INCLUSION
THROUGH
EMPLOYABILITY
Youth work approaches to unemployment

SALTO-YOUTH STANDS FOR...

…'**S**upport and **A**dvanced **L**earning and **T**raining **O**pportunities within the **Erasmus+ Youth in Action** programme'. The European Commission has created a network of eight SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the EU Erasmus+ 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 Erasmus+ 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, 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 Erasmus+ 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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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The context youth work currently has to deal with is one of increasing challenges on multiple fronts. The profiles of the target groups for inclusion policies are becoming more diverse as exclusion threatens a broader range of young people. Likewise, the moments in youth transitions where risks of exclusion arise are multiplying – as the process of transition to an autonomous working life is itself becoming longer. Thus youth workers and policymakers are facing both growing volume and increasing complexity of the problem.

Young people's experiences of employment are at present, and have been for a decade or so, characterised by **precariousness**, a **hollowing out** of opportunity for quality employment, a lengthening yo-yo trajectory in and out of short-term work, unemployment and training or education, and growing ranks of '**NEETs**' (Not in Education, Employment or Training) or so-called 'Zero Status' young people across Europe, not engaged in any kind of work or learning and without any significant personal project for the future.

The current economic crisis has exacerbated youth unemployment, particularly for unskilled and excluded youth. An irony of the crisis is that it has served to reveal already existing problems – by pushing them to an extreme where they become glaringly obvious.

For youth workers, all this means that they will have to, on one hand, operate in a labour market where fewer jobs are available, admittedly with differences of degree depending on where you are.

On the other hand, it is increasingly likely they will have to address structural long-term unemployment and poor employment, with all the consequences of scarring and social fallout that entails.

That is why it has become strategically vital to reinforce those working to increase the employability of young people, particularly with regards to excluded and low skilled young people.

To do so, this study recommends that any such effort take fully into account four broad principles that have been identified by researchers, youth workers and policy makers as **key factors of success**:

- **Involvement and participation** of excluded or at risk young people in the identification of their own needs and in the design, implementation and evaluation of all actions and programmes targeting them. Achieving such participation involves a range of considerations, but it is clear that the actions proposed must be meaningful and credible for young people, should be attractive to them, and any barriers to access need to be resolved.

- **Holistic coordination and governance** has to be practiced: actions, services and diagnoses have to be joined up and talk to each other, not just about general coordination, but about specific young people, and thus be taking place at a local level. Such an approach must be interdisciplinary and it must be **long-term**.

- **Non-formal learning** will be essential to successfully equipping young people with the skills that will increase their employability. Such skills include various work-related, social and behavioural abilities, which can be broadly grouped as 'generic skills' – non-formal learning approaches are the most effective means of teaching such skills. The challenges to non-formal approaches are: correctly identifying the key competences to focus on and when, validation of learning and acceptance of non-formally obtained qualifications within hiring processes.

- **Entrepreneurship** needs to be nurtured among the young, as they are the business creators and innovators of our not too distant future. Programmes and structures working with young people can do a lot to develop entrepreneurial interests and attitudes, and to furnish young people with experiences and skills that will facilitate a path into business initiative. However, broader issues concerning the general business environment, business creation and barriers to entry need to be recognised and addressed if cultivating entrepreneurship is a real goal.

Likewise, it is important that recommendations of recent research on the impact of the crisis on youth are taken into consideration, particularly the **OECD** emphasis on:

• Damage control, by focusing on keeping those furthest from the labour market still connected to it – if necessary, through keeping them in training while they are still unemployed or through temporary jobs in the public sector.

• On-the-job learning, combining work and school, and apprenticeships.

• Prioritisation of preventing early school leaving.

Likewise, actions in favour of the employability of young people need to consider current **EU** Commission's emphasis on:

• More and better education, with a focus on 2020 and developing the skills linked to jobs in growth sectors and so-called 'smart jobs'.

• Generic skills and non-formal learning.

• Guarantee schemes for work or training.

• Mobility.

• Designing effective actions to augment the employability of young people needs to be built on approaches that have been shown to work, an understanding of the current structural realities of the job market and exclusion from it, and a concise grasp of the logic behind current policy frameworks.

INTRO

This report presents the key findings from a review of recent literature and research on youth employment and social exclusion, and a review of some successful approaches when addressing unemployment in excluded youth.

The report is meant to help practitioners trying to develop and carry out successful actions to support young people, who are excluded or at risk of exclusion, in accessing employment and improving their relation to the labour market. Obviously there are differences between member states both at national and local levels, and as such the report does not intend to provide complete solutions on how to increase the employability of excluded youth but rather provides youth workers with key elements they need to consider when intervening with young people. The report is particularly directed to the stakeholders and partners of the SALTO network and Youth in Action national agencies, to help them act more effectively to bring young people with fewer opportunities towards a job.

It draws on reports and papers from research seminars and from the contributions of a range of practitioners and policy makers working with excluded youth. A core reference group of such professionals was gathered at a round table event, organised by the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre in Brussels on 19 October 2010, to discuss successful approaches to improving the employability of young people. The participating organisations and institutions in the round table were:

- SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre, *Belgium*
  www.salto-youth.net/inclusion/
- ProjectWorks Association, *Belgium*
  http://projectworks.wordpress.com/
- Erasmus+Youth in Action programme, *European Commission*
  http://ec.europa.eu/youth/
- Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), *European Commission*
  http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/
- The Youth Research Centre at Warsaw University, *Poland*
  www.obm.isns.uw.edu.pl/forum/
- European Social Fund, *Sweden*
  www.esf.se
- The Dutch Youth Institute, *Netherlands*
  www.nji.nl

- The Valtakunnallinen työpajayhdistys ry (National Workshop Association), *Finland*
  www.tpy.fi
- Cubic-Cultur und Bildung im Context, *Austria*
  www.cubic-online.eu
- The Benfica Foundation, *Portugal*
  http://fundacao.slbenfica.pt/
- Community Links, *London; UK*
  www.community-links.org
- JINT vzw(International Youth Work Coordination Agency), *Belgium*
  www.jint.be

The report starts by clarifying some key concepts around youth and social exclusion. The third chapter describes trends in youth employment in recent years in the European Union, followed in the fourth chapter by an outline of the impact of the economic crisis on youth employment. Chapter five provides an overview of key EU youth policy development, followed in chapter six by a collection of recommended approaches that have been found to be effective when attempting to get excluded youth into the labour market.

Forcibly, it must be kept in mind that the present work is carried out in the context of a severe and (at the time of writing) still unfolding **economic crisis**, which has dramatically increased European youth unemployment and is likely to cause long-term consequences that still cannot be adequately evaluated. We are talking about getting jobs for young people at a time when there are simply less jobs and when austerity measures in most of Europe are putting limits on programmes and resources for the young people concerned.

As a study jointly commissioned by the European Commission and the Council of Europe [I] found that *"although there is a wide range and diversity of youth work experiences in European countries… existing data is scattered and unsatisfactory"* – we hope that the present report contributes to building knowledge on youth work.

[I] 'The Socio-economic Scope of Youth Work in Europe (2007)', conducted by the Institute for Social Work and Social Education (Institut für Sozialarbeit und Sozialpädagogik) of Frankfurt, Germany

TUTORS NEEDED

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2 2

WHO ARE
The excluded? young people?

RETURNEES QUALITY OVERQUALIFIED
DROP OUTS low achievers
Gender Sexual orientation
EDUCATION NEET
UNEMPLOYED AGE justice Prison School policy
BLACK MARKET Institutions reaching out urban
ECONOMIC AREA — peripher foreds
POVERTY Income bracket Rural yoyo
TRANSITION
IN CARE health phys
SOCIAL SERVICE/ welfare DISABILITY — ment depending on benefit
skills self confidence Teenage pregnancy
BACKGROUND family composition
INSTITUTIONAL
SOCIAL MIGRANTS MOTHER TONGUE • Obstacle ≠ person
• Different in different countries CULTURAL
• UNITE Y.P. AROUND ISSUES/TOPIC
• REASONS ≠ CONSEQUENCES
• MULTIPLE EXCLUSION ⚠

Types YOUTH ⚠ STIGMA Labeling!

About youth

This report recommends using the working definition of youth as *"the passage from a dependant childhood to independent adulthood"* used by the working document accompanying the EC communication "Youth – Investing and Empowering" [2]. This definition is not based on age and thus not limiting the scope of interventions. It is a flexible functionalist definition, as it allows for any practical interventions to be based on recognition of whatever varying circumstances are relevant in different locations and with different young people – rather than imposing an abstract, and thus less useful, definition on real and heterogeneous circumstances.

About excluded youth

Different programmes may categorise young people they address by age bracket, economic circumstances, migrant or cultural background, level of education, experience of education (e.g. drop outs, school returnees or an educational difficulty of some kind), disability or health issues, geographical setting (e.g. problem areas of a city, or a rural/urban divide), parenthood (i.e. considering the dynamics of teenage pregnancy or the needs of young parents), gender, language (i.e. what is their mother tongue?), or by institution they are involved with or which refers them (e.g. school, health or social services, institutional care or police).

Identification of differing needs is key to **tailoring** actions suitably; however labelling young people can be **stigmatising** and prejudicial. Categorising young people entails certain dangers: pre-assumption, putting people into 'boxes' and labelling a youth with a problem. Moreover, putting young people into pre-established generic typologies can serve to hide real specificity that may be relevant to that young person's situation. Nonetheless, actions in support of youth cannot be effective without taking into account how their needs may vary.

One possibility for youth practitioners is to adopt the definition of excluded youth used by the inclusion strategy of the Youth in Action, which is *"young people with fewer opportunities"* – as we do in this report – because it covers a wide range of situations and obstacles that can "prevent young people from having effective access to formal and non-formal education, trans-national mobility and from participation, active citizenship, empowerment and inclusion in society at large" [3].

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[2] "Youth - Investing and Empowering", EU YOUTH REPORT, SEC(2009) 549 final.

In practice, it is usually more effective, and empowering, to tailor support to young people in terms of the **obstacles** they need to overcome, i.e. as described by young people themselves. This means that young people should be involved in identifying their own needs. Thus, practitioners working with young people need to speak to them, and solicit from them – **in their own words** – a description of the obstacles they face and the needs they have.

The objective is not to invalidate the diagnosis of a situation that a qualified professional can make; rather it is to say that the subject – young people – needs to be **part** of that diagnostic and prescriptive process.

3 www.salto-youth.net /inclusionstrategy

TRENDS IN YOUTH TRANSITIONS TO employment in the EU

"Interservice-consultation.com"

"Helferkonferenz" .AT
bring services together
to develop tailor made
approach ~ task force

"navigation centers" .SE

Individual sessions/ LIFE
Coaching

Action plan

See YP in wider perspective
(eg family, sports, school,..)

"FAIR CONTRACTS"
help to reach each
others' objectives
WIN — WIN
SUBSIDIARITY

COMMON commitment

* Close to the individual
YOUNG PERSON AT THE CENTER

PROACTIVE ⟷ REACTIVE

CROSS-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Track young
people from
young age
~ education, training
employment

HOLISTIC COORDINATION
between different services

Raise the
profile of
the cooperation
(e.g. politicians,..)

Build up
trust
~ networking
~ reconfigure
relationships/
break stereotypes/
roles

needs long-term work

LIFE LONG + WIDE APPROACH

e.g. disability

Common
assessment
CAF - UK

Find out/document
which other
services YP
access.

involve families

look over
the hedge
other sectors
~ cross sector

Young people's experiences of employment

At the present time and throughout the last decade, youth workers have been operating in a labour market where – with differing intensities depending on where – young people's experiences of employment have been increasingly marked by the following characteristics:

• Young people's transition into the labour market is occurring later, as young people study longer or simply do not find jobs. They are leaving their parent's home later, compared to the 1950s and a few decades following, where "most young people would have attained most of the **traditional markers of adulthood** by their mid-twenties" (Iacovou and Aassve, 2007).

• Young people **outside classical target groups** of inclusion policies are having difficulties entering the labour market and problems leading to disadvantage are shown to arise at various points in their transitions. Thus, practitioners are having to address a **broader scope of young people**, and take into account a more complicated developmental trajectory towards adult autonomy, as there are a variety of points at which a process of exclusion might start.

• In de-industrialised labour markets, there is evidence that young people's experiences of employment are that of repeated and long-term engagement with "**poor work**". A study drawing on the findings of qualitative research projects with young adults who grew up in poor neighbourhoods in the North East of England but who do not describe themselves as excluded or disconnected from the labour market, highlights three characteristics: first, although these young people had a lots of work experience it was in jobs which are **insecure** and with few decent **opportunities**. Second, these people experienced a succession of poor jobs, which **exacerbated** their experience of poverty and social exclusion. Third, they saw few opportunities to "secure the sort of 'respectable' working class jobs undertaken by their **parents** and grand-parents" (Shildrick, 2007). This type of experience is shared by all too many young people throughout the European Union. In countries such as Poland, the decline in the manufacturing sector and the increasing demand in the service industry has generated a **"hollowing out"** of the youth labour market – by polarizing jobs into "professional and advanced technical sectors" at the top end, and unqualified jobs in the service sector at the lower (Musiala, 2007).

- An increasing number of young people are experiencing what is referred to as **"yo-yo" trajectories**, where they find themselves alternating between autonomy and dependence, between training, education and employment without being able to secure a stable entry into the labour market (Kovacheva and Pohl, 2007).

- Although there are differences across the European Union concerning the problems that lead to disadvantage in the transition into the labour market – in terms of the incidence of early school leaving, rates of unemployment, of long-term unemployment and so forth – one common trend, identified in a survey across 13 member states, is the **high precariousness** of youth employment, where various forms of precarious work can serve to extend disadvantage after entry into the labour market. This precarious work takes the form of temporary contracts (Spain, Poland, Finland, Slovenia), part-time work (Denmark) and undeclared work (Greece, Italy) (Kovacheva and Pohl, 2007).

- One group at particular risk of exclusion in most European countries is the **NEETs**, often also referred to as the **"status zero"**. These are young people who are not in education, training or employment and who may not be registered in employment agencies. Statistics and means of measurement vary, but the EU calculates that more than **one third of European young people aged 15-24 are NEETs** [4]. The UK calculates it has the highest proportion of NEETS in Europe, 1 in 10 of 16 years old followed by France with 1 in 14 and Germany with 1 in 23. In some parts of Europe, such as Hungary and Romania, being NEET may be linked with being Roma. For instance, the Hungarian municipality of Nagykálló calculates about 70% of local NEETs to be Roma [5].

- For its part, the Council of Europe study "Disadvantage in youth transitions: constellations and policy dilemmas [6]" identified as the **main causes for entering the Status Zero category:**
    - ¬ Limited **access** to benefit entitlements.
    - ¬ Low **trust** in the effectiveness and integrity of the public employment service, experience of bad treatment by institutional actors
    - ¬ Alternative options such as **informal work** [7].

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[4] EU Youth Report, 2009

[5] InteGROW Baseline Study, Urbact

[6-7] Disadvantage in youth transitions: constellations and policy dilemmas.

Factors of failure and success

Various studies on youth employment highlight the following factors as being **counterproductive** in youth employment programmes and policies:

- Young people are constructed as the **objects** of policy rather than shapers, decision-makers and deliverers [8].

- A failure to **involve** excluded youth in devising and revising policies for inclusion [9]

- Insufficient attention is paid to **empowering excluded youth** [10]

- Young people tend be represented in a negative light in the **mass media**. They are commonly associated with declining moral standards, hedonism, drugs and drinking, sexual promiscuity, public disturbance and crime [11].

- It is important to break down the barriers between researchers, policy makers and practitioners. Policy makers and practitioners need to be research-minded if they are to develop and deliver evidence-based policies. To that end, actions to **provide research and evaluation training sessions for policy makers and practitioners** should be organised [12].

Studies undertaken with young people demonstrated that the following factors are key to **successful employment** interventions with excluded youth:

- It is important to acknowledge the lengthy and complex nature of the transitions of vulnerable young people into the labour market. For this, **holistic and long-term** approaches proved to be more successful than expectations of rapid results [13].

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[8] Youth Employment and the Future of Work - Report of a Research Seminar

http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth_Policy/docs/Youth_Work/Research/YK10_
Youth_employment.pdf

[9-10] Social inclusion and young people: breaking down the barriers. June 2007. Council of Europe. 2007. Research seminar.

http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth_Policy/docs/Cohesion/Research/2007_Social_
inclusion_young_people.pdf

- The quality of the **relationships** of young people with practitioners is key, "respecting young people's confidentiality, and avoiding stigmatisation, are also crucial to establishing trust" [14].

- Young people need to trust the **relevance** of the programmes offered to them [15].

- "Some effective transformations for socially excluded young people have been produced by the self-organisation of marginalised groups to empower themselves, protest publicly against discrimination and exclusion, and take more direct forms of political action. In some cases, such movements have been highly successful in engaging with policy makers to promote positive change" [16].

- The study *"How to Avoid Cooling Out? Experiences of young people in their transitions to work across Europe (2002* [17]*)"* highlights the importance of young people feeling themselves **participating** in their own transitions to the labour market. The study also highlights the importance of **non-formal learning** for young people who disengage with formal transition systems. Informal settings where "learning is linked to their life-worlds, life-styles, to youthful interests etc." are more likely to anchor the meaning of learning as personally relevant.

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[11-12] Youth Employment and the Future of Work - Report of a Research Seminar

http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth_Policy/docs/Employment/Research/Youth_Employment_Report.pdf

[13 - 14-15] Social inclusion and young people: breaking down the barriers. June 2007. Council of Europe. 2007. Research seminar.

http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth_Policy/docs/Cohesion/Research/2007_Social_inclusion_young_people.pdf

[16] Social inclusion and young people

[17] Du Bois-Reymonds and all (2002). How to Avoid Cooling Out? Experiences of young people in their transitions to work across Europe. Research Project YOYO. - http://www.iris-egris.de/en/publications?bib=irislit.bib&all

Impact of the current economic crisis on youth employment

Across Europe, **young people have been the hardest hit** by the present economic crisis; they have the highest unemployment rates (see Graph 1) and are the first to go when firings begin. In some parts of Europe the impact has been enormous in scale – in Spain youth unemployment is over 40% (see Annex). Youth unemployment has been increasing since the first quarter of 2008 at a faster pace than the overall unemployment rate reaching **21.4%** in December 2009 [18]. In each EU country, youth unemployment rates are significantly higher than the total unemployment rate.

However, youth unemployment in Europe was **already high**, and above the OECD average [19], before the current economic crisis began to worsen the situation. For roughly a decade prior, youth unemployment was typically absorbed with **precarious**, short-term employment contracts. These jobs were usually the **easiest to eliminate** when the recession hit.

GRAPH1: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE FOR THE EU
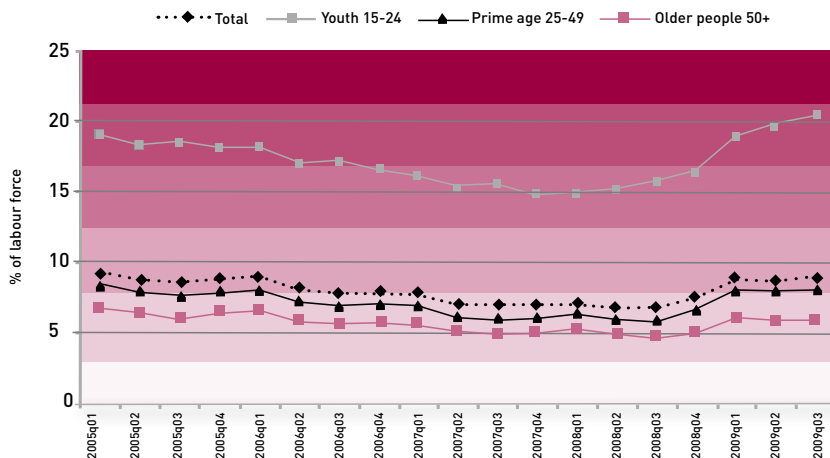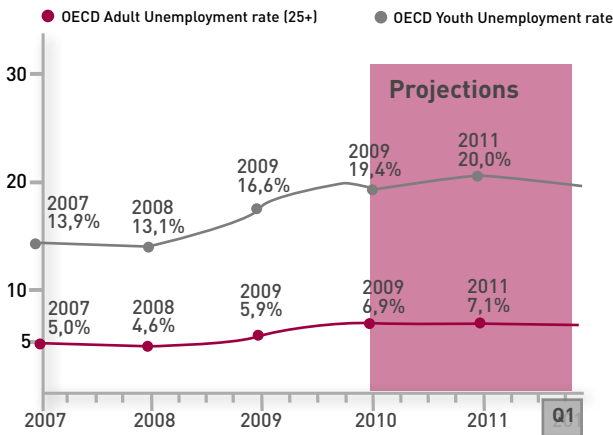

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, Data non seasobally adhjusted

[18] EU employment situation and social outlook, February 2010, EC Monthly Monitor

[19] Lowrey, A. Europe's New Lost Generation. Young Europeans are facing the worst job market in years -- and that has some scary implications now and down the road, Foreign policy, (July 13, 2009). www.foreignpolicy.com

GRAPH 2: UNEMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

● OECD Adult Unemployment rate (25+)   ● OECD Youth Unemployment rate

Projections

2007
13,9%

2008
13,1%

2009
16,6%

2009
19,4%

2011
20,0%

2007
5,0%

2008
4,6%

2009
5,9%

2009
6,9%

2011
7,1%

2007   2008   2009   2010   2011   Q1

Source: OECD www.oecd.org/employment/youth

Likewise, prior to the economic downturn, **low-skilled** young people already faced a significant risk of being either unemployed, or stuck in low-quality, low-paid work [20].

A 2010 OECD paper [21] calculates the current number of unemployed young people in the OECD [22] area at nearly **15 million**, about four million more than at the end of 2007. The youth unemployment rate is expected to stay high over the next year and reach 20% in the OECD area (Graph 2); many unemployed youth are likely to experience a **prolonged period of joblessness**.

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[20] S Froy, F. & Giguere, S. (2009), Putting in Place Jobs which Last, A Guide to Re-Building Sustainable Employment at the Local Level, OECD LEED programme, OECD,

http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/44418145.pdf

[21] Scarpetta, S., Sonnet, A. and Manfredi, T. Rising youth unemployment during the crisis: how to prevent negative long-term consequences on a generation? OECD social, employment and migration papers, no. 106. OECD 2010.

[22] The 31 member countries of OECD are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

The problem is not just the immediate impact of the crisis; previous crises (generally less severe than the present one) have typically been followed by years of social fallout. The phenomenon is sometimes referred to by economists as **hysteresis** – a term used to describe the memory within systems. The principle is that the impact of a significant experience – such as long-term unemployment in a person's formative years – leaves permanent traces.

The term **scarring** is also used to describe this process, whereby people who go through extended unemployment early on in life more often experience throughout the rest of their lives problems of unemployment, social integration, depression, health and so forth.

Aside from the scarring of these individuals' lives, the problem becomes one for society in general – which has to deal with an increase in **social problems**, demand for the **provision of benefits** (unemployment insurance claims, social counselling services, etc.) and a **deteriorated work force**.

Reducing the long-term labour market competitiveness of European youth is particularly unwelcome at the present juncture, conditioned as it is by the pressures of:

• Demographic aging of society, whereby, simply put, more and more older people will depend on fewer younger people to be productive enough to support them.

• Globalisation and an ongoing expansion in the scale and geography of competition.

• Knowledge economy and the fast pace of technological change.

The OECD [23], in 2010 published study *Rising youth unemployment during the crisis: how to prevent negative long-term consequences on a generation,* recommends the following to minimise long-term damage from the current crisis:

- *"Maintain those who are hard-to-place connected to the labour market."*
  - ¬ Put those with most difficulties in finding a job into training when there are fewer job opportunities available (i.e. during the recession) as *"the opportunity cost of time spent on a training programme or in education is lower".*

  - ¬ Make on-the-job learning part of education and training.

  - ¬ Give excluded young people temporary public-sector jobs as a way of entering the labour force and acquiring work skills they can subsequently use in private-sector jobs [24]

- Begin working while still in school; it is a more effective approach to the school-to-work transition than the traditional model of finishing school and then starting to work.

- Make prevention of early school leaving the top priority.

- Youth at risk of dropping out and low achievers in school need a *"second chance through apprenticeship to acquire skills needed on the labour market."*

- Use financial incentives: for example, study grants which require the student to combine work and study, to ensure the school-to-work transition is easier and practical workplace skills are obtained. [25]

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[23] In the 2010 study 'Rising youth unemployment during the crisis: how to prevent negative long-term consequences on a generation?', by Scarpetta et al

[24-25] Rising youth unemployment during the crisis: how to prevent negative long-term consequences on a generation?

RECENT
DEVELOPMENTS
in youth employment

policy in the EU

CREATE "DRIVE" + motivation

Learn PRACTICAL SKILLS
e.g health & safety

PEER LEARNING

Learning by doing

Learning by ___

Inspire schools to use NFL = less drop-out

experienced learning description
make YP recognise their own competences + visible
REFLECT
Relate to CURRICULA
Also learned outside school + youth work

NFL Youth Work

Attractive methods to assess competences

measurable goals
use language employers use!

Involve Employers + Job centres

give them what they are looking for

IMPACT STUDIES

PARTNERSHIP

Link into (alternative ways to obtain) QUALIFICATIONS
(get credit for your Youth Activities)
Get Credits?
Validation by school?

"Bilan de competences"
show it in practice

? How to measure INformal Learning
Operationalise

Document YP's learning Skills
e.g. C-stick
e.g. Youthpass

Guide YP.

GET PAST the first selection round

NFL easier to display in interview

European Employment Strategy

In 2000, the European Employment Strategy became a component of the 'Lisbon Strategy' with its strategic goal for the next decade "to become the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."

Since 2005, the Council has issued guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States. The objectives of the new employment guidelines for 2010-2014 [26] are:

- Increasing labour market participation of women and men, reducing structural unemployment and promoting job quality,
- Developing a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs and promoting lifelong learning,
- Improving the quality and performance of education and training systems at all levels and increasing participation in tertiary or equivalent education,
- Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.

One of the most important financial instruments to implement employment policies in the member states is the European Social Fund, which is devoted to promoting employment in the EU.

Youth on the Move and Europe 2020 Strategy

Current EU policy frameworks affecting youth employment revolve around talk of preparing for 2020, 'New Skills for New Jobs' and 'Smart Growth'.

Established in September 2010, Youth on the Move is the most recent major youth policy initiative from the European Commission. It is one of the seven 'flagship projects' of Europe 2020, the EU's growth strategy for the next decade. The approach revolves around three strands of action:

- Improving youth education and training, so as to improve the job prospects of those starting out on the job market
- Facilitating mobility for study and work
- Providing a new framework for dealing with youth unemployment

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[26] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:308:0046:0051:EN:PDF

In particular, the programme promotes:
- Non-formal learning
- Awareness of opportunities for study abroad
- Entrepreneurship: as part of this drive, a micro-finance facility will provide support to help young entrepreneurs – this is the only new funding being made available, the rest of the programme being more a framework or approach.

Youth on the Move – somewhat in line with the European Parliament's June 2010 resolution (see below) – also advocates member countries adopting a 'youth guarantee scheme', to ensure young people are offered some sort of job, work experience or training within six months of leaving school.

The larger strategy of Europe 2020, of which Youth on the Move is an element, is essentially the successor to the failed Lisbon Agenda and sets out a series of objectives, among which:
- Achieving 75% employment by the end of the decade
- Increasing the proportion of young people in higher education from 31% in 2008 to 40% by 2020
- Decreasing the number of early school leavers from 15 to 10%

New Skills for New jobs

Within the framework of the new scheme '**New Skills for New Jobs**' [27], a first assessment was undertaken by the European Commission of future skills and jobs requirements up to 2020. The assessment predicts that by 2020 there will be **increasing skills requirements** at all levels of the labour market and **generic** skills will be more and more valued on the labour market [28]. These are skills such as
- Problem-solving and analytical skills
- Self-management and communication skills
- Ability to work in a team
- Linguistic skills
- Digital competences.

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[27] New Skills for New Jobs: Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs, Communication from the European Commission, 2008. COM/2008/0868 final. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0868:FIN:ET:PDF

[28] New Skills for New Jobs: Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs, European Commission. December 2008. http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/08/791&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

WORST CASE SCENARIO

Demographic trends and the aging of society broadly mean that progressively less people will be working in proportion to growing numbers of dependent, non-working, people, throughout Europe. The current economic crisis, the worst since the Depression era of the 1930s, has most affected young people, in terms of job losses and unemployment. This sustained unemployment during the formative years of a person's life is known to produce long-term consequences – 'scarring' or 'hysteresis' – well beyond the initial period of unemployment and instability. Such consequences are likely to include a range of health and social problems, but also increased unemployment levels throughout people's lives and a reduced effectiveness as members of the labour force.

Now, the current macro-policy objectives for Europe 2020 largely depend on just these young people – who at present are most suffering the brunt of the economic crisis, in addition to the years of growing precariousness in their employment experiences prior to the crisis.

A worst-case scenario is that a failure to effectively address the current crisis – most particularly in terms of its impact on young people – will cripple the long-term futures of European people and societies.

European Parliament resolution

14th June 2010, the European Parliament passed, with strong cross-party support, a resolution promoting youth access to the labour market [29], calling for a range of measures, including:

- **Guaranteeing** young people access to a job, an apprenticeship or some form of training.
- A European **Quality Charter on Traineeships**, meant to ensure the educational value of traineeships, and that these positions are not a means to replace real jobs cheaply, and which do not in fact ever lead to quality employment, but are rather a means of exploiting young workers.
- Decent **income** for young people – e.g. an end to lower minimum wages for the young, differentiated access to social benefits based on age, and so forth.
- And – of particular interest for EU-funded programmes and participants in them – the facilitation of, and an increase in funding for, **European projects** concerned with youth:

"(The resolution) *calls on the Commission to expand financial capacity for, and to ensure better use of, the European Social Fund, to earmark a minimum of 10 % of this fund for projects targeting young people and to ease access to the fund; urges the Commission and the Member States* **not to jeopardise the running of small and innovative projects through excessive control** *and*

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[29] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-0197/2010&language=EN

to review the effectiveness and added value of programmes, such as 'Youth in Action', in terms of job opportunities for young people; urges the Member States to improve their targeting of youth" (European Parliament Resolution on promoting youth access to the labour market, strengthening trainee, internship and apprenticeship status.)[30]

Strategy behind Youth in Action

A keystone of current EU youth policy is the 2009 Communication *An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering. A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities*. This new strategy set out three general and interconnected goals, linked to those of the 2008-2010 **'Renewed Social Agenda** [31]**':**

• Creating more opportunities for youth in education and employment
• Improving access and full participation of all young people in society
• Fostering mutual solidarity between society and young people.

Each of these goals is associated with two or three **'fields of action'** – eight in total – that cover education; employment; creativity and entrepreneurship; health and sport; participation; social inclusion; volunteering; youth and the world.

Four main mechanisms have been put forward to implement the strategy. These are:
• A **cross-sectoral** approach – implementing at national level cross-sectoral policy-making and cooperation with local and regional actors; peer learning between Member States
• **Evidence-based** policy-making
• **Mobilisation** of EU programmes and funds
• **Cooperation** with other EU institutions and international organisations.

This strategy was the basis for the **'Erasmus+ Youth in Action'** programme – a major initiative for youth policy until 2020 (http://ec.europa.eu/youth). The **SALTO** Youth network itself works, to a great extent, within the framework of Youth in Action [32].

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[30]http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-0197/2010&language=EN

[31] Commission Communication, 2 July 2008 – 'Renewed social agenda: Opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe')

[32] Research And Policy Brief On ICT For Inclusion Of Youth At Risk

GETTING

EXCLUDED

Youth into unemployment

KEY EFFECTIVE APPROACHES

The following are recommendations developed from document research and the findings produced by a round table event organised by the SALTO network in Brussels on 19 October 2010 (see Intro).

The recommended approaches are organised in sections based around four broad themes:

- Involvement and Participation
- Holistic Coordination and Governance
- Non-Formal Learning
- Entrepreneurship
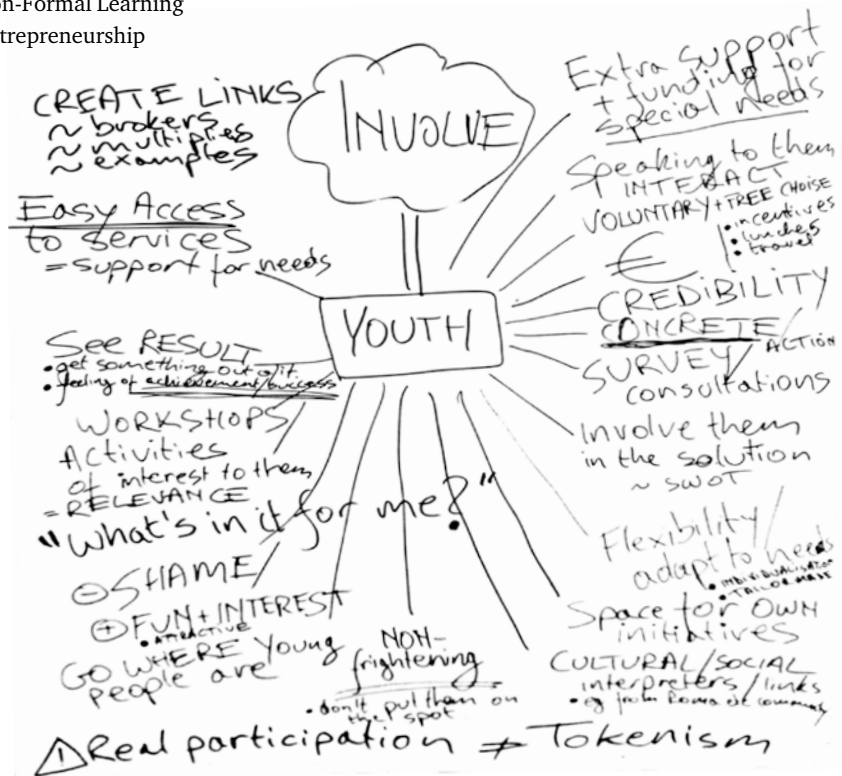
Involvement and participation

Young people are typically the **targets** of policy and programmes, rather than agents in designing, implementing and evaluating the actions that affect them. Research shows that policy and actions for a given target group are more effective when that policy target (i.e. youth) is involved in developing the actions and policies that concern them – and thus given **'agency'** or **'empowerment'** [33].

Empowerment can seem like a vague concept when planning concrete actions and in practice can take various forms, such as involving young people themselves in developing actions that are meant for them, strengthening their self-esteem, including some type of political actions such as supporting the self-organisation of young people themselves and building awareness among young people of what rights they have.

Practitioners need to prioritise involving young people in identifying solutions, developing appropriate responses and exploring implementation issues, particularly when they are addressing exclusion from the labour market and society. This is a principle that is widely accepted but which seems to be under-applied in practice – which may well be due to a fundamental paradox between a principle of involvement and a target group of the disengaged. Nonetheless, this is the challenge facing practitioners.

1. HOW CAN MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION BE ACHIEVED IN PRACTICE?

Practitioners report that one can do so using the following key principles:

- **Dynamic**. Structure the participatory event so that participants actually **do** something and interact – i.e. going beyond the common format of consultation, where a presentation is followed by a question and answer session. Unless the audience is already quite engaged, the latter approach risks falling flat, with little or no articulation of questions, concerns or feedback from participants.

- **Real expectations**. Participation must lead to something real, a result that can be clearly perceived – e.g. an amount of money is going to be spent and the participation will determine or influence how.

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[33] European Research on Youth: Supporting young people to participate fully in society, European Commission, 2009.

- **Credibility**. They believe you. What you propose is sincere, with no hidden agendas or selective omissions (you 'level' with them). Your degree of commitment affects theirs.

- **Proximity**. If the issue is not close (physically or emotionally) to them, of any real concern in their own individual lives, they will not get involved.

- **Empowerment**. Take them seriously. The activity is *for them*, so allow them to participate in designing and making decisions about it.

- **Emotion.** Usually this will be through generating positive emotions such as enjoyment, pride or belonging, though one professional consulted for this report described how he induced a sense of shame in certain government officials to get them to participate with stakeholders they normally did not have any contact with. Overall, it is clear enough that the dynamics of motivation and emotive drives are inseparably linked.

- **Mediation**. A mediator might be termed a 'cultural coach', a 'bridge person', a 'Youth Ambassador', and so on. In some cases bridges can be built with disengaged people by working through people who are considered members of the targeted group, whatever that group may be – e.g. people from the same ethnic or religious group, from the same area of the city, from the same language group or with the same accent, with the same handicap, who share some sort of similar experience, and so on.

2. WHAT ARE THE DRIVERS FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES TARGETED TO THEM?

Young people will participate in programmes and activities if:
- They see the **value** of what is offered
- They are being offered something they **want**
- Promised results are **concrete** and **credible**
- It answers the questions 'what's in it **for me**?' 'what's it got to do with me?' – thus practitioners need to ask themselves if their programmes and projects are tailored to the needs of the young people concerned, are clearly result oriented and use a language that's meaningful to those young people.

- It is a path to a **job** they want
- They see it as an **opportunity**: Does the programme adequately and convincingly explain how it is an opportunity?
- They can **achieve** something: Feeling a sense of achievement is generally a strong motivator, and may be particularly so in those cases where a young person is conditioned by past experiences which did not provide a sense of accomplishment – e.g. school failure
- It is **attractive** to them
- They **feel good** doing it: participants need to experience some enjoyment of the process – a 'feel good factor' – not just endure it to obtain a result
- If childcare solutions are provided for potential participants who are young parents.
- If services and spaces for young people are in **convenient** and **inviting** locations, which are easy for them to access and be aware of. For instance, shopfront type centres on transited streets can be **unintimidating** places where young people passing by may feel free to just drop in and inform themselves (see Box 1).

BOX 1

Community Links' Connexions service, east London, UK. The shopfront format and street level presence of the service in its community both facilitates access and raises awareness of the service, due to its visibility.

Furthermore, a perception of commitment from the other is fundamental to obtaining a willingness to participate and get involved. Achieving real and sustainable change will always require commitment, which can be obtained and expressed in various ways.

Commitment with stakeholders:
The commitment is an issue with the young people participating in a programme, but it can also be an issue with other stakeholders who are cooperating in the delivery of programme and actions for young people, e.g. schools, youth centres, local government, NGOs, etc. For instance people in charge of the programmes for youth might provide a specialized programme in a school free of charge to the school, in exchange the school, or a similar body- youth centre, etc- agrees to meet certain commitments on its part. This could be a range of things, from providing a space meeting certain requirements to adopting new norms and new ways of doing things (e.g. improving monitoring and evaluation procedures).

Commitment with young people:
A programme can be structured around a **two-way contract** with the young people participating: setting out the conditions, what they have to do, what they will get if *they* comply, and what *you* have to do. Any such contract must be clear, easy to understand, fair and transparent. The experience of completing a process in which both sides fulfil their commitments to each other, so as to achieve an agreed objective together can be a useful learning tool for developing **social competences** – i.e. interaction skills, working with others, trading and deal making, receiving and giving recognition, building credibility. For instance, a contract or commitment process can be established with a participant's **family**, or even other people who are part of that person's life (e.g. friends, employers or teachers – according to what makes sense in the specific situation).

Holistic Coordination and Governance

1. HOLISTIC MEANS LOCAL, INTERDISCIPLINARY AND ADDRESSING INDIVIDUAL MINDSETS

Holistic coordination and the principle of involving young people are interlinked; they both must be carried out **locally** to happen. The target (young people) must be part of any attempt at holistic governance, to make it fully real; if not it is a theoretical or bureaucratic construction, disconnected from **actual people**. Thus, to be able to build programmes around actual individuals, systems must allow for flexibility and initiative on the local ground level. In a word, the principle of **subsidiarity** – that decisions should be taken as closely as possible to the citizen-needs to be applied.

Key stakeholders, from government, the private sector and the third sector (NGOs, associations, etc.) should also be involved in any holistic approach for it to be successful. In some cases, this might mean involving the **families** of young people targeted by a given programme. Particularly in those cases where it is important to obtain the **complicity** of parents or where there is a need to build **trust** between a community and the institution or organisation concerned.

The different services that deal with young people, and professionals with diverse expertise concerning young people, all need to coordinate their activities and, ideally, come together to develop a holistic plan around individual young people. Such a combined approach has the advantage of considering the **different facets** of a young person and of **efficiency** – thus reducing overlap, repetition and waste, as things need not be done twice (see Box 2).

Such an approach also has the advantage of influencing change in how the different services involved work, because programmes targeted at youth are not just about young people. They are also about the **people around them**, about changing the views of those who work – or don't – with young people. For instance, it may be useful to target **teachers**, to help and stimulate them to make their subjects attractive and accessible. Sometimes certain organisations don't want to get involved with young people they think won't make an effort. Best practice shows they can, and do, change their minds when they have an experience of dealing with those young people, which is different from what they had imagined.

Such change can also be induced through concrete actions. For instance companies that have **pro-youth practices** – i.e. hiring young people and providing quality apprenticeships to young people – should be given an appropriate degree of preference when choosing suppliers and service providers. Likewise, organisations working to benefit young people are under a logical obligation **themselves** to put into practice pro-youth hiring practices and staff conditions.

BOX 2

Throughout Sweden the use of **'Navigation centres'** is becoming increasingly common. Young people can go to these centres and receive interdisciplinary support, tailored to each individual's needs through a single holistic plan

Picture taken by young people at the Navigation Centre in Trelleborg, Sweden

2. THINK LONG-TERM

There is a mass of evidence that, as stated in the report *Social Inclusion And Young People: Breaking Down The Barriers*, "longer term, holistic initiatives, which account for the complex and lengthy transitions required by the most vulnerable young people, are more helpful than expectations of rapid results [34]".

Pursuing such a longer term and more coordinated approach – because it is shown to be more effective – means that practitioners will need to cultivate **stable and longer-term relationships** with young people, if they are going to pursue the long view successfully. For instance a Swedish participant in the October 2010 SALTO Round Table (from which much of this report was drawn) reported that in Sweden, an approach based on individualisation is followed, whereby one person is assigned to a given youth. This person regularly accompanies the youth or represents him/her in various institutional dealings – a stable long-term relationship with that young person is thus developed.

However, a long-term approach does not preclude **short-term actions**. For example, it is useful for training to be broken down into modules of some form, such that a person who, for whatever reason, does not finish a longer programme can still obtain some form of identifiable qualification – i.e. a certificate from each module.

Crucially, efforts to advance social inclusion by supporting youth access to the labour market need to **focus not just on getting young people into work, but on getting them stable and long-term jobs which have a duration of at least a year** (Iacovou, M. & all, 2007). Schemes to encourage young adults into work, Iacovou argues, should be designed with this in mind, and **evaluated** on the basis of their success at keeping young people in work for at least a year.

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[34] Council of Europe (2007) Social inclusion and young people: breaking down the barriers, Research Seminar, Budapest 2005.

Non-Formal Learning

As mentioned earlier, there is a mass of evidence about the importance of non-formal learning when intervening with young people. Informal settings where "learning is linked to their life-worlds, life-styles, to youthful interests etc. are more likely to anchor the meaning of learning as personally relevant" (Boi-Reymonds M. et al, 2002) [35].

1. FORMS OF NON-FORMAL LEARNING

A non-formal approach may, **rather than teach a subject directly** (e.g. language skills), teach through an activity using the skill in question. Non-formal learning can take many forms; for instance rather than teach reading and writing skills directly as a subject, young people might be involved in creating a journalism or media product which, if it attains suitable writing and production standards, will really be published. This kind of approach, to the degree that it offers participants the opportunity to achieve something that is **attractive to them**, can be highly effective at stimulating young people to improve the skills required (see Box 3 and 4).

> BOX 3
>
> **The Benfica Foundation** in Portugal supports literacy programmes for excluded young people, in which the young people participate in a journalism workshop and, if their article is correctly written, it appears on the football club's high profile media outlets. This has been shown to be highly effective in motivating the young people involved to work hard and sincerely at improving their language skills (writing, grammar, spelling, composition).

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[35] How to Avoid Cooling Out? Experiences of young people in their transitions to work across Europe. Bois-Reymonds M. et al, 2002. Research project YOYO.

BOX 4

Live East is a well circulated magazine published in East London, UK; it is entirely produced by young people aged 14-22 who are coached and edited by media professionals.
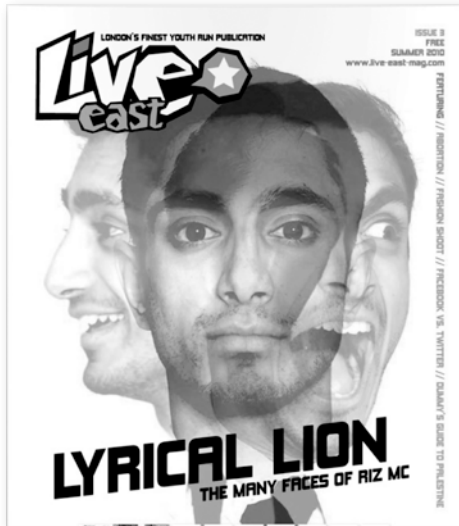
Excerpts from the testimony of a contributor to Live East magazine:

"LIVE was GREAT, FUN and FRIENDLY. I wasn't really looking forward to work experience... But by the end of my work experience all that changed. Normally at school teachers will be annoying and i might have a go at them, but at LIVE I was sort of free...

LIVE gave me a chance to do what I enjoyed. LIVE is a magazine by young people for young people which i think is a great way of getting young people out of trouble.

I really enjoyed writing articles even though I had to do them over like eight times. I realised writing articles is not as easy as it seems... I think being at LIVE has shown me I'm a lot smarter than I thought. I have achieved a lot of things such as writing my first article, having the confidence to communicate with people, I've used my English skills to the best of my ability. ... Now I have been at LIVE I would consider being a journalist, designer, illustrator or anything else"

http://livefutures.blogspot.com/

Likewise, to develop **decision making**, group interaction and negotiation skills, participants might be invited to decide how a portion of money in the programme budget will be spent – i.e. they have to come to an agreement together on what to do with the money (buy something, go out to diner, take a trip, whatever).

A programme might want to **evaluate** the initial level of ability of participants in some relevant type of skill. However, **a standard entry test will often be perceived as off-putting** and reduce the numbers of those wishing to participate. Alternatively, the young people being evaluated could take part in an activity that will display their current level of competence, without having the burdensome associations of a sit down test – for instance an art activity, or a group task requiring cooperation, communication and sequential thinking.

2. IDENTIFYING SKILLS GAINED NON-FORMALLY

Before they can convince others, young people must be made to **see their own competences.** They need to learn how to identify skills they have but which were not learnt in schools. Once the young people have gone through this reflective process, they need to be **coached on how to explain this to others**.

There are any number of ways to do this, some examples include:

- In France the ***Bilan de Compétences*** tool is widely used (essentially the same approach is known under other terms elsewhere, e.g. the RUCC in Portugal). A person, with the support of an advisor, synthesises into one document what the person has to offer (skills, experiences, characteristics, motivations and so on), filling gaps in his/her qualifications (by articulating pertinent attributes and skills acquired without any formal accreditation), and orienting the person's job search and career strategies. However, while the *Bilan*, as it is generally used, can be an effective tool for Guidance services to work with, in some cases it may be too advanced for those young people lacking in suitable experience to convert into qualifications.
- The Youth in Action finds that a large part of the **value of the Youth Pass** [36] **is the** *process* it leads young people through – having them reflect on what their non-formally acquired skills are. The Youth Pass is of particular interest for those young people who have no other certificates.

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[36] "Youthpass is a tool for participants of projects funded by the Erasmus+Youth in Action Programme to describe what they have done and to show what they have learnt" - http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/

- Young people, working with an advisor, can be talked through their **daily routine**, identifying in it applied competences – e.g. they might manage a household, have various responsibilities, negotiate, multi-task, and so on.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE C-STICK TOOL

An outstanding tool developed for identifying non-formal skills is the **C-stick** instigated in 2006 by the JES [37] (Jeugd en Stad/Youth and City), a Belgian NGO concerned with youth issues (see Box 5). The main focus of the C-Stick approach is on the identification and development of **key competences**. The C-Stick itself is an online digital portfolio tool. The young people work with a database on the C-Stick, which allows them to analyse their competences and build a CV from a programme they use – picking from options it asks them about their skills and experience and orient their personal development strategies.

A key problem identified by JES is that young people often think non-formal or informal learning 'doesn't count' or 'isn't real'.

The approach starts by involving young people in a process of **recognising** and learning the value of their own non-formally acquired skills – as a necessary first step towards being able to communicate them to others effectively.

Strengths of the C-Stick tool:
- Usability is good – the C-Stick has a simple navigation structure and uses unsophisticated vocabulary.
- It is an attractive tool for young people to use; they like it, it has 'nifty' factor.
- It is easily updated.
- It is linked to an administrative system by which tutors can send files and competence assessments to learners.

Background:
JES began by cooperating with the public sector Flemish employment service and by involving private sector companies through a questionnaire and in-depth interviews.

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[37] For more information see: http://c-sticks.be/ or http://www.jes.be/

Employers were asked about key competences they valued, and asked to pick the ten they most valued from a long list. The employers contacted were from a variety of sectors and both large and small organisations; however, they consistently chose the same key competences.

16 priority competences for employability were identified:

1. Cooperating	5. Planning & organising	9. Self-reflection	13. Handle clients
2. Speaking	6. Learning	10. Networking	14. Taking initiative
3. Listening	7. Giving feedback	11. Handle authority	15. Act independently
4. Flexibility	8. Handle feedback	12. Respect rules	16. Empathizing

The next step was to work with a smaller sample of employers more in depth; they were interviewed about their hiring procedures – how they select and interview. It was found they used little testing procedures and depended mostly on interview procedures. Employers also consistently placed special emphasis on the need for **interview skills**, apart from the key competences already identified.

JES also works closely with the Flemish Employment Service to guarantee they would recognise the tool and use it with the young people they work with. This was not simple to do as the employment service is a large organisation, which means more complicated and slower decision making and implementation strategies, but this cooperation has been an essential component to ensuring a maximum impact of the programme.

The experience has been good and the Employment Service is now developing new e-tools that will work with the C-Stick and build on it.

Key learnings from the C-Stick experience:

- People working with youth to increase their employability must prioritise teaching skills for **interviews** and **self-presentation**.
- Start by building **awareness of the value** of skills acquired informally or non-formally, among the young people themselves.

BOX 5

3. VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL LEARNING

One of the major challenges non-formal learning approaches face is that of their own effects being evaluated; that is, how can the benefits of non-formal learning be adequately measured and evaluated leading to eventual validation?

Measuring and evaluating non-formal learning:

Key to evaluating impact is to clearly **define the results** the learning actions are trying to achieve. It is widely acknowledged that non-formal approaches are particularly suitable for addressing behavioural issues such as bullying, or self-confidence in interviews. In such cases, the effectiveness of an approach can be determined if the objective is a very clear and **perceivable change in behaviour** – for example:

- If bullying behaviour stops after an anger management intervention.
- If a candidate displays more assuredness in interview situations (e.g. less trembling, voice more stable, better ability to focus on the questions and assert their qualifications, and so forth).

Working with others to achieve recognition and validation:

- With employers and employment services

To have an impact, non-formal learning programmes need to work with **employers and employment centres**, to ensure they both understand and recognise the value of the non-formal learning received by young people they deal with.

Non-formal learning programmes aimed at increasing employability especially need to **liaise closely with employers** to find out what sorts of skills employers are most likely to value, and **design contents accordingly** (see the 'C-Stick' example above).

- With vocational schools

An effective and practical route to validating non-formally acquired skills is that of partnership with **recognised vocational schools**, or similar bodies. A recognised school can evaluate the competences a young person has acquired informally or non-formally and validate them with a recognised diploma – i.e. converting them into traditional formal education credentials.

Such an approach is quite practical for two reasons:

- There is no need to change thinking, raise awareness, convince or explain to people (e.g. employers, employment centres, job agencies) a new type of validation of skills, as you are working with terms and accreditation formats that are **already understood**.

- The trend is more and more for vocational schools, and other educational or training structures, to introduce '**generic skills**' into their curricula – it is precisely these sorts of skills that are particularly suited to non-formal learning.

It might be said that the current situation is that of a **two-way trend**: greater formalisation of non-formal learning, and the increasing introduction of non-formal approaches into formal learning.

4. THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING TO GET A JOB

Social and professional networks are key to most people finding a job (see box 6). A report by the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs in 2000 [38] found that that among young people aged 20:

- 80% get their **jobs through networking**.
- Only 20% obtain employment through formal ways such as public employment office, ads in papers, employment counselling and so forth.
- The results correlate with other Swedish and international research.
- For those with **foreign background**, who often have less developed networks, the figure is 25% getting employment through formal ways, primarily public employment office.
- The biggest disparity is among those obtaining employment through contacts developed during **education and/or training**: only 8% for foreign background, compared to 17% for those with Swedish background.

From these findings, a key thing to understand, about education, training, summer jobs and other experiences of employment, is that, apart from the direct benefit of any learning that takes place, the **contacts and interaction skills** acquired during these experiences are key facilitators of the transition of young people to the labour market.

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[38] Ungdomars vägval , Young people´s choices of direction, 2000. Report from the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs no. 18.

The problem is that many young people graduate from their schooling without acquiring such contacts. Generally, the longer a person goes without building such a network, the more effort is required to get it started.

Ways to support such network building include:
• Actions to get young people **summer jobs** while in school;
• Training, understood as also a *means to improve the network* for young people
• Study visits: from employers to schools/projects – and – from schools/projects to work places.

BOX 6

In Sweden, improving young people's networks has become a key dimension of policies and programmes aimed at increasing young people's employability, particularly those living in **city districts that are largely disassociated from the rest of Swedish society**.

It is theoretically possible to study through compulsory, secondary and tertiary education in Sweden without any labour market experience whatsoever, which is clearly not in the best interest of a young person.

In 2010 the Swedish government provided 100 million Krona (~Ð10.7m) to municipalities to create summer jobs for young people, though many municipalities already organize such summer jobs for 16-19 year olds. Some municipalities even guarantee jobs. The governmental and municipal initiatives are currently being evaluated and a report on them is expected in January 2011.

The project **Work Factory** (in the municipalities of Säffle, Åmål, Årjäng, Dals-ed and Bengtsfors) was recently evaluated and used study visits and training to build young people's **networks**:
- **38%** of the 322 participants answer that they have new knowledge about the labour market
- **26%** have an improved network.
- **63%** went from unemployment to work or studies after participating in the project, which is considered a good result.

5. ACQUIRING BASIC EDUCATION AND GENERIC SKILLS: A STAGED APPROACH

Young people most at risk of unemployment and exclusion often lack very basic skills and levels of education, e.g. **basic reading, writing and math** skills, which must be addressed before they can participate in more formal learning or skills acquisition.

BOX 7

Generic skills are those that apply across different jobs and occupations. They are sometimes known as core skills, key competences, transferable skills and employability skills. They can include basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, people related skills and conceptual/ thinking skills. In today's economy, generic skills are becoming particularly important, as more and more workers need to communicate with a significant number of different people in their working lives, innovate and problem solve, and deal with non routine processes. *(Source: OECD)*

'Generic' skills, such as the capacity to work cooperatively in a group, the capacity to work in a time structured way, are also fundamental and need to be addressed by youth workers before other types of actions can be effective (see Box 7). Young people who are **disengaged** [39] from their own transitional project may often lack structures and routine in their daily lives, that others may think of as so basic they take them for granted. The lack of such structures is a significant barrier to entering the labour market. As such, people working with disengaged young people will need to focus on **identifying what basic and generic skills they need** and developing a base of those necessary skills in the young people concerned on which to build further support actions, i.e. more sophisticated skills training: computers, trade skills, etc.).

The development of generic and other skills needs to be coordinated. When addressing a need to develop a person's generic skills – and generally increase their employability – it is usually most effective to structure such training and learning programmes in appropriate **stages**. Learning approaches that depend on the participants having certain generic skills will be **unsuccessful and counter-productive** if the pertinent generic skills gaps have not first been sufficiently resolved.

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[39] By 'disengaged' we mean "young people (who) do not feel themselves participating in their own transitions while following standardised pathways", taken from the report *How to Avoid Cooling Out? Experiences of young people in their transitions to work across Europe*. Bois-Reymonds M. et al, 2002. Research project YOYO.

Entrepreneurship

1. WHY ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

Youth entrepreneurship is generally being given more attention in youth programmes and policies across Europe. It is an area of growing priority because it is an option for employment – particularly where young people may have fewer options for otherwise becoming employed. Furthermore, successful entrepreneurship is, by definition (i.e. being an experience and life path whereby a person undertakes initiatives and makes decisions for themselves), fundamentally empowering. Likewise, it is of course a stimulating factor for the overall economy and thus of general benefit.

Interestingly, the October 2010 SALTO Round Table (from which much of this report was drawn) found that the theme of entrepreneurship is one that needs to be expanded upon and that requires more attention; it is clearly an area youth workers will be spending more time involved with.

Within the context of youth work against the exclusion of young people, entrepreneurship is mainly about creating and/or running small-scale businesses; it is about giving young people more employment options.

Concurrently, given its relation to small-scale entrepreneurship, youth workers are likely to be seeing Microfinance arising as an increasingly important tool – e.g. see the provisions in Commission's recent Youth on the Move policy framework (see chapter IV above).

2. WHAT CAN YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMMES DO?

Programmes can familiarise young people with entrepreneurship and even give them hands on experiences of what it is like to run their own business (see Box 8). Potentially, such experiences can be quite effective in stimulating an entrepreneurial sensibility. The Youth in Action programme representative at SALTO's October 2010 Round Table reported that the EU's Youth in Action programme has found that **67% of young people declare having an increased sense of entrepreneurship after participating in the programme**.

Youth workers do not have to be experts in business or to design entrepreneurial programmes on their own, but rather, need to work in **partnership** with existing specialised services and with entrepreneurs themselves. To access first hand knowledge and insights about the needs and requirements of entrepreneurship, it is essential youth workers work with the business sector (see C-Stick example above).

Creating entrepreneurial training programmes and support structures such as incubators and so on only tend to be effective if filling a real gap that has been identified. Otherwise it is probably more efficient to work or partner with existing structures and programmes.

BOX 8

A Community Links centre in east London, UK. The snack shop in each centre is run by young people themselves. Participants get a taste of business management, learning about entrepreneurship on a practical level and as an option for them.

http://www.community-links.org/

3. LIMITATIONS TO YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMMES

There are important limitations to what youth programmes can expect to achieve on their own. A participant in SALTO's Round Table – from JINT vzw, International Youth Work Coordination Agency, Belgium – reported from experience that plenty of young people are attracted by the idea of entrepreneurship; however, what discourages them from going into business for themselves is the **excessive administrative burden** they would face.

Thus, while building entrepreneurial culture can certainly be an issue – one that can be effectively addressed by well-implemented programmes – other **significant barriers to entry** into a business activity (institutional, structural, cultural, etc.) need to be taken into account if realistic objectives are to be set.
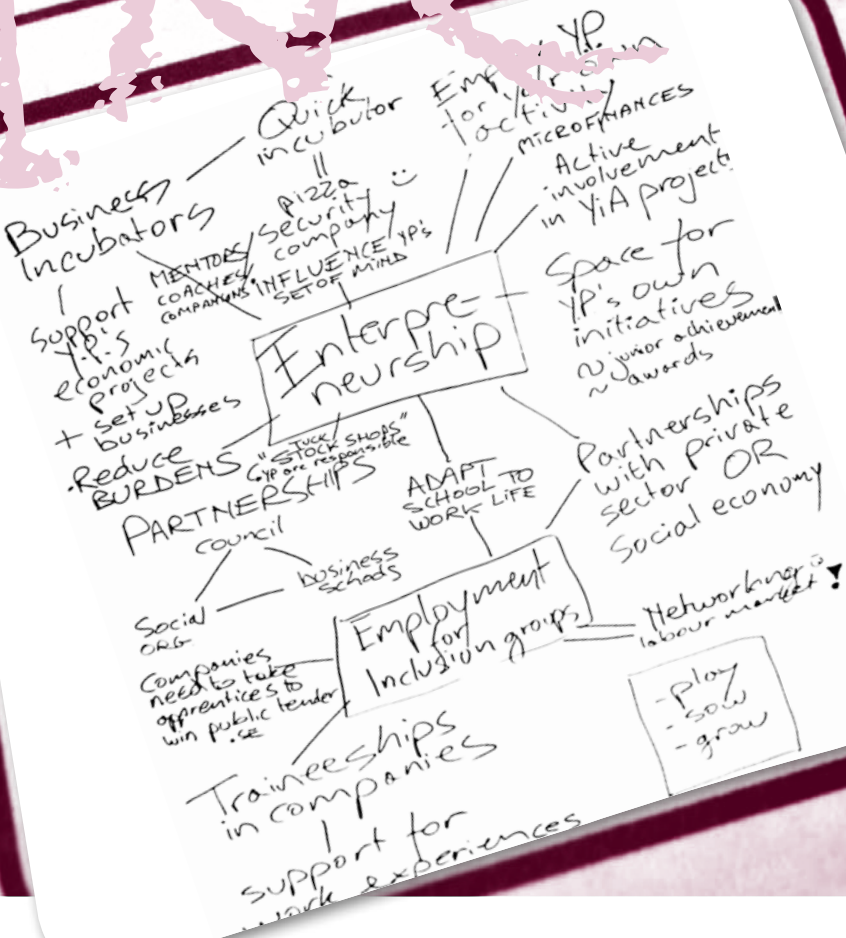
Obviously, decisions affecting the broader **business climate** go beyond the writ and resources of youth programmes. However the conditions of the overall entrepreneurial environment must be addressed – as a societal issue (i.e. in terms of impact on employment, inclusion, empowerment) – if support for youth entrepreneurship is to be seriously pursued as an objective.

In this light, it is worth recalling that the **2008 European Economic Recovery Plan** [40], in the name of promoting entrepreneurship and reducing the administrative burdens on business, declares the following to be official Commission goals:

- "That **starting up** a business anywhere in the EU can be done **within three days** at zero costs and that formalities for the hiring of the first employee can be fulfilled via a single access point"
- "Remove the requirement on micro-enterprises to prepare **annual accounts**… and limit the capital requirements of the European private company to **one euro**".

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

[40] A European Economic Recovery Plan, Communication COM(2008) 800 final from the European Commission to the Council, Nov 2008.

Business Incubators

Quick incubator
=
pizza security company

Emp... YP... for yo... activity
MICROFINANCES
Active involvement in YiA project

MENTORS COACHES COMPANIES
INFLUENCE YP's SET OF MIND

Support YP's economic projects
+ set up businesses

Enterpreneurship

Space for YP's own initiatives
~ junior achievement
~ awards

.Reduce BURDENS

"STOCK SHOPS" YP are responsible

Partnerships with private sector OR Social economy

PARTNERSHIPS
council

ADAPT SCHOOL TO WORK LIFE

Social ORG

business schools

Employment for Inclusion groups

Networking? labour market !

Companies need to take apprentices to win public tender

- ploy
- sow
- grow

Traineeships in companies

support for work experiences

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ANNEX

EUROSTAT YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES:

	Youth (under 25's) rate %		Increase	Males rate %	Females rate %
	Aug 2009	Aug 2010	Rate (% point)	June 2010	June 2010
EU 27	20.4	19.8%	- 0.6	9.6	9.6
BE	22.3	24.2	1.9	8.3	8.9
BG	17.0	20.7	3.7	10.6	9.4
CZ	17.7	18.5	0.8	6.1	8.4
DK	11.5	12.2	0.7	8.6	5.9
DE	10.8	8.8	- 2.0	7.4	6.3
EE	28.9	37.2[Mark]	8.3	22.3	15.0
IE	25.1	28.6	3.5	16.8	9.8
EL	25.8	32.1[2]	6.3	9.7	15.7
ES	40.2	41.6	1.4	19.7	20.7
FR	23.6	24.4	0.8	9.6	10.3
IT	25.3	25.9	0.6	7.6	9.5
CY	15.2	19.7[3]	4,5	7.2	7.1
LV	36.1	34.0[4]	- 2.1	22.8	16.2
LT	33.0	37.6[5]	4.6	22.1	14.4
LU	16.1	16.9	0.8	4.3	5.8
HU	27.2	27.1	- 0.1	11.8	10.6
MT	14.8	11.2	- 3.6	6.3	7.0
NL	8.0	8.8	0.8	4.5	4.6
AT	10.8	8.5	- 2.3	4.6	4.2
PL	22.2	22.6	0.4	9.1	10.0
PT	20.3	20.3	0	10.0	12.1
RO	21.4	21.4[6]	0	7.5	6.5
SI	14.3	16.5	2.2	7.6	7.0
SK	28.2	31.6	3.4	14.1	14.8
FI	22.6	21.0	- 1.6	9.1	7.9
SE	28.4	25.2	- 3.2	8.4	7.7
UK	19.7	19.1	- 0.6	8.5	6.8

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are data from June 2010

The EU27 includes Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK).

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NOTES

NOTES

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