Final Report Summary - WORKABLE (Making Capabilities Work)

Executive Summary:

‘Making Capabilities Work’ (WORKABLE) scrutinised strategies to enhance the social sustainability of Europe by strengthening the capabilities of young people to actively shape their personal and work lives and to cope with today’s economic, cultural, demographic, and technological challenges. It assessed the political and institutional strategies challenged by the high rates of youth unemployment, early school leaving and dropouts from upper secondary education in many member states of the EU. Bridging quantitative and qualitative methods, WORKABLE assessed the potential of innovative European strategies for dealing with local labour-market demands and regional inequalities.

Adopting a comparative and interdisciplinary approach, it systematically analysed whether and how young people are enabled to participate in working life and society. Applying the Capability Approach as a heuristic framework, WORKABLE surveyed whether and how the match between young people's supply of skills and competencies and changing labour-market needs is sustained and secured, while simultaneously broadening their options for living in and actively shaping European knowledge societies.

WORKABLE explored how educational strategies are implemented and assessed whether they enable young people to convert knowledge, skills and competencies into capabilities to function as fully participating active citizens. This called for a three-phase research design:

1) a comparative institutional mapping and analysis of vocational and labour-market policies in all educational regimes;
2) case studies to reconstruct the conceptions, aspirations and practices of local actors implementing educational and training programmes; and
3) quantitative secondary analyses of national and European longitudinal data revealing how effectively these strategies enhance economic performance and close the capability gap for young people.

The application of the capability approach as an evaluative framework followed in the analysis central benchmarks, namely, the capabilities for education, work, and voice. Therefore it was also possible to develop an explicit normative framework that integrates the necessary dimensions of good and meaningful work, a broader understanding of education, and a democratization of social service organizations within European transition regimes.

Project Context and Objectives:

‘Making Capabilities Work’ (WORKABLE), provided knowledge on how to enable young people to function as capable citizens in the labour markets of European knowledge societies. It assessed the political and institutional strategies aiming to cope with the high rates of youth unemployment, early school leaving and dropouts from upper secondary education. The young adults concerned often exhibit multiple strains and remain stuck longer in a transitional state between insecure employment...
conditions, short-term educational and employment support projects and educational and social welfare support systems.

Their situation poses major challenges to European knowledge societies. Yet, European societies are shaped by a diversity of economic conditions and political traditions resulting in different national and regional policies and practices, different welfare policy arrangements and different vocational and educational regimes. Therefore, WORKABLE adopted a comparative perspective and analyse institutional employment policies and educational regimes on a local and regional, a national and a European level. This provided a consistent framework for reconstructing commonalities and differences - based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses -, identifying best-practice solutions and providing knowledge that enable each regime to learn from the others through comparative research.

Theoretical framework and methodology of capability acquisition

The objective of the theoretical and methodological work package (WP 2) was to design the overall theoretical framework which is and will be used for analysing the complex transition process of young people in Europe from education to the labour market and adulthood as inspired by the capability approach, and to deal with the related methodological requirements of its operationalisation. In order to develop an integrated and multi-perspective framework that covers a broad range of aspects, quantitative and qualitative methodologies were and will be combined.

Educational, vocational and policy landscapes in Europe

The objectives of work package 3 were threefold:
1) To describe the various educational regimes at work in the countries or territories investigated, and analyse the standard paths of education and transition to employment and the labour market;
2) To analyse how these educational regimes integrate the labour-market requirements of a knowledge-based economy inter alia with respect to the factors of migration, technological change and aging societies; to consider the issue of civic engagement and participation in community life at large; and to assess the concern for a balance between private life and working life;
3) To identify the people who fail in the standard routes of education and transition to employment and the reasons for their problems; to describe how various educational regimes cope with them; to analyse the provisions for school leavers, dropouts and people with problems in entering the labour market; through this, to add knowledge to the debates about educational regimes.

Capabilities in context - educational programmes in a micro perspective

The work package 'Capabilities in context - educational programmes in a micro perspective' (WP 4) objectives were threefold:
1) To describe local programmes/agencies of education, vocational education and training (VET) designed to deal with people who fail, or are at risk of failing, to cope with the transition from education/training to employment.
2) To analyse these case studies by applying the capability approach as developed in EU surveys on different fields in which similar issues of access to labour market and to employment are at stake.
3) To produce a cross-country comparison of answers to the above-mentioned questions, in order to find out and assess the 'new' or 'innovative' features of the selected programmes/agencies.

Effects on transitional trajectories of young people

The quantitative research work (WP 5) aimed to identify and understand transitions from the educational system to the labour market among young Europeans and whether educational strategies contribute to extending their capabilities for work and social participation. Therefore, WORKABLE identified different types of typical transitional trajectories and understand how these trajectories relate to different European educational and labour-market regimes. It was particularly interested in
analysing the degree to which comparable educational attainments among young people lead to different labour-market opportunities depending on the configuration of labour-market and educational regimes. Another central aspect was the relationship between education, transitional trajectories and individual well-being and social exclusion and how this relationship varies between different EU member states.

By utilising new comparative and longitudinal EU-SILC data, WP5 delivered new insights into young peoples' transitions from the educational system into the labour market while simultaneously providing a better understanding of why this transition sometimes fails. Even though the EU-SILC is an excellent data source, it has certain limitations. Therefore, in order to provide more detailed information, we also conducted more in-depth analyses of specific countries and comparative analyses of pairs of countries in order to better understand the link between upbringing conditions, educational careers and labour-market programs on the one hand and transitional trajectories on the other.

Dissemination objectives

The overall objective of the dissemination activities (WP 6) was to disseminate the generated knowledge to different groups of people. We differentiate between academic and EU policy and practice dissemination. Academic dissemination aimed at informing scientists about the project results. EU dissemination informs young people, policymakers as well as educational providers about the project results and their effects on the organisation of education in a European knowledge society. The project examined local, regional and national differences and commonalities in approaching the acquisition of capabilities.

Project Results:

1) Introduction

The Collaborative Research Project 'Making Capabilities Work' (WORKABLE), funded by the EU within the Seventh Framework Programme, was initiated in response to the way in which a high level of youth unemployment has become a stable feature throughout Europe. This feature is impacting on all countries without exception - although varying in its degree. The situation is particularly dramatic when the youth unemployment rate is higher than that of all other employees. This has justifiably led to a public call for radical change - a call always expressed with concern but sometimes also with aggression. It is not unjustified to talk about a lost generation, and this description applies particularly to southern and eastern European countries. However, alongside the contemporary situation, what we are really dealing with here is fundamental questions of justice that even the EU is now beginning to address in its official papers and policy statements.

The present project has particularly identified the following target groups:
1. early school leavers,
2. the young unemployed,
3. young adults with no secondary education qualifications
4. and - as part of a contrastive and theoretical sampling - unemployed young higher education graduates as well.

The current educational and welfare regimes are broadly incapable of opening up new opportunities for these target groups by introducing the necessary innovations that would extend individual capabilities and provide the structural opportunities for their realization.

WORKABLE has set itself the goal of performing a problem-oriented analysis of youth unemployment and acquiring the necessary knowledge for a broader clarification of what we need to know. The empirical analysis is based on the Capability Approach, drawing particularly on the work of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. The project examined how far each model succeeds in extending the real scope for decision making and autonomy in those concerned rather than just getting the actors to engage in lifestyles and activities whose content is fixed in advance. It is only when this approach succeeds that new
chances will open up for vulnerable youth to engage in social self-realization, to overcome both qualitatively and substantially the human capital approach with its fixation on an employability framework, and to become able to function within the increasingly flexibilized labour markets in line with their own wishes and with viable chances of success.

In the present project, the capability approach was applied as an evaluative framework in which the application of indicators will follow central benchmarks, namely, the capabilities for education, work, and voice. The Capability Approach will also make it possible to develop an explicit normative framework that integrates the necessary dimensions of good and meaningful work, a broader understanding of education, and a democratization of social service organizations.

'Making Capabilities Work' is the first empirical project to pursue a justice theory perspective on a European level and thus be also to contribute to a fundamental change in the currently mostly insufficient attempts within the human capital approach to use the labour market to ensure desired lifestyle forms and a secure income for vulnerable youth.

2) WORKABLE's key concepts: Capability for voice, capability for work and capability for education

The work conducted in the whole project has particularly focused on the reformulation of the Capability Approach (CA) in the light of our research questions and the definition of the key concepts for WORKABLE. The Capability Approach identifies wellbeing as the expansion of opportunities to choose the life the individual has reason to value. Capabilities, functioning and agency are three key concepts which characterize this framework. Functionings (or achievements) are 'the various things a person may value doing or being' (Sen, 1999), which can be specific activities and states of being, such as being healthy, having a secure job, being educated or moving about freely.

Capabilities refer to the potential functionings an individual has access to and represent the various combinations of beings and doings that a person can achieve. Therefore, they relate to the notion of substantive freedoms. Agency is a person's ability to pursue and realize goals she values and has reason to value, a concept close to those of self-determination, empowerment and autonomy. In the CA the person is considered as an agent, 'someone who acts and brings about change'.

The added value of the CA for WORKABLE

The mainstream economic approach to education, mostly based on - or largely inspired by - human capital theory, focuses on the instrumental value of education related to broadening the account of 'productive resources' (Sen, 1999). The CA goes beyond the notion of human capital by acknowledging not only the instrumental value of education in promoting productivity, economic growth and individual incomes, but also its intrinsic value and the direct relevance that it can have in terms of both individual wellbeing and freedom, as well as for social development.

By drawing a clearer distinction between the intrinsic and the instrumental role of education, it is possible to give more emphasis to the undeniable value that investments in education have both for economic growth and for human flourishing, and to portray individual wellbeing in a broader and more comprehensive perspective. It also makes possible a better understanding of the real opportunities and constraints that people have in different domains of wellbeing including participation in the labour market.

Preliminary to the empirical analysis conducted, there has been the identification and specification of the capabilities to be investigated, namely: capability for voice, capability for education and capability for work.

3) Educational, vocational and policy landscapes in Europe

Even though the situations in the countries and the proportions of young persons in vulnerable life situations after compulsory school differ to considerable degree, the reports on the national regimes within the WORKABLE project make obvious that the
identified 'problem groups' are largely similar. They are:

1. Young persons with parents of low educational background respectively young persons from low social class or manual working class;
2. Young persons with a migrant background (most typically from eastern and southern countries);
3. Young persons with actual or ascribed non-conformist behaviours;
4. Sometimes but not always and not primarily the major target group encompasses also young persons with physical or mental handicaps.

These young persons might be classified as 'unemployed', as 'socially excluded' or just as 'pupils'. These classifications are not only rhetorical. Rather they tend to covariate with different social, educational and labour market philosophies and tasks.

Generally there are four major tasks which may be more or less found in every educational and labour market regime. However these tasks vary in their compositions and their relative significance in the different regimes.

1. An initial general task is the attempt to remedy failures of the educational system.
2. A second task, which is gaining prominence within the investigated educational, vocational and labour market regimes, is to improve the employability of the young persons.
3. The third task is to improve the transition into vocational educational training (VET).
4. A fourth task is to avoid 'social exclusion'. This includes the other three tasks but is seemingly broader.

The composition of the tasks and their order of priority are approximately reflected in the general orientations of the national regimes.

With respect to the focus on education there are typically two clusters of strategies. The first cluster of strategies (most typically in the Scandinavian countries) tries to bring young persons 'back to the main road' of the educational and vocational systems. The second cluster of strategies tries to create 'new' or 'alternative roads'. However the problem of the second strategies might be that the 'alternative roads' are sometimes hardly acknowledged and/or have a lower quality than the 'main road' education. Thus there is a certain correspondence between the degree of universalism and the strategy of bringing young persons 'back' to the 'educational main' road.

The strategies of bringing young persons back to the educational main road depend on 'bridges' from different (and stratified) tracks or pathways to the other. Whereas in some regimes such bridges may exist only formally with rather few young persons being able to shift from one track to the other, other systems try to get more or less all young persons back to the 'main road'.

Another difference of the regimes reflects the question until what age of the young persons the attempts of repairing or compensating failures of the pathways of the main road respectively the re-entry to main road continue.

A second axis of differentiation between the regimes reflects the composition of the strategic and operational significance of national, regional or local levels as well as the convergence of these levels. Generally there is a tendency that as well on the national as on the local level more or less fragmented markets of training emerge. At the same time however there is not a decreasing but rather an increasing influence of state level institutions in terms of funds, tendering and regulations. What is decentralised is rather the practical provision of programmes and services. This tendency is accompanied by an amplification of managerialistic modes oriented towards complying with external key performance indicators at the expense of professional scopes of discretion and latitude of judgement but also at the expense of participatory decision-making.

Beyond privileging education or employment the tasks of the different national systems differ with respect to the degree to which they give priority to enhancing competitiveness or ideas of social justice. Depending on the prioritising of the tasks and their general orientations the educational and labour market regimes aim at remedy different system failures. These failures
are broadly speaking:
- failures of the main educational pathway, in particular with respect to young persons with no (or very low) certificate of the educational system or so called 'school drop-outs',
- failures in the transition for employment, and
- failures to enter the next step of VET.

Even though system failures seemingly play a role, the general strategy seems to be the attempt to adapt people to (labour) market demands rather than the other way round. This becomes particularly apparent in the emphasis of individual case management and the quest to find individualised solutions.

With respect to the individualised solutions the regimes vary in the degree to which they conceptualise qualification as a public good and to which they stress rights, opportunities and responsibilities of companies or the duties and responsibilities of the individual young persons. In particular those regimes which stress the latter tend to ascribe comparatively high significance to aspects of 'moral education' i.e. to 'secondary virtue', work ethics etc. Regimes which stress rights and opportunities of young persons and responsibilities of companies are typically oriented in enhancing both choice of the young persons and an idea of social equality. Against the background of a decreasing significance of companies in providing vocational education attempts of enhancing significant choice seem to be more and more restricted.

The Capability Approach understands public policies and institutional arrangements as important social conversion factors which may enable or hinder people to convert resources into (for the individual person) valuable functions and provide a mediating space which influences their capabilities in terms of their real freedoms and their autonomy.

4) Labour market trajectories of Young Europeans  Empirical insights from EU SILC Data

Europe faces new and tough challenges. A globalised economy demands competitive economies, which requires a highly skilled and well-educated labour force. European countries are also ageing societies, which means that relatively large cohorts are about to retire from the labour market and that we are facing an increasing support burden on those who are working. At a first glance young Europeans seems to be in an ideal position to shoulder both these challenges. They are, although there are large differences between countries, better educated and possess more formal human capital than any previous generation. Still, for young people, getting a foothold in the labour market has become increasingly difficult.

The analysis of the quantitative analysis built on the assumption that young people want a life without economic hardship and that they want to establish an independent household, i.e. being able to leave the nest. That is, we assume that these are functions that young people have reason to value. The question is why young Europeans to a large extent lack the capabilities to do so. More specifically we investigated the link between young peoples' living conditions and their labour market related position.

Our point of departure is that all people are in a transitional phase, that a human life is a transition from the cradle to the grave involves a chain of more or less significant changes. It is only when we look at the society trough a snapshot lens that we can make categorisations that provide a picture of, we would say, deceptive stability that makes it seemingly meaningful to talk about, for example, students, workers, single mothers, and unemployed as if they were fixed entities. If we accept that transition is the normal state we can not only see that some periods in life such as adolescence are more volatile than others but also investigate to what degree different types of trajectories have different implications on peoples' life.

Specific conclusions

This research has delivered a number of significant studies on young peoples' living conditions and their capabilities to establish an adult life they have reason to value. The main results are highlighted in these aspects:
- Comparative analysis of 26 countries shows that in the great majority of EU countries higher educational levels lead to better jobs and better life chances. The number of high-skill jobs in a given labour market is always limited, regardless of the educational level of its workforce, so the rewards from higher education vary.

- Labour market trajectories are instrumental in exposure to poverty, deprivation and ability to form an independent living across Europe. However, labour market trajectories explain only a minor part of country differences. Especially in the Nordic countries, young people have the capability to set up an independent household. It makes them relatively poor, but not particularly deprived. As a contrast and with a few exemptions, for example the Netherlands and to some degree the UK, in most European countries young people lack the capability to set up an independent household. As a result they are relatively well protected from poverty, i.e. protected by their parents’ incomes.

- There are positive short-term effects of active labour market policies, there are considerably more doubts considering the long term effect, as it seems active labour market policies have little, if any, long-term effect on the capability for work.

- Jobs available to early school leavers are for the most part temporary or compulsorily part time. The lack in capability of people aged 18-24 has an impact on the chance of finding a job they have reason to value.

- Periods of unemployment lead to scarring in terms of pay and unemployment though not in terms of wellbeing (measured by life satisfaction).

- The impact of people losing confidence is important in all cases and indicates that psychological factors affect the capabilities of young people in the labour market.

- There are strong negative effects of open unemployment on mental health in the short term. Participation in youth programmes does not cause the same negative short- and long-term mental health scarring.

- Class background matters for the non-market capabilities of agency and voice, but not for subjective health. - Education, primarily at university level, matters for the non-market capabilities. - Education matters most for youths with a blue-collar background.

These findings have important implications for policy making across the EU. From a European perspective it is vital to understand these variations and the structural conditions that restrict or enable young people's capabilities.

Difficulties in making the transition from education to work also hinder young Europeans from establishing their own households. But the negative effects are not only short-term. Analyses based on unique longitudinal data from both Sweden and the UK shows that unemployment in youth has long term scarring effects on future employability, pay and often wellbeing in adult life. Hence, youth unemployment is not a problem that we can afford to ignore; it is a problem that European societies need to tackle now.

Our analysis also confirms the consistent pattern of the intergenerational reproduction of educational and occupational inequalities. What this means is that even though today’s generation of young Europeans are better educated than ever before, the relative inequalities between different socio-economic strata are more or less intact. It also means that education can be looked upon as a positional good, i.e. it is not the knowledge acquired that matters in the labour market in the first instance; rather it is the relative position in the educational hierarchy that is important.

At any given point of time, education can be seen as a positional good in relation to a given labour market structure. Thus, early school leavers and young people with only primary or lower secondary education are facing severe difficulties in finding a job, especially a long term one, let alone a job they value. This may come as no surprise but the question is what should we do about it? There is no doubt that education is important and that any responsible policy must ensure that all young Europeans are given the opportunity to achieve the capabilities needed to steer their own lives. From a capability perspective, this means, among other things, that young people in today’s Europe should be able to get a job that they have reason to value. To achieve this, education and supply-side driven labour market policies are important since they provide the individual with skills. The problem, however, is that skills are not enough.

This implies that we need policies that make it possible for young people not only to be employed but also to be employed in
positions that match their skills and, most important, allow them to influence their work organisation. If we can achieve this, we will not only be able to help revitalise European economies, we will also be able to provide young people with jobs they have reason to value. Not everyone wishes to, or can, have a job that makes high demands on skills and creativity. It is also the case that tasks exist which need to be performed which do not necessarily require advanced education or offer many personal development prospects. These jobs do not necessarily have to be bad jobs with low pay.

What is needed is a policy that guarantees both good working and economic conditions in relatively low skilled jobs. Even though young people benefit from education and education is a good in itself, we cannot ignore the fact that education is also a positional good. Even if considerable effort and money is put into education and supply side labour market policies - someone still has to do the relatively low-skilled jobs. Thus, we need to create a labour market where young people also have reason to value relatively low-skilled jobs, and in order to do that we need to start talking again about the re-distribution of resources. It concerns status, working conditions and not least economic rewards. These issues must be addressed from a structural perspective, which among other aspects mean that we need to address the distributional issues, i.e. wage settings and taxes. In concrete terms it implicates that those of us that are relatively well off need to pay more for getting our cafe latte served, getting our streets cleaned, and get someone to care for grandmother. Why should young people have reason to value jobs that are not valued among the rest of the society?

5) Capabilities in Context - Educational Programmes in a Micro Perspective

The nine case studies (Germany, Poland, Italy, France, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Sweden) put the Capability Approach in context by examining the transitions of (disadvantaged) young people from compulsory school to further education, from education/vocational training to the labour market, and from unemployment/outside the labour market to employment, as well as looking at examples of the education and employability programmes that may support them in these transitions.

The aim of the nine case-studies was to enhance understandings of successful ways in which to support young people who encounter difficulties, or who fail, in the ‘standard’ routes of education and the transition towards employment, by empowering their capabilities for voice, work and education. By applying the capability approach, we have elaborated a perspective which highlights:

The relation between freedom, education and work

The importance of educational resources does not lie exclusively in increasing individual professional skills and economic productivity. It also lies in reducing inequalities and empowering young people to lead integrated and active lives in society. In this sense we refer to the capability for education as the real freedom to choose a training/curriculum programme one has reason to value. This poses specific challenges to public policy, namely through education and training. Likewise we use the notion of the capability for work to indicate the real freedom to choose the job/activity one has reason to value. Therefore the capability for work is a very complex issue that encompasses a series of dimensions and the need to take into account the plurality of views about what valuable work’ is. It requires a focus on issues and dimensions such as adequate skills, the availability of work opportunities and access to them. The questions adopted by the case studies take into consideration this complexity: in what conditions does the process of developing skills in young people correspond to a process of capability building?

The relation between capabilities, the knowledge society and the future

Capabilities are intimately connected to the availability of knowledge through which young people can steer their own future development and contribute at the same time to the development of the society they belong to. Crucial, therefore, is the capacity to realign themselves to ever changing circumstances and actively pursue and realise occasions for learning and face the requirements of a knowledge-based economy. In this sense what is at stake is clearly the future, both individual and
collective. Therefore, besides resources, opportunities and freedom of choice, young people should be empowered with the capacity to aspire (Appadurai 2010). This concerns 'how human beings engage their own futures' and the normative frameworks from which the desire and imagination of the future take form.

The relation between capabilities, voice and democracy

Apart from the differences in educational and welfare regime context, the nine cases analysed were different in their methodologies, levels, contexts and intervention targets. Also the architectures of governance are different, both vertically along the EU/national/regional/municipal axis, and horizontally with reference to the relations between public and non-public actors.

Case studies have highlighted the link between the individual and social dimensions of the capabilities, revealing those factors that allow the promotion of individual capacities and the modes in which they are constructed in the relation between context and persons. From this point of view our research aims at highlighting in what sense the promotion of capability for education, work and voice of young people is decisive both for individual well-being and our collective life.

While different groups of young people are considered all the case studies examine the uncertainty about which skills are needed for young people to be able to flourish and become capable citizens who are able to choose work that they have reason to value.

In particular, the case-studies reveal that:

- The role of the family is ambiguous. On the one hand, it may be supportive in its attitude towards education and serve as an important source or information, and emotional support as a 'stability factor'.
- The skills and values of professionals influence the choices of young people. Among these professionals are tutors in Italy, social or project workers in Germany, Switzerland and the UK, teachers in Denmark and France, trainers in Poland, Austria etc.
- The provision of sufficient valuable opportunities in terms of available jobs and/or activities is not only a question of resources, commodities and social justice in general. It also is the condition and target pathway for the institutions and measures in itself (e.g. in Germany, Denmark, Austria, Italy).
- The aspect of capability for education as 'Bildung' is crucial (in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria etc.).
- Infrastructure together with the (material) resources of the transition measures, constitute indispensable preconditions for practical learning and the encouragement to participate in constructive, productive, useful and tangible learning processes (see especially the Austrian case study).
- The findings of the case studies provide useful insights into what kind of work young people find reason to value. On the other hand, it sometimes turned out that it is hard for young adults to reflect on what they value, on their social positioning as the major predictor of life chances and especially on the desirability of different options which are all essential preconditions for moving beyond functionings and realising the possibility for (positive) social mobility in the sense that measuring progress is by the extension of freedom (Sen 1998: 8), which is at the heart of the capability approach.
- Looking at the institutional level, the main objective of public action is - in the words of the CA - to create a broader (and deliberative) informational basis on the one hand and open up new opportunities on the other hand.
- Programmes and interventions can make a major difference if they facilitate the capacity to aspire, which indicates the desire for, and imagination of, the future and the normative frameworks from which they take form.
- In a normative reading, capability for work entails a social definition of 'good and meaningful work' (i.e. those jobs that are recognised as valuable by society at large) and ought to be wide-ranging enough to encompass all types of activities that young people consider as valuable.
- Understanding youth as a specific transition period can be seen as an important aspect when securing the opportunity to re-make choices made within this time of transition either from school to further education, from school to work or even from early youth to adulthood.
- Voice options are mainly available in the young people's relationship with local agents and professionals. This is why
participation in the support process becomes crucial.

More generally, a capacitating project in terms of voice is one that implies the active involvement of young people but also grants them the freedom not to participate. Young persons should not be compelled to participate in programmes; rather, they should be invited to get involved and therefore receive good and sufficient information.

In addressing the issues facing young people in making successful transitions it is often necessary to have inputs from across a number of agencies and for these agencies to work effectively together. Those programmes that were most ‘successful’ tended to be those that were holistic, multidimensional and integrated in their approach to addressing youth disadvantage.

In the WORKABLE project we conceptualised the capabilities for Education, Work and Voice as fertile Capabilities which have positive effects on other central human capabilities - and can be seen as a subject and field oriented adaptation of the capability approach. It appears that voice was a crucial element of some projects. A capacitating project in terms of voice is one that implies the active involvement of young people but also grants them the freedom not to participate.

More generally, a project will be enabling if its operation is one of value in the eyes of the young adult and they for that reason chose to participate. Young people should not be compelled to participate in experimental programmes; rather they should be invited to get involved which requires that they are well informed. According to this, we can say that among the studied projects, very few if any, pay special attention to the capability for voice per se. Capability for voice is not explicitly an end or a means to be achieved by the projects.

So far we can state that the capability for voice can be seen as a ‘transmission belt’ for the other two capabilities and perhaps as a link between them. On the one hand, having a voice only becomes crucial when (real) opportunities of education and work are provided; because if valuable options and choices are effectively missing, this processual dimension of freedom turns out to be a chimera and can be stated as a biographical reflexivity without embodiment and materialisation. On the other hand these opportunities are in need of a practical reasoning for being able to form a conception of the good, to engage in reflection about the planning of one's own life and in the end to value educational and occupational choices.

A strong relationship between the capability for education and work

We observed in the different case studies that education is often closely connected to the capability for work. This double perspective on education in relation to work and the good life one has reason to value raises several problems for vulnerable young people within Europe, especially when the certificates and qualifications are unequally distributed and thereby cause inequalities in the space of other valuable capabilities, such as the capability for voice. Therefore, on a macro level, this causes several paradoxes and counterproductive practices particularly in life-course transitions whether from finished education into the labour market or from compulsory education to further job-qualifying education. For instance in the case of Germany, when leaving lower secondary school it is obvious that finishing school with a general qualification for apprenticeship entrance is by no means an absolute guarantee for a job and training placement. Therefore it can be stated that to foster the capabilities for education and learning, learning methods or processes should lead to concrete, useful and sensually tangible outcomes appreciated by the apprentices themselves and by others. We find similarities across several different contexts as risks when facing these transition periods.

The capability for voice as a just negotiation with exit options

When making informed professional and political decisions within this field of interest it seems of relevance to have in mind the relation between resources (commodities) and the different structural and individual conversion factors. The decisions made need to secure what could be called a just negotiation with exit options between youth services and families with the young persons’ aspirations, wishes and needs at the centre. Just negotiation with exit options would imply that a young person
is not forced to adapt his or her choices to the counsellors or families idea of ‘realistic perspectives’ in relation to the labour market situation at the present.

Real freedom to choose in this matter requires that the choices the young individuals make do not result in discrimination when it comes to valuable social and professional integration. On the other hand this does not indicate that the young person should not reflect his or her wishes in relation to the de facto structures in the labour market or educational system, but they should be equipped with an adequate informational basis for making choices. In this manner, just measures will tend to allow youth on a well informed basis to choose what type of education they have reason to value.

At last, if the above is brought into perspective, it could be discussed whether enabling young people to act as capable citizens in European societies in a just educational (transitional) system would entail a sustainable capability space for young adults that would secure:
1) through a manifold service system that each young person not only has access to information, but can form their own informational basis for choice making in relation to education and work,
2) the real freedoms and not merely the formal entitlements (veto or exit opportunities and necessary commodities for their actualisation) in relation to transitions between employment and education vis-a-vis; this implies that the voice of the young is seriously taken into account, and
3) interventions based on individual needs and resource alignment for all young citizens that secure the real opportunity to enjoy the capabilities for voice, work and education meeting or exceeding a threshold determined through a democratic political process.

Potential Impact:

Strategic impact in educating capable agents for a European knowledge society

To raise employment and productivity and to strengthen social cohesion, the EU supports and supplements Member States’ efforts in the domains of human capital, education and vocational training, including a particular focus on the participation and integration of young people, as set out in the European Youth Pact. To find appropriate strategies of training and education which enable young persons to cope with the economic and social challenges of the emerging knowledge economy and society is a central task for in all European member states. WORKABLE contributed to this task. To transfer its approach into practice, WORKABLE identified factors that promote or impede the participation of young people as workers in the labour market and as citizens in society as a whole, and formulate recommendations for stakeholders, politicians and various sectors of civil society with respect to closing the capability gap and enhancing young peoples’ opportunities.

WORKABLE provides knowledge about strategies to increase young people’s capabilities and thereby knowledge that helps to capacitate young people to lead the life they have reason to value. The rigorously comparative approach taken by the WORKABLE project enables researchers both to clarify the impact of local, regional and national contexts and to create a new, wide-ranging theoretical understanding of the conditions for the functioning of educational and welfare systems throughout Europe. The research conducted by WORKABLE improves understanding of the role of capabilities in relation to employment and growth in Europe as well as in relation to deliberative participation, social inclusion and individual flourishing. Thereby WORKABLE creates knowledge that helps to reconcile economic growth and individual flourishing by developing a society facilitating the development of capabilities through education.

Utilisation of results

EU Member States still play the main role in implementing youth policy, and, in the European Youth Pact, they have already committed themselves to give special attention to young people within the Lisbon Strategy. There is a need for a transversal youth strategy building on cooperation between policymakers and stakeholders at European, national, regional and local
levels.

WORKABLE provides a broad map of European opportunities structures for the acquisition of skills and capabilities and present them in terms of valuable recommendations, guidelines and tools. These are useful to policy makers and other key social players for the definition of social policies and plans for action at a European scale. Recommendations are based on prior in-depth analysis of the innovative systems, practices and policies that have been implemented in order to overcome societal problems related to social and educational exclusion.

Impact on the scientific community

Academically, the WORKABLE project is set to make a significant contribution to developing new theoretical and empirical tools to study capability provision through local providers in specific educational regimes from comparative perspectives. Europe, as a scientific field, is already making efforts to find a common perspective on human capital development. WORKABLE, however, went one step further by linking together current theoretical debates. Today, for instance, a growing number of scientists in Europe are arguing in terms of the capability approach in the research fields of education, welfare and human development.

The approach of our group of collaborating researchers has been interdisciplinary from the outset, and the Capability Approach serves as a unifying perspective that focuses on the practical preconditions for young people to realise those states and actions they reasonably value. This practical orientation makes the knowledge produced directly accessible to educational and welfare providers while incorporating a social-justice perspective embracing wider contexts. This creates a transmission belt’ for EU policy instruments such as the Open Method of Coordination.

One of the tasks for the researchers in the network was to work across disciplines, fields and national boundaries particularly in terms of developing common tools and concepts for the collection and interpretation of data. The project contributes to standardisation of the databases, the transferability of single national good practices and experiences, and the comparability of scientific instruments and methods.

Through the broad range of comparable data to be produced or analysed, WORKABLE yielded recommendations that can be applied to a wide range of contexts for diverse end users in the fields of education and welfare:

1) (experienced and early career) researchers in related academic fields;
2) national and European policymakers;
3) educational and welfare services; and
4) non-profit organisations involved in education, welfare and training.

The project structure created a number of additional opportunities for collaboration and more intensive communication among partners. All partners from different disciplines are working on the same problems, thus making findings comparable even when data are gathered using different methods. The WORKABLE project aimed to turn this into an advantage, because a wide array of competencies in research methods is a necessary precondition for being able to tackle the broad research questions defined by the Work Programme.

The group significantly widened its impact through the integration of excellent young scientists, especially through deepening its empirical and analytical scope by inviting them to workshops and conferences.

Impact on systems, reforms, policies and practices

WORKABLE advanced the knowledge base that underpins the formulation and implementation of youth, welfare and educational policies in Europe. The project involved stakeholders on all levels in the accomplishment and diffusion of research.
It provided educational and training systems with knowledge that improves delivering efficient, fair and relevant services in a long-term perspective, stimulating the individual’s potential for creativity and autonomy, while avoiding mismatches with the labour market. They are supported in preparing young people for entry into and functioning in the labour market but also to enable them to continue their education throughout their lives, for their personal development and to help them to master changing technological and occupational challenges which become all the more pressing in a globalised and knowledge-based economy.

The Commission proposes a number of new initiatives for building bridges between education and employment and fostering young people’s active citizenship. WORKABLE makes contributions to this aim stated at the Lisbon summit. If Europe is to achieve full employment, improve quality and productivity at work and strengthen social cohesion, it must attract and retain more people in employment. By identifying factors that promote or impede the participation of socially vulnerable young people as citizens and (prospective) workers in the labour market, WORKABLE provided elements that will increase the capacity of European educational systems and reforms to:

1) minimise the risk of school failure;
2) increase labour supply;
3) modernise general and vocational skill formation institutions;
4) improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises alike; and
5) make young people and VET institutions capable of becoming actors in European knowledge societies by enhancing autonomy and freedom as understood in the framework of the capabilities approach.

The project provided orientations to policymakers, practitioners and other key players that will help them to account for social and cultural diversity. Furthermore, having people from these groups on the advisory board and their active participation in the dissemination activities throughout the project increased the impact of the results.

These findings serve as the foundation for a multi-sectoral, multi-perspective framework for labour-market policy as well as providing targeted policy recommendations for regional measures to tackle unemployment through enhancing capabilities.

WORKABLE in particular focused on socially vulnerable young persons who are at risk of social exclusion. WORKABLE provides knowledge about their participation in democratic institutions which is essential to the sound functioning of democracies and the sustainability of policies which impact on young people's lives. WORKABLE’s research highlighted the voices of young people and their objective chances to lead the life they have reason to value and thus provides better opportunities for young people to play an active part in the dialogue with relevant stakeholders, especially for young people with fewer opportunities and those who are not members of a youth organisation. Workable provided knowledge about how to promote these young people's full participation in an emerging knowledge society.

The main dissemination activities and exploitation of results

The WORKABLE project makes a significant contribution to developing new theoretical and empirical tools to study skills acquisition through education and welfare from comparative perspectives. It also assisted policy makers and practitioners in learning appropriate lessons from contrasting practice in different countries. The project examined local, regional and national differences and commonalities in approaching the acquisition of capabilities. WORKABLE also included a distinctly European perspective which is especially represented in the dissemination of the project findings. The members of the advisory board including external experts from institutions operating Europe-wide assisted the dissemination process especially regarding policy and practice. The different levels at which stakeholders operate called for a differentiated dissemination strategy catering to the diverse needs of the involved actors.

The approach of the group of collaborating researchers has been interdisciplinary from the outset, and the capability approach has proved its value as a unifying perspective that focuses on the practical preconditions for young people to realise those
states and actions they reasonably value. This practical orientation made the knowledge produced directly accessible not only to a wider, multidisciplinary audience, but also to educational and welfare providers. The results have been disseminated to the groups interviewed in the WPs as well as to the young people themselves. The close connection to the contexts and delivery of VET was not only crucial for the research design of the project, but is a central requirement of its normative stance: To integrate economic prosperity and human flourishing demands action on all these levels.

The WORKABLE Dissemination Plan guaranteed the exploration of its results and assures that the project's main findings are spread beyond the consortium and the scientific community to policy-making audiences and to the wider public. The dissemination plan therefore rested on two pillars: Academic dissemination and dissemination on the policy and practice level.

Highlights of the dissemination strategy

Project website: The project website gathers most of the project's output and makes it accessible to a general audience. Since the end of the project the website is completely updated.

The website informs about:
- the people and organisations which are involved in the project ('About us');
- the project's objectives, research strategy, and work packages ('About WORKABLE');
- the groups the project addresses ('Target audience');
- the workshops and events ('Events');
- the publications of WORKABLE including all deliverables ('Publications');
- the sixth category contains an option for contacting the coordinator ('Contact'); and
- the last menu point as well as the starting side show website links related to the project or/and the context ('Links').

MP3 lectures

The consortium accomplished two MP 3 lectures. The first one was held and produced by Thomas Ley (UNIBI) and Christian Chirstrup Kjeldsen (DPU) and is called 'Making Capabilities work in empirical case studies - A cross-national perspective on the transition from school to work (Germany - Denmark)' (multimedia lecture). The NAPIER team produced the lecture: 'The Capability Approach and Disadvantaged Young People in the Labour Market'. They are both available on the website.

Second Life provides a unique opportunity for dissemination of project results as well as for effective communication in the network. The infrastructure includes showrooms and an interactive area for presenting the public project deliverables. Second Life is used as a tool to widen the target audience, especially VET and higher education institutions, but also political organisations and parties. Second Life is used as a platform for education by many institutions, such as colleges, universities, libraries and government entities. Like the website it is presenting our project deliverables. All content generated in the course of the project is presented here.

Policy recommendations on the European level

A special emphasis was on policy dissemination on the European level. The research and policy recommendations are summed up in three policy briefs. The Consortium targeted all relevant levels including EU institutions, umbrella organisations, policymakers, networks of project promoters and the wider audience of neighbouring countries to maximise European impact.

Along with the preparation of the final reports, each WP produced briefing papers and recommendation reports for policy makers and social agents (Del. 3.4 4.2. 5.3) oriented to reach the political arena and to make it possible for the results to have a real impact on the citizenry.
A textbook (Del. 6.7) on ‘Vulnerable young people in Europe and the issue of full citizenship’, written especially for practitioners and university students has been published outlining the concept of capability acquisition and synthesizing the findings from WPs 3 to 5. The common language of the textbook is English to maximise the target audience. The chapters of the textbook give detailed insights in the conception, theoretical foundation and the empirical significance of the relevant and outlined dimensions. Thereby it becomes apparent that the suggested capability perspective of enabling young people to participate in working life and society has the potential of providing a fundament for more appropriate alternative strategies which are of high practical significance to educational and labour market policies in Europe.

While the Capability Approach offers a rich, comprehensive and innovative way to analyze well-being, its operationalisation is a demanding task, posing several conceptual, methodological and empirical challenges. The textbook also provides an overview of the current state of the art of the application of the Capability Approach in economically developed countries to labour market and education research. Methodological and empirical strategies are presented to highlight how the issues of suitably capturing and measuring young people's capabilities can be addressed. In doing so the textbook presents interesting perspectives and examples for those who wish to make use of the Capability Approach for future investigation.

Short films

The WORKABLE-films show the specific directions and characteristics of nine exclusive educational and vocational programmes supporting young people on their way from school to work or to apprenticeship (from Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, Austria, Switzerland, France and Italy). The short films integrate several perspectives:
- Young Europeans on their (not always easy) ways from school to work or to apprenticeship;
- Experts from the educational and vocational sector fighting for the rights of young people;
- Policy makers and scientists who are interested in a future of justice and chances for the upcoming generation.

The film premiere has been at the final conference on 30th October. All 19 films are available now on our website, on YouTube and as a DVD (9 short films in original language, 9 short films in English, one introduction film in English).

The final conference in Brussels acted as a bridge between the scientific, policy and practice spheres. It involved stakeholders on the European level, especially members of the DGs for Education and Culture as well as Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities to discuss project results. It has made a major impact on the scientific community through the elaborated methodological approach to skills acquisition; on policymakers through the attention to regional, local and national contexts; and to practitioners because of the applicability of the capabilities concept to real-life contexts while respecting professional ethical commitments and wider humanistic and social justice concerns. The title of the final conference was ‘Making Capabilities Work - New ways of tackling young Europeans’ transition from education to work’ and took place on 30th October in Brussels (not only) to reach easily the involved European stakeholders.

Within all sessions and between, the heterogeneous audience had the chance for questions in detail and for an exchange of ideas with the WORKABLE scientists. Besides the people from different scientific disciplines, the audience consists of practitioners from the field of education and vocational training, policy makers from EU level, members of the European Commission (Education and Culture), people from the permanent representations of different member States, scientific officers from the European Commission (Social Sciences and Humanities), representatives from diverse networks in the field of education and Social Work, Assistant policy officers, the German National Agency for the Youth In Action programme, New Europe - Newspaper, and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education.

The whole proceedings of the final conference are published on the projects' website including the conference programme, all spoken contributions as a summary in written form, an overview of the contributors, the press release, an overview of the WORKABLE consortium, a list of participants and pictures.
EU Policy Dissemination

The European level plays an increasingly important role in inspiring and harmonising VET policies in the member states and was a primary target of the dissemination activities. Multiple dissemination tools were utilised to accomplish a flow of communication between social and political actors and networks and the partners involved and the diffusion of alternative proposals for fostering social Europe and participation in the field of education and training: Representatives of the project were present at several European policy maker conferences. For dissemination on the EU policy level, the BBJ Consult AG acted as a transmission belt' between academia and the fields relevant for skills acquisition: It both brought expertise on European relevancies and decision making structures into the project and helped to make the project outcomes suitable for policy makers on EU level.

Further dissemination activities:

Academic dissemination mainly rests on written output and the presentation of the project findings at conferences, workshops etc. It targeted both experienced and early-stage researchers, the latter especially through the TISSA meetings. To disseminate and discuss the research findings to young scientists, members of the consortium had been present at the annual international TISSA conferences, providing their expertise at an established platform for PhD students from all over the world meeting regularly to exchange their experiences with their dissertation project. TISSA is also a forum for academic seminars to gather actual knowledge about international policy and practice.

Given that the members of the consortium come from diverse disciplines (economics, educational science, sociology, political science), the project results have been and still will be disseminated at diverse national and international conferences in the fields of work, education, training and welfare. (a full list of dissemination activities is prepared).

Project website: http://workable-eu.org/

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