

**Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion  
in Six Countries of the EU:  
Dimensions, Subjective Experiences, and Institutional  
responses in Six Countries of the EU  
(YUSEDER)**

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**Comparative Report**

**Innovative Institutional Responses  
to Youth Unemployment  
and Social Exclusion**

**Thomas Kieselbach  
Gert Beelmann  
Ute Traiser**

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**Coordinator:  
Prof. Dr. Thomas Kieselbach**

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## Preface

The research project "Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion: Objective Dimensions, Subjective Experiences, and Innovative Institutional Responses in Six European Countries" (YUSEDER) was supported by the Research Directorate General of the European Commission (DG Research) within the Targeted Socio-Economic Research Programme (TSER) of the 4th Framework Programme.

The research project was organised around three Workpackages:

### *Workpackage 1:*

- empirical evidence on youth unemployment and health in each country
- clarification of the concept of social exclusion
- description of social exclusion of different groups of young people at risk

### *Workpackage 2:*

- qualitative analysis of 50 long-term unemployed young people in each country with regard to
  - antecedent variables facilitating long-term unemployment among young people,
  - the main factors contributing to social exclusion / inclusion (vulnerability factors and protective factors), and
  - the health effects associated with social exclusion.

### *Workpackage 3:*

- innovative institutional responses on a local, regional and national level in various societal sectors to counteract the risk of social exclusion as a consequence of long-term unemployment.

This paper is part of Workpackage 3 and concentrates on the institutional responses to youth unemployment and social exclusion.

### *Publications of previous Workpackages*

Kieselbach, T. (Ed.). (2000). *Youth unemployment and health. A comparison of six European countries* (Psychology of social inequality, Vol. 9). Opladen: Leske+Budrich. ISBN 3-8100-2762-6

Kieselbach, T. (Ed.). (2000). *Youth unemployment and social exclusion. A comparison of six European countries* (Psychology of social inequality, Vol. 10). Opladen: Leske+Budrich. ISBN 3-8100-2939-4

Kieselbach, T., van Heeringen, K., La Rosa, M., Lemkow, L., Sokou, K. & Starrin, B. (Eds.). (2001). *Living on the edge. An empirical analysis on long-term youth unemployment and social exclusion in Europe* (Psychology of social inequality, Vol. 11). Opladen: Leske+Budrich. ISBN 3-8100-2929-7

Further results (Workpackage 3 and Final Report) are available under

**[www.ipg.uni-bremen.de/research/yuseder/](http://www.ipg.uni-bremen.de/research/yuseder/)**

## YUSEDER Consortium

### **Prof. Dr. Thomas Kieselbach (Coordinator)**

**Gert Beelmann**

**Andrea Stitzel**

**Ute Traiser**

University of Bremen

Institute for Psychology of Work, Unemployment and Health (IPG)

Grazer Str. 2, 28359 Bremen, Germany

Tel: +49-421-218-2047, +49-421-218-2825 (Secr.)

Fax: +49-421-218-4309

email: kieselbach@ipg.uni-bremen.de

### **Prof. Dr. Bengt Starrin**

**Erik Forsberg**

**Marina Kalander-Blomqvist**

**Ulla Rantakeisu**

University of Karlstad,

Centre for Public Health Research, 65188 Karlstad, Sweden

Tel: +46-54-7002507

Fax: +46-54-7002523

email: bengt.starrin@kau.se

### **Prof. Dr. Kees van Heeringen**

**Gwendolyn Portzky**

**Tine Willems**

University Hospital of Gent

Unit for Suicide Research

Dept. of Psychiatry

De Pintelaan 185, 9000 Gent, Belgium

Tel: +32-9-240-4375, +32-9-240-4395 (Secr.)

Fax: +32-9-240-4989

email: cornelis.vanheeringen@rug.ac.be

### **Prof. Dr. Michele La Rosa**

**Dr. Vando Borghi**

**Federico Chicchi**

University of Bologna

Department of Sociology, International Centre for

Documentation and Sociological Studies on Labour Issues

(C.I.Do.S.Pe.L.), Strada Maggiore, 45, 40125 Bologna, Italy

Tel: +39-51-640-3111, +39-51-640-3203/5 (Secr.)

Fax: +39-51-238004

email: larosa@spbo.unibo.it

### **Prof. Dr. Louis Lemkow**

**Dr. Josep Espluga**

**Josep Baltiérrez**

Autonomous University of Barcelona

Faculty of Political Sciences and Sociology Spain

Edifici B, 08193 Bellaterra-Barcelona, Spain

Tel: +34-93-581-1439, +34-93-237-9325

Fax: +34-93-581-3264

email: louis.lemkow@uab.es

### **Katerina Sokou**

**Demetra Bayetakou**

**Valentine Papantoniou**

Greek Network of Health Promoting School (D.E.S.P.Y.)

6, Vas Freideriki Str., 15237 Athens, Greece

Tel: +30-1-7794-907, +30-1-7783-513

Fax: +30-1-7794-907

email: asokou@ath.forthnet.gr

## Comparative Report

Thomas Kieselbach, Gert Beelmann & Ute Traiser

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## 1. Introduction

This comparative report gives an overview of the institutional answers to the problem of youth unemployment in six European countries. National and regional programmes and especially local initiatives and projects will be presented. The results from six countries of the European Union (Sweden, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain) will be presented in the form of interviews with experts and case studies (Chapter 2). In the comparison of the national differences, we will focus on the innovative approaches toward combating youth unemployment. Above all, concepts and projects are emphasised which, taking into consideration the National Action Plans, have made an important contribution to the lasting vocational integration of long-term unemployed young people on the national level and which can offer initiatives for future institutional coping with the problem of youth unemployment on a European level (Chapter 3). It also touches the question as to what extent successful projects and initiatives can be implemented in other countries and regions

without ignoring the national structural and cultural peculiarities.

Decisive for national activities toward combating youth unemployment are the Employment Guidelines formulated on the European level, altogether 22 guidelines which deal with the various aspects of labour market policies. Guideline 1 is important within the context of youth unemployment, programmatically formulated as follows:

*“every unemployed person is offered a new start before reaching six months of unemployment, in the form of training, re-training, work practice, a job or other employability measure”* (European Commission, 1999, p. 12).

The special economic as well as socio-political importance given to the problem of youth unemployment in Europe is reflected in this guideline. At the end of this report, we will present the extent to which the Employment Guidelines deviate from the various national institutional activities and which deficiencies and perspectives can be determined.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Expert interviews

Within the context of the YUSEDER Project 68 experts were questioned who offer projects for unemployed young people and who thus pursue the goal of counteracting the risk of social exclusion of this group and supporting the young people in finding employment or a training position. Offers of support exist in every country at various institutional levels (for example, qualification, psychosocial stabilisation etc.). In order to get a selection of relevant experts/institutions from various institutional areas, we set up the following rule before beginning our contacts with the experts:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
labour adminis- tration	social and welfare institutions	self-help groups	public health institutions	education and training schemes	Others: trade unions, private sector / employers, local/regional authorities/politicians, schools, youth organisations, religious institutions, media

For each national study, there were to be two experts selected from all six areas, so that altogether twelve interviews were conducted for each country. If possible, a further interview concerning a project on the local level was to be conducted as well as one with a representative from a regional or national project/programme. In general, this goal was achieved, but it was not possible to get an equal distribution among the levels and the areas in the studies from all countries. Thus, in the Greek study, there are neither welfare institutions, self-help groups nor public health institutions which offer projects for unemployed youth. Therefore, only nine interviews with experts could be conducted. In the Belgian study, no self-help groups could be interviewed, and, in the Spanish as well as in the German studies, no public health institutions could be included. Concerning the Italian study, both, self-help groups and public health institutions couldn't be found. Only in the Swedish study we were able to survey experts in all areas.

The central point of the interviews was the question as to what the institutions had undertaken to combat or lower the risk of exclusion from the labour market and/or social exclusion as well as negative effects on health as a result of long-term unemployment among young people. In order to sensitise the interviewee for the topic "social exclusion", the theoretical approach (six factors of social exclusion) and empirical results of the qualitative studies of the YUSEDER projects were briefly explained at the beginning of each interview. Finally, the interview was conducted using a set of questions to discuss each project, the successes and problems as well as future prospects of the projects (Annex I and II). At the beginning of the interview, background information concerning the institution (target group, size etc.) as well as the surveyed person (for example, occupation) was collected by means of an "institutional data

sheet" (Annex III). Extensive manuals were used for interviews with the experts on the local level. Here, the possibilities for action by the experts were discussed, using concrete cases from two national case descriptions ('vignette technique', see Chapter 2.1.1) of long-term unemployed young people at high risk of social exclusion. Furthermore, the question was asked as to the special efforts regarding the so-called "status-zero-group" (young people who can be classified as socially excluded but who can no longer be reached by social welfare institutions). For the southern European countries, questions concerning programmes in the context of problems of work in the submerged economy were especially of interest.

### 2.1.1 Vignette Technique

In order to get an extensive and realistic insight into the projects, a special form of questioning, the 'vignette technique', was used for interviews on the local level. Developed in the 1970's in the U.S., this technique has been used in various research projects since then. The method consists of asking the interviewee to describe the concrete steps which the institution in question would typically take to improve the social and psychological situation of a person whose individual case is described by the interviewer. The advantage of this 'vignette technique' is that institutional action can be better illustrated by using concrete examples in the interviews with the experts, so that the interview does not simply take place on an abstract, programmatic level. Moreover, the 'vignette technique' makes it possible to compare various institutional approaches by means of one individual case. For the national surveys, vignettes for each country were set up, as the problems of long-term unemployed young people in the participating countries vary widely and cannot be reflected in unified, encompassing vignettes. Each country selected two cases for its own qualitative study

on long-term unemployed youth at high risk of social exclusion.

In the Greek study, four vignettes were used because of the crucial regional differences (two for urban areas and two for the rural areas, see Greece, p. 4).

## 2.2 Case studies

In addition to the expert interviews, each national study describes six projects on the local level which pursue an especially innovative approach. These 'models of good practice' in the area of youth unemployment are characterised by the fact that they display new and successful ways of combating the risk of social exclusion in this group. If possible, the case studies with innovative approaches from various institutional areas should also be presented, namely one case study each from the six selected institutional areas. The information on the innovative case studies will be evaluated in all national studies by means of standardised categories (Structure of the Case Studies: Annex IV). Projects described as "models of good practice" must fulfil at least the following selection criteria:

- The project should have a fixed time frame and financial basis; that is, it should have been running for at least a year and should be financially secure for another year.
- The project should have been evaluated, the most desirable form being a systematic evaluation according to scientific criteria. As it can be assumed, however, that this has only seldom been the case in the southern European countries, at least a form of self-evaluation should have taken place.

In the Greek study, it was found that only two projects fulfilled these criteria (Greece, p. 4).

## 3. Comparison of results

### 3.1 Expert interviews

In the following, the results of the survey of experts from all national YUSEDER studies will be summarised and compared.

#### *Labour Administration*

In the *Swedish study*, three government labour market institutions on the local, regional and national levels will be presented. On the local

level, individual interviews were conducted with unemployed young people about their qualifications and the labour market demand; vocational counselling and training in application strategies were offered (Swedish study, p. 6). In principle, the employment offices consider the placement into the labour market – even short-term – as their main priority: some sort of vocational activity or the participation in a project is said to be better than doing nothing (Swedish study, p. 7). But so-called "project careers" should be avoided (Swedish study, p. 7). These institutions have set as their goal the elimination of youth unemployment (Swedish study, p. 6).

In the *Belgian study*, interviews were conducted in two employment office institutions: the first was the "Employment Mediation Centre" for job placement and training (Belgian study, p. 5). Each school leaver is obliged to counselling by this facility. Along with various counselling offers, there is the opportunity of setting up an individual developmental plan ("involvement plan") with the goal of the fastest possible integration into the labour market (Belgian study, p. 8).

The second interview was conducted in a government ministry which initiates preventative and assistance measures for unemployed young people (Belgian study, p. 9). The long-term goal is a better adaptation of school to the labour market and to the individual needs of young people (Belgian study, p. 19).

In the *German study*, an expert on the local level and one on the national level of employment office administration were interviewed. A vocational counsellor from the Bremen Employment Office explained that young people were offered, on the one hand, recognised training courses conducted outside a business and, on the other hand, preparatory measures in which social educational supervision was of central importance. An improved approach to young people was created by means of city district projects (counselling facilities directly in the living area; see German study, p. 9). The linking of labour market competency and social educational supervision of unemployed young people is viewed as insufficient. The expert at the Federal Employment Institute reports on the projects in the context of the government programme combating youth unemployment (German study, p. 9).

In the *Greek study*, four interviews with experts were conducted. The Labour Ministry “oversees most programmes against unemployment and cooperates with most institutions.” (Greek study, p. 8). The ministry creates training vacancies and measures toward psychosocial support. An additional interview was conducted in a government youth organisation. Furthermore, an expert in the “Manpower Employment Organisation” was interviewed. Its tasks are vocational counselling and technical training, job placement, paying out of insurance benefits and conducting EU employment initiatives, especially for vulnerable groups (Greek study, p. 6). The positive effects of the projects of this organisation are the integration into the labour market, the improvement of the participants’ finances, the improvement of self-esteem and psychosocial stabilisation as well as the improvement of individual coping skills (Greek study, p. 9). Finally, an interview was done in an organisation which conducts labour market analysis and “targets the development of employment and training policies.” (Greek study, p. 9).

In the *Italian study*, five experts from the labour administration were interviewed: A representative of the Ministry of Employment, an expert from an Employment Department which works towards improving the employment situation in the South of Italy and one interviewee from an Employment and Education Department in the Northern region, which works in the field of job orientation, training and access to school and university education in order to improve the transition from school to workplace. On the local level, experts from job centres were interviewed (Italian study, p. 8-9). Since a few years ago the institutional structure in Italy with regard to employment policy is affected by important changes: regional and provincial governments gain more and more importance in this field. Measures against unemployment and social exclusion are no longer initiated by national institutions exclusively (Italian study, p. 11).

In the *Spanish study*, two experts from the employment office were interviewed who work in the European programme “Youthstart”, whose primary goal is training and employment placement (Spanish study, p. 8). Of central importance is intensive supervision, drawing in the family of the individual young people as well as activating the client. The needs of

disadvantaged young people had to be taken into account more intensively while this programme was being conducted. Besides the difficulties in approaching this problem group, there are too few special offers for young women (Spanish study, p. 20).

For the future, the goal is closer cooperation with other social welfare institutions and with businesses, in order to improve the placement opportunities for unemployed young people.

The tasks and goals of labour administrations are very similar in all participating countries: the primary goal is to (re)integrate unemployed young people into the labour market. These institutions are active not only in labour market placement but also in the area of vocational training. It has been shown in all countries that an intensive individual supervision is necessary to support young people successfully in their choice of a vocation or in placing them in adequate employment. Innovative aspects can be found, first, in the establishment of counselling services in the living areas (German study) and, second, in the cooperation with other social service institutions and businesses (Spanish study).

### *Social and Welfare Institutions*

In the *Swedish study*, two experts from welfare institutions were interviewed. The government welfare administration offers a measure to assist young people “to be self-supporting” (Swedish study, p. 5). “An important task for the interviewee is to motivate the young people to take responsibility for their own life situation but at a pace for which they are mature enough to handle” (Swedish study, p. 14). The young people are supported in their search for work; they are motivated to complete a course of training; and their feelings of self-esteem are strengthened (Swedish study, p. 11). The “Association of Swedish Primary Local Authorities” networks and counsels city and community administrations and views itself as a representative for the interests of local authorities (Swedish study, p. 5). There remains a need for projects suited to difficult cases among unemployed young people.

The *Belgian study* contains three interviews with experts on the level of social and welfare institutions. The “local health and welfare organisation” is active in raising motivation, household management and health counselling

(Belgian study, p. 10). Furthermore, interviews were conducted in a counselling facility from the non-profit sector, an organisation which visits its clients at home. The target group are young people from difficult family circumstances or young offenders. The goal is to enable them to a self-determined life in society. Among the tasks of the organisation belongs support “on the level of budgeting, administration, running a household, looking for work, building an autonomous contact network and/or maintaining it” (Belgian study, p. 13). Finally, an expert was interviewed from the “Ministry of Budgets, Social Integration and Social Economy”, which conducts diverse programmes for establishing subsidized work places (Belgian study, p. 10).

The *German study* contains two interviews with experts in this area. The first concerns a counselling project for young social welfare recipients in which barriers to placement are to be recognised and eliminated. Individual developmental plans are set up, taking into account individual interests. However, the young people must participate in compulsive counselling: refusal to participate results in curtailment of financial services. This approach is only partly successful, as the clients’ willingness to cooperate cannot always be enforced (German study, p. 15). In the second interview, an association of organisations is presented which offers projects for the unemployed with the goal of supporting young people toward integration into the labour market. The association’s task is to represent the interests of the participating organisations and to counsel them professionally (German study, p. 9). A primary requirement is, for example, that the unemployed receive better preparation in the projects in order to tackle the world of work (German study, p. 15).

The *Spanish study* conducted interviews in three social welfare institutions which are responsible for making general social services available for socially disadvantaged groups as well as for combating poverty, but they also offer training programmes (Spanish study, p. 8) and public works projects (“socio-labour insertion”; see Spanish study, p. 8). One expert expresses the view that long-term unemployed young people must first be given return access to social communication and information (Spanish study, p. 13). “Rather than thinking in terms of direct job placement, we should be thinking of social promotion, a process of integration in a wider social environment; later, if appropriate, we can

talk about labour challenges” (Spanish study, p. 16). Thus, placement into the primary labour market does not have top priority. Rather the improvement of interaction skills and self-esteem of those affected is seen as a necessary requirement for a later integration into the labour market. However, there is no financial support for the participants during the project, support which would increase their motivation.

The *Greek study* reports that there are no special offers by social welfare institutions for unemployed young people.

One interviewee in the *Italian report* works for the government's Department of Social Affairs. This office deals with the drawing up of national legislation on youth policy, the provision of advice and support on questions of youth policy at the regional and local level as well as the promotion of research on youth problems (Italian study, p. 12). The Department of Social Affairs is involved in projects for different social groups with problems with regard to social marginalisation (Italian study, p. 13-14). The second interview was conducted with an expert from the Department of Town Planning in Naples. The strategy of the interventions in this context aim at creating different kinds of possibilities for development for young people living in disadvantaged areas and preventing the accumulation of social disadvantages or a further social decline of these young people (Italian study, p. 13). This aim is realised by the combination of education and training schemes with the integration in protected jobs.

The Belgian, Italian and Spanish studies are comparable in the area of welfare institutions insofar as the projects in all three countries clearly place the main focus on general help in everyday life and on improvement of the young people’s interaction skills. This is particularly true for problem groups. The integration into the primary labour market is viewed as of secondary importance; there are, however, offers for positions on the government-subsidised labour market. In contrast, the Swedish and German studies describe projects, which focus on linking extensive (psycho) social supervision with placement into the primary labour market. Nevertheless, the compulsory counselling for young welfare recipients mentioned in the German study implies negative side-effects as well.

### *Self-help Groups*

In the *Swedish study*, two self-help initiatives are presented which are financed, however, mainly by public funds. The first concerns a labour union initiative in which unemployed people help other unemployed young people in job and training placement. This project is also described as an innovative case study (Swedish study, pp. 14). In the second interview, an expert was questioned from a non-profit organisation, which fosters entrepreneurship in young people (Swedish study, p. 5). This project is directed primarily toward young people with higher qualifications.

The *German study* presented two projects, one of which is directed toward vocational orientation for girls, having theatre productions as its focal point (German study, p. 10). The goal is the development of creativity, the strengthening of self-esteem as well as personal identity. The Association of the Unemployed offers young welfare recipients in eastern Germany temporary work on the secondary labour market and individual personal counselling (German study, p. 11).

Two interviews with self-help groups were conducted in the *Spanish study*: members of a self-help group of young people were questioned. The group consists of unemployed and also young people who have work and who wish to display solidarity with the unemployed and to help them (Spanish study, pp. 9-10). A second interview was conducted with an expert from a non-profit organisation, which has committed itself to creating positions on the secondary labour market for (disadvantaged) women (Spanish study, p. 10). The organisation was able to obtain placement in (temporary) jobs for 80% of the participants (Spanish study, p. 22).

Neither the *Belgian* nor the *Greek or Italian study* were able to integrate self-help groups of unemployed young people.

Whereas the *Swedish study* presents self-help groups with labour market-related activities (placement in employment and /or starting up businesses), the *German* and *Spanish studies* have each introduced a project which does not pursue employment placement as its main goal but rather learning self-identity (Young Women's Theatre Workshop, German study) or political participation (Spanish study). Furthermore, the *German* and *Spanish studies* describe projects

that place young people particularly in positions in the secondary labour market.

### *Public Health Institutions*

The *Swedish study* contains an interview with a national health organisation, which supports especially disadvantaged groups (for example, long-term unemployed).

The *Belgian study* summarises three expert interviews: a non-profit organisation which works in the area of mental health and deals mainly with young drug addicts (Belgian study, p. 6) as well as a government organisation working to promote better health and prevention (Belgian study, p. 6). Here the attempt is made to give disadvantaged young people access to personal health care and to inform them about hygiene and vaccinations (Belgian study, p. 12). Furthermore, experts in a ministry for public works projects were questioned (Belgian study, pp. 12-13).

Projects from the public health sector are not contained in the *German, Italian, Spanish or Greek studies*.

It must be pointed out that none of the participating European countries has public health institutions that have set up special offers for unemployed young people. The experts questioned in the *Belgian* and *Swedish studies*, however, offer measures toward promoting good health in general, which are directed to unemployed young people as well as to others.

### *Education and Training Schemes*

In the *Swedish study*, interviews were conducted in two institutions that carry out projects in vocational counselling and training with the goal of placement in the primary labour market. There are offers for special problem groups (e.g. the handicapped). "Treatment chains" contribute to maintaining the eventual goal of placement in the labour market also for those young people who cannot be placed immediately in the primary labour market, as they require assistance with other personal needs (Swedish study, p. 16).

In the *Belgian study*, two interviews have been combined. The first was conducted in a training centre for part-time labour: "Learning by working" offers training and improves motivation to work, ... increases chances on a job, ...



increases income, ... cooperates with different institutions which are involved in employment initiatives for young people. It offers stability, improves self-image and self-confidence of young people” (Belgian study, p. 15). The second interview was conducted in a ministry, which initiates various educational and training programmes (Belgian study, p. 7).

In the *German study*, five experts in educational and training institutions were questioned. The project “Opportunities in Trade” undertakes “a mediator role between businesses and applicants in order to close the gap between supply and demand for job training places for young people” (German study, p. 13). A training position was found for 70% of the participants. Also an expert from a special programme for young people with low qualifications was interviewed. The goal is to assist this group in completing a regular course of training (German study, p. 12). A further programme on the regional level aims at long-term integration of young people into the labour market. A characteristic of this programme is the close cooperation between employers and the individual supervision of the young people (German study, p. 13). In addition, a programme for long-term unemployed young people was presented in which temporary work contracts were drawn up for the participants, whereby the employer received wage subsidies. The hiring rate was 50-70% (German study, p. 17). Finally, an organisation is described which develops new training models to enable disadvantaged groups to receive an acknowledged vocational training (German study, p. 17).

In the *Greek study*, an expert was questioned from a private training facility, which also conducts labour market analysis and develops new courses of training according to the demand determined by analysis (Greek study, p. 7-8). There is follow-up supervision at the end of the training (Greek study, p. 13).

In the *Italian study* three experts in professional training on the regional and local level were interviewed (Italian study, p. 10). In general, these institutions deal with improving the efficiency of institutional employment channels and the creation of services that increase the employability of their clients (Italian study, p. 14-16).

The *Spanish study* reports on, first of all, “social guarantee programmes” which (re)integrate

young people who have not completed school either into a workplace or into the educational system (Spanish study, p. 10). Secondly, interviews were conducted in an institution which carries out diverse educational, training and leisure-time projects, namely for young people who have difficulties in the regular school system (Spanish study, p. 11). Topics are help in orientation, training offers, combining work and learning, application of alternative didactic methods (individual supervision) and behaviour training (Spanish study, p. 14-15). However, a placement can be achieved normally only in temporary jobs. The young people gain primarily “personal resources to find work” (Spanish study, p. 22).

Various innovative approaches were introduced in the area of educational and training schemes that are characterised by the integration of learning, working and behaviour training (Belgian, German, Italian and Spanish studies).

Innovative is, moreover, a concept that provides for continual supervision of unemployed young people (“treatment chains”; see Swedish and Greek studies).

#### *Additional Institutions*

In the *Swedish study*, three institutions will be presented: first, a regional labour union association, which pursues political goals such as a general right to work and an overall increase in employment (Swedish study, p. 6). For the unemployed, it is very important “to create the prerequisites so that they will be seen, to get someone to talk and that there are meeting places” (Swedish study, p. 39). A further interview was conducted with an expert from the “labour market council”; its goal is “to get a comprehensive grip on labour market questions in the municipality” (Swedish study, p. 39). At the same time, employees of the “labour market administration” were questioned, an institution whose important task is “to convey norms which function in working life, that is to say, the personnel work quite a bit with attitudes and behaviour, for example that a person observes set times” (Swedish study, p. 22). And, finally, an expert from a school educational programme was questioned.

The *Belgian study* describes two facilities. “Local employment offices” are job placement centres, which attempt to place the client in the preferred

job and, in this context, to remove existing obstacles to placement; young people are prepared for hiring tests, for example (Belgian study, p. 15). “Provincial Council East Flanders” “develops complementary proposals for the Flemish policy regarding measures against social exclusion” (Belgian study, p. 17).

The *German study* presented a project of an oil company in which unemployed young people were given work in the service area of petrol stations. This project was not very successful, however. “The participants were frequently asked by the petrol station employees to do only tasks requiring little qualification” (German study, p. 16). The supervision of the young people was insufficient as well.

In the *Greek study*, four institutions were placed in this category. The “Institute of Employment” (labour union) set up a “network of support” in the Internet for young people through which contact was made between government institutions and young people (Greek study, p. 8). Training offers were made to the young people, and their active participation was fostered by “activity groups” (Greek study, p. 10). In addition, an expert was interviewed from a special programme to combat unemployment and social exclusion (Greek study, p. 9). The target group for this project were school drop-outs (Greek study, p. 11). The “Support Centre” for unemployed young people offers information, vocational orientation and training, but also leisure-time activities such as theatre and sports (Greek study, p. 11). “A successful aspect of the project is the information disseminated to the young unemployed about job opportunities” (Greek study, p. 16). Finally, personnel were questioned from a non-profit organisation which has as its focal point an alternative and healthy life style. Young people can participate in the form of voluntary work and are offered social contacts. Furthermore, the organisation conducts actions against poverty, social exclusion and unemployment (Greek study, p. 9).

In the *Italian study*, there is one interview with the head of a local job centre of the trade union confederation. This institution supports young job seekers in a comprehensive way in order to facilitate the access to the labour market (Italian study, p. 10-11 and p. 16).

The *Spanish study* presents three interviews, one of which was conducted with a representative of

a labour union. The labour union has no special offers for unemployed young people, but offers, along with political activities, vocational training courses for various age groups and support in their search for a workplace (Spanish study, p. 11-12). The main demand of the labour union is “to reduce unemployment and the precarious nature of the labour market” (Spanish study, p. 17). Furthermore, the government is called upon to make available particular offers of help for socially disadvantaged young people (Spanish study, p. 16). The second interview was conducted with an expert from a private placement agency which offers help in starting a business and training courses for dealing with modern means of communication. The third interview was done in a cooperative society which conducts counselling services, for example, for the initiation of economic development and cooperation programmes. The aim is to help young people to take responsibility, to improve their self-esteem, independence and competency in problem solving and to formulate their own interests.

In three of the studies, it can be noticed that, along with political activities, labour unions offer social supervision and support for young people searching for work (Spanish, Greek and Swedish studies). In addition, the Greek “Support Centre” pursues an innovative approach that combines vocational counselling with leisure-time offers.

In summary, it can be said that, in Sweden and in Germany, the communal commitment toward combating (youth) unemployment has increased: “... labour market policy is regarded as a mission for the state. However, during recent years the municipalities have more actively become engaged in labour market questions” (Swedish study, p. 6). In the Belgian study, it can be noticed that various ministries have initiated programmes which aim at social integration, the creation of employment vacancies, job placement and qualifying young people. An additional focus lies in the promotion of good health. In Greece, the measures mainly have the goal of social integration and the prevention of social isolation, not so much placement into the labour market (Greek study, p. 22). The Italian study concludes that there is still a lack of coordination between institutions providing social assistance in general and institutional support aiming at the improvement of the employability of young persons (Italian study, p. 38). In the Spanish study long-term job placement can only be

achieved in a few cases. A positive aspect of all the projects is the strengthening of self-esteem and interaction skills of the participants.

### **3.2 Strategies and programmes in regard to the submerged economy in Southern European countries**

In *Greece* some legal initiatives have been instituted to combat work in the submerged economy, such as awarding work permits to foreigners and “regulations aiming to officially recognise new more flexible models of work organisation” (Greek study, p. 14). But “there are no specific strategies or programmes focusing on young people involved in submerged economy in Greece” (Greek study, p. 14).

In *Italy*, specific programmes for young people with irregular employment only exist on the local level (Italian report, p. 17). Interventions in the field of submerged economy were divided into two categories: There are 1) policies orientated towards employers, encouraging them to transform irregular employment into regular employment, and 2) policies aimed at increasing the quality of life of employees in order to counterbalance bad living conditions in deprived areas where the labour market is mainly based on irregular work (Italian report, p. 19).

In *Spain*, legal regulations have been created which contribute to reducing irregular work, but there are no special youth programmes (Spanish study, p. 16). It is attempted, however, to integrate young people who work in the submerged economy into projects (Spanish study, p. 17). The attempt is also made to inform young people about the disadvantages of irregular work and the advantages of a regular job as well as about their rights and responsibilities on the labour market (Spanish study, pp. 19-20). The following measures could contribute further toward combating work in the submerged economy: better social and economic safeguards for fixed-term contracts, minimum social welfare benefits for unemployed young people, information about the negative consequences of irregular work, the extension of “socio-labour insertion programmes”, also for young people (Spanish study, p. 20).

### **3.3 Innovative case studies and implications**

In the comparative presentation of the case studies from the individual countries, it was

difficult to assign each institutional area into an exact category. Many of the described case studies cannot be placed into only one area; instead, most case studies overlap, as projects, programmes and initiatives were often conceived and conducted by varied institutional sponsorships. In the following presentation, however, the classification of institutions found in Chapter 2 will be maintained. Not all case studies will be included from the individual countries, as multiple case studies exist for certain areas. The essential element of the presentation is to introduce innovative approaches to combating youth unemployment and the risk of social exclusion in each country.

#### *Labour Administration*

One case study each from the three countries (Sweden, Belgium, Germany) falls into the category employment offices. A very important programme for the European discussion has been established on the national level in Sweden, called “Development Guarantee for Youth”. This programme transferred to the local level offers work, training or other work activity to all young people unemployed for at least 100 days. The main idea is fostering personal initiative. It attempts to activate unemployed young people so that they can develop vocational perspectives on their own, which the young people should be able to do at the end of the 12-month project. In order to achieve this goal, the young people’s competency is to be strengthened by the project.

In contrast, the approach of a local employment office in Belgium is directed toward semi-skilled and unskilled young people between 18 and 30 years of age who are offered temporary jobs which can last up to four weeks. This programme is to act as a launching pad for young people to improve their chances on the labour market.

The housing construction project “Waller village” in Germany is supported by the national employment office and is directed towards long-term unemployed young people. They get the opportunity to learn trade skills and to participate in concrete projects under real labour market conditions. This approach is viewed as fostering integration. In the Italian study, several projects were described which focus on the creation of new job opportunities for young unemployed people in the sense of ‘self-employment’.

The innovative aspects found in these case studies are, first, focusing on underprivileged young people (Belgium) and, second, giving a guarantee of work to everyone (Sweden). In the German example, the innovation lies in making available a concrete activity in skilled trade which is to be carried out under real labour market conditions (time pressure, qualification requirements), whereas the innovative approach of the Italian examples lies in the of promotion of entrepreneurship.

### *Social and Welfare Institutions*

In Sweden, the project “There is a Place for Everyone” is targeted toward the group of long-term unemployed. In this project, it is attempted above all to strengthen the social competency and the general physical health of the participants. Here the goal is less one of paid employment, but more one of stabilising health. Through skilled trade activities, the participants are able to work on a voluntary basis as much as they wish. It is more an offer to activate the participants. The project “The Factory” in Belgium is comparable to the Swedish project in that the unemployed young people can take up offers such as sports, music and cultural events at little charge. “The Factory” can be understood as a contact point for young people at risk of social exclusion. The interests of the young people are to be directed toward certain work activities. After a year, the young people should be able to find a workplace on the regular labour market. Similar to these interventions, the Italian study presents a project which offers multifaceted support measures, i.e. training and leisure time activities for disadvantaged young unemployed, pursuing the aim to integrate them into the labour market (Maecenas Project).

In Germany, the project “Work at Once” offers work to young people eligible for social welfare benefits. On the one hand, it gives young people the opportunity to work by the hour in a workshop. On the other hand, they can participate in this 12-month project which provides for an exact plan of help developed individually with the young person.

A programme from Spain with the name “Youths in Action” operates under the auspices of the Ministry for Social Services in Catalonia, a project in which the young unemployed are informed about their opportunities and

perspectives. At the same time, they are to learn in groups about their own abilities and resources.

The Greek project “Social Organisation Supporting Young People” pursues the goal of giving the public a greater understanding of the problems and difficulties of young people. The organisation offers young people leisure-time activities, social contacts and other social activities. Moreover, the attempt is made to prepare young people for the labour market, to improve their personal capabilities and to look for long-lasting or short-term employment.

The innovative aspect of the Belgian project “The Factory” and the Italian “Maecenas Project” is its integrating approach: offers are made from the cultural area, and young people can participate in work projects.

In addition, there is the offer of medical assistance once a week. In contrast, the German project is more work-oriented. The basic idea of the project is to fulfil the needs of all the young people. There is the offer of instant work possibilities all the way to the opportunity of developing an individual vocational developmental plan in cooperation with a project employee. The Spanish project primarily emphasises conveying information; that is, young people are to assess their own personal capabilities and, in doing so, learn how to help themselves or how to seek help. The Greek project is similar to the Belgian example in that it attempts to first prepare young people for the labour market (for example, through raising self-esteem). The project provides for qualification and information along with social contacts and leisure-time activities.

### *Self-help Groups*

With the exception of Germany, there are no initiatives and projects arising from self-help groups. Following the unification of Germany, the Association of the Unemployed in Germany was founded, arising from a counselling service by self-help groups for the unemployed. An association project, “Employment and Qualification”, is to introduce young people to “Learning and Working”. This project is carried out at a youth leisure facility by means of non-profit work. Along with skilled trade activities, knowledge is conveyed under social educational supervision. The innovative aspect is that the young people are not simply put to work, but

work on a concrete object which the community will also profit from.

### *Public Health Institutions*

As with the self-help groups, case studies of public health institutions exist only for Germany. The “netWork-start aid” project is principally a project to place unemployed young people in training. This project conducted by the employment centre is based on a health campaign supported by the health office, in which the public is informed about the connections between unemployment and health. In this respect, the innovative element lies in the fact that it is the public health office with its medical facilities that works on the health problems of the unemployed. Up to now, this has been a rare example in Europe.

### *Education and Training Schemes*

Many of the case studies were done in the area of educational and training institutions. One such is the Swedish example “ASPEN”, mainly established for young people over 20 years of age who receive welfare benefits. With the help of personal counselling, the young people are to decide whether they wish to participate in training or in practical work experience. The goal of the project is to make unemployed young people attractive for the labour market through training and practical work experience. They are to learn to take over more responsibility for themselves. During this project, a mentor supervises them.

Consisting of several training phases, the “Turning Point” project from Belgium is directed toward the long-term unemployed. Its goal is to help the participants toward employment through training and measures to stabilise their personalities.

A German example is the state programme “Youth in Work”. It is implemented on the local level and is characterised by a number of mediators who attempt to place long-term unemployed young people into training positions. The Italian project “Chance 2000” offers particular education schemes for young school drop-outs in order to support them to get a school-diploma. The main innovative feature of this project is the assistance that is provided to the young unemployed with regard to the creation of a social network.

A Spanish project from this institutional area is the project “New Way”, which pursues an integrating approach to combating youth unemployment. The activities in this project provide for three phases: 1) an orientation in which the young people are to be motivated and to achieve self-assurance, 2) learning specific skills and practical training and 3) personal supervision.

To summarise, the innovative elements in these four examples lie in the step-by-step approaches which essentially act, first, to qualify young people and, second, to stabilise them psychosocially and socially. In this process the strengthening of the potential for self-helps crucial, complemented by social skills through means of individual supervision.

### *Additional Institutions*

Most of the case studies fall into the category “other institutions”, mainly labour unions and organisations in the individual countries. For example, a project in Sweden was initiated by a labour union, whose idea is that in the “AHA Project” unemployed people help other unemployed. Unemployed persons serve as counsellors responsible for meeting with 15 unemployed young people each over a period of three months. On the one hand, the individual situation of each young person is discussed in these sessions; on the other hand, there is a practical part which provides practice in writing applications, group meetings and individual supervision while the young person is looking for work.

A Belgian example is the labour union project “VZW OAK” which arose out of volunteer work. The task is to prevent social exclusion of long-term unemployed young people through training courses. It attempts to foster emotional and mental development through communication training, personality development and phases of learning. In addition, leisure-time activities are offered.

A German example is the project “Youth Workshop II”, carried out by an organisation which began on an honorary basis for home work assistance and then developed into a youth sponsor with 50 employees. The project provides for school and vocational qualification as well as practical help in everyday life. The young people

are to be motivated and to be enabled to take care of their own needs independently.

The idea of a Spanish project is to make it easier for long-term unemployed and those affected by exclusion to achieve social integration through access to new information and communication technologies. The approach used by the sponsoring organisation is based on three elements: 1) support through information and resources for the job search, 2) access to information technologies for everyone and 3) training in special short-term workshops to update knowledge of technology. A Greek example is the Institute for Labour's "Counselling and Information Centres for Young People". In the institute, experts conduct training and counselling seminars in order to prepare unemployed people for employment. They are to be guided into a status of "pre-integration" in order to build up their own involvement.

The innovative aspect of the Swedish "AHA Project" is that the unemployed help the unemployed. The unemployed helpers are schooled in planning special activities and in supporting the other unemployed with intensive personal discussions. In Belgium, a labour union organisation attempts to get the long-term unemployed ready again for the labour market through individual schooling. The German example proves innovative in that it draws in young people primarily from the rural area into the project. Such young people in particular are often disadvantaged because of the weak infrastructure. The innovative idea of the Spanish project is that it raises the motivation of those seeking work through the incentive of computer technology, through fostering participation in social life and through developing new forms of culture in city districts. The Greek example is innovative in that it takes the approach that integration into the labour market makes sense only when the young people have achieved social integration.

### *Implications*

The case studies presented above, show the following implications concerning innovative approaches toward avoiding youth unemployment and the risk of social exclusion throughout Europe. In many projects and initiatives, it is stated that training and qualification alone are not enough to guarantee a long-term integration of unemployed young

people. In many cases, measures are required in which the young people first receive help with respect to their personal life situation and emotional development. Only after a phase of stabilisation and improvement in their social situation do efforts toward integration into the labour market seem meaningful. Further innovative aspects are as follows:

- qualification of young people in the area of information technologies
- networking different mediators
- involvement of placement agencies
- city district-oriented projects toward promoting social integration
- strengthening personal responsibility (empowerment approach)
- target group-oriented action
- qualification through skilled-labour activities in concrete projects which benefit the community.

### **3.4 Common problems for long-term unemployed youth**

The experts of the six European countries involved share similar views on the main problems of long-term unemployed young people. Most important are the low qualification, the lack in work experience and the insufficient vocational training (the last mentioned above all in southern European countries). In addition the affected young people often don't have social contacts through which access to potential employers would be established. Furthermore most of the experts of the six country studies talk about the long-lasting exclusion from the labour market and the psychosocial effects of unemployment as well as the loss of the time structure and the self-esteem. They experience intense stress, often get disorientated and face depressions as well as hopelessness. The Italian study emphasises that unemployment is the reason for difficulties and limits with regard to the development of personal autonomy. These consequences of unemployment have negative effects on personal skills, which are required in a workplace.

Also the experts consider the economic problems of this group as a central aspect. The problematic financial situation has a negative impact on the social participation possibilities and stops leading an autonomous life, because the dependence of the family of origin is prolonged (mainly in southern European countries) respectively a dependence of state welfare institutions arises.

Furthermore long-term unemployed young people do not experience sufficient support from social institutions. The southern European countries involved, as for example Greece, are above all concerned: The personnel in the employment offices lack special training and treat the young unemployed in an impersonal way which discourages them from getting registered as unemployed. The situation is gradually changing in the new employment offices. With regard to unemployed young people in Sweden, Belgium and Germany another problem has to be mentioned: the weakened position with respect to the *social insurance system* because of the close connection between wage employment and the social insurance system.

### 3.5 Measures against youth unemployment

For *Sweden* the following public interventions are characteristic:

- Individually oriented long-term strategies and process-oriented measures.
- Measures providing a structure for daily life and transferring norms, which are necessary in working life.
- Educational and competency boost among those unemployed who have the weakest prerequisites for participating in the labour market.
- Internships or apprenticeships as an opportunity for the young long-term unemployed to get a foothold in the labour market and to show their capacity (as the employers are often sceptical regarding long-term unemployed individuals).
- Projects in which different agencies are involved which coordinate their activities in order to improve the support for unemployed persons.

A new programme, starting this year, including 'labour pool' and 'transitional jobs' seems to be an important contribution to the labour market policy. The group members develop individual job-seeking plans, build networks and so on. The objective is to develop systematically the unemployed person's competency and employability.

The *Belgian* government wants to conduct an active education and employment policy that aims at increasing the employment rate. Apparently there are no concrete goals towards the group of young unemployed persons. The

new national government just recently introduced a specific measure against youth unemployment: the "starter jobs". These jobs aim at integrating the youngsters into the job-market within six months after completing a course. In this case the government will have to set up a scheme for tax reductions immediately or it will have to intervene in organising a wage tax for school drop-outs with a lower educational level. In consultation with regional and municipal bodies, this scheme will have to be re-enforced by specific initiatives in the area of mediations, education and intervention in the wage costs so that real work experience can be gathered on the basis of a labour contract. Furthermore, existing schemes for integrating young people such as apprentices need to be integrated and strengthened where necessary.

In Belgium, many measures are developed at a national level, but executed at a regional level due to the fact that Belgium is a federal state. At a local level, particular attention is paid to personal guidance. This guidance is not only focused on employment but also on other personal problems which may be experienced by youngsters. Apparently the concern for individual psychosocial stabilisation and personality development is increasing due to the awareness that training and qualification are not always sufficient. There seems to be a problem with the fact that many local institutions have a specific target group. This means that these institutions have only one way of working with the unemployed youngsters and can supply only one measure against youth unemployment. The institutions should be able to give more than one measure against youth unemployment and social exclusion and should provide a more individualised help towards the youngsters that is based on their individual needs.

At present, the Instant Programme toward reducing youth unemployment initiated by the Federal Employment Institute (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, BA) is the most important programme in *Germany*. This programme is financed by 2 thousand million DM (1 thousand million Euro) for the years 1999 and 2000, putting into effect for the first time in Germany a nationwide special programme for combating youth unemployment, in which the federal and state governments as well as business organisations and chambers of commerce are working together to find solutions. An essential part of this programme is bringing in businesses and industries which provide job

training positions and possibilities for employment. Along with this nationwide programme, there are diverse activities in the realm of labour market policy on the regional and especially the municipal levels to train and qualify unemployed youth. In part, these measures are financed by the Instant Programme; otherwise the responsibility lies more with the state governments or community representatives. There often exists, however, a close cooperation between employment administrations and/or social service institutions.

In general, the main institutional answers to (long-term) youth unemployment in Germany are: (1) training and qualification, (2) cooperation and networking and (3) psycho-social stabilisation and personal development. On the whole, the interviews with experts were able to demonstrate that the approaches that show the most positive effects are those that attempt to design individual goal perspectives with the young people themselves. Furthermore, placement via the labour exchange is a possibility toward integrating young people in a programme or project, but the direct approach by outsiders (for example, social workers, psychologists) has shown itself to be especially efficient. It is also decisive to what extent the different labour market organisers cooperate with one another, that is, which institutions participate in the (re)integration process.

The national policy in *Greece* aims at offering young unemployed a new start in the form of training, re-training, work practice, a job or other employability measure before reaching six months of unemployment. This should be reached through a comprehensive individualised intervention. Females have priority in unemployment programmes covering 62% of the vacancies since women make up 62% of the young long-term unemployed. The national government and all social partners cooperate in the planning and realisation of the National Action Plan. In general, the young unemployed have the following opportunities:

- participating in programmes of initial and continuous vocational training
- gaining work experience in businesses relevant to academic studies or training by subsidising employers to hire young unemployed persons.
- creating an own business with the support and guidance of public institutions.

The Centres for the Promotion of Employment (K.P.A.) will gradually replace the existing local employment offices in Greece. They have been designed as a "one stop shop", where all services are conveniently concentrated. Before completing six months of unemployment a young job-seeker will be interviewed by a job advisor who will help him/her and adapt the existing programmes and services to the specific needs and characteristics of the unemployed person. Starting from January 1999, all young unemployed persons below the age of 30 have been entitled to free access in public health care. This policy has solved a major problem of the young unemployed who until then had to pay for medical services.

An important policy, the "Complementary Teaching Programme", has been launched by the Ministry of Education in 1997. It has been implemented in a number of schools in regions with increased educational needs. Although, the programme does not address unemployed persons directly, since it supports students with low school performance, it can be considered as a programme preventing unemployment. The programme includes supportive teaching during the school period and summer vacations, development of educational material and information and training of teachers, parents and the local community.

In *Italy*, the following goals characterise the most important public interventions:

- facilitating the demand/supply matching (restructuring of the employment centres, improvement of the orientation and counselling activities for young people)
- creation of new job opportunities (fiscal and financial facilities and administrative support for new enterprises and self-employment projects; facilities for new engagements; especially in the South; introduction of measures of labour market flexibilisation)
- improvement of the employability of young people (improvement and more effective co-ordination of the system of professional qualification; extension of the contracts with qualification goals, such as on the job training, stages, work-grants)
- introduction of new measures, i.e. a Minimum Insertion Income (24,919 families involved, in 39 different municipalities)

A new law that, even if not specifically directed towards young people at risk of social exclusion,



aims to subsidise actions (on the local level in particular) improving the quality of living of young people and promoting their participation (through social and cultural groups and associations) in social life. Despite of these actions, two persisting elements must be stressed:

1. the lack of economic support and the low institutional support for persons looking for their first job, and more particularly the lack of specific measures counteracting the risk of social exclusion of young long-term unemployed people; this means that the problems are fragmented and faced by different institutional agencies, often collocated on different institutional levels (national, regional, local);
2. the fundamental importance of the territorial divide in Northern and Southern Italy: the transformations of the institutional regulation of the labour market are differently advanced in the two areas – more in the North, less in the South - and are producing different effects. Moreover, it must be stressed that in the South the vulnerability with regard to the risk of social exclusion is higher.

In general terms, in *Spain* the objectives of the institutions with regard to unemployed young people have consisted of boosting the capacity for insertion into the labour market via participation in programmes and active policies. Most of institutional actions are addressed to young people between 16 and 20, with no qualifications and with social problems. This is due to the fact that most of these actions are financed by the European Social Fund.

In general, it seems that the main aim is to facilitate the adaptation of young people to the labour market by implementing systems of apprenticeship, permanent training and specific programmes providing access to employment information. The Social Guarantee Programmes aimed at young people between 16 and 21 who have not completed their compulsory secondary education and who lack professional qualification. The Social Guarantee Programmes have two objectives: one is facilitating the implementation of young people into the educational system and another is providing them with a basic qualification. The following activities characterise the most important public interventions:

*Training actions:*

- Mixed Training-Employment programmes: Aimed at young people (up to 25 years),

which combine training and work. This is a training process for six months followed by placement with a training work contract in a participating company. Until now, the mean duration of the work contract was 18 months.

- Occupational training, consisting of training courses for the unemployed, which last in average for four months. These measures comprise the great majority of institutional actions.

*Employment actions:*

- Local Employment Initiatives: Support programmes (economic benefits) for companies that hire unemployed people
- Reduction of costs (to companies) in training contracts and incentives to convert them into permanent contracts
- Self-employment support, consisting of financial support and assessment on setting up on one's own.

*Guidance:*

- Individual long-term guidance and support in personal orientation.

### 3.6 Conclusions for the development of intervention schemes

Priorities and measures formulated in the Swedish National Action Plan for employment are on the whole in line with our studies within the YUSEDER project. Most important seems to be the goal that every young person until the age of 25 years shall be offered work, training or other employment within 100 days. Moreover, the National Action Plan for employment should implement more institutional offers with regard to:

- measures and methods that support youth which for various reasons have problems in school
- a more extensive application to apprenticeships where the educational system and the local business co-operate.

At a national level in *Belgium*, there is a growing concern regarding unemployment in general but not specific for youth unemployment. However, the new government has created a new measure against youth unemployment: the starter jobs. There seems to be more attention to youth unemployment at a regional level. The institutions on the local level are often governmental organisations, which thus have to execute what the government decides. On this

level one can find the most promising measures against youth unemployment and social exclusion. The only problem is that these institutions often do not receive enough subsidies from the government to be effective enough in their interventions against youth unemployment and social exclusion.

They acknowledge that the most effective action against youth unemployment and social exclusion is personal guidance but they often do not have the means to guide the youngsters properly.

The *German* study concludes, that qualification of unemployed youth should be combined with meaningful employment whereby the programme should be conducted as a real, existing work project. This can lead to a greater identification of the young people with their own activity, but also can assist them to a suitable qualification in the primary labour market. It is important, moreover, that the young people are placed long-term in the primary training positions or the primary labour market at the completion of a programme in order to avoid renewal of unemployment or the beginning of a "project career". This can be achieved, for example, through the cooperation of project organisers with businesses and enterprises. Besides that, an intensive individual assistance is necessary for unemployed youth. In addition to this, there must be the development of career perspectives as well as the planning and oversight of each step toward realising the individual goal. Institutional support should always be combined with the goal of activating the young people. The contents of institutional offers should also be adjusted to the existing needs of the participants.

The following improvements with regard to institutional measures in Germany should be realised:

- the measures toward outreach youth work must be strengthened; unconventional forms of approach must be broadened;
- practice-related projects toward career preparation and orientation should be installed in schools;
- a local contact point should be created for young people in which professional counsellors are available for questions on training and qualification;
- offers of professional services should be established which can assume a placement function between businesses and unemployed youth.

In *Greece* the existing institutional responses to youth unemployment are not able to face the full extent of the problem, although it is announced in the National Action Plan that each young unemployed should be given a chance of training, re-training, work experience etc. Many of the young unemployed still remain without support. Since 1998, there has been a general activation on the issue of youth unemployment. Progress has been made but there is still much to do. Above all, a faster implementation of the unemployment policies is necessary. Innovative interventions in Greece show that institutional responses to youth unemployment should offer comprehensive support to the unemployed person covering a variety of needs: information, work orientation, vocational training, psychosocial support, and job placement. Moreover, prevention of youth unemployment should be a main policy target. School must be the starting point for preventive measures including measures against school failure. School vocational orientation should be upgraded in the Greek school curriculum and its efficacy to be evaluated. Psychosocial support of the young long-term unemployed should be part of the new individualised approach which the new Greek policy is currently introducing. The young unemployed should also participate in state policy planning against unemployment and should be stimulated to be involved in community activities, self-help groups, sports etc.

Innovative institutional responses in *Italy* aim at the improvement of the social relationships of the young unemployed (with their families, local community, educators, peers) and of their quality of life, the further development of cognitive abilities and educational levels in general, as well as at the provision of work places. The actions at the social and cognitive level have the same importance as those primarily oriented towards the labour market inclusion.

Moreover, the experts also stressed the general social value of work experiences: for that reason also some irregular work opportunities (the more qualifying ones) can be considered as possible instruments for a general improvement of the social competence and quality of life of young unemployed people at risk of social exclusion. Therefore, by leading to the enlargement of social contacts, economic autonomy, possibility of territorial mobility and the improvement of cognitive and social competence irregular work

can, in some cases, be defined as a factor counteracting the risk of social exclusion.

In *Spain* the institutional interventions against social exclusion of young unemployed people tend to be based on training. Many existing initiatives consist of vocational training offers which supposedly allow young people to enter the labour market. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these courses is limited since they often do not provide useful knowledge. Moreover, the young people themselves do not perceive the training as useful. This becomes an obstacle for the insertion projects as it demotivates the young people and makes it difficult for them to achieve the objectives of the insertion programmes. The projects which encourage self-awareness and self-management and which provide professional support at all times and with sufficient flexibility seem to be the most successful ones in the fight against social exclusion of young unemployed people. One of the deficiencies often reiterated by the experts is the lack of coordination between different policies and between institutions of different levels and areas of competence.

The political measures which are being implemented in Spain to address youth unemployment are merely complementary measures which do not address the core of the problem, since all they are achieving is a high unemployment/employment rotation among young people. The training being offered to these young people being often ineffective at mitigating the effects of unemployment. The insertion measures as a whole, while they may have contributed to reducing unemployment levels, do not appear to be effective enough to resolve the problems of social exclusion associated with it, since they maintain a general situation of precariousness among the young people. It may be suggested that, in Spain, the fight against social exclusion of young long-term unemployed people should try to reduce the precariousness of work, in order to reduce the uncertainty in the expectations of the young people as well as the high turnover of people entering and leaving unemployment. Political measures should consider:

- ways of providing an economic cushion for young people which eliminates their exclusive dependence on the family;
- ways of gaining their active participation in different areas of society in order to reduce the centrality of work (currently precarious

salaried employment), in the sense of reducing disorientation;

- ways of encouraging construction or maintenance of an intense network of social relations around the unemployed person.

#### 4. Summary and conclusion

This report summarises the third phase of the YUSEDER research project, a comparative report on the institutional solutions to the problem of youth unemployment and social exclusion in the countries Sweden, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain. The focus of this report was placed on innovative approaches to combating youth unemployment and processes of social exclusion.

In the following, the basic results from the individual countries will be compared briefly emphasizing the most important approaches and perspectives for future European efforts against youth unemployment and social exclusion.

In each of the participating countries, twelve interviews with experts were conducted and six case studies carried out (in Greece only two). These interviews were on the national, regional and local level as well as divided up among various institutional areas. Above all, the case studies were to describe in detail innovative approaches toward combating youth unemployment and social exclusion. Three main institutional areas of activity arise in which most of the interviews were conducted: employment offices, social welfare institutions and educational and training institutions. These areas play a central role in most of the countries (with the exception of Greece, where the national employment office and labour unions are the principal organisers in combating youth unemployment and social exclusion).

In the comparison of measures against youth unemployment and social exclusion, all of the countries display a large government influence, with different levels of emphasis, though. In Sweden, the activities are confined almost exclusively to government institutions where a series of approaches is aimed directly at combating youth unemployment. Very important in Sweden is the legal agreement by which every young person who has been out of work for at least 100 days is eligible to receive an offer of employment, training or another form of work. In contrast, in Belgium, concrete actions against

youth unemployment and social exclusion are found primarily on the regional level. On the national governmental level, only programmes exist concerning the general problem of unemployment. The programmes are carried out on the local level, with directives from the national level.

In Germany the government's Instant Programme to combat youth unemployment needs to be mentioned. In addition to the funds for regular labour market programmes, it provides for one thousand million Euro for projects which are to promote young people's integration into the labour market and to minimize the risk of social exclusion. In contrast, less government influence could be found in Spain. Many projects and initiatives are supported by the European Social Fund. The same applies to Greece, even though there is a much smaller number of projects than in Spain. Only in the last few years Greece has been developing projects and initiatives which are frequently initiated by the government.

The experts in all of the countries stress that, in respect to concrete measures against youth unemployment and social exclusion, labour market integration alone is insufficient to protect unemployed young people in the long run from unemployment and social exclusion. Many experts point out that training and qualification are decisive for a long-term integration into the labour market. Although they are not sufficient to prevent processes of exclusion in a long-lasting way for long-term unemployed young people. In Sweden, the improvement in the levels of training as well as of competency of unemployed young people is viewed as an approach of crucial importance. This approach is to be pursued as early as at the school level, in order to prevent later risks of exclusion. Young people who have grown up under difficult conditions and already display manifold problems at school are to receive fostering and emotional support at an early stage. In Sweden, projects and initiatives emphasise individual counselling and supervision for the unemployed young people. Those affected are to be introduced to work by practical work experience. A basic approach is to create contact points especially for those who are at high risk of social exclusion. In Belgium, it is emphasised that personal support is viewed as the most effective method for the success of a project.

As in Sweden, Germany points out three main features which are being taken to combat youth unemployment and social exclusion: 1) training

and qualification, 2) cooperation and networking of the various mediators and organisations and 3) individual psychosocial stabilisation and personality development of those affected. Here, we must especially mention projects and programmes which attempt to set up training and work positions with the help of placement agencies mediating between businesses and the unemployed young people. In such cases, it is of decisive importance that an individual developmental plan is designed in conjunction with the young people themselves which is carried out with monitoring and supportive supervision.

In its approaches, Spain is similar to Sweden and Germany. The experts from Spain point out that projects concentrating merely on the training of unemployed young people fall short. They formulate as their goal institutional measures, projects and initiatives in which, on the one hand, elementary capabilities and qualifications are taught and, on the other hand, young people are encouraged to achieve more independence and self-assurance in structuring their vocational future. The young people are to be enabled to go their own vocational way. With this, however, labour market integration is not the primary goal; rather the first goal is to foster the young people's social integration, so that the first steps toward a long-term, stable integration into the labour market are possible.

In comparison to the other countries, the Greek situation is characterised by the fact that activities on the national level are only starting. With respect to National Action Plans, it is attempted to attain specific aims. Especially unions and management are working together with the government to develop approaches to combat youth unemployment. For example, small and medium-sized businesses are to be subsidised, in order to hire unemployed young people.

## References

European Commission (1999). *Employment Guidelines*. DG for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs. Luxemburg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

**Annex I*****INTERVIEW SCHEDULE******Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion******Workpackage III******"Institutional Counteractions against SE"*****(local level)**

**Introduction into the interview process (to be mentioned at the beginning of the interview):**

- **Duration of interview:** approximately 1 hour
- **Background of study:** increasing unemployment rates of young people in Europe/the respective country, vulnerable groups at risk of SE
- **Aim of the overall research project:** analysis of the extent and the key mechanisms which lead from YU to SE, analysis of institutional counteractions against SE in six countries of the EC, finding models of "good practice" and "innovative responses", to allow policy makers to develop specific targeted measures in order to harmonize the development of different countries within the EC
- **Introduction into our definition of SE (six dimensions described on index cards)**
  - Unemployment is protracted and permanent (*exclusion from labour market*),
  - it means economic hardship (*economic exclusion*) and
  - difficulties to live as other people in the surrounding (*cultural exclusion*),
  - which in turn can mean to be obliged to live together with other 'poor' (*spatial exclusion*);
  - unemployment can also lead to reductions in social relations (*social isolation*)
  - and that authorities (for example unemployment offices and social services) act so status quo is reproduced (*institutional exclusion*)

## 1. VIGNETTES

### *Vignette 1:*

#### Example of German Vignette:

Lea is 24 years old; she has been unemployed for 2.5 years, and lives with her brother in a small apartment; with 20 years of age she finalised a vocational training as a baker, was then employed as a window-dresser (1 year), then unemployed (6 months), and finally made a further qualification as a sales-person including a short internship (6 months); since then she has been unemployed again (**labour market exclusion**); Lea does not receive support from side of state institutions (feelings of not being trusted, and of being controlled) (**institutional exclusion**), but she gets strong social support from her family/partner; Lea reacts with sleeping disorders, headaches, low self-esteem; she writes continuous applications, but is not willing to move for a job, to take on a job with an income below her current welfare income, or to take part in any type of further qualification scheme; she would take on illegal jobs to get out of her precarious financial situation (**economic exclusion**).

### *1.1 What does your institution usually do to facilitate the situation for X [the vignette-person]?*

- special focus on actual innovative responses

**The following questions 1.1.1. to 1.1.6. should only be asked if it touches an exclusion dimension mentioned for the vignette-person and the direction of activity of the institution:**

- 1.1.1. How does your institution act so that the labour market exclusion of X will not be permanent?
- 1.1.2. How does your institution act so that the economic exclusion of X will not be permanent?
- 1.1.3. How does your institution act to improve the integration of X in social networks?
- 1.1.4. How does your institution act to improve the cultural integration of X?
- 1.1.5. There are some critics who say that your institution only administrates the unemployed youths and is not really able to help them. What does your institution do to avoid this, for example in case of X?
- 1.1.6. How does your institution act so that the spatial exclusion of X will not be permanent?

## ***1.2 What would your institution ideally do to facilitate the situation for X?***

*Vignette 2: see national reports*

### ***1.3 What does your institution usually do to facilitate the situation for X [the vignette-person]?***

- special focus on actual innovative responses

**The following questions 1.3.1. to 1.3.6. should only be asked if it touches an exclusion dimension mentioned for the vignette-person and the direction of activity of the institution:**

- 1.3.1. How does your institution act so that the labour market exclusion of X will not be permanent?
- 1.3.2. How does your institution act so that the economic exclusion of X will not be permanent?
- 1.3.3. How does your institution act to improve the integration of X in social networks?
- 1.3.4. How does your institution act to improve the cultural integration of X?
- 1.3.5. There are some critics who say that your institution only administrates the unemployed youths and is not really able to help them. What does your institution do to avoid this, for example in case of X?
- 1.3.6. How does your institution act so that the spatial exclusion of X will not be permanent?

## ***1.4 What would your institution ideally do to facilitate the situation for X?***

## **2. MEASURE(S) AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

### ***2.1 Can you describe the project(s) or activity(ies) of/in your institution concerning unemployed youths, especially long-term unemployed youths?***

- aims and activities
- What kinds of training are provided?
- For whom and by whom are the measures provided?
- duration of the project for each participant
- networking with other external partners

### ***2.2 What are, from your experiences, the main problems of young long-term unemployed persons?***

### ***2.3 What does your institution usually do to combat this/these problem(s)?***

#### ***2.3.1 What would your institution ideally do to combat this/these problem(s)?***

***2.4 What do you usually do in your place of work if any of the long-term unemployed youth, which you come in contact with, has a poor well-being?***

2.4.1 What should ideally be done if any of the long-term unemployed youth, which you come in contact with, has a poor well-being?

***2.5 What do you usually do in your place of work to prevent negative consequences of long-term unemployment among youths which you come in contact with?***

2.5.1 What should ideally be done to prevent negative consequences of long-term unemployment among youths which you come in contact with?

**3. EVALUATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

***3.1 Can you describe the experiences of your project(s) and activity(ies).***

3.1.1 Which aims could be achieved?

3.1.2 Which aims could not be achieved? What are the reasons for this?

***3.2 Are there systematic evaluations available for the area you are responsible for?***

***3.3 What effects did the project(s) and activity(ies) have?***

- integration into the labour market?
- access to social/institutional support?
- financial consolidation?
- improvement of self-esteem
- psychosocial stabilisation?
- improvement of individual coping competencies?

**4. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES**

***4.1 What will your institution do in the future for long-term unemployed youths?***

- planned changes/measures within the next year?
- exchange/cooperation with other institutions?
- will your institution introduce or develop new measures/interventions?

***4.2 What activities and measures should be taken for long-term unemployed youths?***

- ideally/aiming at innovative responses in the future?

***4.3 Do you know (other) institutions with innovative approaches and good ideas how to handle the situation for long-term unemployed youths?***

- person in charge who can be contacted



***4.4 The so called "Status zero-group" is a group of unemployed youth, who are socially excluded but who are not reachable anymore from side of institutions. They are no longer counted within the national labour market and social security statistics. Have you developed specific approaches that try to get access to this group (outreach)?***

4.4.1. How would it be possible to improve the access to this group?

## **5. FINAL QUESTION**

***5.1 Are there additional important aspects, which we did not touch upon until now, with regard to the counteraction of negative consequences for long-term unemployed youths?***

## Annex II

### ***INTERVIEW SCHEDULE***

#### ***Youth Unemployment and Social Exclusion***

#### ***Workpackage III***

#### ***"Institutional Counteractions against SE"***

#### **(regional and national level)**

**Introduction to the interview process (to be mentioned at the beginning of the interview):**

- **Duration of interview:** approximately 1 hour
- **Background of study:** increasing unemployment rates of young people in Europe/the respective country, vulnerable groups at risk of SE
- **Aim of the overall research project:** analysis of the extent of and the key mechanisms which lead from youth unemployment to SE, analysis of institutional counteractions against SE in six countries of the EC, finding models of "good practice" and "innovative responses", to allow policy makers to develop specific targeted measures in order to harmonize the development of different countries within the EC
- **Introduction to our definition of SE (six dimensions described on index cards)**
  - Unemployment is protracted and perceived as permanent (*exclusion from labour market*),
  - it means economic hardship (*economic exclusion*) and
  - difficulties to live as other people do in the environment (*cultural exclusion*),
  - which, in turn, can mean being obliged to live together with other 'poor' individuals (*spatial exclusion*);
  - unemployment can also lead to reductions in social relations (*social isolation*)
  - and that authorities (for example, unemployment offices and social services) act so status quo is reproduced (*institutional exclusion*)

## **1. MEASURE(S) AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

***1.1 Do you have any programmes off/in your institution concerning unemployed youths, especially long-term unemployed youths?***

- description of aims and activities
- What kinds of training are provided?
- For whom and by whom are the measures provided?
- duration of the project for each participant
- networking with other external partners

***1.2 What are, from your experiences, the main problems of young long-term unemployed persons?***

***1.3 What does your institution usually do to combat this/these problem(s)?***

1.3.1 Ideally what should your institution do to combat this/these problem(s)?

***1.4 What is the standard procedure to be followed if any of the long-term unemployed youths participating in your programme has a poor well-being?***

1.4.1 Ideally what should your institution do if any of the long-term unemployed youths participating in your programme has a poor well-being?

***1.5 At your institution what do you usually do to prevent the negative consequences of long-term unemployment among youths?***

1.5.1 Ideally what should your institution do to prevent the negative consequences of long-term unemployment among youths?

**For Mediterranean countries only:**

***1.6 How does irregular work influence the risk of social exclusion of unemployed youths? Do you have any programme(s) (now or in the future) about this aspect?***

## **2. EVALUATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

***2.1 Can you describe the experiences of your programme(s).***

2.1.1 Which aims could be achieved?

2.1.2 Which aims could not be achieved? What are the reasons for this?

**2.2 Are there systematic evaluations available for the area that you are responsible for?****2.3 What effects did the programme(s) have?**

- integration into the labour market?
- access to social/institutional support?
- financial consolidation?
- improvement of self-esteem
- psychosocial stabilisation?
- improvement of individual coping competencies?

**3. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES****3.1 What will your institution do in the future for long-term unemployed youths?**

- planned changes/measures within the next year?
- exchange/cooperation with other institutions?
- will your institution introduce or develop new measures/interventions?

**3.2 What measures and programmes should be taken for long-term unemployed youths?**

- ideally/aiming at innovative responses in the future?

**3.3 Do you know of (other) institutions with innovative approaches and good ideas how to handle the situation for long-term unemployed youths?**

- in case that another institution is named: please give name and address of a contact person

**3.4 The so-called "Status zero-group" is a group of unemployed youths who are socially excluded but are not reachable anymore from the side of institutions. They are no longer counted within the national labour market and social security statistics. Have you developed specific approaches that try to access this group (outreach)?**

3.4.1. How would it be possible to improve the access to this group?

**4. FINAL QUESTION****4.1 Are there additional important aspects, which we did not touch upon until now, with regard to the counteraction of negative consequences for long-term unemployed youths?**

**Annex III****Data of the institution**

(Data sheet for all levels of the interviews)

Date of the interview:

Number of interview:

Name of interviewer:

Name of interviewee:

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION**

- 1) **Name of institution:**
- 2) **Level of the institution:**
  - national level:                      - regional level:                      - local level:
- 3) **Size of the institution:**
  - amount of employees:
  - full-time employees      - part-time employees                      - freelance employees
- 4) **Legal status of the institution (e.g., association, local authority, charity):**
- 5) **How long has the institution been involved in unemployment matters?**
- 6) **What is the annual budget of the institution in general and for specific youth programmes?**
  - Who is the main financial partner for the programme/project?

**II. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXPERT**

- 7) **Position of the interviewee:**
- 8) **Occupational background (academic education):**
- 9) **Specific responsibility of the interviewee:**
- 10) **In what kind of specific activities/programmes are you currently involved?**
- 11) **How long have you been involved in general with unemployment issues?**
- 12) **What kind of decision-making power do you have?**

### **III. General information about the programme/project**

**13) Title of the programme/project:**

**14) Address:**

**15) Target population:**

**16) Location of the programme/project (urban/rural area):**

**Annex IV****Case studies of innovative institutional responses**

Structure for the case studies  
(amount of pages: 2-3)

- 1) Information about the institution**
  - formal description of the initiative
  - history of its establishment
  - organisational structure (main partners)
- 2) Framework of the project (target groups, financing etc.)**
- 3) Description of intervention (main strategies including methods/ strategies how to reach the target group)**
  - main activities and their objectives
  - intended goals of the whole project
  - innovative aspects of the intervention
- 4) Results of the evaluation (most successful but also less successful aspects)**
  - what kind of evaluation has been done (effect evaluation, process evaluation / self evaluation, external evaluation)
  - objective and subjective effects on the target groups
    - integration rate (into training, further education, employment, re-employment)
    - contribution to sustainable psychosocial stabilization
    - cost effectiveness
    - less successful aspects (what should be improved?)
  - stability of project (not only judged with regard to the amount of time the project has already existed, but including also future perspectives of the project)
- 5) Transferability of successes**
- 6) Future perspectives of the project**
  - which actions have been or will be taken for the future consolidation of the initiative