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1. Description of task

Cross-case analysis of regional/local networks in LLL policy-making (months 23-26): Based on the case study reports from the participant countries, a cross-case analysis is conducted in order to identify patterns of policy-making networks involved in shaping, formulating, and implementing LLL policies for young adults as well as best practices of integrating LLL policies in economy, labour, education and individual life courses. Furthermore, the cross-case analysis is aimed at describing the ways in which the different policy-making networks embody different kinds of mechanisms/assumptions about the needs and the activation paths of recipients (this latter aspect will be connected to the activities carried out in the WP5). A cross-case and cross-national Report is produced which includes types/models of policy-making networks at regional/local level and provides assessment of issues of transferability and policy learning to other contexts. **Role of participants:** WP leader and WP core teams draft the International Report drawing on the WP7 National Reports; all partners are requested to read comment and give feedback to WP leader, who completes the International Report.

2. Description of work & main achievements

The WP7 national reports yielded the case studies analysis by integrating the empirical materials gathered in the previous Work Packages (from 3 to 6). In the WP7 National Reports the cases were constructed, introduced and analysed applying a narrative strategy, by means of which different typologies of networks and patterns of LLL policy-making have been described, taking into account their different degrees of integration with the biographies they came across (and by which are crossed in their turn) and implementation contexts (e.g., economy, labour market and education systems). Starting from these materials, the WP7 International Report juxtaposes the eighteen narratives of the case studies (two per Country) aiming to identify sustainable and successful regional/local patterns and networks of policy-making in terms of integrating LLL policies into the economy, labour market, education and their impact on the individual life courses of young people. In order to do so, the first step consisted of analysing each WP7 National Report and isolating the most important components of each case narrative. For this purpose, the WP7 Core Team shared a common tool (namely the “clustering table”) which helped to organise the different information from the case narratives. Starting from the information resumed in the clustering table, the WP7 Core Team reconstructed each case presentation in the International Report, aiming to make them understandable and visible. In addition, in order to further strength the embeddedness of the case presentation, the WP7 Core Team asked each partner to condense in an introductive page the contextual features which, both at national and Functional Regional

level, above all affected (and interacted with) the case narrative. Further, the eighteen cases of the nine YOUNG_ADULLLT participating countries have been probed in terms of their similarities and/or divergences around a variety of dimensions, and analysed against three crucial “knots of relations”, namely the constellations of relations which, by their interplay, shaped the cases, affecting their design as well as their unfolding.

Finally, the results deriving from the knot analysis have been further interpreted by the three main theoretical perspectives of the YOUNG_ADULLLT project (Cultural Political Economy, Governance and Life Course Research).

3. Deviations from the Work plan

No deviation from the work plan has occurred. The delivery of this report is slightly delayed due to the high level of complexity in integrating different sources of information and material from work packages 3 to 6.

4. Performance of the partners

After the reception of the WP7 National Reports (February 2018), the WP7 leader and the Core Team worked towards the completion of the International Report. UNIGE (as WP leader) has been leading the analysis and synthesis of the National Reports, proposing a first structure of its index. The collaboration and support by SWU and GUF (Core Team members) has been crucial and constant throughout the whole process. Further, the comments and suggestions by the Coordinator (by periodic skype meetings and feedbacks on the different versions of the report draft) improved the final version of the International Report, also monitoring its ‘synchronization’ and coherence with the approach of the following WP8 on comparative analysis.

The rest of the Consortium has been involved in different phases of this process, always focusing on the cases analysed in his WP7 National Report:

- each partner gave feedback on the compiled clustering tables circulated by the Core Team;
- each partner substantially integrated the case presentation draft circulated by the Core Team;
- each partner produced the ‘contextual introduction’ for the cases presentations, selecting and introducing the contextual features which, both at national and functional regional level, above all affected (and interacted with) the cases;
- each partner replied to the Core Team requests of clarification about specific issues concerning his cases.

5. Conclusions

The Full Assembly deems this deliverable to be fulfilled satisfactory

Deliverable 7.2



Work Package 7

Cross-case and cross-national Report

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Executive summary

The project YOUNG_ADULLLT departs from the observation that most European Lifelong Learning (LLL) policies have different, yet often competing, objectives leading to intended and unintended effects on young adults' life courses. This concerns not only LLL policies at national levels, but also their implementation in specific regional and local institutional frameworks, in education and/or trainings, in labour markets, and a landscape of other informal learning initiatives. All of these specific levels could influence the effectiveness and successful overall implementation of LLL policies. Given the goals of the latest European Lifelong Learning policies, which aim at fostering economic growth as well as guaranteeing social inclusion (EC 2010), a risk arises that unless they are well suited to the highly diverse target groups, their needs, as well as their challenging life trajectories, they might produce unintended far-reaching effects. In addition to this, since the fragmented LLL policies produce different effects in different contexts, it is vital to question their adequacy for young adults. Therefore, the project YOUNG_ADULLLT aims at identifying necessary parameters for the future decision-making support systems and analyses LLL policies for young adults in their interplay between economy, society, labour market, education, and trainings systems both at national and regional/local levels. The analysis covers issues of fragmentation of and discrepancies between LLL policies affecting the building of young adults' life courses.

Thus, the objectives of the project are:

1. To understand the relationship and complementarity of LLL policies in terms of orientations and objectives to their specific target groups, including (intended and unintended) effects on their life courses;
2. To enquire into policies' fit and potentials from the perspective of the young adults to explore hidden resources of young adults building their life projects;
3. To research LLL policies in their embedding and interaction in the regional economy, the labour market and individual life projects of young adults to identify best practices.

In the context of the overall objective of YOUNG_ADULLLT, this Working Package (WP7) conducts *regional/local case studies* in selected LLL policies of the participating countries. Specifically, the aim of WP7 is to identify more sustainable practices and patterns of coordination in LLL policy-making at transnational/national/regional/local level with particular attention to actors, dynamics, trends, (mis)matches and redundancies. This includes the identification of patterns of policy-making networks involved in shaping, formulating, and implementing LLL policies for young

adults as well as patterns of integration of LLL policies in economy, labour, education and individual life courses.

The objective is to analyse the intersections between the social and the economic dimensions aiming at recognizing strengths and weaknesses (overlapping, fragmented or unfocused policies and projects). In doing so, different patterns of LLL policy making and their integration with the labour market, education and other social policies as well as their impact on the target groups can be best identified at regional level. Thus, the objective of WP7 is fourfold:

1. it defines the criteria for the selection of case studies and the construction of a shared research framework;
2. it defines the indicators for description and comparison of the case studies;
3. it conducts the analysis of the case studies at regional/local level, including a data integration of its previous sub-studies; and
4. cross-case analyses identify patterns of policy-making networks involved in shaping, formulating, and implementing LLL policies for young adults and points out the best practices of integrating LLL policies in economy, labour, education and individual life courses.

In order to meet the objectives, this Cross-case and cross-national Report (D 7.2) synthesises the Case Study reports from regional/local levels (D 7.1) produced by each National Team, compares the main results and conclusions, and produces first cross-national general conclusions.

The main findings elaborated in the WP7 International Report concerning the policy-making networks and the social actors involved at local level can be identified in:

- it seems that for most of the 18 case studies network collaboration is a central instrument. Working together with institutions and individuals and sharing visions, goals and resources in different forms of collaboration proved to be a crucial condition for the successful implementation of the measure. At the same time, if collaboration is not led by relevant actors, the wider the network, the greater the risk of conflictual aims, sometimes using mutual veto power;
- participatory planning made without young people risks undermining the agreement of the various stakeholders, and may not necessarily anticipate the needs of the market or meet the needs and expectations of young adults. In most of the analysed cases, young people did not take part in the policy decisions;
- policies that reward employment rates as outcomes could be excessively focused on results, rather than on the processes and unintended consequences.

As regard of the different patterns of Lifelong Learning policy-making at regional level:

- the segmentation of policies is at the base of the standard approach to life courses, since they assume that the addressee lacks a single, main, specific characteristic, that is employability. To provide employability interventions are directed to the 'distance' that separates the addressee from the market in terms of that specific characteristic. On the contrary, usually, those who present a large distance from employability in terms of a specific feature are often even further from a standard life course path;
- the Lifelong Learning policies tend to be aligned to the aim 'employability', which seems to be the dominant European-wide discourse. But the goal of employability usually diverges from that of empowerment, which for policy-makers is considered as an instrumental objective compared to the final one of employability (assuming that the needs of addressees are or become coherent with those constructed by the policy-makers);
- the segmented approach is likely to prove unproductive because the needs of addressees are broader and they cannot be segmented. On the other side, segmentation is a way to define policy targets, although the main political discourse is about "detecting real needs", while they are constructing these needs;
- the policies analysed can in general be interpreted as both expressing an institutionalised life course order based on assumptions of 'normality', and as the reaction and adaptation of institutions to social changes and discrepancies especially between established education and training and labour markets. In other words, Lifelong Learning policies simultaneously stand for de-standardising and re-standardising institutionalised life courses. They react to deviations from the 'normal' life course by offering additional and/or compensatory education, and while doing so, they contribute to its further diversification and fragmentation;

Concerning the impact on the target groups of the analysed policies:

- extending vulnerability to all young adult social groups by constructing the policy targets can produce a sort of 'certification of vulnerability', which risks generating a self-fulfilling prophecy: if a specific policy is aimed at people with a 'certified' form of vulnerability, this produces the labelling and the fusing of individual perceptions with the collective one. If the recognition of a specific form of vulnerability is a requirement of access to a measure/policy, this recognition by the addressee could conflict with the activation paradigm, which underlies all the interventions.
- the analysis of young adults' biographies in the different case studies reflects different possible interpretations according to Merton's strain theory, due to the mismatch between

the socially-encouraged goals of society and the socially-acceptable means to achieve them. Indeed, in most cases, young adults in vulnerable conditions reflects a typical retreating attitude, due to the difficulty/impossibility to follow conformist or ritualist adaptive patterns due to the unavailability of the needed adequate means. However, in some cases, contradicting the widespread interpretation of the retreating profile (a stereotype of apathy of Young Adults toward policies, emphasized by their non-linear trajectories), some of them show patterns of different and alternative ways of activation (for instance, through undeclared work experiences), which can be likewise interpreted according to the Mertonian innovative strategy, reflecting non-standard ways of pursuing socially-encouraged goals, but without socially-acceptable means. However, not always the policies/measures addressed to this target group adequately intercept such alternative ways of activation and reinforce the stereotypes representing young adults as inactive profiles.

Finally, to summarize the main findings of this WP:

- the segmentation of policies highlights the need to ensure greater coordination to better respond to the actual needs of young adults (holistic needs vs. sectorial policies);
- the segmented approach presupposes the standard approach to life courses and this penalizes those who do not fit into this model;
- the measures which entail competition in accessing them might provoke a creaming effect that, on the one hand, favours the success of the measure according to its goals and aims, but, on the other hand, it can further penalize people in vulnerable conditions by excluding them from its benefits;
- the orientation is often unsatisfactory and destined to fail in the presence of a lacklustre labour market, of poor job-creation opportunities and of a high mismatch between demand and supply of skills;
- there is a strong risk of transferring on young people the responsibility for the choices and paths made in deviation from the standard, hiding the structural causes of these deviations. This could also lead to a stigmatisation, due to the application to the “deficit model”.

The report concludes (see chapter 6) by reminding the reader of the main findings, providing insights into and interpretations of the case study analyses and pointing out the contributions of the three main theoretical perspectives, i.e. Cultural Political Economy, Life Course Research, and Governance, to our knowledge of patterns of policy-making networks involved in shaping, formulating, and implementing LLL policies for young adults as well as patterns of integration of LLL policies in economy, labour, education and individual life courses.

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- Cefalo, R., Kazepov, Y., Chan, R. & Alexander, L. (2018). *Regional/local case studies – National Report: Austria*. YOUNG_ADULLLT Working Papers. Vienna: University of Vienna.
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1. Introduction

Life Long Learning (LLL) policies across Europe have been repeatedly described as highly fragmented and often conflicting in their objectives in relation to their target groups and means of implementation. Although aiming to improve economic growth and social inclusion for young adults, they might produce unintended effects when they are not well suited to the highly diverse target groups. In particular, firstly, regarding measures aimed at young adults a lack of coordinated policy-making can be observed; secondly, regarding the high fragmentation of LLL policies different effects in different contexts can be observed, raising the question these policies are adequately fitted to their targeted groups. This concerns not only LLL policies at national levels, but also their implementation in specific regional and local institutional frameworks, in education and/or trainings, in labour markets, and a landscape of other informal learning initiatives. In such a background this Working Package (WP7) conducts regional/local case studies in selected LLL policies and this International Report presents a cross-case and cross-national analysis of regional/local networks in LLL policy-making, which includes types/models of policy-making networks at regional/local level and provides assessment of issues of transferability and policy learning to other contexts.

1.1 Aim of cross-case and cross-national Report (D 7.2)

The main aims the WP7 International Report (D. 7.2) are listed in the YOUNG_ADULLLT Grant Agreement document:

Cross-case analysis of regional/local networks in LLL policy-making

based on the case study reports from the participant countries, a cross-case analysis is conducted in order to identify patterns of policy-making networks involved in shaping, formulating, and implementing LLL policies for young adults as well as best practices of integrating LLL policies in economy, labour, education and individual life courses. Furthermore, the cross-case analysis is aimed at describing the ways in which the different policy-making networks embody different kinds of mechanisms/assumptions about the needs and the activation paths of recipients (this latter aspect will be connected to the activities carried out in the WP5). A cross-case and cross-national Report is produced which includes types/models of policy-making networks at regional/local level and provides assessment of issues of transferability and policy learning to other contexts.

Work Package 7 provides the link between the empirical Work Packages (WPs 3-6) and the comparative analysis (WP8). Consequently, it aims to 'prepare' the comparative analysis. While the WP7 National Reports focused on the contextualisation of the cases in their social, political and economic realities, the WP7 International Report goes one-step further in terms of establishing

relations among the relationship patterns by isolating similarities and differences according to one specific quality (cf. Phillips & Schweisfurth 2008). That means considering the different national case studies to identify different patterns of policy-making by clustering; that means juxtaposing them according to selected criteria such as different educational infrastructures or different labour market systems.

Thus, the WP7 International Report aims to identify sustainable and successful regional/local patterns and networks of policy-making in terms of integrating LLL policies into the economy, labour market, education and their impact on individual life courses of young people. It is worth stressing that, consistently with the approach to case construction and analysis, an assessment of results is not pursued here, rather the focus is on a systematisation of the case narratives aimed at describing *how* and *in which conditions* the cases produced their effects within their contexts and in relation to their addressees' life courses. Following the reflection by Rein & Schon (cf. 1991, p. 267), we are thus not pursuing a conventional analysis approach focused on choice, or concerned with the analysis of the rational choice of decision makers among policy options. Instead, we seek to "identify the taken-for-granted assumptions that underlie our apparently natural understanding of actions in a problematic policy situation" (ibid.).

To summarize, this report primarily aims to:

- analyse policies and programmes at the national, regional and local level recognising policy-making networks including all social actors involved in shaping, formulating, implementing and evaluating LLL policies for young adults in all the nine countries participating in this research;
- distinguish ways in which the measures selected as case studies are applied in different contexts, thus identifying different patterns of LLL policy-making at regional and national level, and investigating their integration with the labour market, education and other social policies as well as their impact on young European adults' lives.

In relation to the above mentioned patterns of policy-making and best practice of integrating LLL policies in economy, labour, education and individual life courses, it is important to stress the difficulty/impossibility to elaborate 'best practice' without having clear criteria of what is 'good' or 'bad'. Indeed, one of the original features of the research in YOUNG_ADULLLT is the application of the three theoretical perspectives (Cultural Political Economy, Life Course Research and Governance), by which we overcome the traditional conception of 'good practice' that usually refers solely to the point of view of policy-makers. In contrast to such a one-sided view, our research gives the same 'dignity' to the point of view of the addressees and the implementers and policy-makers. Consequently, we need to refer to case/context immanent criteria of 'good/bad' like,

for instance, the presence of transparent and shared goals, relating these criteria to the young adults' ones. It is in this specific understanding we will hereafter refer to the notion of '*good practice*'.

1.2 Structure of the WP7 International Report

The "**Methodology of the case studies analysis and the logic of work**" (chapter 2), focuses on the employed research procedures and on the different steps leading each YOUNG_ADULLLT partner to the selection of two case studies. The chapter discusses the multi-level and multi-method approach to case studies, the main research questions tacking into account in the cases construction, as well as the analytical approach to the research material gathered. Furtherly, the 'heuristic table', used as an analytical tool to share among the project partners a common strategy for data integration is illustrated. The aim of the heuristic table is to display the intertwinement of the three main theoretical perspectives of YOUNG_ADULLLT (Cultural Political Economy, Life Course Research and Governance), through which we reflected upon the empirical data, the multilevel approach applied for the analysis (from the transnational level, down to the addressees, focusing on the interdependence between the different levels) and the stock of information and data gathered throughout the research process (deriving from the previous WPs).

In **chapter 3 "Cases presentation"**, the WP7 Core team reconstructs each case drawing on the narratives of the WP7 National Reports. The aim is to make the cases understandable and visible, also highlighting the most relevant contextual features, which interplay with the analysed policies/measures. Each case is presented in a way that seeks to find a balance between the description of its design and the concise references to the main analytical results, while focusing on the features, which make the case unique and/or particularly significant for our project and its context. In a nutshell, each case presentation is meant to reply to the overall question of the chapter, namely "*What is the presented policy/measure a case of?*".

In **chapter 4 "Cross-analysis of the main knots of relations"** the eighteen cases of the nine YOUNG_ADULLLT participating countries have been selected in terms of their similarities and/or divergences around a variety of dimensions, and analysed against three crucial "knots of relations", namely the constellations of relations which, by their interplay, shaped the cases, affecting their design as well as their unfolding. Indeed, with "knot" (see also paragraph 2.4.1), we refer to the intersections of different social relationships revealing the complex and non-linear causalities between different social actors and factors. More specifically, the WP7 Core Team selected and analysed three main knots from the case narratives of the WP7 National Reports: the target construction, the implementation and the pedagogical interactions.

Each knot analysis ends up with insights according to the three main theoretical perspectives, i.e. Cultural Political Economy, Life Course Research, and Governance, which are then connected together and interpreted in **chapter 5 (“Insights deriving from the knot analysis with the three theoretical perspectives”)**. The WP7 International Report concludes with the **“Closing remarks”** in **chapter 6**, where it not only summarizes the main conclusions of the report, but also provides insights into and interpretations of the case study analyses, in order to identify sustainable and successful regional/local patterns and networks of policy making in terms of integrating LLL policies in the economy, labour market, and education, as well as exerting impact on individual life courses of young adults.

2. Methodology and logic of work

Before going into the methodology and logic of work, this paragraph introduces the overall meaning of the case studies in the YOUNG_ADULLLT project.

Based on the selection in WP 3, the policy mapping, review, and analysis, LLL policies and programs were selected for an in-depth analysis in case study reports from each YOUNG_ADULLLT partner. Indeed, WP 7 integrates the results from the previous WP 3-6 in order to provide a regional review of policies and programs, networks of actors and individual life projects of young adults for an ideal-typical modelling. Hence, in YOUNG_ADULLLT the specific LLL measures selected as case studies are meant to ‘tell the story’ of LLL policy-making in each of the Functional Regions by means of a detailed description that integrates all information, material, and data we gathered during the course of the project. Firstly, in constructing and analysing the case studies, the WP7 framework draws on the three main theoretical perspectives of the YOUNG_ADULLLT project: Cultural Political Economy, Life Course Research and Governance. These perspectives lead the analysis at diverse institutional/territorial levels and in WP7 a particular attention is devoted to the interplay of the three dimensions with these levels. Furthermore, the diachronically built analysis of the evolution over time of the features of each policy-in-context allows to move from a detailed ‘picture’ to a more interesting ‘story-line’ as described in figures 1 and 2 (respectively in paragraph 2.1 and 2.2). In order to do so, we followed a set of research questions, synthesized in the “Magic Table”, a tool shared by the Consortium in order to ‘synchronise’ the different strand of research carried out in previous empirical WPs (3-6) with the case construction and analysis in WP7. In the following, the main WP7 research questions according to the three theoretical perspectives are summarised, and the complete list of questions is reported in Annex 1. Of course, not all the questions suited each case study, then every national team chose or modified them according to the feature of the selected case.

Firstly, a set of research questions oriented the case analysis toward the ‘triangulation’ among the three theoretical perspectives, advising to apply it at the different levels where the empirical materials were gathered, namely from the local and individual level to the transnational one (for a detailed description of the different levels of analysis see paragraph 2.2). Specifically, the questions were:

- *Is the Cultural Political Economy embedded in the measure coherent with the addressees’ life courses or not? If it was not congruent, or if its objectives and how it is implemented were not shared by the addressees, which reactions did they generate? Apathetic rejection, passive admission, opportunistic acceptance?*
- *Do the different actors share the same Cultural Political Economy orientation? If they did not share it, did this result in conflicts or disagreements that occurred at the Governance level? Is there any correspondence between the interests of the actors involved in the decision-making process and the Cultural Political Economy specific for the measure observed?*

Further, the main research questions were included, according to the CPE perspective:

- *To what extent do the actual addressee profiles differ from the “official” target?*

According to the GOV perspective:

- *Have there been significant conflicts between the stakeholders that decided the measure? If so, which are the most critical ones? And, how have they been managed and/or solved?*
- *Did the measure allow policy-makers and implementers to fit with the ‘local’ needs? Or, on the contrary, was the possibility for ‘local’ adjustments limited?*

According to the LCR perspective:

- *How did the measure promote and/or allow for conciliation between the different life spheres (work, leisure, family, community) of addressees?*
- *How did the measure promote the equal life-opportunities of young people and young adults?*

Moreover, a set of research questions regarded the process of implementation of the selected cases, particularly aiming to understand the interactions between the actors, or the ways in which the different actors interacted in the different phases of the policy cycle. For this purpose, particular attention for the communicative flows was given, in order to investigate how different subjects carried out reciprocal adaptations and consequent changes with respect to the original design of the measure. Furthermore, the organisation level integrated this analysis, aiming to reconstruct the inner organisational cultures and structures, as well as the organisation strategies, since they

affect the specific ‘institutional’ interpretation of the measure (see objectives and target groups), in a contextualized process of continuous negotiation with the macro-structure (labour market, education system and so forth) of the local environment.

According to the Cultural Political Economy perspective, this set of research questions included:

- *Which output did the measure provide?*

According to the Governance perspective:

- *Have there been significant conflicts within the network that implemented the measure? If so, which are the most critical ones? And how have they been managed and/or solved? “Where” did these conflicts and/or negotiations occur (i.e. formal or informal situations)?*

According to the Life Course Research perspective:

- *How did the measure promote and/or allow for conciliation between the different life spheres (work, leisure, family, community) of addressees?*
- *How did the measure promote the equal life-opportunities of young people and young adults?*

Finally, in order to grasp the peculiarities of each case study, both in terms of integration in the context of the specific measure and in terms of originality, the overall research question was: *What has been brought back to the context?* In particular, the focus was on whether ‘new’ needs have been recognised and satisfied, or whether ‘old’ needs have been addressed with new solutions, or finally whether old solutions have been repeated to address chronic problems. From the point of view of the addressees, we aimed to understand if the interaction with the measure had determined adaptive or opportunistic reactions, or if it has stimulated a proactive attitude in design terms.

According to the Cultural Political Economy perspective, this set of research questions included:

- *Which mechanism has been activated in the context? Has the context modified (and how) the mechanism (or the capacity of the mechanism to activate the required behaviours)?*

According to the Governance perspective:

- *Did the measure allow policy-makers and implementers to fit with the ‘local’ needs? Or, on the contrary, was the possibility for ‘local’ adjustments limited?*

According to the Life Course Research perspective:

- *What do the addressees think about their skills?*
- *What skill formation services the addressees demand?*

- *What are the life projects of the measure's addressees?*
- *How do the addressees elaborate their professional projects?*
- *Why did addressees expect the measure? Did the measure correspond to their initial expectations?*
- *How was the measure integrated into the addressees' life courses? And to what extent did they modify their aspirations according to the assumptions underlying the measure's design?*
- *Which effects have been produced by the measure on addressee life courses?*
- *What are the addressee representations of the mechanisms implemented by the professionals involved in the measure?*

Consistently with such framework, the case studies were carefully selected by the project partners, looking for dense and contextualized narratives able to represent the complexity of interactions among levels and actors.

Indeed, in YOUNG_ADULLLT case studies were introduced by a narrative strategy of 'storytelling' (see section 2.3) of the different typologies of networks and patterns of LLL policy-making, taking into account their different degrees of integration with the biographies they come across (and by which are crossed in their turn) and implementation contexts (e.g., economy, labour market and education systems). Since case studies do not 'naturally' exist and they are culturally constructed, in the YOUNG_ADULLLT project we built them carefully, also considering the complex intertwine between actors and levels.

The narrative presentations of the eighteen case studies (two case per country) constructed by integrating the empirical work of the previous WPs thus constituted core of the WP7 National Reports. The cross-case analysis yield by the WP7 International report draws on these National reports, primarily aiming at showing variations and commonalities across cases, paving the way for the subsequent comparative analysis in WP8. Thus, the WP7 cross-case analysis has no evaluation objective, rather it aims at describing different patterns of policy making that, once juxtaposed, allow to construct insights and further research questions concerning their effects on the addressees' life courses and their potential in terms of transferability and policy learning.

The first part of the chapter (paragraphs 2.1. to 2.3.1.) illustrates the process of cases construction and the approach applied by the project partners for their analysis, in view of the WP7 National reports construction. In the second part (paragraphs 2.4 and 2.4.1), the chapter focuses on the logic of work and methodology followed by the WP7 Core Team to yield a first systematization of the information integrated in the case studies.

2.1. The construction of the case studies

In constructing their case studies, the project partners did not apply an instrumental approach focused on the assessment of “*What worked (or not)?*”, also for the previously mentioned reasons. Rather, consistently with Bartlett & Vavrus’s proposal (2017, pp. 1-2), the Consortium adopted an approach able to “understand policy as a deeply political process of cultural production engaged in and shaped by social actors in disparate locations who exert incongruent amounts of influence over the design, implementation, and evaluation of policy” (ibid). In order to enhance the interactive and relational dimension among actors and levels, as well as their embeddedness in local infrastructures (education, labour, social/youth policies) according to project’s three theoretical perspectives, the casing process (Byrne & Ragin, 2013) in YOUNG_ADULLLT thus followed these main assumptions:

- the effects of the policies might be best researched starting from the local level, as it is the ‘place’ where they concretely meet their addressees and interact with other systems (labour market, educational and training system and so on);
- the cultural meanings of policies are constructed by different stakeholders in relation to their context of implementation and the diverse configurations of actors. However, we must also take into account that the local contexts continuously interact with broader levels and different patterns of interaction;
- the subjective dimensions of agency and sense-making, constructed through qualitative research has also to be related to the broader frames of structural conditions and arrangements described through quantitative data analysis.

Given the very nature of the whole YOUNG_ADULLLT project, namely its multi-level and multi-method overall design (Parreira do Amaral et al., 2018), the case construction ‘embodied’ (and in turn was shaped by) the integration of the empirical materials gathered throughout the project. The following Figure 1 (see below) represents the complexity that characterized our case studies, showing the how the cases are ‘produced’ by the interaction of different actors at different levels.

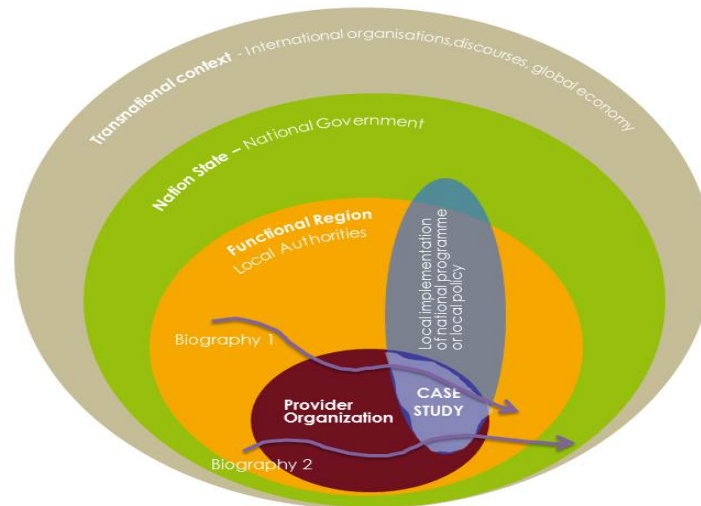


Figure 1. Case studies in YOUNG_ADULLLT

Concerning the **multi-level** dimension, the underlying assumption is that most of the LLL policies are designed at transnational level, but come into action at the regional/local level creating specific – intended and unintended – effects on their target group (individual level). Consequently, the case construction sought to incorporate all the relevant levels – namely transnational level, national level, regional level, local level, organisational level, interactive level and individual level, see also table 1 - by establishing inter-level interlinkages and correlations. By this approach, we had the possibility to grasp the various levels at which LLL policies are negotiated and display the interplay of macro-structures, regional environments and institutions/organisations as well as individual expectations.

In order to capture the various forms of sense making on each of the above mentioned level, a **multi-method** approach has been applied, drawing of the results deriving from document analysis, qualitative as well as quantitative analysis. Moreover, the multimethod design enabled a deeper understanding of data and information, taking into account different points of view according to the multi-level analysis approach. Specifically, the different empirical materials integrated in the cases construction consisted in:

- the document analysis and thorough description of LLL policies from WP3;
- the macro-statistical analysis from WP4;
- the different structural, institutional and subjective perspectives (re)constructed by the WP6 and WP5 interviews with actors who play different roles in the processes of design and implementation of LLL policies;
- the local 'skills ecologies' description from WP6.

2.2 Methodology of the case analysis

The WP7 case study analysis provides the link between the empirical WPs (WPs 3-6) and the comparative analysis (WP8). Given the very nature of the whole YOUNG_ADULLLT project, namely its multi-level and multi-method design, the information and data integrated by our case study approach led us to a cross-reading of the relations among the macro socio-economic dimensions, structural arrangements, governance patterns, addressee biographies and mainstream discourses that underlie the process of design and implementation of the LLL measures selected as case studies. The subjective dimensions of agency and sense-making animated these analyses, and the multilevel approach contextualized them from the local to the transnational levels. The Figure 2 below represents the analytical approach to the research material gathered about the case studies. Specifically, it shows the different levels from the transnational level, down to the addressees. These levels are focused on the three theoretical perspectives (Cultural Political Economy, Life Course Research and Governance) through which we reflected upon the empirical data. Therefore, the coloured broken lines show that we not only focused on the levels themselves, but also on the connections from level to level. The phenomena we identified with our three theoretical perspectives exist only as connected side by side. Therefore, the black broken lines illustrate, on the one hand, that we looked at interdependence at each level. On the other hand, the black broken lines overlap from their origin level to the neighbouring levels. This shows our attention to the interdependence between the different levels and points out that the selectivity between the limits of each level is fluid. By pulling all these threads together and describing the fabric, we got the 'whole story' of the cases, which is symbolized by the 'egg' (solid black line).

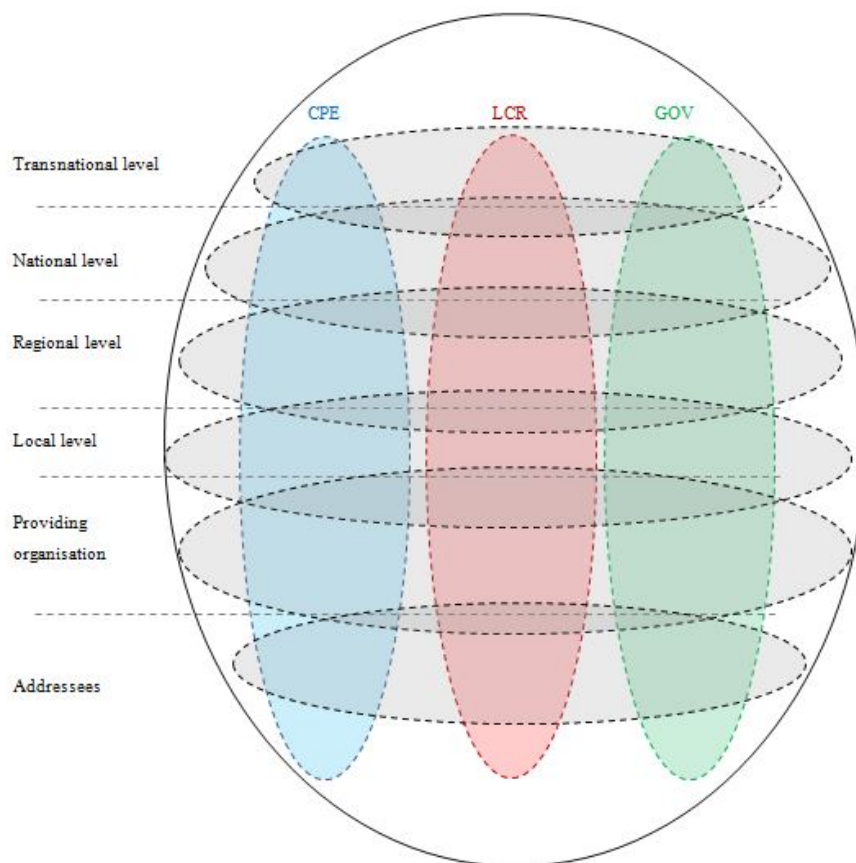


Figure 2. Multi-level and multi-method approach to case studies

In order to set a strategy for tackling the complexity of the cases, the Consortium shared as a common analytical tool, an heuristic table (see Table 1 below). The table aims at displaying the intertwinement of the three main theoretical perspectives of YOUNG_ADULLLT (see the dimensions of Cultural Political Economy, Life Course Research and Governance in the vertical axes of the table), the multilevel approach we applied for the analysis (see the different horizontal levels) and the stock of information and data we gathered throughout the research process. Very shortly, each vertical and horizontal level of the table was compiled by the project partners drawing on the empirical materials gathered in the previous WPs.

Table 1. Heuristic table for case study analysis

LEVEL	CPE	LCR	GOV
Transnational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourses Agenda setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes Assumptions underlying the institutional regulation of life courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Social Funding regulation
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourses Assumptions underlying policy-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistics on young adults living conditions Secondary data analysis reports Assumptions underlying the institutional regulation of life courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional framework of policy-making Patterns of funding Welfare models Labour and skill market regulation
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumptions underlying policy-making Target group construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young adult targeted welfare measures Statistics on young adults in FR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies governance models
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy meaning construction Target group construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific youth targeted Welfare measures Interrelation with local labour market, schools and other LLL policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies implementation models
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation specific interpretation of policies and target groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiation with local labour market, schools and other LLL policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation culture and structure
Interactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication of objectives between organisation and young adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiation of 'match' between young adult's previous career and organisation objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process of access and entry to the organisation
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy meaning construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subjective biographical sense-making Life trajectories and life choices/planning Perception of target group depictions (especially "vulnerable groups") Subjective policy meaning construction 'Ecologies of expectations' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patterns of participation in stakeholder representations

Specifically, the for the **Transnational Level**, the main research object/materials considered in a Cultural Political Economy perspective were the mainstream discourses underlying the European Youth Strategies orientation (e.g., discourses about participation, social inclusion, entrepreneurship, volunteering, creativity and active citizenship) and the related agenda setting. The main data sources here were WP6 and the WP3 national reports. In a Life Course Research perspective, the focus was on youth targeted programmes such as Youth Guarantee, Erasmus+ and Youth on the Move, especially considering their target group construction and related assumptions on their addressee life courses. Most of this information were introduced in the WP3 policy mapping and/or mentioned in the WP6 interviews. At this level, the Governance perspective mainly concerned European Social Funding regulation, especially referring to relevance as 'permanent' (and sometimes almost single) funding sources for regional/local actions or, on the contrary, their extemporaneous application for non-recurring initiatives. This latter information mainly drew on the WP3 national reports, WP6, and WP2 state of art report (D2.2, D2.3).

At a **National level**, by the Cultural Political Economy approach the assumptions that affect the patterns and processes of policy-making were critically read, and this strand of information mainly derived from WP6. The Life Course Research perspective was approached drawing on statistical data (from EUSILC, EUROSTAT and different local providers) concerning young adult living conditions, the labour market and educational dynamics and the demographic structure. Specifically, these information were gathered through the WP4 analysis of data and the WP3 Functional Region descriptions. Furthermore, at this level the degree of correspondence between the implicit assumptions concerning the 'standard' life courses of young adults was important: the institutional regulations of the life course at national level are thus relevant. In terms of Governance, national contexts were described referring to institutional frameworks of policy-making, patterns of funding (e.g. considering the role and usage of national Ministry funds), regulation of the labour and skill markets, leading to the broader dimension of the different Welfare models. The information pipeline here crossed WP6, the WP3 international and national reports and the WP2 state of art report (D2.2, D2.3).

At the **Regional level** the underlying assumptions in the policy-making process were again reviewed by the Cultural Political Economy perspective, although the main focus here was their relation with the construction of the policy target groups. Thus, the main references in terms of information were WP6, the WP3 in-depth analysis of policy documents and the WP5 expert (manager level) interviews. As far as the Life Course Research perspective is concerned, at Functional Regional level particular attention was given to the availability of youth targeted Welfare measures (within a broad range, from income support to housing facilitations), drawing both from the WP6 and the WP5 interviews (with managers, street level professionals and young adults).

Coming closer to the local contexts, the Governance perspective here entailed analysis of the policy governance models, then considering different constellations and patterns as described in the WP3 national reports and Functional Region descriptions, in the skill ecology mapping of WP6 and in WP2 (D2.2, D2.3).

At the **Local level**, the 'outcomes' of the deconstruction of the 'construals' (namely acts of meaning making) surrounding the analysed measure were furtherly contextualized, especially relying on the WP5 interviews (with manager and street level professionals), although some insights might derived from WP6. Staying at a local level, the Welfare measures quoted above concerning the Life Course Research perspective were considered here for their concrete aspects/characters/features. The availability and the features of these measures within the local areas have been taken into consideration in the WP6 policy mapping and in all the different typologies of WP5 interviews. The strict connection with the case studies also implied that the Governance analysis was here focused on the different models of implementation for the chosen measures, starting from the document analysis carried out in the WP3 in-depth descriptions and combining with the WP5 interviews (with managers and street level professionals).

The central data source for the **Organisational level** was the WP5 interviews with the managers and the street-level professionals. This level is the location of the providing organisation where the street-level professionals do their work. While on the local level the Cultural Political Economy perspective focused on the environment of the chosen organisations, at the organisational level the organisation specific interpretation of the policy and the target group was reconstructed. At this level, the Life Course Research perspective focused on the specific processes of negotiation with labour markets, schools and other LLL policies by the professionals. Concerning the Governance perspective, at this level were mainly taken into account the inner organisational cultures and structures as well as organisation strategies.

At the **Interactive level**, the focus was on interactions between the providing organisation, their staff and young adults. Here interviews with managers, street-level professionals and young adults were equally important data sources. From the Cultural Political Economy perspective, the issue of communication of objectives between the organisation and young adults was questioned. At this level the Life Course Research perspective focused on the negotiation processes to 'match' young adult previous career experiences, expectations and needs with organisation objectives. For the Governance perspective, the different ways to access and enter the organisation were an important issue.

Finally, the **Individual level** was addressed by exploring the subjective meanings constructed by young adults, consequently it mainly drew on the WP5 biographical interviews. In a Cultural Political Economy perspective, this concerned young adult representations of the target groups

they were connected with (with particular attention to the definitions concerning ‘vulnerability’ and the condition of ‘need’). Furthermore, these latter research materials enabled to take into consideration also the biographical issues (choices, planning styles, trajectories, timespan perceptions). Concerning the Governance perspective, the focus here was on the different patterns of participation that were (or are not) available to young adults in the stakeholder representations (e.g., top-down vs. bottom-up models), and the main information sources were WP6 and all the typologies of WP5 interviews.

2.3 The narrative approach to case studies analysis

To carry out a cross-dimensional description of the case studies, the project partners analysed their data and information organising them according to the structure of the heuristic table by moving the analytical perspective top-down and bottom-up, as well as shifting from left to right on the matrix and vice versa. Considering the “horizontal movement”, the multidimensional approach enabled taking into consideration the mutual influence and relations among the institutional, individual and structural dimensions (which in the project correspond to the theoretical frames of Cultural Political Economy, Life Course Research and Governance and related mixed research methods). In addition, the ‘vertical’ movement from the transnational to the individual level and vice versa, was meant to carefully carry out (and analyse) a “study of flows of influence, ideas, and actions through these levels” (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2009, p. 11), emphasising the correspondences/divergences among the perspectives of different actors at different levels, as they result from analyses carried out in the previous WPs.

Given the overall task of creating, analysing and enhancing the interlinkages of the various levels, while bringing them together in an in-depth case study construction (see also Helsper et al. 2010), the WP7 Core Team proposed a narrative approach for the cases presentation in the WP7 National Reports. Indeed, since no established methods are available to do so, unique and project-specific ways of interlinking were applied. Following Byrne’s (2013) approach to case-based methods, the aim was thus not to establish interlinkages by looking for causalities, but rather by means of theoretical relationships and “recognizing that in complex systems [...] trajectories and transformations depend on all of the whole” (Byrne 2013, p. 2). Concerning the analysis of policies, this meant that both the policy-making and implementation stages have been considered as “cultural and social processes” (Bartlett & Vavrus 2017, p. 2), where the first corresponds to the setting of a cultural, discursive and normative frame which, in the second stage, is appropriated, adapted and contextualized by different actors (with different powers) at different levels. Then, establishing theoretical relationships in YOUNG_ADULLLT, and how cases are constructed, was done in the form of storytelling. By asking what LLL policies can tell about their trajectories on each

level, the focus was on what makes them unique, rather than on causalities. By this approach, the case studies construction and analysis integrated the heterogeneity of the empirical materials deriving from WPs 3-6, enabling to find “different plots” through which to bring them together and explore the interplay of different dimensions on different levels. Indeed, the storytelling of the cases revealed a proper way to grasp rather the complex environment of the analysed policies, as well as their relation to young adults’ expectations. Consequently, it is important to further stress that the policies built just a storyline, yet not the case itself.

2.3.1 The structure of the case storytelling in the WP7 National Reports.

The described narrative approach to case studies constituted the core of the WP7 National Reports. Specifically, in each report the project partners introduced their cases by locating them within their context, which are composed of policy frameworks, patterns of policy-making, networks of implementation, political discourses and macro-structural conditions (mostly concerning young adults) at the different levels of our analysis. Furthermore, these introductions were meant to explain the rationale which every partner applied to select case studies. Second, to build a dense portrait able to yield the complexity as well as the specificity of the cases, each partner integrated and connected the case analysis results by a narrative approach. In order to equally represent all the actors’ “voices” (especially the ones of the addressees and the organisations) within the WP7 storytelling, these parts of the WP7 National Reports started the narrative from a relevant entry point, which was the history the policy (see “history of the policy-approach”) or the life stories of (at least two) addressees (see “biographical approach”). Concerning the latter approach, it is important to stress that it was not meant as a strictly biographical perspective; rather it aimed to contextualise the life stories within the biographical constellations in which these young people came across the measure, the access procedures and how these trajectories continued in and possibly after the measure. Concerning the “history of the policy-approach”, the narrative focused on the evolution of a policy/measure (in terms of main objectives, target groups, governance patterns and so on) in order to highlight the intended and unintended effects of the “current version” of the policy within its context. Further, these narratives were meant to reconstruct the story of the meaning of Lifelong learning in different constellations which results from interactions among policy makers (at different levels), representatives of providing organisations (managers and professionals) and young people.

Once the entry point was selected, the storyline was structured accordingly. This meant that in terms of its sequence, the narrative was developed consistently with the trajectory of the selected entry point, also integrating insights concerning the correspondences, implementation and original aspects. As far as the correspondences are concerned, the first analytical issue was represented

by the different patterns of integration of the three perspectives (Cultural Political Economy, Life Course Research, Governance) and within each of them. Starting from the level at which the analysis was conducted, namely the Functional Region level and the individual level (considering the different points of view of the actors involved), this analysis yielded how the Cultural Political Economy embedded in the FR and at local level relates to the ones on upper levels. In particular, it sought to understand whether the measure was declined at FR and local level in a different manner (and to what extent), whether these changes were consistent with regard to the higher-level of the Cultural Political Economy (e.g., the modifications were adaptive to a different context than transnational or national), or whether they were divergent in responding to the interests of local decision-makers. In relation to Life Course Research, the main aim of the correspondence analysis consisted in asking whether the positions of the addressees at national level corresponded to those locally observed, while at Governance level the main focus regarded the issue of collaborations and/or potential conflicts recorded at Functional Region level and their potential (or not) occurrence at the other levels. The implementation analysis mainly focused on communication flows, investigating how different subjects carried out reciprocal adaptations and consequent changes with respect to the original design of the measure. In particular, interactions between operators and addressees were considered in order to explore how the visions of the street-level operators and addressees interact with the Cultural Political Economy level, and how any divergence could explain the success or the failure of the examined measure. Furthermore, the organisation level integrated this analysis, reconstructing inner organisational cultures and structures, as well as organisation strategies, since they affect the specific 'institutional' interpretation of the measure (see objectives and target groups), in a contextualised process of continuous negotiation with the macro-structure (labour market, education system and so forth) of the local environment. The third analytical issue, namely the original aspects, aimed to grasp the peculiarities of each case study, both in terms of integration in the context of the specific measure and in terms of originality: *what has been brought back to the context?* In particular, we asked whether 'new' needs have been recognised and satisfied, or whether "old" needs have been addressed with new solutions, or finally whether old solutions have been repeated to address chronic problems. From the point of view of the addressees, we wanted to understand if interaction with the measure has determined adaptive or opportunistic reactions, or if it has stimulated a proactive attitude in design terms. Furthermore, in this analysis it was particularly important to highlight if there have been any examples of bottom-up reformulation of the problems and/or solutions and if there have been cases of active participation of the people involved in the construction or implementation of the policy/measure.

Finally, the case storytelling was followed by a section devoted to systematizing the most relevant insights about the case according to the three main theoretical perspectives of YOUNG_ADULLLT.

2.4 WP7 International Report logic of work

Given the overall aim of WP7 to provide the link between the empirical WPs (3-6) and pave the way for the comparative analysis in WP8, the cases constructed and analysed in the WP7 National Reports performed the function of incorporating the different levels from transnational to regional/local to individual, bringing together the results from the quantitative, qualitative and document policy analysis and examining the background to contextualise the phenomenon.

Starting from these materials, the WP7 International Report is meant of juxtaposes the different cases by isolating differences and similarities in patterns of policy(-making). In order to do so, the first step consisted of analysing each WP7 National Report and isolating the most important components of each case narrative. For this purpose, the WP7 Core Team shared a common tool (namely the “clustering table”) which helped to organise the different information from the case narratives. The following table 2 illustrates the structure of the clustering table. Specifically, the selected main dimensions (and related sub-dimensions) are meant to “cover”, as much as possible, the information integrated in each case storyline, from the policy/measure design to its implementations, also taking into account its integration within local networks and other policies and its (potential) previous “history”. Further, the main dimension give particular room for the information concerning the implementing organisations and the “effects” produced by the policy/measure in the interplay with the addressees’ biographies.

The clustering table also reports the theoretical perspective by which the specific dimension is analysed in the cases juxtaposition, as well as the list of potential values to be used in order to fill each cells. It is noteworthy that both this latter information were put in the table as a compilation guideline and a main orientation for the analysis, yet they did not constitute mandatory values, since the heterogeneity and complexity of the case narratives entailed the need for a very flexible tool. Finally, the “reference of categorisation” column reports, where needed, the source of the categorisation considered in defining the dimension potential values.

Table 2. The clustering table structure

Main dimension	Theoretical perspective	Sub-dimensions	Dimension values	Extra information	
funding scheme	GOV	source	totally or mainly public; totally or mainly private; equally mixed sources	<i>if totally or mainly public</i>	totally or mainly European; totally or mainly national; totally or mainly regional
	GOV	criteria for refunding	refundng under success assessment; refundng regardless of success assessment	<i>If under success assessment, which criteria of success?</i>	
sector of orientation	GOV/CPE		SYP; LMP; EDP (and potential combinations)		
policy-making	GOV/CPE	approach	top-down; bottom-up		
	GOV	network	totally or mainly private actors; totally or mainly public actors; equally mixed actors		
	GOV	addressees participation in policy making	yes/no	<i>if yes, how?</i>	
	CPE/LCR	underlying conception of the life course in policy making	linear; non-linear		
	CPE	official target	<i>Specify</i>		
	CPE	focus on specific vulnerability in target definition	yes/no	<i>if yes, which dimension of vulnerability? (potential values: low qualification; unemployment; NEET condition; early school leavers)</i>	
	CPE/GOV	success criteria	yes/no	<i>if yes, which criteria?</i>	
main task of the measure	CPE/GOV/LCR		employability; qualification; empowerment; compensation of individual deficits; basic skills		

Main dimension	Theoretical perspective	Sub-dimensions	Dimension values	Extra information	
history of the measure		starting year			
	CPE/GOV	originality of the measure	there have been predecessor policies; the measure is a clear change		
implementing organisation	GOV	size of the organisation	as defined in the WP7 national report		
	GOV	role of the organisation in the FR according to main task of the measure	<i>specify (focusing on potential monopolist role and/ integration within a network or a system)</i>		
approach to addressees	CPE		holistic; employability-centred		
addressees' access to the measure	CPE	level of activation	autonomous; tutored		
	CPE	typologies of selection	competitive selection; threshold; free access		
tailored implementation according to the addressees' needs	CPE/GOV/LCR		yes/no	<i>if yes, how? (potential values: task adaptation; target group definition; services supply; time flexibility)</i>	
length of addressees' paths within the measure	None		low (0-3 months); medium (4-12); high (13 and over)		
how does the measure conceptualizes	LCR/CPE	are the addressees constructed as deviating from normal life course?	yes/no	<i>if yes, in what sense?</i>	

Main dimension	Theoretical perspective	Sub-dimensions	Dimension values	Extra information	
the standardization of the life course?	LCR/CPE	is the aim re-standardising or further de-standardising the life course?	yes/no		
how do the addressees justify their participation to the measure?	LCR		individualised; systemic ascription of disadvantage and ruptured trajectories; 2nd/last chance of compensating failure; subjectively meaningful goal		
how do the addressees evaluate their experience in the measure?	LCR		well-being; improved life chances; experience of been taken seriously; relevant learning experiences; stigmatization; further exclusion; ineffective according to their need; useful to plan their future (educational, professional... domain)		

The compiled clustering tables were circulated to each project partner in order to share and validate the WP7 Core Team's interpretation of their case narratives.

Starting from the information resumed in the clustering table, the WP7 Core Team reconstructed each case presentation (see chapter 3 of this report), aiming to make them understandable and visible. In addition, in order to further strength the embeddedness of the case presentation, the WP7 Core Team asked each partner to condense in an introductive page the contextual features which, both at national and Functional Regional level, above all affected (and interacted with) the case storyline. Specifically, the leading questions for this introductive contextualisation were:

- *what is the specific of the landscape of LLL policies in your countries and the Functional Regions which is necessary to understand the particularity of the two policy cases? What is the specific of school and training and how are labour market policies for young adults related to these?* (mainly drawing on the WP3 materials);
- *what are the characteristics of the living conditions of young adults in your country and the two Functional Regions, especially with regard to unemployment including the particular aspects of the target groups of the two studied cases?* (mainly drawing on the WP4 materials);
- *what are typical ways in which young adults assess their biographies and their expectations and experiences in LLL policies? Do these ways correspond to the point of view of expert? Which are typical interactions resulting from this?* (mainly drawing on the WP5 materials);
- *what is the specific of the skills system in your country and the two functional regions? How does this affect young adults and how is this reflected by LLL policies?* (mainly drawing on the WP6 materials).

2.4.1. The juxtaposition of the cases by the knot analysis

In order to pave the way for the comparative analysis in WP8, the 18 case narratives were organised according to their similarities and divergences around a variety of dimensions. This operation helped to reduce and manage the (necessary) complexity and heterogeneity of the case narratives. At the same time, the different interpretation of the narrative approach to case studies analysis applied by the project partners, and the heterogeneity of the constructed cases itself, entailed a varying possibility to organise all cases according to different dimensions. However, as will be presented in chapter 4, in order to particularly explore the constellations of relations which, by their interplay, shape the cases affecting their design as well as their evolution, the juxtaposition of the cases has been realised through the analysis of three main 'knots of relations'. Indeed, 'knot' is a term derived from the social

network analysis (e.g., Scott, 2017), but in a more general sense it may also refer to relational sociology (Emirbayer, 1997). Concisely, the concept of 'knot' is applied in this report as a reference to the intersections of different social relationships revealing the complex and non-linear causalities between different social actors and factors. This understanding comes close to the understanding of social situations as underlying the approach of situational analysis (Clarke, 2005). In YOUNG_ADULLLT, thus, focusing on knots of data meant to "return to the potential shift from 'knowing' to 'relating to', to develop the understanding of the multiplicity of the world/worlds [...] moving away from seeing individuals as clearly bounded subjects [...] towards a mapping of the relations in which researchers are always involved" (Coleman & Ringrose, 2013, p. 6).

The knots emerging in the case study analyses are considered as relational interaction among the purposes of policy makers and practitioners, the organisational network, the experience of the street level managers and tutors with young people and the subjective sense-making of these latter.

Specifically, the three main knots are:

- target construction – this knot is relevant because of its relation with the discourses which underlie the decision-making process of the cases, with the governance models applied according to defined target and with the self-representation of the beneficiaries (who necessarily interact with the depictions of the target they are included in);
- implementation – through the analysis of this knot, the process of actual unfolding of the analysed policy/measure is explored in terms of relation among the goals of the policy/measure, the means and tools applied to reach them and the networks of actors activated in its developing;
- pedagogical interactions – this 'knot' is explored as an in-between the intentions of policy-makers and addressees, the organisational structures set in place, the teaching practices of staff and the interaction with the learning practices of the young people.

The knot analysis attempts to cover the whole storyline of the case narratives, starting from how they were conceived "on paper" (thus in relation to the underlying discourses in policy-making and related interpretation of contextual and individual needs), going through the process of their implementation and exploring the interactions built by the different actors and stakeholders around them.

Finally, each knot analysis ends with insights according to the three main theoretical perspectives, which are further connected and interpreted by a more general standpoint in chapter 5.

3. Case presentations

In this chapter, each case is presented looking for a balance between the description of its design and concise references to the main results of the analysis. The aim is to introduce the cases in order to make them understandable for the readers, mostly focusing on the features, which make the case unique and/or particularly significant for our project as well as for its context. Consequently, the most relevant structural features both at national and regional level affecting the development of the cases were selected and reported in collaboration with the project partners.

The cases are introduced by a short label (see table 3 for the complete list) which shortly resumes the most significant features of the case, stating *what* [the specific case] *is a case of*. Each presentation concludes with a summary box that underlies the features, which, above all, make the case unique and particularly relevant for the YOUNG_ADULLLT research.

Table 3. YOUNG_ADULLLT case studies¹

Country	Policy/measure name	Functional Region	Label	Case code for the Policy
Austria	Du kannst was!	Upper Austria	Flexibilising a standardised skills system by recognising informal and non-formal learning	A-UA-2
	Back to the future	Vienna	Work ethics through work experience	A-V-1
Bulgaria	University Students Training Practices	Blagoevgrad	From theory to practice in higher education	BG-B-3
	Youth Guarantee	Plovdiv	Adapting an EU programme to a local context	BG-P-2
Croatia	LLCG Centre	Osijek-Baranja	Tackling skills mismatch by guiding labour force	HR-OB-3
	Open Public University Dioptr	Istria	Adult education in public-private responsibility as passe-partout	
Finland	NUPPA Centre	Kainuu	Holistic support to provide a sustainable life perspective	FI-K-1
	Ohjaamo Centre	Southwest Finland	Holistic support to develop employability	FI-SF-1
Germany	VbFF	Rhein-Main	The functionality of feminist empowerment	DE-F-3

¹ Hereafter, the cases will be mentioned by reporting their policy/measure label plus the Functional Region they belong to in square brackets, e.g. Du kannst was! [Upper Austria].

² The particularities of the Finnish cases are highlighted together at the end of 3.4.2 as they are two different regional expressions of the same national policy.

³ See <http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2016/20161285>.

⁴ See the full text at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/46/contents>

⁵ The particular aspects of this case are summarised at the end of the next cases descriptions as both are regional variations of the same national policy.

⁶ On the bottom we have policies which address basic, sometimes even existential needs of the young adults.

Country	Policy/measure name	Functional Region	Label	Case code for the Policy
			for active labour market policies	
	Werkschule	Bremen	Preventing pre-vocational education by including it into regular school	DE-B-3
Italy	NEETWork	Milan	Targeting 'weak' profiles in a 'strong' context	IT-M-2
	Civic Service	Genoa	Targeting 'strong' profiles in a 'weak' context	IT-G-1
Portugal	Professional Courses	Vale do Ave	Addressing mismatch by the 'dualisation' of secondary school	PT-VdA-1
	Adult Education and Training Courses (EFA courses)	Alentejo Litoral	Maximizing social inclusion through recognition of individual needs and skills	PT-AL-2
Scotland	Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)	Glasgow City Region (GCR)	Supporting school-to-work transition by early guidance and apprenticeship	UK-G-2
	Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)	Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Region (ACAR)	Supporting school-to-work optimizing the role of personal networks	UK-A-2
Spain	TP12	Girona	Lifelong Learning as extension of the youth moratorium	
	Workshop Schools	Malaga	Empowering young people by making them contribute to local communities	ES-M-3

3.1. Cases in Austria

In Austria, institutions like the Employment Service Center along with the Regional Coordination Platforms for Transition from School to Work provide an overview on options for young adults. The relevant policies have been identified by looking at the relevance of the policies and programs. The selected policies in the functional regions (in Vienna “Back to the Future” and in Upper Austria “Du kannst was!”) mainly focus on education and training and not on coaching or career guidance policies. Like in Germany, the Austrian education system is characterised by an early tracking starting at the age of 10, respectively at the age of 14 or after the obligatory education. The selection process takes place along the lines of social background. After the compulsory education, young people can decide whether to go for further schooling, for an apprenticeship or for work. The existing options show also the importance of VET in Austria and its attractiveness for young people. In the school year 2015/16, almost 70% of all Austrian pupils in their last compulsory school year attended a VET school. In Upper Austria, these were 76.5% and in Vienna 57.6%. Due to the apprenticeship system and the VET

sector, Austria has a higher employment rate in the age group from 15 to 24 years than the EU-28 average (51.3% in comparison to 32.6% in 2014.).

Although the employment rate in Austria is higher than EU average, the economy cannot fully absorb the growth in the labour force, which has led to recent increases in unemployment, especially for the low skilled, even if it remains low in comparative perspective. In 2015, about 110,000 young people were employed as apprentices. Regarding the unemployment rate, in 2015, Vienna was the federal state with the rate with 13.5% compared to the average of 9.1%. 11.7% of all unemployed in Vienna were between 15 and 24 years old. The unemployment rate in Upper Austria was lower compared to Vienna with 6.1% in 2015; about 16.2% of all unemployed were between 15 and 24 years. Compared to the EU average the unemployment rate of young adults is very low (in Austria about 6% and EU average is about 8%). Generally, the amount of resources spent for social protection is well above the EU average (11,312 Euro per inhabitant compared to 7,655 Euro). Social welfare standards are still high overall, as the proportion of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion is one of the lowest among EU member states, which can also be seen in the overall rate of life satisfaction.

As for the configuration of the skill system in Austria, the two regions of Vienna and Upper Austria differ very much regarding their economic structure. While Upper Austrian economy is mainly based on industrial production, in Vienna the service sector plays an important role. Therefore, differences in the systems concern specific skills demand and supply, rather than the actors involved. In terms of skills supply in Vienna the share of young adults with high-level and low-level qualifications is higher than the Austrian average, while medium-level skills are the mostly common in Upper Austria. The demand of skills is in both cases defined by the economic structure of the region. However, looking only at skills formation in LLL programmes for young adults in vulnerable situations, the problems faced in both cases do differ rather in quantity than in quality. The problems identified in both regions are individual and social problems connected to young adults' early exit from the education and training system and the related consequences. Regarding LLL programmes, there are no major differences in the degree of public and private commitment to skills formation. In terms of coordination between different actors, the decentralized organisational structure of actors in Upper Austria has led to better coordination networks than in Vienna. The decentralization in the case of Upper Austria, increases the complexity of governance processes. Even though the educational structure of young adults in Vienna and Upper Austria differs, the characteristics of young adults with difficulties entering the labour market are the same in both regions. Other individual factors negatively influencing labour market integration are a lack in motivation and lack in practical experience as well as a lack in basic skills, soft skills, learning skills and life skills. In Vienna, the number of unemployed young adults is much higher due to its higher share of early school leavers. In terms of gender, in labour market

policies men are overrepresented and women are underrepresented. This is partially due to the general gender imbalance in education: in Austria, more girls attend upper secondary schools (vertical inequality), but boys are overrepresented in technical and vocational schools (horizontal inequality).

3.1.1 Du kannst was! [Upper Austria]: flexibilising a standardised skills system by recognising informal and non-formal learning

Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] was selected for a case study on Upper Austria firstly because of the number and range of institutional partners involved. The policy relies on the cooperation between the social partner, public institutional actors and adult education institutions. The Chamber of Labour together with the other social partners initiated Du kannst was! [Upper Austria]. The original idea was taken from the Swiss model of recognising competences. That was an unknown territory in Austria. There were three years of negotiation between the Chamber of Economy and Labour, the Trade Union, different educational institutions (for instance the Firmenausbildungsverbund) and the regional administration, which was supposed to finance the project. The cooperation among those involved is still ongoing by means of frequent meetings. Given the major role of the social partners, and especially of the Chamber of Labour, in the design of the measure, the negotiation between them assumed a primary importance. In particular, the experts interviewed stressed how the Chamber of Economy had some doubts regarding Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] especially during the design of the action, as they feared it could bring “*cheap qualifications*” (I_E_AT_UA_5, 177) for employees, without a strong value added for employers. Further project partners are the Forum for Adult Education, the Adult Education Center Linz, the Public Employment Service and the Upper Austrian Trade Union Confederation.

Looking at the governance of the measure, coordination at street-level mainly takes place between the two managing organisations, the Chamber of Labour and the Chamber of Economy. This cooperation proved to be quite successful, despite initial hesitations. A policy manager stressed the flat hierarchies within the policy, making possible quick adaptations and changes if necessary. Officially, the programme’s steering committee, made up of five people, meets once a year. However, at the beginning of the programme the actors involved had a vivid exchange and regular meetings to get to know each other and develop a common understanding about the policy. Cooperation among social partners is embedded within a broader social partnership culture of negotiations and concessions. However, for the case of Du kannst was! [Upper Austria], the experts interviewed added that successful cooperation would depend very much on the specific individuals involved and not so much on the organisations they represent, thus stressing once again the relevance of the specific context and network of actors in shaping the implementation and the impact of a policy intervention.

As an expert from the Chamber of Labour puts it, at the origin of the project was, on the one hand, the complaint of the Chamber of Economy about the so called shortage in skilled workers and, on the other hand, the position of the department of education at the Chamber of Labour, which pursues increased accessibility of further education for unskilled workers. Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] is based on the fact that low-qualified people face higher risks of unemployment. Therefore, by targeting people who are in employment, this Lifelong learning policy is based on preventing future unemployment by means of additional training. Finally, it can be considered a positive example in the landscape of Austrian LLL policies: Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] was first implemented in Upper Austria and its first edition is still ongoing. However, it was subsequently taken up in other Austrian regional states, as it was considered successful in enhancing the recognition of informally acquired professional skills.

The general idea was to provide educationally disadvantaged groups who are excluded from further training in companies and fail to show motivation with formal qualifications to improve on their own. It was implemented in Upper Austria in order to facilitate the official recognition of informally acquired professional skills. Its target group are people who are 22 years or older, who are employed and have acquired the skills of their respective occupational profiles but do not hold an apprenticeship or have not been employed in the trained profession for more than five years. Within the official target of employed but poorly qualified people, particular attention is devoted to young people who were not able to get a qualification through apprenticeship, because they abandoned the course or failed the final examination. The action is also directed at immigrants whose educational attainment has not been officially recognised in Austria. Although it does not specifically address young adults, we consider it strongly relevant for them, as experts stated that one third of the participants are under 29 years. All interviewees for Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] had a lot of work experience before participating in the policy. In this sense, they matched with the conceptualized target group of the policy.

The project specifically applies to 20 occupational profiles, which were selected because of the high number of semi-skilled people employed in these occupations, and also by looking at the labour market demand for skilled workers in the specific branches. The profiles range from knowledge-intensive activities (IT, engineering), to manufacture (metal working), to less knowledge-intensive and manual activities (backer, retail, restaurant service employees, carpenters). In autumn 2017 the project summoned a total of 700 participants.

One expert who was interviewed stressed that the 20-30 year old age group expresses a strong request for professional coaching as they often lack a proper assessment of their skills and strengths and therefore find themselves without orientation or a plan for their professional life. Upon

participation, one of the first steps is to engage in biography work. This means recapping what they have already done – in professional terms and beyond – during the course of their lives. Interviewed partners considered this step very important, as this “zooming out” and looking at one’s own life from a bird’s eye view enabled most people to realize what they had already achieved. Reportedly, this has often led to a change in the sense of self and an increase in participant’s self-esteem as most participants tended to underestimate their own knowledge and skills. This biography work is an important step in setting up individualized training plans, as one of the pillars of the programme: participants should only have to learn what they do not know. This implies that their already existing knowledge and skills are seen, valued and taken seriously. After a skills evaluation, eligible persons acquire missing skills – if necessary – in training courses and subsequently conduct a practical test to get a formal qualification recognizing the skills possessed or acquired during training. According to our interviewees, the individualization of learning matters and the prevention of over-burdening or under-challenging has contributed to participants’ motivation to learn and has largely led to learning success. For some of them the action helped to overcome the anxiety of examinations due to their negative experience within the education system. This again, is of particular relevance for a target group with predominantly negative learning experiences and a resultant reluctance towards learning, often in combination with exam nerves. To prevent drop out due to exam nerves, test situations are avoided and have been replaced by conversation-style knowledge assessments. Learning success partly re-defined their relationship with learning which subsequently led to further engagement in education and training.

Lack of qualifications is considered a major risk factor in young adults’ working careers and life courses, both for those who are engaged in difficult school-to-work transitions and for those who are employed but face a risk of a more precarious working position. Young adults’ plans for the near future and their long-term plans were quite similar, even though some of the young adults interviewed were in very different stages of their lives. If they were still participating in the policies, their main goal was to complete participation successfully. Regarding their private lives and plans for the future, the young adults mainly referred to moving out of their parents’ places and finding a partner.

The expected impact of Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] is to reduce the individual risk of unemployment and smooth life course transitions with certificates of professional skills assessment and increases in the self-confidence of participants. Not only are transitions between employment and unemployment, or among different working relationships concerned: also, since unskilled workers and employees often have negative learning experiences, positive learning experiences via practice-based and adult learning approaches have managed to readjust their image of learning. For some participants this has led to further engagement in formal education, up to university graduation. Since

2008, more than 700 people have successfully participated in the programme (one third of participants is under 29, 59% are male and 41% female).

For all participants participation in Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] was mainly about the formal recognition of their skills and not about acquiring new skills and knowledge. Participating young adults reported that they were aware that the programme reduces biographical uncertainty (low wage and precarious employment) by providing officially recognised certificates, which can be a valuable qualification for getting a better job in future. They are aware that companies seek their own advantage by encouraging and supporting them in their training, as they will get highly skilled staff and improve their image. However, it is a win-win situation for the employer and the employee.

The most important success criterion for Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] is the number of participants that obtain their apprenticeship certificate. Currently, the ratio of successful participants is between 70 and 80%, which is close to the success rate of standard final apprenticeship tests. For all participants, attaining an apprenticeship qualification via Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] boosted their self-esteem and self-worth. In the sense that they proved to themselves or their significant others that they are able to succeed.

Some of the participants complain that courses and training like Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] but also master-apprenticeship come with high expenditure for the trainee. Courses must be attended after the normal working day, with no support from the employer or the regional government. Within Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] participants are much more flexible in terms of time, as they are not obliged to attend any courses: If they have skill gaps regarding the occupation they work in, they have to acquire the respective knowledge, but they can do this in whatever way they want, also via self-study, if course schedules do not fit their working hours and other obligations. Nevertheless, attending additional training courses puts some pressure on a young individual when it comes to accommodating private matters, work and education, especially for mothers. Particularly, for young people with a family, this created difficulties in the conciliation of the sphere of work and labour market participation, with the private sphere of family life and care.

Sometimes a general critical view of young unemployed people receiving subsidies also emerged from the experts: one of the interviewees drew a clear distinction between the target group of Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] and other young adults in vulnerable situations. He classified the target group of Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] as motivated and making an effort, while young adults receiving minimum-based income subsidies were labelled as often being indifferent and living at society's expense. This resonates with the persistence of a neoliberal view of activation which places all the responsibilities of difficulties encountered during life course transitions on the individual, by accusing

them of being welfare-dependent. It ignores structural pre-conditions that may negatively affect youth employment (for instance changes in the organisation of work or in the structure of the job-demand).

The policy has also been classified by policy managers as very successful and has been transferred to other Austrian regions, although in “reduced versions”. However, its success seems to be related to Upper Austria’s economic structure, particularly the strong industrial sector.

The most distinctive aspect of Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] is related to its original approach in the field of Austrian activation and training policies. First, as stated by the experts, there is no federal policy for the formal recognition of non-formally acquired skills that would guarantee young adults the same opportunities in all the regional states. Instead, this issue is handled differently in all regional states. Despite the positive impact of Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] has triggered the design of similar policies in other regions, the federal government holds the responsibility for a unification of formal recognition practices at federal level. Second, previous policies aiming to formally qualify unskilled individuals mainly focused on the learning of theoretical subjects in school-like course settings, without taking into account the target groups’ existing practical knowledge and their earlier (often negative) learning experiences.

The particularity of the case Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] is that it uses the strength of a corporatist system in involving different stakeholders for an innovative policy transgressing the traditional model of governing education, training and labour market policy. The approach of recognising in- and non-formally acquired competencies and to support young adults who have been out of regular education, training and work without expecting them to go ‘back’ into pre-vocational education or training is a significant turn away from both the standardisation in vocational training and in welfare policies. It can be interpreted as an attempt of balancing of life course de-standardisation and re-standardisation as well as reflecting that getting involved with skills demands and qualifications on the side of the labour market needs to be negotiated and matched with individual life plans and perspectives.

3.1.2. Back to the future [Vienna] – work ethics through work experience

This case was selected because it addresses a relatively high number of young adults within the Viennese context of LLL policies and it implies a complex governance regime involving various public institutional actors, with an implementation role for private actors too. Back to the future [Vienna] was designed as a response to the rise in the number of young adults dependent on basic subsidies, experienced by the city of Vienna in recent years.

The Viennese economy has gone through structural changes during the last decades: approximately 86% of the Viennese gross product is generated in the tertiary sector, while approximately 14% is

generated in the secondary sector. After assessing the need for a new initiative, the financial and political aspects had to be settled: administrative organisation, agreements and approvals, financial aspects and the involvement of different organisations. Subsequently, the information about a new project was communicated to street-level bureaucrats. The idea of the Back to the future [Vienna] project was developed in February 2016, half a year before it was implemented. It is funded with 10 million Euro and provides 200 transitional work places for young adults in socio-economic employment projects.

Back to the future [Vienna] was set up by governmental institutions and it is characterized by strong cooperation between different actors at different levels and by a high degree of formal institutionalization. As explained by the experts interviewed, its foundation lies in the cooperation between the municipality which is in charge of social assistance and public employment services. The institutional actors involved in the policy are: the Municipal Department for Social Affairs, the Municipal Department for Health Planning, the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Public Employment Service. The Municipality of Vienna (Municipal Department of Social Affairs) and the local section of public employment services (AMS Vienna) cooperate in the implementation of the measure. AMS allocates young people to the programme.

The initiative aims to foster the sustainable and active integration of the target group into the primary labour market by increasing their “employability” by means of transitional employment, coaching and training. In order to reduce individual obstacles to labour market integration, young adults engage in specific public-funded employment projects. During this transitional employment, young adults benefit from regular social security standards and receive additional payment according to sector-specific collective agreements. The participants are employed via part-time contracts in public funded social firms. The limited duration of their contract is intended as an incentive to search for employment on the regular labour market. This also allows them to engage in further training and job-seeking activities.

The initial motivation behind the policy was to reduce the number of basic income subsidy recipients, to get young adults used to regular employment, leading therefore to young adults’ integration into the primary labour market or reintegration into the education and training system. However, this is to be pursued following a more comprehensive approach that addresses their working life in order to trigger a “change of face” regarding young adults’ relations to work, where the incentive of transitional work is but a step to *“develop an incentive to enter this system and to stay in it. Thus, also to demonstrate the value of work and to really get them into employment”* (E_AT_V_1). Young people are conceptualized as individuals in need of guidance, without a clear idea of what labour is, why it is needed and how employment actually works. An expert stated that AMS consultants’ report on facing major difficulties

in creating realistic ideas about job profiles among young clients. The underlying assumption is that they don't live in the "*sobering reality of work*" (I_E_AT_V_1, 367).

These lessons, according to the experts interviewed, are not easily learned: the intervention aims at getting young adults used to a regular working life and it is not about making young adults feel comfortable. In Back to the future [Vienna], young adults are employed by the implementing firms: they receive a contract for 24 hours per week after completing the initial eight week orientation phase. Subsequently, they get the opportunity to increase their working hours. Two enterprises, Reintegra Craft Jobs and Start Working, applied for Back to the future [Vienna] and are key actors in the implementation of the project. Each offers 100 seats for training and educating young adults. Their staff consists of skilled manual teachers and caregivers (social worker, psychologists...). In *Start Working*, young adults work in agriculture, in gastronomy or a wood workshop. In *Reintegra Craft Jobs*, they mainly take over simple manual tasks, like packing, requested by companies with which the implementing organisation has established cooperation. Looking at the governance structure of the policy selected, as far as implementation procedures are concerned, the interviews did not stress the emergence of relevant conflicts among actors. In the case of Back to the future [Vienna], public institutions played the leading role and managed to steer the implementation of the measure, while private actors like Reintegra mainly acted as executors in the implementation process.

In the case of Reintegra, the firm orients the work schedule with realistic conditions and tries to mimic a logistic firm. Moreover, it is in contact with firms that could potentially employ participants. The Reintegra-team tries to allocate the different available tasks based on the strengths of the young adults (e.g. staffing communicative persons in the reception). However, the range of different tasks the programme offers is limited and the focus does not lie on training the participant specifically but getting them used to a regular working situation. The participants receive slightly higher subsidies (BMS and a little extra money for their effort, simulating a wage) that are linked to a principle of conditionality: it can be cancelled if the employed youths do not show up during their working hours without a reason.

The Back to the future [Vienna] measure finds its roots in a growing narrative on the relevance of successfully managing the school-to-work transition in order to achieve a long-lasting and positive integration into the (primary) labour market. This issue can be addressed by developing the human capital of young people, which is composed of a variously defined stock of skills and capabilities. In the last 10 years, the main national strategies on education and LLL have strongly reflected the strategies for Lifelong Learning formulated at the European level. The European discourse combined with the national discourse on LLL stresses the central role of vocational training and apprenticeship in providing a mix of school- and work-based learning to young people. Back to the future [Vienna] constructs its targets and defines its objectives according to the perspectives assumed by the

Municipal Department of Vienna and the local section of the Austrian AMS, i.e. the two main institutional actors who cooperate in the design and implementation of the measure. The target group is made up of young people aged 18-24 who depend on basic subsidies, and are therefore experiencing major struggles in labour market integration. The discourse on the individual responsibility of young people to be proactive is recurrent in the definition of the target group of the measure Back to the future [Vienna]. This is a regional and local policy influenced by transnational discourses on Lifelong learning that were then translated into Austrian narratives and strategies on LLL, connected with the relevance of vocational training and the emphasis on practical working experience. We can also see the parallel existence of two narratives on the objective of LLL: on the one hand, it is framed according to an approach combining labour market participation and personal development or self-realization, through the acquisition of some working experience; on the other hand, practical employment skills and the fulfilling of job-market needs are considered paramount, as no additional training is provided.

In the case of Back to the future [Vienna], the initiative does not deal with the direct provision of training. However, the creation of public-subsidized employment positions aims to increase the human capital of the target group through practical working experience, which includes specialized skills but mostly soft skills like motivation, work place conduct. This is meant to ease the difficult transition from education to the labour market, and from a non-standard low-skilled employment to a more attractive, better paid working position.

Policy makers designed the policy assuming that the target group would have low levels of education, would be school drop-outs, long-term unemployed and unstable or precarious employment. Participants only partly match this profile, as some of them are overqualified with respect to the policy intervention. For these people, participation is not related to a lack of skills but to a skills mismatch, so that the benefits they can gain in terms of reduction of life uncertainty is limited to the acquisition of some generic work experience. In this light, Back to the future [Vienna] seems to suffer from a deeper inconsistency: policy makers and managers know that the reasons for receiving basic income subsidies are mainly related to current labour market characteristics – the structural level or demand-side. Still, they implement policies that are based on the assumed deficits of young adults – the individual level or supply-side.

The measure selected addressed some peculiar new challenges. To start with, the target group (people who get basic subsidies) has changed in the last 15-20 years, and now covers different educational backgrounds, heritage and social classes. The skill formation system in the region of Vienna is characterised by the expansion of higher education on the one hand and, on the other hand, by a limited relevance of the dual system of apprenticeship. Combined with the upgrading of

employment demand, this creates a relatively good match in the higher sectors of skills distribution; but also a lack of opportunities for low-qualified people, except for the case of non-standard jobs in service sectors like accommodation or restoration. This connects with migration in-flows creating a state of vulnerability in the passage to the primary labour market.

“...in Austria I worked as waiter, no really as waiter, rather service, because my language was not so good, it helped me not so good.” (I_Y_AT_V_1, 114)

The initiative is presently running its first edition, and it has a time horizon of 2 years. This is why reports and evaluation activities have been planned but are not yet available. Participants' expectations and impressions are available. A recurrent topic in the interviews regards bad learning experiences and “negative” or low performance at school. On this matter, the young adults' interviewed stated that they do better with practical learning, instead of theoretical learning which dominates at school. *“...learning, learning that is not my thing. I must do that on my own and see if I can do that, learning-by-doing that is my thing.” (I_Y_AT_V_8, 64)*. The provision of practical knowledge and soft skills through direct working experience is considered a valuable tool in view of labour market participation and a stronger labour market attachment later in life.

The specific tasks young adults have to fulfil within the policy led to an increase in self-esteem, as they see the relevance and value of their own work directly. One interviewee also said that participation had helped her to handle stressful situations. All interviewees have had good experiences with the policy and were happy about the opportunity to participate. In particular, the interviewees appreciated that they had a regular day-to-day structure and could do “real work” for which they received acknowledgement.

„Getting up early is great. Because when I get a job, I am already in the rhythm.” (I_Y_AT_V_8, 505)

A policy manager stated that it took some time to get the policy started properly because of the difficulty of getting the target group interested in participation, as many young people do not show interest in the service offered. Possible participants get assigned to the policy by the AMS but out of the around 600 young adults assigned, far less than 50% showed up at the following informative meeting. Dropping out continues with each subsequent step, leaving a very limited number of participants who fully participate in all the steps of the programme. Policy managers even had to “overbook” the policy to ensure a decent number of participants. According to the experts one of the reasons for high drop-out rates is that many young adults are disappointed because their expectations vis-à-vis the Austrian labour market diverges from reality, in terms of opportunities and jobs available.

Wages also seem to be a key-issue, as young adults wish to financially support their families back home. With the money they earn by participating in the policies, this is not possible in most cases.

The particular of the case Back to the future [Vienna] is that it clearly shows how particular LLL policy objectives are reflected by implementation and experience. In this case, the primary objective is reducing the share of recipients of social subsidies, i.e. not an explicit skills-related objective, which implies a programme of socialisation for work through work experience rather than involving the addresses in learning. Even if several actors are involved, the dominance of an activating welfare and labour market policy approach is obvious. Yet, due to providing an extrinsic incentive of providing a supplement to subsidies this measures appears to be a second chance for those who have developed a negative self-concept as learners throughout their learning biography.

3.2. Cases in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, after the collapse of the state socialist regime in 1989, the free market economy replaced the previously imposed centrally planned system. After almost two decades of transition and gradual improvements the country became a member of the EU in 2007. However, since the global financial crisis in 2008, the labour market in the country has become unbalanced, characterized with high rates of unemployment and inactive population as well as high levels of informal employment. The disparities of the labour market have been growing simultaneously with the rapid decrease of resources available to address them by implementing appropriate Life Long Learning (LLL) policies.

The education and training system of modern Bulgaria has been well designed and properly developed. During the transition period, the system of LLL policies adopted some common European principles, programmes and measures while also preserving certain traditional characteristics related to the national perceptions of 'education' as one of the most valued virtues. However, during the transition period it has been facing serious challenges related to: 1) decline of the quality of education; 2) mismatch between labour market needs and education provision (particularly in terms of practical orientation of studies); 3) high share of university graduates occupying job positions below their qualification; 4) high rate of NEETs between 15 and 29.

During the transition period, the labour market policy and skill system formation have been accompanied by restructuring of the major social institutions. This also changed the patterns of youth transitions from school to work – from rather linear into extended, reversible and insecure variations between the forms and levels of the educational and training system, and from there to different structures of the labour market. Disruptions, delays or parallel flows of life cycles become key characteristics of young people's life course trajectories.

The current conditions related to young adults in Bulgaria have been shaped by the slow recovery of the country's economy. Nevertheless, several important characteristic features need to be pointed out: underdeveloped apprenticeship system or vocational training in secondary education; lack of established dual education; few opportunities for practical training at the university level; insufficient availability of flexible forms of employment.

A number of national initiatives have been designed aiming to address these challenges. One of them is the "Strategy for the Development of VET 2015-2020" which encourages cooperation and partnership between VET institutions and employers aimed at attaining better match between skills provision and labour market needs. Additionally, the "National Strategy for the Development of Higher Education 2014 – 2020" have been created to strengthen the links between the needs of the labour market and higher education providers, i.e. to reduce academic orientation and enhance practical aspects of studies. Increasing stakeholder involvement has also been among the strategic priorities. Additionally, NGOs and other forms of citizens' representation have been involved to assess policy initiatives as well as legislative changes through Public Consultations Platforms.

Many issues relating to young adults' skills and competencies exist not only at national but also at regional and local levels. The main reason is that the system of education in Bulgarian is quite centralized governed by unified standards and criteria applied in all schools in the country. Centralization in higher education is somewhat lower, however it is still imposed by the national evaluation and accreditation system as well as traditions and culture.

For the purposes of the YOUNG_ADULLLT research two functional regions (FR) have been selected – Blagoevgrad and Plovdiv. The two regions have several specific characteristics: Plovdiv FR has a central location in the country while Blagoevgrad is a border region; Plovdiv FR is an urban territory with higher concentration of services and industry in its economy; Blagoevgrad FR is mixed with rural and urban areas and has a higher share of service sector in the economy.

Blagoevgrad FR is the sixth largest district in the country. It has a relatively good demographic structure – the urban population in the district is 39% and there is a high percentage of people employed in services. The employment rate of the population aged 15-64 was 63.4% in 2015. At the same time, the youth unemployment rate in the main city was 5.3% for the age group of 15-24 and 22.8% for the age group of 25-35 in 2014.

Plovdiv FR is unique in terms of administrative-territorial characteristics, e.g. Plovdiv Municipality is one of the three municipalities in Bulgaria, which comprises only the main city. The FR has a multi-sector economy providing around 7% of the national sales revenue of goods and services. The

employment rate of the population aged 15-64 was 62,1% in 2015. However, the overall unemployment rate was 4,9%, as the youth unemployment rate in the main city was 19.4%.

3.2.1 University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad]: from theory to practice in higher education

The project University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] aims to include more young people in the workforce thus strengthening the relationships between education, the work environment and the labour market. As it has been established by many surveys, analysis and discussions, the majority of the degree programmes offered by Bulgarian higher schools are quite academic in terms of their content, teaching and learning methods. At the same time, employers, individually or through their branch organisations, complained that graduates are not well prepared for the real work conditions and under-performed when hired. It often happens even though the studied subjects completely correspond to particular job positions. The widely accepted conclusion is that university studies need to be oriented also to real labour market needs.

Deriving from similar assumptions, the main objectives of the project have been defined as follows: to improve the quality of education through gaining practical experience and developing the practical skills of students in vocational schools and universities in accordance with the needs of the labour market; to facilitate the transition from educational institutions to the workplace and increase the success of young adults in the labour market; to support and encourage the development of stable partnerships between educational institutions and business establishments; to increase students' motivation to participate in additional practical training in real working environments; to increase the number of students who succeed in finding jobs immediately after graduation; to provide some preconditions for updating curricula as a whole as well as certain disciplines and topics in accordance with the particular needs of the labour market; to support the creation of sustainable mechanisms and opportunities for employers to select appropriate high school leavers and university graduates who have proven their skills, competencies and attitudes in real working environment for their immediate inclusion in the labour market.

The policy University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] serves as a basis for formulating recommendations for more effective outcomes of the educational process at university level and within training organisations. It also enables analysing the strengths and weaknesses encountered in the cooperation initiatives between the stakeholders of this policy – universities, business establishments, public institutions, non-profit organisations, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Welfare, etc. Young adults undergo training practices and internships in real working environments over the course of six months, while at the same time they continue pursuing their

studies at a university. The policy as a whole contributes to the national economy revival through enriching the studies at university level with practical components thus making them more labour market and employment oriented as well as better aligned with the needs of Bulgarian society. However, the policy has other goals, as well, among which: to support young people in achieving success in their life course; to better prepare them for the challenges of the real work conditions; to retain them in the region or the country. The traineeships are carried out in different organisations and enterprises along with university classes in order to increase students' competitiveness and create prerequisites for employment of young adults immediately after obtaining their Bachelor's or Master's degree. The paths within the project include strong collaboration between several functionally tied actors conducting different kinds of activities. These are:

- training organisation – an establishment where the practice of students is carried out by providing both real work and specific training environment;
- trainee - a student who has been selected by a training organisation to participate in an internship for a certain period;
- mentor - an employee from the training organisation who supports the trainee by providing guidance, instructions, advices, etc. during the training practice in particular working environment;
- academic mentor - a teacher from the university, who is responsible for and supervises the practical training of a student or a group of students;
- functional expert - a representative of the university who supports participants and organises diverse project activities in terms of logistics, communication, data and documents handling, etc.
- leading functional expert - a representative of the university who is responsible for the overall organisation and supervision of the project implementation and acts as a contact point in communication processes between the project management team at the university and the respective experts from the Ministry of Education and Science (MES).

The project is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science in partnership with all 54 higher education institutions in the country. It is funded by the European Structural and Investments Funds under the “Science and Education for Smart Growth 2014-2020” Operational Programme of Bulgaria. The opportunity to benefit from it is open to all current students enrolled at South-West University “Neofit Rilski” in Blagoevgrad. The harmonization of the regional environment is provided by the university as a key institution in this measure. The university maintains the relationship with the

training organisations, the students, the Ministry of Education and Science and other partner organisations. The project is oriented towards the 18-29 age group, mainly undergraduates, as a specific community of young people pursuing academic achievements in study programmes lacking practical, labour market and employment orientation. Therefore, the policy addresses the higher education system and attracts students who are motivated to gain practical experience and improve their skills and competencies along with their academic endeavours. The policy does not specifically target groups labelled as 'vulnerable', at least there are no specific provisions for representatives of such contingent. It is open to everyone and young adults in vulnerable conditions can and in fact participate in students practices. They are usually supported by the staff of the SWU Career Centre, representatives of the Students' Council and the work and academic mentors. However, there are other programmes and measures intended for young people (including university students) affected by some kind of vulnerability.

The main expected outcomes of the project, as stated in the official policy documents, are: 1) improved practical skills of students corresponding with the needs of the regional labour market; 2) established strong partnerships between the university and the local and regional business establishments from different fields of industry; 3) acquired working habits and developed personal qualities in the students; 4) adapted and updated curricula as well as new study content related to the specific needs of the labour market; 5) opportunities for employers to select students who have demonstrated appropriate skills and attitudes and proved readiness to be immediately involved in concrete workplaces and job positions. Various surveys and assessment procedures are envisaged and regularly carried out (nationally and at individual universities) to measure the level of intended outcomes achievement (plenty of data about the results could be found at the central website of the project as well as at the webpages of the institutions involved). Furthermore, the results of the evaluation are used for renewal of the project and refunding of its initiatives (in fact, due to highly positive assessment results it has been significantly expanded after its initial stage 2013-2015). Survey results also highlighted that accumulation of practical experience and provision of opportunities for professional success are some of the main challenges which have been successfully solved by collaboration between the main actors. The qualification outcomes of the project are measured by the variety of practical skills the students have acquired and the level of mastering them, especially those which will be needed in the future. The acquisition of soft skills is another qualification outcome. Employers and mentors think that young people should learn to work and perform responsibly, to feel and demonstrate respect for their workplace (including employing organisation) as well as for people with whom they work and collaborate.

The SWU Career Centre staff carry out regular surveys in order to measure the impact and outcomes of the Students Practices project at local level. It is done mainly by circulating anonymous e-questionnaires. According to the responses of 1031 students who successfully completed their training practices in 2013-2015, 320 of them were offered jobs out of whom 110 started work at the companies where they had interned. Furthermore, 75 trainees got extra payments from their training organisations, and 230 were offered an extension of the internship beyond the contracted period of the project (Survey 861382, 2015).

The major benefits for the students summarised from their answers in the e-questionnaires are: stronger motivation to search for appropriate positions; gaining experience for successful job application; acquisition of valuable information about concrete skills and competencies appropriate for obtaining different kinds of positions as well as tips and pragmatic clues about how to behave during negotiations with prospective employers; building new industrious habits and development of personal attitudes and qualities; gathering useful information about particular aspects of their future work places; participation in interactive activities, specialized instructions, and many other capacity-building activities.

The policy is based on the internship system, which means a special combination between labour market and educational sector with a specific focus on the effectiveness of university education and training. Personalization in the project is achieved by the students applying for a particular company or an organisation which they find appropriate to their interests and preparation. In addition, students themselves choose the academic mentors who work with them and maintain the link with training at the university and in the training organisation. Personalization is possible because each student has their own pace during the internship within the contracted period of 6 months. For this reason, everyone draws up a personal plan of work.

During the starting period of the project implementation ("Students Practices – 2013-2015"), 5761 students benefited from the opportunities offered by the SWU Career Centre (SWU-CC), which was responsible for maintaining the practices. The training takes place in real working environment at various businesses, profit or non-profit organisations, public authorities or municipal organisations. The training lasts for 240 working hours, which roughly amounts to about a month and a half of full-time attendance.

The multi-actor network has engaged 530 private companies, NGOs, public institutions, schools and other kinds of establishments from the whole region. By signing contracts to act as "training organisations" they accept students from SWU for an internship or some other kind of practical experience. During the years of implementation, strong collaboration (in diverse forms) has been

established both between institutions and individuals involved (especially between work and academic mentors). Representatives of public and private organisations have been involved in curricula improvements, final theses defence procedures, steering board committees, regional and transnational projects, public events, etc. The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency of Bulgaria repeatedly acknowledged the high quality and value of this collaboration by awarding very high scores related to “collaboration with employers and other stakeholders” criteria during institutional and programme accreditation procedures.

Guidance and counselling for young adults are offered by a network of professionals: a mentor, who is an employee from the training organisation, and who instructs students during the training practice in a real working environment as well as by an academic mentor who is a university teacher. The mentors spend considerable time communicating with students during training. The training provides a real connection between the student’s main field or studied subjects at the educational institution and the more practical aspects in an organisation or a company.

The experts interviewed have said that the main project outcome is the successful transition of university students from their studies to the labour market, and this is clearly justified by several successful stories. Young adults have said that the programme enables them to benefit from working in an organisation or a company; that they feel happy participating in real work processes and being part of the communication within a community of employees; that they feel better prepared to perform different real tasks assigned to them; etc.

Here is an example of tutor’s reflections and insights: *“In the project I have been an academic tutor of students studying Geography and Pedagogy of Geography and History Education. Some of them have acquired practical skills in different schools, primary and secondary schools, where the subject ‘Geography and Economics’ is being taught, and they had opportunities to practice teaching and acquire pedagogical skills. The second group of students worked with non-governmental organisations and the practical skills acquisition was focused on different field – exploration of opportunities for developing tourism, touristic routes design and practice of rural development. Students were very interested in the project. Most of them participated with the purpose to acquire pedagogical skills. It is well known that for young teachers it is difficult to adapt to the school environment. What is offered in their curricula as a teaching practice is not enough to make them good pedagogical specialists. This is what they feel. We, as teachers, as well as the experts of the Ministry of Education also realize the existence of such deficit and hopefully they proposed a new regulation which was adopted last year aiming to increase the amount of practical training courses and the overall practicing of professional skills in the curricula”* (E_BG_B_3). She finds that cooperating with different organisations address this major challenge – “deficiency” of practical skills and competencies training during the university

studies and thinks that *“this is yet another attempt to make studying closer to business, to real practice, to the areas where students will pursue their professional realization”*. In her opinion, such good cooperation [between the university and work organisations] *“can make students grow up also in other spheres and areas as long as there is good collaboration between them”*. For this academic tutor *“the project definitely has achieved good results”* proved by even another evidence – employers appreciate what students have demonstrated coming to their organisation. Moreover, some of them offered part-time or permanent jobs, signed contracts for different kinds of interaction beyond the contracted practical training period. Therefore, it is important for all involved in the training practices project *“to go on in this direction and look for more and more diverse forms of cooperation”*. Yet another valuable outcome of the project is that young people feel that *“someone is addressing them, that somebody needs them, which is important for motivating them to stay, live and eventuate in Bulgaria which would be evidenced in a longer period, not necessarily now”* (E_BG_B_3).

The overall conclusion of another survey is that the “Students Practices” project is a successful measure for achieving all its goals and meeting the expectations at least for the young adults from South-West University (Dzhorova, 2016). The experts interviewed confirmed that no serious problems have arisen. However, greater and more efficient control over the practices carried out in many organisations needs to be exerted by academic mentors for often the training component is either missing or neglected and trainees are being treated as regular employees. This also implies improvement of collaboration between the university and the training organisations and involves the selection of appropriate students, assessment of the appropriateness of the workplace conditions, availability of sufficient resources and stimulating benefits for trainees, closer collaboration between work and academic mentors.

The specificity of the case in the Blagoevgrad Functional Region consists of the proposal of individualized practical training to young adults in higher education, providing concrete ways to run their internship and training in a particular working environment. The uniqueness of the policy is also connected with the creation of links between the academic training process and work environment and is proved by the number of graduates who found work immediately after graduation, which has shown an increase. In its entirety, the programme aims at solving problems related to the local high rates of youth unemployment by improving the employability of young adults fostering the integration of practical experiences in the learning curricula, thanks to the collaboration between the University system and the local productive fabric.

3.2.2 Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv]: adapting an EU programme to a local context

The Youth Guarantee aims to provide a number of options for young people from the Plovdiv Functional Region that can be divided into several areas: vocational guidance; training in professional qualifications or key skills; subsidizing temporary employment; helping employers to generate new jobs; support for youth entrepreneurship; provision of services from the EURES network. The main goal is to activate long-term unemployed groups of young people, improve the efficiency of the local labour market and promote economic activity. The significance of the programme is in supporting young people in the country to establish and maintain their life courses and achieve success. The programme is associated with high expectations – solving the problem of youth unemployment and ensuring an effective workforce and it aims to enhance the adaptability of the workforce to labour market requirements.

The measure started in 2014 and since then it has facilitated structural reforms and innovation in policy design across EU Member States. The Youth Guarantee is a commitment from all Member States intending to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a job offer, continuing training or other opportunity related to employment. However, Member States can increase the age limit to 29 years and Bulgaria has taken this decision.

In Bulgaria, the National Implementation Plan for European Youth Guarantee (NIPEYG) covers the period 2014-2020 and is carried out within the framework of the Operational Programme – “Human Resources Development” (OP HRD). The implementation of the NIPEYG is financed by the national budget, the European Social Fund (ESF), the Youth Employment Initiative within the framework of the implementation of the OP HRD, and by employers' funds. The main tools of the policy are different kinds of training, internships, practices, etc. related to local needs.

Firstly, the measure focuses on public awareness of the objectives, procedures and benefits of the Lifelong learning tools available. It addresses young people with a special focus on disadvantaged groups (NEETs, Roma minorities, at risk of exclusion, etc.), however many different key stakeholders can benefit from its implementation. Participants are helped by youth mediators who are a part of another European project and are subordinate to the municipality. They have an obligation to activate the youths and lead them to the workers in the Agency. When registering at the Labour Office, officers become aware of the problems of each and every young person individually, and as a result they are included in a workshop. Then they meet a psychologist who organises meetings between the case managers and youths. Almost all youths go through these two steps in order to ensure assessment of their needs, desires, and evaluate their opportunities. The target population is selected at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The integration process of the Regional Employment Agencies into the Youth Guarantee scheme realized in FR Plovdiv is an example of local government adaptation of a European policy. The National Employment Agency and the Regional branches are responsible for the

implementation of the programme. The local agency as part of this programme has a key role in targeting and registering youths.

The link between the objectives of the programme and local needs has mainly two orientations: on the one hand, public institutions aim to promote economic activity by increasing employment, and on the other hand, they aim to increase employment corresponding to the needs and requirements of local stakeholders. The Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] project focuses on young people up to 29 years of age who are not only unemployed but also not being well educated, although some exceptions exist. The aim is to activate inactive youths (NEETs, unemployed, low-qualified, young people with disabilities, etc.), including the young people who remain out of youth unemployment statistics (particularly Roma).

Young people can register through the Labour Offices with the assistance of labour mediators working with unemployed young persons. However, a large majority of NEET remains inactive, thus indicating structural problems in the inclusion of young people in the labour market or in education (Hawley et al., 2016). The NEET rate especially among Roma is very high, particularly for girls. Early school leaving increased to 13.4 % in 2015 (above the national EU 2020 goal of 11 %) amid high regional variations and urban-rural disparities. It is again particularly high among Roma. Socioeconomic factors, educational difficulties and family reasons are key drivers of early school leaving. EU funds are used to provide second chance education, literacy courses and qualifications to young adults who have dropped out of school. A strategy to tackle this phenomenon is being implemented. Regarding work with Roma, it is important to mention that their representatives work as mediators and this is very effective approach. From one side, they are involved in understanding and constructing vulnerability at the policy making level, from the other, being involved in the policy implementation, they participate actively in motivating young Roma people.

Despite the different level of development of the regions, young people receive equal payment. Concerning the target composition, the Regional Agency does not reach the target group even though the eligible beneficiaries under the Youth Guarantee are treated without discrimination. Most of the measures target young people with secondary or tertiary education, with less emphasis on low-skilled youths. It is particularly worrying that the number of low-skilled NEETs is high and targeted actions are still limited. The increase of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) remains significantly above the EU average, despite the implementation of the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv]. The advantage of the initiative is to target more affected regions with high levels of youth unemployment. The project is widely open to meet the needs of the main actors at all levels, and especially at a local level. The opportunities for change depend on the increase of youth employment, and level of adaptability of the measure depends mainly on the specifics of the region.

The Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] interacts with other programmes that also offer training for key competencies, social partnership projects organizing courses for young people up to 29 years of age, etc. Up to date, upgraded by all previous programmes, the new Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] has three targets: activation, training and employment.

Young people emphasize that the skills acquired at school/university are insufficient for success in the labour market. The focus is on the lack of practical orientation in education courses and the inadequate preparation of young people to cope with a real work situation.

In an extensive interview, a participating young woman summarises that after completing the programme, the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] gave her opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills but did not help her to integrate what she learned into her own professional aspirations. Differently, a young man acquired new skills and managed to integrate them into the work environment. Along an interview with an expert, he emphasizes that the initial expectations he had when entering the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] programmes went hand in hand with the objectives of the measure. As a result of the lack of a sustainable career project, young people turn to the Labour Office to participate in Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv], and the ways of participating in the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] LLL programmes are recognised as: personally motivated choice; recommendation of a colleague; employer's request.

The two young people (from the Plovdiv case) do not perceive Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] as a decisive factor in mapping their life and professional trajectories. They consider the programme effects to be short-term and they cover only the period of subsidized employment.

The outcomes of the project are: increasing employment among young people, reducing the number of people at risk of falling into poverty and the number of early school leavers, helping young people to enter the labour market. On the other hand, these outcomes are a prerequisite for achieving sustainable economic growth and reducing costs from the untapped potential of young people.

The success of young people leads to public welfare, and due to this, the effective institutionalization of the Youth Guarantee is vital in achieving the publicly desired outcomes. As a result of personal involvement, a large proportion of young people have improved their living conditions, especially those who have a motivation for change. There is also another part of the youth population lacking motivation because of the lack of parental support:

"There are young people whose grandparents lead them to register because their parents are abroad, for example. And they lead them here to get them to work." (E_BG_P_1).

Participation in Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] programmes enables young people to start work, and not only to acquire new knowledge and skills, and accumulate work experience, but also to have income security for a certain period of time. A regular income enables them to plan their life, albeit for a relatively short term period (from 6 months to 1 year). Young people gain confidence, and a significant number of them continue working in the firm. The principle is 6 + 6, meaning 6 months of subsidized employment, and the rest of the time is without subsidized employment. At least 30-40% remain in the companies. The employer has to appoint a mentor and a proper position in the company. The Regional Labour Agency is the responsible institution at a local level and works with all of the described agents. This refers to the types of employers' organisations and their culture, the youths, and the nature of the educational opportunities, as well as the needs of the region. Through consultations between local institutional bodies, young people and employers, a flexible system for the implementation of the project objectives is created offering a wide range of opportunities.

In this complex process, many institutions and actors are involved. They collaborate at different levels, and in different ways, and the cross-case analysis approach reveals the complexity, and the dynamics of different interactions between them. The institutional interaction along with the interaction between the key actors is crucial in solving possible conflicts that could hamper the achievement of the goals outlined. The next paragraph outlines some key features of this interaction.

The employment offices contact different social partners, such as employers' representatives, the Business Chamber, the Chamber of Commerce, the Employment Agency, the Directorate for Social support and others. Co-partnering is multi-layered because of the many agents involved in the project, including signing agreements, developing plans, designing strategies, holding roundtables, exchanging experiences and good practices, etc. Both employers and professionals aim to increase the quality of the workforce through internship programmes and training. It is important for young people to gain experience while they are studying, and for the institutions to achieve labour market efficiency by improving the matching process between job seekers and job providers. There are no evident conflicts between the key players. Through consultations between local institutional bodies, young people and employers, a flexible system for the implementation of the project objectives is created offering a wide range of opportunities. The result is meeting local needs through proper training, focused on local labour market demands, and an increase of discrimination is prevented. The programmes outline the issues of socio-economic reality in the region. As one expert notes:

"Somehow this project is related to the demographic problem, the aging of the population, respectively the 'brain drain'. I suppose they have reported factors such as qualifications, age, marital status, etc." (E_BG_P_3).

In fact, there is no mismatch between the opinions of the young people and the experts, who think that the programme helps graduates to find a suitable job. When a failure is registered, both experts and young people think it is rather personal, than it affects the programmes. Implementation of the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] in the Functional Region faces a number of challenges. One of them is that there is no procedure for the selection of the participants and thus the programme does not reach the target group that is truly in need.

According to the interviews with experts, managers, street-level professionals and young adults the programme faces several challenges. First, young people have an unrealistic assessment of their own qualities. On one hand, their expectations about a certain job and employer are too high, and on the other hand, their skills are too low. Secondly, there is a need for much higher wages for young people to gain greater self-esteem and be satisfied with the efforts they have made. Thirdly, more support is needed for young people without education or very low education. Another problem is the unrealistic expectations of employers, who require young people to get down to work quickly.

The Youth Guarantee in Plovdiv is a case of top-down designed policy which is transferred to a local context, where some structural features affect the possibility to improve the condition of the potential target, especially referring to the Roma NEETs. Furthermore, the convergence of the experts' and youths' opinions in the individual ascription of the causes of the failures of the programme (mostly in terms of actual employment) seems to reinforce the neoliberal perspective of personal blaming instead of the acknowledgment of the structural contradictions.

3.3. Cases in Croatia

In Croatia, youth are defined as a social group which includes the population aged 15 to 29. The Croatian Government attempts to facilitate the process of becoming independent for youth by enacting and implementing numerous laws and strategies with the common aim of improving the level of education and facilitating youth employment. This also encompasses public social policies directed towards additional support to youth who fall into the category of NEET. Croatia is characterised by relatively rich legislative activity, accompanied by a continuous development of policy documents directed towards various social groups, where youth are relatively rarely the addressees of those policies and laws. Although there is an expectation that these national documents are operationalised at the regional and local level, this seldom happens, since local self-government units rarely specify and adapt national needs to the needs of their citizens. Thus, most benefits for the youth are granted at the national level, whereas differences among regions have not been adequately overcome. Though, a higher proportion of youth have been observed to have used various national measures in underdeveloped regions (Osijek-Baranja County, as opposed to Istria County). Underdeveloped

regions have fewer possibilities to provide additional funding for programmes supporting youth, including the possibilities of providing money for social support programmes. The existing documents from the three LLL policy sectors (labour market, education, social youth policies) are mutually compatible, with a clear intention to improve the living conditions of youth in Croatia. Due to a lack of coherence in the actual public policy, the absence of coordination between stakeholders and indifference of the political elites towards the necessity to resolve problems young people in Croatia are facing, their full potential cannot be used. It is particularly important to define the roles of stakeholders and bodies that will act as a link between vocational education and the labour market, and higher education.

Young people in Croatia live in conditions that are less favourable in comparison with the EU28 average. This conclusion concerns youth in both functional regions, even though the Istria County is more developed than the Osijek-Baranja County. Croatian economic conditions are significantly under the EU28 average. The economic activity rate of youth (age 15-24) has decreased in the last ten years. The key issues faced by young people when entering the labour market in Croatia are the lack of previous work experience and mismatch between their qualifications and the skill demand. Because of their unemployment, youth are unable to become autonomous in their personal life.

Young adults mostly represent themselves through two groups of skills: social skills and work-related skills. Youth have a high level of extrinsic motivation and the aspiration of finding a secure job that can ensure their livelihood. Alternative aspirations, connected with additional education and training, are really rare. Unemployment, increasing poverty and job insecurity are the biggest problems of today's young generation in Croatia. Young people isolate themselves from politics, especially institutionalised (conventional, formal) politics. On the other side, the experts do not have clear picture if their activities are successful in fulfilling their goals. Slow improvement of the unemployment situation leads young adults to the conclusion that the only way for them to find a job is to leave Croatia. This is especially visible in Osijek-Baranja County where most young adults who are unemployed for year or more are planning to go abroad.

One of important area for successful transitions from education to labour market is vocational training. The level of participation in vocational education and training (VET) at the upper secondary level in Croatia is one of the highest in the EU. However, only 2.3% of labour active population in Croatia have been participating in some form of education and training. Moreover, the current Croatian system of vocational education and training does not ensure the acquisition of competences needed in the labour market, because the education supply and education programmes are not modernised fast enough. They are neither based on the market needs analyses, nor are the employment rate indicators and/or the education continuation rate of the pupils who completed vocational education

followed up. This problem is equally presents in both Functional Regions. It is obviously that three dimensions are crucial for understating youth unemployment in Croatia: governance, labour market supply and labour market demand. Simply put, the Croatian economy currently does not have the capacity for sufficient job creation which could significantly reduce youth unemployment, nor are there any indications that this will change even in the mid-term. Around 300,000 jobs were lost in industry during the 1990s within the framework of privatisation, which was, and still is, a fiercely contested in economic, political and legal sphere. This loss, among other things, permanently reduced the economy's export potential, directing it towards the import-orientated, fiscally dependent and ultimately unsustainable growth path that characterised the 2000s.

3.3.1. LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja]: tackling skills mismatch by guiding labour force

In the Republic of Croatia, vocational guidance services have been systematically developed for several decades. The Croatian Employment Service (CES) plays an important role in the field and is responsible for the Lifelong Career Guidance (LLCG) Centres. These Centres are based on the principles of accessibility and flexibility. In order to analyse the LLCG Centre initiative, we need to put it into the context of the overall characteristics of the labour market in the functional region, as well as of the national career education and vocational guidance system. Among other programmes and measures, the Youth Guarantee predicts a biggest vocational and career guidance reform at the national level. It includes the establishment of a Forum for Lifelong professional guidance and career development, which should support promotion of mutual learning activities at national, regional and local level and further development of efficient policies, measures and activities aimed at development of top-quality vocational and career guidance. The LLCG Centres are important institutions that should answer on abovementioned aspect of the Youth Guarantee plan.

The LLCG Centres [Osijek-Baranja] provide space and trained professionals to all stakeholders in creating and delivering support to unemployed youth, especially in career choice, in an individualized manner (small working groups or individual). The purpose of LLCG Centres is to achieve a joint goal: enhancing user competences in order to increase competitiveness and restore the balance of labour supply and demand. The LLCG Centres' objective is to increase the availability and quality of Lifelong career guidance services to all Croatian citizens and to provide appropriate support to different target groups at local and regional levels. More concretely the overall goal is to provide guidelines for successful career planning for young people based on the assessment of their potential and interests as well as to develop and upgrade their career management skills, although in reality, young people use other sources of support for career counselling, like friends or family members. Following quotations illustrate that conclusion:

“My grandmother said to me that I will never find a job with philosophy and I see now that she has right.” (WP5_Y_OB_F_7); “My mother is a nurse, and since childhood all I can remember is that she was working all the time, and I remember me going with her to the work, and that is why I started to love it to be in the hospital” (WP5_Y_OB_F_4); “My sisters are my role models. One of my sisters went to gay pride and I went also. I learnt from my sisters much more than in school” (WP5_Y_OB_F_1).

It should be noted that career guidance has still not been properly elaborated in the Croatian education related legislation. So far, the LLCG Centres are the only institution in the field of Lifelong career guidance. At the same time, there is no unified approach to the development of the required professional competences of guidance practitioners either in the educational or employment sector.

The LLCG Centres provide information on educational and employment opportunities, enabling independent searches of published job vacancies, as well as the use of different online tools. In cooperation with partners and other stakeholders, through counselling, thematic workshops, lectures, presentations, seminars and panel discussions, they provide necessary information about education, employment or Lifelong career planning and development possibilities. The LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] is one of these centres. It provides services to clients based on their identified needs and their willingness to make decisions regarding their career. The Centres provide triage support at three main levels of support: self-help services, brief assisted services and individual case managed services. In addition, the centre provides coaching, staff training, counselling services on how to write CV, job application, motivation letter, how to present oneself at a job interview, etc.

Most activities are planned and organised on a daily basis. It means that users are informed and consulted in the frame of activities of few hours.

Despite the Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia 2016 - 2020, guidance and counselling in the primary and general secondary education (general grammar schools) are not properly elaborated and defined at the national, regional or local level. Except for the National Framework Curriculum, it is still inadequately mentioned in the Primary and Secondary School Education Acts, the Vocational Education Act or in the Adult Education Act. Professional orientation has been introduced through operational programmes in class education and within the contents of additional and supplementary courses and extracurricular activities. Career guidance services are provided by non-teaching staff (school educational experts, psychologists, etc.) as part of their duties, while partnership-based models are applied and include various national stakeholders. The activities of the LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] are among them, because this institution organises lectures and workshops in collaboration with schools to inform pupils about professions, qualifications and available educational paths. In fact, lots of young people do not use this kind of service because the staff of the

LLCG Centre do not have enough capacity to cover all schools in the region. Sometimes, youth participate in some activities, but they are not aware on them, as the following quote hints at:

"I know that something like that exist, but I did not use such support. Maybe I used to participate in some activities of the Centre, but I did not know. Now I do not have enough time for that." _WP5_Y_OB_F_7).

Users of the Centre's services are primary and secondary school pupils, unemployed people and others (employed people and job seekers, students, employers, parents, career counsellors, etc.).

Even though it is one of the measures of the Croatian Youth Guarantee plan, there is no administrative data on the NEET population in Croatia, and there are no specific measures aimed explicitly at this population group. This means that the main institution responsible for identifying young people at risk of unemployment and for reaching out to them and helping reintegrate them back into education or into the labour market is Croatian Employment Service (CES).

The career guidance services have been continuously developed and improved and are aimed at various target groups, from elementary and high school students and their parents to the unemployed and job seekers and to career counsellors. However, the majority of users who received support through some form of counselling/coaching since its establishment are young people at the age of 15 to 24.

Career guidance can take place at a number of different points in a young person's life:

- Early interventions - include early engagement with career guidance services on entry point, first interview and individual action planning to clarify personal goals and opportunities and also to connect personal interests and skills with the labour market.
- Guidance and mentorship - are tools for supporting personal engagement. Mentorship, which includes the participation of members of the local community with successful careers, is viewed as an effective means of prevention, also in labour market and education strategies.
- Facilitating choices between the elements of the Youth Guarantee (such as between traineeship and apprenticeship) to support people in finding pathways that align their personal interests with positive labour market outcomes by providing complete information on all occupations and the required qualifications offered by the system.
- Supporting young people - after they find employment and helping them with individual career plans and targets to retain them in a non-subsidised placement or in self-employment.

The activities of the LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] are based on non-formal and informal learning, and no qualifications are issued. Users can sometimes obtain some kind of certificate that does not have special value on the labour market because informal learning is not well recognised in Croatia.

In Croatia, the responsibility for the connection of institutions responsible for skills formation and skills use markets lies with the regional authorities. Their role is to ensure availability of the educational institutions, which answer to individual and labour market needs. The regional and local authorities are also responsible for the implementation of national legislation and policies at the local and regional level. The relative abundance of educational possibilities in Osijek-Baranja County (and in skills formation) does not automatically ensure their relevance for the labour market (the skills use markets).

The LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] faces the need to identify priorities in delivering services and to balance these with the resources available (human resources, financing and other). Motivating partners to take place in LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] activities can sometimes be an issue, because different stakeholders in the community are competitive and educational, social welfare and labour market policies are fragmented. Finally, there could be some challenges in creating (new) services for local needs.

The planning and implementation of Lifelong career guidance activities include partners in the fields of education, employment, social inclusion, private institutions and civil society organisations. The majority of activities are implemented within the framework of state institutions and agencies, although the nongovernmental sector is also included. A key function of the LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] is coordination and cooperation with other partners (local chambers, universities, adult education institutions, schools and NGOs) in the outreach and activation of inactive NEETs in order to improve their integration into the labour market and/or education/training or into other activities aimed at increasing their employability. However, there is a lack of coordination and collaboration between institutions in charge of unemployment (CES) and the social welfare system in Croatia. Because of this, the LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] is faced with many obstacles in achieving these priorities.

All the actors involved in regional LLL policy development, with an emphasis on content and type of skills, recognise the importance of more intensive and closer cooperation between educational institutions and the real economy. However, until now, there have only been a few examples of good practice of such cooperation. The development of new programmes and the adaptation of existing curricula to the needs of the labour market represents a great challenge in Osijek-Baranja County. Even so, the interviewed actors recognise the difficulties and even the lack of will to cooperate on aforementioned issues. In their words:

“...we used to get enquiries from schools and from the County to give suggestions about the necessary professions. Although it was all just a formality... Today, we are not even asked any more. ... The system of education, both its secondary and tertiary sector, does not meet the needs of the labour market. The Employment Service sends a list of scarce professions to secondary schools and to the University. However, the problem is that the university is autonomous ... and secondary schools are under the jurisdiction of the County, and the head teachers are in most cases not proactive.”, WP6_E_OB_F_2).

The previous statements indicate that there is a lack of dialogue between all actors in the field of education and employment of young adults, which leads to a discrepancy between former students' qualifications and labour market needs. That is the main reason for the unfavourable economic situation in the region that has led to the high emigration rate of youth from the region. If they are not able to leave Croatia, they work as seasonal workers in the Croatian tourism region.

In Osijek-Baranja Functional Region there is variety in the supply of levels and educational programmes, different secondary schools, open universities and one university. However, there is a lack of cooperation among educational programme providers at different levels of the educational system. The lack of cooperation is visible also between educational actors and actors of the regional labour market. Although all interviewed persons highlight the importance of cooperation, there is still no systematic way of connecting different actors.

Early evaluation of LLCG Centres services suggests that the decentralisation and democratisation of career guidance in Croatia has had a broad impact on regional development as well as on professional practice which is developing new and creative approaches.

The importance of LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] arises from its capacity to: improve the efficiency of labour markets and education systems; support key policy objectives ranging from Lifelong learning to social equity; enable people to build human capital and employability throughout their lives.

A systematic evaluation has not been developed. Regular statistics about activities and users are kept, without insight into the possible results of these activities. Along with the lack of evaluation, there is also a lack of databases about the needs of the job market, its connection with the available educational programmes and other data which could enable an objective view of employment needs. Improving the work of the LLCG Centres is needed, because the insufficient capacities and infrastructure cannot meet the demands of all interested citizens in a high quality manner. Enhancing cooperation between the Centres, primary and secondary schools, and other relevant institutions at the local level would enable systematic student monitoring, recognition of their abilities, interests and other relevant factors for career choices and development.

The case Lifelong Career Guidance (LLCG) Centre [Osijek-Baranja] is characterised by the aim of improving the educational and professional guidance in a context with scarce employment

opportunities, a low integration of young people into the labour market, a general skills mismatch and a weak coordination among stakeholders in the field of LLL. The idea of providing support in terms of Lifelong guidance is presented as a means of compensation for the difficulties of young people in planning (and even imagine) their own professional and personal future. At the same time, the activity of the centres may contribute to new forms of coordination and collaboration between actors and institutions at local level and improve the contextualisation of national policy objectives and actions with regard to the needs of the context and the young people in the context.

3.3.2 Open Public University Diopter [Istria]: adult education in public-private responsibility as passe-partout

In Croatia, the percentage of people enrolled in adult education is significantly lower than the EU average. The main providers of LLL education are local institutions for adult learning called public open universities. They can be set up by local self-government units and legal or physical persons with the purpose of providing primary and secondary education to adults, professional development, training and retraining of youth, outside the formal system of education. At the moment, according to the data of the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education there are around 200 open public universities, and they are offering around 300 primary-school programmes, and over 9000 secondary-school programmes. There are also several private open public universities.

In Istria County, there are 15 public open universities, which offer more than 500 different adult education programmes. Open Public University Diopter [Istria] is one of the main stakeholders in the field of transition of young adults from education to the labour market situated in the Istria County. It was founded in 1995 as a private institution. At the beginning of its work, Diopter carried out training for safety at work. Nowadays, Diopter is the biggest private open public university in Istria Functional Region with more than 20.000 participants since 1995 (around 100 participants per year). This is important because users (young adults) are looking for the cheapest educational programmes, and private school is not always able to compete with the public schools (*"In the end, participants chose the programmes which are the cheapest."*, WP5_E_I_F_4).

Its goal is compatible with the goals of other stakeholders in that field, and that is to increase young adults' employability. Diopter is trying to reach that goal by developing young adults' skills, but at the same time trying to remain competitive in the highly developed market of public universities. Their aim, that is to help young adults develop the skills that would enable them to find a satisfying job, is compatible with the motivation of young adults to enrol in their programmes. The most often group of their users the Diopter expert explains as: *"Young women and young man who have finished vocational school, already have some working experience, even family life, and now they want to*

finish something more in order to get a better job.” (WP5_E_I_F_4). Additionally, employers expect young people to already have certain skills and to be ready to start working on the job “from day one”. At the same time, even though Diopter addresses the general problem of youth unemployment it lacks adequate evaluation methods to investigate whether it is successful in reaching its objectives or not. One professional raised the issue of more systematic evaluation of Diopter’s work. She would like to receive feedback on the number of participants in their programmes who found a job after the completion: “While they are at school we know if they got a job, but we still do not practice asking them what happened to them, for example 6 months after they finished our program.” (WP5_E_I_F_4).

Public universities deal with all kinds of adult learning including both formal and non-formal education. Their programmes vary from basic education and literacy to secondary-school courses, occupational retraining courses, foreign language courses, computer technology, general education and cultural courses. Istria County offers a large number of programmes for re-qualification and the acquisition of secondary-school qualifications, foreign language learning programmes and informal. Currently, the Open Public University Diopter [Istria] is offering different Professional training programmes and Programmes for re-training and acquisition of vocational qualification. Head manager of Diopter raised an issue about poor programme offer: *“We talk to young people about retraining, and in the end all open public universities offer the same programmes. We all have commercialists, transport technicians...when they come to the school, I ask them: Did you maybe hear for any other programmes out there?” (WP6_E_I_F_2). Because the offer of programmes of different open public universities is mostly the same, there is competition instead of cooperation between them: “In Istria County, the highest competition is in the city of Pula. There most of the open public universities are there, and we all have the same offer. In the end, participants chose the programmes which are the cheapest.” Professional at Diopter (WP5_E_I_F_4)*

Lengths of the programme vary depending on the programme. Most of the programmes last a few months (6-9 months). The level of target first construction is national but with regional variations. The Diopter is an institution of community interests, and it deals with different types of users (people without any completed education, unemployed people wishing to get retraining, employed people who want another education level and many others).

While talking about the main type of users of their services, the head manager recognises different sorts of motivation of the people undertaking training or retraining programmes in this institution. Her impression is that most of the students come with a will to finish upper-secondary school in order to be able to enrol in higher education programmes. For them, it is not important which profession they will

have. The example of this motivation is readable from the interview of one participant: *“My main motivation for starting this program was to get into university.”* (WP5_Y_I_F_2)

Programmes provided by open universities, enrolling mostly youth without qualifications, are financed by the students themselves. An exception are the programmes carried out within some EU-funded projects designated for the implementation of active youth employment policy measures. This circumstance significantly hampers the access of youth in NEET status to education, as they do not possess the resources to finance those programmes but only can enrol if EU-funding is available within a running project. Typical users of open public universities are young women and men who graduated from a vocational school, already have some working experience, even family life, and now want to obtain another qualification in order to get a better job. Other users are people who already work and need proof of a qualification in order to keep that job. None of the participants in the last year courses were without a school diploma, which indicates that this type of institution cannot answer the needs of the NEETs to help them enter the labour market. All said is readable from following quote by Diopter professional:

“This year we didn’t have any participants without any kind of school completed. All the participants have already finished some program, and they just wanted to improve their status.” (WP5_E_I_F_4).

This sentence gives a new perspective to the context, because according to official data of the local employment agency in Pula, the most difficult to employ are the persons without completed primary school. These data are in agreement with the data on the structure of unemployed persons with respect to the level of education, but are not entirely in agreement with the educational structure of youth in the Istria County. According to the last census in the Istria County, in the population of persons between 20-29 years of age, of 26,569 young persons, 196 or 0.74% never finished primary school, and 1499 or 5.64% completed primary school only. Secondary-school education was acquired by 20,356 or 76.61% young, and some level of higher education was acquired by 3,521 or 13.25% of young people (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, Population Census, 2011).

In accordance with the reason why someone is enrolled in the programme, open public universities can have linear or non-linear connections with representations of the life course. For some users, finishing the programme means being able to continue working at some workplace, or being able to enrol in higher education. For others, finishing secondary school or getting retraining, will contribute to better employability, and therefore, non-linearly help them to get employed or to get a better job. Depending on the programme users of the open public universities get formal qualifications or certificates.

In relation to the implementation at the national level from the governance perspective, one of the conclusions of the qualitative analysis in Croatia is that there are a lot of institutions on the local and regional level that have the goal of raising the quality of life of young adults through increasing employment. The main problem that causes failure of those programmes is the lack of coordination between different stakeholders and between three main systems: educational, social welfare and employment. Moreover, institutions choose to deal with a few measures at a local level, based on their particular interest. However, participation in the programmes of open public universities does not ensure the acquisition of competencies needed in the labour market because the education supply and education programmes are not adjusting fast enough to the new developments and circumstances. An additional difficulty for the system of mutual coordination is the fact that institutions are focused on the implementation of programmes and policies that stem from the interests of their founders, whereas the horizontal and vertical coordination among providers of educational services occurs sporadically, mainly in the course of the preparation and realization of short-term and mutually unrelated projects and programmes. The repercussions of lack of cooperation in the system are young adults who are unprepared and often without any support in their transition from education to the labour market system. They are unaware of possibilities in their local community and in their region, they are not familiar with programmes that different institutions are offering, and they are focused on developing practical skills which will help them get a job or leave the country without any qualification. It is particularly important to define the roles of stakeholders and bodies that will act as a link between vocational education and the labour market, and higher education. The principal stakeholders of this process need to be sectoral councils, as they are the bodies that competently present the needs of the labour market and higher education which need to be met by the vocational education to the system of vocational education and training. Further actions needs to be defined by the Act on Vocational Education, which is being drafted.

Diopler employs 5 persons and more than 50 external experts. In Istria Functional Region, in the field of adult education, there are 15 Open Public Universities, 8 secondary schools that offer additional programmes of training and qualifications, and 1 primary school offering literacy programmes. Because the supply of programmes from different open public universities is mostly the same, there is competition instead of cooperation between them.

Open Public University Diopler [Istria] is one of the open universities engaged in the implementation of EU-funded projects. So far, it has implemented 6 projects, and all of them have included young people as a target group. Diopler uses those projects to fund the participation in the programmes for those who are unable to pay for their training or retraining. Through these projects this open public university aims to create programmes that would be more interesting to young adults. Diopler uses more

innovative teaching methods, and their approach to participants reflects their goal to raise their motivation to successfully complete the programmes in which they enrolled. This is illustrated in the quote of Diopter head manager:

“We are trying to keep the whole group until the end of the year. But in the several last years we were not very successful in that. I think we should start using some modern methods, like multimedia methods in the classroom.” (WP6_E_I_F_2).

The participant in a Diopter course also talked about a different approach to teaching in open public universities then in the formal education:

“Teachers, they are different. I prefer talking to them about the content, and not take written exams. This is why I prefer this program to the secondary-school program.” (WP5_Y_I_F_2)

Young people today are oriented towards skills that they can use in their everyday-life situations (only practical skills that can help them in their job search) and they are not proactive enough to take part in activities that would lead to community improvement. They choose open public university programmes as an instrument to obtain a higher education level, and not according to their professional interests. According to the perspective Diopter employees, as well as interviewed users, personal experiences of users are positive. They recognise the different methodology in teaching that is used in this open public university vis-à-vis formal education. However, there is no evaluation of fulfilment of the set goals of open public universities. There is no evaluation of the implementation measures, so there is no feedback on whether actions and programmes help young adults in improving their life-quality. The lack of coordination and the lack of evaluation are creating a skills mismatch at the local and regional levels that is visible to all actors involved. All this leaves young adults in an unpleasant situation: unemployed, without any financial stability, living with their parents and unable to plan their future. This situation, coupled with a high level of nepotism in employment, makes young adults dissatisfied with their life in Croatia and makes them willing to leave Croatia. The main thing that both experts and young adults from both regions claim is that LLL policies should be changed and improved in order to answer to the special needs of young adults' transition to the labour market.

Open Public University Diopter [Istria] is a case the specificity of which is its openness and flexibility to different local and individual possibilities, demands, needs, as well as funding. In a context with low rates of involvement in and qualification from education and training and a dynamic labour market, open public universities are a combination of both ‘containers’ and flexible units allowing different actors to collaborate on specific courses between general and vocation, regular qualifications and specific profiles, publicly or privately funded. While this allows actively addressing young people’s

transitions, it is unclear if and to what extent these offers provide sustainable – and if anybody cares in a systematic way

3.4. Cases in Finland

The main objective of Finnish education policy is to offer all citizens equal opportunity to receive education, regardless of age, domicile, financial situation, gender or ethnic background. As one of the key elements of the Scandinavian welfare model, the comprehensive school system is identified by universal, non-selective, and free basic education provided by the public sector and of adequately good quality in order to prevent the demands for private schools.

Compulsory education is organised comprehensively from age 7 to age 15 covering 9 grades (plus an optional 10th grade). After comprehensive school pupils can apply either to general upper secondary school, which is the traditional route to university, or to vocational upper secondary school. Vocational education can alternatively be taken as apprenticeship training. Universities and polytechnics form the tertiary level offering four types of degrees: lower degree (BA), higher degree (MA), Licentiate's degree (nowadays rare) and PhD.

One feature in Finland is that young people move away from their childhood home at a relatively early age. Leaving home at the age of 30 like in other EU countries would be considered as some sort of personal failure (in the age group 20–29, only 10% of Finnish women live with their parents).

In Finland, education is very much a gender related phenomenon. Fields of education as well as occupations are strongly segregated by gender. In school, girls clearly outperform boys in reading and languages, (in recent PISA assessment also in mathematics and sciences). Also later on in life, women have higher educational attainments than men: 34% of the female population has completed ISCED 5–8 level of education compared to 26% of men. The share is about the same in FR Southwest Finland as it is in Finland on average. However, population in FR Kainuu has a remarkably lower rate of ISCED 5–8 educational attainment (27% of women and 20% of men).

Despite the overall high educational attainment, the share of NEET has been increasing in Finland until 2016. The share of NEET youth is bigger in North & East Finland (11%) than in South Finland (10%) or in Finland on average. However, especially the NEET rate for young adults older than 20 years of age have increased. Among young women 20–24-year olds are most affected, among young men those aged 25–29 years.

What is crucial, is that the labour market position of young adults has worsened as a whole during the recession period in comparison to older cohorts. The share of 25–34-year-old men in positions of workers and dependent clerical workers is increasing with a decrease in the field of information and

communication, and increases in mining, construction, finance and insurance as well as in electrical, gas and heating services. According to academic studies, the deteriorating labour market positions are also visible in terms of income. Job seekers aged between 20 and 24 are often unclassified in terms of occupation. The highest share of occupations are found in construction, repair and manufacturing work, while also service and sales occupations are found for over 20 percent of the jobseekers in the cohort. For the five years older cohort, the share of expert occupations is higher.

After the financial crisis, unemployment for young people has increased, more heavily for males than for females. Since 2017, youth unemployment has decreasing, but long-term unemployment is still rising.

To summarize the findings on labour market situation in Finland, we conclude that differences in employment rates between regions and age groups are large. Average employment rate is much higher in FR Southwest Finland than FR Kainuu, and respectively, unemployment rate is higher in FR Kainuu than in FR Southwest Finland. The labour market position of young adults has worsened as a whole during the prolonged recession period in comparison to older cohorts. The average job tenure for young people in Finland is usually short in duration, also when compared internationally. It is more difficult than before for young adults to get into a salaried professional position. Young people have a hard time in planning their future especially in economically regressive regions.

3.4.1 Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland]: holistic support to develop employability

In the regional strategy of Southwest Finland, the main goals related to youth and young adults include involving them in the decision making processes and development activities of the region, and developing a regional work and training model and career guidance structures and practises for young people, as well as improving students working life, entrepreneurial, and innovation skills (Rinne et al., 2016).

The LLL policy measure in the field of youth and social policy selected for analysis for WP7 in Southwest Finland is the one stop, low-threshold guidance centre Ohjaamo, which is an integral part of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee at a regional level. Based on the assumptions of the prevalence of the standardised normal life courses, but also taking local living conditions into account, the aim is to provide help for young people who need educational support and personal guidance in order to eventually reach the labour market and become employable, such as young entrepreneurs who need instructions and advice on how to run their businesses. The national level policy, the Ohjaamo Programme, was explicitly designed so that the definitions of the structures and activities are broad in order to leave enough room for regional or local interpretations. Hence, when planning the measure, fitting the measure to the local and regional needs was enabled and encouraged.

The Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] is funded by the ESF (till the end of 2018) and the employment appropriation of the city of Turku. The Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] belongs to the administrative branch of the Turku Employment Services Centre; hence, in its operations it has an emphasis leaning in the direction of labour market policy and, to some extent, education policy.

The Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] in Turku brings several services for people under 30 years of age under one roof offering employment and rehabilitation services, as well as information and guidance. Although some of the information services are also available to non-residents. A special emphasis of the policy is on those young people who are not in education, employment, or training. Young people can access the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland]'s services without any referrals (from, e.g., a doctor or an employment official), and participation is voluntary. The target group is defined by the funders (ESF, the city). As the target group of the national Ohjaamo Programme is very broad, the actual addressee profiles of the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] in Turku did not differ from the official target group. One of the experts estimated that there had been 5500 visits to the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] (at the time of the interview, it had been open for little over a year).

The general aims of the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] are to build a service management and multidisciplinary service model for young people as well as to support and rehabilitate them to enter the labour market. The main approach of this LLL policy measure is lowering the threshold for youth and young adults who are seeking to use services by minimising bureaucracy and making services more flexible. The experts working in the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] have actively participated in its planning and development. The main problems that both the national Ohjaamo Programme and the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] in Turku aim to tackle are youth unemployment and school drop-out.

The Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] provides services related to education and employment (information and guidance services, labour market coordinator, education coordinator, career planner, etc.) and different pop-up services offered by several 'external' actors (e.g., sexual therapist, psychiatric nurse, vocational guidance counsellor, career planner, housing counsellor, adult education counsellors, TE Office's employment adviser, and rehabilitative work services). Young people are guided to services that fit their needs and wishes (e.g., help with writing a job application or CV, or with finding a place in a rehabilitative workshop). In addition to offering services for young people, the services of the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] can be utilised also by professionals who work with young people, such as teachers and career planners. An important part of the operations of the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] are monthly themed exhibitions and pop-up events. Also youth participation is very much emphasised by the experts.

The Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] has adopted a holistic perspective on the lives of the young adults by systematically taking their life circumstances as well as their personal strengths and challenges into account. In addition to acknowledging the existence of these factors, the centre addresses them by either by providing individualised support for the young adults or by finding other service providers (mostly public or third sector actors or other policy projects) that have the forms of support available that suit the needs of the young adults. The logic behind this kind of an approach, according to the expert interviewees, is that young adults have to reach a certain level of functional abilities, skills, as well as physical and mental wellbeing in order to be in a situation where the main goal of the policy measure, such as entering education or the labour market, can be reached. (Tikkanen et al., 2017.) While this type of perspective can be derived from the national policy, it has been strengthened at the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] as a result of the experts' experiences during the first year of its operation.

Facilitating young adults' autonomy and reducing their biographical uncertainty is also closely related to the holistic approach. The importance of helping the participants to improve their skills related to everyday life management, learning and studying, career management, and working life was emphasised by the experts (Tikkanen et al., 2017). Increasing motivation and ability to get involved with their community and decision making related to their own lives were also significant aims. The importance of facilitating participants' overall wellbeing and life management skills was seen as something that is necessary for them to be able to participate in education and become employable. The dominant national policy discourses and seeing young people as future employees who need to be ushered into the use of the labour market were emphasized in the discourse of the interviewed experts.

With regard to tackling the so-called wicked problems in the lives of the participating young adults in vulnerable situations, a central tool of the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] is network collaboration. By working together with, for example, employment officials and services, education institutions and special needs education professionals, social services, mental and physical health professionals, and addiction treatment centres, and, thus, by bringing together a wide range of professional skills and representatives of the relevant jurisdictional fields, it is possible to address the multilevel wicked problems in a way that would not be possible for a single policy measure or actor working alone.

As said, the experts working in the Ohjaamo Centre are actively and systematically involved with several different policy actors and networks. The main external cooperation partners of the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] include the TE Office, Municipality Welfare Division, Education and Cultural Services, Employment Committee, Employment Services Centre, and Youth Services. There

is cooperation also with third sector actors (e.g., Helsinki Deaconess Institute and the Evangelical Lutheran Church), outreach youth work, projects supporting immigrants, rehabilitative workshops, local/regional employers and companies, the Defence Forces, Criminal Sanctions Agency, schools and educational institutions, Child Welfare, and the local Youth Council. The forms of collaboration vary based mainly on the main objective of the partner. With regard to the private sector, cooperation with regional companies and employers includes mainly practical training, work trials, and on-the-job learning periods. Cooperation with public sector institutions and actors is typically related to education, employment, social security, as well as physical and mental wellbeing of the young adults. Cooperation with the other policy institutions and actors is mainly coordinated and developed by using well-established, formal network collaboration with the other municipal and regional actors.

It seems that the experts of the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] interviewed were working under quite a lot of stress caused by the discrepancies between their main backdrop, the national level policy, and the local policy interests and reforms, and also by the difficulties related to managing with the multi-jurisdictional and, in some cases, bureaucratic cooperation network of different institutions working in the field. In addition, the experts were unsure about the future of the Ohjaamo Centre and felt that they had to constantly justify its existence to local policy makers in the midst of ongoing and forthcoming structural reforms. (Tikkanen et al., 2017.)

The impacts of the policy measure are closely monitored by the national level policy and the Employment Services Centre of the city under the administration of which the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] operates, and, also in this regard, the sometimes nonparallel main emphases can pose challenges to the experts' work.

For the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] addressees interviewed, motivation for participating varied greatly due to the wide definition of the target group and the variety of services available. For those young adults who were mainly using the information and 'lighter' guidance services, the reason for participation was to get help either with finding a job or with figuring out the next steps to take with regard to education or employment. The value they saw in the policy measure was that they could use it as an extra tool to help them progress on the life course trajectory they were already on. With regard to those young adults who were participating in rehabilitative workshops aimed at young people in more vulnerable situations and with lower functional abilities, the need that defined participation was related to their fractured life courses, which typically entailed severe social challenges as well as a series of what they saw as 'failures', such as having difficulties with learning at school, dropping out of education, and not being able to find or keep a job. In this sense, they were using the 'normal' life course as a yard stick against which they compared their own biographies. For those young adults, the measure's role was, in a way, to get them back on track on a more standard life course, when

compared to their fractured biography so far, as they often hoped to eventually be able to participate in full-time education or work (Tikkanen et al., 2017).

The young adults participating in the more ‘in-depth’ services felt that taking part in them had affected their lives also outside the measure (Tikkanen et al., 2017). An often mentioned important aspect of participation in the Ohjaamo Centre’s activities was that it helped the young adults to gain or maintain a normal pace in their lives, which they found to be very difficult in a situation where there is nothing to do during the week. Some of the young adults talked about how draining life is when there is nothing to do, and that the longer one stays at home the harder it becomes to ‘get back’ and become active again.²

3.4.2 NUPPA Centre [Kainuu]: holistic support to provide a sustainable life perspective

Due to the scarcity of educational opportunities after upper secondary level and the poor employment situation, many young people move from the region to other parts of the country to study and work, which is strongly reflected in the population structure of the region. In the Kainuu Programme, the central question related to young adults is, on one hand, how to get the region’s young adults to stay in the region or at least to return there after studies, and, on the other hand, how to attract young people, especially young families, to move to Kainuu from the other Finnish regions and abroad as well. The plans and goals of the Programme include fighting social exclusion, implementing more measures supporting the development of children and youth, maintaining and developing educational supply as well as stronger marketing of them to young people, paying special attention to reducing youth unemployment and increasing entrepreneurship among young people, supporting active participation, highlighting the importance of creative culture as a source of wellbeing and sense of community, and targeting guidance to a healthy life style for young people and those who are long-term unemployed.

In implementing LLL policies in Kainuu, a wide range of regional actors from various administrative bodies are involved. Also many third sector actors are actively involved in the field. The main policy objectives are related to supporting the general wellbeing of young people and reducing their risk of social exclusion. The Youth Guarantee is being actively implemented all across Kainuu, and the aim is to offer young people the services they need. Workshop projects help strengthen young people's ability and capacity to seek training or employment. Funders of the Youth Guarantee in Kainuu include

² The particularities of the Finnish cases are highlighted together at the end of 3.4.2 as they are two different regional expressions of the same national policy.

the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment of North Ostrobothnia, the EU, the European Social Fund (ESF), and the Public Utility of Education of the City of Kajaani. In Kainuu, there are active employment, education, and rehabilitation related workshops targeted at young adults in several municipalities (Rinne et al., 2016).

The concrete example of the youth and social policy selected for analysis for WP7 in the Functional Region Kainuu is the one stop, low-threshold guidance centre Ohjaamo called NUPPA, which is an integral part of the Youth Guarantee at a regional level. Its name, which is an acronym for 'a service place for young people ('Nuorten Palvelupaikka'), has been chosen to highlight its policy emphasis and close connection to the local and regional youth services. The national level policy was explicitly designed so that the definitions of the structures and activities are broad, thus, leaving room for regional or local interpretations when planning the measure.

The NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], which belongs to the administrative branch of the municipal Youth Services, receives funding from the ESF (through the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, till the end of 2018), the State, and in the future also the Regional State Administrative Agencies. In the organisational structure of the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], the future has been taken into account so that if the project does not receive further funding, NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] can be subsumed under the structures of the local youth services quite easily due to, for example, the small number of its employees.

The NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] brings all of Kajaani's youth services under one roof and provides young people with free and confidential counselling, advice, life management support, hobby activities, and expert services. The aim is to implement the principles of Lifelong guidance and to create services for long-term and urgent situations as well as to construct an operating model for the various service providers operating in Kajaani. According to the interviewed experts, the main approach of the LLL policy measure is to take a comprehensive approach to young people's lives and provide tailored support for their individual needs, which is something that the experts planning the measure wanted to highlight also in the centre's name instead of calling it just Ohjaamo (Tikkanen et al. 2017). While the main emphasis of the national level policy is on youth unemployment and school drop-outs, the central problem the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] aims to tackle is social exclusion of youth and young adults. Services of the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] include, for example, different rehabilitative workshops that are geared to a situation where the young person is able to move on to education, rehabilitative work experience periods, information services, a youth club, small group activities (cooking, grocery shopping, physical exercise and games, household management, outdoor activities, voluntary work, first aid courses etc.), and individual guidance and support.

The target group of the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] is all the under 30-year-olds and young adults living in Kainuu. A special emphasis in the target group of the policy is on young people in the most vulnerable positions under the threat of social exclusion or already socially excluded. Young people can access the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu]'s services through multiple channels and they do not need any referrals (from, e.g., a doctor or employment official) to gain access, and participation is voluntary. As the target group of the Ohjaamo guidance centres is very broad (i.e. all youth and young adults of certain ages), the actual addressee profiles of the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] did not differ from the official target group.

The NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] has adopted a holistic perspective on the lives of the young adults by taking their life circumstances as well as their personal strengths and challenges systematically into account. In addition to acknowledging the existence of these factors, it address them either by providing individualised support for the young adults or by finding other service providers (mostly public or third sector actors or other policy projects) that have the forms of support that suit the needs of the young adults.

The holistic approach to participants' lives is closely related to facilitating young adults' autonomy and reducing their biographical uncertainty. Also the importance of helping the participants to improve their skills in everyday life management, learning and studying, career management and working life, social relationships and communication, and time management was emphasised. Increasing motivation and strengthening the ability to take responsibility for one's own actions and choices were also significant aims. These skills and abilities are central for young adults not only on the path to being able to take more control of their own lives and make related choices and decisions, but also to reduce uncertainty in their future life courses.

Given the main emphasis and goals of the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], dealing with the so-called wicked problems the participants have in their lives is a very important issue. One central tool in this regard is network collaboration. By working together with, for example, employment officials and services, education institutions and special needs education professionals, social services, mental and physical health professionals, and addiction treatment centres, and, thus, by bringing together a wide range of professional skills and representatives of the relevant jurisdictional fields, it is possible to address the multilevel wicked problems in a way that would not be possible for a single policy measure or actor. The experts working in the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] are actively and systematically involved with several different policy actors and networks. It is, for example, part of the local Youth Guidance and Services Network, which includes all actors and institutions involved in working with youth and young

adults. According to the Finnish Youth Act 9³ municipalities are required to have a multi-jurisdictional Youth Guidance and Services Network of local authorities for planning, development, and implementation of the youth services (Youth Act 2016/1285). The network must include representatives from educational, social and health, employment, and youth affairs administration and the police forces. The network may also include representatives from the Defence Forces and other administrative fields. The network cooperates with actors and institutions providing youth services.

The main internal cooperation partners of the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] include outreach youth work, rehabilitative workshops, the Finnish Cancer Society (Good Day project focusing on everyday life management skills), special youth workers, youth club, youth information workers, Family Centre, adult social work, Employment and Economic Development Services ('TE Office'), Sosped foundation (support for mental health issues), Evangelical Lutheran Church (especially a project targeting young homeless people), the Young Church association (social support for young people under the threat of social exclusion), Recreational Fishers (activities for families), and the Association of the Unemployed. The most important external partners are mental health services, the A Clinic Foundation, the multi-sectoral joint employment service (TYP), The Martha Organisation, the psychiatric rehabilitation unit for young adults of the Kainuu Central Hospital, Rehabilitative Work Experience, social services, Police, the Defence Forces, local and regional schools and educational institutions, local and regional employers, and different youth projects. Based on the interviews with the experts, they were in general happy with the way the cooperation with the internal and external partners is working (Tikkanen et al., 2017). Many of the actors in the field have known each other and been working together for a long time, so the cooperation network is well-established in many aspects. However, there were sometimes problems with cooperation with other, more short-term LLL policy projects.

All the young adults interviewed in the Functional Region Kainuu were participating in a rehabilitative workshop meant for young people in more vulnerable situations and with low functional abilities, that is young people who were, at that moment, not able to participate even in part-time education or work (Tikkanen et al. 2017). According to both the expert interviews and the young adults themselves, the need that defined their participation was related to fractures in their life courses and especially educational trajectories, which were typically caused by mental health problems and insufficient support in one or more field of life. Typically, the vulnerability of their life situation was not related to an especially disadvantaged social background. The participants of the policy measure felt that the rehabilitation the workshop provided would help them to overcome their challenges and, thus, assist

³ See <http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2016/20161285>.

them to become full members of the community and to return to a 'normal' life course entailing education and work. The importance of stable, positive social relationships was highlighted by the young adults in their desired futures (Tikkanen et al., 2017)

Many of the interviewed young adults who were participating in the activities of the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] felt that participation in the measure had also affected their lives outside the measure. An often-mentioned important aspect of participation in a LLL policy measure was that it helped the young adults to gain or maintain a normal pace in their lives, which they found to be very difficult in a situation where there is nothing to do during the week. Some of the young adults talked about how draining life is when there is nothing to do, and that the longer one stays at home the harder it becomes to 'get back' and become active again.

Another aspect that emerged from the young adult interviews in this regard was the importance of social contacts and peer support. For some, the peer support that they gained from other young adults in the policy measure was very meaningful. Meeting people who had had similar experiences and challenges in their lives or having a safe and confidential peer group around them was an empowering experience for them. Although, getting acquainted with the group sometimes took a while.

Based on the expert interviews it seems that the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] is a well-established part of the youth and social policy sector in Kajaani and is not affected by the current Government's unstable policy making as much as the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] in Turku is. The latter is likely due to the fact that the NUPPA Centre was planned from the start to be 'light' enough so that, if necessary, it can be merged into the other structures of the local youth services (Tikkanen et al., 2017). Hence, the experts of the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] were not worried about the future after the end of the ESF funding period. Also the the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] cooperation network appears to function more smoothly than the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] one, although collaboration in Kajaani has its own challenges and requires constant input.

The two Finnish cases are both regional variations of the national programme of Ohjaamo Centres, integrated services by which the Youth Guarantee is being implemented. The particularities of the policy at national level are the holistic approach addressing young people not only as job seekers and participants of education and labour market programmes but as individual persons with subjective needs. Consequently, they operate on the basis of large networks and integrate different policy sectors which in the Finnish context seems not problematic while at the same time regional actors have considerable freedom in interpreting the policy and adapting it to needs at regional level. As regards the two regional interpretations of the policy, Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] is implemented by the Employment Service while NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] is implemented by local youth

services. This is also reflected by the way in which overall objectives are formulated. In the Southwest, the policy is developed explicitly to address employability which however is addressed by a holistic approach. In Kainuu, a region affected by peripheral situation and a less dynamic socioeconomic development, emphasis lies on social inclusion whereby the holistic approach is not only instrumental to employability but to secure well-being and social cohesion.

3.5. Cases in Germany

In Germany, the skills system relies on a selective structure of secondary *school* traditionally organised by a three-track system starting from age 10. Recently, this tracking has started to weaken and there are significant differences between federal state with school in Hesse (relevant for functional region Rhine-Main) being more differentiated compared to a more comprehensive system in Bremen. *Vocational training* is largely organised through the dual system of apprenticeship training whereby the skills system is strongly structured by a dependency of the provision of apprenticeship places as well as by accepting applicants by the employers. The dual system is segmented according to *gender* with females being under-represented and according to education inasmuch as school leavers from the lowest track of secondary schooling have increasingly problems in entering apprenticeship training directly as employers ascribe them a lack of ‘training maturity’. The *national employment service* with its regional branches plays an important mediating role while *job centers* cater for long-term unemployed job seekers. In European scale, *youth unemployment, early school leaving* and *NEET* are clearly under EU-average. However there are *differences between the functional regions Rhine-Main and Bremen*. In Rhine-Main quotes are under the national average (NEET 6.4% in in 2016 and youth unemployment 7% in 2015) due to an economic structure characterized by a highly dynamic service sector (the financial hub of Frankfurt) with a GDP significantly above national average. The demand focuses on high-skilled labour while there is still also an industrial sector demanding for skilled labour. In Bremen quotes are above the national average (NEET 9.4% and youth unemployment 9.6%) due to a slower re-structuring of the economy from industry to services reflected also by a GDP below national average. Also here, the demand for skilled and high skilled labour is higher than for low skilled labour. One key structural feature in *dealing with the mismatch* between the skills of young people and the demand of employers is the so-called ‘transition system’ consisting primarily of preparatory, pre-vocational measures aimed at providing training maturity (taking up ca. 250,000 young people per year nationally compared to ca. 500,000 starting apprenticeship training). As regards the *living conditions* of young adults, in a European comparison, the level of precariousness is lower while in the inter-regional comparison more young adults in Bremen compared to Rhine-Main are affected by risk and uncertainty. Yet, also there spatial segregation leads to high shares of poverty among young

adults in certain districts with single mothers being at highest risk. However, the demand for high skilled labour has also increased the mismatch between employer's demands and the profiles of those young adults with lower qualifications and social disadvantages in Rhine-Main. This mismatch is reflected by the simultaneity of thousands of unplaced applicants and vacant apprenticeship places (with a higher share of vacancies in Rhine-Main compared to a higher share of unplaced applicants in Bremen). Policy makers address this situation by relating two discursive figures: The first is ascribing those who do not enter regular training directly a '*lack of training maturity*' which needs to be compensated by pre-vocational measures and which justifies channelling them into training professions of lower status like the crafts. Due to the functionality of such an individualizing interpretation of mismatch, this perspective has been adopted also by training providers and practitioners. Especially, in Rhine Main where the ratio between offered apprenticeships and applicants is more positive, this discursive figure is complemented by the forecast of a '*lack of skilled labour*' which statistically applies especially for the crafts and which is to be prevented primarily by ensuring that enough young people continue to enter the dual system. Whereas in Bremen with its more precarious socioeconomic situation, *young people* seem to be still willing to do so accepting both prevocational measures and reducing occupational aspirations, in Rhine-Main there is a trend of school leavers with low qualifications not to accept any available apprenticeship at the cost of reducing occupational aspirations but aiming at continuing with school, increasing qualifications and thus increasing options for choice. Here, it seems that it is primarily those with particular problems (e.g. mental health), i.e. who have an 'objective' excuse for previous failure, who accept being subjected to preparatory measures and develop the perspective (cf. Bittlingmayer et al., 2016; Schaufler & Parreira do Amaral, 2017; Weiler et al., 2017; Verlage et al., 2018).

3.5.1 VbFF [Rhein-Main]: the functionality of feminist empowerment for active labour market policies

The focus of the Rhein-Main case is a part-time vocational training for young mothers. The provider of this training is the Verein zur beruflichen Förderung von Frauen (VbFF), which is located in the City of Frankfurt. The VbFF [Rhein-Main], founded in 1978, is an example of an independent service provider offering a LLL policy measure mainly directed at the labour market. The VbFF [Rhein-Main] has a history in the women's movement and still has a feminist perspective. In accordance with its self-conception the VbFF [Rhein-Main] did not traditionally employ discourses like securing workforce or training maturity, even if those discourses would be good points of reference for their own measures. With regard to the shortage of skilled workers, which is a dominant discourse in Germany, many programmes have been initiated to tackle this problem.

One such programme which is important for the Region Rhein-Main is the “Overall strategy for securing skilled personnel” in Hesse. It is a joint approach of the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration adopted in 2013. As its title suggests, the initiative aims to secure a stock of skilled workers for the economy. Two approaches are especially central to its implementation. 1. Vocational training & further education and 2. Immigration and integration. Over 150 separate measures have been initiated with regard to this initiative. A central element is the activation of unexploited labour force. On the one hand, these are low skilled workers. The Hessian government tries to implement consistent structures of counselling to make tailor-made post-qualifications possible for them. On the other hand, women with children are becoming the focus of attention. The government is trying to increase the number of child care facilities and is initiating measures aimed at facilitating women to get back into the labour market.

Nevertheless, the VbFF [Rhein-Main] is much more related to the gender equality discourse, which was long located in oppositional circles. One of the reasons for the selection of this policy was the observation of the intertwining of those discourses. A staff member explained the traditional feminist perspective in an expert interview:

“On the one hand of course, that the women get an official apprenticeship and become financially independent, from the welfare offices, from the men. So that they can live their lives independent from any other factors. That is the primary goal. The next goal is that they grow personally” (E_GER_F_2 – 369ff; see Verlage et al., 2018, p. 27).

For the VbFF [Rhein-Main] staff the transition into work is not an end in itself and not synonymous with integration into society, but a condition for being able to lead their lives autonomously both in economic terms but also in terms of individual choice.

The exemplary measure addresses the problem of reconciling work and family life like many other measures analysed in WP3. The project addresses are mothers up to the age of 25 years living in Frankfurt with a school leaving qualification. It offers thirty-hours per week part-time vocational training for young mothers. That means young women who would otherwise not have the chance to do an apprenticeship according to the dual training system combining vocational school and practical training in a company, are being qualified to successfully conclude vocational training. The training takes place in the collaborating companies, in vocational schools and in the association itself. The measure is well-established and since 1998 has been implemented and funded by the Jobcentre, which is exemplary for the “skills ecology” in Rhein-Main.

A starting point for the part-time training measure of the VbFF [Rhein-Main] was the observation that it was very difficult for women with children to get an apprenticeship. First, the dual system is both segmented by gender with few vocational sectors being open for men and women, and most of the

training professions address young men rather than young women. Second, the requirements for trainees are high. In the dual vocational system in Germany, depending on the profession, they have two to three days in school and two to three days in the company. Generally the vocational training lasts three years. This means 40h per week work and school, and working time is oriented towards the economic needs of the company and not towards the opening hours of child care facilities. While women in partnerships or with the support of their families have social resources they can fall back on, single mothers, who also live far away or are without family support, stand alone. They do not have the resources to care for their children while they have to work or go to school. At the same time companies know about the problems and will choose those people who have the resources that enable them to concentrate 100% on the training. Statistics show that 70% of the people in apprenticeships who become single-parents cancel their apprenticeship. As a consequence, young mothers and especially single mothers have limited chances to start vocational training. People without apprenticeships are overrepresented among those at risk of poverty as are single mothers. The general unemployment rate in Germany in the year 2012 was 5,4%, among single-parents it was more than double at 11,6%. Additionally in their situation, without an apprenticeship, without the chance to stand on their own financial feet, they remain dependent on their partners, their families or the welfare state – and/or live in poverty. Here factors culminate and lead to systematic disadvantage which, in the long run, leads to the fact that women with children are a disadvantaged group in German society.

The VbFF [Rhein-Main] takes an intermediate position between young women and vocational schools and especially companies, but also between the feminist women's movement, the economy and the welfare state with its different sectors of social, education and labour market policy which in turn position themselves differently between individuals and the market. They offer part-time vocational training in different professions, especially as office clerks. In some of the professions the VbFF [Rhein-Main] is the official training company where the young women are employed officially, in other professions the young women are trainees of the companies while VbFF [Rhein-Main] "only" provides additional guidance. As a mediator, VbFF [Rhein-Main] prepares the young women for an application for an apprenticeship by testing skills such as command of the German language, maths and general education followed by a detailed interview. During the period of vocational training, the VbFF [Rhein-Main] serves as a contact point for the young women with regard to practical and psychological support such as time management or childcare as well as for vocational schools and employers.

For every group of participants two staff members are responsible, one trainer and one social worker. Both professionals work together and jointly decide how to support the women with their apprenticeship. The trainer is in contact with the vocational school and is *"always up to date with what*

happens with our women in the vocational schools” (E_GER_F_2 – 33f). Contact with the companies is less close, especially because most of the companies do not want so much additional communication, but regular contacts are envisaged. With regard to the analysis of the skills system (Weiler et al., 2017), we see here once again the different allocation of power in the skills system. The VbFF [Rhein-Main] uses these insights to consider what they can do to “*determine and face problems, review and improve professional and school-relevant content*” (E_GER_F_2 – 38f). The social worker describes her task with the following words:

“And I do with the women: social-pedagogical units. That could be time-management, self-organisation. That could be visiting an exhibition, because for me it is important that the women get to know our cultural landscape. We conduct theatre-projects to strengthen the self-esteem of our women. We do Mother-Child-Meetings to get to know our participants also as mothers and not only as trainees or participants. We offer a three day seminar in an educational institution with the women and their children. The children get child-care around the clock, so that the women can focus on their work, also with methods of leisure time pedagogy to increase their self-esteem and their courage” (E_GER_F_2 – 39ff).

Beside the special events and the social-pedagogical units the VbFF [Rhein-Main] experts highlight that the women can ask them for support at any time:

“We advise and support them in all questions they have: Whatever they need, no matter what information they need. For example cancellation of the rental agreement or problems with the partner, health issues, everything what happens in life. They can ask us and they do. [...] If the issues are psychological we pass them on. We recommend other institutions to them and if the women want, we can also guide them there personally” (E_GER_F_1 – 236ff.).

The measure ends with the young women having successfully finished their vocational training and applying for a job. Moreover, a concluding interview between the VbFF [Rhein-Main] and the women serves as a self-evaluation.

This little information already shows us different aspects of the organisation and the focus of the VbFF [Rhein-Main]. They work in multi-professional teams and take different aspects of guided part-time training into account. On the one hand the professional aspects, and on the other hand social-pedagogical aspects of support. It becomes clear that the VbFF [Rhein-Main] is eager to offer a broad range of support to their participants. This could be seen first of all as rooted in the feminist tradition and approach of empowering women to live “*independently, from the welfare offices, from men, that they can live their lives independently from any other factors*” (E_GER_F_2 – 370ff.). At the same time it becomes apparent that this tradition and the neoliberal ideal of an individualized life of independent and self-optimizing humans fit together very well, at least in this constellation, inasmuch as competencies like time-management and self-organisation are functional for the adaption to company-based expectations of a good employee. We see how codes of individualization like independence

and living their “own” lives are expressed in a feminist perspective as well as in the neoliberal activation regime. Based on this case we have come to the conclusion that the feminist approach of providing holistic support is functional for the activation regime in ‘producing’ a self-organised workforce, while at the same time the organisation has to adapt to the specific principles and conditions of the Jobcentre according to which autonomy is not an end in itself, but only a means for labour market integration.

The Jobcentre is the main funder of the project and, as we know from WP6, a central actor in the skills ecology of the region (cf. Weiler et al., 2017). It appears as a central actor who enables a diversity of support mechanisms with its financial power. At the same time, as the main aim is to get people into paid work, its funding is tied to a set of conditions which have to be fulfilled by potential clients and providers. Hence, conditions and regulations have a huge impact on the way the support of the independent service providers is delivered.

The particularity of the case VbFF part-time training for single mothers [Rhein-Main] is the simultaneity of reproducing and at the same time diversifying the standard female life course and the vocationalism underlying the dual system of apprenticeship training in Germany. This is reflected by the unexpected alliance between a training provider emerged from the feminist movement and the regional job centre as one of the key institutional actors of activating welfare state in Germany. In fact, the surplus of empowerment provided by the measure both contradicts and supports the activating welfare. At the same time, this alliance may not be unique in Germany but still is typical for the functional region Rhine-Main characterised by an amalgam of sociocultural and multicultural modernisation connected to the service economy and the German education and welfare system.

3.5.2 ‘Werkschule’ [Bremen]: preventing pre-vocational education by including it into regular school

In Bremen FR the Werkschule was selected as a case study. The policy, which has been implemented since 2009 and is localised at the VET schools, focuses on the education policy sector. Its aim is to support the transition process of young adults in the VET system. In 2012, the Werkschule [Bremen] was integrated as a regular school of the Bremen education system. The Werkschule [Bremen] started with six vocational schools; meanwhile, more than 1000 students attend one of the ten Werkschule [Bremen] in the FR Bremen. Young adults who have completed the eighth grade of secondary school education can apply for the Werkschule [Bremen]. Most clients of the Werkschule [Bremen] have a diagnosed Lernbenachteiligung (‘disadvantages in terms of learning’) – an umbrella term encompassing all kinds of difficulties that put the pupils affected at a disadvantage. Since its foundation in 2009, the Werkschule [Bremen] has not only followed the four main national discourses

in Germany, but also one of the central goals of the school plan of Bremen which focuses on how to develop all students' skills and knowledge. For this purpose, the policy was conceived for those students experiencing trouble with theoretical learning (who needed more time to learn), and were willing to try a more practical experience related to finding a job. Werkschule [Bremen] symbolizes a bridge for those students who "have lost faith and hope" in the traditional school system. However, it is difficult to assess the extent to which this function is still an important part of the policy today, or whether the described 'holistic approach' could be considered in this case as simply necessary to achieve the expectations of the activation regime, which "involves a policy of producing individuals and identities that conform more readily to industry's new rules" (Serrano & Magnusson, 2007, p. 12).

At the beginning, the project was co-funded by the ESF. However, in 2012, the policy became part of the formal education system by turning it into an officially recognised secondary school type in the state of Bremen. By taking this step, the policy makers secured the existence of Werkschule [Bremen] mainly in financial and organisational terms. Furthermore, this decision also had a concrete impact on the continuity of the policy and its establishment: it increased the fit between the school curricula and the regional regulations and thus increased the opportunity for improved cooperation between the different actors.

In relation to this last point, the "institutionalisation" of the Werkschule [Bremen] went hand in hand with the involvement of actors from different social and labour policies and thus allowed for intensified cooperation with other related projects. This was, for example, the case with the Project COMPASS, developed for and coordinated together with the Werkschule [Bremen], to provide support to those students leaving the policy with their own mentoring programme as well as seminars, advice and networking. The idea behind this cooperation scheme was to strengthen the students' orientation with regard to their Lifelong learning goals.

Although these forms of cooperation were not planned very systematically, they certainly helped to strengthen the position of the Werkschule [Bremen] in the local policy arena and to initiate coordinated policy making in this FR. It is possible to identify some of the beneficiaries from this institutionalisation of the Werkschule [Bremen] at different levels: On the one hand, at a national there is the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Federal Employment Agency), and the Industrie- und Handelskammer (Chambers of Commerce and Crafts); at the regional level the Bremer Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur (Ministry of Science and Culture) and the Bremer Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Verkehr (Ministry of Economy, Employment and Transport). On the other hand, at a local level, there are the ten schools and their stakeholders, mainly the students.

Implementation is also related to the general organisation of the policy and its strategies to achieve its main objectives. At this point it should be stressed that there is a process of continuous negotiation between the Werkschule [Bremen] and the macro-structure (e.g. the labour market, education system etc.) of the local environment. To illustrate this point, it is, for example, very important to point out that access to the labour market depends a great deal on the reputation of the school. Companies like to work together with schools that send them reliable students for internships and apprenticeships. It is a win-win situation based on trust and years of experience and exchange.

Further negotiations also take place between the Werkschule [Bremen], the Employment Agency and the Ministries on other matters like staff salaries, curriculum and funding of further education programmes. Implementation is also related to the relationship with the chambers of commerce on topics like skills formation and employability. The complex relationships between the Werkschule [Bremen] and its environment show that the negotiations are multi-levelled and dynamic as the power relations and topics differ according to the type of actors involved.

The years following 2012 became essential for the stability of the policy according to two connected elements. Firstly, from an organisational point of view, the Werkschule [Bremen] guarantees the collaboration of different professionals, who, until the present day, work together on behalf of young adults. Thus, teachers, social education specialists and so-called Lehrmeister (master craftsman with some additional educational qualification) work closely together as one team, which, according to the head teacher of the school, seems to be a key feature of the functioning of this policy. In fact, the policy allows teachers to work more individually with the students, as class sizes are comparatively small (16 students/class at the Werkschule [Bremen] compared to 23 or more in regular secondary schools), and the school curriculum, oriented towards practice, is heavily project-based. The work carried out aims at tangible products which are often sold at (local) markets and can lead to an internship of the students of 3-6 weeks offered by a company on an annual basis.

The social-educational and psycho-social care functions of the policy, which have been a key feature of this policy from its very beginning, seem to be an important aspect for the stability of the project. This function, which aims to develop the young adults' general life skills, could be seen as an integrative and more holistic approach to LLL. This function runs somewhat beyond the international utilitarian vision of LLL policies which aim to prepare young adults for the specific needs of the labour market, thus marginalizing the traditionally holistic approach of LLL policies (i.e., the personal development of human beings and their LLL in relation to the principle of equal opportunity and the idea of the democratization of education and training). This care function seems to be at the heart of the policy following the idea that the Werkschule [Bremen] symbolizes a bridge for those students who "have lost faith and hope" in the traditional school system. However, it is difficult to assess the extent

to which this function is still an important part of the policy today, or whether the described ‘holistic approach’ could be considered in this case as simply necessary to achieve the expectations of the activation regime. This reading is supported by a quotation of a student:

“At the beginning there were a lot of foreigners in the class and after a while these foreigners left due to some reasons. Some just got kicked out or were forced to leave”. (Y_GER_B_4_WP5, L. 627-633)

This quotation could lead to different interpretations concerning the implementation (and functioning) of the policy itself. On the one hand it is possible that the policy follows a clear set of rules and if participants in this measure for “some reasons” (like violent behaviour, for example) do not obey these rules, they are expelled from the school. On the contrary, it could also be possible that this quotation reveals the weakness of the socio-pedagogical and psycho-social care function of the Werkschule [Bremen]. This means that the activating function of the ‘holistic’ approach allows individualising failure and at the same times shows the others what happens, if they do not comply with this specific approach. This is perhaps more related to a narrow idea (employable young adult male) of a holistic approach, which comes rather close to a more utilitarian vision of education (mostly related to a neoliberal ideology focused not only on a lack of employment and the development of work capacities, but also on labour competitiveness).

Two dimensions demonstrate the special features of this case study: firstly, in terms of the integration of the specific measure into its context, and secondly, in terms of its originality. Taking the two main features of the Werkschule [Bremen] into account (i.e. its effective institutionalization and its socio-pedagogical and psycho-social care functions), there are two evident original aspects. The first one comes directly from the point of view of the young adults, when some of them stress the fact that the policy structure led them to a proactive attitude, which helped them to feel that it is like a new start:

“I actually didn’t really feel like going to school any longer [...] [Werkschule means a] new school, a new experience I want to have, a new better experience, again” (Y_GER_B_3, L. 573-581).

In the case of other young adults, it is about gaining interest in learning again, being included in a regulated daily schedule, having a goal and trusting life again. This means that the policy fulfils a psycho-social care function, which contributes to a positive attitude towards school performance and embeddedness in social structures. Thus, we can say that empowerment and stabilisation are also part of this policy and should be taken into consideration because of the activation regime.

The second original aspect concerns how the policy allows the addressees to take an active part in the development and implementation of the policy. According to the head teacher, the fact that there

are no more than 16 students per class helps to consolidate and improve the basic skills of the students, and allows them to acquire both mental stability and the ability to learn. Even if this aspect is not the only one to provide this sort of balance within the policy, the idea of project-oriented teaching lessens the distinction between theory and practice and allows students to simulate real business conditions. This constitutes an advantage in the sense that: “*learning is easier*” (Y_GER_B_3, L. 90) and the focus of the activities is more on the practical exercises in the workshops.

An important part of the success is ascribed to the Lehrmeister (masters), who belong to the Werkschule [Bremen] and who dismissed half of the students in the first cohort of the Werkschule [Bremen] and only kept the best students to complete the school qualification. Quality assurance and skills acquisition are at the core of the practical exercises in the workshops. For example, one of the disciplines of the final exam is to create a piece of metalwork like a charcoal chimney. Here the students learn how to use milling and welding machines, but also to improve their interpersonal skills. However, from a general perspective, this sort of practice could be seen as controversial because it seems to contribute not only to adapting and subjecting the “successful” young adults to alienating work, but also to force those who did not “succeed” to drop out.

Two evaluations of the Werkschule [Bremen] point out the relative success of the policy by stating how “students whose graduation was rather unlikely a few years ago regained interest in school and finally received their degree. Others, who had social problems at former schools or had to leave their former school due to several problems strengthened their social competencies and identified themselves with the concept and the institution” (Gessler & Kühn, 2013, p. 2-3).

Furthermore, the two studies show that the students feel much more accepted in their classes than at their previous schools and that the practice-based instruction had a strong impact on the young adult’s (school) career: for example, 85% of the students from the first cohort (2009-12) received a school-leaving qualification (Berufsbildungsreife), which according to the authors of the studies, will improve the young adults’ chances of entering vocational training (ibid.). Nevertheless, if students want to achieve a higher school leaving diploma, the so-called Mittlerer Schulabschluss (secondary school leaving qualification), they have to attend another school. The vocationally oriented school leaving certificate clearly shows the intention of integrating the Werkschule [Bremen] school leavers into the skilled craft sector of the VET system.

From a general point of view, the policy points out an institutional regulation of individual lives following a standardised life course and it is difficult to assess the extent to which the individualization and destandardization of young adults’ life courses is considered. However, it is worth noticing how the Werkschule [Bremen] takes account of the young adults’ living conditions and has been able to

reduce the biographical uncertainty of some young adults by integrating the specifically social-pedagogical and psychosocial care function into its approach.

The particularity of the case Werkschule [Bremen] providing compensatory education for disadvantaged youth lies in the integration between the transition system, normally addressing young people labelled as lacking training maturity after regular school, and specialised schooling. By integrating professional orientation and pre-vocational education (including the 'normal' mechanisms of cooling-out) into lower secondary education (extended by one year) waiting loops in the transition system can be avoided in many cases. Although this implies stigmatising attendants as cases of special needs education, many of them accept due to the difficult socio-economic and labour market situation in the functional region of Bremen. This case is also special because it has been institutionalised on a large scale due to the corporatist governance in the functional region which at the same time has the administrative competencies of a federal state.

3.6. Cases in Italy

Italy is characterized by a relevant *skills mismatch*. As an OECD report showed (McGowan and Andrews, 2015), Italy is among European Union countries one with the highest levels of mismatch between the skills that workers have and those requested by the jobs market. Indeed, the Italian skill market and labour market are parallel and far away from each other: the first one has certificatory purpose, while the second is referred to an occupational goal. Regarding the *educational sector*, since the mid-eighties the number of pupils in higher education and the students at university have greatly increased: the students transition from high school to university passed from 25% to 80%. In addition, there is a *high level of youth unemployment*, mainly caused by the weakness of economic development and by the mismatch between education and training, from the one side, and job demand, on the other. This mismatch is usually expressed by firms in terms of lack of transversal competencies (e.g. communication skills, problem solving, teamwork, or autonomy and flexibility), as well as lack of specialized technical position and the fact that education (high school and universities) are too far from labour market needs. Concerning the peculiarities of the Italian Functional Regions, some differences are noteworthy. In general, *educational, social, labour policies in Milan invest more* in the activation of young people and emphasize the individual choice, trying to build a quasi-market environment, turning to the addressees of policies the responsibility to choose the tools to use to improve their employability. On the other side, the *Genoa Functional Region has traditionally a more centralized design of social (labour, educational) policies*, in which the main stakeholders manage the whole process of policy delivering (from design to implementation). In addition, the Milan Functional Region, thanks to the *greater vitality of the labour market*, can favour a more proactive behaviour of

young adults. The opposite situation occurred in the past in Genoa Functional Region, where the weakness of labour supply and the greater importance of skill market, joint with the greater distance from a quasi-market environment, favoured a more passive behaviour of young adults. The macro analysis of the *living conditions of the young adults* confirms the distance between the two analysed contexts, as in general living conditions in Lombardy are better, and this evaluation emerges both from objective data, both from perceptions of citizens. Liguria is the region with the oldest population, and it is heavily affected by economic and demographic crisis: less young people in an ageing context with fewer opportunities and a greater part of population at risk of social exclusion contribute also to lower levels of subjective wellbeing and lower expectations for the future.

3.6.1. NEETwork [Milan]: targeting 'weak' profiles in a 'strong' context

Aiming to compensate for the Youth Guarantee shortcomings in terms of the actual engagement of the most disadvantaged targets and the weak connection with the Third Sector area, the project NEETwork [Milan], integrated within its framework, represents a peculiarity of the Lombardia Region Youth Guarantee implementation. Specifically, NEETwork [Milan] targets a particularly disadvantaged group, that is 18-24 years-old NEETs, with a level of education below or equal to lower secondary level, unemployed for almost six months and not yet enrolled (or having already concluded their experience) in the Youth Guarantee plan. The project started in July 2015 with the collaboration of its partners: a private foundation (a philanthropic organisation which promoted and coordinated the project); the Public Employment Services; two Private Employment Services, authorized by Italy's Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and accredited with the Regional Administration of Lombardy under the Youth Guarantee; a private research institute that aims to promote and develop social research with special focus on young people. Moreover, NEETwork [Milan] is supported by the Lombardy Regional Administration, which signed an ad hoc agreement for the delivery of actions under the Youth Guarantee regional implementation plan. Given that the project was initiated by a private foundation, it might be considered an example of subsidiarity in the private sector in the Milan context. Specifically, the NEETwork [Milan] project might be considered a relevant case of integration of the private and public sector, since the former has intervened to compensate the shortcomings of the latter, namely the low rates of Youth Guarantee engagement of the more disadvantaged NEETs. Moreover, as a long-term result related to the governance dimension, the established network shares the acquisition of a deeper knowledge of a target which is traditionally disengaged from institutions. Thus, the effects of the project are meant to overcome its same conclusion, providing both public and private actors a set of useful skills and insights to contribute to fill a gap shared by most of the institutions collaborating in the field of labour and training policies.

The goals of the NEETwork [Milan] project are to engage or re-engage youngsters, motivating and helping them to return to education/training and transition into employment, thus increasing the labour market engagement rates of NEETs. This resonates with the general orientation of policy-making in the context of Milan, where the educational, social and labour policies are particularly invested in the activation of young people, and they emphasize individual choice, trying to build a quasi-market environment, leaving the addressees of policies the responsibility of choosing the tools to use to improve their employability. Thus, the attempt to engage even the less competitive profiles among the NEETs can be related to the general task of supporting youths by actively closing their distance from the market and, more generally, from institutions. Moreover, the NEETwork [Milan] project aims to increase the understanding of the NEET phenomenon and to test new ways of engaging young people. On this latter point, the aforesaid specific target was reached through complementary channels with respect to those provided by Youth Guarantee: lists of unemployed people registered with Public Employment Agencies, as well as lists of candidates registered with a Private Employment Agency (which is a project partner) and through interaction on the project Facebook page. This latter aspect is worth underlining, since it represents an innovative strategy of target engagement in the Italian context. Specifically, the online engagement campaigns entailed: i) the publication of a form on the project website to gather spontaneous applications; ii) the launch of two paid Facebook campaigns, the first targeted to youngsters with characteristics similar to those of the NEETs in the databases sourced for the project (similar population, identified through an algorithm), and the second targeted to mothers over 35, resident in Lombardy with children in the 18-24 age bracket, given their crucial role in triggering the (re)activation process of their sons and daughters. In little more than a month these Facebook campaigns led to the submission of 545 applications (an average of 11 per day with peaks of up to 43 applications/day), showing how social media can be an effective channel for engaging young people to take part in a social project. Once accepted by the NEETwork [Milan] project, the recipients formally adhered to Youth Guarantee, enjoying additional services aimed at supporting them not only in terms of skills acquisition, but also regarding their psychosocial development (thanks to periodic individual meetings with occupational psychologists to identify and work on any personal and/or family issues that may require special attention). Furthermore, the initial interviews were also useful for optimizing the match between the individual features and the available paid traineeships (€400 per month, lasting 4-6 months) at one of the Third Sector organisations involved in the project network. The traineeships offered were across Lombardy - mainly in Milan and Bergamo - and for a variety of positions (in offices, production and services), reflecting the diversity of the Third Sector organisations involved (mostly social cooperatives and consortia, but also including foundations, various associations and religious organisations). For the latter, NEETwork [Milan] provided integrative economic incentives and bureaucratic management support for each hosted

internship, in addition to those already provided by Youth Guarantee. Once they completed their traineeships, the recipients received a “Skill License” (an official document reporting the skills and abilities acquired through work experience) and had the opportunity to apply for the skill certification process under Youth Guarantee. Thus, the NEETwork [Milan] project represents a significant experience of private subsidiarity due to some weaknesses of a public policy such as Youth Guarantee. On this point, the project presents some interesting features, considering the widespread perception of general distance from the policy-making process in Italy (Palumbo et al., 2016; Palumbo et al., 2017c), which also reflects a general scepticism about the effectiveness of the policies (especially when it comes to labour market policies). In the case of the NEETwork [Milan] project, young adults’ engagement was totally driven by the experts who directly contacted the potential addressees to propose traineeships. It is important to underline the significant effort spent on guidance in the recent policy approach in Lombardia Region and in Milan Functional Region, which aims to make young adults more aware of the opportunities available to them (Palumbo et al., 2017c). To confirm its target, most of the NEETwork [Milan]’s current addressees might be labelled as vulnerable (Palumbo et al., 2017b): in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, most of them come from working-class families and all of them dropped-out of school before finishing the upper secondary level. Also for these reasons, the NEETwork [Milan] project is relevant in terms of social impact as it offers the disadvantaged youths an opportunity to re-shape their motivation in life and to gain better employment chances, by helping them to acquire basic skills spendable in the labour market, as well as to obtain better personal and relational skills. Significantly, a consistent number of addressees have decided (or at least have planned to) re-enter the educational system once their paths in NEETwork [Milan] have concluded, in order to fill the qualification gap which they perceive as pivotal in affecting their low competitiveness on the market. In terms of project design, the strong emphasis on the soft skills dimension also contributed to shaping the choice of locating the NEETwork [Milan] traineeships in the context of Third Sector organisations, which are deemed by the experts to be the ideal environment for protected and gradual approaches to work. This choice was made in spite of the low potential of these organisations in terms of future employment, given the low short-term employability attributed to this target. The issue of the employability of such a vulnerable group also connects with the representation of the context of Milan as particularly rich in job opportunities. Currently, the data (see Palumbo et al, 2017a) confirm this vision of the local market as a whole (especially when compared to other local markets like, for instance, Genoa), but such dynamism also entails higher competitiveness and potential further exclusion for the weakest profiles (see Palumbo et al., 2017b). Indeed, Milan is generally depicted as the main ‘working city’ and the ‘place for opportunities’ in Italy; in comparison with the majority of other Italian cities and regions, it offers more highly qualified job opportunities; has more medium and large enterprises; is more innovative in social policies. It is the richest metropolitan

area in Italy, with a GDP at current market prices at 186,045€ million in 2013 (Eurostat), about 10% of the national GDP, the third in the EU after Paris and London. The GDP per capita, 44.700€ is about 36% higher than the national average. The value added per capita (2015) is 44,839€ in MFR while in Lombardy is 32,001 and only 24,288€ at national level. Moreover, Milan is ranked 10th in Europe in 2015 for economic prospects (according to E-REGI the European Regional Economic Growth Index). Concerning the labour market, the data (Eurostat) confirm better performance than the Italian average: in 2016 the unemployment rate in Italy was 11.7% while in the EU it was 10.0% and in MFR it was 7.5%. The unemployment rate in the second quarter of 2016 was 6.9% compared to 7.8% in the previous quarter. Overall, there were 322,000 unemployed people. The unemployment rate among young adults is 28.2% in Italy, while in MFR it is 10 points lower (18.2%). At the same time the NEET (18-29) rate in Lombardia Region shows an increase from 12.9% in 2004 to 22.1% in 2015, with a decrease of 2 percentage points in 2016 (20.1%): this rate varies according to the gender: in Lombardy in 2016 the female rate of NEET was 24.6% while the male rate was 15.8%. In absolute terms NEETs have increased from 160,000 in 2004 to 229,000 in 2016: the discouraged effect of young adults in a dynamic region seems to be relevant (Palumbo et al., 2017a).

The case in the Milan Functional Region represents an attempt to compensate for the disadvantage of unqualified youth in the local labour market. In a nutshell, it is a measure targeted to weak profiles in a “strong” context, since Milan is one of the most developed and dynamic contexts in Italy. The higher availability of job opportunities might entail a stronger competition especially among young adults, with particular disadvantages for those affected by conditions of vulnerability (as the NEETs targeted by the NEETwork project who has lower secondary degrees). Furthermore, due to its integration in the broader Youth Guarantee scheme in the Functional Region, the case represents an example of subsidiarity by a private Foundation in terms of overcoming the limited effectiveness of a public programme (Youth Guarantee) in engaging a particularly disadvantaged target.

3.6.2. Civic Service [Genoa]: targeting ‘strong’ profiles in a ‘weak’ context

The Civic Service is an interesting policy because of its long and articulated history (with both national and regional interpretation). Since 1972, Italy has offered Civic Service as an alternative for conscientious objectors to the military draft, and about 600,000 young Italian men took this option until the draft was phased out in 2005. In preparation for the end of the draft, Italy created a voluntary National Youth Service programme in 2001 called “Servizio Civile Nazionale” targeted to Italians aged 18-28, and received funds to support 377,568 participants from 2001 to 2015.

Volunteers in the programme were subsidized by the Government to work for both public agencies (in particular municipalities) and NGOs in order to a) contribute to the defence of the homeland through

non-military tools and activities, as an alternative to compulsory military service; b) foster the realization of the constitutional principles of social solidarity; c) promote solidarity and cooperation, at national and international level, with particular regard to the protection of social rights, welfare services and peace education among people; d) participate in the protection of the heritage of the Nation, with particular regard to the environmental sectors; e) contribute to the civic, social, cultural and professional training of young people through activities also carried out in entities and administrations operating abroad. The strong ethos of this policy has been declined at a local level since 2006: Liguria was one of the first Regions that explored and experimented these new pathways of local active citizenship for young people, activating a Regional Civic Service , complementary to the National one.

In 2015 the Italian Government inserted Civic Service as one of the Youth Guarantee measures: this change has strong implications on the ethos of the policy: it is now increasingly farther from conscientious objection and closer to a policy of employment, although Civic Service projects remain a single experience oriented to improve training, knowledge and commitment to care giving, civil protection, environment, cultural heritage, education and cultural promotion. Italy is the only country in which Youth Guarantee operates to integrate the Civic Service within the range of its measures. Considering the transversal nature of Civic Service (not only a labour, social, volunteering or youth policy) and the latent conflict between work and volunteering that is typical of Civic Service, in the context of Youth Guarantee it could acquire a new orientation towards work or towards the problem of lack of competencies of young adults by providing a context (Civic Service) in which they can be acquired in non-formal and informal ways, and also be recognised and certified. This is strictly connected to the features of the regional skills ecology: local public actors are the ones steering skills formation for disadvantaged young adults, providing skills formation courses that are aligned as close as possible with labour market sectors and occupations. The common assumption seems to be that the way to smooth the transition from education to the labour market is by providing work placement learning opportunities, by supplying ready-to-use skills targeted to regional labour market needs. However, the training supply does not always meet the actual needs of young adults and the skill formation system provides skills that are not always in line with the labour market's needs (Palumbo et al., 2017c, p. 32). This refers to the well-known mismatch between educational and employment systems: on this point, the Genoa FR reflects the national trend, characterized by a relevant skills mismatch. As an OECD report showed (McGowan and Andrews, 2015), Italy is among European Union countries one with the highest levels of mismatch between the skills that workers have and those requested by the jobs market.

Regional Civic Service is an initiative that only a few Italian regions have. Liguria was one of the first that enacted a law (Regional Law No.11 May 11th, 2006) to establish and govern the regional civil

service that was complementary to the national one. Differences seem to be minute (the duration is from six months to one year, instead of one year in National Civic Service, bodies of Regional Civic Service can have a registration for regional entities, the age can be 16-29 instead of 18-29) but they are indicative of a precise orientation of the regional application to test new forms of Civic Service for specific target groups. Thus, it is a very significant example case of a local government adaptation of a transnational policy. Since 2006, indeed, the Regional Government has been trying to experiment: with young people on probation, with High Schools students aged 16-18, with young migrants or disadvantaged people. The aim was to open the SC to segments of young society traditionally excluded from National Civic Service. Until 2015 the recruitment mechanism was based on co-optation or it depended only upon specific experimentation and numbers of youngster were very few. The National Civic Service, that still involved many Regional Civic Service bodies, guaranteed the presence of very motivated young people, with a high stock of social capital, a high level of education and (in some cases) a deep idealistic engagement (Cossetta, 2010). Before Youth Guarantee and beyond the small and specific experience of the Regional Civic Service, the National Civic Service was an opportunity for improvement preferred by young women with strong family ties and a high stock of social capital (Canino & Cima, 2006; Cossetta 2009; Ambrosini 2010). Regional Civic Service, but more in general, the Civic Service proposal seems to be an important policy of social inclusion that provides some employability element that goes beyond a job oriented measure, like the other initiatives of Youth Guarantee.

One of the most interesting peculiarities of Regional Civic Service [Genoa] is its organisation. On this point, it has to be noted that the Genoa Functional Region traditionally has a more centralized design of social (labour, educational) policies, in which the main stakeholders manage the whole process of policy delivery (from design to implementation). Civic Service [Genoa] has an interesting ecosystem based on a participatory approach among Civic Service [Genoa] bodies with a strong control of the Regional Government (and in particular of the Regional Office) that leads the whole process through an intensive relationship, in continuous dialogue, which provides for mutual recognition. The ethos and the effectiveness of this policy were the basis for a shared consideration that all the stakeholders were involved in a very good initiative. Civic Service [Genoa] has modified its well-established governance network according to a “bottom-up” need of the ONG participating in its network, namely the rationalization of their same pattern of collaboration through the creation of a unique ATS. Through the ATS the ONG bodies share knowledge about their “new” target (deriving from Youth Guarantee) and, in addition, they have stopped competing with each other for Civic Service [Genoa] project funding. Furthermore, the Civic Service [Genoa] and, more generally, the Liguria Region Youth Guarantee scheme have given a crucial role to local Public Employment Agencies, especially in the

implementation phase, and this represents a chance for these Services in terms of acquisition of proper expertise in matching and placing youth targets in the local labour market (thus tackling one aspect of the “traditional” weakness of the Public Employment Services, which are rather ineffective in terms of actual market integration of their users). Moreover, in Liguria a particular emphasis on professional skills and their recognition has to be underlined as an important tool to improve the competences and the employability of the young participants. At this point the Regional Government experimented a skill recognition programme, which tries to involve young adults in defining a personal skills portfolio in order to explain the abilities and competences that can be validated (in the perspective of the certification of competencies established with the national law 92/2012 and implemented by a “regional net” which is currently in the starting phase).

In Liguria, funds related to Civic Service [Genoa] have increased: € 501,500 in 2014; € 531,000 in 2015; € 796,500 in 2016 € 973,500 in the second 2016 programme and € 973,500 in 2017.

In September 2017 there were 333 young adults effectively involved in Civic Service [Genoa] in Liguria: half of them were very distant from the labour market and only a few were characterised by a short distance. This “distance” is the result of individual screening and profiling undertaken by the Public Employment Agency, consisting of an initial personal interview, personality tests, and a skills analysis. The integration of the Civic Service [Genoa] as one of the measures within the Liguria Region Youth Guarantee framework entailed at least a partial redefinition of the ‘traditional’ Civic Service objectives. Consistently with the general purposes of Youth Guarantee, Civic Service [Genoa] has indeed acquired a more pronounced orientation toward professionalization, yet it continues to maintain its original implementation scheme. Thus, the Civic Service [Genoa] paths continue to be contextualized in the Third Sector (which in Liguria and in particular in Genoa, is very important), consequently keeping the soft/citizenship skills at their core; so, Civic Service seems to be a “multifunctional initiative” that can also fit under the big umbrella of Youth Guarantee.

Concerning the match between the Civic Service [Genoa] paths and the local labour market, the focus on the non-profit sector is deemed by the interviewed managers as particularly suitable for young adults, who can experience a ‘soft’ approach to work, thanks to the alleged greater potential of Third Sector organisations (compared to firms) in hosting and supporting apprentices. Moreover, in the interviewed experts’ opinion, the Civic Service [Genoa] target population often lack transversal and basic skills, and non-profit organisations are adequate ‘secure environments’ where young adults’ training gaps might be filled, thanks to their weaker orientation toward business and their higher value orientation, which leads to a less competitive approach to work. In addition to the short duration of the Civic Service [Genoa] paths (6 months), this cultural distance from the business-based work environments seems to have affected managers’ choices regarding the experimentation of skills

recognition at the end of the Civic Service [Genoa] paths. Indeed, the initial purpose of validation of at least one of the formally recognised skills connected to the Liguria Region Repertory of Qualification has been shifted to optional processes of soft/citizenship skills validation. This has entailed a rather modest impact in terms of formal recognition of the Civic Service [Genoa] experiences, reducing their professionalization potential.

According to a few Civic Service [Genoa] addressees' interviews, their work prospects have not been significantly enhanced in terms of mere professionalization. Generally, the interviewed Genoese young adults achieved higher levels of education (mostly university degrees) but they experienced a lot of short-term and/or unstable jobs and experienced the precariousness of the local labour market. This condition often leads them to perform unqualified jobs, despite their high educational qualification. Moreover, it has to be underlined that Liguria is the region with the oldest population, and it is heavily affected by economic and demographic crisis: less young people in an ageing context with fewer opportunities and a greater part of population at risk of social exclusion also contribute to lower levels of subjective wellbeing and lower expectations for the future (Palumbo et al., 2017b, p. 6). Indeed, Genoa is depicted as a static ex industrial area with a non-dynamic social fabric (especially in terms of relations with the labour market and entrepreneurship). Among young adults in Liguria the employment rate is 39.4 (2016), which is an increase from 2013 when it was 36.5 but far from 55.2 which was the percentage before the crisis in 2007. Focusing on Genoa Functional Region, the employment rate of young adults is 38.0 per cent (lower than the regional number) but in a positive trend since 2013. The activity rate in Genoa Functional Region for people 18-29 is 51.4, a point lower than the regional rate. The unemployment rate in Genoa Functional Region for young adults is high, 26.2 in 2016, more than in 2015, when it was 25.4, and more than the North West level, that in 2016 was 20.4. NEET (18-29) in Liguria were about 46,000 in 2004 (15.7) and this value was substantially stable until 2007. In 2008 it decreased to 14.4% but from 2009 to 2014 it rose to 26%; from 2014 to 2016 this rate was reduced by about six-percentage point (20.8% in 2016; 14.7% in 14-24 year-olds). For years, in Genoa Functional Region the weakness of labour supply and the greater importance of the skills market, together with the distance from a quasi-market environment, favoured the more passive behaviour of young adults. Furthermore, in the local context the limited amount of the monthly reimbursement provided by Civic Service [Genoa] (433.80 euros) may not be considered a sufficient income for supporting young adults' independence. This is an amount that allows young people to improve their everyday life but it certainly does not enable them to become autonomous. In this way it seems that policies for young people not only start with the premise that they live with parents, but support a time translation of self-sufficiency (Palumbo et al., 2017b). As a whole, these factors threaten to reproduce inequalities among the actual addressees: the youths who have relied on a

good amount of economic, cultural and social capital, have been able to use the Civic Service [Genoa] experience as a chance to gain ‘on the field’ awareness of their potential, thus reducing their distance from the labour and training market, which was mostly due to their lack of guidance. They have been able to optimize their previous experiences and personal resources, “exploiting” the Civic Service [Genoa] paths as a “bridge” to more stable professional relations. On the other hand, weaker youths in terms of structural conditions seem to have been affected by the in-between condition of the ‘new’ Civic Service [Genoa] (not completely a professionalizing measure and not completely a volunteering experience), and thus face some difficulties in constructing their own meaning for the experience, which has been often lived as a transitory experience, a “cooling out” strategy for their expectations, as a strategy of postponement of the problem of stable integration in the labour market, as well as of future planning (Palumbo et al. 2017b).

The Civic Service is an example of a measure targeted to young adults with potentially competitive profiles in a context characterized by a ‘static’ labour market, a significant skills mismatch and high level of youth unemployment. In a nutshell, it is a measure for “strong” profiles in a weak context, since the addressees are mainly middle-class and high-educated youths who however face difficulties in finding a stabilization in the local market of the Genoa Functional Region. Furthermore, the effects of the integration of the Civic Service among the measures of the Youth Guarantee in the Functional Region is particularly interesting in terms of adaptation of general aims of a well-established measure – namely the traditional focus of the Civic Service on citizenship and soft skills – to the aim of employability pre-defined by the EU programme. This latter aspect also influenced the policy-makers’ choice to use the Civic Service as experimentation of a system of skills certification which, thanks to its connection with a future national system, might constitute a strategic tool for smoothening the integration of the young adults in the labour market

3.7. Cases in Portugal

The education and training system in Portugal is comprehensive and centralised at the national level. The division into three tracks, each lasting three years long, takes place when youngsters are 15 years old, at the entrance of the upper secondary education: the scientific-humanistic track; specialized arts tracks and the VET track. All VET provisions offer either double certification (academic and professional) or just the academic diploma (when provided by secondary schools), avoiding dead end pathways in the education system. Following the same centralised tradition, LLL policies have a national scope and are specifically focussed on the educational sector, considering the high levels of ESL, school failure and youth unemployment. VET policies aim at the attainment of the Portugal 2020’s benchmark of generalization of secondary education as the lower qualification level of

the population, in order to lower the unemployment rates. The skills system is also centralized, but regionally organised and operationalized. The national skills' system is managed by the National Agency for the Qualification and Professional Education (ANQEP), responsible for the National Qualifications' Catalogue and the Qualification's Framework. Two ministries, Education and Labour, are involved in the ANQEP, although it has a stronger connection to the Ministry of Education, as the professional education subsystem is ruled by this ministry and the ANQEP. Professional training is ruled by the Ministry of Labour. Each govern their network of providers and build their qualifications' offer differently. The great difference between the two functional regions (Vale do Ave and Alentejo Litoral) in this matter is how the national qualification's system is acting locally. The skills system is materialized through the SANQ (System of Anticipation of Qualification Needs) report, created by the national agency for the qualification, which is expected to be put together by each intermunicipal community (CIM), a sub-regional structure where all municipalities of the country are organised in clusters to interconnect national policies in their territories (each functional region corresponds to a CIM). They have special responsibilities in promoting the match between labour market needs and VET offers. They do so by stimulating the articulation between regional stakeholders, both public and private, such as institutions, local authorities, schools or companies. The SANQ report collects the qualifications' needs of a given region and translates them into qualification offers. This means that this qualification offer will result on higher employability, once it responds directly to the region needs. The Vale do Ave functional regional is an example of success in what concerns the skills system and the articulation of the SANQ report with the LLL and labour market policies. This is a rather young and industrialized region, which means that the industry and the companies are the main agents of the region's economic growth. The main challenge that young adults face in Vale do Ave is the lack and/or the inadequacy of their skills. The fact that the educational institutions provide training that meets the needs of the companies, and of the region's labour market in general, contributes to lower unemployment, NEET and emigration. The fact is that in the Vale do Ave functional region the CIM plays the networker role and in the Alentejo Litoral functional region the CIM chooses not to play that role. In the Alentejo Litoral, the offer and target group are built differently between the professional education subsystem and the public training subsystem, originating tension between providers, overlapping offers, mismatch between offer and local needs, as well as segregation of the users. In fact, the public training network of the National Employment and Training Institute (IEFP) has the unofficial aim of targeting the unemployed. Figures show qualification as the most important active labour market policy to deal with the increasing unemployment rates. In what concerns the living conditions of the young adults, what stands out the most in the Portuguese case is the fact that there is a high percentage of people aged between 20 and 29 years old still living with their parents. The data analysed referred to the time span between 2005 and 2016, coinciding with the economic crisis

and Troika's intervention. In spite of the fact that the GDP and the academic qualifications of the Portuguese population increased in recent times, when compared to other European countries, Portugal still reveals lower rates. This also happens in what concerns unemployment: even though the Portuguese youth employment rate (15-24 years old) had been consistently decreasing over the last years, unemployment is mainly a youth problem, particularly after 2011 and both unemployment and youth unemployment rates are higher than the EU28 average. In spite of this, there are significant regional differences, as the Norte (where Vale do Ave is located) labour market seems to be more youth friendly than the Alentejo (where Alentejo Litoral is located) one. Overall, the data show that the young adults' living conditions in Portugal are below the EU28 average. Regionally, the living conditions seem to be slightly better in Vale do Ave rather than in Alentejo Litoral. In the Alentejo Litoral functional region, young adults and experts reveal an apparent coincidence of views regarding the objectives of the LLL policies analysed. Indeed, the role played by these policies in raising the qualifications of young adults is widely reported by the two groups of interviewees. However, the difference arises from the differentiated importance attached to academic and professional qualifications. For the experts, professional qualifications are undoubtedly the most valued in order to defy unemployment while at the same time contributing to the development of the region. In turn, young adults do not neglect the contribution of these LLL policies to the learning of a profession. But for them it is more important to obtain a school certification. In Vale do Ave, both young adults and experts of the region share their visions in what concerns their experiences in LLL policies, and more concretely regarding the professional courses. In this functional region, young adults reveal that the high rates of employment of professional courses allow them to envision more stability for their future lives, once they are labour market oriented and answer the skills' needs of the region, which means having greater chances of employability. In Vale do Ave, and in a context still recovering from a severe economic crisis, young adults seem to rely on professional courses for their own economic independence, once a professional qualification will allow them to have a job. On the whole, young adults proved to be happy with their choice of enrolling in a professional course and have high expectations concerning entering the labour market in a near future.

3.7.1 Professional Courses [Vale do Ave]: addressing mismatch by the 'dualisation' of secondary school

The Vale do Ave case study focuses on Professional Courses which are high-school level courses targeting young people and aiming at employability. These courses allow training in school, practical training in the work context, the involvement of enterprises in practical training and in supporting the transition of young adults to the labour market. Private professional schools have existed in Portugal

since 1989, but since 2014 Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] have become part of the secondary educational supply in public schools. This increased the supply both in terms of professional qualification supply and geographical coverage. This geographical factor is relevant when talking about a region like Vale do Ave which encompasses much heterogeneity among its municipalities and in terms of accessibility, especially in the more rural part of the region.

The main challenges that the Vale do Ave region faces today concerning young adults are mostly related to the lack and/or inadequacy of qualifications. This problem is partly a consequence of school dropout and failure rates in the region and gets translated into unemployment, NEET and emigration. However, this is not just a problem in Vale do Ave but it is also a national challenge. Therefore, Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] aim mainly to prevent school dropout and youth unemployment. Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] are part of a set of measures aimed at competitiveness, growth and the employment of young adults through a match between the training supply and the actual contextual needs of the labour market. Therefore, unlike regular courses, Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] are labour market oriented, both in terms of supply and curricular approach. The learning taking place in these courses enhances the development of skills to do a job in collaboration with the local business sector. In addition, after completing a professional course, students can access Higher Education. Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] are funded directly by the European Social Fund and, at a national level, by the Portuguese Government. Regionally, they are also funded by companies and other institutions, especially those where young adults do internships. The duration of the paths within the measure is 3 years completed with a dual certification.

This educational supply addresses problems that are recognised not only at the national and regional levels but also at a European level. In national terms, and in recent years, educational policies have emphasised Professional Courses [Vale do Ave]. Broadening the Professional Courses [Vale do Ave]'s supply in the country is a measure to combat early school dropout, failure, and more broadly, unemployment, NEET and emigration. There has been a change of paradigm as, a few decades ago, professional courses were envisioned as a second choice and today the latest policies are bringing professional courses to the forefront, together with regular scientific/humanistic courses.

The main challenge young adults face nowadays in the Vale do Ave region is finding a job. In fact, this is a challenge not only in the region, but in the whole country. Having qualifications is crucial to find a job, and Vale do Ave is no different from other regions in Portugal, as policies (both education and youth policies) are centralised and national. Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] are part of the secondary education supply. They are designed for young adults aged above 15 that have completed the 9th grade, and consist in vocational education. They combine academic education with training in

work contexts, are very much labour market oriented and usually combine partnerships between schools and regional companies. Young adults don't define themselves as being part of a vulnerable group, although they feel the prejudice and misconceptions commonly associated with professional courses. In spite of this, the interviewed young adults who currently attend or have finished Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] revealed feelings of finally fitting in the educational system and happiness towards labour market. The target group is the same as defined by the measure. The underlying conception of the life course in policy making is linear with defined stages and trajectories. Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] are double certification courses and this grants these courses high rates of employability and, hopefully, fulfilment.

In 2014 there was the need to broaden Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] and the dual certification of young adults in order to match the real professional needs of the different contexts and, at the same time, to improve youth employment rates.

Vale do Ave is a quite industrialized region, best known for some specific, and traditional, industries, such as textiles, agriculture and food, and metallurgy and metalworking, but there are also new, emerging and innovative professional areas that are being integrated in the region, such as Electronics and Polymers. This results in tailor-made professional qualifications for the companies provided by the professional courses, which is added value for the young adults who are offered qualifications with high rates of employability in the region. At the same time, professional courses in Vale do Ave do not differ or diverge from transnational and national levels, responding to the same objectives and target population. The measure allows implementers to fit professional courses to the needs in Vale do Ave. This possibility for adjustment happens through the elaboration and implementation of the SANQ (system of anticipation of qualification needs) report, as this instrument is the one that allows adjusting the measure to local and regional realities. There is a case in the region that stands out, that of a professional school that has a particularly close relationship with companies. This school responds to the needs of the region's companies for qualified young adults through the professional courses they provide. The students do their professional training in a dynamic partnership between the school and the companies, as they are offered internships and jobs at the end of their professional qualification. This is understood as a win-win situation, both for the schools that are able to offer professional training that has high rates of employability in the region, and for the companies, who receive qualified young adults, specialized in their field of work, that are also trained by them. This particular school, for example, is able to activate courses and classes financed by the companies themselves when public financial support is not available or when financing does not allow the school to activate more classes.

In Vale do Ave, professional courses are offered both by public high schools and by many private professional schools. The companies also play a very important role in professional courses, once they dictate the labour market supply. The professional courses more likely to be available depend on the companies' needs, and, at the same time, these companies provide professional training and jobs for the young adults who attend those courses. The companies are part of the corporate bodies and the advisory board of the school, and everything the school does has to be validated by the associates. Because the school has a solid connection to the companies, they are able to get funding for professional courses that have a very high demand for candidates. Furthermore, the Employment and Professional Training Centre (IEFP), a national institution with regional representation, and the Protocol Centres, which are training centres that are part of the IEFP and work in partnership with business and industry associations, also provide vocational training. Also, IEFP partners with other organisations such as professional placement offices, local authorities, schools. Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] are proposed by the schools and approved by the Ministry of Education, and chosen from the selection offered by the National Qualifications Catalogue. Thus the public and private sectors work together with the mediation of regional institutions and platforms. Vale do Ave still relies on the collaborative work of two key institutions, which form a very solid and important network within the region: CIM AVE and ADRAVE.

Young adults feel that in Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] they have full support from the professionals during their professional training. This fact is more accentuated in the private professional schools than in the public high schools with a supply of professional courses. Thus, in general, young adults feel more support in professional courses than in regular ones. Communication between young adults and professionals is maintained long after they finish their courses. In professional schools, teachers have specialized vocational training and this is not always the case in public schools. Additionally, the region (through a network of psychologists in the region and councillors in the private professional schools) provides vocational counselling, guidance and help to young adults to choose their educational pathways, according to their particular interests, abilities and skills.

The Vale do Ave region, located in the North of the country, is a very industrialised and young region. As such, Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] stand out as they offer young adults professional paths integrated in the region. This is a very significant issue in Vale do Ave. This policy enables the region's young adults to stay in the region, to study and work, mitigating current national problems: unemployment and emigration. This also generates an economic increment within the region, as the investment in young adults' qualifications has a return once they become the working force of the region. A professional course offers young adults a professional qualification with a high probability of

employment, and it also makes it possible for them to stay in the region. Currently, in Vale do Ave, many young adults are quitting regular school and switching to professional courses, given the success rates they have in the Vale do Ave. On the whole, young adults seem very happy with their decision to enrol in a professional course. Whether we are talking about young adults who have quit scientific/humanistic courses to start over in professional courses, or about young adults who finished a professional course and are now integrated in the labour market or in Higher Education, all the interviewed young adults, and even the experts and street level professionals, mentioned that professional courses, with their vocational character, fully serve their policy purpose of lowering rates of unemployment, school dropout and failure. They mention that the more practical component of these courses and early contact with the labour market, through internships in the companies, are an added value in this educational supply. Furthermore, the high rates of employability and the opportunity to remain with the companies in which they get their training, are an advantage and a key factor in their life's decisions. Besides, young adults enrolled in Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] seem to be more satisfied and motivated for school and plan their professional lives more concretely.

Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] still suffer from prejudice and misconception from society in general, and this needs special attention from educational policies. Today, these courses are still seen as second choice education, aimed at young people with inadequate skills for regular education.

The specific of the case Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] is that labour market mismatch is already addressed during regular (secondary) education by turning a school-based VET course into a 'dual' track combining theoretical instruction and practical experience and involving private companies in public education. Although access to higher education is still possible, also this approach suffers the general stigma and lower status of vocational compared to general education. Nevertheless, the involvement of different stakeholders into a public and regular system is innovative – and a model also for countries with a historically grown apprenticeship system.

3.7.2. Adult Education and Training (EFA) Courses [Alentejo Litoral]: maximizing social inclusion through recognition of individual needs and skills

The case study selected in the Alentejo Litoral Functional Region consists of the Adult Education and Training Courses, also known as the EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral], at the Training Service of the Institute of the Employment and Professional Training (IEFP) of the Alentejo Litoral. Considering the significant number of low-qualified adults and the high rate of youth unemployment, EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] provisions with double certification, professional and academic, allow pursuing studies as well as a professional qualification, as a solution to address the situations identified. In particular, the EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] provided by the IEFP target low qualified unemployed

adults and act as an active employment measure, although the official documents point to the qualification of the workforce as the main measure's aim.

The EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] were established in 2000. The programme guidelines stressed the individualization character of forms of provision in education, the valuing of past experiences and the relevance of (Lifelong) learning. Additionally, training within the link between education and economic development was also stressed. The purpose was to have forms of provision that developed skills, namely hard skills related to traditional school disciplines, according to an innovative curricula, flexible paths and modular training units, but also soft skills that had not traditionally been provided by second chance school education and that were relevant for enterprises and existing jobs following neoliberal trends. The EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] are now one of the priority LLL policies. At the moment, in Alentejo Litoral, the IEFP training centre is the only entity delivering professional certification, whereas schools can offer EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] with an academic certification only to under qualified youths up to 18 years of age.

A fundamental condition to make this policy successful is the funding available to providers. When funding is not given to providers or when it is given with delay, EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] cannot take place; on some occasions, due to these delays, trainees are no longer available, due to a seasonal labour market in AL. This is so as the present policy mainly depends on the ESF. The procedures to attract trainees for enrolment can work, as long as these do not interfere with the seasonal nature of the labour market. Although the training centre schedules training courses to avoid stronger economic sectors' seasons, the ESF has its own calendar which is a European Union one and it is not adapted to local labour market characteristics. Meanwhile, the funding criteria operates according to the conclusion rate and the employment rate. The law mentions that at least 50% employment rate 6 months after concluding the course or enrolment in further studies has to be achieved. Courses can last between one and three years, depending on which qualification level they refer to. By being designed at the national level, this policy does not seem to recognise de-standardized life courses. It provides for various economic supports (meals and transport expenses), child care expenses, on top of a (small) grant. In spite of this support, interviewees claim that it is not enough to face trainees' typical poor life conditions in this sub-region. Thus they often give up on the training path to accept whatever job comes up.

In the young adults' discourses attending these courses comes as a second or even a last chance to make a life change. Completing compulsory education and at the same time a professional qualification of their interest corresponds to the trainees' initial expectations. And therefore, to attain a stable economic situation and to have a family life are central aims. This linear correspondence between training and the labour market in the official documents reinforces the young adults'

aspirations of a life change. The target is universalist: officially, it is directed at people over 18, under certified and under qualified, those in need of placement or progression in the labour market. In practical terms, in the IEFP setting, this supply acts as an active labour market measure, by specifically targeting the unemployed. It is part of a policy that stresses VET but has a very distinctive feature with respect to previous policies. In fact, it has an inclusive character with a social justice scope as it considers those who no longer have a place in regular school but need academic certification and a professional qualification for fast entry into the labour market.

Regarding the vulnerability underlying the target, these are mainly unemployed, low qualified, and young adults at risk of social exclusion. Existing research argues that mainly people aged 25-34 years old attend this form of course. Following a similar pattern, national data show EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] attended by people between 20-44 years old. Therefore, the actual addressee profile differs to some extent from the initial official target established in 2000, but it is clearly in line with the aims set out in the New Opportunities Initiative and with the most recent national adult education programme – the Qualify programme. In this way, it can be expected that the participants of this measure differ according to its provider's aims, whether training centre or school, even though developing the same policy. The training centres of the Institute of Employment and Professional Training target the unemployed, using the EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] as an active labour market policy and schools, regular and professional, register young people under 18 in these courses aimed at completing compulsory education.

During the fieldwork it was clear that the EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] provision with double certification was where trainees in the age group of the YOUNG_ADULLLT project could be found, as well as young people in more vulnerable situations, such as those unemployed, when starting the course, with non-linear school paths and with experience of the school-work transition.

EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] are a significant form of provision for young people who have not completed compulsory education following a regular path and are in need of a fast labour market placement, specifically in regions that present such significant economic growth as the Alentejo Litoral region. For these reasons, these courses can be considered an interesting provision matching local labour market needs and learners' needs for fast labour market placement. Adult education and training courses that issue a school education certification follow the same core curriculum established in reference standards, and EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] involving a professional qualification are based on vocational education and training reference standards and in-service training. The latter are established according to the needs of national and local labour markets. These needs are identified by the ANQEP, the National Agency for Qualification and Professional Training in the case of regular and professional schools, and by the Institute of Employment and Professional Training based on studies

and surveys (formal and informal surveys) of relevant economic actors (enterprises, sectoral organisations, trade unions, social partners) involved in the Local Advisory Council, etc.

At the beginning of the measure, a wide range of organisations (a large number dependent upon the Institute of Employment and Professional Training - the IEFP) and others from civil society institutions developed this provision. These local stakeholders adapted to supranational and national guidelines - these courses were strongly regulated and involved relevant funding, only from the European Social Fund, both for organisations implementing this provision and for adult learners through grants. At the moment, only the training centres that are part of the IEFP's network and secondary or professional schools, provide these courses, with the same need to adapt to the ESF and the national orientation.

As a national policy with local implementation, the States' central departments take on the decision-making process. The ANQEP centralizes the decisions on the National Qualifications Referential and Catalogue, with its own advisory structures such as sectoral councils or the Qualifications' Needs Anticipation System (SANQ), also in the form of a web portal. In this portal, employers can submit a qualification request. Additionally, it includes a regional extension phase anchored in the network coordinated by the Intermunicipal Communities (CIM) as sub-regional administrative structures. The IEFP, which implements EFA double certification Courses [Alentejo Litoral], decides upon which qualifications from the national catalogue are suitable for each local territory. Although considering national priorities previously defined by central services, local units may determine the actual skills supply by consulting their formal as well as informal (based on personal contacts) networks of providers, employers, local governments and civil society. The IEFP cooperates with its other partners within the public VET network, complementing the existing supply of schools or specifically directed to those over 18 years old.

In implementation decisions are taken with wider autonomy by the local IEFP provider in terms of in-job training places, trainees and trainers' recruitment, educational materials, considering the characteristics of where the training takes place. But the EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral]' policy does not give much margin to local adjustments. Although policy-makers and providers, within the IEFP, have autonomy on the skills' supply definition, their action is still restricted in relation to activating courses. The interviews often mention how the minimum number of trainee enrolments necessary to activate a course (N=15) is not adequate for a region such as AL with a high territorial dispersal and inadequate public transport network. Another case of mismatch between policy and local characteristics, as mentioned earlier, is the imposed ESF calendar that does not consider local labour market specificity. Whereas during the initial phase, the main providers were approximately ten non-governmental organisations, today this provision is delivered by the national network of regular and professional schools and the IEFP national network of training centres.

Since 2007, regular education schools have developed this provision offering only an academic certification. Professional Schools dependent on the Ministry of Education and Training centres dependent upon the IEFP (Ministry of Labour) have continued developing courses that also issue a professional qualification. This situation has involved a polarisation among stakeholders including regular school education organisations (developing adult education courses directed only at school education certification) and the ones involved in vocational education and training (developing adult education courses that issue a school education certification and a professional qualification after attendance), which can still be observed today. Indeed, as the IEFP holds, the double function of managing the unemployed population, through its Employment Centres and organizing vocational training, with its national training centre's network, its training supply target-group seems to serve both aims. Within the local State's structures, we can find the Municipal Education Councils, where some civil society actors are represented, but only at the education/training level. These Councils include economic and labour market agents but do not comprise many civil society organisations. Also, economic sectors and labour market agents are not formally organised, and no aggregate chambers were found in the AL sub-region. It is the IEFP itself that mobilises local contacts and builds informal networks to listen to big and small companies in order to find answers to qualification needs. Microenterprises, the main element of AL's economic fabric, which are seen as individual elements due to a lack of organisation to bring forward their aspirations, are very hard to reach and seldom heard.

EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] promote equal-life opportunities specifically for under qualified people over 18 years old, who are no longer permitted regular school attendance. It offers a training model focused on differentiated flexible paths, considering the individual contexts and experiences of trainees. The pedagogical approach of these courses is practice oriented and it is based on the national qualifications framework. This approach is highly appreciated by young adults and the educational relationship between trainers and trainees is reported in the interviews as easy, respectful and different from regular schools. One of the specific characteristics of the measure is a more humanist curriculum based on the Referential of Key-Skills that includes subjects such as Citizenship and Professionalism; Society, Technology and Science, and Culture, Language and Communication. As defined in the first law regulating this provision, its training model approach favours individualized and flexible training paths with consideration for the previous experience of trainees.

Another specific characteristic of this provision is the direct link between qualification and employment, as it responds to the trainees' aspirations. Therefore, one cause-effect sequence that can make the present policy successful is the double certification, that is, the opportunity for adults to obtain compulsory education certification along with a professional qualification, which is highly valued by the

trainees. Finally, a condition for success is the inclusion of in-job training as part of the curriculum; this element facilitates labour market placement after the course ends, as many interviewees have stated when asked about course-work transition. In fact, from the biographies of the young adults in the present research, we garner that the vast majority of the attendees of this provision chose a VET path as an alternative to regular school. They did so due to learning difficulties and lack of motivation or as an option after dropping out. In particular, the choice of an EFA course came, to most of them, as an opportunity to conclude compulsory education after having interrupted the school path, seen as the only option to reach a decent job, a necessary condition to fulfil the family project.

The Adult Education and Training [EFA] Courses [Alentejo Litoral] are particular inasmuch as they maximise the social inclusion potential of Lifelong Learning through a combination of low threshold access, flexibility for individualised training – while not excluding social and citizenship learning – and recognising both individual needs and prior experiences. An implementation problem of such a flexible approach is the challenge of integration both with regard to European/ESF funding schedules on the one hand and private economy and civil society organisations on the other.

3.8. Cases in Scotland

The Scottish education system is characterised by a pursuit of consensus and a decentralisation of many aspects of the education system to local authorities. These are the main features which have historically differentiated it from the rest of the United Kingdom. The Scotland Act 1998⁴ gave the Scottish parliament legislative control over all areas of education within Scotland.

Local authorities in Scotland are responsible and make their own income spend decisions for the provision of education in early learning and childcare, primary and secondary education. These are directly funded by the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government funds teaching and research at Further Education Colleges (FECs) and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) via the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), which is an arms-length organisation of the Scottish Government (formally a Non-Departmental Public Body). Each FECs and HEIs in Scotland sets a yearly Outcome Agreement with the SFC in which they agree how the funding is going to be used to serve specific objectives in terms of learning, employability, living conditions and contributions to the regional economy.

The Scottish Government also funds Skills Development Scotland (SDS), which is the national skills agency, whose mission is to support individuals in their skills formation and use in the labour market

⁴ See the full text at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/46/contents>

and society, as well as supporting businesses in finding people with the skills they need. SDS uses labour market intelligence to detect the skills gaps and needs at the regional level and tries to meet them via the skills formation offer, encouraging people to take courses that might fit their interests and facilitate their employability in the regional labour market. One of the main activities of this skills agency directed to young adults is the funding and managing of the Modern Apprenticeship scheme, as well as the new Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships. It is also directly funded by the Scottish Government.

With regards to the skills use in the labour market, local authorities across Scotland have Economic Development Departments which work in collaboration with the corresponding education departments in the local authorities and with the Scottish Government and derived agencies. However, since Scotland has not devolved powers in labour market, part of the collaboration and cooperation in employability and skills subjects is with the UK Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

Even if the same system applies all over Scotland, regions and localities have some degree of flexibility to enact and adapt policies and allocate resources depending on their regional priorities and needs. On the one hand, Aberdeen City is the third largest city in Scotland and is well known for its oil and gas industry. Traditionally, the region was dependent on agriculture, fishing, and forestry and related processing industries, but over the past 40 years the development of the oil and gas industry and associated service sector has broadened Aberdeenshire's economic base, and contributed to a rapid population growth of 50% since 1975. However, since the dramatic decrease in the price of a barrel of crude oil in 2014, the region is facing economic and social challenges that are affecting the structure of the region. For the past years the oil and gas industry has impacted the region in several ways. It has rapidly increased its population, mainly attracting young people with high educational qualifications from Scotland, the UK and abroad. Regarding education, the region is in a better position than the Scottish average. Although the proportion of 16-17 year olds in education is lower in Aberdeen City (76.6%) than in Aberdeenshire (80.6%) and lower than the national average (79.8%), the proportion of the population with no qualifications is lower in Aberdeen City (20.2%) compared to Aberdeenshire (23.6%) and the Scottish average (26.8%). The opposite applies to the share of people with high level qualifications: the share of people with high qualifications is larger in Aberdeen City (33.2%) than in Aberdeenshire (27%) and Scotland (26.1%), highlighting the relevance of qualifications in the city. In terms of the labour market and economic activity, Aberdeen region is an active region in the Scottish context. The share of the population that are economically active in Aberdeen City (73.3%) and Aberdeenshire (74.9%) is above the Scottish average (69%) and the unemployment rate is slightly lower in Aberdeen City (3.1%) and Aberdeenshire (2.5%) than the

national average (4.8%). However, the unemployment rate among 16-24 year olds is quite similar to the Scottish average (30.2%) in Aberdeen City (29%) and in Aberdeenshire (31.7%).

On the other hand, Glasgow City Region is one of the largest city regions in the United Kingdom and it is Scotland's largest populated region, representing 34% of Scotland's population. In terms of youth population, Glasgow City presents a youthful population, with 24.4% of the population aged 16-24 years old, way above the Scottish average of 18.5% (Scotland's Census, 2011). Although Scotland is not a very diverse country in terms of ethnic backgrounds (84% white Scottish), Glasgow City – jointly with Aberdeen and Edinburgh City – is one of the regions with the largest variation in terms of ethnicity (78.6% white Scottish). One of the differential characteristics of Glasgow City is the larger share of socially disadvantaged people. The share of economically inactive people (aged 16-74) who are considered as long-term sick or disabled is 23.7%, way above the 16.6% Scottish average. This figure widely varies across GCR areas and it is mainly concentrated in the most deprived areas in GCR.

In the educational sphere, Glasgow City presents a more polarised picture. The percentage of 16-17 year olds in education is below the national average (74.4%, below the 79.8% Scottish average), which is considered one of the key transitions in the Scottish educational model (i.e. positive destinations). The share of the population with no qualification is also quite high (32%, compared to the 26.8% Scottish average), but the share of people with higher educational qualifications is 25.9%, similar to the Scottish average of 26.1%.

Finally, in terms of employment and economic activity the most relevant economic sectors are quite similar across the whole GCR, the service and retail sector being the most important, followed by human health and social work activities and education. According to Scottish Census data (2011), the share of economically active people in Glasgow City is around 65%, below the Scottish average (69%). The unemployment rate in Glasgow City is 6.5%, also above the Scottish average (4.8%), although the youth unemployment rate (16-24) in the City is 27.8%, below the Scottish average (30.2%).

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) is currently the main education, training and employment national policy in Scotland. The principal objective is to better prepare young people in Scotland (16-24 years old) for the labour market, aiming to ensure that all young people who leave school continue to be engaged in some kind of learning activity. The task connects schools with regional employers. Its strategy is to be as inclusive as possible, providing flexible educational pathways that facilitate a long term educational strategy for all young people. The way to make educational pathways more flexible is by strengthening the vocational and training education system and improving the work experience of young people starting from school.

It is steered by the Scottish Government (SG) and provides a clear 7-year programme plan (2014 to 2021) with specific objectives for different institutions (schools, colleges, employers) with concrete targets to be achieved. The objectives of the national policy keep the educational and working trajectories of young people in Scotland in mind. A 'rational approach' to educational and labour market transitions is prevalent among the DYW managers: it is assumed that the main education and career routes are not affected by other life domains. Focusing on the 16-19 age group further strengthens this assumption, leaving aside the rest of the group targeted by DYW policy (20-24). The main idea is to facilitate the construction of individual "learning journeys" that are educational, and learning pathways flexible enough to be meaningful and useful for each young adult. However, it is expected that these individual learning journeys will lead to one of the situations considered as a "positive destination" by the SG. These positive destinations basically include any type of learning, employment and/or volunteering activity. Implicitly, youths whose main activities do not include any of these situations are to be considered as not being in a positive destination. Possible examples are maternity/paternity, caring for a dependent person or sick leave, although they are not explicitly mentioned by the DYW policy document.

The main tool that the SG is putting in place to raise the amount and quality standards of apprenticeships for young people - especially focusing on 16-19 year olds - is the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) scheme. The reasoning for focusing on an apprenticeship scheme for this age group is to make sure that young people who are not going to college or preparing for university have a route to take once they leave school that still ensures a learning experience. MA is a work-based learning scheme that aims at matching young people (mainly 16-19) who are not in education and training and who are looking for their first labour market experience. In relation to the length of addressees' paths within the measure, it is expected to be high (13 months and over), to be from 16 to 24 years old during the whole period, to ensure that these young adults have a form of learning in their everyday life and that are in a positive destination (education, employment, volunteering).

In the DYW policy document all objectives, milestones and measures are set at the national level. However, the production and setting of strategies translates into a local/regional implementation. Therefore, it is necessary to allow for some degree of flexibility to adapt these targets and processes set by national policy to local/regional needs. However, it has to be noted that although DYW leaves enough flexibility to the regions to identify the local/regional needs to better adapt the policy to them, there is no further support on how to do it and the regional and local actors are left to deal with these needs, regardless of how challenging they are. The fact of having to implement the national strategy at the regional level makes it an interesting framework for comparison across the two analysed Scottish regions: Glasgow City Region (GCR) and Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Region (ACAR).

3.8.1 DYW (Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) [GCR]: supporting school-to-work transition by early guidance and apprenticeship

Glasgow was the first regional group in Scotland to start undertaking the DYW work. The implementation of DYW in Glasgow City Functional Region (GCR) is steered by the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, as they were invited by the SG to apply for the funding to lead the implementation of DYW in GCR. The fact of having an organisation with established links with regional employers and organised activities facilitated the setting in motion of DYW in the region with regard to employers' engagement. The implementation of DYW at the GCR has strengthened the coordination and partnership model beyond the previously relationship and partnership working culture. Each institution has a different role and they need each other in order to attain their objectives and DYW goals. One good example of this formal and systematic coordination is the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) scheme: in 2015/2016 the number of MA in the region was about 3,370, representing 13% of the total MA in Scotland. Construction related MA were the most popular group, which represented 22% of the total MA in the region and it was heavily gendered (98% male). From April to September 2017 there were 6,368 registrations in My World of Work, 1,298 MA started, most of them were 16-19 year olds (644), while the rest were youths aged 20-24 (307) and older than 25 years of age (347). The total number of MA in training in September 2017 was 3,841, which already represented 75% of the total target to be achieved. Enrolment in colleges in the region represented 23% of Scotland's total. Therefore, the Glasgow area concentrates an important proportion of vocational education and training. One of the main peculiarities of GCR is that most of the people in charge or related to DYW management and implementation already knew each other. The fact that their organisations were previously in touch and collaborating for other reasons has probably facilitated parts of the coordination and implementation process.

The main way to promote flexible educational pathways that facilitate a long-term educational strategy for all young people focuses on providing information to young people in schools and trying to influence their educational decisions. DYW and managers in GCR think that familiarising students with other educational environments is a way to promote and facilitate these transitions, especially among young adults who lack other kinds of support and information from family or friends. The intention is not to normalise the educational pathways and ways to get into the labour market, but to standardise the outputs of the process: education and employment, which in the Scottish policy sphere are labelled "positive destinations". The architecture of the system is designed to link the different stages allowing completion at different paces. According to their reasoning, it promotes students staying in the education system after compulsory education, providing different options, such as Foundation Apprenticeships that can later link to the Modern Apprenticeship. The work of DYW managers and

practitioners is to think in a pathway perspective and try to get as many regional employers as possible involved in order to increase the opportunities for young adults. In the educational sphere, in terms of qualifications Glasgow City has a polarised youth population who work in a wide range of service sector economic activities. The percentage of 16-17 year olds in education is below the national average (74.4%, below the 79.8% Scottish average), which is considered one of the key transitions in the Scottish educational model (i.e. positive destinations). The share of the population with no qualification is also quite high (32%, compared to the 26.8% Scottish average), but the share of people with higher educational qualifications is 25.9%, similar to the Scottish average of 26.1%.

Although the 'ideal' DYW pathway is that young people will never leave the learning component of their lives and that they will transition from school to an apprenticeship, to college or university, reality is certainly not like this for a non-negligible share of young adults in GCR. One of the main specificities of GCR is the above average number of young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged families and/or living in deprived areas. The share of economically inactive people (aged 16-74) who are considered as long-term sick or disabled is 23.7%, way above the 16.6% Scottish average. This figure varies widely across GCR areas and it is mainly concentrated in the most deprived areas in GCR. The young adults interviewed, indeed, come from a deprived area in GCR and none of them had a standard educational pathway or placement in the labour market as expected in the DYW policy document. They have all been in and out of education and work, mentioning a number of personal situations (e.g. health problems, pregnancy, childbearing, elder care, financial constraints) that deviated them from the standard and smooth educational and labour market transitions considered in the DYW policy document. None of the four young adults interviewed mentioned school as a place where they were influenced or set in the direction of an apprenticeship, or put in contact with an employer. They all heard of DYW and the possibility to engage in an apprenticeship scheme later on, when they had already left school and because of different circumstances. Some interviewees think that the current system does not support all young adults throughout their learning journeys. There is a clear educational pathway for those that want to follow the academic path, another one for those that do not fit into the academic route but "behave properly and are proactive", but there is no clear alternative to support those that are not in any of the previous categories. Moreover, some young adults have the feeling that the apprenticeship system is for those that do not want to continue to study. It seems that some of the young adults interviewed also interpreted the information they got at school from the vocational route (apprenticeships) as a pathway for people who want to leave school and are mainly dominated by men. The key influencers of the most disadvantaged young adults are close relatives, partners and friends, rather than professionals from education and labour market institutions.

Most youth from disadvantaged social backgrounds see DYW as an opportunity after school to attain their objectives. They tend to see failure as individual or due to contextual circumstances, but that they can address with some support. Regarding the evaluation of the experience by the addressees we can mention: improvement in self-esteem, acknowledgement of educational and employment possibilities, support in making choices, getting a job and sustaining it, addressing health and mental health problems.

Employer engagement with the school and providing information about the existent choices might work for non-disadvantaged young people, but not for disadvantaged ones. In GCR, DYW managers and practitioners have developed mechanisms to recover these disadvantaged young adults who left school if they get in touch with any local authority institution. According to practitioners in the region, working on a case work basis is more effective for disadvantaged youths. The weekly contact with a person that builds on young adults' confidence and preferences seems to influence these young adults to a larger extent than the general talks and activities they might have received at school. Support to these young people should come at an earlier stage and with higher intensity than the one suggested in the DYW national policy document. One of the features shared by all institutions taking part in DYW in GCR is that they all have a good knowledge of the socioeconomic characteristics of the region and the problems that families and young adults in deprived areas are facing. On this point, we have to recall that in terms of employment and economic activity the most relevant economic sectors in GCR are the service and retail ones, followed by human health and social work activities and education. Moreover, according to Scottish Census data (2011), the share of economically active people in Glasgow City is around 65%, below the Scottish average (69%). The unemployment rate in Glasgow City is 6.5%, also above the Scottish average (4.8%), although the youth unemployment rate (16-24) in the City is 27.8%, below the Scottish average (30.2%). The good knowledge of the socioeconomic characteristics of the region facilitates adaptation of DYW to local needs to the largest extent possible, even although that might sometimes clash with the expected national targets. The existence of a dynamic and diversified labour market in the region also helps to provide young people with a range of employment opportunities.⁵

3.8.2. DYW (Developing the Young Workforce) [ACAR]: supporting school-to-work optimizing the role of personal networks

⁵ The particular aspects of this case are summarised at the end of the next cases descriptions as both are regional variations of the same national policy.

Similarly to the case of GCR, the Scottish Government invited the Grampian Chamber of Commerce to be a candidate for leadership of DYW in the region, creating a regional group to govern the regional recommendations proposed by DYW policy. In this case, the region is denominated as DYW North East and includes the regions under Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils. A lot of initiatives and programmes supporting young people in their educational pathways and transition to the labour market were already in place in ACAR. DYW has served as a way to organise them and try to coordinate efforts in the region. It has also served as a way to recognise already existing practices and to identify duplications. One way to face these duplications is coordinating people under the regional DYW umbrella: working on partnerships with educational institutions to make sure that there is a single voice promoting engagement between them and the regional employers. So far, schools, colleges and universities have been contacting employers separately, making it a bit chaotic and difficult for employers. The different organisation of the schools has challenged the identification of the right contact person and the subsequent systematization and linking with employers in ACAR. While the implementation in the region seems to be following the national directives, there are some tensions in reorganising and making clear each party's role and place in the big picture of supporting young people in their educational and labour market transitions.

Regarding education, the region is in a better position than the Scottish average. Although the proportion of 16-17 year olds in education is lower in Aberdeen City (76.6%) than in Aberdeenshire (80.6%) and the national average (79.8%), the proportion of the population with no qualifications is lower in Aberdeen City (20.2%) compared to Aberdeenshire (23.6%) and the Scottish average (26.8%). The opposite applies to the share of people with high-level qualifications: the share of people with high qualifications is larger in Aberdeen City (33.2%) than in Aberdeenshire (27%) and Scotland (26.1%), highlighting the relevance of qualifications in the city.

The bridging between schools and employers and the promotion of the vocational pathway described by the national document can be easily identified in the explanations of regional managers and practitioners. The main task recognised and put in place by the regional DYW team has been coordinating and promoting the partnership work between schools and employers. In this region, a significant active role from the employers' side in engaging with schools and other educational institutions has to be underlined. The Modern Apprenticeship (MA) scheme is notable: according to Skills Development Scotland (SDS), from April to September 2017 there were 2,371 registrations in My World of Work, 481 MA started, most of them were 16-19 year olds (318), while the rest were taken up by youth aged 20-24 (106) and older than 25 years of age (57). The total number of MA in training in September 2017 was 1,941, which already represented 85% of the total target to be achieved. Therefore, the further education sector is quite active in the region. Managers and

practitioners in ACAR recognise that the balance between promoting available careers and educational pathways that have available vacancies in the area conflicts with the type of jobs and careers that might interest young people. The oil and gas industry has dominated the regional labour market and youth's studies and career expectations. Indeed, over the past 40 years the development of the oil and gas industry and associated service sector has broadened Aberdeenshire's economic base and has impacted ACAR in several ways. It has rapidly increased its population (growth of 50% since 1975), mainly attracting young people with high educational qualifications from Scotland, the UK and abroad. The gas and oil industry, mining and related activities are the most important economic activities in the region both in terms of employment in professional scientific and technical activities, but also in terms of revenues. However, since the dramatic decrease of the price of the barrel of crude oil in 2014, the region is facing economic and social challenges that are affecting the structure of the region. Thus, following the 2014 oil crisis some of the previous educational and career expectations have had to be readdressed. This is why career advisors still accept that their main role is to promote different routes among young people to make sure that they continue into some form of learning after leaving school.

Managers and practitioners in ACAR shared the underlying perspective of DYW policy according to which potential influencers of young people's educational and career decisions have to have access to all the information available in order to support young adults to make the best decision for them. In terms of the labour market and economic activity, ACAR is an active region in the Scottish context. The share of economically active population in Aberdeen City (73.3%) and Aberdeenshire (74.9%) is above the Scottish average (69%) and the unemployment rate is slightly lower in Aberdeen City (3.1%) and Aberdeenshire (2.5%) than the national average (4.8%). However, the unemployment rate among 16-24 year olds is quite similar to the Scottish average (30.2%) in Aberdeen City (29%) and in Aberdeenshire (31.7%). Probably, the fact of having an overrepresentation of a young population in ACAR might be part of the explanation for these figures.

DYW managers in ACAR stressed the relevance of parents as key influencers in the educational and career decisions of their offspring. Since they accept that they do not exactly know at what stage children really make decisions on their educational pathways and future careers (primary and/or secondary school), ACAR managers have decided that influencing parents is a good strategy to indirectly influence young people.

The testimonies of the young adults interviewed fit into the overall structure and planning of DYW, as the three young adults interviewed have had linear trajectories. After school they either moved to college and/or engaged in an apprenticeship that smoothed their transitions to the labour market. Although the young adults interviewed mainly argued that they made their own choices on their

educational pathways and later careers, once the conversation developed they pointed out some key influencers. Some of them are part of the DYW policy in the region. The discussions with the career advisors at school or college seem to have made young people reason and elaborate on their educational choices. There is some ongoing discussion about the main task of a career advisor, which is to support young people to make decisions, instead of making decisions for them. All young adults interviewed acknowledged the support of the career advisor. The influence of parents was also mentioned by two of the young adults. However, their influence seemed to have more to do with supporting and smoothing their decisions (getting an internship placement or advice on how to prepare an interview) rather than making the actual choices. It is also worth pointing out at this stage that young adults interviewed in ACAR did not talk about other life spheres beyond the education and work ones. The evaluation of the experience by the addressees is generally positive: they appreciated career guidance and support as useful to plan their future and to consider the opportunities available in the region.

In general terms, DYW national policy seems to fit to a better extent in ACAR. DYW actions and ambitions might work to strengthen vocational education and training in Scotland among young people who are not highly disadvantaged in socioeconomic terms and that do not have difficulties in other life domains beyond education and training. Therefore, more efforts and resources should be directed to rethink the policy for the most disadvantaged young adults who might need early intervention before they reach the last year of compulsory secondary education.

The DWY policy is a case of national policy which is adapted to Functional Regions with different features (above all, in GCR there is a higher concentration of disadvantaged youths and worse general socio-economic conditions). This case – or better: these cases – are specimen of the effectiveness of two main aspects in contextualising a national programme. The first one refers to the pre-existence of well-established networks of local actors and institutions collaborating in the LLL field, which facilitate governance. The second one consists of the sound knowledge of the problems of the context and their relation with the young adults' needs shared by these networks, which helped in structuring apprenticeship experiences able to fit the addressees' expectation as well as the local employers' demands.

3.9. Cases in Spain

LLL policies addressed by the Spanish team have been conformed, mainly, as a resource to tackle phenomena associated with the education and labour market spheres, as well as the mismatches produced between both of them. Their development is framed in the context of a comprehensive education system, partially decentralized in the Autonomous Communities, at the regional level.

Educational trajectories are characterized by both high Early School Leaving (ESL) rates (in 2016: 19% in Spain, being 15,1% in women and 22,7% in men; 22,2% in Catalonia; and 27,7% in Andalusia) and the tertiary education access (in 2012, about 80% of aged 20-24 in Spain, 70% in Andalusia and 90% in Catalonia). At the same time, the Vocational Education (VE) track in the education system has been perceived by young adults as a second choice option in detriment of Higher Education. However, this perception is changing inasmuch as it is thought as an option to promote a faster labour insertion. Vocational Training (VT) policies, comprised in the LLL system, have emerged as a parallel system to the VE one. Its development has also been marked by a decentralization process from the Spanish Central Government to the Autonomous Communities one. In the last years, this process has been reverted in some extent in Andalusia and, therefore in Malaga Functional Region (MFR), due to a re-centralization in the selection of skills and design of the training provision, occurred after an interruption of more than 5 years (2011-2017) of the new offer of VT courses, due to problems with funding control. In contrast, in Catalonia and, specifically, in Girona Functional Region (GFR), such decentralization process is still being strengthened and local and net coordination structures and dynamics within the local actors and those at the regional government are being fostered. Moreover, in both functional regions, coordination is mainly developed within the institutions allocated in the same policy sphere (VE or VT), through informal spaces and by the professionals involved in the different measures, despite of the existing formal structures which seem to not be really effective. The policies mentioned above are aimed at addressing the school-to-work transitions of young adults in both regions. In the Spanish context, young people have to cope with what has been called a precarious labour market characterized by high rates of temporality, seasonality and low skilled occupations. However, whereas both autonomous communities allocate their main focus of economic activity in the service sector (i.e. tourism), the youth unemployment rate was about 50% in 2015 in Spain, 56,8% in Andalusia and 42,3% in Catalonia. The rate of NEET in Catalonia was 15,1% in 2016, in line with the national figures, and in Andalusia it was 18,4% (with a decrease of 4,8 and 4,4% since 2012, respectively). Over-qualification, as a skill mismatch, has a great prominence in the Spanish national labour market (39% in 2000 and 46% in 2015) and has been defined as one of its structural features, characterized by a generation effect (i.e. only a 5-6% of those aged 20-29 in 2000 who were overqualified surpassed this situation in 2015; Herrera, 2017). In terms of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion and severe material deprivation, Andalusia shows higher rates than Spain and Catalonia. Nonetheless, these contextual conditions do not avoid that the notion of the standard life course still serves as a reference for many young people. Although the theories of change that underlies these policies do not appear to be really specified or developed, it seems that they point out at a deficit and compensation approach. In this vein, policy-makers and street professionals stress the idea of a lack of skills within young people, specifically the so called soft skills, as well as those

associated with languages. This idea is also shared by young adults, who assess their experience in these policies mainly from an instrumental approach, it is to improve their skills and reach their labour insertion. In the case of Girona, the relevance of their intercultural skills is also emphasized. LLL policies establish Early School Leavers and NEETs as some of their main addressees, being labelled, in some cases, as at risk. Moreover, young adults and street professionals highlight the relevance of other kinds of impacts not previewed previously in the formal design of the policies, such as the reduction of life uncertainty or the increase of self-esteem, where the interaction between these two types of stakeholders, especially in relation to a supportive emotional dimension, becomes really relevant (c.f. Autonomous University of Barcelona & University of Granada, 2016; Herrera, 2017; Jacovkis, et al., 2017; Rambla et al., 2017, 2018; Scandurra & Rambla, 2017).

3.9.1. Training Programme TP12 [Girona]: Lifelong Learning as extension of the youth moratorium

The training programme TP12 [Girona] is an emergency plan launched by the Catalan Employment Service (SOC, in Catalan) in 2012 to tackle youth unemployment throughout Catalonia. However, this programme did not start from scratch, but adopted many of the characteristics of a previous programme. The TP12 [Girona] is a 12-15 month programme aimed at improving the employability of unemployed and unskilled young adults (aged from 16 to 24 with a level of qualification below ISCED-3) by providing them with three months vocational training and one month of training in a work environment. It also provides career guidance and apprenticeship experiences to its beneficiaries. The intention is likewise to encourage the obtaining of the Compulsory Secondary Schooling certificate and to provide support in finding employment. In addition to these characteristics of the target group, all the beneficiaries are required to be registered under the Youth Guarantee Scheme. Out of all the candidates, local employees select those who best fit with the orientation of the programme. A quick glance at some socio-demographic indicators reveals some of the most important features of the city, and also most of its potential challenges. In 2016 the immigrant population represented 37.39% of the total. The proportion of the population between 20 and 29 years old was in general higher than in Catalonia as a whole (12.46% and 10.1%, respectively). This proportion was notably higher for the immigrant group (16.60%) than for the indigenous population (9.99%). The differences in the educational status between these two groups are also relevant. According to a diagnosis by the City Council, 43.3% of the foreign young people have no education certificate (vs. 9.9% of the autochthonous) and only 16.9% of them have finished post-compulsory secondary education (vs. 27.4% of the indigenous population). Moreover, immigrants are almost absent in higher education. Indeed, early school leaving and youth unemployment are extremely high in Spain, in Catalonia and in

the city. Young adults with migrant status are significantly more exposed to this risk. For a long time, policies have basically subsidised firms to contract some young employees through short-term or apprenticeship contracts, which has not improved their situation in the labour market in terms of stability. For local authorities, short-term training has become almost the only instrument to tackle this problem. The adaptation of the Youth Guarantee Scheme by the Spanish Government has followed the same lines, by prioritising training measures over labour market placement initiatives. Moreover, the evaluation of these measures has considered mainly indicators on placement rather than education or training data. Both the Government of Spain and the Government of Catalonia divide the measures designed to tackle youth unemployment and early school leaving between the Education and Employment authorities. The former is broadly structured according to standard life-courses in which the different education stages are closely linked to pre-established age ranges and alternative trajectories are exceptional. However, the higher the qualification level (higher education), the less the impact of the age ranges. But the schemes which are related to employment are not as linear as education institutions. These other schemes include different training measures aimed at both employed and unemployed workers regardless of their age. Regarding young adults, it is also important to take into account the National Plan for Youth 2010-2020 launched by the Catalan Government, which attempts to frame all political actions within an array of dimensions including education, employment, healthcare, leisure, housing and so on. What is interesting here is to point out that education and employment seem to be increasingly subordinated to the actions developed under the Youth Guarantee Scheme. These measures somehow set the “standard” time-span within which it is correct, accepted or normal to perform certain training activities (up to the age of 29). At the local level there is also a Local Plan for Youth (2016-2019), which develops the National Plan for Youth and sets specific priorities and evaluation mechanisms for all of its dimensions. TP12 [Girona] courses constitute one of the main municipal initiatives regarding employment and training programmes. Across all its activities, the Youth Section of the city emphasises the importance of developing WHO’s Life Skills such as assertiveness, empathy and problem solving. This is an important difference in their approach, since both the Catalan and the Spanish administrations are more centred on instrumental skills such as employability and adaptation.

As for the pool of candidates, it is remarkable that a decreasing number of young people apply for TP12 [Girona] since the local supply expanded (the two last editions included level 2 qualification courses but no level 3 course is offered). Since level 3 courses have not been offered for the last two editions, apparently self-targeting is enacted somehow. Once the beneficiaries are selected to participate in some of the offered courses, they start a process of individually guiding and defining their personal and professional itineraries with the assistance of a tutor of the programme. These

coaching activities are conducted throughout the whole programme. The training courses start approximately a month after the definitive selection of candidates. They last for three months (i.e. about 240h). External providers conduct the specific training. After that, the beneficiaries are placed in a job position for one month. During these four months, the participants receive an incentive of 150 Euros per month dependent on them attending at least 75% of the training time. They can also receive a transport grant if courses are located outside their city. After the training period finishes, the beneficiaries are expected to continue being linked to the programme through guiding and coaching meetings with their tutor. In these meetings, each young person works on different transversal skills with the help of their mentor, prepares a personal curriculum, receives assistance to look for a job, etc. In addition, the programme negotiates subsidised contracts for its participants with a number of local companies. Despite some previously mentioned difficulties, both employees and young people consider that this is one of the most fruitful parts of the programme. These contracts provide some real job experience to the beneficiaries as well as the opportunity to showcase their skills

The programme is funded both by the SOC and the European Social Fund (ESF), and additional funding is provided by the municipality (facilities, workers' bonuses, etc.). TP12 [Girona] in the selected city of the GFR depends on the Youth section of the City Council. This is an important difference in comparison with other implementation examples of TP12 [Girona] throughout the Autonomous Community, where it is mainly managed by the Employment section and, to a lesser extent, by the Education section. What is interesting in this particular structure is that the technicians responsible are clearly aware of the difficulties faced by young people in the region, regardless of their particular situation in relation to the labour market. In this sense, their trajectories are taken into account beyond their relationship with employment, and therefore a wider vision of their situation is expressed. Contrary to what seems to be the main political focus of the development of the YGS in Spain and also in Catalonia, the implementation of this programme pays attention to the different dimensions of the personal development of young people, and not only to those related to their employability. Obviously, skills and abilities aimed at improving their opportunities to find a job are stressed, but they do not seem to be the only ones that are taken into account. In fact, as stated by the person responsible for the Youth section, the skills on which all the activities of the section are based are those defined by the World Health Organisation and UNICEF. These life skills are closely related to questions of self-satisfaction, motivation, stability, mental health, etc. and are considered as key abilities to address different questions such as education, democracy, gender equality, Lifelong learning, etc. This is an important difference in their approach compared to the focus of other administrations, which are more centred on "utilitarian" skills (employability, adaptation, etc.). Furthermore, and regardless of this focus on life skills, the actual implementation of the programme

strongly emphasises individual interventions over contextual or social ones. Despite opening their focus from employability to “quality of life”, the emphasis of the actions conducted through the TP12 [Girona] programme is closely focused on each young person’s capacity to overcome his or her situation. To this end, close relationships are established between street-level employees and mentored young people. The former consider that they cannot assist the latter if there is no interest shown, and that they need to be committed to the programme. The beneficiaries seem to find the programme to be somewhere reassuring for them to go when they have doubts about their employment or training trajectories, even when their participation in the programme has concluded. In this regard, the beneficiaries interviewed consider the programme to be a good opportunity to rectify poor choices they have made or to reach life aspirations that have been hindered by their particular trajectories and environments. Finally, the Functional Region and particularly the territory covered by the city of Girona and surroundings is increasingly characterised by a public effort to improve coordination among private and public actors, and among different administrative levels. In this city, the education figures are generally below the Catalan average. While over 40% of students failed to achieve their Compulsory Secondary Education Certificate (15% in Catalonia), almost 50% of immigrant students (35.4% in Catalonia) did not and 26% of autochthonous students did not either (11% in Catalonia). Regarding the local labour force, foreigners amount to 52% of the potentially active population, while they represent 29.4% in Catalonia as a whole.

The practical difficulties faced by the local service as well as their broader understanding of how a programme of these characteristics should be designed and should function are an example of the possibilities and restrictions for adaptation of policies designed at higher administrative levels. The bottom line is that competition between providers to enrol as many people as possible has relegated the central role of young people to second place behind the economic survival of the training providers. Moreover, the expansion of the Youth Guarantee Scheme has suffered from important overlaps and gaps, with cheaper offers being the most accepted. Certain unpredictability in the launching calendar of TP12 [Girona] and the slowness of the process of selecting candidates has led to an important drop in the final number of applicants to choose from. Some strategies have been developed by the local implementers to deal with this situation. First, they have modified their supply of courses in order to avoid overlaps and to increase the range of opportunities from which young people can choose. Second, they have worked on their personal relationships with the beneficiaries. Finally, they have worked hard for the improvement of coordination between public and private agents in the area, and not only in their city. In this regard, they maintain regular contacts with other administrations in order to improve the training supply in the area and to design more wide-ranging actions with the aim of providing young people with more opportunities.

In general, irrespective of the programme, institutional affiliation or administrative level, the different interviewees agreed in considering the policies developed under the Youth Guarantee Scheme as strongly addressed to vulnerable young adults. In particular, some of them highlighted the lack of opportunities and supply addressed to improving both qualifications and labour market experiences for those young people with a higher education level. In this regard, they commented that it is hard for the public administration to access this group of young people, as they do not usually contact employment and social services to look for alternatives. Additionally, some interviewees stressed that for these young people the most common alternatives are emigrating or accepting placements below their qualification level. Our case study addresses a particularly complex situation that tries to place the focus more on the beneficiaries' condition as young people, rather than on the fact that they are unemployed, early school leavers and/or foreigners. This adds interest to analysing this particular implementation as it implies noticeable variations in the understanding of the causes of the situation of vulnerability of these young adults, and in the solutions proposed in comparison with other levels of administration. With this in mind, the TP12 [Girona] team in this city seeks to broaden the approach by attempting to involve a number of public and private agents in the development of the programme. They also make reference to social cohesion and personal well-being more often than the discourses of the regional and national authorities. In this sense, the programme employees and managers consider the programme useful, although they state that it is insufficient to cover all the demand and all the needs of its beneficiaries. The beneficiaries agree with these statements. Both professionals and young adults state that the locality and the region have to align counselling and training more systematically. Regarding the characterisation of the beneficiaries, it is interesting to stress that, while the mainstream approach is based on the deficits of the young people, the local approach tries to take into account not only their shortcomings but also their virtues. In this sense, the local TP12 [Girona] employees characterise the beneficiaries as being vulnerable, with no solid social networks, under skilled and undertrained. But they also consider them as adaptable, versatile, with high social values related to cohesion and cohabitation skills. The beneficiaries themselves share this characterisation.

The particularity of the TP12 is the approach to vocational training and work experiences, because of its focus on the addressees' condition as young people, rather than on the deficits in their educational, training and professional trajectories, in a context which however is characterized by high rates of early school leavers and youth unemployment. This approach also resonates in the balance between the enhancement of life-skills and the delivering of more employability-oriented skills, with the overall aim of recognizing and strengthening the individual potentialities, rather than furtherly stress the personal deficiencies.

3.9.2. Workshop Schools [Malaga]: empowering young people by making them contribute to local communities

Workshop Schools [Malaga] is a programme carried out in the Municipal Institute of Training and Employment (MITE), as in other important parts of the Functional Region. The MITE stands out because it is an organism for information and advice on the promotion of employment and self-employment in the municipality of Malaga, which acts as promoter and coordinator of all the resources available to boost the city's economic, entrepreneurial and training activities in order to achieve the ultimate goal of full employment. In the framework of the broad plan of action for LLL policies, Workshop Schools [Malaga] stand out among other programmes of vocational training and promotion of youth employment. In this respect, it is also important to emphasize the work of Malaga City Hall as a promoter of these policies. This programme is not exclusive to the Municipal organism or the Functional Region, but it is a programme of regional scope so it exceeds the limits of the Functional Region itself. It is co-financed by the Department of Employment, Enterprise and Commerce of the Andalusian Regional Government, the Ministry of Employment and Social Security and by the European Social Fund, which combines training and employment initiatives. The Workshop Schools [Malaga] are a result of the policies of the European Strategy for Employment, financed by the European Social Fund, but with a strong regional or autonomous component, as they form part of the work-linked training policies, i.e., alternating periods of training in school and in work, which is one of the features most highly valued by the different actors involved.

The appointment of different entities for the development of the Workshop School [Malaga] programme is carried out on a competitive basis. Different local organisations, associations, foundations and other non-profit-making institutions participate in this competition. The Andalusian Autonomous Government establishes and decides which professional qualifications will be granted taking into account the criteria set by the Estrategia de Innovación de Andalucía 2020 (Andalusian Strategy for Innovation 2020) and the Estrategia Española de Activación para el Empleo 2014 – 2016 (Spanish Strategy for the Activation of Employment 2014 – 2016) and by analyzing the jobs with the best future. In the Functional Region of Malaga, with a current resolution (November 2017), the Regional Department for Employment, Business and Trade of the Andalusian Autonomous Government, has granted only seven Workshop Schools [Malaga] to local governments and dependent organisations of Malaga, five of them granted to MITE.

As regards the particular issues facing young people in the Malaga Functional Region, two statistics stand out: the large number of young people who drop out of the education system early (27.7%), and the high percentage of young Andalusians who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)

(18.4%), although both of these figures have improved since 2012 with falls of 1.1% and 4.4% respectively.

The various youth (between 16 and 29 years old) employment indicators are also significant. Even though youth unemployment in Malaga is 3% below the figure for Andalusia as a whole, it is still high at 39.7%. The number of working young people in temporary employment is 62% compared to 66% for Andalusia. 54.1% of working young people in Andalusia are overqualified for the job they are doing and the net average monthly salary for young Andalusians (831.69 euros) is about €50 higher than the average received by young people in Malaga (780.90 euros).

These factors, added to the fact that buying a house consumes on average 52.1% of net salary in Andalusia and 72.4% in Malaga, while renting accounts for 69.3% and 81.3% respectively, explain why the percentage of young people who have managed to leave the parental home is 17.4% in the region and 14.8% in the province. All of this may also explain why the average age at which women have their first child is now about 30 years old.

A substantial 14.7% of the population is of foreign origin, twice the figure for the region as a whole. Most of them are from the European Union, especially the UK (50,888) and Northern Europe, and from countries in North Africa. In total there are 9,584 young people of foreign origin in the province (16 to 39 years old), although the average age of the foreign population is around 42 years old. Approximately 1,500 foreigners are enrolled at the University of Malaga.

More specifically, the metropolitan area of the case study has an unemployment rate of 19.86%, with a higher rate among women. Unemployment among young people under the age of 25 years old, in this area, is 47.9%, and unemployment among young people aged 20-24 is 43.7%. The foreign population, mainly from the European Union, represents 7.9%, with the majority of this population from the United Kingdom. The population aged 20-54 represents 62.20% of the total. The annual income level of the population in this area is 17,881 euros/year. It is also an area of growth and especially of the young population.

In Malaga, as in the entire Autonomous Community of Andalusia, as a result of administrative dependence, all training courses for employment including the Workshop Schools [Malaga] have been suspended since 2011, because of irregularities detected in their execution. Some of the court cases concerning Vocational Training for Employment (VTE) have been dropped because the employment technicians were not involved in the supposed irregularities and they have acted as informants. In all these years, Andalusia, with an average unemployment rate of 34.3%, has not had training for employment in accordance with the needs of the region. These anomalies in policies of training for employment have meant the loss of European Union grants, with the ensuing suspension of different

programmes and projects for training for employment, including the Workshop Schools [Malaga]. For these reasons, new regulations have been passed for the Workshop Schools [Malaga] and other programmes and recently put into practice. We can, therefore, speak of a before and after in the policies of training for employment and the subsidies for their promotion and development.

The aims of the Workshop Schools, in Malaga as in the whole of Andalusia, have a very specific particularity, which was the development and promotion of activities related to the recovery of artistic, historic, cultural or natural heritage. Rehabilitation of urban areas and the environment was also considered, as well as the recovery and conditioning of publicly owned infrastructures to serve as the basis for centres of entrepreneurial initiatives, and any other public or social activity leading to placement of the young participants through professionalization and acquiring experience (García Valverde & Serrano, 2009).

Another peculiarity of the Workshop Schools [Malaga] aims to grant a remunerated and productive job to unemployed young people, between the ages of 16 and 25. However, the new regulations of 2016 include a 60% fee for unemployed young adults from priority groups (e.g. unemployed under the age of 30 with training deficit, women, ethnic minorities, refugees and immigrants, women victims of gender violence, persons with recognised disability of 33% or more, persons at risk of social exclusion). Likewise, the selection proceedings have changed from being carried out by the institution promoting the Workshop Schools [Malaga], to being undertaken by the Andalusian Employment Office.

The young people undergo a training plan with the aim of acquiring and improving professional competences and qualifications to obtain professional certificates. The new regulation insists that the training action may be a speciality leading to a level 1, 2 or 3 certificate of professionalism. In this way, once initiated in these policies, young people can develop a complete training itinerary. The Workshop Schools [Malaga] are temporary projects (12 months duration) in which training and qualification alternate with productive work in activities related to the recovery of the artistic, historic, cultural or natural heritage, the rehabilitation of urban areas or the environment, the recovery or creation of public infrastructure, and any other activity of public use or general social interest leading to social placement of the young participants through professionalization and the acquisition of experience. The main objective of these courses is to increase the employability of young people. By way of the corresponding contracts and remuneration, this somehow poses a solution that also focuses on the structural dimension of employment and employability (although it belongs to a specific action for a specific amount of time) and not only on employability issues associated with the training of the person. It is likewise especially suitable for young people with educational deficiencies and in a situation of social vulnerability. These training policies, such as VTE, and the case of the Workshop

Schools [Malaga], combine the relevance of job placement at a local level, promoted by these training programmes, together with the need for training to act as integral promotion of the individual, contributing to their wellbeing within the community (Carvajal, 2015). In fact, these and other similar programmes are also known as “social services programmes for employment” because of their high contingency depending on local job markets and the capacity of social agents and contact networks to offer satisfactory results. Like other municipalities in the Malaga Functional Region, the Workshop School projects carried out by the MITE are directly related to specific initiatives aimed at young people to promote their non-formal learning (EU Youth Strategy) and sandwich courses. The link between these projects and problems of young people and their community promotes participation and the notion of enabling, in the sense of feeling useful by offering a service to the community, but at the same time it provides both individual and social synergy. In this case young people recognise that the training received favours the promotion of the person as a whole and contributes to their wellbeing in the community. In the case of the young people in the Workshop Schools [Malaga] this recognition exists regarding the opportunity they are offered by the training they receive. This gives them confidence for the future to take on new responsibilities both at work and to overcome situations of special difficulty. Somehow, the programme is established as a turning point as it helps young people to achieve better stability in their lives. It has been established (Muñoz, 2013, Carvajal, 2015) that the policies of training for employment, including Workshop Schools [Malaga], combine the values of the salaried society, focused on job placement, with the need for training for personal promotion. For many young people this experience has become an opportunity to get their first paid job, albeit for a short time, and the work is attractive, free and creative in some cases, which leads to the creation of future expectations in training and the acquisition of skills in a professional field. Moreover, this type of training has a compensatory character for the young participants in a Workshop School, Trade School or Employment Workshop. Specific programmes can be organised with the aim of providing them with basic, professional training that allows them to find a job or to continue their studies in formal education under the present regulations. The professionals of the Workshop School [Malaga] play an important role in the success of the experience, because of their attitude of helping young people, as well as their professionalism. Especially for the heterogeneity of groups of youths and the specificity of the projects linked to the context in which they are carried out make up innovative, contextualized projects with answers to the individual and collective similar needs. The interviewed addressees have a positive evaluation of their participation in these training programmes, because they allow them to improve their professional competence and skills, as well as to obtain a basic certification to continue in the job market or the educational system. Moreover, these young people have had failures in their previous experiences in the job market, so that this precarious transition and their participation in this programme becomes a turning point. Likewise, young people express that these benefits are not

limited to the job sphere, but also impinge on their social and personal lives, including an improvement in their self-esteem or the building of better expectations for the course of their lives. In this case, the activities of orientation, support and accompaniment have been fundamental. The role of the company where young people do their work is also important in the lives of young people.

The Workshop Schools are a case of synergy between personal development and contribution to the local community. Indeed, training as well as job experiences provided by the measure put an equal emphasis on job placement and the need for comprehensive development of the individuals. Young people are asked to contribute to their wellbeing within the community by participating in actions related to the recovery of artistic, historic, cultural or natural heritage. As a “social service programme for employment”, the Workshop Schools are thus able to produce a positive change in terms of self-esteem and capacity to plan their trajectories.

4. Cross-analysis of the main ‘knots’ of relations

In the following, we will undertake a comparative analysis of the presented functional regions and LLL policies. The focus lies on the interactive functioning of these policies within their regional context as interactions between different actors across different levels. We have identified three ‘knots’ of interaction on which we will focus: the construction of target groups, the implementation of policies and the pedagogical interactions involved.

These ‘knots’ can be interpreted as configurations of the interlinkages of structure and agency (Elias, 1978). Each of the relevant sections will be concluded by reflecting on the insights under the theoretical perspectives of Cultural Political Economy, Governance and Life Course Research.

4.1. Target construction knot

The process of target construction is a relevant “knot” because of its relationship with the discourses underlying the policy-making of the analysed cases, the governance patterns applied according to the addressees’ profiles and the self-representation of the beneficiaries. Indeed, the construction of the measure/policy target is affected by the goals set by the political agenda at different levels (from transnational to regional) for the top-down designed cases, and by the interpretation of local needs for the bottom-up designed cases. Further, the target construction tends to interplay with the funding criteria modifying, according to the different cases, the possibility of accomplishing the expected results. Sometimes, local or regional authorities try to adapt broader policies to local needs “forcing” young adults to fit the target, which is defined at the national or European level. In other cases,

broader policies are modified in order to fit the local target (e.g., in Italy local authorities tried to build complementarities between Youth Guarantee and ESF targets). In addition, the definition of targets affects the governance models applied for measure/policy implementation, calling for different pattern of interaction among private and public bodies, as well as different typologies of professionals involved in the measure/policy delivery. Moreover, from a subjective standpoint, the very fact of accessing an LLL policy because their profiles match with the measure/policy target implies, for the addressees, a reflexive reading of their biographies which, regardless of different life trajectories, seems to necessarily relate to the dominant conception of the life course (both in terms of schedule and meaning attached to the different phases).

In the following subsections, we will discuss the target groups' construction process, focusing on different aspects related to their definition, considering: a) their correspondence between the definition according to national programmes (policy/measure's 'official' documents) and the practical choices made by each (research) team in terms of age composition and level of vulnerability, as main factors of definition of the target groups; b) the main discourses underlying and affecting the policy/measure's target group construction; c) the governance patterns related to the target groups and intervening in their definition; d) the addressees' standpoint on the target groups' definition, showing how and at what extent young adults recognise themselves in the definition and conceptions of them underlying the policies/measures. Lastly, the target construction knot analysis will be summarized according to the 3 main theoretical perspectives (Cultural Political Economy, Life Course Research and Governance).

4.1.1. Level of target first construction

One first matter to be considered is the level of target first construction, that is, how, among the different case studies, the target group of young adults has been intended and defined in all of the 18 Functional Regions and which could be the possible transversal factors adopted by the teams underlying the definition of the target groups themselves. Concerning the levels at which the target groups are defined, at least in terms of first framing, we find a rather equal balance between transnational/national and regional/local dimensions among the cases. Indeed, a consistent number of cases is connected and integrated with the Youth Guarantee scheme and in the unique case of the Plovdiv Functional Region, the Youth Guarantee policy itself is analysed as a case. Therefore, Civic Service, NEETwork [Milan], TP12 [Girona], NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] share the general Youth Guarantee target, namely people under 25, who have left formal education and/or have been unemployed for at least 4 months. Furthermore, the application of the Youth Guarantee scheme provides the possibility for extending the age of the targeted group, in order to better tackle youth unemployment. The unemployment rates of

the analysed Functional Regions seem to be crucial for the target group construction process. For example, in countries where the NEETs' rates are consistently high even among over 25 (i.e., Bulgaria, Italy and Spain) the age group of the policies potential addressees includes also young people up to the age of 29. Although these policies expand the recommended age group of the Youth Guarantee, they mostly adapt and integrate all other features of the policy. Beside the case in the Bulgarian Functional Region Plovdiv, the remaining cases of this sub-group further adapt their national Youth Guarantee target to their regional/local contexts, producing different modulations. For instance, both the Italian cases are measures meant to integrate the Youth Guarantee scheme with specific actions aimed at strengthening the fit of the European Programme with the local contexts. In this sense, similarly to the TP12 [Girona] Spanish case, the NEETwork [Milan] project directly tackles the issue of the target by engaging, focusing on the attempt to reach the weakest – in terms of qualification - potential Youth Guarantee beneficiaries who have not already been engaged by the programme and are at the same time particularly disadvantaged in the Milan Functional Region labour market. On the other hand, the choice of proposing the Regional Civic Service of the Liguria Region instead of the National Civic Service leads to a more inclusive and locally rooted approach to addressee selection, creating new chances of relations between the Third Sector local networks and youth profiles who have seldom had contacts with them. Considering a different dynamic, both the Finnish cases modify the Youth Guarantee target by extending it. In fact, due to the same nature of these cases, namely low threshold guidance centres, the correspondence with their national Youth Guarantee target is deliberately “light”. In order to respond to the heterogeneity of the potential user profiles, these Centres are regulated at Finnish national level with a broad definition of their main tasks, in order to pave the way for a more effective adaptation to their local areas and different individual beneficiaries.

For a second sub-group of cases, the target is firstly defined at national level and, consequently, defined in its local application (exemplifying how national criteria need also to be contextually applied at the regional level) for the LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] and both the Portuguese cases. The Scottish cases represent a slight exception in this group, since they also provide for the possibility of a temporary definition of priority groups according to policy decisions. Finally, the Austrian and German cases, the Open Public University Dioptra [Istria], the Spanish Workshop Schools [Malaga] and the University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] share the regional/local dimensions as the first level of their target definition.

4.1.2. Target construction according to the 'official' policy/measure's definition

In the process of the target group's construction, each local context has to take into account also the 'official' definition depending on how the different national policies/measures classify the addressed groups of young adults. In this sense, two main criteria are transversally observable among the different local experiences: on the one hand, the range of age, more or less specified, defining the age group of the young adults' addresses; on the other hand, the different vulnerability factors, related to the missing abilities or the structural conditions that could limit the young adults in their biographies.

The first transversal criterion refers how the young adults' addresses are defined in terms of age and the consequent age group definition restricting the target group.

Almost every measure/policy classifies the target groups according to age criteria. Among these, we can distinguish three main groups according to the affected age groups:

a) A delimited age group (in a range span of about ten years).

18-29 years age group: the Italian Civic Service [Genoa] and the Bulgarian University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] case study;

18-24 years age group: the Italian NEETwork [Milan] case study of the Milan FR and the Austrian Back to the future [Vienna] case study;

16-24 age group: in both Scottish FRs (Glasgow City Region and in the Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Region) in relation to the policy Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and in the Spanish TP12 [Girona] case study, while the Workshop Schools [Malaga] case study extended to a 16-25 age group.

b) A broader age group with upper or lower age limit (over and under a defined age)

For example, both the Finnish case studies, the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] and the Ohjaamo Centre in Southwest Finland FR, defined their target groups according to under 30 years old. In Germany, the VbFF [Rhein-Main] case study is addressed to mothers under 25. In Portugal, the Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] adopted a general above 15 years old criteria, while the EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] case raised the target group to over 18s. In Bulgaria, the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] defined its target group as youths up to 29 years old. In Austria, the Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] case study addressed 22 year olds or older age group.

c) An undefined age group, without age group restriction, as in Croatia: the LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja], addressed "all Croatian citizens - with a general focus on youth"

The following table 4 shows the different age group considered in the policies/measure targets

Table 4. Age groups in target definition

Country	Policy/measure label	Functional Region	Age criteria				
			18-29	18-24	16-24	A broader age group with upper or lower age limit	An undefined age group, without age group restriction
Austria	Du kannst was!	Upper Austria				X (22 years or older)	
	Back to the future	Vienna		X			
Bulgaria	University Students Training Practices	Blagoevgrad	X				
	Youth Guarantee	Plovdiv				X (up to 29 years old)	
Croatia	LLCG Centre	Osijek-Baranja					X
	Open Public University Diopter	Istria					X
Finland	NUPPA Centre	Kainuu				X (under 30 years old)	
	Ohjaamo Centre	Southwest Finland				X (under 30 years old)	
Germany	VbFF	Rhein-Main				X (under 25 years old)	
	Werkschule	Bremen				X (who completed the 8th grade of secondary school education)	
Italy	NEETWork	Milan		X			
	Civic Service	Genoa	X				
Portugal	Professional Courses	Vale do Ave				X (above 15 years old)	
	Education and Training Courses (EFA courses)	Alentejo Litoral				X (over 18 years old)	
Scotland	Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)	Glasgow City Region (GCR)			X		
	Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)	Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Region (ACAR)			X		
Spain	TP12	Girona			X		
	x	Malaga			X up to 25)		

A second transversal criterion refers to the concept of vulnerability. Referring to the notion of vulnerability as it has assumed in the YOUNG_ADULLLT project, it has to be reminded that the concept of vulnerability is used to refer to a higher propensity of particular individuals or groups for risk, danger of deterioration in conditions or poor outcomes or achievements. Several factors may be seen as causing or influencing vulnerability, for instance: physical (e.g., sickness, disability), emotional/psychological (e.g., mental illness, immaturity, dependence), material (e.g. poverty, homelessness, health care, education), and social (lack of support by family or peer group, absence of guidance in difficult situations, and immediate risks from the environment). As such, vulnerability may be approached from different viewpoints, for instance individual conditions and behaviours, structural and systemic material conditions or also social relations and insecurity, and thus needs to be seen as a multidimensional concept and in relational terms. Moreover, it is important to note that vulnerability is not a natural category, but has to be viewed as constructed, relational, and multidimensional. Thus, by focusing on 'young adults' and 'vulnerable groups' as targets groups of LLL policies,

YOUNG_ADULLLT enquires whether and to what extent these represent a result of the de-standardisation of the life course.

In this sense, the category ‘young adults in vulnerable positions’ as targets of LLL policies might include young people who: are seen by state institutions/employers as having left education and training too early and therefore are addressed by policies to re-enter education or training; are longer in education or training than implied by mainstream institutions/standard life course normal expectations; are seen as in need of support to compensate for inequalities – usually framed as relating to indigenous, ethnic, migration or gender issues; are expected to re-enter education in order to upgrade qualifications or correct earlier educational/occupational choices which were not in line with their interest.

The dimension of vulnerability emerging from the case studies analysis refers essentially to the main aspects of lacks and deficits underlying the negative representation of the addressed young adults as a weak group to be empowered. Such representations are generally top down defined referring to the national policies. In this sense, the transversal interpretation of vulnerability underlying the definition of the target groups among the different case studies seems to be based on and, at the same time, to reinforce some widespread discourses on young adults. Moreover, the differences among the case studies in focusing the attention on different types of vulnerability show how the local context features exert significant influence in the target groups construction, aiming at properly answering to the specific local ‘needs’.

Thus, the main factors causing or influencing vulnerability emerging from the case studies analysis lead to the following four types of vulnerability.

a) “Educational/training vulnerabilities” (i.e., low level of education, qualification, early school leavers, drop out...).

Such a criterion was adopted in Italy, by the NEETwork [Milan] case study, focusing on youth with a level of education below or equal to the lower secondary level. Similarly, in Spain, the TP12 [Girona] case study addressed unskilled young adults, below ISCED-3 level. In Bulgaria, Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] addressed youths up to 29 years old who were not well educated and early school leavers. In Portugal, the EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] observed profiles with education under the compulsory level.

b) “Current occupational condition”, mainly focusing on NEET and unemployed conditions.

In Italy, the NEETwork [Milan] case study focused on NEET unemployed for almost 6 months. In Spain, the TP12 [Girona] case study referred to 16-24 year-old unemployed youths. Both the Finnish

case studies (the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] and the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland]) and the Bulgarian case study (Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] case) addressed NEET profiles. Over 18-year-old, unemployed youths were the target group in Portugal by the EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral]. Unemployed youths up to 29 years old were the target of the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] case in Bulgaria.

c) “Structural vulnerabilities”, for instance, referred to gender or ethnicity.

In Germany, the VbFF [Rhein-Main] case study observed mothers under 25. Similarly, gender issues and ethnic minorities are the main criteria of the targeted groups identified in the policy document (Scotland, DYW [GCR]). In Austria, the Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] case study focused on immigrants whose educational attainment was not officially recognised and in the Back to the future [Vienna] case study, refugees who were granted asylum were added as a secondary target group.

d) “Vulnerability due to physical/cognitive impairments”.

For instance, the German Werkschule [Bremen] case study also addressed profiles with physical and/or cognitive disabilities. In Scotland, the DYW [GCR] included disabled people among the targeted groups identified in the policy document.

Moreover, we can identify an extra focus on a “priority group” which relates to vulnerability: there appears to be several flexible criteria in defining priority groups, generally determined at a political level. Indeed, although in general being young and inactive constitutes a condition of vulnerability in contexts where the youth unemployment rate is higher, some of the cases tackle further specific vulnerabilities.

For instance, in Spain and Austria, the criteria refer to young adult asylum applicants at risk of social exclusion. In Portugal, the focus is on “social justice scope”, underlying the “inclusive character” of the programme addressed to unemployed, low qualified, and young adults at risk of social exclusion, considering those who no longer have a place in regular school but need an academic certification and a professional qualification for a fast entry to the labour market (see the EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral]). In Spain, the reference is to precise forms of assistance provided to 16-25 unemployed youths, with specific benefits for priority groups, as described in the Workshop Schools [Malaga]: unemployed youths under the age of 30 with training deficits, women, ethnic minorities, refugees and immigrants, women victims of gender violence, persons with recognised disability of 33% or more, or persons at risk of social exclusion. In Austria the Back to the future [Vienna] case study shows how 18 and 24 year-olds receive needs-oriented basic subsidies, with a focus on vulnerability showing how young adults are dependent on public financial support. In Scotland, the DYW [GCR] includes young care leavers among the targeted groups identified in the policy document.

4.1.3. Correspondence between 'official' and actual target

According to the experts interviewed, the relation of the analysed measures with their contexts produces different degrees of correspondence between their official target and the actual users. Indeed, according to different contextual features and dynamics, some sub-groups within the broader definition of the targets on policy documents might potentially be over-represented in the composition of the actual addressees' group. Also, contrariwise, some (more or less) implicit access 'threshold may produce a 'creaming-out effect' which furtherly select the more fitting profiles, shrinking the heterogeneity of the profiles actually reached by the policy/measure. From this standpoint, we can identify cases like the Finnish ones, for which the broad targeting corresponds to a very heterogeneous group of actual beneficiaries, and cases like the VbFF [Rhein-Main] and the Workshop Schools [Malaga] where the beneficiary profiles overlap with the ones built by policy-makers. This also applies to the NEETwork [Milan] case, although the experts clearly stated that the impact of the measure was revealed to be considerably less sizeable than planned in terms of the actual number of addressees. For the other cases, we have observed different forms of incomplete correspondence and, among them, we can distinguish two main patterns. On the one hand, we have cases where some specific sub-targets tend to be over-represented, and this occurs in terms of age-group (whether the LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja], the University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] or the Scottish cases tend to engage the youngest users among their potential targets) or in terms of structural conditions. Concerning this latter point, another distinction applies. We can indeed find cases where persons belonging to groups identified as priority because of their being defined as vulnerable (like, for instance, the refugees in the Back to the future [Vienna] case) tend to outnumber other beneficiaries. The Civic Service [Genoa] (where the youths at farthest distance from the labour market according to the Youth Guarantee profiling prevail), the TP12 [Girona] (where migrant youths as well as the less qualified NEETs are almost all of the actual addressees) and the Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] (where young people who faced problems in their educational paths usually prevail) belong to this group. On the other hand, we have observed cases that reproduce, at least at some levels, a "creaming-out effect" which entails exclusion of the weakest profiles. In the case of the Open Public University Diopier [Istria], this is due to the cost of enrolling in the measure, which implies an almost automatic barring of persons with low economic resources like, for instance, NEETs tend to be. Instead, the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] seems to face difficulties in reaching less skilled NEETs, thus threatening to produce a further "internal" competition among the strongest and weakest NEETs, while among the Back to the future [Vienna] addressees the number of migrants is very limited compared to its potential target. The German Werkschule [Bremen] represents a case where the "internal" selection mechanisms, which aim to ensure the quality of its outcomes by focusing on the

motivation and the adequacy of potential addressees, tend to entail “implicit” exclusion criteria, discouraging for instance migrant users because of their lack of proficiency in German.

4.1.4. Main discourses underlying the target construction

The main discourses underlying the target construction refer to the diffused social and cultural representation behind the profile of the young addressees, evidencing how such stereotypes can intervene on the definition itself of the target groups in the different national contexts. Observing the core topics of the discourses affecting the policy/measure’s target group construction, four main transversal dimensions can be identified: a) the attitudinal limitations (stressing on the scarce propensity toward activation); the lack of soft skills (focusing on missing competences and abilities of the target group); c) the deep social vulnerability of the target groups (implying the need of a dedicated and specific multidimensional approach in terms of empowerment); d) the stereotypes behind the target group biographies, represented as a deviation from a standard linear’ life course; d) lastly, the training/education path as a conversion factor to overpass the weakness of the target group.

a) Attitudinal limitations are often described by experts as the main limitation for young adults in socioeconomic difficulties. In this sense, a diffused image of idleness, incapacity and scarce attitude toward activation stresses and culturally reproduces the negative representation of the target groups.

- *Inactivity and limited orientation to mobility and self-autonomy.* In Italy, experts from both the NEETwork [Milan] case and the Civic Service [Genoa] case highlighted the common depiction of passive and disengaged profiles, significantly tied to their social origins.
- *Scarce job market orientation.* In Austria, the Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] case study showed how the local Chamber of Labour considers young adults with no formal education as poorly capable of autonomous orientation in the labour market.
- *Scarce motivation.* Lack of motivation by the young adults addresses emerged (mainly from the experts’ point of view) particularly in the Austrian Back to the future [Vienna] case and in the Croatian LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] case study. The main reference on this point is to the motivation to learn, to continue the educational paths in order to improve their competences and their employability.
- *Scarce proactivity and inability to engage in long-term planning.* Scarce vision of long-term future and lower social involvement by the youths are evidenced in the Croatian Open Public University Diopter [Istria] case study.

It has to be underlined that such reference to personal attitudinal limitations stresses individual responsibility as a major explicative factor and often does not adequately take into account the faults of the systemic and structural dimension (especially at institutional level), thus allocating to individual responsibility the main motivation for struggling in labour market integration (as emerged, for example, in the Austrian, Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] case study).

b) Lack of soft skills. The significant lack of professional and even basic-soft skills is underlined by the experts in the Italian NEETwork [Milan], in the Austrian Back to the future [Vienna] case study and in the Spanish TP12 [Girona] case study. Such a critical point is amplified by the limited expectation in capability of educational improvement and self-empowerment of the observed disadvantaged profiles, as clearly emerged in the Italian NEETwork [Milan] Case, of the Milan FR, and the DYW [GCR].

c) Excessive social vulnerability implies safeguarded experiences and dedicated learning contexts. The deep social frailty of the NEET profiles (particularly due to the lack of transversal and basic skills), as well as the need for expert tutoring in protected and secure work environments emerged in the Italian Civic Service [Genoa] case study. Such aspects also have to be related to the German Werkschule [Bremen] case study, stressing the need of educationally disadvantaged profiles for individual support and to develop a particular relationship based on trust and confidence with mentoring profiles, in order to enter the vocational sector effectively.

d) Underlying representation of young adults' trajectories in terms of 'linear' paths. The definition of the target group in some cases seems to be dependent on the common conception of young adults' trajectories and their transitions from education to the labour market according to linear paths developed in a rational perspective. The cases of Finland and Scotland are illustrative. In the first case, the target group definition is broad, but the conception of Life Course Research is tightly linear (deviations are depicted as risk factors both from the economic and social perspective) (Finland, NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] case, Kainuu FR and Ohjaamo Centre case, Southwest Finland FR). In both Scottish Functional Regions there is a rational approach to educational and labour market transitions. According to the Scottish case studies, the "ideal" ideal pathway is that young people will never leave the learning component in their lives and that they will have a linear transition from school to an apprenticeship, to college or university (Scotland, DYW [GCR] and DYW [ACAR]). Similarly, standardized and institutionally regulated life courses emerged as a latent and diffused representation of individual linear biographical paths in both German case studies (the VbFF [Rhein-Main] case study and the Werkschule [Bremen] case study, in the Bremen FR).

e) The common assumption of training/education as the essential conversion factor to increase employability, focusing not only on 'traditional' training modalities (mainly in classroom and

theoretically-based), but also on work related activities). In this sense, we adopt the Sen's (1992) notion of conversion factor related to training and education policies, as those factors permitting to individuals to overpass social discriminations and limitations in order to achieve better conditions. In Austria, the Back to the future [Vienna] case stressed the central role of vocational training and apprenticeship in providing young people with a mix of school- and work-based learning. Similarly, in the Portuguese Alentejo Litoral Functional Region the importance of Adult Education and Training Courses (EFA courses) is underlined as a significant form of provision for young people who had not achieved compulsory education following a regular path in due time and are in need of fast entry to the labour market.

4.1.5 Governance patterns according to the target construction

The peculiarities of the targets relate to governance issues that particularly affect the dimensions of the addressees' engaging and taking-up and, in some cases, they also interplay with the assessment of success that determines refunding.

Generally, all the analysed cases share the underlying assumption about the necessity to approach vulnerable targets by means of networks of different professionals and/or institutions, in order to better respond to the needs generated by the intersection of different dimensions of vulnerability. At the same time, the tension toward the holistic approach is reduced when the employability task constitutes the core of the measures, as it also often affects the definition – and for some cases even the assessment - of the expected outcomes. The Finnish cases are examples in terms of construction and managing of an extended network of private and public institutions, as well as different professionals who interplay in adapting to a very variable set of requests, according to the heterogeneous profiles of the beneficiaries. Furthermore, the action of these networks is facilitated by the flexibility of the national regulation of Ohjaamo Centres, which is meant to support their local adaptation, in the wake of the general process of ongoing decentralisation of governance in Finland. Given the similar nature of the LLLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja], coordination and cooperation with other institutional partners is also a key function. However, this case shows how the lack of upstream coordination between the Croatian Public Employment Services and social welfare conditions the implementation of a network based service, which is affected by the mismatch in the Croatian skills ecology and the absence of measures supporting the education-to-work transitions. However, this last point is relevant for most of the cases, as it affects the opportunities of the beneficiaries, regardless of the degree to which the focus is on employability. A good pattern of functioning, in this respect, is found in the University Training in Plovdiv, where the local employers interact with the internship design in order to synchronize the training with the labour market needs.

Concerning the cases with a more focused targeting, the German Werkschule [Bremen] – and at least in terms of potential development, the Austrian Back to the future [Vienna] – tackles the issues of youth low qualification and training deficits (as constructed by policy-makers) by strengthening the fit of its school curriculum with the Regional regulation (the Werkschule [Bremen] was recently institutionalized as a component of the German educational system) and, above all, by planning project-based curricula. Consistently with the greater value assigned by the policy managers and street level professionals to practical experience in the learning process within these curricula, the Werkschule [Bremen] gathers a number of different professionals as teachers, which constitutes a further connection with the local market, even in terms of addressees' contact network, which is a further dimension of potential disadvantage reduction for the less competitive profiles. Indeed, this assumption also resonates with the policy-making of both Italian cases, where the Third Sector is deemed as the ideal environment for integrating the most vulnerable profiles in the labour market, starting from their soft skills acquisition and, moreover, their integration in formal and informal networks, in order to overcome their disengagement from the local social and productive fabric.

As anticipated, the target definition has in some cases entailed issues concerning the assessment of success (which often relates to further refunding). For instance, for the Spanish TP12 [Girona] the distribution of ESF funds is planned according to employment-based indicators, neglecting the positive rate of former addressees who decide to re-enter the educational system after participating in the measure.

In terms of capacity of the policies/measures to engage specific targets like the ones of the Scottish cases, it is relevant to point out that the DYW policies in both the Functional Regions draw on a sound knowledge of their context shared by the institutions participating in their networks. This is also reflected in the effectiveness in detecting potential users through the collaboration of the educational system staff and/or the social workers and the public Job Centres. In this way, the main areas of youth disadvantage, namely early school leaving, health and economic domains and unemployment, are covered by the DYW network, thus reducing the potential exclusion of the weakest profiles. Yet, when it comes to cases that imply a certain degree of individual activation to access the measure, we have also observed deficits in the governance of engaging addressees, and this especially applies to the cases shaped by the Youth Guarantee scheme that have been put in place in contexts where disengagement between youths and institutions is particularly significant. Both the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] and the NEETwork [Milan] project explicitly assume the difficulty in reaching the weakest profiles among their targets, and in both cases the reasons for this gap are attributed by the experts interviewed to the NEETs' deficits in self-managing their educational and training trajectories and, above all, to the inadequacy of the communication channels used by institutions for policy promotion.

In other words, given the widespread condition of disengagement from institutions of the most of the NEETs, the standard Youth Guarantee campaigns seem to be effective in strengthening relations with the profiles who are somehow already in contact, threatening to produce further exclusion for the youths who stand outside these channels. Thus, Scottish cases might be considered as a good example if the policies want to reach a yet unknown target groups, however the Youth Guarantee risks to excludes certain groups as it not focuses on the regional characteristics and young adults needs. Referring to the specific Bulgarian and Italian cases, it is worth stressing that, for the latter, the attempt to fill this gap in communication is one of the main tasks of the measure itself, which integrates into Youth Guarantee the aim of compensating its difficulties in engaging NEETs.

4.1.6. Relations with other actors

As partially shown in the previous paragraph, the target group construction contributes to shaping the networks of institutions collaborating in policy implementation. In this paragraph, we take into account relations with other significant actors, which, in the context of the analysed cases, interplay with them, although they are not directly involved in the networks of governance that run the policies/measures. Thus, the attention will be on the relations with different actors at different levels (mainly training and educational agencies and local firms), showing if, and at what extent, they enter into competition by offering similar solutions and/or services for similar targets, or, on the contrary, synergies among them occurs. The issue of potential competition among different actors is tackled in relation to two main dimensions: the first one refers to the funding issue, considering the competition for guaranteeing the funds. The second dimension refers to the competition in engaging the higher potential numbers of addressees. The role of the actors and institutions in the FR is also considered, distinguishing the cases where a monopolistic role within the region is played by a unique organisation from the cases where a network or a system prevails.

In this sense, an important distinction might be made between the cases that entered into competition with other actors by offering similar solutions and/or services for similar targets or, on the contrary, cases which, because of their very design, fostered synergies with other actors in their context. This latter condition best applies to cases, which aim to deliver a multifaceted range of services to a large target group, in order to better tackle the holistic approach to their users. In this group, there are both Finnish cases, while the LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] struggles because of the general lack of coordination among actors operating on unemployment and the general skill mismatch of the Croatian context, and consequently relies on smaller networks of “external” collaboration. On the contrary, both Scottish cases are good examples of a positive coordination and partnership model: the implementation of DYW both in the Glasgow City Region (GCR) and Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire

Region (ACAR), has strengthened previous relationships among different actors supporting young people in their educational and labour market transitions. Further, also both German cases have synergies with other actors, particularly local firms. Indeed, thanks to their well-established tradition in their context (VbFF [Rhein-Main]) or their institutionalization within the educational system (Werkschule [Bremen]), they both often play an intermediary role between their addressees and the local productive fabric, thus fostering the process of labour market integration. Similarly, both the Austrian cases are characterized by strong cooperation between different actors at different levels. In the “Du kannst was! [Upper Austria]”, the strong cooperation mainly among social partners has to be underlined and it is embedded within a broader social partnership culture of negotiations and concessions. In the “Back to the future [Vienna]” case the relationships between the socio-economic companies (acting as executing organisation) and other organisations (mainly public) are strong, and the exchange of information among them is significant, and is aimed at fostering the sustainable and active integration of the target group into the primary labour market. As a long-term task, this corresponds to one declared by the experts interviewed for the analysis of TP12 [Girona] in Spain, who would like to increasingly contribute to counter the widespread depiction of their addressees as inadequate for the local labour demand. Similar evidence has emerged when analysing the Portuguese Professional Courses [Vale do Ave]: indeed, they still carry a legacy related to prejudice and misconception, leading to informal discourses mentioning that these educational pathways are resources for students that do not succeed in regular school or have lower academic skills. The strong cooperation among different actors at the regional level contributes to spreading the real purpose of professional courses, which is the qualification of young adults with the objective of lowering unemployment rates and providing equal opportunities in diverse contexts. At the same time, for other reasons TP12 [Girona] is one of the cases belonging to contexts where competitiveness on the same target is rather high, mostly due to funding criteria. In fact, the TP12 [Girona], the Workshop Schools [Malaga], the NEETwork [Milan] project and the Civic Service have to compete with other actors in engaging the higher potential numbers of addressees, differently from the Open Public University Diopter [Istria] which, although in its turn depending on the amount of actual addressees, has a monopolistic role within its region. A similar monopolistic role characterizes the University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] implemented by South-West University “Neofit Rilski”: it is part of a network at a national level, but its role is monopolistic at a regional level, where it aims to include more young adults in the workforce and to strengthen the relationships between education, real work conditions and the labour market.

To sum up, pre-existing positive and fruitful relations among different actors dealing with similar target groups as well as providing similar services seem to be a key factor in creating synergies, rather than

competition. The strong cooperation among different actors could also contribute to qualify services making them more fitting with the local young adults' needs. To this, it has to be added the funding issue: where the economic resources are sufficient to guarantee the services' implementation by all the actors and institutions the competition dynamic less likely occurs, including the competition to engage the higher potential numbers of addressees.

4.1.7. Target group construction from the addressees' standpoint

Focusing on the life course perspective, issues emerging from the various case studies show an implicit correspondence with the elements described in the previous sections, often displaying a reproduction of the main discourses underlying the construction of the measure/policy target group. Aspects referring to the attitudinal limitations and the lack of autonomy and soft skills occur again. However, adopting the addressees' standpoint permits to reinterpret the aforesaid elements, better understanding the actual limitations, thus offering an alternative interpretation according to the individual perspective and often differently explaining the effective conditions and the causes behind the limitations described. Following the addressees' perspective, several common themes are identifiable in the various case studies: a) the lack of autonomy and independence (often describing the counter effects of public provisions); b) the underlying linear conception of young adults' trajectories (often reflecting a cultural expectation rather than an effective diffused opportunity, especially for those young adults with no linear trajectories); c) self-perception corresponding to social image and stigmas (reproducing marginalisation of disadvantaged young people); d) the hidden dynamic behaviours of young adults (contradicting the passive representations of their profiles); e) the scarce expectations towards the project itself (generated by poor self-perception); f) the reaction to vulnerability labelling (against prejudices and social stigma).

a) The lack of autonomy and independence (in the economic, as well as in the life course perspective). This emerges clearly in the Italian Civic Service [Genoa] case study, in the Genoa FR, where the financial support provided is addressed to subjects typically still living with parents. Although provided with financial support, the young adults are not able to build economic independence. This means that, even if the sum helps to improve the everyday life of the beneficiaries, it does not help the path toward autonomy but, on the contrary, it postpones the gaining of independence. In Germany, as emerged in the VbFF [Rhein-Main] case study, the support system for disadvantaged groups implies both public provisions to support the subjects in job seeking and an individual responsibility toward a self-empowerment through training activities. Similarly, the importance of professional courses to provide the opportunity to have qualifications for a job and, thus,

leading to economic autonomy and stability for the young adults' lives is underlined by the Portuguese Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] case study.

b) The underlying linear conception of young adults' trajectories reflects a presumed standardisation of successful life courses (e.g., being busy, having completed a scholastic path, etc., relating to what has already been reported in the previous 4.1.4. paragraph). For instance, the Spanish TP12 [Girona] case study shows how integration in Youth Guarantee fosters the standardization of the time-span (under 29) in which training activities are accepted and considered "normal". Similarly, the two Finnish case studies (the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] case, and the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland]) underline the reproduction of the linear conception of Life Course, applying it as a comparison criterion between successful or unsuccessful paths. The Scottish case studies reflect how, on the one hand, successful linear trajectories can reflect a smooth transition from school to apprenticeship, until employment in the job market (DYW [ACAR]), as well, on the other hand, how unsuccessful non-linear trajectories can be explained by several personal situations (e.g., health problems, pregnancy, childbearing, elder care, financial constraints) that deviated them from the standard and smooth educational and labour market transitions (as emerged in the other Scottish case study, DYW [GCR]). Sometimes, the policy itself does not seem to recognise de-standardised life courses (as in the Portuguese EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] case study).

c) Self-perception corresponding to social image and stigmata. Relating to the commonly diffused and underlining conception of standardised linear trajectories, some youths have reported increasing social pressure pushing them into higher education, showing how opting out of the education system is not socially accepted. This implies a correspondence also with negative self-representation and identity, interiorizing the personal path as a deviant path from a normal trajectory (for instance, as emerged in the Austrian Back to the future [Vienna] case). In this sense, often the vulnerability framed by the target definition corresponds to (almost all) the addressees' self-perceptions, where youths feel weak mostly because of their early school leaving condition and consequent low qualification (as emerged in the Italian NEETwork [Milan] case). Thus, sometimes, such self-representation as a 'vulnerable group', interiorized by being significantly structurally reproduced, is reflected in their perception of other 'vulnerable groups' as a threat (like the fear of the increasing migration flows, as emerged in the Austrian Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] case study).

d) Dynamic reality vs passive representation. However, when exploring the accounts of actual daily life conditions, a much more dynamic situation emerges which is far from the passive/inactive representation. On this point, the "planning" ability and the efforts and competences used to make a life choice, independently from the type of choice, often has not been adequately taken into account and valorised by policymakers. Indeed, often, even if self-recognition reflects the scarce personal

appeal for the local labour market, the accounts of respondents (particularly those concerning undeclared work experiences) contradict the widespread depiction of passivity (as in the Italian NEETwork [Milan]).

e) Poor self-perception generates scarce expectations towards the project itself. For instance, having interiorised a strong sense of weakness and poor self-identity, the subjects often take part in the project with no significant expectation, and denote a very low level of life planning (as in the Italian NEETwork [Milan] case).

f) Reaction to vulnerability labelling. However, in other cases, youths do not recognise themselves in the label of 'vulnerable group', although they feel the prejudice and misconceptions commonly associated with professional courses, due to the related social stigma. Indeed, regular school teachers and the students' families and friends doubt their quality in assuring professional success or access to the higher education paths that are so much socially valued (see the Portuguese Professional Courses [Vale do Ave]).

The analysis has discussed some common issues among the different case studies, showing how some of the main discourses underlying the construction of the measure/policy target group are the same in different National and regional/local contexts. In particular, often, we have seen how the underlying linear conception of young adults' life course risks to be applied as a comparison criterion between successful or unsuccessful paths and how, sometimes, the policy/measure itself does not seem to recognise de-standardized life courses. Both these aspects have impacts on the young adults' self-perception as well as on their "reaction" to vulnerability labelling. Indeed, some youths have a negative self-representation and a poor self-identity, interiorizing the personal path (for example in the cases of early school leavers) as a deviant path from a 'normal' trajectory. This could lead also to scarce expectations towards the projects as well as to low motivation to improve their competences. Thus, sometimes, such poor self-perception leads to consider themselves as vulnerable people. This can produce the "certification of vulnerability", which risks to generate the self-fulfilling prophecy, leading to the labelling and the welding of individual perception according to the collective one.

4.1.8 Target construction knot analysis with the 3 main theoretical perspectives

In this paragraph, the main insights emerging from the analysis of the target construction knot will be briefly discussed with reference to the theoretical perspectives of Cultural Political Economy, Governance and Life Course Research. The attention will be focused on the following issues: a) the implicit prevalent orientation of the analysed policies/measures to the model of the dependent work,

indirectly considering the dependent worker's career as the main, if not the only, access to the job. This, again, shows the underlying linear conception of young adults' trajectories reflecting a presumed standardization of successful life courses; b) the widespread conception of young adults as 'vulnerable subjects' because of individual deficits and/or inadequacies; c) the relations among public and private actors and institutions as well as the coordination among different policy fields (educational, social, labour market), discussing whether the wider the network, the wider the scope of the young adults' policies; d) the impact of the expected funding scheme on the target group construction process; as well as e) the prominent role covered by employability in the different policies/measures and its relation with the empowerment' goal in order to better meet the young adults' actual needs.

Cultural Political Economy perspective

As far as the target construction is concerned, a common thread among the cases consists in the strong emphasis on the application of different LLL measures as means by which to reduce the distance between the vulnerable youths and the market. The prevalent thrust of the measures/policies seems still to be the employee condition, rather than, for instance, self-employment or independence, i.e., the underlying representation of trajectories in terms of linear paths seem to refer to career development solely as employees. Given a widespread depiction of the targets as potential workforce, which is still unexploited mainly because of individual deficits and/or inadequacies, a significant focus is generally placed on the definition of solutions which best apply to their "treatment". Consequently, the emphasis on soft skill learning (as emerged in the Italian NEETwork [Milan], in the Austrian Back to the future [Vienna] case study and in the Spanish TP12 [Girona] case study), as well as the positive value attributed to the practical component of learning (as emerged in the Austrian Back to the future [Vienna] case, as well as in the Portuguese Alentejo Litoral FR) and the search for "ideal" work/learning environments for protected and gradual integration (see, for instance, the Italian Civic Service [Genoa]) converge toward the aim of "fixing" the scarcely competitive targets. These aspects seem to fit with the needs of at least some of the addressees, who are generally depicted with the following features: inactivity and limited orientation to mobility and self-autonomy (see, for instance, the Italian NEETwork [Milan] project), with scarce job market orientation (as it is evident in the Austrian Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] case) and scarce motivation as well as scarce proactivity and inability to undertake long term planning (see, for instance, the two Croatian cases and the Austrian Back to the future [Vienna] case). The influence of the mainstream EU discourses on employability seem therefore particularly relevant when it comes to the definition of the target groups, among which the NEET profile construction might be considered an example in terms of attribution of individual responsibilities for their "structural" deficits.

Governance perspective

In a Governance perspective, the target construction particularly affects the building up of networks that aim at better responding to the assumed target groups' needs. As a consequence, the more the overlap among social, structural and professional vulnerability is addressed by the policy/measure, the more these networks tend to include different kinds of institutions. This applies differently to contexts where coordination among different policy areas is stronger or, on the contrary, contexts where different policy fields work separately. Opposite poles in this sense are represented, for instance, by the Finnish cases, the design of which is essentially cross-sectoral, and both the Italian cases, which reflect low coordination among different policy fields. Furthermore, the different models of collaboration among private and public bodies also entail differences among the analysed cases, in which examples of synergies among private and public bodies are present (see, for instance, the NEETwork [Milan] project) or more rigid divisions among public and private institutions (see for instance the Open Public University Dioptr [Istria]) have been shown.

In terms of funding schemes, the target construction produces, in some cases, contradictions related to the assessment of success. Indeed, even for the cases where the holistic approach to the addressees is more oriented towards personal empowerment rather than labour market integration, like the Spanish TP12 [Girona] or the German Werkschule [Bremen], the prevalent criterion for refunding is in most cases the employment rates of the former addressees. This somehow conflicts with the peculiarities of target groups characterised by low competitiveness on the market.

Life Course Research Perspective

Being seen as belonging to a 'vulnerable' target group seems to further enhance the addressees' internalisation of the negative social evaluation concerning their own life choices. Indeed, the different experiences of exclusion shared by the most of the case addressees form the basis for their negative self-evaluation (see, for instance, the Italian NEETwork [Milan]), especially in terms of non-coincidence of their life trajectories with "normal" ones (for instance, as emerged in the Austrian Back to the future [Vienna] case). The cultural push toward standardised and linear life courses (see, for instance, the Spanish TP12 [Girona] case study, the two Finnish as well as Scottish case studies) acquires particular relevance for those whose trajectories diverged from the expected ones at early stages of their relations with educational and work institutions. In addition, sometimes, the policy itself does not seem to recognise de-standardized life courses (as in the Portuguese EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] case study). In some cases, due to an interiorised sense of weakness and poor self-identity, young adults take part in the project with no significant expectation, as well as a very low level of life

planning (as in the Italian NEETwork [Milan] case). In other cases, however, youths do not recognise themselves in the label of 'vulnerable group' and their accounts contradict the widespread depiction of passivity (as in the Italian NEETwork [Milan] case).

Moreover, empowerment and employability are sometimes conceived as converging the contrary, this is not a connection that can be taken for granted as the link between empowerment and employability is neither automatic nor predictable. Indeed, it is necessary to question the links between employability and empowerment, as the goal of employability diverges from that of empowerment, which for policy makers is often considered as an instrumental objective compared to the final one of employability. This is one of the points of possible divergence in young adults' life courses who, on the one hand need holistic policies and, on the other hand, need specific measures aiming to the integration of different segments (educational, social and labour policies) to best respond to their actual and multidimensional needs

4.2. Implementation knot

Policies are devised to address identified challenges of common importance and interests. Their success or failure depends on the way they have been implemented. The implementation of a policy is a very complex process, which involves a great number of variables, although having very similar or completely identical components and phases. In comparing policy "fabrics", certain points or "knots", where their key elements intersect or "knit", appear to be of particular importance for elucidating similarities and differences, for identifying productive patterns or counterproductive practices, but also allowing for deeper understanding of a particular policy itself. Thus, the implementation factor is one of the most important "knots" for the policy comparisons and analyses. Furthermore, it even embraces in a way other knots as "target group construction" and "pedagogical interactions" analysed in this report. This causes certain overlapping of topics although regarded from different perspectives.

Overall, the term "implementation" in the context of the YOUNG_ADULLLT project represents an accomplishment of a particular policy, measure or a strategic plan related to the opportunities of long life learning provided to young people. For the successful implementation of a policy, certain key prerequisites need to be ensured beforehand. Firstly, it is necessary to identify appropriate objectives and a series of corresponding interrelated and consistent actions intended to break down the whole process of coordinating, conducting, monitoring, etc., i.e. the overall execution of the policy. Subsequently, a complex system of tasks needs to be designed to translate the major structural elements of the process of introducing the policies such as suitable initiatives, appropriate competences of the implementing staff, relevant allocation of responsibilities, suitable communication flows, specific consultation arrangements, feasible deadlines, synchronized actions between all

participating agents, regular reporting, timely corrective actions, etc. within the whole policy implementation process.

Secondly, there is a need for suitable means and tools to reach the intended target groups as well as to involve related communities. Such an approach, that is, integrating all related actors into a well-coordinated process starting from policy formulation and strategic planning followed by appropriate practical actions, could ensure efficient implementation leading to tangible results.

Thirdly, there is also a necessity to develop and follow an appropriate methodology that also embraces identified links between actors and networks of institutions ready to become proper implementers of the policy.

This meta-level sample structure of a policy implementation has its concretization in the national and regional contexts where one can see how a policy is actually being carried out and accomplished with all possible modifications, adaptations and transformations as well as measure its real impact and consequences on young adults' life trajectories. As an abstract model, the implementation scheme couldn't account all possible external and internal factors which could be encountered, no matter how thoroughly thought, well-designed and appropriately planned.

Therefore, there are a number of difficulties and challenges that can hamper concrete policy implementation. For example, a large number of tasks, poor planning, lack of administrative capacity, and especially insufficient funds. Another serious challenge might be the lack of adequate consultation and two-way communication with the target groups, which could hinder the achievement of the desired results.

All these make the implementation of LLL policies and measures quite a demanding task, whose success depends mainly on the optimal interaction of diverse actors and factors at many levels. This can be seen very clearly in the analysis of 18 cases from nine European countries. The comparison of the cases from different perspectives unveils common features and similar patterns despite the exceedingly different national and regional contexts. The most important influencing factors and their interplay can be pursued at three different levels – policy decision, fulfilment and acceptance. However, it needs to be preceded by an analysis of the contextual aspects with the strongest impact on policy implementation starting from the concrete policy aims and objectives. Then, the analysis could consider certain key aspects of the policy at the level of its construction among which – target group definition, life course models and approaches to intervene them, tools and means for implementation. The practical performance of the policy measures are also important elements of the whole accomplishment process and need closer consideration. Finally, but most importantly, the

acceptance of the policy by its intended target groups and stakeholders need to be justified and investigated thoroughly.

4.2.1. Aims and Objectives of the Policies

The basic aims and objectives of all the measures carried out at the 18 Functional Regions refer to: increasing employability of young adults; integration into primary labour market positions or reintegration into the education and training systems; transition into employment; acquisition of some generic work experience; provision of practical knowledge and skills; supporting low-qualified people, facing risks of unemployment or preventing future unemployment; facilitating the official recognition of informally acquired professional skills; acquiring new skills and knowledge especially practical competencies; enhancing competencies of young adults in order to increase their competitiveness, develop and upgrade their career or everyday management skills as well as their learning and studying capabilities; supporting the general wellbeing of young adults, reducing the risk of being socially excluded and their biographical uncertainty; encouraging active citizenship of young people and improving training, knowledge and commitment on care giving, civil and environment protection; etc.

Overall, the key goal of most policies is to reduce the inactive population while improving the efficiency of the local labour market and promote economic activity. The significance of the policies studied is in supporting young people in the country, and particularly the region, in their endeavours to achieve adequate personal and professional success. Most of the measures are associated with high expectations for solving the problem of youth unemployment, ensuring an effective workforce, enhancing the adaptability of the young workforce to labour market requirements and reducing the gaps and mismatches between skills supply and demand.

The link between the objectives of the programmes and local needs is mainly in two directions: on the one hand, public institutions aim to promote economic activity by increasing employment, and on the other hand, they aim to increase employment corresponding to the needs and requirements of local stakeholders. In some cases, the policies serve other goals, as well. For example, in the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], the central question related to young adults is, how to get them to stay in the region or at least to return there after studies. Furthermore, another objective of the programme relates to how to attract young people, especially young families, to move to Kainuu from other Finnish regions and even from abroad.

The case-studies under investigation involved a huge number of ways, means and tools as well as a great variety of options which can be divided into several main areas: vocational guidance for young

people; short or long term training in professional qualifications or key skills; recognition of competencies; subsidizing temporary employment (e.g. transitional work places at Back to the future [Vienna]); offering practical experience opportunities by participation in internships and practices (e.g. students' practices at University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad]); supporting employers to generate new jobs; support for youth entrepreneurship; provision of services from professional networks, etc.

4.2.2. The Importance of the context

Since the LLL policies are being devised at national level (sometimes with strong influence from international trends and developments) but implemented at regional or local level it is necessary to take into account some key factors influencing the process. For that reason, we highlight a few basic indicators that have key importance for the success of policy implementation. Some of these indicators relate to educational governance (its dominant model, scale and level of regional autonomy), while others are more connected to ecology (particularly skills ecology) in terms of the type of localism as well as the mechanisms of coordination. Furthermore, factors like established transition regimes of young people from school to work environments are also very important and their influence needs to be explored. For example, Back to the future [Vienna] case study, which definitely addresses this issue, aims mainly to foster the sustainable and active integration of young people into the primary labour market by increasing their “employability” by means of transitional employment.

Concerning the “model of educational governance”, all the young adult policies in participating countries could be defined as state regulated with slight variations. In Italy, a recent push is reported towards quasi-market, especially in higher education and vocational education and training. In Scotland the state deals with compulsory education (up to lower secondary) and higher education, and vocational education and training are quasi-market. In fact, there is a great variety of quite different examples among the 18 cases that demonstrate original methods undertaken or measures elaborated at regional or local levels in order to align the measures and initiatives to the centrally imposed regulations while at the same time responding to contextual necessities, peculiarities and needs.

In relation to the profile of the countries, in terms of “scale of governance” which strongly influences policy implementation, there are different variations between two main types. National (or federal) profiles are found in Austria (AT), Bulgaria (BG), Croatia (HR), Germany (DE) and Italy (IT) and regional or local in Finland (FI), Spain (ES) and Scotland (UK). Portugal (PT) is an exception because national and regional are equally presented. This indicator closely relates to the level of regional autonomy (in terms of educational governance) which is also a very important factor when analysing the implementation of LLL policies.

Regional autonomy allows a certain freedom in devising measures, using tools, establishing partnerships, creating independent governing bodies and using appropriate approaches to achieve intended outcomes and desired impacts. This could allow regional or local institutions and people to independently apply policy measures to local economic environment, labour market, education and training practices. This regional autonomy is ensured by the policy itself as is the example of the Ohjaamo Programme [Southwest Finland], which was explicitly designed so that the definitions of the structures and activities are broad in order to leave enough room for regional or local interpretations. Therefore, as reported, when planning the measure, fitting the measure to the local and regional needs was enabled and encouraged.

All these provide greater compactness and purposefulness in management actions, a higher degree of continuity between labour market, educational and LLL policies and measures. Furthermore, the Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] case study demonstrates that successful cooperation very much depends on the specific individuals involved and not so much on the organisations they represent, thus stressing the relevance of the specific context and network of actors in shaping the implementation and impact of a policy intervention.

The level of regional autonomy in terms of educational governance refers to freedom and independence from centralized management and control. In other words, it illustrates how much the decisions taken in a regional context are influenced by regional interests and are focused on problems and plans within the region. For example, the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] aims mainly to tackle the social exclusion of youth and young adults while the main emphasis of the national level policy is on youth unemployment and school dropouts.

In summary, most of the cases studied show an “average” level of regional autonomy, which in most cases of educational management varies to a “high” level, and to a lesser extent to “low” regional autonomy.

Considering the different skills ecologies, we can distinguish diverse types of localism and mechanisms of coordination in the different Functional Regions. They display freedom of action in individual projects/cases. Is it possible for the institution implementing the project to model it in accordance with regional specificities, to include new elements, to act autonomously?

According to the “type of localism” all the countries are divided into two groups of “centrally managed” (AT, BG, HR, IT, PT and UK) and “laissez faire” (FI, DE, ES) type cases. In terms of the “mechanisms of coordination”, there are again two groups of projects/cases: “coordinated market economies” (AT, HR, FI, DE) and “liberal market economies” (BG, IT, PT, ES and UK) with certain variations from the main type. As regards the transition regime dimension the countries vary between four different

categories – “employment centred” (AT, BG, HR, DE and PT), “sub-protective” (IT and ES) “universalistic” (FI) and “liberal” (UK).

Referring to the cases, it could be concluded that in most of them there is medium to high regional autonomy and the implementation of policies is to a greater or lesser extent centrally management.

4.2.3. Major Issues at the Level of Policy Construction

Policy design is an important step when addressing challenges and planning interventions aimed at supporting young adults to achieve their personal goals and professional aspirations. It also affects their implementation because, while developed at national level in a more or less abstract way, they have to meet different contexts and environments, face unexpected difficulties and limitations, and deal with complex challenges while trying to achieve their goals.

There are several key elements in every LLL policy among which the most important is the definition of its target group. Although, this issue is thoroughly discussed in another section, for the purposes of the present analysis it is necessary to just outline the most important aspects of the target group definition in a policy related to its implementation.

First of all, this is the underlying conception of the life course. The majority of the policies related to our 16 cases originating from nine different European countries follow the “linear” assumption of a standard life for young people, although with certain variations. For instance, in the case Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] the linear life course model is combined with difficulties in the transition to adulthood; in the case of the Civic Service [Genoa] it is not so strictly linear; in the Part-time vocational training for young mothers (VbFF [Rhein-Main]), it is also linear but connected to work and delayed or premature steps in the transition to adulthood (motherhood) of the addressees. Only three cases envisage a “non-linear” life course trajectory and these are the two cases from Croatia and EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] in Portugal.

The target groups in almost all cases examined can be summarized in the age group “under 25 years of age or up to 29 year-old” who are not only unemployed but also with a low level of education (there are exceptions like, for example, the university students in the Blagoevgrad FR case). These are inactive youths, including the discouraged people who remain out of youth unemployment statistics. Somewhat similar are young people at risk of social exclusion and becoming NEETs who are vulnerable to a lesser or greater extent (Boyadjieva & Ilieva-Trichkova, 2017). In some cases, these are young adults during their apprenticeship encouraged to stay and finish their vocational education in the dual system (Werkschule [Bremen]) or young single mothers (VbFF [Rhein-Main]).

In the linear life course trajectories, there is a certain consistency and continuity between different stages of the life cycle and this sequence runs smoothly and without crashes or crises. Generally, the “linear” follows an established model: learning - work that corresponds to the direct transition from adolescence to maturity. In “non-linear” life course trajectories certain disruptions are observed, delays or parallel flows of life cycles, referring to both learning and work for a shorter or longer period. In this model, transitions are hampered by unemployment, limited job offers, or work not in the completed field of specialisation.

Another very important aspect of target group definition is whether the addressees are considered as a deviation from the normal life course or not. According to this dimension, for the majority of the cases, their target groups are defined as deviating from the standard life course (Back to the future [Vienna] and Du kannst was! [Upper Austria], Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv], Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], NEETwork [Milan], DE VbFF [Rhein-Main], Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] and EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral], ETP12 [Girona] and Workshop Schools [Malaga]), but a large group of 7 cases address young people with a standard life course trajectory.

Vulnerability is also an important issue in the target group definition in terms of the attention given to it by the policy as well as in relation to the means and tools employed. Regarding this dimension, 13 cases focus on specific vulnerability (Back to the future [Vienna] and Du kannst was! [Upper Austria], Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv], LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja], Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], NEETwork [Milan], VbFF [Rhein-Main] and Werkschule [Bremen], PEFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral], Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] and EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] and both DYW cases in Scotland, while for the other 5 this is not a priority (University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad], Open Public University Diopier [Istria] and to a certain extent Civic Service [Genoa], Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] and both DYW cases in Scotland).

In relation to policy implementation, consideration should also be given to adopting, following and complying with certain standard paths relating to the target groups’ life courses. Standards help to achieve interoperability, cooperation and efficiency of actions carried out. Connected to this are the objectives of the policies aimed at:

- 1) re-standardizing, meaning creating conditions in which individuals or groups “out” of the normal cycle of standards return to it; or
- 2) de-standardizing, showing cases in which individuals come from a standard vision of sociality.

Within the continuum “re-standardizing” – “de-standardizing”, some interesting conclusions could be derived from the fact that the majority of the cases refer to re-standardizing the normal life course

model, while only a few of them address de-standardizing. In summary, almost all of the analysed cases represent activities aimed at creating a return to normality and standardization of social stages.

Table 5. Re-standardizing or de-standardizing orientation of the policy

Re-standardizing	De-standardizing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to the future [Vienna] • Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] • Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] • LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] • Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] • NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] • NEETwork [Milan] • Werkschule [Bremen] • VbFF [Rhein-Main] • EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral], • TP12 [Girona] • Workshop Schools [Malaga] • both the DYW cases in Scotland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] • Open Public University Dioptr [Istria] • Civic Service [Genoa] • Professional Courses [Vale do Ave]

One very important observation that emerges from the analysis of the 18 case studies – the addressees of the measures do not participate in policy-making. The National Reports of the nine countries highlighted that young people take some part in policy decisions only in three cases – that of FI (Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and NUPPA Centre [Kainuu]) and DE (VbFF [Rhein-Main]). For the remaining 15 cases there is no clear evidence for addressees participating in policy making processes, although certain considerations have been voiced. Important conclusions could be drawn about the absence of young people from processes of policy formation in relation to the mismatches the measures produce. Some of these mismatches might be due to fairly abstract definition of the target groups to be addressed disregarding the specific profile of concrete communities of young people, having quite particular features with their probably very specific needs. When these people have not been involved or at least heard, the policy could fail due to inappropriate approaches, means and measures as well as inadequate expectations.

Another aspect of policy construction with crucial effects on its implementation are the tools and means by which it is realised. The 18 case studies utilize a huge diversity of instruments ranging from personal counselling and guidance, different (in size, duration, type, etc.) kinds of vocational education and training activities, financial and many other kinds of support, information and other types of services (including health and child care, psychological support), etc.

4.2.4. Performance of the Policies Measures

Regarding the performance of the policy measures, there are several important aspects – overall approach of implementation, sources of funding, network of players, profile and size of the organisation that implements the measure, customization related to the addressees' needs, approach

to them, addressees' access to the measure and level of activation, as well as duration of addressees' paths within the measure.

For most of the case studies the overall implementation approach is "top-down" (Back to the future [Vienna] and Du kannst was! [Upper Austria], University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] and Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv], LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja], Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] and EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral], TP12 [Girona] and Workshop Schools [Malaga], both DYW cases in Scotland, of course with certain considerations about the FNUPPA Centre [Kainuu] case). For the rest of them, it is "bottom-up" (Open Public University Dipter [Istria], NEETwork [Milan] and Civic Service [Genoa], VbFF [Rhein-Main] and Werkschule [Bremen]), again with certain considerations, for example related to the Civic Service [Genoa] and VbFF [Rhein-Main]). On the other hand, we can observe variations of approaches between a "holistic" type and an "individualized" one. A good example of an appropriate combination between the two is the VbFF [Rhein-Main] which takes an intermediate position between young mothers, vocational schools, feminist women's movement, and other organisations to provide individualized support (including psychological and even child care) to meet the real needs of those in need.

As for the kind of implementation approach, there is a great variety of solutions employed around the 18 Functional Regions. There are several examples that could be mentioned in this context, for example, the main approach of the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] as an LLL policy is lowering the threshold for youth and young adults who are seeking to avail of services by minimizing bureaucracy and making services more flexible. An important part of this approach are the monthly themed exhibitions and pop-up events organised by the Centre in order to activate participation of young people. Another very good example of a "bottom-up" approach is the Civic Service [Genoa] case study, where all stakeholders were involved in implementing the policy, which modified the well-established governance network in accordance with a "bottom-up" need of the participating NGO in its network, namely the rationalization of the same pattern of collaboration through the creation of a unique ATS.

Sources of funding are mainly "public" – (Du kannst was! [Upper Austria]: 55% public + 45% ESF), University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] and Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv], LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja], Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], Civic Service [Genoa], VbFF [Rhein-Main] and Werkschule [Bremen], EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral], TP12 [Girona] and Workshop Schools [Malaga], both the DYW cases in Scotland. However, some measures have been ensured by "private" funds – Open Public University Dipter [Istria], NEETwork [Milan], or

“mixed” sources (Back to the future [Vienna]: 70% public + 30% private, Professional Courses [Vale do Ave]).

There are great varieties of players who implement the measures around the 18 Functional Regions. Almost half of them are “public” or “mixed” and there is only one “private” player.

Table 6. Type of the implementing organization

Public	Mixed	Private
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to the future [Vienna] • Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] • LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] • Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] • NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] • EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] • TP12 [Girona] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] • Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] • NEETwork [Milan] and Civic Service [Genoa] • VbFF [Rhein-Main] • Werkschule [Bremen], • Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] • Workshop Schools [Malaga] • DYW cases in Scotland) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Public University Diopler [Istria])

Similarly variable are the sizes of the implementing organisations as well as their role in the Functional Region according to the main task of the measure. But what is more important is whether implementation is tailored to the addressees’ needs or not. In this respect, the majority of them are customized to contextual factors (Back to the future [Vienna] and Du kannst was! [Upper Austria], University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] and Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv], LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] and Open Public University Diopler [Istria], Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], Civic Service [Genoa], VbFF [Rhein-Main] and Werkschule [Bremen], both DYW cases in Scotland), while some of them are not (NEETwork [Milan], Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] and EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral], TP12 [Girona] and Workshop Schools [Malaga]).

The issue of “networking” turned out to be of paramount importance for the successful implementation of a policy involving diverse kinds of organisations and their available resources. One can find various dynamic local constellations of actors contributing to the application process. As reported in the Back to the future [Vienna] case study, the implementation of the LLL policy in the Viennese context implied a complex governance regime involving various public institutional actors, with an implementation role for private actors too. This is a very good example of successful cooperation between public and private actors where the policy is implemented by two implementing firms offering 24 hours per week contracted employment for young adults. Similarly, the University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] case study demonstrates another example of successful cooperation between a public university and private companies offering work placements for a period of 6 months to regular students.

Overall, it seems that for most of the 18 case studies the collaboration network is a central instrument. Working together with institutions and individuals sharing visions, goals and resources in diverse forms of collaboration proved to be a crucial condition for the successful implementation of the measure.

The level of activation of the target group in the process of the policy implementation is a very important related aspect of the implementation process. The activation is reported to be “autonomous” for University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] and Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] but with some limitations, LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] and Open Public University Diopter [Istria], Civic Service [Genoa]), Werkschule [Bremen] also with certain limitations, Professional Courses [Vale do Ave], and “tutored” for Back to the future [Vienna] and Du kannst was! [Upper Austria], NEETwork [Milan], VbFF [Rhein-Main] and Werkschule [Bremen], EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral]), both DYW cases in Scotland. Information about ES is missing. As for the typologies of selection, there are three main groups of cases classified by “competition” “threshold”, and “free access”.

Table 7. Types of selection

Competition	Threshold	Free access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] Civic Service [Genoa] VbFF [Rhein-Main] Werkschule [Bremen], 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back to the future [Vienna] Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] NEETwork [Milan] TP12 [Girona] Workshop Schools [Malaga] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] Open Public University Diopter [Istria] Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] both DYW cases in Scotland

The duration of paths within the measures vary from low (0-3 months): , and medium (4-12 months) to high (13 months and over). For the Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and NUPPA Centre [Kainuu] cases it is flexible.

Table 8. Duration of the path within the measure

0-3 months	4-12 months	13 months +
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back to the future [Vienna] LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] NEETwork [Milan] and Civic Service [Genoa] EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] Workshop Schools [Malaga] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Public University Diopter [Istria] VbFF [Rhein-Main] Werkschule [Bremen] Professional Courses [Vale do Ave] TP12 [Girona] ES – TP12 [Girona]

		• both DYW cases in Scotland
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In summary, the policies presented in the case studies are mostly employment-centred, and these are labour-market policies. At the same time, the focus in some cases is also on social objectives related to community integration, the achievement of educational results, etc. Most of the policies are implemented through the system of "tutoring" or "mentoring"; focusing on apprenticeships or internships, emphasizing the need to acquire practical skills, assimilating professional success abilities and various social skills. Policy paths are varied, and this highlights the opportunities for young adults that the policies involved provide.

4.2.5. *Acceptance*

This can be analysed through two important dimensions – how addressees justify their participation in the young adult measures and how they evaluate their experience in them.

The implementation of policies is related to the creation of sustainable measures at regional and national level. Implementation is also related to the awareness of personal participation as an element of life courses, as well as an upgrade and extension of life trajectories, which raises the meaning of this participation for the individual. Reflection on these topics is related to the improvement of inclusive approaches to the learning environment and their modernization. By improving sustainability and outcomes, methods of participation in LLL activities have the potential to engage individuals who are at risk of failure and school dropout. In describing and evaluating their LLL experience, young adults assess the level of relationships between mentors / lecturers and learners and the extent to which they meet their individual needs. The concepts reflecting LLL policies emphasize partnership in the educational environment and interaction oriented approaches.

Considering their participation in the young adult measures, some justifications can be classified as "individualized" (Back to the future [Vienna] and Du kannst was! [Upper Austria], University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad], LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] and Open Public University Diopler [Istria], Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], Professional Courses [Vale do Ave]), others as "2nd/last chance" (Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv], NEETwork [Milan], VbFF [Rhein-Main], EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral], TP12 [Girona] and Workshop Schools [Malaga]), third as complying with a "subjectively meaningful goal" (Civic Service [Genoa]), and forth as "systematic ascription..." (this could be related to a certain extent to Werkschule [Bremen] and Workshop Schools [Malaga] cases).

All this reveals that the degree of participation in LLL and LMP projects is perceived and defined in the categories of personal life plans and standards.

Regarding the second, there is a great variety of evaluating opinions about individual experience in the measures, which could be grouped around the following categories – “well-being” (Back to the future [Vienna], and Du kannst was! [Upper Austria], Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], VbFF [Rhein-Main]), “relevant learning experience”, “improved life chances”, “useful”, “meaningful goal” (Professional Courses [Vale do Ave], TP12 [Girona]), “improved/enhanced self-esteem” (Workshop Schools [Malaga], DYW [GCR]), and “acknowledgement” (DYW [GCR]).

Table 9. Individual experience in the measure

Relevant learning experience	Improved life chances	Useful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to the future [Vienna] • Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] • University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] • Civic Service [Genoa] • Werkschule [Bremen] • Workshop Schools [Malaga] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to the future [Vienna] • University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] • Open Public University Dioptr [Istria] • Civic Service [Genoa] • VbFF [Rhein-Main] • EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to the future [Vienna] • Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] • University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] • LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja] • Open Public University Dioptr [Istria] • Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] • NUPPA Centre [Kainuu], NEETwork [Milan] • Civic Service [Genoa] • VbFF [Rhein-Main] • Werkschule [Bremen] • EFA Courses [Alentejo Litoral] • TP12 [Girona] and Workshop Schools [Malaga] • DYW [ACAR]

In summary, the LLL measures are evaluated reasonably by young adults and the assessment is relatively positive, which is very encouraging in terms of the international sample of 18 case studies. However, there is limited evidence on one of the main goals of most measures – employability, i.e. to what extent participation in the measure helped them to find a job, be successful at work, get a promotion, etc.

However, the majority of cases report the personal benefits of young adult participants in the policies as a result of their implementation. Among the benefits most often mentioned are: improved self-esteem and self-worth, increased self-confidence and self-satisfaction, raised motivation, reduced biographical uncertainty, acquired life skills, acknowledgment of educational possibilities, support in making choices, solving health and mental health problems, smooth transitions to the labour market, experiencing the importance of social contacts and support from peers, etc.

Specifically, considering the results and the overall impact of the project from the addressees' standpoint, the NEETwork [Milan] shows how, by means of the project itself, they attempt to overcome the same condition which framed them as a project target; the positive experiences with the

traineeships paved the way for a more targeted approach to their own educational/training trajectories, leading the addressees to re-enter (or at least to plan their return to) the school system by enrolling in evening adult schools. Similarly, the project seems to have generally improved the self-confidence and the approach to the future of the addressees (see both the Spanish case studies). Often, the experience is perceived by most of the addressees as a new start, a chance to turn a proactive attitude towards their own trajectories (as emerged in the Werkschule [Bremen] case). Most youths from disadvantaged social backgrounds see it as an opportunity after school to attain their objectives (as reported in the DYW [GCR] case). The young adults participating in a professional course seemed to have obtained more certainty for their future lives thus regaining an opportunity to restructure their life courses in a linear trajectory (Professional Courses [Vale do Ave]).

Motivation and personal activation. In this sense, the role of motivation and personal activation seems to be essential to overcome both individual vulnerability as well as the structural stigmatization that reproduces vulnerability itself. In the Spanish TP12 [Girona] the experts tend to emphasize the role of motivation and personal activation, depicting the project as a potential positive shift toward a stable future life (which is expected to reflect the traditional middle-class lifestyle standard). In this sense, most of the addressees tend to reproduce this expectation about the crucial role of their own motivation, reproducing in turn the individualization of systemic failures. This practice is reflected also in the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] case where, when a failure is registered, both experts and young people think it is due more to personal reasons than to the programmes, thus they work together to solve the failure itself.

4.2.6. Implementation knot analysis with the 3 main theoretical perspectives

Just like the other “knots”, the implementation could also be analysed from the three main theoretical perspectives – Cultural Political Economy, Governance and Life Course. While the three of them are equally important for understanding different implications of the LLL policy accomplishment over young people, the Life Course has a special status.

Cultural Political Economy perspective

The economic and cultural implementation approach of social policies is a subject of many analyses. Undoubtedly, professional and personal success of young people as well as the reduction of youth unemployment contribute to the well-being of society. Therefore, the institutionalisation of young adult policies is of great importance for achieving the desired results. Broad networks of national and regional, public and private institutions as well as a vast pool of experts are involved in LLL policy

construction to address the most crucial challenges faced by young people during their normal life course within particular contexts.

In fact, most of the 18 case studies demonstrate that such policies are or could be successful in achieving their goals of improving young adults' lives and well-being as well as enhancing local, regional and national economies and enriching their resources. Certain cases highlight weaknesses and failures of policies some of which are caused by inadequate or faulty visions, perceptions and concepts related to contemporary realities, their dynamics, the changed characteristics of young people and their life courses. One of the reasons for such deficiencies might be the insufficient involvement of young adults in the policy construction process as becomes evident in most of the cases.

An essential aspect of the Cultural Political Economy perspective of implementation is public awareness, focusing on the goals, procedures and benefits of Lifelong learning policies, which could ensure broader involvement in their construction as well as more realistic and adequate formulation. Communication channels should be targeted not only at key stakeholders but also at many other potential beneficiaries, with particular attention to disadvantaged groups. Institutional interaction, together with interaction between key actors, is crucial to resolving potential conflicts that could hamper the implementation process.

To sum up although most of the programmes are beneficial to local needs, the prevalent "top-down" approach, demonstrated in the 18 case studies needs to be changed so that be able to support and align to local and regional "bottom-up" initiatives, visions and concepts. The responsible institutions at the regional level who implement the programmes and work with the other institutions and actors there need to be more closely involved in policy formulation.

It is necessary to say that although the policies under consideration are carried out in national contexts, the objectives, the aims, the paths, the activities, the forms and the tools through which the policies are implemented have many things in common, therefore the measures aimed at exchanging good practices need to be enhanced. This is because all 18 cases provide compelling evidence of the similarity of young adults' challenges and difficulties no matter where they live in Europe – West or East, North or South.

Governance perspective

Implementing policies requires deep knowledge of not only the legal frameworks, rights and responsibilities of institutions and bodies, but also regional and local peculiarities, particularly those related to young people's lives and life conditions. Proposing different measures, elaborating

appropriate means and tools, establishing broad networks of complementary organisations is not always sufficient for the successful implementation of policies. As becomes evident in certain cases individuals are also very important in the process of implementation, in addition to infrastructures and resources – financial and material.

Awareness of policies is very important although not all policies have sufficient visibility in their regions thus limiting the opportunities of young people to benefit from them as well as failing to involve other stakeholders who could significantly contribute to the measures. As demonstrated in the case studies, there is insufficient or ineffective communication and collaboration between the different levels (national, regional and local) although on a horizontal level, i.e. at the regional or local level there is efficient networking and collaborative support. The Governance perspective is also linked to the existence of a system for monitoring and supervising the implementation of programmes which is not visible in many cases or works improperly thus failing to ensure sufficient feedback about the implemented measures. It needs to be clarified that this applies both to youth policies and to the labour market and education and LLL policies.

These policies are aimed at different sectors, but they have the objective of ensuring quality education and adult training, filling the gaps in the qualifications and skills of young adults, and supporting them in gaining a good position on the labour market. What becomes evident in many cases is the lack of synchronization and mutual support of measures proposed by the three different types of policies that result in insufficient or poor results.

Implementing policy also implies two-way communication between hierarchical and horizontal levels, including mentoring-trainee relationships, reporting on the progress made by participants and especially learners.

The complexity of links, the multiple communication channels, the goals and priorities of many aspects, the presence of many partners and, last but not least, the different level of communication all inevitably create both a clash of interests and problems in achieving the goals set by all participants.

In addition, the Governance perspective of implementation also seriously affects the funding of ongoing projects and is of great importance. A large part of the projects are financed by the European Union, there are also those with national and regional funding, however, private funding, although it exists, seems to be insignificant in most cases. Additionally, poorer countries participating in the project mainly rely on funding (full or co-financed) ensured by European funds and in a few cases there is sufficient or significant national or regional financial resources. It means that the implementation of policies is largely dependent on funding provided or available for its implementation.

Life Course Research perspective

The life course of young people decisively depends on their education. Therefore, it is important to identify the reasons for dropout or leaving educational institutions and ending up in difficult situations. Then, it is equally important to propose policies and provide support (in all meanings of the term) aiming to create appropriate conditions for them to overcome challenges by gaining skills, competencies, qualifications, guidance and other kinds of support, including material, financial but also psychological.

In the investigated cases describing separate stages of the educational paths of young adults - in formal and non-formal education, young people rely on the authority of two main actors: parents and teachers/mentors. Institutional authorities in the form of teachers/university teachers appear to be one of the key factors for young people in making important decisions on their professional trajectory.

At the same time, young people seem to think that the skills acquired at school/university are not always sufficient for successful entry to the labour market. But at the same time, many of the participants in the 18 policies confess that they have gained valuable personal qualities like self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence, higher motivation, stronger ambitions, etc. which are not strictly related to employability. These should be taken into account in the process of policy formulation and be suitably concretized.

The focus of many policies in the 18 cases is on the lack of practical orientation of education courses and the inadequate preparation of young people to cope with real work situations, therefore, policies should maintain an appropriate balance between theoretical and practical preparation. Participation in the implemented programmes of the 18 cases demonstrates that such a balance and strong practical orientation of policies enables young people to start work by both acquiring new knowledge and skills as well as accumulating real work experiences in a relatively stable period of their life. Additionally, the income earned allows them to plan the development of their lives and support their initiatives independently.

Encouraging entrepreneurship is the other important aspect, which is lacking in most of the 18 cases. As it becomes evident, entrepreneurial skills and competencies are needed by young people in planning and succeeding in their future life trajectories.

4.3. Pedagogical interactions knot

By pedagogical interactions we refer to the forms of teaching and learning intended by and/or occurring within the studied measures. A distinction between intentions and actual learning is crucial

inasmuch as learning needs to be understood as an individual activity, which emerges from and is embedded in social relationships. According to Wenger (1998, p. 229), learning “cannot be designed, it can only be designed for”. The studied measures of LLL policies thus can be understood as settings designed for the learning of young people in their transition to work. However, this does not mean that intended learning processes actually take place and goals are achieved. Policy objectives and practice goals are reflected by and materialized in more or less bureaucratic entry procedures to which young people are subjected. Yet, they enter these measures with their own biographical agenda that influences their individual learning processes. Learning means that individuals actively appropriate and (try to) make meaning of the social and material world they find themselves in (Bandura, 1977).

Pedagogical interactions are relational ‘knots’ between intentions of policy-makers and practitioners, the organisational structures set in place, the (intended or unintended, reflected or unreflected) practices of staff in the interaction with young people (as well as preparing them), and the practices of young people – whether they are actively engaged with appropriating services offered and contents taught or with making use of what is on offer for their everyday lives and their subjective identities. Thus, the analysis of pedagogical interactions contributes to understanding the Cultural Political Economy of Lifelong Learning Policies inasmuch as explicit and implicit education and training goals are expressions of dominant discourses of what competencies are needed for social inclusion, the most powerful of which is ‘employability’. These objectives underlie the implementation of policies but are also referred to in daily practice where practitioners legitimise teaching methods and contents towards their addressees or where the latter translate their subjective life plans into education or training choices (even if these choices are enforced and/or lack alternative options). Pedagogical interactions are expressions of governance inasmuch as they structure and are structured by the way in which teaching, training or counselling are programmed politically and planned and framed by organisational structures and processes. Finally, they are related with the life course because the normative justification of most education and training goals derives from orientation towards an assumed standard life course while young people’s individual learning processes reflect earlier biographical experience as learners both in and outside formal education and training.

In the following paragraphs, we will analyse pedagogical interactions along the following dimensions: organisational forms of pedagogical interactions, educational training and goals, intended contents of learning and communication.

Some of the cases refuse their integration in some of these dimensions for different reasons. Indeed, some cases like the Finnish (or Italian) ones focus on programmes or institutions that organise a broad range of support under their umbrella. In those cases, some of the above mentioned dimensions or rather the clear assignment to certain characteristics of the dimension is not possible.

For example: The Finnish Ohjaamo centres offer diverse support measures which cover a broad range of different organisational and pedagogical approaches, e.g., from collective workshops to individual counselling. In other cases it is not the “altitude” that prevents a clear assignment, but the variety of instruments and approaches. For example part-time training for young mothers in the German Rhein-Main region, which uses collective support approaches as well as individual ones.

Pedagogical interactions are organised in different formats: the most important are theoretical instruction, group work, practice-based learning, and counselling and guidance. In some cases, these occur in standardized forms like classroom teaching, in others they occur in flexible, individualised ways, which apply especially to counselling and guidance. However, there is a broad range of counselling and guidance from transmitting information to open, dialogic reflection of personal orientations and experiences and external demands.

Two central continua allow us to draw a picture of the landscape of organisation of pedagogical interactions in different policy formats according to which the different constellations in the 18 Functional Regions can be located (see Figure 3 below). On the *vertical axis*, we position the cases between the poles theory and practice, which are expressions of the differentiation of theoretical input and instruction on the one hand, and practice-based learning and approaches on the other hand. The *horizontal axis* allows us to locate the cases between the poles of collective pedagogical approaches like classroom teaching, courses and workshops and individual pedagogical approaches like single-case counselling or guidance. We are aware of the fact that figures massively reduce complexity but we think the figure helps visualising the diversity of pedagogical approaches in the different cases.

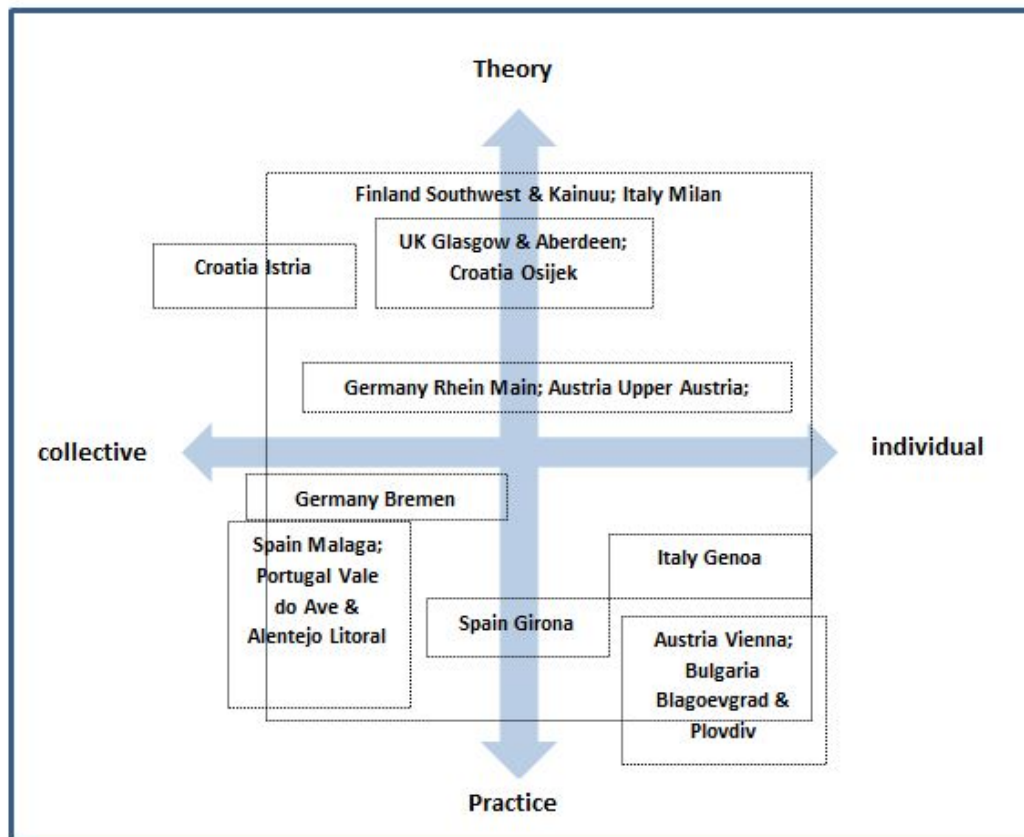


Figure 3. Landscape of the organisation of pedagogical interactions

The first general observation is that most selected cases have more practice-based orientation. The Vienna case is a very good example for practice-based orientation. Young adults have working contracts and work for companies. In addition, the Bulgarian cases follow a very practice-based approach. Both Bulgarian cases focus on working experience of young adults. In the Blagoevgrad case, university students are supported by training, because the content of the university studies are labelled as too theoretical for the labour market (and young adults). In the case of the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv] project, the internships are starting points to increase work experience. Other typical cases with a practice-based orientation are the Spanish and Portuguese cases.

On the other side of the continuum, following a much more theoretical approach, are much fewer cases. Cases in Croatia and the United Kingdom especially stick out. In the UK cases, the information transfer to young adults is the focus of the measures. Following a rational choice approach they are convinced that offering the right information leads to good decisions by young adults, in those cases with regard to their professional choices. In Croatia, in both regions the pedagogical approach is theory-based. While in the Lifelong Career Guidance Centers focus lies on providing general information without accompanying the search and decision-making of young people, the Public Open

Universities in Istria provide vocational education courses, which are largely instruction-based with limited elements of labour market experience and counselling.

Both German Cases are in the centre of this continuum. Here the case from the FR Bremen in Germany is very interesting, because the “Werkschule [Bremen]” already implies with its name, which is a coinage of “craft” and “school”, the combination of a practice-based approach and theoretical lessons. The Rhein-Main case is also located in the middle (with a slight tendency to the theoretical pole) of this continuum because of the variance of the support offered. The young mothers are already in an apprenticeship but get diverse support, which is often theoretical like coaching and learning groups, but has also strong practice-based components.

The Finnish cases instead cover the whole spectrum of the theory – practice continuum because of their above mentioned “altitude” and variation of approaches. The Italian case in Milan is similar for the same reasons.

Looking at the continuum from the collective pedagogical approaches to the individual ones, we noticed a broad distribution. Strong collective approaches are the cases in Istria (Croatia), Bremen (Germany) and Malaga (Spain) and both Portuguese cases. Here the traditional collective school lesson is especially located as it is conducted in Bremen (Germany), Malaga (Spain) and in the professional courses in the Portuguese Vale do Ave cases.

On the other side of the continuum are both Bulgarian cases, Vienna (Austria) and Genoa (Italy). They are characterised by a strong focus on the individual young adult. In the Vienna case, young adults have working contracts with companies. They are integrated in the companies and do their experiences independently from other young adults. This is very similar to both Bulgarian cases, where internships for single persons are established. Also, the Italian case in Genoa follows an individual approach. Individual screening and profiling should lead to tailor-made support measures, where they can do something that can help them.

The cases located more in the middle of this dimension are the cases in the UK, Osijek (Croatia), Rhein-Main (Germany), Upper Austria and Girona (Spain). In common, they have individual approaches like single case counselling and collective approaches like group work or group teachings. Exemplary for these last mentioned cases is the LLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja], which has a tiered system: Group informing for large groups, group counselling for medium-sized groups and detailed individual assessment and counselling for small groups and individuals.

Also on this continuum, the Finnish cases and the Milan (Italy) case cannot be assigned to this dimension because of their “altitude” and variations of approaches under the “roof” of the central project. They cover a wider area of this dimension.

While individual approaches like single-case-counselling provide the opportunity to address the needs of the participants in a tailor-made form, the collective approaches like group work can offer the opportunity for peer learning. Peer learning as an effect of the measures was ascertained especially in the cases of Bremen (Germany), Malaga (Spain) and Istria (Croatia).

4.3.1 Thresholds

Another important distinction with regard to pedagogical interactions in the cases is the different degree of thresholds to gain access to the measure and to stay in the measure.

With regard to access criteria, the selected cases vary from measures with explicit low thresholds to measures with intentional high thresholds. Measures with low access criteria are found in both Finnish cases. The Ohjaamo Centres are designed as one-stop-shops, which form the core of the support in the regions. They are explicitly low-threshold and welcome not only residents of the region but all young adults looking for support. The UK cases offer vocational information especially in schools. They try to be as inclusive as possible and want to reach all young adults. Hence, they follow also a low-threshold approach. Another example for the low-threshold orientation of measures is the Italian cases. In the NEETwork [Milan] project the most important access criteria is to be a NEET. They are very much committed to reaching this group. Consequently, no more access restrictions are implemented.

Beside the threshold implemented in accessing measures, selection during the measures are further thresholds, which shape the pedagogical interactions in the measure. In particular, school-based measures, like the Werkschule [Bremen] (Germany), pursue a partly strict selection of participants during the measure: *“At the beginning there were a lot of foreigners in the class and after a while these foreigners left for some reasons. Some just got kicked out or were forced to leave”* (Y_GER_B_4, L. 627- 633).

Educational and training goals derive from policy objectives but are often negotiated and translated with regard to particular target groups, local context factors and organisational and interactive situations. They materialize in more or less tangible outcomes from soft skills to acknowledged certificates (all interpreted in terms of employability) to effective placement in further education or training or in employment (in few cases).

On the vertical axis, we position the cases between the poles of formal qualification, which could be certificates or professional qualifications and non-formal qualifications, which could be gained in skills, experiences and similar but without the official formal recognition. The horizontal axis allows us to

locate the cases between the poles of deficit orientation in the description of the cases of the National Reports and the skills focused description of pedagogical approaches in the cases.

And again, Figure 3 reduces the complexity of the cases massively and is also understood as a tool to visualize the diversity of pedagogical approaches in the different cases.

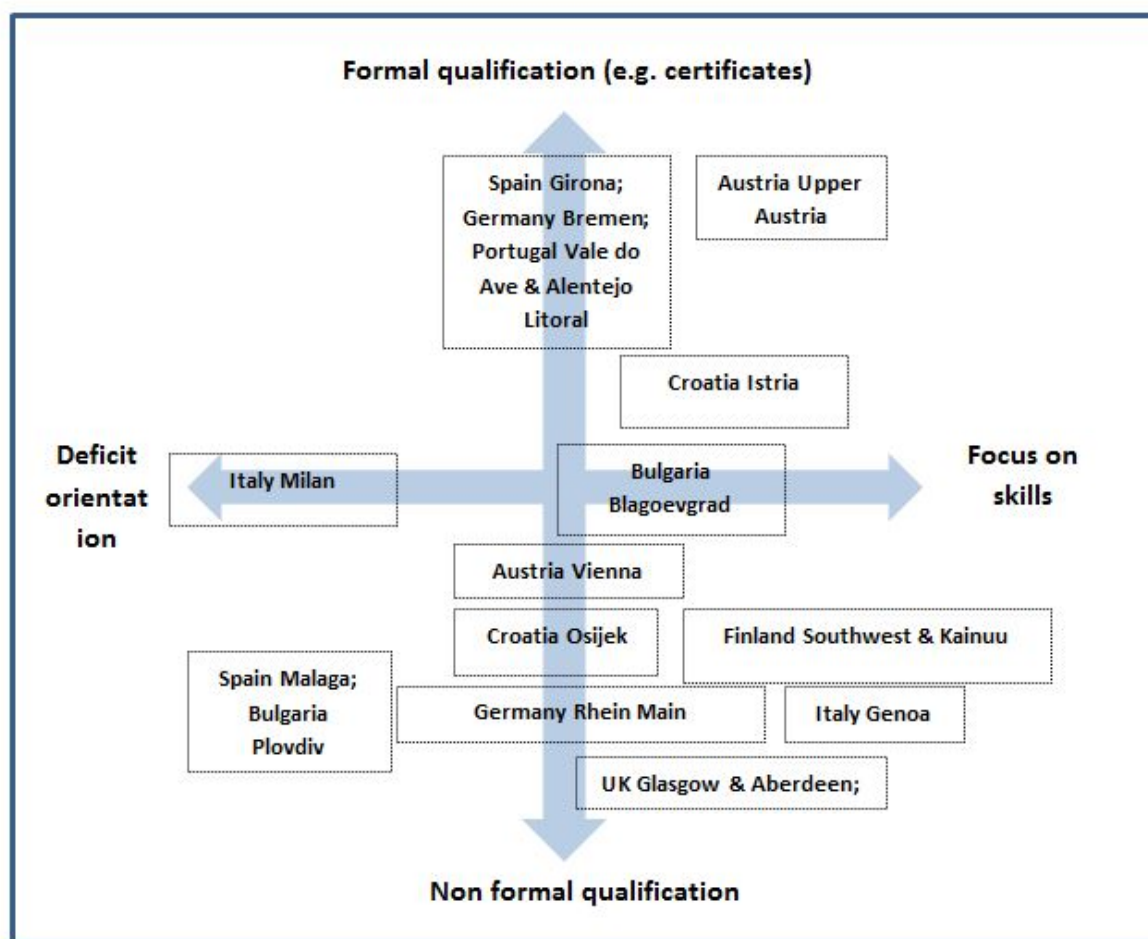


Figure 4. Landscape of the cases between the degrees of qualification and deficit orientation

With regard to the continuum from formal qualification to non-formal qualification we noticed a fairly equal distribution of the cases. Cases which focus on a formal qualification (generally on a certificate) are the cases in Portugal, and Spain, Bremen (Germany), and Upper Austria. In the case of success in all these cases official certificates are the outcomes of the measure. In the Portuguese cases and the Upper Austrian case completed vocational training is the successful outcome of the measures. In the case of Bremen (Germany) a school leaving qualification is given. The outcome of the Girona case (Spain) is a completed professional training or transition into the school system are possible successful outcomes.

On the other side of the continuum with a focus on non-formal qualifications are especially the cases in the UK, Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Rhein-Main (Germany) and Genoa (Italy) located. Non-formal qualifications fostered by the measures in these cases are the successful vocational orientation of a young adult (UK), the increased working experience of young adults (Plovdiv - Bulgaria) and skills accumulation in Genoa (Italy). In the Rhein-Main (Germany) case the measure guides young mothers through their apprenticeship and imparts non formal qualifications in the form of skills (although in the end the young mothers complete apprenticeships).

In between these poles are cases like Milan (Italy), Vienna (Austria) and Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria). Because of its high “altitude” and the diversity of measures under its roof, the NEETwork [Milan] (Italy) case covers the whole dimension from formal to non-formal qualifications. In the case of Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria) the measure itself offers no formal qualifications but because of its embeddedness in university education a formal qualification is “integrated”.

Figure 4 shows a second continuum between a deficit orientation in the pedagogical approach and the focus on the skills of the young adults. Starting with the deficit orientation, two cases especially stick out: the Italian case in Milan and the Bulgarian case in Plovdiv. In both cases, the starting point of the measures is based strongly on a deficit-orientated view of young adults. In the Milan case, this is expressed by the often mentioned imputation of passivity as the biggest fault of young adults, and in accordance with this diagnosis the approach is to address young adults through social media campaigns and direct phone calls. The origin of the measure in the Plovdiv case is the diagnosis of the unrealistic self-assessment of the young adults’ skills, which also reveals a general deficit orientation of the measure.

On the contrary, there are a number of cases, which explicitly follow a resource-oriented approach and focus on the skills of young adults. Namely, both Finnish cases, the Genoa (Italy) case, the UK cases and the Upper Austrian Case. Especially the last mentioned case from Austria is interesting in this dimension. Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] starts with biographical work and works out the strengths of the young adults. In accordance with the strengths and experiences of the young people, individualized training plans and support courses are elaborated, which lead in the case of success to a formal qualification. The Finnish cases are located on this end of the continuum because of their focus on well-being and their holistic perspective on the young adults. Even if they try to reduce deficits, their pedagogical approach is resource orientated. The Civic Service [Genoa] (Italy) with its approach of skills accumulation in NGOs as a “secure environment” and its idea of a more social, ethical and supportive handling of young adults is also located on this end of the scale.

The majority of the selected cases are located somewhere between both poles. Some of these cases are the cases in Spain and Portugal, the German cases, the Vienna case in Austria and the Osijek case in Croatia.

Obviously, the intended contents of learning and pedagogical methods depend on the goals of the measures. Certified courses tend to be structured with more or less standardized curricula. In classroom teaching, these may be subjects related to specific professions like in Bremen (Germany), Vale do Ave (Portugal) and Alentejo Litoral (Portugal). This also involves assessment of learning to prepare participants for assessment. In group work which prevails in preparatory measures, key issues are social skills like in Rhein-Main (Germany), South West Finland and Kainuu (Finland) while in practice-based learning both internships and apprenticeship training involve confronting young people with situations typically involving relevant skills, which happens especially in both Bulgarian cases, in Alentejo Litoral (Portugal), in Vienna (Austria) and the Italian cases. In counselling, the contents depend on the approach of counselling, in some cases there is information related to jobs or further education and training as in both UK cases and Osijek (Croatia). In others cases contents are determined by life conditions, life experiences and life plans of young adults. This is typically the case in the Finnish cases, the Rhein-Main (Germany) case, the Upper Austrian case and to certain extent in the Genoa (Italy) case.

4.3.2. Pressure – voluntariness

A further important dimension for pedagogical interactions, which also relates to the methods, is the degree of pressure and voluntariness in the cases. Here, especially the Finnish cases stick out with their explicit voluntary offers. In addition, the selected cases in the UK, Croatia and the Upper Austrian case have a high degree of voluntariness. Much more pressure on the participants is ascertainable in the Spanish and Portuguese cases, the Vienna (Austria), the Rhein-Main (Germany) and the Genoa (Italy) cases. The cases in Bremen (Germany) and Milan (Italy) are the ones with the highest pressure on their participants. The two last mentioned cases are at the same time good examples of the consequences of this pressure. In Bremen (Germany) drop outs are produced, who did not simply disappear. The chance that they will be participants in the next LLL measure is very high. But certainly it will be a measure in a greater distance to the labour market. Additionally the “dropped out” have another experience of failure and are in risk of labelled as drop out of a measure which was already for weaker students. In the Milan (Italy) case, the young adults are often not interested in participation.

Communication aspects are general styles or cultures of communication in education and training measures, which are reflected by specific situations. Communication of course is again closely related to the overall format, the content and the methods. In classroom teaching, communication is

formalized by student/teacher roles, in practice-based learning this can either be the boss/worker constellation (giving and following orders) or more horizontal communication among colleagues. In group work and counselling, communication tends to be more informal. In many of the projects the communication of the professionals with the young adults is applauded by young adults. Some of these cases are Istria (Croatia), Vale do Ave (Portugal), Rhein-Main (Germany) and Upper Austria. Communication happens not only between professionals and participants. As mentioned above in some cases (Bremen (Germany), Malaga (Spain), Istria (Croatia)) peer-learning is explicit mentioned as an effect of the policies. Therefore not only collective approaches (see above) are needed. Also, space and time for peer contacts and exchange is necessary. Some projects foster these constellations explicitly (e.g., Istria (Croatia) in other cases this peer effects are side effects (e.g., Bremen and Upper Austria).

4.3.3. Pedagogical interactions knot analysis with the 3 main theoretical perspectives

Cultural Political Economy perspective

Pedagogical interactions are framed by dominant discourses in each of the countries. This applies first to the aims of the respective measures inasmuch as pedagogical aims in terms of skills or competencies reflect societally dominant norms and values. In Germany maturity training for young adults and the shortage of skilled worker are prominent examples. In Austria, the discourse about the activation of welfare beneficiaries and in Italy about the accessibility and re-integration of NEETs is framing policies. In Bulgaria, the lack of work experience of low and high-qualified young adults is a subject of discussion. In general, we notice that Lifelong-learning policies are aligned to the aim 'employability', which seems to be the European-wide dominant discourse. This observation confirms the message of the so called "task pyramid"⁶ developed in WP5 (cf. Verlage et al., 2017), which highlights, inter alia, 'employability' as the overall aim of Lifelong-learning measures.

⁶ On the bottom we have policies which address basic, sometimes even existential needs of the young adults. On the next level we have policies aimed at compensating individual deficits which are seen as barriers for training or employment. The next level can be characterised by empowerment, even if we see that aspects of empowerment can be identified at all levels. At the top level of the pyramid we have the policies which provide regular qualifications. In fact, the different policies share the overall orientation towards employability and independence through standard employment with the only difference that the top level provides direct access while the lower levels aim at providing required prerequisites (cf. Verlage et al, 2017).

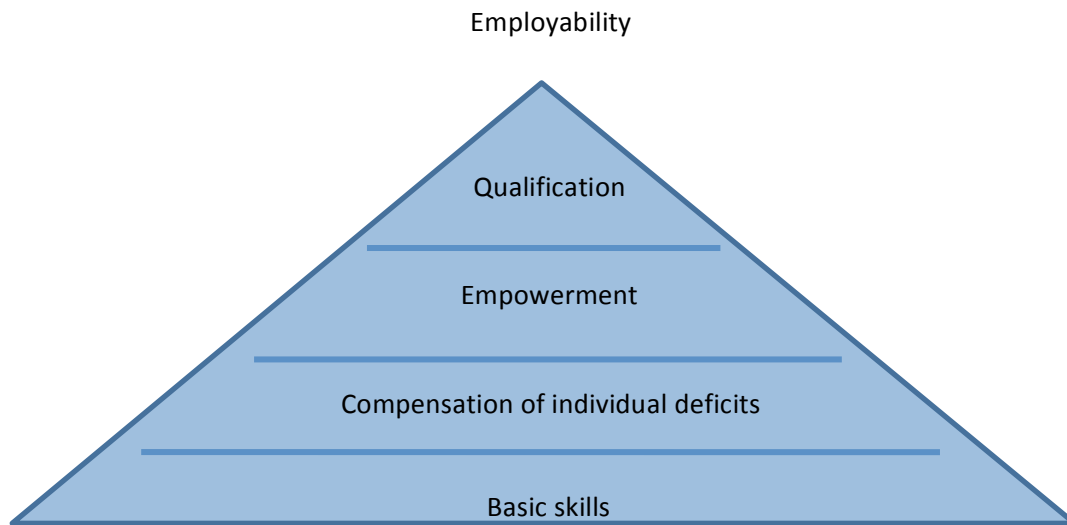


Figure 5. Task Pyramid of LLL Policies

In accordance with this assessment, practice-based approaches seem to be the state of the art with regard to Lifelong-learning measures in the different regions. The objective 'employability' frames not only the implementation of policies, it also affects the daily practice of professionals and pedagogical interactions. However, at the same time there is no general pattern as regards the way in which the aim 'employability' is strived for. Attainment is pursued by the complete range of forms, methods and contents of learning including group work, individual counselling, providing information or work experience. In fact, methods derive from the combination of aims on the one hand and the assumptions on the deficits and needs of the target group on the other. One interesting example in this sense is the difference between the two cases in Finland. While in the Kainuu region the Ohjaamo Centre (NUPPA Centre [Kainuu]) is focused on the well-being of young adults in the region, the Ohjaamo Centre in the South-West region leans more towards the European trend of focusing on the employability of young adults. They differ more in terms of their orientation than in their methods.

Governance perspective

The way pedagogical interactions emerge on-site is framed by the organisation of the support supply. The selected cases cover a wide range of organisational structures and an even wider range of organisation of pedagogical interactions. From teaching, training or counselling in classrooms, larger and smaller groups to individual guidance, almost every conceivable organisation of support and learning was found in the selected cases. Also, the kind of qualification gained in the measures varies from vocational education certificates, school leaving certificates relating to completed internships, accumulation of working experience to clear vocational orientation, clarity about the next steps in the

life course and soft skill accumulations. With regard to the governance perspective, the dominance of practice-based approaches is especially conspicuous. It shows the close link between Lifelong-learning policies for young adults in vulnerable positions and the effort to integrate them into the labour market, which is a sort of vanishing point of the governance effort. This becomes clear in the cases of Vale do Ave and Alentejo Litoral where vocational education certificates are the obvious objective. Also in many other cases, the objective of all the governance effort is labour market integration: vocational guidance in the UK, part-time training in Rhein-Main (Germany), accumulating working experience in the Bulgarian cases and so on. The exception of this general rule is Kainuu in Finland with its focus on well-being itself.

Another aspect of pedagogical interactions and governance touches the embeddedness of measures in their environment. Many of the selected measures foster networks with different kind of actors. We especially noted cooperation with principles, companies and additional social services. Cooperation with principles exists inherently in all of the selected cases. In most of the cases, the principles are ministries or other governmental actors. They are often initiators and are directly involved in the governance of the measure. This is for example the case in Vienna (Austria), Girona (Spain) or Alentejo Litoral (Portugal). A different example is the situation in the Rhein-Main case, where the measure has just been assimilated by the Jobcentre and is a good example of a bottom up approach.

Cooperation with companies plays an important role, not least because of the dominance of practice-based approaches in the selected measures. Cooperation with companies is widespread over the selected cases. In the Vale do Ave (Portugal) case the companies are part funders of professional courses, in Rhein-Main (Germany) they are engaged in the part-time training measure for young mothers, in Vienna (Austria) the companies employ participants and in both Bulgarian cases they are hosts for the internships of young adults.

Our data show that young adults in vulnerable positions in Europe often have to cope with a multitude of challenges. One indicator for professional action is the awareness of the limitations of their profession. A single profession is rarely able to make comprehensive offers. In these cases, cooperation with actors with other professional backgrounds like in hospitals or psychosocial services are useful. This happens explicitly in measures that follow a holistic approach like the Finnish cases, but such cooperation was also noticed in other cases like the German ones.

Life Course Research perspective

Pedagogical interactions are related to the life course because the normative justification of most education and training goals derives from orientation towards an assumed standard life course. Many

of the selected measures depart from ascribing the target group a deviation, or the risk of deviation from the standard life course. For example, the practice-based approach is favoured in some cases because policymakers assess young adults as unsuitable for theoretical learning, which leads to the danger of labour market exclusion. This is explicitly mentioned in the Werkschule [Bremen] (Germany) and the Youth Guarantee [Plovdiv]. In the case of the University Students Training Practices [Blagoevgrad] programme it is not the young adults themselves that are labelled as not matching labour market needs, but their “too theoretical” studies. In other cases like in Italy (NEETwork [Milan], Civic Service [Genoa]), Malaga (Spain) and to a certain degree in the Back to the future [Vienna] measure, practice-based approaches are a method of choice because young adults are assessed as not ready for practice. ‘Not ready for practice’ means the assessment that deviation from the standard life course is a threat or has already occurred. Obviously, including young adults into a standard – meaning an employment-based – life course is also the aim of most measures. However, there is evidence that in several cases this implies modifying conventional normalities such as in the case of part-time training for single mothers (Rhein-Main, Germany), both the form and the target group of apprenticeship training represent a contribution to a further de-standardisation of the life course. At the same time, also principles of activating at work in different ways in different policies in different regions undermine the standard life course model. Finally, assumptions of normalities are also represented by the contents provided and the methods applied in the measures. The overall assessment of the target groups being ‘behind’ the schedule of the normal life course – for being ‘early’ school leavers or ‘late’ in terms of entering regular training or work – implies contents of lower complexity and methods involving assisted rather than self-learning. It may be argued that from a pedagogical perspective, many Lifelong Learning policies do contradict the pedagogical ideas of Lifelong Learning such as being learner-centred and holistic (cf. Jarvis, 2008).

5. Insights deriving from the knot analysis with the 3 theoretical perspectives

In the following, we will draw together the conclusions obtained with regard to the overall theoretical perspectives governing the YOUNG_ADULLLT research that have emerged from the different interactive ‘knots’: Cultural Political Economy, Governance and Life Course Research. The aim is first, identifying differences and commonalities and, second, aiming at a first level of theorisation of the interactive functioning of LLL policies in a regional perspective.

5.1. Cultural Political Economy perspective

A *first* aspect emerging from the analysed case studies and from the whole project is the prominent role played by employability in the different measures/policies considered. Indeed, employability is at

the root of at least two important assumptions of the Cultural Political Economy underlying the measures/policies examined in the WP7. The first one concerns the polarity between a holistic approach and a segmental approach. Although there are cases of holistic approaches (e.g., the NUPPA Centre [Kainuu]), many other cases focus on employability and this is linked to the segmentation of policies, which undoubtedly presumes a standard approach to life courses. The standard approach tends to prevail where educational, labour and social inclusion policies are more segmented, because they suppose that the addressee lacks a specific characteristic, that is employability. Such employability is supposed to be provided by precisely intervening on the “distance” that separates the addressee from the market in terms of that specific characteristic. On the contrary, usually, those who present a significant distance from employability in terms of a specific feature are often even further from a standard path. Therefore, the segmented approach (which in pedagogical perspectives is well-known as a resource-based approach to be converted into skills) is likely to prove unproductive because the needs of addressees are wider and they cannot be segmented. Moreover, the segmental approach is often heavily bureaucratic; in other words, the operators are not always able to grasp the difference between the substantial needs and those assumed by the Cultural Political Economy and, therefore, they are unable to give flexible answers.

In the life cycle perspective, the mix of the different dimensions characterizing the transition to adulthood (work, family and other typical “markers of adulthood”) significantly varies and policies intervene when people’s shortcomings are concentrated in one dimension. If, instead, the policies concern different dimensions, then the policies are inclusive and holistic. Otherwise, as an integrated one-sided policy when faced with wider deficiencies, it risks being ineffective, as well as producing an unbalanced relationship which ‘blames’ the addressee if she/he does not know how to take advantage of the opportunities offered. The ‘segmental’ approach of a policy, aimed, for instance, at work integration, ends up penalizing the really disadvantaged groups, which obviously need a holistic approach. Furthermore, segmentation is functional to an equally segmental view of people, thus indirectly implying a linear conception of the life course (because it fosters interventions on a specific segment of a life-phase in which other segments have already been resolved or have not yet been addressed).

Moreover, the hypothesised standardisation of the life course generates more easily a standardisation of the addressees’ needs, which the policies aim to satisfy. Standardisation depends on both the segmentation of policies (assuming specific standard needs for housing, education, work ...), and the segmentation of addressees, considered homogeneous by virtue, often, of just one characteristic (being early school leavers, without analysing the reasons for the dropout, being unemployed for a long time without analysing the reasons for unemployment, etc.). This also assigns a key role to the

activation of the addressees: the absence of activation is conceived as an element to blame potential addressees and not as a sign of a poor effectiveness of policies designed on erroneous assumptions. The lack of participation of young people in the planning and the management of policies that emerges from the analysis of implementation further fosters this perception, because the Cultural Political Economy has no way to “clash” with Life Course Research even in the implementation phase. In turn, this produces the “certification of vulnerability”, which risks generating the self-fulfilling prophecy: if a specific policy is aimed at people with a “certified” form of vulnerability, this produces the labelling and the welding of individual perceptions according to the collective one. If the recognition of a specific form of vulnerability is a requirement of access to a measure/policy, this recognition by the addressee could conflict with the activation paradigm, which underlies all the interventions. On the other hand, the activation paradigm, in addition to underpinning a model according to which the responsibility for the “deviation” from the standard (i.e., to be employed, to have completed a school path, etc.), is individualised and not attributed to an unbalanced social order, it tends to leave behind those people who have a conception of life that is actively different from that underlying the Cultural Political Economy. In other words, if many young people can passively accept the cultural assumptions and normative expectations that undergird the policies and then can adapt to it, more or less consciously, others, who reject (even unconsciously) such assumptions, can be pushed to drop-out of it (again confirming the underlying stereotypes and, also in this case, agreeing with a form of self-fulfilling prophecy, as they end up being “unfit” for this policy). In these cases, the goal of employability differs from the empowerment goal, which, by contrast, is considered by policy-makers as an instrumental objective towards the final one of employability (assuming that the needs of addressees are or become identical or at least coherent with those of policy-makers). Another important aspect concerns the implicit prevalent orientation of policies for employability, which seem to be inspired by the model of dependent work, indirectly considering the dependent worker’s career as the main, if not the only, access to the labour market. The soft skills that many policies aim to provide are consistent above all with employed work rather than with self-employment. This aspect is very interesting, because, on the contrary, it is possible that the “distance” of addressees from work and from a linear conception of the life cycle converge in considering self-employment as more appropriate, in some cases, to activation through empowerment which makes it possible to exploit resources that can be directed towards self-employment or entrepreneurial work, rather than towards employees. However, this orientation would require refusing another implicit assumption in the employability policies, that is, that one needs to work on the needs of the labour market for dependent workers even when one is perhaps closer to the independent labour market. In other words, the more a society invests in young adults the closer they are to the needs of labour market (this means to the needs of job demand, of the demand for dependent workers) and, on the other hand, the less it is invested in young adults, the farther they are

from the dependent labour market, and undoubtedly closer to self-employment. This aspect is linked to a fact that seems implicit in many policies that is, the appropriate life choices for young adults, are those consistent with the re-standardisation of their life course. On the contrary, it could be said that young adults make choices precisely by de-standardising their courses of life, while remaining or falling within a linear logic/path involves non-choices, and being out of a linear logic/path involves constant choices. This aspect is tied to one of the most significant implicit critiques embedded in the Cultural Political Economy, related to young adults' lack of planning ; often the energies and skills required for a divergent project from that implicit in a life course perspective are not recognised.

5.2. Governance perspective

LLL Policies are devised at governmental level to address societal needs and challenges of particular target groups with specific pedagogical interactions. They set goals and objectives and propose measures to achieve them. The implementation of the proposed policies appears as a crucial stage for their success or failure. Therefore, from a Governance perspective, the analyses of the "Target Construction" and "Pedagogical Interactions" knots intersect at the "Implementation" knot analysis. This is because the official target group is decided usually at national level, while the concrete pedagogical interactions are designed and applied at regional or local ones, linked within and by a very complex process of policy implementation.

Governance patterns are applied in accordance with predefined target group profiles, constructed along different criteria like age and vulnerability. What became evident from the analysed cases is that different contexts produce different degrees of correspondence between the official target and the actual users. It might be partially due to the fact that only in a few cases, participants were involved in the policy construction process. Another reason could be the dominant "top-down" approach of implementation, which leaves only a narrow room for regional or local adaptations related to the specificities of the concrete context.

Another important aspect related to the governance perspective is the activation of the target groups and the amount of funding provided. There is a huge diversity of activation approaches among the 18 cases, which involve the joint efforts of broad networks of players – both institutions and professionals. It seems also that funding is crucial for the majority of case studies, which means that the most vulnerable participants would not benefit in case of insufficient or lack of funds from policy promoters. In this respect, involving private companies and employers turns out to be a successful solution in contexts where this is possible.

Some interesting mismatches and gaps were identified during the case study analyses especially in the implementation phase. For example, in some cases there was certain contradiction between the

intended holistic approach aiming at employability or labour market integration of young people and the applied approach by concrete implementers oriented toward the personal empowerment of participants in the measure. Another deficiency, turned out to be insufficient feedback from the different stakeholders, including participating young adults, which could enable objective evaluation of the outcomes related to the policy implementation.

In terms of the pedagogical interactions, as “expressions of governance”, there is also a great variety of options and solutions proposed by different (public and private) actors in line with the policy objectives as well as in correspondence with the concrete needs of young people and local markets. What is important from a governance perspective is the organisation of the learning, training and other support services, offered usually in cooperation with different local institutions, networks and experts led by a public or a private one.

Another important conclusion, taken from the cases studied is the prevailing role of the practice-based approach that aims to link education and training with real market conditions. In this respect, close cooperation between the governmental actors and private companies (in some cases public organisations also) turned to be of crucial importance.

The holistic approach in the implementation process of certain cases offering services that were not only and not strictly market-related, for example, psychological, health or other types of personal support turned to be an example of good practice which could also be transferred to other policies and measures.

5.3. Life Course Research perspective

The life course theory builds upon the interplay between life course and biography. The key transitions in the life course are embedded in a social time and place – social circumstances and historical events influence transitions (Heinz, 2009). At the same time, individuals actively construct their biography and individual agency is employed in the sequence of events in the life course, in the construction of interpretive accounts and meaning making processes. The institutionalised constructions of the life course define normal patterns of transitions for age and gender. Social change however constantly undermines such notions of normality. Nevertheless, policies are trying to limit deviances from these normal patterns.

The analysis of the above mentioned knots (target group construction, pedagogical interaction, implementation) shows the interplay of individual biography and institutionalized life courses. The life course perspective allowed us to investigate processes of securing or restoring young adults' standard life course, and at the same time revealed some weak points of this policy orientation. The target

group construction is closely linked with addressing young adults as a ‘vulnerable group’, an attribution that in many cases is based on deviation from the standard life course. Targets of LLL policies are often young adults who:

- are seen by state institutions/employers as having left education and training too early and therefore are targeted by policies to re-enter education or training;
- spend longer in education or training than accepted by mainstream institutions/standard life course normal expectations;
- are seen as being in need of support to compensate for inequalities – usually framed as relating to indigenous, ethnic, migration or gender issues;
- are expected to re-enter education in order to upgrade qualifications or correct earlier educational/occupational choices which were not in line with their interests.

The life course perspective on the target group construction knot allows us to recognise that young adults have to develop their biography, while they compare their individual life course with the life course of others. They notice their deviation and have to cope with this knowledge. In some cases, policies did not reflect this perspective of young adults. This blind spot of (some) LLL policies could lead to mismatches between young adults and the policy. The danger of dropout arises if the expectations of the young adults do not match the aim or the implementation of the policy. In other cases, young adults take part in the project with no significant expectation and with only a very low level of life planning. If in these cases the policies themselves have no understanding of the perspective of the young adults on their life course deviation, they cannot develop an understanding of supposed deviant behaviour like passivity or aggressiveness. On the other hand, there are of course young adults who do not recognise deviations from a standard life course. In these cases, addressing them as potential participants is often difficult. This problem is resolved in cases where access to the policy is open to all young adults.

Life course research offers a logical framework to research young adults’ perceptions and expectations, of their informal/non-formal competences and their ability to create subjective meaning and continuity along the different phases, domains, and spheres of their life courses. Pedagogical interactions are the place where expectations could be fulfilled or disappointed, they are the place where the different ways of teaching and learning meet and where the standard life course is again the vanishing point. We noticed the entire bandwidth of formats of pedagogical interactions: from theoretical instruction, group work, practice-based learning to counselling and guidance; from single-case support to collective classroom teaching. Some policies lead to formal qualifications, like school leaving certificates or completed apprenticeships; others foster soft-skills and are located in the area

of non-formal qualifications. Behind all these differences and variation, employability seems to be the vanishing point of nearly every selected policy. The dominant means of achieving this objective is through practice-based approaches, which seem to be very much the trend in the European LLL policy landscape. 'Not ready for practice' is an often noted assessment from professionals and with regard to the life course perspective means that deviation from the standard life course is a threat or has already occurred.

We could show that ongoing life course de-standardisation (and re-standardisation) processes affect young adults in their life course. On the one hand, not only in spite of the LLL policies but also due to them. On the other hand, LLL policies have the potential to decrease insecurity and uncertainty in the life course or help to cope with them.

6. Closing remarks

In conclusion, we want to highlight some aspects that have emerged from the WP7 International Report. In doing it, we also highlight some issues that lead to further reflection, showing the complexity and multidimensionality of the cross-case analysis of regional / local networks in LIFELONG LEARNING policy-making based on the case study of the nine YOUNG_ADULLLT participating countries.

1. The local level: policymaking networks and the social actors involved

An emerging issue is that the challenge of coordination among diverse policies and actors is relevant, as is the effectiveness of the local net of social, educational and occupational actors. For instance, among the analysed cases, there are some cases in which strong coordination between different types of policies seems capable of meeting the needs of addressees, as is the case, for example, of the Finnish Ohjaamo centre in the Kainuu region, which exemplifies a typical holistic approach, as well as the German case VbFF [Rhein-Main], which highlights the need to provide 'complementary' services to allow addressees in a vulnerable situation (in the specific case, young mothers) to be able to take advantage of the measure effectively. Thus our analysis shows that the wider the network, the wider the scope of young adult policies.

Furthermore, participatory planning made without young people risks undermining the agreement of the various stakeholders, and may not necessarily anticipate the needs of the market or meet the needs and expectations of young adults. The National Reports of the 9 countries and the 18 Functional Regions highlighted that young people usually do not take part in the policy decisions, with some exceptions only in three cases – that of FI (Ohjaamo Centre [Southwest Finland] and NUPPA Centre [Kainuu]) and DE (VbFF [Rhein-Main]). On the other hand, policies that reward employment

rates as outcomes could be excessively focused on results, rather than on the processes and unintended consequences.

A second challenge concerns orientation: what is necessary for policies to work and become effective? Of course, we must recall the previously mentioned statement according to which it is impossible to identify good practice or effective policies while only considering the point of view of policy makers, as usually happens. Therefore, we must integrate the immanent criteria of 'good/bad' that are embedded in the examined policies, and consider if they affect the life course of youths without contradictions and without requiring them to adapt their life courses to the policies. This also sometimes means involving other actors like firms, in such a way that education and training successfully lead to 'good' jobs etc. In addition, of course this implies that a policy could be defined as 'good' or 'bad' according to the degree and the way in which it has been negotiated in each FR.

Further, two central issues are the stakeholders involved and their roles; and how does the local skills ecology system work? What are the implications on youth life courses of the mismatch between supply and demand of skills?

Regarding the first aspect, we found an interesting mix between public and private actors not only in the decision-making phase but, above all, at the operational level. Some examples are: the national Scottish politics Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), analysed in the two Scottish Functional Regions: Glasgow City Region (GCR) and Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Region (ACAR); the Finnish cases (Ohjaamo Centres and LLLCG Centre [Osijek-Baranja]; the German cases (VbFF [Rhein-Main] and Werkschule [Bremen]); both the Austrian cases (the "Du kannst was! [Upper Austria]", "Back to the future [Vienna]"). Overall, it seems that for most of the 18 case studies network collaboration is a central instrument. Working together with institutions and individuals and sharing visions, goals and resources in different forms of collaboration proved to be a crucial condition for the successful implementation of the measure. At the same time, if collaboration is not led by relevant actors, the wider the network, the greater the risk of conflictual aims, sometimes using mutual veto power. With regard to the local skills ecology system, the challenge refers to the orientation in contexts characterized by a 'sluggish' labour market, fewer job creation opportunities, and a high mismatch of supply and demand of skills (as in the Genoa Functional Region in Italy, in Spain and Portugal).

2. Different patterns of Lifelong Learning policy-making at regional level

First, an issue concerns the segmentation of the policies analysed. Young adults as groups are inherently heterogeneous, and for the purpose of being addressed by policies they are often defined as 'vulnerable' or 'at-risk', etc. – that is, in constructing specific target groups, policies segment the issues faced by young adults. However, groups in vulnerable situations require the integration of

different segments (educational, social and labour policies) to better respond to their needs, because a segmented policy meets sectoral/segmented needs and not global ones.

In our opinion, the segmentation of policies is at the base of the standard approach to life courses, since they assume that the addressee lacks a single, main, specific characteristic, that is employability. To provide employability interventions are directed to the 'distance' that separates the addressee from the market in terms of that specific characteristic. On the contrary, usually, those who present a large distance from employability in terms of a specific feature are often even further from a standard life course path. Employability covers a prominent role in the different measures; in general, we notice that Lifelong Learning policies are aligned to the aim 'employability', which seems to be the dominant European-wide discourse. However, it is necessary to question the links between employability and empowerment, as the goal of employability diverges from that of empowerment, which for policy-makers is considered as an instrumental objective compared to the final one of employability (assuming that the needs of addressees are or become coherent with those constructed by the policy-makers). For instance, in some cases there was a definite contradiction between the intended holistic approach aimed at employability or labour market integration of young people and the approach applied by policy implementers, oriented towards the personal empowerment of the participants in the measure. The following questions summarize the issue: empowerment versus employability? Empowerment for employability? Or, Employability for empowerment? Therefore, the segmented approach (which, in pedagogical perspectives, is well known as a resource-based approach in which personal resources must be converted into skills) is likely to prove unproductive because the needs of addressees are broader and they cannot be segmented. On the other side, segmentation is a way to define policy targets, although the main political discourse is about "detecting real needs", while they are constructing these same needs. We must then reflect on training, a widespread policy in a number of Functional Regions: is it a remedy for an educational system that does not work? Is it really a connection belt with the labour market if the educational system works?

One of the elements that emerged from the analysis of the measures/policies is the common assumption that vocational training is the essential conversion factor for increasing employability as it focuses not only on 'traditional' training modalities (mainly in classrooms and theoretically-based), but also on work related activities. The focus of many policies in the 18 cases is on the lack of practical orientation of education courses and the inadequate preparation of young people to cope with a real work situation, therefore, policies try to maintain appropriate balance between theoretical and practical preparation. The practice-based approach is favoured in some cases because policy-makers find young adults to be unsuitable for theoretical learning, which leads to the danger of labour market exclusion. This is explicitly mentioned in the Werkschule [Bremen] (Germany) and the Youth

Guarantee [Plovdiv]. In Austria, the Back to the future [Vienna] case stressed the central role of vocational training and apprenticeship in providing young people with a mix of school- and work-based learning. Similarly, in the Portuguese Alentejo Litoral Functional Region, the importance of Adult Education and Training Courses (EFA courses) is underlined, as a significant form of provision for young people who had not completed compulsory education following a regular path in due time and are in need of a fast labour market insertion. In other cases, like in Italy (NEETwork [Milan], Civic Service [Genoa]), or Spain [Malaga] and to a certain degree in the Back to the future [Vienna] measure, practice-based approaches are methods of choice because the young adults are assessed as “not ready for practice”. These cases do not smack so much of a neo-liberal agenda, as a mismatch between the educational system and the job market, the fault of which does not necessarily lie with young adults, as it does not depend on their erroneous educational choices, but on the misalignment between school and the job market. The expression ‘not ready for practice’ somehow ‘certifies’ the acknowledgement of a deviation from the standard life course

Obviously, integrating young adults into a standard – that is, an employment-based – life course is also the aim of most measures. However, there is evidence that in several cases this implies modifying conventional norms such as, for example, in the case of part-time training for single mothers (Rhein-Main, Germany), both the form and the target group of apprenticeship training contribute to a further de-standardisation of the life course. At the same time, principles of activating for work in different ways in different policies in different regions also undermine the standard life course model. Thus, the Lifelong Learning policies analysed can in general be interpreted as both expressing an institutionalised life course order based on assumptions of ‘normality’, and as the reaction and adaptation of institutions to social changes and discrepancies especially between established education and training and labour markets – or better: skills ecologies (cf. Capsada-Munsech et al., 2018). Considering different regional and national contexts, Lifelong Learning policies simultaneously stand for de-standardising and re-standardising institutionalised life courses. They react to deviations from the ‘normal’ life course by offering additional and/or compensatory education, and while doing so, they contribute to its further diversification and fragmentation.

Regarding the theme of job creation, another important aspect concerns the implicit prevalent orientation of policies to the model of employed work, indirectly considering employee careers as the main, if not only, access to jobs. Indeed, the soft skills that many policies aim to provide are consistent above all with employee work rather than with self-employment. This is another way to see the conception of standardized life courses embedded in the majority of the policies examined. However, are we sure that the implicit model of employed work always works everywhere? Alternatively, maybe we should be more determined to focus on entrepreneurship in certain sectors. Indeed, it is possible

that the 'distance' of addressees from work and from a linear conception of the life cycle converge in considering self-employment as more appropriate. In some cases, activation through empowerment makes it possible to exploit resources that are directed towards self-employment or entrepreneurial work, rather than towards employees. However, this orientation entails refusing another implicit assumption in employability policies, that is, that they must take the needs of the labour market of dependent workers into consideration while addressee goals may be closer to the independent labour market. On the other hand, in general, attention and resources have been focused on the spin-off model, related to high professional profiles, thus neglecting the opportunities/needs of people with lower educational qualifications or manual skills (for example, young adults who want to open a workshop, a beauty centre...). Today, self-employment is associated with precariousness, especially for higher-level professional profiles who often experience conditions of existential and professional uncertainty. However, being able to develop entrepreneurial skills could constitute a road to full personal and professional fulfilment. It is necessary to ask whether the young adults furthest from the models implicit in the Cultural Political Economy are perhaps more 'cut out' for flexible, creative jobs and can experience flexibility as a resource, and not as a constraint. On the other hand, if, rather, they are idlers to be rehabilitated and socially reintegrated.

Last but not least, the features of the analysed policies as well as the way in which they are implemented, show a relevant difference among free access measures, threshold and competitive access measures. Obviously, especially the measures, which entail competition in accessing them, might provoke a 'creaming-off effect' that from the one hand favours the success of the measure according to its goals and aims, but on the other hand can further disadvantage people in vulnerable conditions by excluding them.

3. The impact on the target groups of the analysed policies

As shown in the section above, some reasons for the lower effectiveness of young adult policies could refer to the partial representation of young adults' needs. In fact, in some cases we found a mismatch between the perspective of the experts and the young adults, that the analysis of the policies led by the standpoint of policy makers or the implementers would not be able to highlight. A number of policies also take the risk of giving young people the responsibility for making choices and choosing paths, thus perpetuating a model according to which the responsibility of 'deviating' from the standard (being busy, having completed a school course, etc.) is a fault of the single recipient and not due to the unbalanced social structure. Often, in fact, the frequent reference to the personal limitations of young adults stresses individual responsibility as a major explanatory factor and often does not adequately take into account the faults of the systemic and structural dimension (especially at the institutional level). In this way, the responsibility for struggling vis-à-vis labour market integration lies

with individuals. Indeed, addressees in vulnerable conditions are generally attributed the following features: inactivity and limited orientation to mobility and self-autonomy (see, for instance, the Italian NEETwork [Milan] project), with scarce job market orientation (as is evident in the Austrian Du kannst was! [Upper Austria] case) and scarce motivation as well as scarce proactivity and inability vis-à-vis long term planning (see, for instance, the two Croatian cases and the Austrian Back to the future [Vienna] case).

A related topic is the one regarding the construction of the target group, which is closely linked with addressing young adults as a vulnerable group, an attribution that in many cases is based on deviation from the standard life course. The targets of Lifelong Learning policies are often young adults who are judged by state institutions/employers as having left education and training too early and therefore are addressed by policies to re-enter education or training; have been longer in education or training than implied by mainstream institution/standard life course normal expectations; are seen as in need of support to compensate for inequalities – usually framed as relating to indigenous, ethnic, migration or gender issues; are expected to re-enter education in order to upgrade qualifications or correct earlier educational/occupational choices which were not in line with their interests.

Extending vulnerability to all young adult social groups can produce a sort of ‘certification of vulnerability’, which risks generating a self-fulfilling prophecy: if a specific policy is aimed at people with a ‘certified’ form of vulnerability, this produces the labelling and the fusing of individual perceptions with the collective one. If the recognition of a specific form of vulnerability is a requirement of access to a measure/policy, this recognition by the addressee could conflict with the activation paradigm, which underlies all the interventions. In a broader sense, we can say that the reaction of young adults to policies that have been designed without their participation could have a strong similarity with the situation described by Merton in 1938, when he noted that Americans believed in social goals such as success and material wealth, but the absence of equal access to those goals generated a strain between the socially-encouraged goals of society and the socially-acceptable means to achieve them. In the case of young adults, to paraphrase Beck (1992), the impossibility of tackling systemic contradictions (mismatch between job supply and demand) with biographical solutions (e.g., vocational training, guidance), leads to different kinds of adaptation to this contradiction. In particular, we think that the most widespread adaptation strategy could be conformism for people that work hard and try to achieve success despite the difficulties, or ritualist, that is accepting the means but not the goals (this means following the available policies without the belief that they can really be useful), or refusing both means and goals, the retreatist, social dropout in Merton’s scheme, prone to drug use or crime. On the other hand, rebellion, according to which some

people might want to replace the means and the goals with new ones, could be assimilated to the situation in which people look for ways other than standard employment (compatibility with the de-standardisation of life courses). Hirshmann's scheme (1970) can also help to understand young adult conditions: while loyalty can be assimilated to Merton's conformism, between exit and voice a trade off in terms of uncertainty (exit) versus tolerance to unsuitable conditions (voice) exists; in our analysis we have evidence of a low level of attention for young adult voices, so youths who forego policies or drop out can be assimilated to the retreatist ones.

Nevertheless, in our analysis we have collected both holistic policies, that can also help addressees far from the 'employability paradigm', as well as segmented policies, that require addressees to only be bereft of the specific deficit that they want to fill. It is evident that the first type of policies seems to be more appropriate to most Young Adults. In any case, it is also evident that the social integration of young adults requires a minimum level of compliance to the requirements of society, so a policy completely oriented to the needs of young people and not to those of society seems unrealistic and perhaps even senseless.

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Annex 1. WP7 overall research questions

LEVEL	CPE	LCR	GOV
National / Transnational level	<i>Are the issue/problems tackled by the measure also recognised at national level? If so, by which programmes? What is the main orientation and objectives of these programmes? What are their main targets? And in turn, how do these programmes respond to EU influence in terms of preferred policy solutions?</i>	<i>Which living conditions for the young adult are described by data in this national context? Are these data coherent with the assumptions of the policies or not?</i>	<i>Which Welfare models apply to this national context?</i>
		<i>What are the main youth targeted programmes at national level? And what is their connection with EU programmes?</i>	<i>How are the labour and skill market regulated at national level?</i>
			<i>Which patterns of policy funding are observable in this national context? And how do they interact with the EU Social Funding regulation? Which actors plays a more relevant role?</i>
Regional / Local	<i>What is the target of the measure? And how does this measure construct its target groups? Does it entail some gender, race, age (and/or other) bias? How does this measure define social categories?</i>	<i>Which contextual and target group related data have been considered to design the measure?</i>	<i>Which actors operated in this measure's design? and by which decision-making model (cooperation, conflict, passivity...)?</i>
	<i>How have similar problems been tackled in this regional/local context by other policies in the past? And how are similar problems currently tackled by other policies in this regional/local context? How are these policies mutually integrated?</i>	<i>Which data are provided to assess the impacts of the measure?</i>	<i>Have the different stakeholder interests and needs been equally represented in the process of definition of the measure? If not, which interests and needs prevailed over the others? Which significant stakeholder needs and interests have been excluded?</i>

LEVEL	CPE	LCR	GOV
	<i>What are the main distinctive discourses underlying this measure? are these discourses diverse from the national or transnational level and, in this case, why?</i>	<i>Which living conditions for the young adult are actually described by data in this context?</i>	<i>How are young adults engaged in LLL policy decision-making, design, implementation and evaluation?</i>
	<i>Which solutions does this measure provide?</i>	<i>How are the de-standardization and individualization of young adult life courses taken into account in the LLL policy design?</i>	<i>Which actors are involved in LLL policies? How do these actors coordinate their activity? What is the relationship between public and private in this field?</i>
	<i>What effects is the measure supposed to have on the regional/local level? Are these effects measured by any indicator? If so, what kind of indicator?</i>	<i>How do LLL policies enable, shape and restrict young people's biographical life projects?</i>	<i>How are different actions and agents coordinated within the state, the economy, labour market, civil society and young adults?</i>
	<i>Which categories, meanings and narratives are used and reinforced in the local LLL system, and which are used in order to construct their target groups, objectives, strategies, and success criteria?</i>	<i>How to LLL policies take into account the living conditions, family responsibilities and civil engagement of young adults?</i>	<i>At what governmental level and by whom/by which interest groups are the "road maps" of policy programmes decided on, constructed and implemented?</i>
	<i>What are the underlying assumptions of policy programmes (contents, goals, target groups etc.) aimed at young adults in challenging situations?</i>	<i>Do LLL policies foster the autonomy of young adults and help them to reduce their biographical uncertainty?</i>	

LEVEL	CPE	LCR	GOV
	<i>Which different classifications of LLL policies (de-commodified LLL regimes: academic, corporatist, and universal as well as LLL market regimes: market competition and organised market) can be observed and how do they shape normalization in the research regions?</i>	<i>How effective/ineffective are LLL policies for young adults and do their needs shape LLL policies?</i>	
	<i>How young are adults represented in the mainstream discourse? And how is their potential vulnerability represented? Is the representation coherent with the national/transnational one? If not for contextual reasons or for other reasons, due to the diverse actor CPE?</i>	<i>How are the living conditions and local opportunity structures related to young adult life opportunities (as well inequalities) taken into account in shaping, formulating and implementing local LLL policies?</i>	
		<i>Which young adult-targeted measures are available in this context?</i>	
Individual	<i>What are young adult representations of the problem tackled by the measure and its objectives? And what solutions do they imagine?</i>	<i>How do young adults represent their local context in terms of opportunities (available measures, networks)?</i>	<i>How are young adult interests and needs represented in the processes of definition of the LLL policies in the context?</i>
	<i>To what extent do the young adults recognise themselves in the measure's target group?</i>		<i>What are the young adult representations of the mechanisms implemented by the professionals involved in the measure?</i>
	<i>Why did policy-makers invest in the measure in the opinions of young adults?</i>		