

# young adultllt Newsletter No.2 (January 2017)

## Editorial

Dear Readers,

*This is the second Newsletter of the project YOUNG\_ADULLLT with which we want to keep you informed about current events and outcomes of our project.*

*As you may already know, 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.*

*Nowadays many young adults face difficulties in their transition from schooling to working life and a large number of them leave formal education either too early or lacking the necessary and adequate qualifications and skills to enter the labour market successfully. Against this background, YOUNG\_ADULLLT focuses on Lifelong Learning (LLL) policies across Europe as they are aimed at creating economic growth and social inclusion especially for those groups in vulnerable positions. In particular, the main objective of the project is to yield insights into their implications as well as intended and unintended effects on young adult life courses.*



*For the last six months, we have made considerable progress in implementing our plans. Fifteen partner institutions from nine European countries, representing a variety of institutional and national contexts, have been working together in order to align the differences and elaborate a solid methodological ground for the national surveys. It has been challenging and enjoyable and we have happily created a strong research and operational alliance.*

*You can find more information about our consortium, work plan and progress, expected impact and current news at the project's website: [www.young-adullt.eu](http://www.young-adullt.eu).*

*Best regards from the YOUNG\_ADULLLT dissemination and coordination team*

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Contact: [info@young-adullt.eu](mailto:info@young-adullt.eu)

Website: [www.young-adullt.eu](http://www.young-adullt.eu)

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## Project News – Our Results

### 1. Milestone 1

In August 2016 we reached our first milestone, including four *Deliverables*. An important step was the set-up of a management framework, which included the official *Kickoff Meeting* in Münster as well as the launching of the project's *website*. The website serves as a communication tool with the public and shares important information about the project in general, as well as current updates of the research process.

As a first step towards a conceptual framework, all project members collaborated on the development of a common *Glossary* of terms. It supports the interdisciplinary approach of the project not by providing homogenized definitions, but rather by pointing out the different understandings and usages across national and cultural spaces and disciplinary traditions. The Glossary reflects the collaborative work process in YOUNG\_ADULLLT and helps us to ensure a coherent theoretical and methodological conceptualisation of the research, thus allowing the construction of a strong and innovative international and comparative research design.

In order to ensure research quality throughout the project's lifetime we developed a *Quality Assurance Plan*. The Quality Assurance Plan elaborates, *first*, on important research quality criteria in general and, *second*, specifies these for the context of the YOUNG\_ADULLLT project. It outlines the strength of research in the project and ensures a common understanding of quality between each project partner. As our project contains qualitative and quantitative studies, the Quality Assurance Plan contains criteria for both research strands and provides orientation for all participating research teams.

### 2. What happened in the single Work Packages

One main objective of Work Package 2 is to establish a sound and coherent research design by outlining common conceptual, theoretical and methodological bases for the research project. Current issues concerning the research framework are the documentation of data base and the state of the art report. While the overall research framework is only due in early 2018, the data base and the state of the art report form a crucial step towards a coherent design. The documentation of data base provides systematic contextual information on the project's research sites (functional regions) which include different institutional frameworks, traditions and arrangements between economy, labour market, welfare state and education and training systems. Thus, the idea of the data base is to provide this information in a time- and cost-effective way by collecting and sharing this information on the project's server and present first insights from the juxtaposition of content. The state of the art report incorporates this juxtaposition focusing on the three main theoretical perspectives of the project: Cultural Political Economy, Life Course and Governance. Moreover, the report includes reflections on the design and methodology of the research. While the documentation of data base is at the last stages of the drafting process, the work on the state of the art report is in full swing.

Between August and October 2016 all consortium partners analysed national and regional LLL policies (WP3) according to a common analytical framework and set of indicators and prepared a first draft of their national report on LLL policies and inclusion in education and work. In order to allow partners to share their experiences during the mapping process and to coordinate the review and analysis of LLL policies, the teams of PHFR and WWU organised a second

meeting in Münster on September 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> 2016, followed by a redrafting of the reports (for which the meeting proved to be very valuable).

The work on the empirical Work Packages on *quantitative (WP4) and qualitative young adults' data (WP5)*, the *analysis of skills supply and demand (WP6)* as well as *Regional/local Case Studies (WP7)* is gaining pace. As the teams come closer to the finishing processes of writing the Work Package Proposals, new challenges need to be faced in order to integrate the data collection of the WPs like socioeconomic indicators, young adult's biographies, expert's interviews, and the skills supply and demand maps. Crucial for the work in each of these work packages is the interconnection between them focusing on the research questions and theoretical perspectives during each step. The second consortium meeting in Porto was characterised by lively discussions on how to integrate the empirical work packages best. In order to do so a workshop (the 'magic meeting' as it has been labeled by the research partners) will be held in Barcelona in January 2017 to resolve on specific actions.

In WP10, the *Working Paper on Ethical Issues* was completed in June 2016 aiming to ensure that all partners are informed about the fundamentals of research ethics, about "best practice" research standards, and about European, national and institutional legal provisions. It provides overall guidance related to the ethical aspects of the YOUNG\_ADULLLT project and is available online at the project website [www.young-adulllt.eu](http://www.young-adulllt.eu). Later on Information Letters and Consent Forms have been designed for three different types of interviewees (related to WP5) and circulated within the consortium for translating them into the national languages. Ethical Approval process started by all partners in order to comply with national and institutional regulations and requirements before starting the individual and focus group interviews.

## Project Meetings

### 1. WP 3 Meeting Münster



In order to review the "Policy Mapping, Review and Analysis" (WP3), partners from each participating country met in Münster for two days in September. The main aim was to discuss the first results in the topic of 'policy mapping' by each single partner. The meeting aimed at exchanging first 'mapping experiences' of the participants, on emerging problems and on the first steps of analyzing LLL policies. Due to the heterogeneity of the national, regional and local contexts the exchange ensured the compatibility and comparability of the generated data

and cases. A second aim was the possibility to discuss overall open and emerging issues as well as questions on the research design/framework, mapping and analyzing the policy field and further aspects. The participants had the chance to present and discuss different mappings from different parts of Europe (East, South and North) and discuss emerging problems as well as develop solutions in small workgroups. This allowed becoming aware of how other partners solved similar mapping problems and which solutions they may have implemented. Therefore, the meeting provided a forum taking into account the diversity of realities in the participating countries as well as ensuring common mapping strategies representing all three levels (local/regional, national and international) and the three policy sectors Labour Market Policy, Educational Policies (general, vocational), Social Youth Policies (SYP). As such the workshop was well received by the partners and proved to be very beneficial for the further development of the national reports on LLL policies.

## 2. Meeting Porto



The Second Consortium Meeting of the project was held in Porto from November 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 under the motto “integrating the Work Packages” and sparked a lively discussion among the partners on how to lead the project into its second phase on data collection, treatment and analysis. The meeting included discussions about *Work Packages 1 to 6 and 10*.

Enjoying a beautiful sunny scenery on Wednesday and weathering heavy rains on Thursday and Friday, the consortium started out with a WP5-workshop on qualitative analysis. In the workshop, the project members discussed methodological aspects and challenges related to conducting biographical narrative interviews. Main objective of the debates were related to preparing the interviewers for fieldwork.

The next day, 24<sup>th</sup> of November started with a discussion on *WPI*. This included different topics like the reporting to EC (month 12), the review meeting in Brussels (April 2017), the Quality Assurance Plan, management issues and the possibility to discuss and ask about emerging issues and questions. The discussion concerning *WPI0* included the Ethics Document in particular as well as issues regarding open access. Concerning *WP2* the discussion focused on the documentation of data base and the state of the art report. Main issue regarding this work package was a brainstorming session on the integration of the empirical work packages as preparation for the workshop in Barcelona. The discussion of *WP3* was a core issue during the

meeting as the national reports. In the end of the meeting, financial issues, the coming 4<sup>th</sup> Consortium Meeting and the next steps, until month 15, have been sharpened.

During the meeting, partners discussed the progress of the project – amongst other things reporting on LLL policies (WP3) and issues related to ethical requirements and documentation (WP10). Central to the discussions was the preparation of the second phase of the project and in particular designing a coherent and consistent integration of the empirical work packages (WPs 3 to 7).

### KEYNOTE

A highlight of the programme was the keynote presentation by Prof. Dra. Fernanda Rodrigues who critically interrogated into “*The effects of austeritarian policies on education and social policies*”, pointing out the repercussions of the recent financial crisis and the reaction of the Portuguese government. The topic proved of crucial importance to the research themes of YOUNG\_ADULLLT. Member of the Porto team, Fernanda Rodrigues is currently Invited Professor at the University of Porto and the Catholic University of Lisbon. In 2016, she has been awarded the *Medal of Honour of Social Security* of Portugal.

In short, the meeting was a full success and paved the way for the project entering its second year early next spring.

### 3. Methods Integration Meeting Barcelona

The leaders and members of the different Work Packages in YOUNG\_ADULLLT met in Barcelona for a meeting (13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2017). During the meeting, strategies and procedures for a stronger coordination of the research steps across these working packages were discussed in a series of workshops. The main objectives of the workshops were:

- Establish concrete research questions for each Working Package, in order to avoid overlaps;
- Specify the data sources and methodology to be used to answer the research questions proposed;
- Specify the data to be collected by each Working Package and how it is going to feed and be used in each Working Package;
- Establish a coherent and feasible timeline with concrete tasks deadlines.

After two intensive days of careful discussions, all expectations and objectives were achieved. This will allow YOUNG\_ADULLLT partners a more clear idea of what is to be done in each Working Package, which data is to be collected, and how the data collected is going to be used across the different phases and WPs to provide answers to the research questions.



**Next Steps**

The work on *Work Packages 4 to 7* will come to full swing as all WP leaders have circulated their work proposal and work on the integration of the empirical work. In the upcoming months, the project will enter its second phase, in which data collection, treatment and analysis will be conducted. In April 2017, the coordination and WP leaders will meet in Brussels for the review meeting and in Granada, Spain, for a third Consortium Meeting.

The YOUNG\_ADULLLT Research Consortium

