fields for SALTO Inclusion in coming years.

The title of this publication is "Working on Work". All through its activities in this field, SALTO Inclusion has also used the slogan "I don't have a job but I'm working on it" which originates from co-operation with Loesje International. Both the title of the publication, as well as this slogan, refer to the pro-active and practice-oriented approach in the fight against youth unemployment that we have tried to keep through SALTO Inclusion activities in these fields and also throughout this publication.

**51% OF THE
WORKING PEOPLE
IS
CALCULATING
THE OTHER HALF**

Loesje

SETTING THE WORK SCENE: youth unemployment?

THE MACRO- AND MICRO-LEVEL PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is a complex phenomenon of present-day societies. Analysing its causes as such is a very challenging exercise for economists, sociologies, educationalists, researchers and other experts. The causes are multiple, inter-related, change very quickly with time and depend a lot on the particular context.

It would be therefore pretentious to try to collect them in some pages. But at the same time it is necessary to –at least- briefly explore some of the most important causes of youth unemployment before looking for ways to fight against it.

In light of the complexity of the causes of unemployment, these are often classified in two main groups:

- the structural ones which are related to the economic system and the labour market
- the personal ones related to the individual's skills and characteristics which influence access to the labour market.

These are the so-called macro- and the micro-levels of unemployment – and are one possible way of looking at it.

STRUCTURAL FACTORS

Analysing unemployment among youth attempts to find out why the rate of youth unemployment is higher than the average. The greater rate of youth unemployment is true for all countries and all economic sectors (industry, services, agriculture...) across Europe.

At a macro level, studies (O'Higgins 1997 etc) show that youth unemployment varies more in response to variations in economic conditions than adult unemployment, increasing more in recessions and recovering more quickly during booms.

One way of looking at youth unemployment is to consider the aggregate demand, youth wages and the size of the youth labour force as three main determinants of youth unemployment (ibid.)

The fluctuations in the labour aggregate demand affect young people disproportionately because it often “costs less” to fire young people than adults, because young people are not as well protected by employment legislation and because they are more open to quitting or changing their job, even in periods of recession. Another reason is that very often companies’ first reaction to a recession is to stop hiring new workers: considering later the possibility of firing the older workers.

The amount of young people looking for a job (due to the percentage of the youth population or due to the lack of further educational opportunities etc) does play a role in the level of youth unemployment. This factor of youth unemployment (the size of the youth labour force) becomes more important in combination with the fluctuations of the aggregate demand. This means that a strong decrease in the aggregate demand combined with a large youth labour force causes a very high rate of youth unemployment as we unfortunately see in many countries.

Contrary to what some policies propose for reducing youth unemployment, studies[†] show that there is no strong evidence that youth unemployment rates are closely related to youth/adult relative wage rates. In other words, lower salaries for young people -from the simple the fact of being young- do not play a role in decreasing youth unemployment.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

After analysing the structural causes and tendencies of youth unemployment, it is also necessary to look at the micro level, at which the characteristics of individuals affect their chances of finding a job. Those are the so called “individual factors” of youth unemployment.

GENDER

Women face higher youth (and adult) unemployment rates. This is a general tendency in Europe, although it varies considerably from country to country.

The number of women –and young women- working has grown in recent years, but the female labour force (meaning women willing to work) has grown as well. This together with the greater substitutability between older and younger women (due to the fact that women tend to be employed in less skilled work than men) explains how the female unemployment rate continues to be considerably higher than the average.

SKILLS AND EDUCATION LEVELS

Another features of youth unemployment is variation in relation to the educational levels of individuals, which is clearly one of the specific focuses of those working with European youth and in non-formal educational fields. As a general tendency, higher levels of (formal) education are correlated with lower unemployment rates. In general, young people who leave school early are twice as likely to become unemployed than those who complete their education (European Youth Forum Policy Paper on Early Education Leaving, 2008). In addition, for example, in his study Nickell (1996b) has noted that in OECD countries, the difference between the unemployment rates and the wages of those with low levels of education relative to those with higher levels of education has tended to widen over the last twenty years. This means that education is increasingly a key factor and the situation of unskilled workers has been getting progressively worse over the last twenty years.

This tendency is explained by the evolution of the model of economic development in Europe: the increasing dependence on products and services, with the incorporated additional value of quality, design and technology.

However, specially in the situation of an economic crisis, it is observed in many European countries that unemployment is remarkably affecting young people with various levels of formal education (for example, the report of Youth In Action Inclusion Colleague Support Group, February 2008).

Some studies (for example Byambadorj, 2007) have also identified that the main cause of youth unemployment is not the lack of education but the lack of experience and mismatching of qualifications to the labour market.

For this reason, when speaking of unemployment and ways to work on it, the competences, together with the level of formal education which can be developed through non-formal learning, remain an important issue.

REGIONAL ASPECTS OF THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

In every country in Europe there are regional disparities in terms of unemployment. Between metropolitan, rural, coastal, inland areas and/or east-west, north-south, and/or continental regions – islands... Just to take some examples, some well known regional disparities are between the south and north of Italy (very high unemployment in the south in comparison with the north) and between the east and west of Germany (very high unemployment in the east in comparison with the west).

The youth unemployment rates are highly correlated with regional variations within countries. Even more, the regional disparities in youth unemployment are even higher than in adult unemployment.

The reasons for this wellknown tendency vary from region to region but in general better skilled young people migrate to the more economically developed regions and cities. The least developed regions cannot create enough jobs and training opportunities for young people. This leads to a vicious circle of fewer opportunities and limited future perspectives which particularly affect young people.

There are not so many studies which have focused on youth unemployment from the perspective of differences between urban and rural contexts. However, some studies have shown that, even if the rural labour markets are characterised by low skilled and insecure employment, long-term youth unemployment tends to be less common in rural than in urban areas (for example Cartmel and Furlong, Youth unemployment in rural areas, 2000).

It is also evident that many challenges which are associated with unemployment and which young people face, are similar both in urban and rural contexts but the latter brings additional difficulties linked to geographical isolation and the narrow range of employment and training opportunities available. Nevertheless, one circumstance which is believed to have positive effects insofar as moving from unemployment to employment in rural settings is concerned is connection to local informal networks (ibid).

ETHNIC ORIGINS AND IMMIGRATION BACKGROUND

Different ethnic origins occur all around the world, as well as in Europe, and are an important factor when talking about youth unemployment. As a general tendency, immigrants have a higher incidence of unemployment than the native-borns (OECD forum on Migration, Employment and Integration, 2009). The average unemployment rate of all ethnic minorities in the UK - for example - is more than double that of the “whites”. And this, despite the fact that ethnic minorities tend to have higher participation rates in education.²

The research “Unemployment and job seeking: specific groups and their experiences” by Jules Shropshire, Rebecca Warton and Robert Walker Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University shows that ethnic minorities experienced greater difficulties when trying to find and retain work than did other population groups. The median length of unemployment experienced by those from ethnic minorities was, at eight months, twice that for other respondents. The problems ethnic minorities had in moving into work may have been compounded by their unfamiliarity with the legalities around registering as unemployed and being able to participate in activities they believed would improve their job prospects.

Another example is from the Netherlands. The publication “High unemployment among ethnic minorities”³ by the Social and Cultural Planning Office highlights the high unemployment rate among Turks, Moroccans, Surinamers and Antilleans and the fact that this has increased substantially during recent years. The position of immigrant youth - even of the second generation - is particularly disadvantaged in terms of accessing and keeping their jobs (ibid).

DISABILITIES

Another group in the labour market facing particular difficulties are those with disabilities. Numerous studies (Reguera 1995 and Sly et Al.1995) have noted both the lower rates of labour force participation and higher unemployment rates.

The differential in labour market success between people without and with disabilities tends to increase with age. As a very general trend, young people with disabilities have lower unemployment rates than older people with disabilities. In part this may be due to the tendency of disabilities to increase in severity with time, but also to the persistent effects of an early lack of success in the labour market.⁴

The elaborations above refer to some of the key factors, and it goes without saying that, depending on the context, there could be other aspects determining the individuals' perspectives for (un-)employment.

Factors of youth unemployment as expressed by participants of SALTO Training Course “I don’t have a job but I’m working on it”, June 2009 in Portugal-

As preparation for the Training Course, participants were asked to do a small research project to identify the factors of youth unemployment in their countries. Together with some general statistical data they analysed the factors causing youth unemployment based on their own work experience. They did an “action oriented” analysis, trying to distinguish between factors they could influence and those they couldn’t.



Factors they felt they couldn’t influence included, for example, the economic collapse, characteristics of the education system, the human resources policies of companies, the globalisation process, market regulations...

They considered that they could influence factors such as the development of skills, non-formal educational possibilities, self-generation of jobs, support mechanisms for unemployed young people, fighting against several forms of discrimination...

In general, they think that they can't really influence socio-economic causes, while they can do much more on the personal level. In this way, the main thrusts of participants' analysis were also very similar to the main findings from various studies.

At the macro level, on the causes of youth unemployment, they added the existence of "black markets," which particularly affect young people, and the lack of co-ordination between the needs of the labour market and vocational training.

At the micro- or personal level, they were more specific on the factors influencing skills and educational levels. They underlined the importance of "competences" (understood as the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes) in addition to (just) knowledge or (just) skills enabling access to jobs. Besides the skills to be acquired in the formal educational system, they underlined the importance of social competences, entrepreneurship and communication competences.

Participants identified another obstacle for accessing the labour market: religious discrimination. In some cases it might be equivalent to ethnic origin but they perceived that religion was another and differentiated factor which should also be considered in some contexts.

¹ Abowd, J., Kramarz, F., Lemieux, T. & Margolis, D. 1996. "Minimum Wages and Youth Employment in France and the United States," paper presented at the NBER Conference on Youth Unemployment and Employment in Advanced Countries, Winston-Salem, December 12-14. (see p 10)

² The rates of participation in education for 16-24 year olds in Spring 1996 was 57% for all ethnic minorities as against 41% for "whites" (UK Department for Education and Employment, 1996). To some extent, of course, this could be attributed to the poorer labour market prospects for youths from ethnic minorities who do decide to enter the labour market and has tended to remain a feature of the British labour market since at least the 1980s (O'Higgins, 1992). (see p 13)

³ "High unemployment among ethnic minorities" Social and Cultural Planning Office J. Dagevos (17th Jan 2006 ISBN: 90-377-0266-x) http://www.eukn.org/eukn/themes/Urban_Policy/Economy_knowledge_and_employment/Urban_economy/Employment/Unemployment/unemployment-ethnic-minorities_1053.html (see p 13)

⁴ See, for example, Reguera (1995) and Sly et al. (1995). (see p 13)

DUE TO THE CRISIS

WORKING CLASS

**IS BECOMING AN
EXCLUSIVE TITLE**

Loesje

UNEMPLOYMENT and social exclusion

The term “social exclusion” has been growing in importance as a way to understand the challenges faced by modern societies and the lack of cohesion in this respect. In the context of the current publication, it is also interesting to look at unemployment from the perspective of how it is linked to social exclusion, or at least to try to gather some possible viewpoints on it.

Social exclusion is far broader than income poverty and is understood as a dynamic, multidimensional process which includes social and economic aspects of living, subjective experiences and objective situations, and which depends upon available personal and social resources (Kieselbach 2000). According to Kieselbach, social exclusion refers to the employment crises, which in particular, affect low qualified workers with the consequence that more and more people cannot meet social standards for material and social well-being (ibid.).

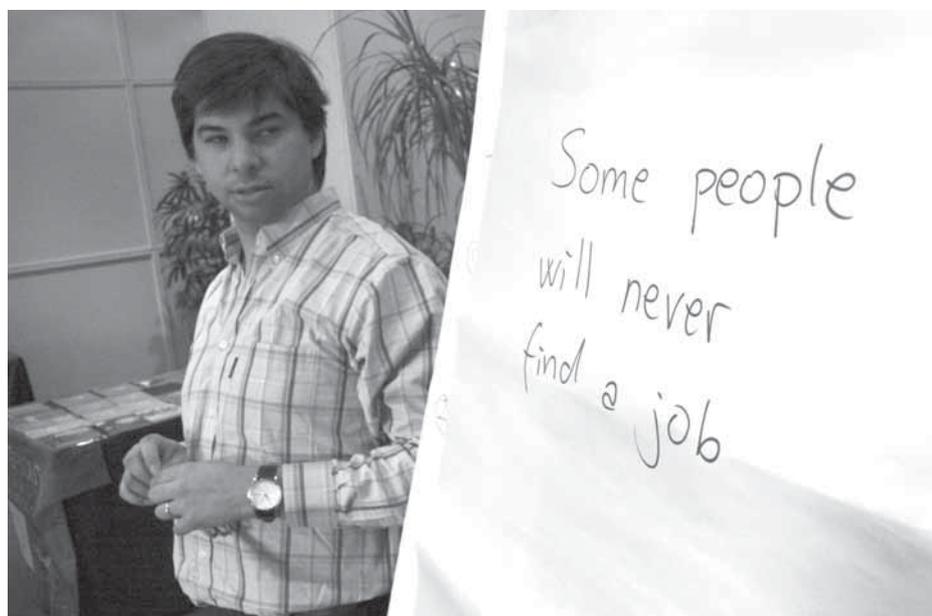
As mentioned in the study “Youth Unemployment situation in Sweden” (Purvee Byambadorj, referring to Kieselbach)⁵, six dimensions of social exclusion can be described as (being linked to unemployment):

- Exclusion from the labour market presents external barriers to entering or re-entering the labour market.
- Economic exclusion refers to poverty and includes financial dependency upon the welfare state or a socially unacceptable income, and the loss of ability of individuals to financially support themselves or their families.
- Institutional exclusion can align with that of the educational system, institutions dealing with unemployment and poverty, and public and private service institutions.
- Exclusion through social isolation describes either a withdrawal of the social network or one’s own withdrawal which can lead to a reduction of contact to only a specific group of people or even a general isolation of the affected person.
- Cultural exclusion relates to inability to live according to socially accepted norms and values with the possible consequence of identification with non-standard norms and behaviours.
- Spatial exclusion describes the spatial concentration of persons with limited financial resources, coming from similar social and cultural backgrounds and experiencing feelings of isolation due to a lack of infrastructure in their own residential area (ibid).

As we see, unemployment (particularly long-term unemployment) is one of the causes of social exclusion. For many young people unemployment implies lack of opportunities, lack of future perspectives, limited personal development, low self-esteem, the impossibility of becoming autonomous...

Unemployment affects young people from a variety of backgrounds, at different times of their lives and in various circumstances. Recognising this diversity of unemployment shouldn't divert attention from the general thrusts, target groups and factors explored in the previous section.

Unemployment is a social problem that everybody may face. But when it affects young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, their situation is harder due to the lack of support. Those young people become unemployed more easily and unemployment can be the starting point of a "negative snowball effect". Then, they face problems of different kinds which come together in a short period of time and/or accumulate in other ways.



Taking into account this "inter-linked" aspect of obstacles faced by individuals, the so-called multi-problem situation⁶ is one of the useful approaches when exploring the social exclusion of young people. Unemployment is often the main cause of social exclusion in a multi-problem situation. If somebody loses his/her job, in a very short time he/she might lose competences and social contacts... to look at it like this may be in a way too simplified and generalised, but it is still largely based on what we often see in reality. It's like a vicious circle which is hard to break.

Apart from being permanently or long-term unemployed, socially excluded young people might face one or several of the following situations:

- Frequent change of work-environment, difficulty in keeping their jobs
- Chronic mental or physical illness or disability
- Truancy, unfinished education, lack of professional qualifications or other problems at school
- Addictions to drugs, alcohol, behaviour or relationship dependencies, “risky” lifestyle
- Disadvantaged family background, conflicts between generations, lack of support from the family, problematical relationship with parents etc
- Disadvantaged neighbourhood
- Previous police record, criminal background
- ...

A particularly difficult situation is when unemployment (and related to that also poverty) affects one generation after another – there are people who inherit poverty and unemployment from generation to generation (the so-called generational poverty).

In that case, the young people also often lack any positive examples of how to deal with it or break out of it. Not to speak that in this context, it is important to look not only at the issue of stigmatization but also at self-stigmatization.

Also, too often the responsibility in these situations is put on people when in fact one could argue that the most barriers are due to the failures or gaps in the “system”. Not to mention that these families and social settings are not easily reached by professional social services – which does not mean that the youth field, which is often more flexible and tries to use innovative approaches, could not be successful in reaching out to young people from these settings!

But before we explore some more practical ways of working on unemployment, we will look at it in the light of another very interesting dimension, which hopefully helps us to put all of the issue of youth unemployment into an even more complete perspective – the dimension of European youth policy.

⁵<http://gupea.ub.gu.se/dspace/bitstream/2077/4603/2/IMSSW%20degree%20report%20Byambadorj-%2after%20seminar.pdf> (see p 17)

⁶ The idea of the Multiproblem and some of the methods come from Insoo Kim Berg, the founder of the Milwaukee Brief Family Therapy Center. In: Family preservation – a Brief Therapy workbook, 1991. (see p 18)

M. You B. N. B.

THE NEW YORK COMPLIMENT CAMPAIGN

THE NEW YORK COMPLIMENT CAMPAIGN

**WORK IS
HARD
TO GET
SO
LET'S HAVE
HOLIDAYS**

Loesje

Keeping them quiet during the night

Youth unemployment IN THE POLICY AGENDA

Many practitioners would probably demonstrate that they are not too interested in the policy dimension - let alone on European level - since this seems to be something which is too “far away”, difficult to reach and does not relate to their every-day practice. However, the question is probably more about how much we know of what is going on, as a first step in attempting to create better synergies between policy and practice.

The current chapter aims exactly to do that: to try to introduce some of the most important benchmarks from the European youth policy field over the past years as a basis for further, more practically-minded approaches on how to turn these political ambitions of combating youth unemployment into practical actions in the youth field.

After all, when we take a pure dictionary perspective to the term “policy”, it is described as:
...a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual (Thesaurus)

Or

...as a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes (Wikipedia).

That is not at all so different from how we generally tend to understand why or how we work in the youth field, is it? And if the policy is a plan of action to achieve certain results in which a wide variety of actors can play a role, it might as well be any of us.

Throughout the past years, the issue of social and occupational integration of young people has gradually gained importance on the agenda of the European youth policy framework, which in its more formalised approach dates back to the end of 1990's, with the start of consultations for the White Paper on Youth “A new impetus for European youth”.

Among other matters, the White Paper is taken up with Labour the importance of employment as a means of social integration and emphasises the importance of employment supporting individual pathways between the worlds of learning and work for young people in order to support inclusive societies. With respect to the prevention of long-term unemployment among young people, the White Paper refers to the European Employment Strategy, giving importance to individual counselling, improved education and training schemes, reducing the number of young people who leave education and training early, as well as better instructions and the availability of new technologies (ibid, pg. 20).

Regarding the White Paper as a kind of declaration of intention in which the European Commission committed itself to a clear policy and accompanying actions, it was then continued with follow-up processes in the Member States. Youth employment and social inclusion continued to be covered by the process of “mainstreaming” (which could be described in short as the co-ordination of different policies into an integrated approach) until the adoption of the European Youth Pact as part of the Lisbon Strategy (2005). The latter put an ever clearer focus on employment and social inclusion as one of the three priority areas for European youth policy making, proposing that the following measures should be implemented to bring about employment, integration and advancement of youth:

- creation of inclusive labour markets for job-seekers and young people who face disadvantages;
- promotion of a life-cycle approach to work, including renewed efforts to build employment pathways for young people and reduce youth unemployment;
- improvement in the matching of labour market needs and adjustment of education and training systems in response to new skills requirements;
- expansion of investment in human capital.

Those may all indeed sound like big ideals. However, it is important to understand that youth (un-)employment, being a very complex phenomenon, certainly requires a strong political agenda and coherence between different policies and measures. In this light it is no wonder that, through the years and initiatives described above, the priority has been also to seek better synergies with other key initiatives from the European policy field (and beyond the immediate area of the youth field) – European Employment Strategy, the Social Inclusion Process, the Education and Training and Lifelong Learning Strategy...

In 2007 the European Commission published its communication “Towards the full participation of youth in education, employment and society” which brought forward the idea of youth unemployment as a wasted resource and stated the need for actions by the European Commission, such as better monitoring of youth employment in member states and promotion of best practices, and also called on countries to act, and amongst other things, to make better use of national policies and European funds such as The European Social Fund, The Regional Development Fund, The Cohesion Fund etc.

While we have already discussed the White Paper and The European Youth Pact, and their role in the so-called mainstreaming process, another initiative – The **EU Strategy on Youth “Youth - Investing and Empowering”** (2009)- is attempting to respond to the challenges identified for young people in the Renewed Social Agenda: Opportunities, Access and Solidarity in 21st Century Europe (2008).



The strategy “Youth - Investing and Empowering” aims to present a cross-sectoral approach with perspectives for short- and long-term actions in the key policy areas which affect young people in Europe, employment and social inclusion among them. In addition, references are made to several other areas, which have been seen as significant ones in relation to youth unemployment - for example education and health - as also discussed in previous chapters of this publication.

While aiming to create more opportunities for youth in education and employment, together with improving access and participation of all young people and fostering solidarity between youth and society, the strategy states that *“Promoting labour market access and quality employment has been a key priority of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs and the European Youth Pact. This momentum is to be maintained. The impact of the financial and economic crisis on labour markets adds urgency to addressing youth employment for both the short- and long-term. The free movement of labour, especially relevant for young people at the start of their careers, is a cornerstone of the Single Market.”*

In fighting against unemployment, the strategy underlines the importance of good co-ordination between the Member States and the EU in order to facilitate transitions from school to work or unemployment to work, as well as increasing and improving investments in providing the right skills for those jobs in demand on the labour market, with better matching in the short term and better anticipation in the longer term of the skills needed.

In the area of employment and in terms of concrete actions within their respective spheres of competence, the Member States and Commission are called to:

- Ensure that youth employment remains a priority;
- Promote cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for young people, including early familiarisation of young people to the world of work;
- Develop youth work as a resource to support youth employability;
- Encourage co-operation between employment and youth policy makers and encourage youth involvement in employment policy;
- Ensure that the EU funds available for promoting youth employment, in particular the European Social Fund, are effectively used;
- Develop short-term measures in the recovery plans to stimulate youth employment as well as structural measures in favour of youth;
- Develop career guidance and counselling services;

- Lower barriers to the free movement of labour across the EU;
- Promote quality internships within education and training and/or employment schemes;
- Improve childcare so as to help reconciliation between the professional and private lives of young adults.

In the following paragraphs, we will look at some other areas tackled in the strategy - social inclusion; education; creativity and entrepreneurship - since they are very closely related to the (un)employment perspectives of youth and specifically to young people with fewer opportunities.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The EU youth strategy recognises that poverty and social exclusion are complex phenomena which require extra mobilisation effort and aims to break the inter-generational transmission of exclusion among the disadvantaged youth population by mobilising all actors, who have a stake in the lives of young people- (youth and social workers, parents, teachers etc.). The latter is a strategy, fully in coherence with the understandings, tackled also in the current publication, which is one of the approaches to breaking the so-called multi-problem situations.

The strategy also proposes certain actions for Member States including the European Commission itself, such as optimised use of EU Funds and experimental programmes to support social integration; addressing homelessness, housing and financial exclusion; promoting access to quality services of transport, e-inclusion, health, social services, as well as enhancing the effectiveness of social inclusion policies, by, amongst other things, involving youth.

EDUCATION

In the field of education –related very directly to employability and job opportunities- the importance and complementary roles of formal and non-formal education are underlined. The three main working areas are the promotion of a life-long learning strategy, fostering of learning mobility and fighting against early school leaving. Among other things, the strategy proposes to:

- develop non-formal learning as one of the measures to address early school leaving;
- promote learning mobility for all young people; make available good quality guidance and counselling services;
- further develop Europass (especially the self-assessment functions of it) and provide certificates such as Youthpass.

CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The strategy states that young people should be encouraged to think and act innovatively and sees entrepreneurship education as a tool for economic growth and new jobs, as well as a source for new skills, civic participation, autonomy and self-esteem. All these are certainly important factors for better employment perspectives but not only that, for they are first of all important for individual well-being and self-realisation. In the field of Creativity and Entrepreneurship, the identified working areas are the promotion of creative skills, fostering cultural expression and giving support to the development of talents. Some of the specific actions proposed are to:

- develop start-up funds and encourage the recognition of junior enterprises;
- widen access to and the contribution of new technologies, as well as further promoting the contribution of youth-work to creativity and entrepreneurship of young people.

In addition, the European youth strategy emphasises professionalisation and recognition of youth work. In relation to the youth (un-)employment issue, it could first of all mean the need to guarantee that people active in the youth field have the relevant competences to work on this very important issue, as well as ensuring the existence of opportunities to further develop these competences. In wider terms, it also voices the viewpoint that the youth field can bring an important contribution to the cross-sectoral approach to combating challenges which the youth population is facing, unemployment being one of them.

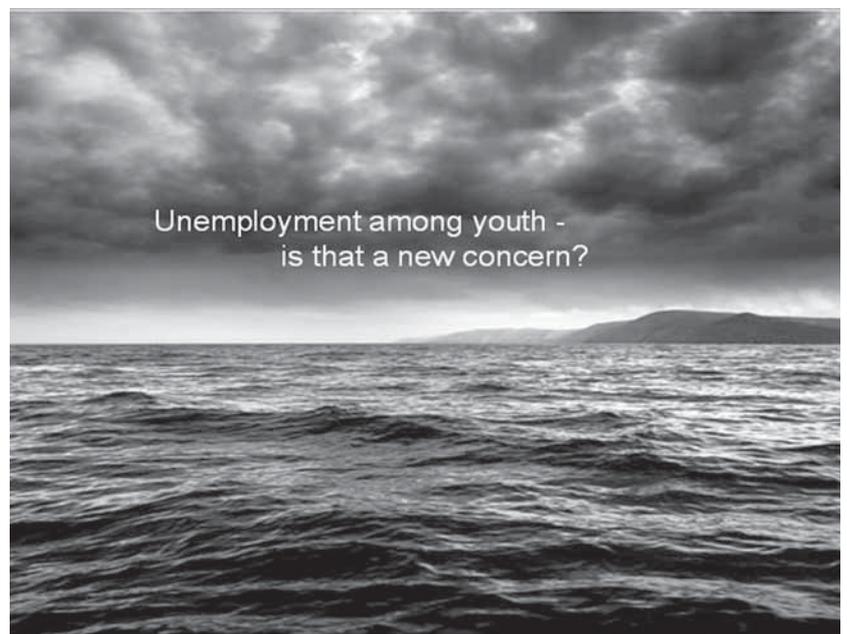
If these are the political ambitions set out at the European level for the youth field till 2018, where do you see your and your organisation's role? How does that all comply with your own strategies and action plans?

After 2010, an amended Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs will focus on overcoming the recession and transforming the European Union into a more sustainable, greener and more innovative economy. Paving the way for this, the communication "New skills for new jobs" has been launched by the European Commission at the end of 2008 and, according to that, soft skills, such as problem-solving, analytical, self-management and communication skills, language skills, digital competences and the ability to work in a team are becoming more important. All these have obviously great relevance to competence development through non-formal learning in the youth field.

The development and upgrading of skills is seen as the basis for more employment, which is also in the „Political Guidelines for the next Commission“, by Jose Manuel Barroso (2009). In this, fighting unemployment and reinforcing social cohesion is identified as one of the five key challenges confronting Europe currently. Furthermore, with the proposal for the initiative „Youth on the Move“ aiming to guarantee that by 2020 all young people in Europe have the opportunity to spend a part of their educational journey in another member state, it aims to support intercultural learning and intercultural competences (ibid, 32).

Even though the focus of this chapter has been on the policies of the European Union and European Commission, it is evident that there are many other important actors at the European level in this respect.

The Council of Europe has identified access to paid work as one of the key components of youth policy in order to create conditions for young people to learn and develop relevant competences to play a full part in the labour market (Denstad 2009, 29).



The European Youth Forum has put forward several documents such as the Policy Paper on Youth Employment (2008) or the Policy Paper on Early Education Leaving (2008). Both of these institutions, as well as many other organisations at European level, have organised international initiatives devoted to the topic of youth unemployment, its relation to social exclusion etc.

And these have lots of connections to and impacts on national, regional or sometimes even local level policies which are probably closer to practical youth work with young people who face unemployment.

Some critical reflections on European Youth Policy as expressed by the participants of SALTO Training Course “I don’t have a job but I’m working on it”, June 2009, Portugal

As we see, the proposed working areas and specific actions cover all together a quite complete spectrum of measures to overcome youth unemployment.

However, one could and probably should critically look at these political developments in relation to youth unemployment, particularly when it comes to their implementation and specific results. So, it was also one of the ideas of the training course that participants would get to know in detail, and critically reflect upon, the previously described developments on European Youth Policy.

The discussions focused on how to influence the development of those youth policies: at local level, at national level and even at European level. Many different ways of influencing policy making were identified, making through or in cooperation with national youth councils, local authorities etc. Because, first of all, youth policies are the responsibility of the member states and as such, this is also the main level at which political ambitions become more concrete.

Participants expressed the need for being patient and persistent because the results of political work take time. The ultimate common aim of influencing political processes would be to achieve equal employment opportunities for all young people.

The fact that youth unemployment is so prevalent in the youth policy developments certainly adds impetus to the establishment of concrete measures and programmes.

Participants concluded that political developments are never as such “the solution” but -as is the case for youth unemployment- they can contribute to create the necessary conditions for it.



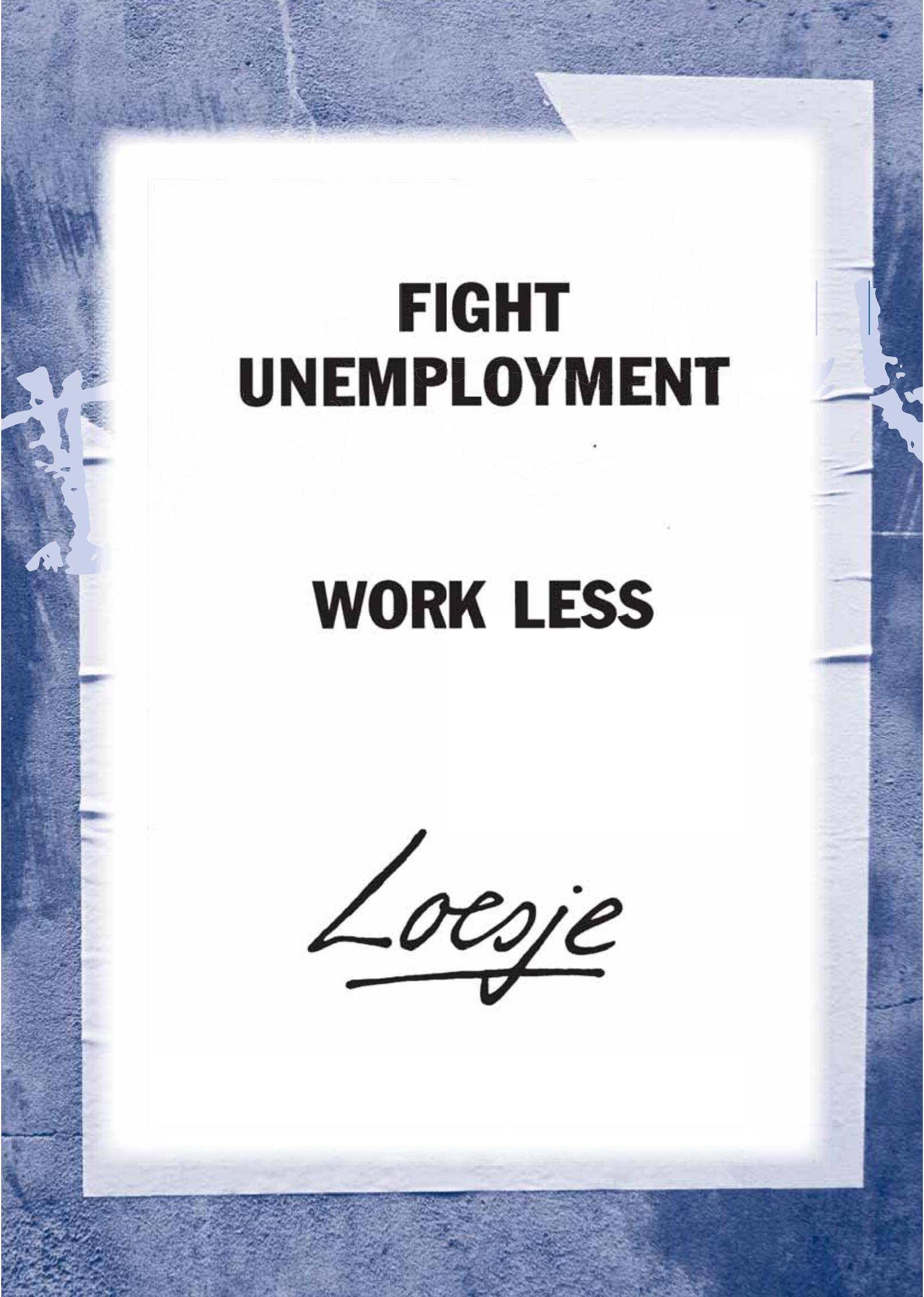
A PRACTICAL TIP:

Why not reflect on the links between policy and practice?

As part of the strategy creation for your own organisation, you might find it useful to reflect on the policy dimension from your perspective, taking into account the local, national and European levels:

- If, where and how do you see the links with the work you do on youth unemployment?
- What kind of opportunities do you see for your practical work, created by the policy developments?
- Where do you see shortcomings? What seems to be missing?
- Is this something which needs to be addressed and how could you play a role in that?

For example, in the European Youth in Action programme within the framework of action 5, there are opportunities to organise trans-national and national youth seminars, bringing together young people and youth policy makers. Since these meetings are aimed at promoting the exchange of good practice and ideas in relation to important topics in the field of European youth policy and its priority themes, they also provide great opportunities for further discussion on the topic of youth (un-)employment. See more about youth seminars in the later chapter about the Youth In Action programme.



**FIGHT
UNEMPLOYMENT**

WORK LESS

Loesje

Youth unemployment

HOW TO BREAK IT?

SOME GENERAL APPROACHES

People cope with unemployment in many different ways. Julkunen argues that “coping has a large scope, related to gender, age, qualifications, one’s financial situation, level of activity and social network” (Julkunen, 2001). Unemployment seems to be a very complex and dynamic situation, which is coped with in different ways, depending on the resources, social capital, and orientation of the individual. In terms of unemployment, coping is more or less a problem-solving strategy.

In her study Julkunen found that the psychological impact of unemployment relates to how unemployed people use their time; those who cope best are engaged in purposeful activity and maintain regular contact with people outside the “nuclear” family. Sports associations may well reduce the chance of having poorer mental health during unemployment. Further, adopting an alternative role may also serve as a defence against negative experience. Women generally tend to adjust better than men to the effects of unemployment since women tend to have more extensive social networks offering support and they maintain their level of social activity better when unemployed (Julkunen, 2001).

The longer an individual is out of employment, the more likely they will suffer from psychological problems combined with loss of self-confidence. Ritchie found that people unemployed more than three months start to experience some of these problems (Ritchie & Bourne, 2005).

Unfortunately, many unemployed people tend to have friends who are also unemployed, and they have weaker social support systems to help with the psychological and material problems.

As we see, youth unemployment is a serious and continuous challenge. So, as with the phenomenon of unemployment, the response to it should be complex: considering different dimensions (economic, social, political, educational...), co-operating with numerous partners and at different levels (local, national and European) etc.

Without simplifying them or artificially trying to classify them, we have grouped the responses to youth unemployment around three key ideas:

- positive thinking
- empowering young jobseekers
- fighting against social exclusion

It goes without saying that this is just one of the possible approaches and so many other ways exist. This way we also hope that this serves as an inspiration for professionals and organisations to develop their own responses and for the European youth field to find further ways to collect and disseminate these practices.

POSITIVE THINKING

Despite the complexity and difficulty of fighting youth unemployment or better said, precisely due to this difficulty, it is necessary to deal with it with positive thinking. This would be the first lesson gained with experience.

This positive thinking starts by changing the vocabulary and the mental attitude when dealing with unemployment, for example talking about “young jobseekers” instead of “young unemployed”, focusing on resources and capacities rather than lacks etc.

Positive thinking also implies the need to analyse the situation of being unemployed, not just in negative terms but also understanding the potential positive impact that it might have in –at least- some aspects of life. According to the famous quote of Harry S. Truman we should try to generate opportunities out of the difficult situation of being unemployed:

“A pessimist is the one who makes difficulties of his opportunities and an optimist is the one who makes opportunities of his difficulties.”

Harry S. Truman

EXAMPLE OF HOW TO ENFORCE POSITIVE THINKING.

An exercise “Pros and cons of unemployment” from a training course

The national training course “Getting young jobseekers involved through non-formal learning” has been organised by the Estonian National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme, Foundation Archimedes, in 2007. The training event focused on how to use non-formal learning for creating better opportunities for unemployed young people for self-development and, in the long run, for returning to work and getting involved in community life.

Among many of the exercises run in this training course, there was one devoted to analysing the pros and cons of unemployment. Following is a brief overview as identified by participants at this training course:

Pros of unemployment:

- a wish and motivation to change your life
- lots of free time
- hope for a better future
- time to think about yourself
- choices you can make without being afraid to “lose” something (in professional life)
- new experiences
- a time for hobbies, to be with family and friends
- a possibility to sleep longer ○
- an opportunity for self-development
- time to take part in training etc

Cons of unemployment:

- a decrease in self-confidence
- facing financial difficulties
- fear and uncertainty
- inability to keep up with new knowledge
- stress which could lead to different illnesses etc
- relationships which suffer from personal difficulties
- depression
- no sense of belonging
- too much free time...

The example of this exercise shows that with sufficient support (for example by individual coaching etc), the period of being unemployed can provide a very significant learning experience and serve as a way to better recognise yourself as a personality and your resources.

There are several other methods to support the positive thinking of young people facing unemployment. For example, one could run an individual reflection with a particular focus on the potential of those young people. A more elaborate one would be the S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis applied to the young job seekers and/or to the unemployment situation.

EMPOWERING YOUNG JOBSEEKERS

One of the most important tools for combating youth unemployment is empowering youth who face unemployment. There are different definitions and understandings of this term according to the culture, traditions and specific contexts in which it is used etc.

For the purposes of “empowering young jobseekers” a particularly inspiring working definition of empowerment would be:

“Empowerment is how individuals/communities engage in learning processes in which they create, appropriate and share knowledge, tools and techniques in order to change and improve the quality of their own lives and societies. Through empowerment, individuals not only manage and adapt to change but also contribute to/generate changes in their lives and environments”. (UNESCO 1998)

In the Salto Inclusion booklet “E.M. Power”, we can find this and other complementary understandings of empowerment (<http://www.salto-youth.net/EmpowerBooklet/>) .

In the “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” (1968) Paulo Freire presented the idea that empowerment comes from *praxis*: *empowerment is a cyclical process of experiential learning wherein the individual examines his/her current life situation, identifies what he/she would like to change, takes action to make that change happen, then reflects on that action. Empowerment, then, is a continuous process of change.*

This idea of empowerment as a liberating continuous process goes with the practical examples and working experiences of young job-seekers. Empowering them implies a process - often lengthy - which consists of the development of practical skills and social competences, the support towards change of attitudes and the promotion of co-operation and networking.

This process of empowerment combines educational and social strategies, training and social protection (in terms of access to basic needs such as housing or health...) and requires the co-operation of NGOs, public administrations and the private sector.

The idea of empowering young jobseekers, with the aim of creating better opportunities for finding a job, should not be understood as an “individual solution” for some groups of youngsters. On the contrary, those programmes and initiatives are often the best expression and the origin of new and better policies that are generated afterwards.

EXAMPLE OF HOW TO PRACTICE AND REFLECT ON THE IDEA OF EMPOWERMENT:

“Theatre of the oppressed” in the context of youth unemployment from a training course.

In the SALTO Training Course “I don’t have a job but I’m working on it”, June 2009, Portugal, a well-known methodology of “Theatre of Oppressed” was used to practice and reflect on the concept of empowerment. First of all, let us briefly explain the methodology, based on the works of Augusto Boal, creator and main developer of the Theatre of the Oppressed methodology:

“Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) is the Game of Dialogue: we play and learn together. All kinds of Games must have Discipline - clear rules that we must follow. At the same time, Games have an absolute need for creativity and Freedom. TO is the perfect synthesis between the antithetic Discipline and Freedom. Without Discipline, there is no Social Life; without Freedom, there is no Life.

The Discipline of our Game is our belief that we must re-establish the right of everyone to exist in dignity. We believe that all of us are more, and much better, than what we think we are. We believe in solidarity.

Our Freedom is to invent ways to help to humanise Humanity, freely invading all fields of human activities: social, pedagogical, political, artistic... Theatre is a Language and so it can be used to speak about all human concerns, not to be limited to theatre itself.

We believe in Peace, not in Passivity!

Games of the oppressed - *All our senses, our perception of reality, and our capacity of feeling and reasoning, tend to become mechanical by every day repetition. We tend to become less creative, accepting reality as it is, instead of transforming it. Games of the Oppressed is a system of Games that help us to “feel what we touch”, “to listen to what we hear”, “to see what we look at”, “to stimulate all senses”, and “to understand what we say and hear”.*

Image-theatre – Words are emptinesses which fill the emptiness (vacuum) that exists between one human being and another. Words are lines that we carve in the sand, sounds which we sculpt in the air. We know the meaning of the word we pronounce, because we fill it with our desires, ideas and feelings, but we don't know how that word is going to be heard by each listener. Image-theatre is a series of Techniques which allows people to communicate through Images and Spaces, and not through words alone.

Forum-theatre - Music is the organisation of sound in time; plastic arts, the organisation of colours and lines in space; theatre, the organisation of human actions in time and space. Theatre is a representation and not a reproduction of social reality. Forum –Theatre presents a scene or a play that must necessarily show a situation of oppression that the Protagonist does not know how to fight against, and fails. The spect-actors are invited to replace this Protagonist, and act out - on stage and not from the audience - all possible solutions, ideas, strategies. The other actors improvise the reactions of their characters facing each new intervention, so as to allow a sincere analysis of the real possibilities of using those suggestions in real life. All spect-actors have the same right to intervene and play their ideas. Forum-Theatre is a collective rehearsal for reality.

Invisible theatre – To be a citizen does not mean merely to live in society, but to transform it. If I transform clay into a statue, I become a Sculptor; if I transform stones into a house, I become an architect; if I transform our society into something better for us all, I become a citizen. Invisible theatre is a direct intervention in society, on a precise theme of general interest, to provoke debate and to clarify the problem that must be solved. It shall never be violent since its aim is to reveal the violence that exists in society, and not to reproduce it. Invisible theatre is a play (not a mere improvisation) that is played in a public space without informing anyone that it is a piece of theatre, previously rehearsed. Invisible theatre is the penetration of fiction into reality and of reality into fiction, which helps us to see how much fiction exists in reality, and how much reality exists in fiction

Rainbow of desire – Many concrete oppressions provoke deep damage inside our subjectivity and psychic life. Under the general title of *Rainbow of desire*, there are fifteen Techniques - complex, but not complicated! – which help us to visualize theatrically our oppressions, and deal with them more clearly: no one interprets anything, but all participants offer the Protagonist the mirror of the multiple regards of the others. We try to locate the Cops in our Head knowing very well that, if those Cops are there, they have come from some Headquarters outside us that spread them all around, into the heads of many more citizens. We try to discover the ideology of each Cop and not concentrate our attention on the particular individual.”

Augusto Boal, Rio de Janeiro 2004

A very complete documentation about this methodology and its educational applications can be found in the following website: www.theatreoftheoppressed.org

In the frame-work of the SALTO Training Course “I don’t have a job but I’m working on it”, the use of the Theatre of the oppressed methodology allowed us to identify elements which would be important when empowering young jobseekers:

In terms of general attitudes:

- Listening
- Being flexible
- Being active, through an immediate response

In the approach of different actors in the situation of unemployment:

- Using a “one to one” approach when supporting the jobseekers
- Involving all the actors who have an influence on the situation of the unemployed person.
- Creating a supportive network around the young jobseeker
- Promoting partner relationship, mutual respect. So that the young jobseekers can find role models.

For educational work with the young jobseekers:

- Strengthening their social competences and exploring different strategies to overcome the situation.
- Making information accessible and available for young job seekers
- Making use of the testimonies, successful stories and peer support on youngsters
- Engaging in long-term support processes with young job seekers
- Promoting entrepreneurship, self-generated employment
- Strengthen young jobseekers and support their dignity

For the youth workers supporting young jobseekers:

- Accepting, as youth worker, the feelings of frustration. Share and work on them (in groups, peer support, through supervision...)
- Being able to step out, take time to adapt and act more adequately in challenging situations

Those elements together with others are also very much present in the following experiences of “good practices” - an enriching variety of situations, strategies and concrete responses to the situation of youth unemployment in different contexts.



EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE: Young people's house from Iceland



Austurbæjarbío- the young people's house is a project that The Reykjavik Red Cross⁷ branch in Iceland has set up in co-operation with the National public health institution, Culture centre for young people in Reykjavik city and SÍF, which stands for the association of Icelandic secondary school (college) students. The target group of the house is young people between 16 and 25 years old.

Main objectives

The Icelandic Red Cross, as well as many other organisations in Iceland, has expressed its concern over the fate of young people in Iceland following the economic collapse in October 2008. Thousands of young people have lost their jobs or will not get any work in summer and that is a completely new situation in Icelandic society. The unemployment rate among young people has so far been close to zero but now it is close to 12% (age 16-25 according to national statistics in June 2009). To assist young people who are facing unemployment and other social problems which can follow long-term unemployment, the Red Cross teamed up with other organisations to open up a centre for young people, managed by young people where they can use their time productively.

⁷ www.redcross.is/reykjavik

The house where the project takes place is an old movie theatre in downtown Reykjavik. It is in really bad shape since it hasn't been renovated for dozens of years. That is why one of the main objectives is to renovate the house so that the young people can create the house as their own and in that way feel more responsible /caring about the fate of the house.

Participative management

The house has a full time programme manager who has been hired for the summer time. We have put together a few groups of volunteers who are working on different objectives. There is a group of volunteers to assist the ones who want to start their own project, work-shop or what other idea they might have. Another group is helping around the house, collecting young volunteers who want to renovate the house, clean it, help keep it open and so on. Another group is focusing on fundraising, searching for sponsors and contacting companies for supplies needed for the programmes and for the house. Another is an advertisement group working on how to motivate young people to come and use this facility.

The project has already got sponsors from the Reykjavik government and individual organisations in Iceland so it will probably continue.

Activities

In the young people's house there are different kinds of courses, programmes and sports activities for young people to participate in or run themselves.

There is a Café and a lobby with internet access in which to sit, socialise and relax.

Some of the activities taking place are: Thai Chi classes, a drama group, a reading circle, movie production teaching, concerts, sports clubs, different work-shops...

Until now the project has had some positive impact on participating young people, which can first of all be associated with the following competences:

- Self-esteem and self-worthiness (which can be damaged by long-term unemployment) by using their time productively instead of just hanging around, which in some cases can lead to destructive behaviour.
- Entrepreneurship, autonomy and leadership skills by taking up a project of their own by young jobseekers.
- Team-work and feelings of responsibility.
- New professional skills by participating in the on-going courses.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE FROM SWEDEN: Promoting entrepreneurship



Communicare⁸ is a non-profit youth organisation founded in 1996 with the following aims:

- To achieve a stimulating climate for entrepreneurship, motivation and power in which to act.
- To create lasting changes of attitudes and processes towards increased development of entrepreneurship and personal initiatives in society.

⁸ <http://www.communicare.nu> Recognised as the Expert organisation for the Swedish Government: It co-operates with the Swedish Government, EU, UN, companies and other organisations

We think that everyone is someone – no matter what others think. We are helping young people to live on what they are living for, to live their dreams. In our different projects we meet young people and help them to come closer to their dreams: finding a job, find out what to study, become self employed or go abroad. We have approximately 30 local Job College offices in different cities and towns in Sweden.

Our values are: Change, Action, Youth, Respect, Responsibility, Changing attitude, The world... And our motto is “Use what is in your hand to fulfil what is in your heart” (Brian Houston).

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship means for us to find out what you want and to have the ability to act. Our method is about stimulating entrepreneurship and an attitude to change, to find ways to employment and self-employment.

When promoting personal entrepreneurship we encourage:

- Focusing on results: Ability to create a clear goal
- Power to act: Ability to act powerfully
- Responsibility: Take responsibility for your own future
- Positive attitudes: Focus on possibilities and solutions

Our work is based on the following action cycle:



Projects

Our two main projects are:

- Attitude 2010 (2008 - 2010). It is a project for jobseekers between 16 and 35 years old. It consists of a marketing campaign for self employment. It was funded by the EU and supported by the business sector through coaching, lectures and networking opportunities.
- Job College (2008 - 2010). It is a youth employment project for jobseekers between 18 and 25 y.o. It consists of a combination of coaching sessions, lectures, group activities and study visits. It is run by 27 local offices with 1 – 3 coaches per office.

The success factors of the Job College are:

- Coaching as a method
- Always listen to the individual
- Positive empowerment
- Trust in the individual and their dreams
- Individual action-plan
- Commitment / Follow-up
- A daily schedule
- Showing and focusing on possibilities

80 percent of all participants in our projects over the years 1996 – 2006 went on to employment, studies, and self-employment or went abroad.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE FROM ICELAND: Short term aid course “Vitamin”

Hitt húsið⁹ is an information- and culture centre for young people, aged 16-25 years old. It is run by the Youth and Sports Council of Reykjavík City and it is located in the city centre.

The main goals of Hitt húsið are:

- To offer young people facilities and assistance with turning their ideas into reality
 - To counsel and give information to young people, in co-operation with professionals and associations that specialise in that field
 - To reflect what’s going on in the creative art life of young people at any given moment
- Vitamin is a first aid course for short-term unemployed young people between 16 and 20. It was developed in co-operation with the Directorate of Labour (Rights & registration). It runs for 4 days, from 9.00 – 13.00.

The contents of the course are:

- Work on the self-image with some exercises
- Social skills
- Motivation: what are you without a job, unemployed or a jobseeker?
- Job seekers scheduled their own “working hours”, the time they would spend looking for a job or working on something so you don’t have to go around feeling guilty all day.
- CV – Interview – Follow up
- Presentation on the history of trade unions, rights and duties
- “Ready for crisis” financial management for young people in an understandable language.
- Short introduction to the Youth in Action programme
- Other options: studies, training, volunteering...
- Evaluation

The organisation is considering an option to extend the content of this currently very short course to a duration of around 3-4 weeks. It would have the following additional contents:

- Basic project management – Idea to Action!
- Visiting a company/organisation connected to your interest. Then have a presentation and public speaking lesson, and then give a short presentation, in groups or individually.
- A more extensive introduction of the Youth in Action program. Maybe do a small project plan.
- Entrepreneurship & innovation – Let’s get motivated...
- Graduation party
- Certificate (document showing what you have learned, some kind of a “YouthPass”)

GOOD EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE FROM ESTONIA: Work Camps

These work camps are promoted by the Estonian Youth Work Centre¹⁰ The youth and work camps, promoted by the Estonian Youth Work Centre, are practical ways for youth to get their first work experiences and develop social skills and spend their summer holidays in a useful way.

The activities in the camps are twofold: Working (picking berries, weeding, gathering stones, selling ice-cream...) and Leisure - cultural activities (work-shops, cultural events, sport activities, projects...)

There are two kinds of camps: with an overnight stay (outside of town) or without an overnight stay (in town). Their duration is between one and three weeks. The age of participants is between 13 and 18 years of age. The gender distribution is as follows: 35-40% boys, 60-65% girls. The working hours per day are between 4 and 6 and the monthly salary between 30 and 120 €

These youth camps have developed into a very widespread activity, for example in 2008, there were 56 camps throughout Estonia involving around 6000 participants. Every camp has its responsible youth leader, who also communicates with employers and with parents.



⁹ [http:// www.hitthusid.is](http://www.hitthusid.is) (see p 44)

¹⁰ [http:// www.entk.ee](http://www.entk.ee)

The evaluation studies run among the participating young people show that the main reasons for participating were:

- It is an exciting way to spend time
- For making new friends
- For the salary
- For getting new work experiences

On their personal and social development, participants have said that:

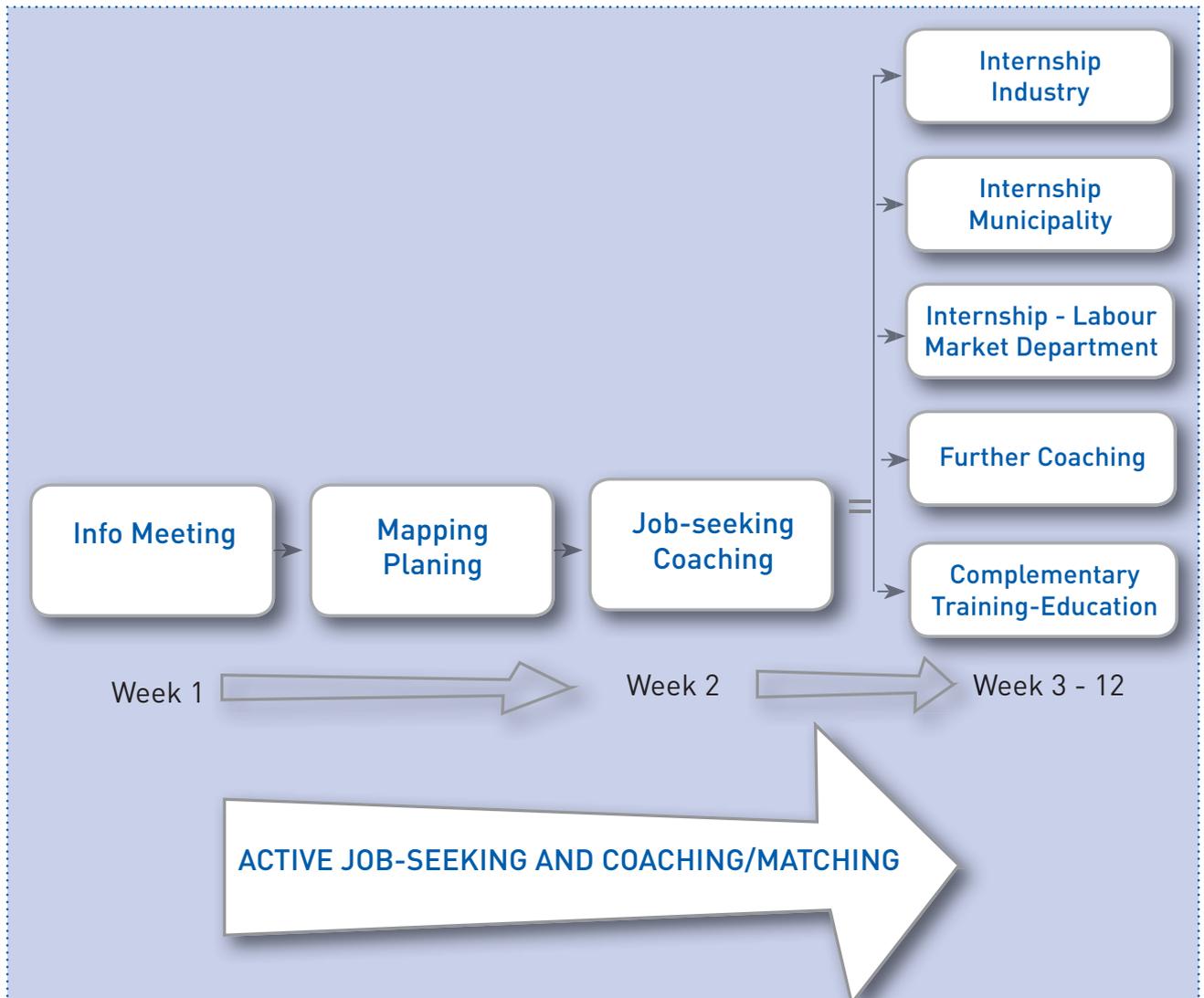
- It gave them more responsibility
- It contributed to developing their team-work abilities
- It developed their problem-solving competence
- It fostered their ability to understand their role in relation to other people

This way, it is evident that although not directly targeting young unemployed people, this project represents an important contribution to work on (un-)employment among youth as it is a way to get work experience and develop relevant competences. As noted before, various studies have referred to these as significant factors influencing youth unemployment.

GOOD EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE FROM SWEDEN:

Day 1 -90: Local plan for young jobseekers

A good example of support for young jobseekers at a local level is given by the municipality of Jönköpings – Sweden. This municipality promotes a plan for young jobseekers from day 1 until day 90. The main idea of this plan is to work integrally for the employment of young people from the very first moment.



This plan is a co-operation project between the Municipality and the national government. As a result of it, every jobseeker between 18-24 who has been unemployed for 90 days gets the opportunity of receiving complementary training, further coaching or a job practice internship with the guarantee of work practice in a programme. This is a government programme. But the Municipality of Jönköping, in co-operation with the government, started a programme for the first 90 days.

Additionally, the Office of Public Management of Labour Market organises paid holidays/practice/summer jobs in order to give students the opportunity of having professional experience and contacts in the labour market.

FIGHTING AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION FROM THE MULTI-PROBLEM PERSPECTIVE

As we have already seen, when analysing the relation of unemployment to social exclusion, the mechanisms are complex and challenging. It is therefore necessary to develop a holistic response to it. In the following paragraphs, we will focus on the understanding of the multi-problem situation as one possible alternative.

HOW TO START? FIRST STEPS

In the case of a multi-problem situation, sometimes it is better not to do too much at the same time, just to take things step-by-step. The over-supportive attitude may cause lots of harm, because it can be too much for the young person: it could create unrealistic expectations and it would be difficult to cope with them.

It is hard to create an action plan. True. So how do you start? Where do you start? First of all, not to panic is probably the most important aspect when you are about to start working with someone who faces several obstacles in his/her life, including being unemployed.

Then, based on some good counselling experiences, we suggest that the following ideas should be kept in mind:

- The first step is to identify which is one of the most important and urgent problems for the young jobseeker. The basic idea of the “solution focused brief therapy” is to give responsibility back to him from the outset. The goal to be achieved should be small, short-term and realistic.
- Who is the most frustrated person in this situation? Sometimes it might be the youth or social workers or counsellors... They shouldn't be the consumers of their own services!
- Analyse how the life of the jobseeker will change if the goal is achieved.
- Focus on only one problem at any time. Just step-by step.
- Explore the job seeker's past! Find out if there was any challenging situation in his/her past that he/she could overcome. Explore the successful stories in detail. What worked in the past could be useful and inspiring in the present.
- Focus on the change, not on the problem. Praise the young jobseekers for everything you can with goodwill. Don't “paint it into pink”, just celebrate the small successes: it will empower them to keep going. Work on trust!
- When the first goal is achieved, review how he/she managed it: What was done? What could be useful to do next one? Every problem is an opportunity for strengthening the jobseeker.

AN EXAMPLE OF A METHOD: “Brief, solution-focused, dynamic job-consultation”

In this method the focus is on finding and keeping a job. For this purpose it is necessary to map obstacles, to involve partner organisations, experts, and together with the jobseeker, explore the strategies for finding jobs.

The approach of the dynamic job-consultation is similar to that of the main principles of coaching in the sense that it is better to work towards the expected change with the jobseeker instead of doing it for him/her.

In the dynamic job-consultation, the worker and the young jobseeker together consult and explore the opportunities. But the decision and action are in the jobseeker's hand. Of course, the process should be supported, closely monitored by the youth-worker, but the youth-worker's basic job is to ask open questions that inspire the youngster to step forward from here-and-now and imagine the possible future. Without an inner vision, it is hard to start the change. The “red-line” for finding the proper job for a young person should be what makes him/her happy?

People need to enjoy and find pleasure in work as well. In a multi-problem situation, the social workers quite often use the methods of existential psychotherapy of Victor E. Frankl.¹¹ For example, by interviewing Holocaust survivors, he found that they could survive extreme situations because:

- They were able to create something (manual or intellectual).
- They had got a deep belief in something. It could be a religious faith or the inner conviction that they have something important to do in the world. An example of this is a young man who wanted to be a magician, because he knew he could create new tricks and was able to make this profession more dynamic. He had a deep vision about “Underground magic” – and it became a popular style of magic.
- They had a deep relationship with somebody. They had emotional support, were attached to somebody.

Therefore, the kind of support provided to the young jobseeker in a multi-problem situation will be effective if it can fulfil these needs. In the middle of a difficult situation, it is necessary to promote creativity, to strengthen self-confidence, to empower people to move, to create an adequate space in which they can grow up and take on responsibilities.

AN EXAMPLE OF A METHOD: Appreciative inquiry

It is another useful method in multi-problem situations. It is based on the assertion that “problems” are often the result of our own perspectives and perceptions of phenomena, eg, if we regard a certain priority as a “problem,” then we tend to constrain our ability to effectively address the priority and to continue to develop in our lives and work.

Appreciative inquiry includes:

- Identifying the best times during the best situations in our past,
- wishing and thinking about what worked best then,
- Imagining what we want in the future, and building on from what worked best in order to work towards a vision.

One dimension of Appreciative Inquiry is about being aware of the language we use, because it becomes the reality. An example: for this reason, when you want to support a young person in doing something, never use “if”, use “when”. Empower him/her with this: you are able to do that.

Appreciative inquiry has contributed a lot to a new educational praxis with young unemployed people. It builds on past successes. New, unknown things and/or changes may frighten young jobseekers and stop them from taking the first steps. They need support to improve their self-esteem and self-confidence, to further develop their competences and to show their strengths.

¹¹ Viktor Emil Frankl M.D., Ph.D. (March 26, 1905 – September 2, 1997) was an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist as well as a Holocaust survivor. Frankl was the founder of logotherapy, which is a form of Existential Analysis, the “Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy”. (see p 50)

POSSIBLE SERVICES

The combination of methods and tools to work with the multi-problem situation of young jobseekers can include:

- Providing information on topics such as labour market trends, employment, law, education (courses, professions), job seeking techniques, social issues etc...
- Job club:
 - Casework counselling: assessing the “status” of the job seeker; creating an individual plan for the desired job, writing a C.V., a motivation letter, finding employers; interview techniques; etc...
 - Provision of facilities for finding jobs: the opportunity to use a phone, a fax, the Internet, a copy machine, etc...
 - Making newspapers available with job advertisements.
 - Lists of vacant job places from the regional employment centre.
 - Internet: job ads from the Internet in printed version.
 - Individual consultations: help to initiate direct contact with employers without ads, „job-matching”.
- Group training, courses for developing key competences, communication skills, conflict resolution techniques, co-operation abilities...
- Career orientation guidance with the help of a psychologist, when the young jobseeker doesn't know what to learn or work, and has no idea about his/her abilities and skills.
- Psychological or psychiatric consultation for those youngsters who have mental health problems, are not able to cope with stress or with failure, or just need more self-confidence. This service can be provided by another specialised service, an NGO or a health centre.

GOOD EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE FROM BELGIUM: Public Private Partnership (PPP)

The challenge

In the end of the 90s, it became clear that it was impossible to integrate some groups of unemployed youngsters into the labour market. Lots of efforts were made, without much effect. The employment services, which the organisations delivered to these young people, were not adapted to their specific needs. These young people were quite satisfied with the services delivered to them by social NGOs (working with them on the streets trying to keep them out of trouble, keeping them away from petty criminal activities and trying to mediate between the city council and the police – older people in the city of Mechelen for example, felt unsafe and threatened by the youngsters hanging around in the city, doing nothing). However, the social NGOs were not able to satisfy all the needs. The young people were always short of money: they wanted to buy nice things but did not have the money. Moreover, they were often sentenced to pay fines to the local police. Most of them were not used to having a job for a long time and found it difficult to adjust to working hours and the discipline required.

An NGO, called “City and Youth” noticed the specific problems encountered by unemployed youngsters with little education, experience and motivation. They thought that short-term work (subsequent short-term contracts with various employers) was ideal for this group. Although this NGO knew everything about the social problems of the disadvantaged target group, the social workers had no experience with the labour market and the private sector. The private organisations from their side did not understand the necessity for social guidance and support for this group of youngsters. From here came the idea to work together.

Public Private Partnership – Instant A

The NGO City and Youth started with a pilot project in the disadvantaged districts of Antwerp, the largest city in Flanders (the Flemish speaking part of Belgium), a city of almost 500 000 inhabitants. They negotiated with two private companies dealing with part-time labour – there was mediation between employers looking for short-term employees and those seeking this kind of work-, Vedior and T-Interim. Together they set up a Public Private Partnership (PPP). After two and a half years, the NGO City and Youth decided to create a new independent NGO, “Labor X” to deal with local youth unemployment in five Flemish cities (Antwerp, Mechelen, Gent, Vilvoorde, Genk) and finally also in the European capital Brussels. “Labor X” now became the non-profit partner in the PPP. The PPP structure was called “InstantA”, a private company with a social touch.

A PPP construction offered specific opportunities to them: Labor X guaranteed social assistance and close follow-up to the youngsters and they were able to incentivise the companies to do more for the disadvantaged groups. The decision of the private companies to invest in Instant A was a demonstration of their commitment to provide equal opportunities to all unemployed people, including those with a more complicated background.

Instant A functions as follows:

- Instant A is a PPP between the NGO Labor X and two private companies.
- Instant A signed an agreement with the Flemish government on the basis of a clear business plan.
- Instant A signed an agreement with the cities (Antwerp, Mechelen, Gent, Vilvoorde, Genk and Brussels), which clearly states that Instant A is committed to the development of a local employment policy. This means that Instant A is committed to assisting those youngsters who are coming to them through the local welfare institution. Instant A is also obliged to ensure that employers are sensitive to the need to hire people from their target group and to oblige companies to adhere to a pact of anti-discrimination.
- Each city made its own agreement with Instant A. This can include a financial contribution or the supply of employees.

Target group

The target group consists of under-educated youngsters (drop-outs from school or above 18 years and no longer obliged to go to school): they received little education and practical experience. Many of them have problems speaking the language. Their social network is tied to their neighbourhood. A lot of attention is paid to social assistance, which is very different from other private companies involved in Interim labour. Through Labour X there is an extensive social network: this makes it easy to reach young people with specific problems through specialised social organisations. The social assistant of Labour X is responsible for a very close follow-up of the youngsters, which creates the necessary relationship of trust. If youngsters gain more self-confidence through the intense process of assistance and follow-up, they will be more motivated to find long-term employment or additional training.

The main actors involved:

- Public authorities: the Flemish Government and the local city government. They provide some of the funds which are used to pay for additional activities.
- Two private (commercial) partners: they provide their technical know-how of the labour market, contacts with the companies and employers and invest in the office infrastructure and personnel.
- Privileged co-operation partners, such as the local branch of the Flemish labour office (a central government institution), the local welfare institution (dealing with social payments and support to the disadvantaged).
- Other organisations in the sector of social services, community building and education and training.

The outcomes

- 8 offices in Flanders, managed by the same PPP structure. This is a social project that is financially healthy when measured by business standards.
- 2,363 contracts/year (representing 432,995.23hrs of labour). 39.69% of the workers find long-term employment (average figures 2007-2008). As such, Instant A has created new perspectives for a target group that was increasingly excluded from society.
- Instant A succeeded in playing a role as creator of local employment (which goes further than mere mediation).
- The Flemish government presented the case of Instant A as a best practice to the European Commission (2001). Within the framework of the European employment strategy, EU countries have to develop local and national plans.
- Additional value for the cities: Instant A has access to a difficult target group that was out of reach of the city officials.

Reasons for failure and success

- The PPP structure is kept very simple. The office is small and has a low threshold (everybody is welcome for a consultation).
- The PPP structure offered numerous advantages, both to the non-profit and to the profit sector: sharing of risks, costs and responsibilities, exchange of knowledge and expertise, gaining more credibility for public authorities (for the private companies) and for companies (for the social NGO requesting more attention for the disadvantaged groups),...
- Establishing and sustaining a local, structured dialogue involving all relevant actors was very important for developing a successful local employment policy.
- Strong networking: exchange of information about trends in the labour market, especially those affecting the target group.
- The commitment of the private sector to social investment and local economic development.
- The connection between social welfare and the employment/labour market: a two-way relationship between social organisations and Instant A.
- Credibility amongst the target group (creating relationships of trust).

The lessons learnt

- Co-operation between the profit and the non-profit sector is not evident but when successful, both sides have a lot to gain: a more practical and efficient style of working in the social sector on the one hand and the conclusion on the other that a social and human approach to disadvantaged groups can yield profits.
- The private sector needs hard figures: therefore, it is of the utmost importance to collect data about the youngsters and the contracts with employers. Instant A developed a special follow-up and tracking database, which makes it easy to make reports for all institutional and other stakeholders involved. With this instrument, Instant A is able to collect very important information for other organisations dealing with the same target group or others who are active in the region.
- This type of social project is a valuable and cost-effective instrument for the local self-government in trying to achieve its local development goals.

A new experiment

In October 2008, Labour X started, in co-operation with VDAB (Flemish service for labour counselling) an experimental method for youngsters who are really hard to guide to work. The experiment is named: "VELCROCOACHING".

The name itself explains the method of guidance used in this programme. The coaches really stick to the youngsters during the guidance. The methodology works as follows:

- First the coaches try to visit the youngsters in their own environment.
- Then the coaches try to build a strong relationship of trust.
- The third step is to determine what competences the jobseeker has.
- Step 4 is to build on the competences of the jobseeker.
- In step 5 the coach mediates with the companies to find a job for the jobseeker.
- The final step includes the aftercare of the jobseeker (a follow-up).

The fact that the coach doesn't start his guidance in an office, but in the jobseeker's own environment, results in the jobseeker feeling s more at ease during this consultation. This has already been evaluated as very important by the jobseekers.

During the experiment (which lasted a year, until September 2009 and perhaps will be continued), every coach has to reach 30 youngsters. By June 2009, almost every coach has already reached this goal.

GOOD EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE FROM IRELAND: Transitional housing

One of the manifestations of the multi-problem situation is the difficulty of housing and of living in a family setting. Don Bosco House in Dublin is a therapeutic community for young men between the ages of 18-25. These young men are in transitional housing. Support is provided for these young men as they are unable to live within their family setting.

Young jobseekers develop their competences through external consultation and training. This enables more effective work within the staff team and with the vulnerable young people.

A pivotal and effective part of the work takes place around the community meetings. This is where the staff and young people come together in a safe environment. Each person is asked how they are and if they have an issue they would like to discuss. This leads to open conversation, and development of conflict resolution skills. Young people are encouraged to reach fair and pragmatic outcomes by themselves. In this process, modelling, relating and teaching techniques are also used.

The following poem “There’s a Hole in my Sidewalk”, by Portia Nelson describes the philosophy and process of the work done with vulnerable young people.

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk
I fall in.
I am lost ... I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes me forever to find a way out.

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place
but, it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in ... it's a habit.
My eyes are open
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

I walk down another street

The self reflection and 1:1 support are used to explore why this happens with the young person.

To tackle unemployment the Don Bosco house uses many outside resources as the result of networking. Those partner organisations and activities are: Adult learning centres, Drama groups, Unmarried fathers' association, colleges and universities, job clubs, training courses, volunteering Ireland, sport activities... The diversity of partners and activities show how important this team-work and co-operation are in dealing integrally with the multi-problem situation.

GOOD EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE FROM SPAIN: Disability and employment

In SALTO Training Course the example of FEPAMIC¹² was introduced; an association of disabled people in the province of Cordoba –Spain- who are working for their integration into society and into the labour market in particular.

Causes of higher unemployment

For most people, disability is an unknown world. When people think about a person with disability, most of the time they think about a person in a wheelchair or with severe difficulties. But the experience of FEPAMIC shows that this image is not an accurate one: the whole staff of FEPAMIC –around 500 persons including doctors, assistants, teachers, drivers, ICT experts – is composed of people with disabilities.

Let us look at some of the most basic characteristics of disability:

- Disability affects around 10 % of the population.
- A disabled person is a person with a physical, organic, mental or learning disease which limits the possibilities of the person to live in an independent way and achieve real social inclusion. In reality disabled people are a diverse group who have different kinds of physical, organic, mental or learning difficulties, with different degrees of disability.
- Most of the time it is not possible to recognise a disabled person if this person has not a very visible disability.

As we have seen when analysing the factors of unemployment, the rates among young disabled people are higher than for the non-disabled people (at least 30-40% more). Various reasons could explain that:

- Managers still think that a disabled person is completely unable to work. They have an incorrect image of the disabled people. In addition they do not know how to deal with them. Including a disabled person in the company is in a way a problem, and managers try to avoid problems.
- Disabled people lack vocational training. This is because they are faced with greater difficulties when it comes to enjoying training actions. School is made for normal people and people who are not normal always find more difficulties.

¹² <http://www.fepamic.org>

¹³ www.youthworkgalway.ie (see p 61)

- Parental overprotection regarding disabled people is still today a fact which limits their integration into society and the labour market.
- Low self esteem and confidence, lack of social skills, lack of competences for searching for employment. Usually disabled people do not know where to go, what to do, how to pass a job interview.

What to do to:

- Raise awareness in society about the reality of disabled people. Society as a whole, and specially managers and entrepreneurs, should know that behind disability, there's always a person full of skills which just need to be discovered.
- Promote real inclusion of disabled people in the vocational training policies, removing barriers to education, making parents aware that overprotection is not the best way to guarantee real integration. In other words supporting the independence of the disabled person.
- Focus on the skills and capabilities of the disabled person more than on the lacks and difficulties.
- Increase the self esteem and confidence of disabled people. Equip them with techniques for a successful job search.

GOOD EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE FROM IRELAND: Job Club

Background

Youth Work Ireland, Galway¹³ is a voluntary organisation that works with young people in Galway City and County. We do this through supporting communities to set up and deliver youth programmes on a voluntary basis, and by developing services to young people implemented by paid staff. We work in partnership with a number of community groups and statutory bodies in the development and promotion of youth services.

Treo Nua (new direction) is a project established as a partnership of Tuam Gardaí (Police), Youth Work Ireland, Galway and a local inter-agency committee early in 2007. Treo Nua is a community-based initiative to work with young people, aged between 12 and 18 years, in the Tuam area. The Project delivers youth work programmes in conjunction with local community, voluntary and statutory groups. Participation is by referral only.

Our challenge in the Treo Nua Project is to encourage and empower young people to move the focus on to their innate and acquired positive attributes; their successes, their achievements and their positive qualities. By doing this we can help them to focus on clear and achievable goals, that will lead them on a Treo Nua towards self-sufficiency, happiness and personal fulfilment.

The project offers many programmes to achieve our outlined challenge. One such programme is our 'Jobs Club'. This programme is designed to assist young people who are no longer availing of mainstream education, training or employment. It aims to identify possible areas of employment for them, prepare and support them in this process and provide an opportunity to experience working in one or more identified area.

Jobs Club

Treo Nua organised links with local businesses in the Tuam area. Places were secured within a number of businesses and managers/supervisors agreed to take on a Mentor type role with the young jobseeker while on placement.

A partnership was made with Youthreach, Tuam (Co. Galway Vocational Education Committee) to assess the young person's preparation and performance in their work placement. If the young person meets the necessary requirements, they are entitled to a qualification – FETAC Level 3 Work Orientation.

Preparation is carried out in the youth project with the Youth Justice Worker, which can include communications, mock interviews, role play, customer service, etc. The minimum period of the programme is 10 weeks (3 weeks preparation, 7 weeks work placement). A longer preparation period may be facilitated if required.

It is essential that the project worker constantly supports and encourages the young jobseeker throughout the programme and includes sessions for review and reflection. The project worker must also keep regular contact with the business to insure that they are happy with the placement and that they are guiding the young person as agreed.

Potentialities of job clubs

- The job clubs can run the mediating function between the various parts of the social system: local government, regional employment centres, family counselling centres, child welfare, educational institutes and schools, etc... The “jobseeker” is not lost in the system.
- It is an active tool: instead of a passive tool such as giving money (aid).
- Filter function: find out who is not able to work, and why not, then give adequate support.
- Preventive function: for those who are still learning or working, but will have finished with it in a certain time, the jobclub helps them to prepare for the next phase.
- Socialising function: being without a job makes people isolated, so they need to get integrated again into society. This also encourages them to behave appropriately, to wear acceptable clothes.... Losing the rhythm of life is also a problem: school and work structure your time, expectations are given. The job- club works for them as a “workplace”, what would not be acceptable at work is not allowed in the job club.

Outcomes of job clubs

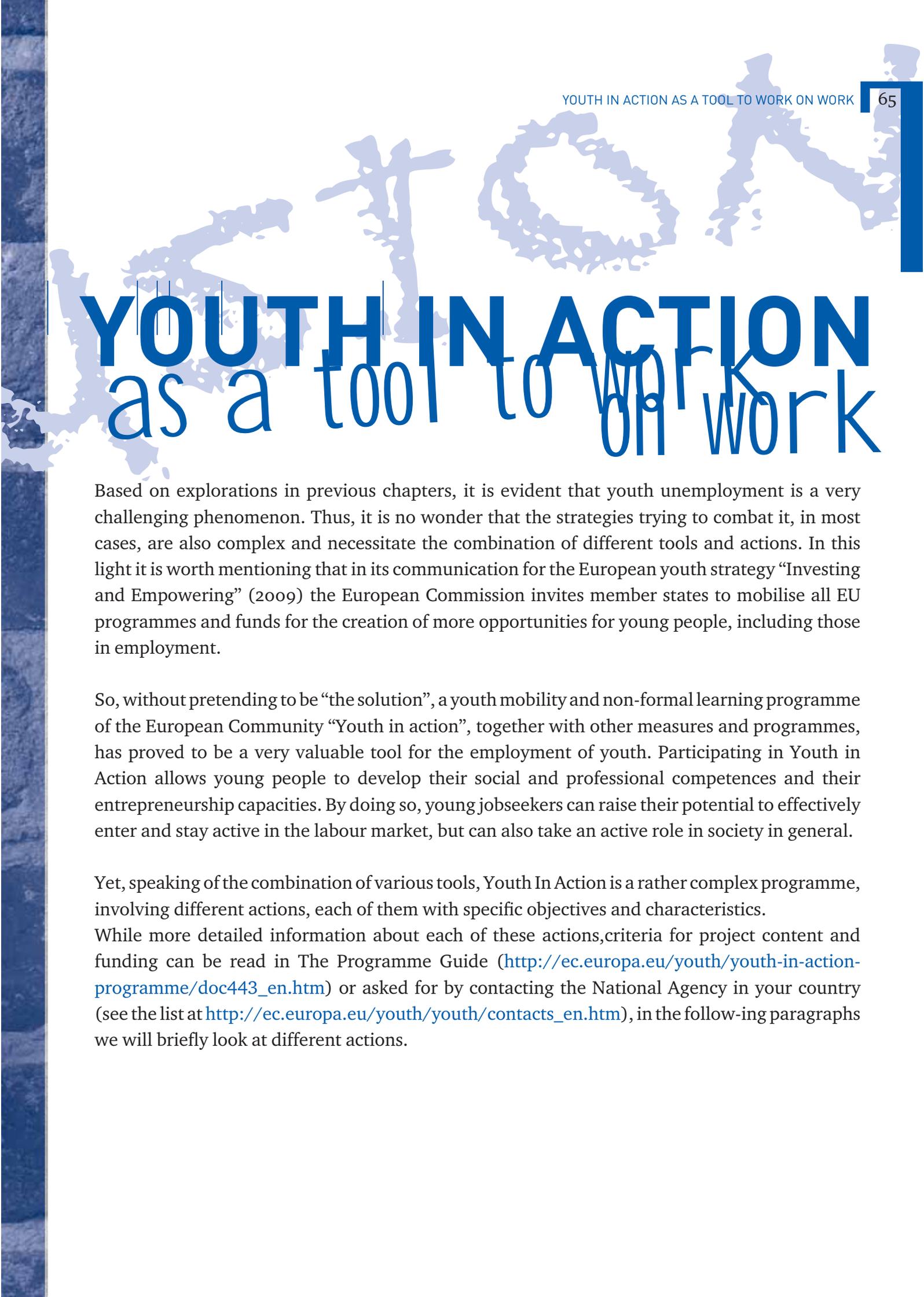
The young jobseekers that complete the programme get:

- An education/training opportunity to ensure that they have a greater chance to avail of various types of employment
- A stronger work ethic
- A greater sense of self -worth and purpose
- The ability to identify goals and design action plans
- The opportunity to interact with adults in a work setting and to be treated as an equal

Having discussed how to understand unemployment as a social phenomenon and having discovered the political context on the European level, as well as how some core approaches proved to be effective in practical work on unemployment, it is now most appropriate to explore a specific tool which can be useful when combining all of these: the Youth in Action programme. Without being a programme exclusively devoted to fighting against unemployment, it can definitively contribute to improve the employability of young people. In the following chapter we will explore the potentials of Youth in Action and of its different actions, particularly regarding development for professional life.

**STRANGE
UNEMPLOYMENT
WHEN THERE IS
A WHOLE WORLD
TO IMPROVE**

Loesje



YOUTH IN ACTION

as a tool to work on work

Based on explorations in previous chapters, it is evident that youth unemployment is a very challenging phenomenon. Thus, it is no wonder that the strategies trying to combat it, in most cases, are also complex and necessitate the combination of different tools and actions. In this light it is worth mentioning that in its communication for the European youth strategy “Investing and Empowering” (2009) the European Commission invites member states to mobilise all EU programmes and funds for the creation of more opportunities for young people, including those in employment.

So, without pretending to be “the solution”, a youth mobility and non-formal learning programme of the European Community “Youth in action”, together with other measures and programmes, has proved to be a very valuable tool for the employment of youth. Participating in Youth in Action allows young people to develop their social and professional competences and their entrepreneurship capacities. By doing so, young jobseekers can raise their potential to effectively enter and stay active in the labour market, but can also take an active role in society in general.

Yet, speaking of the combination of various tools, Youth In Action is a rather complex programme, involving different actions, each of them with specific objectives and characteristics.

While more detailed information about each of these actions, criteria for project content and funding can be read in The Programme Guide (http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc443_en.htm) or asked for by contacting the National Agency in your country (see the list at http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth/contacts_en.htm), in the following paragraphs we will briefly look at different actions.

And namely, in the Youth in Action programme there are various opportunities for young people to set up projects with an international dimension: e.g. international group exchanges, international voluntary service, youth democracy projects and group initiatives. The programme also provides funding for support activities for youth workers and others active in the youth field to increase their competence and through that the quality of their youth projects. In addition, the programme supports better understanding and cooperation between young people and those responsible for youth issues, policy makers.

YOUTH EXCHANGES

Within the YiA programme, a youth exchange is an activity that brings together young people from two, three or more different countries to exchange views and experiences on a specific topic. Young people between the ages of 13 and 25 can participate.

The exchanges must have a theme that is relevant to the daily experiences of the young people involved but also a clear European dimension. Themes could cover numerous issues, such as young people in society, racism and xenophobia, local heritage, drugs, the environment, etc. The Youth in Action programme particularly encourages youth exchanges involving young people with fewer opportunities.

In the context of topics discussed in this publication, youth exchange could for example be used as a tool to discuss youth employment in different countries as well as one which looks for ways to take initiatives to support the employability of young people. The project could either involve young people who are interested in this topic and/or young people who face unemployment in their life.

AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE: Exchanges as a tool to empower young job-seekers from rural areas, “Associação Cultural de Riodouro – A montanha” from Portugal

Young people with fewer opportunities means, in the case of our association, involving young people - many of them jobseekers - from rural areas.

A Montanha has participated in multilateral youth exchanges since 2002, it has co-operated with partners from Spain, France, Hungary, Finland and Holland, the Czech Republic and Scotland.

As a continuation for bilateral exchanges with these partners, there was in August 2009 a “mega-exchange” project bringing together all the countries with the theme “All together for a healthy life”.

The objectives were:

- To give participants tools to face the social environment in which they live
- To stimulate their potential and creativity
- To strengthen their feeling of being Europeans

Young people who participated in those youth exchanges increased their social competences, became more open-minded, resourceful and tolerant, and developed a deeper understanding of their social and other realities.

Participating in youth exchanges contributed to their personal and professional development. The developed competences make an enormous difference to their employment opportunities in a market that is not any longer local but international.

AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE: De Wroeter Arbeidcentrum from Belgium

Arbeidscentrum De Wroeter can be divided into three parts; social working place (= sociale werkplaats), training (= opleidingscentrum), and voluntary work (=arbeidszorg). The main target of De Wroeter is employment of people who no longer get opportunities in a regular work setting. It is very important that this vulnerable group is integrated into our society. If you don't work, you don't "count" in our society.

Our principle is to offer customised work with a lot of training and guidance on the work floor. There is no prior knowledge necessary to start. We offer a great diversity of working activities: growing biological vegetables, indoors (greenhouse) as well as outdoors, growing biological fruit, green jobs and landscaping, retail (bio-shop, market, web shop and auction, semi-industrial work). This allows De Wroeter to provide employment at a level that is customized to everybody's abilities.

For the moment, about 75 people in the target group are working in De Wroeter. Most of them left school at a very young age. Next to the educational problem, our target group often faces a very long period of unemployment. Their confidence and self image is often very low because of many negative experiences with employment. Because of the long period of unemployment and low education, many problems have developed over the years: low-income and financial problems, health problems, poor housing, poverty, education of children, addiction, imprisonment Because of unemployment, many people have lived a very isolated life. In the best case, they have contact with their family, their neighbours, ... In the worst case they are very isolated, and have practically no contact with the outside world. In many cases they have never seen more of the world than their birth village, or villages where their family lives.

Experiences with the Youth In Action programme

Every year, we offer a lot of opportunities for cultural exchange to our target group, by both hosting foreign partner groups as well as by sending our youngsters abroad.

For example, for years we've cooperated with Germany in hosting a group of youngsters in our centre who work and live with us for a period of two weeks. During these two weeks we try to stimulate as much exchange as possible. Belgian and German youngsters live and eat together, make excursions together, talk with each other, work together, experience each other's persuasions ...

In addition, a person from abroad comes to work with us every year as a European Voluntary Service volunteer, for a period of several months. It is always a bit difficult to make contact in the beginning. But after a while, when they find that communication means that both parties understand, you can see a bond growing. Even after the youngster has left, there is still contact by telephone, e-mail, letters, ...

Our main objective is to give our youngsters a chance to taste a little part of the rest of the world, which often results in a greater self-awareness and greater self confidence. They even learn a few words of a foreign language and are stimulated to discover a little bit more of the world.

Impact of these activities

As mentioned above, our youngsters gain a great deal of self confidence, learn more about other countries, become more aware, become more tolerant of other cultures ...

The self confidence gained by them stimulates them to dare to take new challenges; dare to go to a job interview, dare to take a course they never dared taking before, dare to talk to people from another cultural background....

The biggest impact on the local community is the influence our employees have on their families, friends, neighbours... In some cases it causes a domino effect.

Main challenges

A big challenge is always the time which is invested in the exchange. We often organise a lot of activities after working hours for the youngsters but none of the activities can take place without the necessary guidance from the leaders.

Another problem is the language barrier. Very few youngsters are able to talk in another language. This makes the first contact very difficult. But a lot of communication happens during the work, and with 'hands and feet'.

Another problem, due to the cultural exchanges, is that some youngsters wish to go abroad individually after several successful exchanges which we have hosted. Many obstacles are in their way; parents who need some persuasion because of a lot of fear, financial obstacles, fear of losing their job (will my job still be available after I come back?)...

Some of our learning points

Several ingredients are very important but first of all it is important that you prepare the group very well. You need to inform young people well, provide chances to participate in the preparation of the activities etc. And be ready for things which happen spontaneously, during the programme when working together, eating, having fun...

YOUTH INITIATIVES

(National and trans-national) youth initiatives are projects entirely planned and implemented by young people at local, regional, national or international level. Youth initiatives which aim to stimulate young people's creativity, enterprise and initiative, are aimed primarily at 18-30 year olds, but 15-18 year olds can take part if accompanied by a coach or youth worker.

Since youth initiatives aim to contribute to local level developments in synergy with the European dimension, these could be aimed at mapping the (un-)employment situation in communities involved in the project and seeking better employment opportunities through reflection and exchange between partner groups (in the case of trans-national projects) and/or in co-operation with local employers. Young people who have experiences in the labour market could also take the initiative to peer-support those young people who face unemployment, to advise them on how to look for a job, how to develop their career etc.

AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE:

"A learning camp – let's boost our summer" from Estonia

This youth initiative took place in a small village in South-Eastern Estonia, providing unemployed local young people with fewer opportunities an opportunity to get together and do something different.

As part of this initiative project, young people were renovating a part of an old unique lumber house. Through practical activities young people could practice new skills in traditional handcraft and carpentry. Also, as part of the youth initiative dedicated to supporting the confidence and know-how of young jobseekers, various work-shops, meetings with local and regional entrepreneurs and employers, and social activities took place.

AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE:

“Young parents into action!” by NGO Täheklubi from Estonia

The project was targeted at young parents, to support them in developing their competences, to encourage them to (re-)enter the labour market. After staying at home with kids, especially if from a very early age, many of them have lost their self-confidence. The aim of this project was to support active and positive attitudes, as well as better understanding of the labour market and their own individual perspectives related to that.

The programme of youth initiative included several work-shops on how to look for a job, how to write a CV, on official regulations and laws related to labour etc. Several art field activities were also organised to boost the creativity and entrepreneurship of young parents, as well as social skills through theatre, music etc. In addition the project has aimed to contribute to social networking among young parents.

The project was initiated by a group of active youngsters from a local youth club but during the project, other NGOs, experienced to work with young job-seekers as well as local employment offices (especially in the training parts), became involved. This way, the project also represents a good example of how to network and co-operate between other actors at the local level in order to support young job-seekers.

YOUTH DEMOCRACY PROJECTS

Youth Democracy Projects aim at boosting young people’s involvement in the democratic process at local, regional and European level by improving young people’s understanding of how democracy works, helping them to make the most of their right to participate in the decision-making structures of a democratic society.

Aimed at 13 to 30 year olds, youth democracy projects should focus on such themes as European citizenship, active participation, cultural diversity, social inclusion, the future of Europe or other priorities identified in the youth field, within the frame-work of European co-operation. Thus it goes without saying that youth (un-)employment is definitely one of those topics which could also be tackled more through youth democracy projects. Organising a youth democracy project could help young people to better understand how the labour market functions, the expectations employers may have of them, but it could also clarify the position of youth in these issues, for example, through organised meetings, various work-shops, campaigns etc.

EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE (EVS)

The European Voluntary Service provides young Europeans aged 18-30 with unique chances to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country within or outside the European Union. In this way, it seeks to develop solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance among young people, thus making a contributing to re-inforcing social cohesion in the European Union and to promoting young people's active citizenship.

Participation in the European Voluntary Service contributes greatly to the development of competences and thus, also to the further employability of young people. For example, it can be the case that the young unemployed people get a chance through EVS to get engaged in an activity which provides them with the opportunity to develop their competences but first of all, to rediscover themselves, to contribute, to create something meaningful etc. But EVS can also become a useful tool in organisations which work in the area of unemployment and engage EVS volunteers to provide peer-support by hosting foreign volunteers. It goes without saying that based on the learning experiences of EVS, volunteers are able to develop their professional career, to better understand the expectations they have of a future professional life and can develop a relevant basis for a future professional career.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE: A Belgian volunteer and her further professional development in her host country, Portugal

Ilse Bervoets is a Belgian ex-EVS volunteer, living now in Portugal where she decided to stay to work as a youth-worker and trainer after her EVS period. Her story in the youth field at European level started when she participated in an EVS project, then in a Future Capital (an action within the past European YOUTH programme which was aimed at building upon the experience of EVS), then through participation in SALTO training courses, in exchanges, as an EVS co-ordinator and lately working with theatre as methodology within the framework of non-formal education. Following is a summary of her personal testimony - how she sees the impact of EVS on her professional life.

"Starting with EVS, non-formal education helped me to find a job and to be a good worker. It gave me the opportunity to grow, to make my own experience, to co-operate and work with others, to find my place and to improve.

This was possible because the experiences and methods in which I was involved were from the beginning challenging and motivating: involving leisure activities, intercultural experience, communication exercises, reflections...

At the beginning I didn't fully realise, but all those activities meant entering the learning process slowly, which - beyond the specific methods used - challenged me to learn, to grow and to take on responsibilities.

The enriching experience, and the challenges that implied in terms of attitudes was the most important thing for me as I became more complete as a person.

Thanks to EVS and other experiences, I could identify the following developments in me:

- *Changing attitudes*
- *Developing ideas: read, listen, speak, doing projects, making plans*
- *Learning from experience: How to make and how to create*
- *Sharing the experience with others and learning from it*
- *Being more aware, improving*
- *Developing my own personality and opinions, what you like, don't like and know it*
- *Making meaningful decisions*
- *Taking action*

This learning process was very satisfactory but not always easy. As a learner I was willing and open enough to do it.

I think that everybody has his own way of learning and of developing. Non-formal education should always take this into account so that it does not become standardised (the same for everybody) or "formalised". I think that the greatest aspect of EVS is that it gives the chance to develop, using tools that provide freedom and room for experimentation and challenge."

TRAINING AND NETWORKING PROJECTS

This action, different from those described previously, is specifically targeted at building the capacity of youth workers and organisations active in youth field, to develop the quality of their activities. First of all it means that opportunities are created to develop cooperation and partnerships, to exchange good practices, as well as to receive training. This will strengthen the impact of European cooperation in the field of youth policy and will also support project development under the Youth in Action Programme.



In more practical terms, within this action, support is available for a whole range of different activities like **job shadowing**, **feasibility visits**, **evaluation meetings**, **study visits** and **seminars**, **training courses**, as well as **partnership building** and **networking activities**.

In relation to the topic of youth unemployment, for example, youth workers can use this action to set up partnerships with similar organisations and plan further projects (feasibility visit), to learn through the practices in other organisations which have experience and expertise in that field (job-shadowing project), to meet with colleagues from different countries to discuss issues related to youth (un-)employment and respective solutions within the frame-work of the seminar or develop their skills to work with young people who face unemployment in an international training course.

NATIONAL AND TRANS-NATIONAL YOUTH SEMINARS

Aimed at promoting European co-operation in the youth field, these seminars represent an opportunity to organise meetings between young people and those responsible for youth policy.

Targeted at young people aged 15-30, these meetings can take place either at national or international level with the aim of exchanging good practices and ideas in relation to important topics in the field of European youth policy or the priority themes of the Youth in Action programme and structured dialogue. This way these projects can be seen to contribute to young people's knowledge and awareness of the European and international contexts within which they live.

Seeing unemployment as complex phenomena and believing that effective solutions are only possible through synergies between policy measures and practice, youth seminars provide an excellent opportunity to discuss these issues, involving both young people as well as those in the support field of youth and policy makers. This way these projects can bring an additional value to policy developments on various levels, as well as helping to guarantee that matters concerning youth are discussed directly with them. "Nothing about them without them" is a good slogan to express the need for better understanding and cooperation for which youth seminars can turn out to be a very effective tool.



EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE: FNAJ from Portugal

FNAJ (the National Federation of Youth Associations in Portugal)¹⁴, founded in 1996, gathers around 100 members of youth organisations and associations from all the regions including Madeira and Azores. Its main goals are:

- Representing all the Youth Associations before the public and political powers;
- Promoting and developing youth associations in a way to increase youth participation in civil society;
- Promoting experiences of exchange between local, regional and national associations;

Its main activities are training courses at national level for associative leaders and persons who work in the youth field, organisation of international events and national Youth Associations Meetings, promotion campaigns, development of a sociological study “Portuguese Youth Associative Profile” and publication of the Youth Politics Collection etc. Among many other activities the FNAJ organised a trans-national youth seminar project.

A true dialogue between young people and politicians was the primary objective of the “Youth Policies in Local Government” conference. It aimed not only at the exchange of ideas between different youth policies in Europe but also intended to encourage a network for partnership and co-operation based on European programmes and recommendations. This project was promoted by the National Federation of Youth Associations in partnership with the Municipality of Porto.

Twelve countries were involved, represented by delegations from 14 cities, a total of 80 delegates. Each delegation included a politician, a project manager and 3 youth representatives. The schedule involved discussion sessions, presentation of case studies, work-shops and working group sessions.

The voice of young people at this conference was of great importance in defining future public youth policies. This project aimed to stimulate young people to participate in local political management which resulted in strengthening their participation in European policies for youth.

The policy areas discussed included education and employment. Current obstacles and difficulties were discussed. Several policy proposals emerged, particularly for equal opportunities when accessing education and the labour market at local level. The need of overcoming the existing gender and ethnic background discrimination in the labour market was stressed.

In most cases the Youth In Action projects were important elements of a wider strategy for employment which included other measures such as job-clubs, counselling, leisure activities, social and political work at local level... and often the effectiveness of this has been proven through the long-term approach, which means that setting up a project in a Youth In Action programme can become an effective tool at a certain time but not a useful or appropriate tool at other times. Furthermore, having seen the differences between the different actions of the programme, it might be interesting to set up a pathway approach, using different actions of the programme at different times of your inclusion work.

For example, organising an international youth exchange to reach and motivate a group of young people who are currently unemployed, to use the process of preparing for the project as well as the exchange itself to empower young people. And after the exchange to continue working with some young people, who might further benefit and are interested in European Voluntary Service, to challenge themselves and develop their competences further. Or it could be that you decide to motivate a group of young people to start up a local youth initiative, which could be later developed into a trans-national one, to share your practices with a group from abroad ...how to best use these actions depends a lot on specific situation, the needs of youth as well as your own creativity and competences to use Youth In Action as tool.

However, there are certain aspects of the “Youth in Action” programme which currently do not seem to fully favour the participation of young unemployed people or use of the programme as an effective tool for the employability of young people and would thus need further attention.

Based on the discussions from the SALTO Training Course “I don’t have a job but I’m working on it”, the participants – working with unemployed youth - expressed their concern:

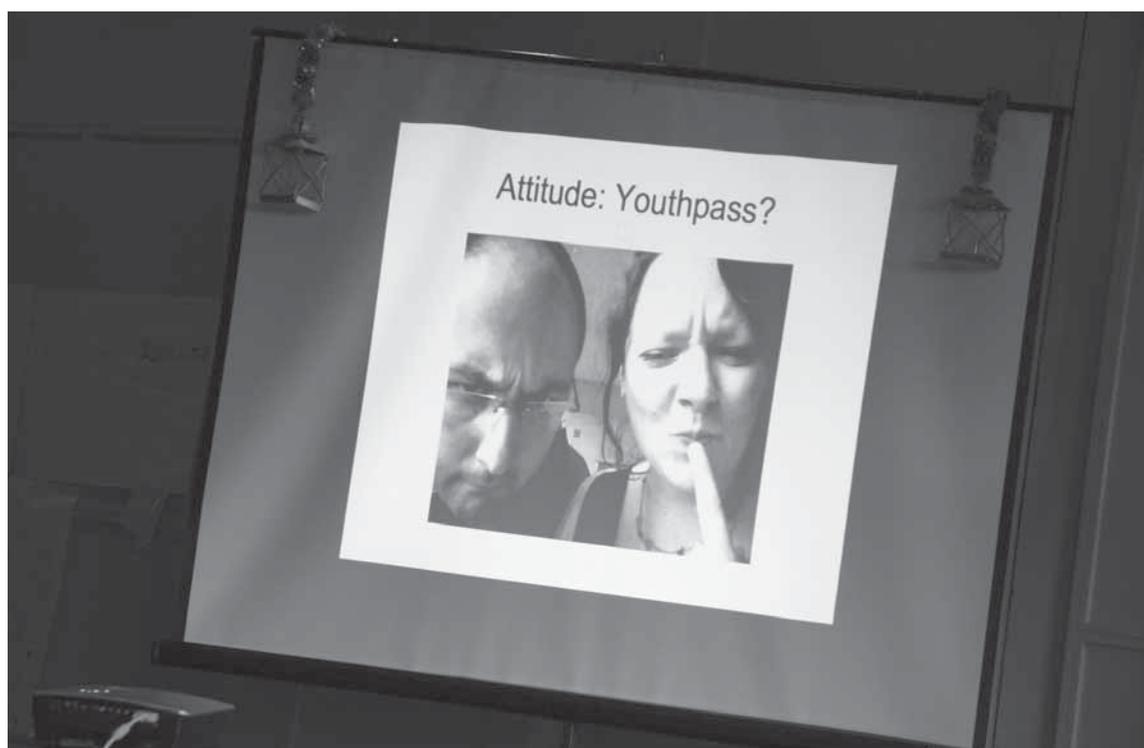
If the Youth In Action Programme could and even should be used for creating employment opportunities, it is a contradiction that its potential beneficiaries lose their unemployment benefits if they decide, for example, to take part in an EVS in another country. Administrative and financial regulations should be changed so that specially young jobseekers can effectively take part in the YiA programme.

¹⁴ <http://www.fnaj.com> (see p 76)

Having looked at all these examples – in which way(s) can Youth In Action really contribute to the employability of those young people who face unemployment? Can it create jobs? Mhmm... well, probably not in its direct sense. But participating in the programme has certainly helped many young people to understand their professional aspirations, inspired them to continue towards becoming a youth-worker or trainer, to continue their studies in the field in which they tried volunteer work and to continue towards a professional career in that field, to create their own business in the field connected to the topic of their project etc. Project experiences have also been taken as a good reference by employers when applying for a job or have been recognised by universities or other higher education institutions to which young people have applied to enter or as part of the practice during studies.

Yet, the impact that the programme experience can have depends a lot on the context and other circumstances and, most importantly, on the ability of the young person to understand the impact, to reflect, assess, make it transparent and communicate it. To support all this within the frame-work of the Youth In Action programme, there exists an instrument called Youthpass.

THE YOUTHPASS



Competences = knowledge + skills + attitudes

Youthpass is based on the idea that through participating in the Youth In Action programme, people go through an important non-formal learning process and, in order to better acknowledge it, make it more evident and apply for recognition of these learning experiences, an assessment of the development of competences should be integrated into the project process. In the final phase of the project, this results in an official certificate, confirming the fact that this person has participated in such an activity and describes the learning outcomes.

Youthpass is based on a European framework of 8 key competences for life-long learning (2006) and looks at learning outcomes in the following areas:

- **Learning to learn** - how to organise and assess your own learning; how to motivate yourself to learn and overcome obstacles etc.
- **Interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competence** - understanding what is going on in your local context as well as on regional, national and European and global levels; to be able to adapt to different situations and deal with people from various backgrounds etc.
- **Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship** – ability to turn ideas into action, be creative and able to manage projects etc.
- **Cultural awareness and expression** – to know and creatively use media, arts, music as well as to understand the importance of creative expressions etc.
- **Communication in mother tongue** – the ability to express yourself in oral and written communication etc.
- **Communication in foreign languages** – ability to understand and express yourself in foreign languages, as well as to be curious and have a positive attitude towards cultural diversity and communication with people from different cultural backgrounds
- **Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology** – the ability to use mathematical thinking in everyday life as well as to put theoretical knowledge into practice
- **Digital competence** – to have basic skills for confident and critical use of the computer and internet.

So, Youthpass is a validation instrument within the “Youth in Action” programme, the aims of which are:

- reflection upon the personal non-formal learning process
- social recognition of youth work
- employability of young people and youth workers

This way it is evident that Youthpass as a piece of paper won’t “do the trick” to support young people’s employability. But if used qualitatively, consciously and integrated into the whole project process, it can become a very powerful tool to support the competences of young people and also the “competence” to be proud of their learning experiences and communicate these in various contexts – when applying for a job or arguing their expectations of better working conditions, of starting a course of studies etc.

It goes without saying that in order to support young people reflect on their own learning, based on this frame-work, a wide range of different methods can be used, depending on the needs, abilities, interests etc. of both young people and people supporting them in this process.

To find examples of these tools and methods, as well to get a better understanding of how to use Youthpass throughout the project process, Youthpass Guide (<http://www.youthpass.eu>) and Toolbox for Training (<http://www.salto-youth.net/Toolbox>) can be valuable sources.

If you are interested in how to affect the competence-based approach in your youth projects, you might find some inspiration and know-how from the relevant publication from SALTO Inclusion publication series (<http://www.salto-youth.net/inclusionforall>).

The YOUTHPASS contains:

- Description of project (objectives, venue, duration, main activities) and the Action
- Participant's details
- In the form of self assessment a description of the learning outcomes based on the 8 key competences for lifelong learning:

Learning to learn

Social and civic competence

Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship

Cultural awareness and expression

Communication in mother tongue

Communication in foreign languages

Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

Digital competence



In the SALTO Training Course „I don't have a job but I'm working on it“, participants – working with young jobseekers – discussed various project examples of the Youth In Action programme with the aim of identifying different competences which can be developed in such projects. When doing this, specific instances of young people who face unemployment were kept in mind.

The following does not pretend to be a complete map but rather a collection of some thoughts which hopefully inspires you to do a similar thinking-exercise in your work field: so you do all these projects but what is the point for young people in terms of learning and their further employability, especially if you work with young people who for several reasons seem to face difficulties in the labour market?

Learning to learn: to experience that learning can be fun and an enjoyable process; by offering a safe learning environment where mistakes are allowed and recognised as a source for learning; being able to get specific work experience and analyse it to create a better understanding of your preferences; experience to reflect on something you have lived through in a constructive way;

Intercultural, interpersonal, social and civic competence: getting to know new people who can inspire you with their career stories and/or even be the ones to help you in the process of finding a job; raising self-esteem by becoming more aware of yourself through contact with others in new contexts; improving their “soft” skills to deal with people; discovering your own interests and through self-reflection getting a better understanding of your work orientation and expectations related to that; when in contact with new people and/or in a new environment, it can offer a “break from the circle”; can experience relationships of trust; developing a more realistic understanding and expectations of the labour market and job perspectives; to learn how life is in other countries;

Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship: broadens views and horizons for job opportunities and inspires you to think possibly, not only in terms of “finding” a job but also “creating” one for yourself; skills for entrepreneurship – you might have great ideas but to be able to put those into practice, one needs a lot of skills and encouragement!; positive thinking (especially as these young people have frequently faced many disappointments in their lives); confidence and courage to deal with fears (often related to new situations and new people); to have the experience (maybe for the first time) of taking responsibility and keeping it and/or assuming leadership in certain tasks;

Cultural awareness and expression: use art (products) to create a job for yourself; discover your talent and start to build-up a career on that;

Communication in mother tongue: through better self-esteem to a better presentation of yourself in a job interview, to practice for a job interview; learning new ways to interact and communicate with people;

Communication in foreign languages: through better self-esteem to a better presentation of yourself in a job interview and to practice for a job interview (if international job perspectives are considered); practising foreign language skills;

Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology: budgeting, developing the skills, within the frame-work of the project, to manage finances in a responsible and effective way in personal and professional life; planning and project management (to be able to experience the process of a step-by-step approach to reaching goals, as many of these youngsters often live very hectic lives);

Digital competence: use computers for learning and searching of information (as many of them would possibly just use it for social and entertainment purposes); to get “tangible” skills that can be later included in the CV (like blogging, on-line searching, programmes, working with data etc.

**HAVE YOU STARTED
THE JOB
OF YOUR DREAMS
YET**

Loesje



CALL for action

Youth unemployment is a serious problem affecting a considerable number of young people in Europe which limits their potentialities and future perspectives.

Together with a deeper understanding of youth employment, we have seen inspiring strategies, actions and policies for fighting against this complex phenomenon. This is all in line with the concept of comprehensive active inclusion strategy of European Union which aims to promote the integration of the most disadvantaged people, entailing the provision of an adequate level of income support with a link to the labour market and a better access to services, while combining these measures appropriately to the individual's situation and needs.

Together with other initiatives, the Youth in Action programme has proved to be a very valuable tool for developing fundamental competences and new skills for the employability of young people.

The analysis, the inspiring practices, the current and potential use of the Youth in Action programme explored in the booklet would be of little value if, all together, they didn't foster new analyses, practices and actions at local, national and European level.

That is the reason why we would like to conclude this booklet with a "call for action". It is necessary to overcome youth unemployment and, as we have seen in the publication, there are ways for each of us to contribute towards its eradication.

'AUTHORS' & CONTRIBUTORS

This publication was written by:



ÜLLY ENN (Author)

Experienced in European Union Youth In Action programme and European youth work practice, policy and training field. In 2009 she was working in SALTO-YOUTH Social Inclusion Resource Centre, in Brussels. Currently, working for the Estonian National Agency of EU Youth In Action programme.

ully.enn@gmail.com



MIGUEL ANGEL GARCÍA LÓPEZ (Author)

Experienced evaluator, trainer and educational consultant. Working as a resource person for the University of Osnabrück (Germany) and for more than ten years as a freelance at international level for European Institutions, Universities, Non - Governmental Organisations and Private Companies.

rmbercia@aol.com

With substantial contributions through comments, examples, inspiration, contacts and materials... from (in alphabetical order):

Ann Hendriks, Koen Lambert, Els Meersschaert - SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre, JINT vzw

Barbara Zupan -, European Commission, Youth Policy Unit

Branca Pimenta- Portuguese Youth in Action National Agency

Darragh Kennedy- Irish Wheelchair Association, Ireland

Estonian National Agency of Youth In Action programme

Ines Alves- European Youth Forum

Jorge Cristino- Portuguese Youth in Action National Agency

Marius Ulozas – Consultant, trainer

Mark Eerdekens, Arbeidscentrum De Wroeter- Belgium Flanders

Marta Medlinska- Council of Europe

Mick Petrovic- Brighton and Hove Youth Offending Team, Young Offenders Employment Project, United Kingdom

Tanya Basarab-, European Anti Poverty Network

Timea Sofalvi – Consultant, trainer

&

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&

Loesje International who has inspired us with their creative writing slogans on topic of unemployment, used in the SALTO training course and throughout this publication.

FURTHER READING & OTHER RESOURCES

Other SALTO Inclusion Publications:

- **Fit for Life (2005)** – using sports as an educational tool for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in youth-work
- **No Offence (updated 2010)** – exploring opportunities and setting up youth projects with young ex-offenders and those at risk of offending
- **Village International (updated 2010)** - setting up international projects in rural and geographically isolated areas
- **Inclusion & Diversity (updated 2008)** – how to make your youth-work and youth projects more inclusive and reach more diverse target groups
- **No Barriers, No Borders (updated 2008)** – organising international mixed ability projects (including people with and without a disability)
- **Over the Rainbow (updated 2008)** – creating sensitive projects with young LesBiGays and young people questioning their sexual orientation
- **E.M. power (2008)** – empowering Ethnic Minority young women through international youth projects
- **Youth and the City (2008)** – developing meaningful international projects with young people in disadvantaged (sub)urban areas
- **Inclusion in Practice (2008)** – inspiring examples of inclusion projects within the Youth in Action programme
- **Going International - Inclusion for All (updated 2009)** – practical methods and advice for youth workers organising their first international project for young people with fewer opportunities
- **Use your Hands to Move Ahead (updated 2009)** – using practical tasks to increase participation by young people with fewer opportunities in short-term European Voluntary Service projects
- **Inclusion by Design (2009)** – a manual for youth NGOs to approaching inclusion in a strategic way
- **Making Waves (updated 2010)** - greater impact with your youth projects through visibility, dissemination and exploitation of your project results
- **Images in Action (2010)** – running a positive image-building campaign for inclusion groups
- **Let's Youthpass it on for All! (updated 2010)** – recognition of non-formal learning through the Youth in Action programme for young people with fewer opportunities



T-Kit Series: *The training kits are thematic publications written by experienced youth trainers. They are easy-to-use handbooks for use in training and study sessions, published by the Youth-Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.*

- Social Inclusion
- Project Management
- Organisational Management
- Methodology in Language Learning
- Intercultural Learning
- International Voluntary Service
- Under Construction...Citizenship, Youth and Europe
- Training Essentials
- Funding and Financial Management
- Educational Evaluation in Youth Work
- Euromed Cooperation

📄 Downloadable from www.youth-partnership.net or www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Toolbox/

In addition to references provided throughout the text, some other resources and links:

GENERAL

- **Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2008**
New Skills for New Jobs. Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs.
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=431&furtherNews=yes>
- **EU Youth Report**, 2009
http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/news1458_en.htm
- **Finn Yrjar Denstad**, 2009 - *Youth policy manual - How to develop a national youth strategy.*
ISBN: 978-92-871-6576-3
<http://book.coe.int/EN>
- **“Political Guidelines for the next Commission”**, by Jose Manuel Barroso, 2009
http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/index_en.htm

EMPLOYMENT

- **EU employment situation and social outlook.**
European Commission's monthly monitoring report, April 2009
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=488&furtherNews=yes>
- **Byambadori, Purvee, 2007** - *The youth unemployment situation in Sweden. University of Göteborg, Department of Social Work*
<http://www.essays.se/about/youth+unemployment>
- **Policy Paper on Youth Unemployment, 2008** - *European Youth Forum*
http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/social_conditions/0813-07_Employment_FINAL.pdf
- **O'Higgins, Neil, 1997** - *The challenge of youth unemployment. Employment and Training Department of ILO. ISBN 92-2-110751-5/ISSN 1020-5322*
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/publ/etp7.htm>
- **Symposium on Youth Employment Report, 17-19.10.2008** - *European Youth Forum*
<http://www.salto-youth.net/download/1761/>
- **Youth employment in times of crisis. An EU-Youth Dialogue in the Zlin Region. Conclusions, 20-21.01.2009** - *European Youth Forum*
http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/Press_publications/press_releases/2009/0008-09_Conclusions_Zlin.pdf

SOCIAL INCLUSION - EMPLOYMENT

- **Cartmel F, Furlong A, 2000** - *Youth unemployment in rural areas.*
<http://www.jrf.org.uk>
- **Colley H, Boetzelen P, Hoskins B and Parveva T, 2007**
Social inclusion for young people – breaking down the barriers. Council of Europe
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Resources/Publications/Presentations/084_Social_inclusion_en.asp

- **Inclusion Colleague Support Group on how to involve young people who face unemployment**, 18-20.2.2009. Report.
<http://www.salto-youth.net/InclusionColleagueSupportGroupsWhat/>
- **OECD forum on Migration, Employment and Integration**, 2009
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/38/9/43124357.pdf>
- **Small Steps – Big Changes on building participation of people experiencing poverty**, 2009
European Anti-Poverty Network
<http://www.eapn.eu/content/view/855/30/lang,en/>

EDUCATION - EMPLOYMENT

- **Education at a Glance**, 2008 - *OECD Indicators*
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/46/41284038.pdf>
- **Policy Paper on Early Education Leaving**, 2008 - *European Youth Forum*
http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/learner-centred_education/0052-08_FINAL_%20Early_Education_Leaving.pdf
- **Economic Survey of Sweden**, 2008 - *Education and youth employment*
http://www.oecd.org/document/17/0,3343,en_2649_34117_41738577_1_1_1_1,00.html
- **Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “Promoting young people’s full participation in education, employment and society”**, 2007
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0498en01.pdf

COUNSELLING - SUPPORT TO YOUNG JOBSEEKERS

- **Insoo Kim Berg; Evan George: Family preservation – a Brief Therapy workbook**,
Publisher: London: BT Press, 1991
- **Whitmore, John: Coaching for Performance**, 1992
- **Victor E. Frankl: Man’s Search for Meaning**, 1956

- **Eric Berne:** *Games People Play - The Basic Handbook of Transactional Analysis*, Ballantine Books, 1996
- **An interview with Insoo Kim Berg:**
http://www.psychotherapy.net/interview/Insoo_Kim_Berg
- **Coert Visser:** *A brief history of the solution-focused approach*, © 2008,
<http://articlescoertvisser.blogspot.com/2008/02/brief-history-of-solution-focused.html>
- **David L. Cooperrider and Diana Whitney** - *A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry*. E-book
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SALTO-Jint, Grétrystraat 26, 1000 Brussel, Belgium

Tel: +32 (0)2 209 07 20 Fax: +32 (0)2 209 07 49

inclusion@salto-youth.net

Coordination: Ülly Enn, ully.enn@gmail.com

Authors: Ülly Enn (ully.enn@gmail.com) and Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez (rmbercia@aol.com)

Proof-reader: Fionnuala Walsh fionnualawalsh@hotmail.com

Lay out: miXst, info@mixst.be

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Updated in November 2010 by Marija Kljajic,

marija@salto-youth.net

SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre

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„Young people have profited less from inclusion and active labour market policies than other age groups“

The Renewed Social Agenda,
Thematic Study on Policy Measures concerning
Disadvantaged Youth, 2005;
KoK Report 2004.

At the same time, it is a generally acknowledged trend that the rate of youth unemployment is mostly higher than the adult unemployment rate and tends to vary more in response to variations in economic conditions, increasing more in recessions and recovering more quickly during booms. Hence the explosive rise in youth unemployment in the economic context of some past years in Europe is not a surprise, with youth unemployment having reached almost 30-40% in some European countries.

Unemployment is a complex, social phenomenon and efforts towards combating it require a well-planned strategic approach, combining integrated policy measures with effective practices. There exist many inspiring practices in different European countries, and together with some theoretical elaborations on the issue, this publication also takes a look at these.

While it is evident that a lot has already been done to work on unemployment among young people, unfortunately there is yet no need to be afraid of being “out-of-work” in that area. So what is your next step in the work on youth unemployment?

This booklet has been developed by SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre. Download it free at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Workingonwork

