

Editorial

Dear reader,

this is the first Newsletters of the project YOUNG_ADULLLT with which we want to keep you informed about current events and outcomes of our project.

Against the background that many young adults face difficulties in their transition from schooling to working life and a large number of young people leave formal education either too early or lacking the necessary and adequate qualifications and skills to enter the labour market successfully, for a successful entry into the labour market, YOUNG_ADULLLT focuses on Lifelong Learning (LLL) policies across Europe as they are aimed at creating economic growth and social inclusion in particular for those groups in vulnerable positions. Doing so, the policies' potentially competing (and possibly ambivalent) orientations and objectives become apparent.

The objective of the project is to yield insights into their implications as well as intended and unintended effects on young adult life courses. YOUNG_ADULLLT aims at critically analysing current developments of LLL policies in Europe in order to prevent ill-fitted policies from further exacerbating existing imbalances and disparities as well as at identifying best practices and patterns of coordinating policy-making at local/regional level.

Please also check our website for detailed information on the consortium, the work plan, news and impact: www.young-adullt.eu.

Best regards from the YOUNG_ADULLLT dissemination and coordination team

Contact: info@young-adullt.eu

Website: www.young-adullt.eu

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme



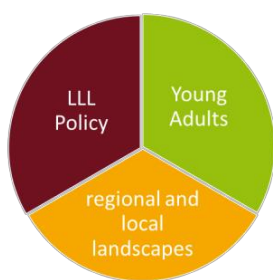
The Project

The Europe 2020 targets on employment, poverty reduction, education, sustainability and innovation set the background for the European Union’s **Horizon2020 Research and Innovation Programmes**. As they respond to serious societal challenges, one action these challenges can be met with, is education in general and adult education in particular. Thus, adult education programmes and Lifelong Learning (LLL) measures are considered by the European Union to contribute to overcoming the effects of the economic and social crisis which are currently weakening the labour markets.



However, while most these current **European LLL policies** have been designed to create economic growth and, at the same time, guarantee social inclusion, thus creating complementary yet not linearly objectives, they differ greatly in their distinct orientations and aims. Departing from this assumption that LLL policies with potentially competing (and possibly ambivalent) orientations and objectives have significant implications as well as intended and unintended effects on adult life courses – and in particular young adult life courses – raises a number of social and educational questions that emphasize the relevance of research in this particular moment regarding young adults as target group in Europe.

The project YOUNG_ADULLLT ('Policies supporting young Adults in their life course. A Comparative Perspective of Lifelong Learning and Inclusion in Education and Work in Europe') focuses lifelong learning policies for young adults that address young people, in particular those not in education or training (NEETs) or those in situations of near social exclusion.



Against the outlined background of a high fragmentation and persistent weakness and ineffectiveness of adult education policies across Europe, YOUNG_ADULLLT enquires into the specific forms of embedding of these policies in the regional economy, the labour market, the education/training systems and the individual life projects of young adults. The argument is that it is by looking into these specific regional and local contexts that policies are best understood and assessed.

Thus, the research focus offers three different entry points: LLL policy, young adults and regional and local landscapes.

The project aims at critically analysing current developments of LLL policies in Europe in order to prevent ill-fitted policies from further exacerbating existing imbalances and disparities. LLL policies more often than not have been designed for adult needs. We aim to elucidate how policies characterize the target groups of young adults and whether they account for the fact that young adults are a highly dynamic and heterogeneous target groups in terms of socio-economic stratification and living conditions and in terms of life projects, interest and possibilities. In this regard, the project looks into relevant social developments affecting young adults such as life course de-standardisation processes and into the emergence of a new political economy of skills. Policies, in general, reflect assumptions of ‘normal’ or ‘standard’ life

courses, but they also produce new social expectations with which young adults have to be able to relate to and cope with if they are to be successful. For this reason, the project also focuses on the perspective of the young adults and asks questions as to how they perceive policies and which skills they acquired by formal and informal education and what needs and potentials they identify.

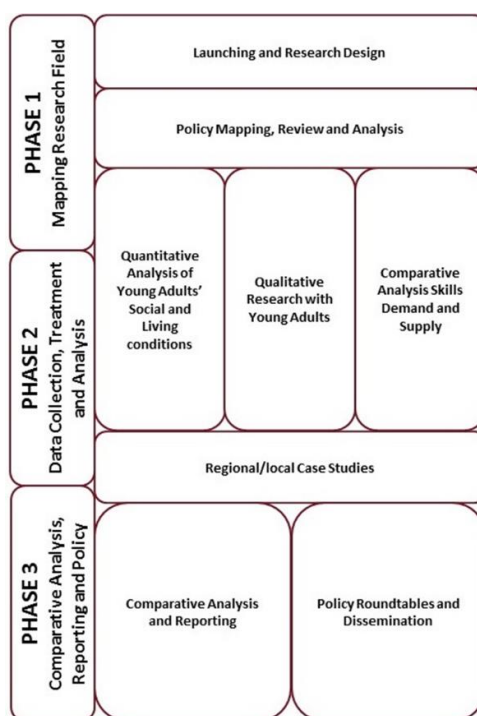
In order to ensure research activities according to expertise and time efficiency, the work is split into **ten Work Packages** which make up **three phases** of the research process. WPs 1 and 10 are concerned with the management and dissemination of the project and continue during the entire duration of the project.

The *first phase* comprises the launch as well as the mapping of the research field. The main objectives are to create a theoretical and methodological basis in order to develop an overarching research hypothesis and identify relevant contextual information that can guide the mapping of the policy field by providing sensible indicators for analysis of national and regional strategies of LLL policies.

The *second phase* comprises the data collection, treatment and analysis of empirical data. Thus, the main objectives are to collect qualitative and quantitative data on the macro- and micro-level of the participating countries in order to produce national and international reports exploring the impact of LLL policies on young people as well as constructing case studies so as to identify policy-making networks that are involved in LLL policies.

The *third phase* comprises the comparative analysis, reporting and policy roundtables. The main objectives of the last phase of the project are ‘to pull the strings together’ and conduct a comparative cross case and cross-national analysis as well as prepare and implement Policy Roundtables in each participating country in order to produce European/national/regional/local briefing papers.

The duration of YOUNG_ADULLLT is three years (2016 to 2019) and is funded by the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme with a budget of 2,4 Mio. €. About 70 researchers from 9 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom) and 15 institutions will work towards the projects goals, including a European Advisory Board of about 15 persons from various research disciplines as well as vocational training institutions.



Project News

1. Consortium Meeting

The project started with the kickoff meeting at the University of Münster, Germany, (March 30th to April 1st, 2016) in order to get to know each other in the consortium and discuss overall open and emerging issues as well as questions on the research design/framework, mapping and analyzing the policy field as well as research ethics and publication and dissemination activities. The meeting also comprised a public symposium as a first dissemination activity of the project (see section 3.). Since the kickoff meeting extensive research has taken place based on the discussions during the meeting concerning the Work Packages 1, 2, 3 and 10. Currently the Working Papers for the mentioned Work Packages are circulated among the consortium for revision.

2. First Outcomes

Initial outcomes of the Work Packages 1,2, 3, and 10 are the launch of the website (WP1), a sophisticated and expedient debate on the three theoretical perspectives – Life Course, Cultural Political Economy and Governance – that guide the research and a set-up of an online database of relevant contextual information (WP2). Moreover, a productive and nuanced discussion on the mapping and the analysis of the policy field and its application in terms of national reports on LLL-policies has ensued the kickoff meeting (WP3) as well as a discussion on ethical issues concerning the kind research accomplished in the project (WP10).

For a comprehensive depiction of the project including contextual information on the research background and specific information on the project as for instance objectives, work plan, information on the consortium and helpful links the website www.young-adultlt.eu may be consulted. The first publication available online is an extensive Working Paper on Ethical Issues.

3. Symposium

As the first dissemination activity an open symposium was held during the kickoff meeting in Münster on March 31st, 2016. The consortium and guests were greeted by the vice-rector for research of the University of Münster Prof. Dr. Stephan Ludwig and the Dean of the Department of Educational and Social Sciences Prof. D. Martin Bensen. The keynote with the title *'Policies, Education and Justice: the quest for a more inclusive vision of education and training'* was given by Prof. Dr. S. Karin Amos of the University of Tübingen and addressed a change in the discourse and understanding of inclusion in education and training and argued for a cautious and sensitive application of the concept 'inclusion'.



The keynote was followed by presentations on the three conceptual perspectives of the project by member of the consortium:

- Siyka Kovacheva on Life Course
- Oscar Valiente on Cultural Political Economy
- Risto Rinne on Governance

Moreover, Marcelo Parreira do Amaral gave an overview of the project, its background, objectives, impacts and challenges.

4. Next Steps

Next steps will include the completion of the online database on contextual information and data related to the different dimensions of the complex relationships of LLL policies for young adults, the construction of target groups, processes of the de-standardisation and re-standardisation of youth life courses, the political economy of skills, and the macro-structural institutional framework across the participating countries as well as a draft of the state of the art report (WP2). Within the next few months the indicators for the policy mapping will be identified in order to choose relevant documents on LLL policies for the analysis in the national reports (WP3). By that time the drafts of all ethics documents will also be assembled in order to produce a final version of all ethics documents (e.g. consent letter, informational material) later this year (WP10). The work on the next following WPs 4, 5, 6 and 7 will begin shortly.

The YOUNG_ADULLLT Research Consortium

