D 4.2 - Policy learning and innovation processes drawing on EU and national policy frameworks on youth – Synthesis Report

Edited by Maria Petmesidou, Democritus University of Thrace and María C. González-Menéndez, University of Oviedo

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i) to ‘advance the knowledge base that underpins the formulation and implementation of relevant policies in Europe with the aim of enhancing the employment of young people and their transition to economic and social independence’, and

ii) to engage with ‘relevant communities, stakeholders and practitioners in the research with a view to supporting employment policies in Europe.’ Contributions to a dialogue about these results can be made through the project website www.style-research.eu, or by following us on Twitter @STYLEEU.

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About the authors

Maria Petmesidou – http://www.style-research.eu/team/maria-petmesidou/


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Executive Summary

This Synthesis Report summarises the main findings of the research carried out in the nine partner countries under Task 2 – Policy Learning and Innovation Processes - of Work Package 4 – Policy Transfer. The Introduction sets out the main objectives of this deliverable, the data sources used and the methodology followed by the partners. Next, the main part of the Synthesis Report presents, in a summary form, the major findings in each country (brief country reports). Finally, the conclusion wraps up the main strands of policy innovation.

Under Task 2, in each country two innovative schemes were selected to be studied: a scheme consisting in a “holistic” intervention in reaching out to disadvantaged youth in order to improve qualifications and skills profile, provide integrated services and ease transition to the labour market; and an apprenticeship scheme with an innovative potential. In the partner countries, the cases selected are: (a) some policy strands of the Youth Guarantee (or similar programme) or localised innovative practices for tackling youth unemployment in a specific region/locality; and (b) innovative apprenticeship initiatives along the lines of dual training and regarding the extent to which they lead towards a more central and active role of employers in the management of the apprenticeship system.

Innovative schemes are examined with regard to the extent to which they trigger significant changes in policy governance (e.g. whether a “bottom-up” push for cooperation triggers policy learning, transfer and experimentation, and how and to what extent does a more proactive role of employers in the apprenticeship system promote policy learning and peer learning; what changes in the policy toolkit for reaching out to disadvantaged youth have been introduced; and what mechanisms of change underlie the innovative schemes studied (more or less intentional learning, the role of policy entrepreneurs, EU funding conditionality, etc.).

Significant differences are found among the nine countries as to the extent to which policies aimed at young people fulfil the youth guarantee. In countries where the active path of the YG is a novel overall policy (Greece, Slovakia, Spain) designing and delivering individually tailored services and coordinating the system at the national level pose a challenge. At the same time, in Spain local initiatives already in place and fitting the YG were formalised by it. In Slovakia the EU initiative for a Youth Guarantee triggered novel practices at the local level drawing upon policy learning and transfer from other EU countries and collaborative trust-based relationships locally. Key practitioners at the local level played a central role in this respect. Among the partner countries that have in place a youth guarantee, the Pact for a Youth Unemployment Free Zone is an example of a “good practice” from which policy practitioners can draw inspiration as to both governance and delivery of interventions for STW transitions.

In all the countries studied (with the exception of Turkey) we find the commitment to the youth guarantee linked to attempts at strengthening the dual vocational training system, particularly by mobilizing employers to play a more active role in it. The employers driven initiative to set a learning process on matching VET to the skill demands in Denmark, the coalition of stakeholders in the Amsterdam region for setting VET in the context of an integrated system of service provision and adapt it to the skill demands of the 21st century, as well as the Apprenticeship Trailblazers in the UK are significant examples of a shift in both the governance and knowledge base of VET systems. A similar tendency is also present in France (e.g. the Second Opportunities Schools) in Greece, Slovakia and Spain. In the latter three countries in particular EU influence
regarding the dual VET system created “windows of opportunity” for domestic policy entrepreneurs (or for negotiated agreements at the regional level in the case of Spain) to experiment with novel practices that promote work-based learning.

Key words:
Apprenticeship programme; community centres; dual VET system; policy innovation; policy learning; policy transfer; school-to-work transition; youth guarantee
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Abbreviations

ACTIRIS  The Public Employment and Vocational Training Service of Brussels
BIS     Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (UK)
CDI     Contrat à Durée Indéterminée
CIOs    Centres d’Information et d’Orientation
CIVIS   Contrat d’Insertion dans la Vie Sociale
DA      Confederation of Danish Employers
DfE     Department of Education (UK)
DI      Danish Employer Association
DIRECCTE Directions Régionales des Entreprises, de la Concurrence, de la Consommation, du Travail et de l’Emploi
DPT     Dual Professional Training
DWP     Department for Work and Pensions (UK)
EAfA    European Alliance for Apprenticeships
ECVET   European Credit System for VET
EES     European Employment Strategy
E2C     Ecole de Deuxième Chance
FOREM   The Public Employment and Vocational Training Service of Wallonia
GSEE    The Greek General Confederation of Labour
İŞKUR   Turkish Employment Agency
JCP     Jobcentre Plus (UK)
JEEP    Jeune, école, emploi programme
JUMP    Jump to work programme
MoLSS   Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security
MoNE    Turkish Ministry of National Education
MRC     Marginalised Roma Communities (Slovakia)
NCS     National Careers Service (UK)
NEETs   Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGOs    Non-governmental Organisations
OAED    Manpower Employment Organisation (Greece)
OECD    Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OJT     On-the-Job Training
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAIO</td>
<td>Permanences d’accueil, d’information et d’orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PES</td>
<td>Public Employment Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STW</td>
<td>School-to-work transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URHAJ</td>
<td>L’Union Régionale pour l’Habitat des Jeunes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VDAB</td>
<td>The Public Employment and Vocational Training Service of Flanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VQA</td>
<td>Turkish Vocational Education Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>VQA</td>
<td>Vocational Qualifications Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>YG</td>
<td>Youth Guarantee</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZAP SR</td>
<td>Automotive Industry Association (Slovakia)</td>
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Executive Summary

This Synthesis Report summarises the main findings of the research carried out in the nine partner countries under Task 2 – Policy Learning and Innovation Processes - of Work Package 4 – Policy Transfer. The Introduction sets out the main objectives of this deliverable, the data sources used and the methodology followed by the partners. Next, the main part of the Synthesis Report presents, in a summary form, the major findings in each country (brief country reports). Finally, the conclusion wraps up the main strands of policy innovation.

Under Task 2, in each country two innovative schemes were selected to be studied: a scheme consisting in a “holistic” intervention in reaching out to disadvantaged youth in order to improve qualifications and skills profile, provide integrated services and ease transition to the labour market; and an apprenticeship scheme with an innovative potential. In the partner countries, the cases selected are: (a) some policy strands of the Youth Guarantee (or similar programme) or localised innovative practices for tackling youth unemployment in a specific region/locality; and (b) innovative apprenticeship initiatives along the lines of dual training and regarding the extent to which they lead towards a more central and active role of employers in the management of the apprenticeship system.

Innovative schemes are examined with regard to the extent to which they trigger significant changes in policy governance (e.g. whether a “bottom-up” push for cooperation triggers policy learning, transfer and experimentation, and how and to what extent does a more proactive role of employers in the apprenticeship system promote policy learning and peer learning; what changes in the policy toolkit for reaching out to disadvantaged youth have been introduced; and what mechanisms of change underlie the innovative schemes studied (more or less intentional learning, the role of policy entrepreneurs, EU funding conditionality, etc.).

Significant differences are found among the nine countries as to the extent to which policies aimed at young people fulfil the youth guarantee. In countries where the active path of the YG is a novel overall policy (Greece, Slovakia, Spain) designing and delivering individually tailored services and coordinating the system at the national level pose a challenge. At the same time, in Spain local initiatives already in place and fitting the YG were formalised by it. In Slovakia the EU initiative for a Youth Guarantee triggered novel practices at the local level drawing upon policy learning and transfer from other EU countries and collaborative trust-based relationships locally. Key practitioners at the local level played a central role in this respect. Among the partner countries that have in place a youth guarantee, the Pact for a Youth Unemployment Free Zone is an example of a “good practice” from which policy practitioners can draw inspiration as to both governance and delivery of interventions for STW transitions.

In all the countries studied (with the exception of Turkey) we find the commitment to the youth guarantee linked to attempts at strengthening the dual vocational training system, particularly by mobilizing employers to play a more active role in it. The employers driven initiative to set a learning process on matching VET to the skill demands in Denmark, the coalition of stakeholders in the Amsterdam region for setting VET in the context of an integrated system of service provision and adapt it to the skill demands of the 21st century, as well as the Apprenticeship Trailblazers in the UK are significant examples of a shift in both the governance and knowledge base of VET systems. A similar tendency is also present in France (e.g. the Second Opportunities
Schools) in Greece, Slovakia and Spain. In the latter three countries in particular EU influence regarding the dual VET system created “windows of opportunity” for domestic policy entrepreneurs (or for negotiated agreements at the regional level in the case of Spain) to experiment with novel practices that promote work-based learning.

Key words:
Apprenticeship programme; community centres; dual VET system; policy innovation; policy learning; policy transfer; school-to-work transition; youth guarantee
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1. Introduction

Maria Petmesidou, Democritus University of Thrace
Maria C. González-Menéndez, University of Oviedo

This Synthesis Report summarises the main findings of the national reports on Task 2 – Policy Learning and Innovation Processes - of WP4 – Policy Transfer. In Task 1 we examined the institutional settings and processes of information and evidence distribution (within and between countries) that enable or constrain policy learning and innovation with regard to STW transitions and youth labour markets among the nine countries included in this Work Package. In Task 2 we focus on two specific schemes selected in each partner country that have an innovative potential: (a) a scheme involving an integrated approach to tackling youth unemployment, which combines education, training and employment with guidance, counselling and additional support to various categories of disadvantaged youth jobseekers (e.g. the Youth Guarantee or similar scheme); and (b) an innovative apprenticeship scheme.

In some partner countries, the selected schemes constitute bottom-up policy initiatives, while in others they refer to nationally implemented policies that aim to improve policy tools, institutional settings and implementation processes. The main concepts (i.e. regarding policy change and innovation, policy learning, policy transfer, etc.) and the explanatory framework (with regard to policy change) we developed in the Synthesis Report on Task 1 (Petmesidou and González-Menéndez 2015: 12-14) provide an important foundation for the case studies discussed in this report as well. In the light of our definition of “innovation” as “policy changes in objectives, programmes and delivery processes that are conducive to positive results with regard to the labour market and social inclusion of youth (and particularly of the most disadvantaged/disaffected young people”, ibid: 13), the schemes studied in the partner countries range from promising initiatives at an early stage (e.g. the Pact in Mid-Braband for a Youth Unemployment Free Zone) to well-established programmes with a positive impact on youth labour markets (e.g. the Youth Guarantee in Denmark). Ambitious plans towards a holistic/integrated approach to youth unemployment triggered by the EU Youth Guarantee programme, with little progress so far, though, in terms of nation-wide implementation (as in Greece, Spain and Slovakia) have also been included.¹

The brief country reports draw upon desk research / review of available documents and interviews with key informants from government departments, employers’ associations, trade unions, VET

¹ In the case of Turkey, where a holistic intervention is neither in place nor is considered to be introduced, the emphasis is on a training programme run by the public employment service. This is examined in the light on its impact to STW transitions.
institutions, public employment services, regional/local administrations and other relevant organisations (detailed information about the number of interviews conducted and the characteristics of the interviewees is provided in each brief country report). In-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out on the basis of a common template with the major themes to be discussed. However the thematic range was adjusted according to the specific cases examined in each country.

The case studies focused on the following issues: (a) The extent to which innovative practices adopt a “triple helix” approach, namely an approach that enhances the interface between knowledge and training institutions, labour market and social services, and the world of work (i.e. the involvement of employers, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders in public-private partnerships) with the aim to design and implement effective policies for youth labour markets. (b) Whether a holistic/integrated approach is in place that combines education, training and employment with guidance, counselling and additional support to various categories of disadvantaged youth jobseekers (e.g. for accommodation, health, childcare, adapted workplaces, language competency, etc.); and (c) whether there have been any changes in the structure and knowledge base of VET. Policy change and innovation along these action lines are examined with respect to policy learning and transfer processes.

In the Synthesis Report of Task 1, we laid out the selection criteria of the nine countries and the rationale for dividing them into two groups for the purposes of our analysis (see Petmesidou and González-Menéndez 2015: 9-12). We used three cross-cutting criteria, namely, to include old and new EU member countries, with different intensity of youth unemployment, and varying degree of proactive policy response. The first group of countries (Group A) comprises Belgium, France, Greece, Spain, Slovakia and Turkey, and the second group (Group B) the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark. The former countries have high youth unemployment compared to the latter. The second group includes countries exhibiting proactive policies that are often taken as “good practices” to be “exported” to other EU countries. Among the countries of the first group, France and (to some extent) Belgium could be distinguished for policy-making machineries that facilitate experimentation with innovative measures, but youth unemployment remains high. EU influence, to one extent or another, is highly significant for triggering policy change and innovation across all countries of the first group.

The country reports (executive summaries) are structured in two parts. The first part focuses on the Youth Guarantee or an equivalent scheme. It provides a brief overview of the building blocks of the scheme and the institutional structure in the context of which the scheme is being implemented (partner bodies in central administration and in the regional and local level). This is followed by an examination of the changes in governance (lead institution, decentralisation, co-ordination and public-private partnerships). Then, the focus centres on policy learning and evaluation (if available) of innovations regarding holistic interventions (e.g. innovations in [re]structuring youth oriented PES
services, and in encouraging the involvement of community-based actors, civil society organisations and youth organisations so as to develop more effective outreach activities for the disadvantaged groups).

Table 1.1 The schemes with an innovative potential studied in the nine countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Scheme Description</th>
<th>Group A countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>The Youth Guarantee in Flanders, Wallonia and the Brussels region</td>
<td>The JEEP (Jeunes, école, emploi) programme introduced by the Forest municipality of the Brussels region and expanded to other municipalities of this region under the Youth Guarantee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>The Youth Guarantee (particularly the schemes: emploi d’avenir, contrat d’insertion dans la vie sociale &amp; garantie jeunesse, already in place and integrated into the YG)</td>
<td>l’École de la deuxième chance (first introduced as a pilot case in Marseille and expanded to other regions across the country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>The “Voucher for Labour Market Entry” as a strand of the Youth Guarantee, so far implemented</td>
<td>Experimental Vocational Training Schools (pilots under Greek-German cooperation in the tourism sector)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>The Youth Guarantee as implemented in three localities (two participating in early EU pilot projects - Avilés and Gijón- and another outside the pilot - Lugones)</td>
<td>Dual Professional Training: a regional government-led experimental pilot project (metal sector) and a business-led scheme (automotive sector), both in the region of Asturias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>National Project Community Centres (targeted to marginalised Roma communities)</td>
<td>Dual VET: pilot initiated by the Automotive Industry Association – ZAP SR and the Austrian-Slovak Pilot Project “Young Stars”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>The İŞKUR On-the-Job Training Programme</td>
<td>Apprenticeship Programme (dual training system)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group B countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Scheme Description</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>The Youth Contract (similar to the Youth Guarantee)</td>
<td>Apprenticeship Trailblazers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>The Pact for a Youth Unemployment Free Zone in Mid-Brabant (the region around Tilburg)</td>
<td>A collaborative initiative in the Amsterdam region for setting VET in an integrated system of service provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>The Youth Guarantee (in place before the launching of the EU initiative)</td>
<td>“Operation Apprenticeship”, an innovative initiative by the Confederation of Danish Industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second part of the brief country reports examines an apprenticeship-type scheme (that is, a VET scheme that is not exclusively school-based). After a brief description of the main characteristics and target groups of the scheme, any changes in governance and organisation are examined with an emphasis on the major VET change agents (nationally, regionally/locally) and any policy learning
partnerships driving reform. Policy learning, transfer and innovation are discussed with regard to partnerships working at the regional/local level in order to develop new qualifications and forms of training responsive to the identified skill needs. Any changes in the professional knowledge/pedagogic base of VET (in the context of the selected scheme in each country) are also briefly discussed.

We use three interrelated (and partly overlapping) dimensions for analyzing and comparing policy innovation(s) introduced under the two selected policy schemes in the countries examined. The first dimension concerns the extent to which either policy scheme triggers significant changes in the institutional setting and/or in the group of actors involved in its design and implementation. Of crucial importance is how this impacts upon changes in domestic governance by promoting more or less structured forms of cooperation between actors at different levels of government and between major stakeholders (employers, trade unions, youth organisations and others) with the aim to improve service provision to disadvantaged youth. In this respect, innovation consists in the “push for cooperation” that yields policy experimentation (cf Verschraegen G. et al. 2011). The second dimension refers to changes in the way policy is formulated and in the policy toolkit for reaching out to disadvantaged youth, improve the skill profile of youth jobseekers and provide integrated services. Third, we trace the pathways in which policy change and innovation take place: (a) through more or less intentional policy learning (among domestic actors at different territorial levels and institutional settings and/or across countries); (b) by a push provided by policy entrepreneurs at the national, regional or local level; and (c) through EU influence, particularly through EU funding conditionality and the aims set by the European funds.

Bibliography


2. Innovative schemes in the Group A countries

2.1 Belgium – Brief country report

Elisa Martellucci and Karolien Lenaerts
CEPS

2.1.1 Introduction

This report aims at understanding policy learning and innovation processes in Belgium drawing on EU and national policy frameworks on youth. We focused on two programmes, the Youth Guarantee and an apprenticeship programme called JEEP. The mission of the JEEP programme is to train, inform and guide young people about their future employment, before they leave compulsory education.

In terms of methodology, we conducted four semi-structured interviews, with representatives from the main Belgian Public employment agencies: VDAB (Flanders), ACTIRIS (Brussels) and FOREM (Wallonia). With regard to the Apprenticeship Programme we interviewed the two main coordinators of the JEEP initiative.

The interviews were based on a questionnaire developed in English by the leader of Work Package 4 in the context of this research project, which we translated to French for the representatives of ACTIRIS, FOREM and JEEP. The interviews have been carried out in person and by telephone, and were about one hour long. We complemented this information with desk research, gathering and compiling relevant information from the existing literature.

2.1.2 Implementation of the Youth Guarantee

Complying with the constitutional context of Belgium, the implementation of the youth guarantee in Belgium consists of four separated schemes; one for each Region/Community:

- Flanders
- Wallonia
- German
- Brussels-Capital
In January 1st, 2014, the different regional authorities launched the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. Based on the specific labour market condition and ongoing ALMPs, each regional plan included a set of different initiatives: job offers, job trials, work place integration traineeships, language courses, international mobility.

As there is no coordination structure on employment matters, the Belgian Federation of public services (Synerjob 2013) has been identified as the “single point of contact” in charge of communicating with the European Commission on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

The Federal government supports the Youth Guarantee mainly through the unemployment benefit system; school leavers once they register to the regional PES and become job seekers enter into an integration period (310 days), after which they can qualify for an allowance. During the integration period, a regular monitoring interview takes place (after 6 and 10 months).

This system provides an encouragement for people to register at the PES, broadening their reach and thus reducing the number of NEETS (Synerjob 2013).

In terms of actors, beyond the PES services which are the most important players, Ministries of Education as well as non-profit organisations, municipalities and the business sector play an important role in the current Youth guarantee implementation. Municipalities, for example, have access to educational data that can be used to prevent and track early school leaving. Other initiatives have been foreseen in cooperation with NGOs to find the non-registered NEETs and guide them to work or to the PES counsellor. Other stakeholders associated with the Youth Guarantee are the Youth Councils, the employers and the Labour Unions.

Thanks to the implementation of the youth guarantee, the Belgian authorities have all initiated structural reforms to improve the employment services by establishing:

- Preliminary Trajectories for vulnerable people
- Reinforce the regional legislation
- ICT and languages incentives

However differences exist in the approach of each region, depending on the specific regional needs and actions already in place;

- Having put in place already since 2007 the “Youth Work Plan”, Flanders is the most advanced in establishing the Youth Guarantee (Broeck, forthcoming). According to the YWP, workplace trainings are offered to unskilled young job-seekers up to the age of 27 (ETUI 2013).

In the framework of the Youth Guarantee, VDAB has decided not to draw up a new plan, but to optimise and to strengthen the existing youth work plan, in order to be able to offer every young person either a job or a personal assistance within 4 months after registration.
Brussels decided to focus the resources on low-skilled and long-term unemployed (EMCO, 2015)

In the Walloon region some of the initiatives already in place have been strengthened and adapted to better meet the specific needs of the target audience. In particular new training programmes in the field of basic and soft skills were developed, as well as increase the attractiveness of technical jobs (Broeck, forthcoming).

At the time of writing, only the evaluation of the Flemish Youth work plan is available. The results of this evaluation suggest that the deadlines of the program were not fully respected; neither for the low- to mid-educated youngsters, nor for highly-educated job seekers. This is partly due to the lack of motivation of youngsters to come to information sessions, as well as scheduling and capacity issues. Furthermore, the target-level outflow to work of 60 per cent is not reached either. The VDAB should therefore redirect its services even more towards individualised mediation and counselling strategies, regardless of job seekers’ education level. Related to this notion is the idea that the VDAB’s tool set should become more flexible (e.g. though less strict rules on program participation). A careful analysis of the position of the stakeholders (job seekers, employers, other organisations) on a new program or activity should be performed. Some activities and programs are ineffective because their target group is difficult to reach. In these cases, a close collaboration with dedicated youth and welfare organisations can be valuable. In general, job seekers are satisfied about the services of the VDAB and its partners. Low-educated job seekers are often referred to partners, but do not always know way and thus feel disrespected and misunderstood. In addition, referrals occur after just a single conversation with a VDAB counsellor, which goes too fast for a thorough screening of the job seekers’ needs and the problems he/she faces. As a result, in many cases complex multi-faceted issues are not detected on time. It is difficult to strengthen the competences of the young job seekers, as they prefer paid work over unpaid internships and training programs. Highly-educated job seekers are often poorly informed about the transition process and their labour market opportunities (especially when there is no clear relation with their educational background). More generally, information should be offered through multiple channels so that job seekers can use the channel that fits with their expectations and profile (VDAB, 2014).

2.1.3 Innovative Apprenticeships programme, the JEEP initiative

Belgium has a long tradition of VET. Different institutional levels support and promote initial and continuous vocational training: Federal Government, professional sectors, regional authorities and linguistic communities. The world of work and the VET system are generally considered as very close; social partners are associated with many establishment offering VET qualifications and many employment services have in their management committees, 'representatives of social partners.
The Belgian VET system includes secondary compulsory education with technical and vocational programmes; a) adult education; b) higher education with vocational bachelor programmes; c) apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training; d) vocational training for adults, jobseekers, worker and students, organised by the public employment agencies.

In 1998, the Local mission of Forest (one of the 19 municipalities of Brussels Capital Region) launched a project – named JEEP - to tackle the high number of students dropping-out of school. The mission of the JEEP project is to train, inform and guide young people about their future employment, before they leave compulsory education. Thus, the programme has the scope to empower students before they leave education, easing their transition to the labour market.

When JEEP started, only students of the Forest community were concerned and two services were foreseen:

- A training service on working life for pupils
- A student job service offered to all young people

In 2011 the initiative was extended and both the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and the Brussels Capital Region were involved. In 2012, the plan was further expanded. In 2014 The Brussels Region decided to integrate the JEEP program as part of the "Youth Guarantee", financed by the EU from the 1st January 2015 and since then, the initiative is fully coordinated by the Local mission of Forest. Partnerships with local missions and youth centres of other municipalities are also in place, as well as with Public employment services and schools were the students are reached-out.

The jump programme focuses on students with a low social background, however pupils coming from different social classes can also get in touch with JEEP coaches, as participants are mostly reached-out at school.

Since January 2015 the initiative involved as well the Flemish community of Brussels and, as the interviewees stated, there is a demand to further extend it to other Belgian regions. Unfortunately, the language skills of students represent a barrier to internal mobility, mostly for the French communities, which generally have a weaker knowledge of the other national languages.

The programme is now divided into three main services:

1) A training service on working life for pupils at the end of secondary education
2) A student job service offered to all young people
3) A recruitment service for companies looking to hire motivated students
4) The training program involves four half-day sessions on:
   - Choices: The motivation engines, values. Where and how to make choices.
   - The job and wages: Wages, budget, social security.
• The job market: The supply and demand, employability, recruitment procedures, tools
• Working in a company: behavioural skills, corporate culture, entrepreneurship.

To break the school dynamic among class-mates the training sessions are not held at school but, depending on the orientation of the students, they can be done in the context of a business visit or simulation of economic activity.

2) The student job-service supports students on how to write a CV and motivation letter, how to prepare for an interview and where to submit your job application.

3) Recruitment service

The JEEP offers companies a completely free student placement service that allows a matching between student profiles and job offers received. JEEP offers employers to recruit young motivated students who have been trained, equipped and selected by a team of professionals with diversified backgrounds (e.g. psychologists, trainers, coaches).

According to the 2014 JEEP activity report, the schools and the students involved in the programme evaluated the training session positively; in particular teachers assessed that after the JEEP training, students will have more chances to find a student job and will have a more clear idea of their study and professional interests (JEEP 2014). However, bilingualism is still a limiting factor for recruitment. It is often asked, especially in the Brussels-Capital Region, an advanced knowledge of Dutch, limiting access to students the access to many jobs.

The interviewees highlighted the complexity of involving big companies in the initiative. Many employers give priority exclusively to children of the staff. This leaves little room for new students, as those recruited by JEEP, except when a former student completes his studies and he must be replaced. Since 2011, BNP Paribas Fortis, the Town-hall of St. Gilles and some Bruxelles Hospitals offered positions to JUMP youngsters, mostly in the administration, cleaning and entertainment sectors.

The minimum age for the majority of most of the offers often remains above 18 years old. For some positions "administrative-commercial", the level requested by some employers is quite high because the student must completely replace the employee on leave. Therefore many students cannot access this level.

The interviewees identified the following recommendations to improve the initiative:

• Earlier and longer intervention at school, not only in the last year of secondary education
• Enlarge the pull of companies willing to recruit students involved in the jump initiative
• Use of social media to easily reach-out the youth.
2.1.4 Conclusion

Given the federal institutional setting, tackling the problem of youth unemployment in Belgium requires joint action between the federal government, the regions and the linguistic communities. This is made complicated by decentralisation of competencies on employment and Active Labour Market policies (at regional level) and Education policies (at Community level). The Fragmentation of competencies leads to an inconsistent cooperation across regions and across other actors involved in the field of youth unemployment. This makes policy innovation slower. However, the implementation of the Youth Guarantee is currently giving impulse to peer-to-peer policy learning across regions and institutions, even if there are differences in the implementation of the common directives, given that important differences in the socio-economic situation of each region persist. The Belgian Federation of public services, for example, (Synerjob 2013) has been identified as the “single point of contact” in charge of communicating with the European Commission on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

The Jump apprenticeship programme represents a case of policy learning and innovation process started from the local level (municipality of Forest) and progressively extended to the regional level. However, bilingualism is still a limiting factor for recruitment and students mobility across regions, in particular for the French speaking community, which generally has a weaker knowledge of the other national languages.

Bibliography


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### Annex

**Table 2.1.1: List of actors involved in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee per Region/Community**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government level</th>
<th>name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Level</strong></td>
<td>Belgian Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue</td>
<td>Responsible for legislation on Social Security Contribution, labour market entry traineeships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ONEM/RVA</td>
<td>Responsible for the payment of the integration allowance to young people and for the follow-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flanders</strong></td>
<td>Flemish Ministry of work and Social Economy</td>
<td>Responsible for advice, evaluation, follow-up and coordination and social economy in Flanders. To prevent early school leaving there is a cooperation between Ministry of Work and the Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Employment Service of Flanders (VDAB)</td>
<td>Responsible for implementing the Youth Guarantee&lt;br&gt;- Organise the transition of young jobseekers to employment&lt;br&gt;- Offer every young jobseeker registered with Actiris the range of YG services&lt;br&gt;Ensure matching between employers and jobseekers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Find the non-registered NEETs and guide them to work or to the VDAB counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESF agency Flanders+ Business sectors</td>
<td>Employers within a business sector get support to train young people in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Syntra</td>
<td>Training courses to future and existing entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipalities</td>
<td>With VDAB and other local actors work with young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flemish Youth Council</td>
<td>Testing the Youth Guarantee implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wallonia</strong></td>
<td>Forem</td>
<td>Responsible for implementing the Youth Guarantee&lt;br&gt;- Organise the transition of young jobseekers to employment&lt;br&gt;- Offer every young jobseeker registered with Actiris the range of YG services&lt;br&gt;Ensure matching between employers and jobseekers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>IFAPME</td>
<td>Training public operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walloon Youth Council</td>
<td>- Listen to Youth&lt;br&gt;- Bring to the foreground their needs and expectations&lt;br&gt;- Interface to youth population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Centres de competence</td>
<td>Complementary training services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPS</td>
<td>CPAS</td>
<td>Les Mires</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Policy learning and innovation processes drawing on EU and national policy frameworks on youth**

**Synthesis report**

**EPS**

- NEETs and school drop-outs support through calls for proposals

**CPAS**

- Les Mires

**EFT/OISP**

- S

**German**

**Arbeitsamt**

- Responsible for implementing the Youth Guarantee
  - Organise the transition of young jobseekers to employment
  - Offer every young jobseeker registered with Actiris the range of YG services
  - Ensure matching between employers and jobseekers

**Ministry of the German-speaking Community**

- Advice and legal assistance on labour law and social security

**IAWM/ZAWM**

- Conclusion of apprenticeship contracts

**NGOs**

- Preventing drop-out
- Reaching-out the youth

**Brussels-Capital**

**Government of the Brussels Capital Region**

- Coordination of the Youth guarantee

**Flemish and French Community Commission**

- Management of items that can be personalised for the French and Flemish speaking people of Brussels

**Actiris: Brussels Regional Employment Office**

- Organise the transition of young jobseekers to employment
- Offer every young jobseeker registered with Actiris the range of YG services
- Ensure matching between employers and jobseekers

**Bruxelles Formation**

- Organise and Manage training

**VDAB Brussel**

- Offer technical screening to jobseekers and accompany jobseekers during their apprenticeship

**Service Formation pour les PME (SFPME)**

- Approval of apprenticeships contracts and work experience agreements and ensure they run smoothly

**Syntra**

- Training courses to future and existing entrepreneurs

**The Flemish Agency for Education Services (AGODI)**

- Conducting the education policy of primary and secondary education and centres for part-time training.

**Conseil économique et social de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale (CESRBC)**

- Consultation body for the Region. It brings together social partners

**Commission**

- Consultative committee responsible for
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultative Emploi, Formation, Enseignement (CCFEE)</th>
<th>Giving recommendations on initiatives or at request of the authorities in the areas of employment, training, and education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brussels Nederlandstalig Comité voor Tewerkstelling en Opleiding (BNCTO)</td>
<td>Dutch speaking Committee for employment and training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on Synerjob 2013.
2.2 France – Brief country report

Mark Smith  
Grenoble École de Management

2.2.1 Introduction

This report outlines two initiatives for the school to work transition for France that illustrate some of the challenges faced in strengthening the interface between education, vocational training and the world of work. Both initiatives aim to promote a greater openness and relevance of education and training pathways for young people by building more flexible routes into employment, particularly for those with few qualifications. In the case of one – the École de Deuxième Chance – it is also an example of the development of a holistic approach combining education and training with employment, guidance, counselling and additional support for disadvantaged young jobseekers. Secondly the Implementation of the European-led Youth Guarantee provides a contrasting example of an initiative focused on mobilising long-term unemployed youth.

This brief report follows a common structure. Firstly we outline the key dimensions of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee exploring the main characteristics of the system, the system of governance and funding, the scope for innovation and finally the scope for policy learning. The second section looks at the longer history of the École de Deuxième Chance (E2C). In both cases we draw upon semi-structured interviews with eight respondents conducted between February and September 2015 as well as secondary data provided by respondents and publically available sources.

2.2.2 The Youth Guarantee in France

France was the first EU country to get the approval from the European Commission for its youth guarantee programme. In 2014, the country received 620.2€ million for the implementation of the initiative, which included the Youth Guarantee Plan. More than €400M was used to support NEET to take part in the Youth Guarantee programmes. An additional €188M was granted to 12 regional Operational programmes with the aim to develop local-level programmes.

This budget was assigned for the YGI to reinforce national youth employment policies and the implementation of targets for NEETs less than 26 years. Funding has two main aims: enable and support young people most in need in first professional experience (emploi d’avenir et garantie jeunesse) and support the recruitment of young people (contrats de génération, law for favouring insertion with Contrat à Durée Indéterminée - CDI).

The French YG can be described as revolving around three main actions (Bussi 2014: 38). (1) identification of NEETs via existing networks and systems within the PES, (2) identification of the best
professional orientation via personalised coaching and mentoring services, and (3) foster the integration by means of vocational education, training for self-employment, apprenticeships and hands-on work experience. A range of measures have been implemented, the most important being the Contrat d'Insertion dans la Vie Sociale (CIVIS).

**(A) Governance, institutions, co-ordination and partnership**

The implementation of the YG should be evaluated against the principles put forward by the Commission (EC 2013) – early intervention and activation, enhancing skills and integration and building partnerships. The creation of partnerships is one of the building blocks of the YG schemes and the participation of social partners and the opportunity of creating synergies is proposed at all levels and from the design to the implementation of policies for young people (Bussi and Geyer 2013).

The inclusion and cooperation with social partners represent one of the major difficulties encountered (Dhéret and Morosi 2015). The type of partnership differs across countries depending on the ‘path dependency’ of existing institutional structures. In France, a broad array of institutional actors and agencies possess roles, responsibilities and capacities, for implementing the YG. The Pôle Emploi and the Missions Locales are central to this delivery although the Regions also lead on education and training programs (alternance and apprenticeships) as well as raising awareness of opportunities.

The Pôle Emploi is the main public actor (the French PES) and plays a central role in planning labour policies with 902 local branches and 146 specialised agencies is in charge of registering the unemployed and different types of schemes. The YG is actually administered by a network of Missions Locales and the Pôle Emploi network works in partnerships with these regional and local authorities and voluntary organisations. Cooperation is directed to selecting the recipients most likely to benefit from the YG.

The Missions Locales were established in 1981 to help young people access the market and facilitate their insertion (OECD 2015). They aim to promote intra and interregional cooperation. The network of 450 local missions and PAIO (permanences d’accueil, d’information et d’orientation offers ‘information services, guidance, support for access to education and training opportunities, coaching and intermediation with employers’ (see EC 2014: 84). Mission Locales represent a key factor in the YG process since their capacity to implement the processes relates to the quality of the cooperative arrangements with employers’ organisations, trade unions, schools and training institutions (EC 2014).

**(B) Innovations**

One of the key innovations related to the implementation of the YG has been the integration of existing measures aimed at young people. Thus the development of coordination mechanisms has
been one of the main challenges experienced in implementation – in particular coordination mechanisms regarding the Pôle Emploi and the Missions Locales may not be sufficient (EC 2014). In practical terms the Missions Locales engage young people with collective workshops and assign an advisor that will support the young person with mobility, health, housing, etc. It also acts as “trait d’union” with local partners, to support the search for employment and training. Each Mission Locale receives 1600 euros for accompanying a young person.

In addition young NEETs are provided with information on career opportunities by the Centres d’Information et d’Orientation (CIO) through career guidance individual programmes for bringing young people back to school or to a training path (alongside Missions Locales supporting young people without formal qualifications).

The YG in France also (confusingly) incorporates the ‘garantie jeunes’. Despite the similar names with the ‘Garantie Jeunesse’ (YG in English), the ‘Garantie Jeunes’ is an initiative launched by the French government in 2013. The former is addressed at young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This aims to facilitate the access to the job market and it is part of the Multi-Year Plan against Poverty and Social Inclusion adopted in January 2013. The ‘Garantie Jeunes’ was developed in the framework of the ‘garantie pour la jeunesse’ and it address European Union's suggestion to put in place a set of diverse measures within the frame of the YG.

The main objective of the Garantie Jeunes is to accompany young people in precarious situations towards autonomy and co-create a personalised path to professional insertion. It also addresses young NEETs and offers a ‘guarantee’ of a first work experience, dynamic path and a guarantee of resources. Insertion is mediated by a referent from the Mission Locale, who acts as main contact point for the young person and manages the network of partners involved in supporting the young person (Wargon and Gurgand 2013).

(C) Policy learning and evaluation

Given the early stage of the process and implementation of the YG there are no full-scale evaluations of the scheme in France. There is however evidence of phased introduction of schemes based on pilot areas and then gradual roll out of actions (for example IDF 2015) The EC identified a number of challenges in relation to the implementation of the YG for France (EC 2014). Firstly an insufficient YG funding for all young people since there was commitment that only the 166,000 young people registered for the longest time at the PES would receive support within four months (there are 674,000 young people registered). Secondly, a need to reinforce of cooperation and partnership between PES, Pôle Emploi and the Missions Locales. And finally, a lack of a comprehensive outreach strategy to ensure that all young (non-registered) NEETs are proposed a quality offer within four months.
The objective of these collaborations has been to identify young people in situations of precariousness that are not always known to the Mission Locales. However, one of the major challenges among the social partners is that their involvement is often lacking, with their participation being ad hoc and sporadic.

The YG in France has been implemented in order to create a strong territorial structure (Wargon and Gurgand 2013). Strong linkages between the actors and an individualised path, supervised throughout the young person enrolment in the programme are key characteristics. These partnerships are played out at different levels and among different territories involving state services and local authorities. For example, an action to equip young people with driving licences in the Rhone Alps region involved a partnership of the Regional Council, the URHAJ, a driving school, Missions Locales, the prefecture, FARE, DIRECCTE and an "Innovation and Development" association (FEJ 2015).

2.2.3 Overview “L’École de la Deuxieme Chance” (E2C)

The purpose of “l’École de la deuxième chance” (meaning Second Opportunity School and known as E2C) is to ease the social and professional integration of youngsters aged between 18 and 25, who have left the education system with no diploma and who are currently unemployed.

The roots of the E2C project are to be found at the European level. The E2C’s innovative pedagogical and organisational principles were formulated in an EC White Paper (EC 1996). The subsequent creation of a pilot project in Marseilles in 1997 came directly from this European initiative and provides a somewhat unique example of a trans-national innovation with a long history of success.

Today, the E2C network includes more than 45 independent schools, operating over 100 sites across France. About 14,000 youngsters are trained per year – about a 10 per cent of the youngsters leaving school without any diploma. According to E2C statistics, about 60 per cent of the NEETs entering their programme end up with a positive outcome, either a job or an access to training.

Financially speaking, in 2012, E2C mainly depends on local or intermediate institutions, as “Conseil régionaux” contribute 33 per cent to its budget and local authorities 11 per cent, while the State covers about 21 per cent of the E2C functioning costs. The EF is the third main financial contributor (20 per cent) followed by “taxes d'apprentissage”.

From the beginning, E2C was conceived to be deeply embedded within the local context. Its overall functioning is highly decentralised and operates as an independent organisation. A light coordination at the national level represents E2C’s interests toward its wider stakeholders. At the European level, a transnational network also gathers various heterogeneous national initiatives.

(A) Governance and organisation

Locally, each E2C school acts as an autonomous entity. This decentralisation was part of the initial
1995 White Paper, in order to favour local embeddedness. According to our interviewees, the decentralised governance enables E2C to gain the support of local politicians beyond their affiliations (from both right-wing and left-wing parties). The project was initially developed by personalities of the left, notably the former Prime Minister Edith Cresson. In addition to ease the involvement of local politicians, the local orientation of the E2C governance scheme also enables the diffusion of tensions with other local actors. Our interviewees reported some frictions from time to time with other local actors but also acknowledged that their decentralised functioning made it possible to be seen primarily as a partner rather than a competitor.

The second key characteristic of E2C local governance scheme is the plurality of the actors involved. In order to fight compartmentalisation of the educational and corporate worlds, E2C boards are composed of actors from different horizons. This plural governance model departs from the traditional school system which is often blamed for its distance from the commercial world. Local boards generally gather actors from the three areas: the political (regional and / or local); the economic (through chambers of commerce, local companies associations and / or employers’ union) and the educational (as training institutions such as CFA). This proximity created with the corporate world increases the opportunity for students to gain work experience.

Nationally, the various E2C organisations are coordinated through a network. The mission of the network is threefold: (1) it supervises the certification process (2) it serves as an exchange platform between E2C directors and professionals and (3) it deals with national stakeholders. The modest human and financial resources of the network reflect its deeply decentralised nature (but also a factor for success): until 2013, only two full-time employees were working for this national structure. An increased need for coordination between the schools led to more full-time employees in 2015 reaching seven in a close future.

**(B) Effective innovations in the knowledge base of VET**

The E2C project is based on two-sided innovation. The model first includes innovative and non-conventional pedagogical principles and secondly is also based on an original institutional diffusion process, best pictured as a viral expansion strategy.

From a pedagogical perspective, the model breaks many codes of traditional French VET schemes. There are three key pedagogical characteristics. Firstly, there is a highly personalised relationship between a tutor and the youth, as opposed to the school mass-education. Each student is supported by a tutor whose role consists in favouring the emergence of a personal and professional project. Second, a learning methodology based on the progressive acquisition of the basic and fundamental knowledges and competences, as opposed to the mainstream educational system which is primarily centred on the delivery of a diploma. Finally, a highly flexible schedule defines weekly “pedagogic”
activities. This flexibility provides as individual student progression path and also enables them to benefit from internship possibilities when they are offered.

The certification process developed by the E2C network aims to guarantee that these basic pedagogical principles are implemented. Outside these compulsory building blocks ("éléments de base"), each E2C also benefits from a certain leeway to develop its own cultural, sport and artistic activities.

From an institutional perspective, the diffusion process of E2C also bears some significant originality. The four key steps in the development of E2C shed light on what has been described as the “viral” expansion strategy of its designers.

- **Step 1 (1995-1997):** the “inception”. According to one of the founding members, the initial implementation the E2C schools could not have been conceived at the national level, because of the French institutional settings. Thus, faced with a radical alternative, the only way to introduce incremental change is through local experiments. One interviewee phrased it, “the only way to drive change is to introduce social change virus. To that extend, E2C has been conceived as a virus.” Following E2C history, it took two years for the concept born at the European level to become reality.

- **Step 2 (1997-2004):** “incubation”. Based on the initial success of the school in Marseilles, various first movers’ entrepreneurs joined the move of E2C who replicated the initial model. In this period six different schools emerged across the national territory.

- **Step 3 (2004-2007):** “diffusion” through the institutional recognition. The third period of E2C development starts with the creation of a national network whose objective consists in coordinating their action, protecting and starting institutionalizing the concept. In 2007, schools eventually gained the state recognition and a decree makes it compulsory for E2C schools to go through the labelling process if they are to access public founding.

- **2007-2013:** a “contagion?” In 2009, thanks notably to additional financial support brought by national ministers, the device definitively takes off. Between 2007 and 2013 (latest data available), the number of beneficiaries almost tripled, from 3 700 to more than 14 000.

This analogy of the “virus” provides a useful means in which to understand the success of the E2C innovation by working within the existing institutional system and addressing the reasons for the difficulties faced by young people by turning the existing logics for both pedagogy and institutional on their heads (we address this in the next section).

(C) Policy learning, transfer and innovation: measuring success

The E2C success is mostly due its pedagogical innovation – conceived as a counter-model to regular VET education schemes. Indeed the E2C philosophy is based on strongly differentiating principles, notably a firm orientation toward companies, highly individualised courses and a focus on the acquisition of competences rather than a diploma. However, this radical combination of pedagogical
principles is not the only factor explaining its success.

Our analysis suggests that its original positioning within the French institutional landscape also greatly contributed to its rapid spread across France and its now strongly established legitimacy. Its governance model indeed favours a strong local embeddedness which eventually overcame the rigidities of the highly centralised educational system. The pathway taken by E2C over the last 20 years provides some insight into the necessary conditions to fulfil in order to implementation innovation in the French institutional configuration.

There are a number of basic conditions for transferring such schemes. Firstly, a political will for change in the form of a firm and unambiguous engagement from policy makers. However, there is also an element of “luck” which depends on the existence of an opportunity window – as the Portuguese experience with Second Chance Schools tends to show. Secondly, there is a public acceptance and recognition for the schools to be held in high esteem locally – not to be considered only as a school for dropouts. In the case of Marseille there is a prestigious building that is the “pride” of the neighbourhood. Thirdly, there is a pedagogical expertise in the E2C based on alternative educational principles that are not taught in the regular way or by regular teachers. Fourthly there is a strong spirit of municipal and school leadership which is clear in the high-level of local embeddedness and recognition by local actors. Notably, having a charismatic local entrepreneur building strong relations with local authorities and diverse associations eases the E2C implementation success. Finally there is a funding stability since the E2C has demonstrated the positive leverage of investment when compared to the extra cost of providing social welfare to unemployed youth. In addition to the unsecure European social funds alternative sources for funding have been sought - NGOs, local partnership and state.

There are also limits to transferability not least the uniqueness of second chance education resting with its “experimental, non-institutional” ethos. There is a fundamental challenge in seeking to harness “non-institutional approaches”. Similarly second chance schools are by their nature residual opportunities and to that extent they offer an alternative and targeted model in opposition to existing universalist and mainstream approaches. Finally there is a dependency on individuals as entrepreneurs and mentors to drive such innovations.

Bibliography


2.3 Greece – Brief country report

Maria Petmesidou & Periklis Polyzoidis
Democritus University of Thrace

2.3.1 Introduction

In this second task of Work Package 4, we focused on two programmes aiming to introduce innovative measures for improving STW transitions and help unemployed and disengaged youth back into education and employment: (a) the “Voucher for Labour Market Entry”\(^2\), which is the main policy measure that has been implemented so far under the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP) and is addressed to unemployed youth (including young NEETs) 18 to 29 years, and (b) the Experimental Vocational Training Schools (ExpSEKs) in the tourism sector, which are implementing, in a pilot form, the “dual VET system” under the coordination by the Greek and German Ministries of Education, the Greek-German Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) and other relevant stakeholders in both countries. Both these programmes aim to introduce innovative elements in VET and labour market integration policies for youth. They involve policy learning and transfer mainly under the influence of EU stimuli (i.e. the European Employment Policy, the Youth Employment Initiative, the Alliance for Apprenticeship, etc.). Moreover, changes in the governance and delivery of policies are included in the “conditionalities” of the rescue-deal that Greece has signed with its international lenders.

From the point of view of Hall’s approach (1993)\(^3\) the innovative elements of the above two programmes aim to trigger a paradigmatic shift in employment policy (namely towards comprehensive, personalised interventions, requiring new policy instruments, e.g. a governance structure facilitating integration of services, a robust monitoring system, a dual VET system, etc.). Since the turn of the century, financial conditionality (of the EU Structural Funds) brought to the fore the need for a wholesale restructuring of OAED, so as to develop sufficient capacities and capabilities for a shift to a preventative approach. However, despite consecutive legal changes, from the late 1990s onwards, OAED’s re-engineering is still at the top of the reform agenda.\(^4\) The “personalised intervention” approach, although introduced in the 1990s under the EES stimuli, has remained on paper until recently. The bailout requirements intensified pressure for reform.

In the following sections we provide a very brief overview of the major policy instruments of the YGIP with a focus on the “Voucher” programme, while in the second section we briefly assess the

\(^{2}\) Henceforth referred to as the “Voucher”.

\(^{3}\) That distinguishes between radical changes in the basic instruments of policy and in policy goals (second and third order changes respectively), and piecemeal changes in the setting of these instruments (first order changes) (1993: 281-287).

\(^{4}\) For a detailed discussion of the “reform pathologies” in Greece see Petmesidou and Polyzoidis 2015 & 2015a; also Zartaloudis 2013.
innovation introduced in VET through the ExpSEKs. The brief analysis carried out draws upon desk research and seven in-depth interviews. All interviews were carried out between July and September 2015, and were of about 45 minutes duration on average. We interviewed the Head of OAED, the co-ordinator of the experimental VET programme in the tourism sector (Mentoring Dual Training, MENDI) and a student attending this programme (in the Alimos ExpSEK), the head of OAED’s vocational schools (in Alimos, Athens) and a student at this school, and the directors of two employment promotion centres (one in Athens under OAED, and the other in Thessaloniki operating by the Greek General Confederation of Labour [GSEE]).

2.3.2 The Greek YGIP and the “Voucher for Labour Market Entry” programme

The YGIP has brought within a single plan a number of measures that have been in place for some years, with some amendments regarding their detailed actions and implementation requirements (see Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare 2014). It includes four groups of programmes: (a) Apprenticeship programmes that support apprenticeship schemes in OAED’s Vocational Schools (EPAL), in public and private Vocational Training Institutes (IEK), and Merchant Marine Academies. (b) Traineeship Programmes, such as the “Voucher”, and work experience placements for tertiary education students. (c) Entrepreneurship programmes further developing actions such as the “Entrepreneurship Cells” that were introduced in the late 2000s, as well as support measures to young people for establishing social co-operative enterprises. And (d) provision of social security contributions subsidies to young people who decide to become self-employed.

Overall, the innovative element of the YGIP does not so much lie in the introduction of new measures (with the exception of the dual VET system that is an innovative element of the YGIP), but on structural, legal and organisational reforms that can allow for an integrated, personalised approach to be delivered in a joined-up way by the various stakeholders involved in the YGIP.

(A) Major structural changes still pending

OAED is the main service co-ordinating delivery of various measures of the YGIP, while a competent authority in the Ministry of Labour is responsible for the overall governance of the plan. Even though a partnership approach is inscribed into the YGIP (Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare 2014: 35-41), so far a weak social dialogue among a whole range of relevant stakeholders indicates limited social partner involvement (see on this point Eurofound 2015: 77).

The re-engineering of OAED is the linchpin of the reform, though it is still pending. Also little progress has been recorded in developing links with employers, and conduct local surveys to monitor and forecast skills. Although the social partners (i.e. the Greek General Confederation of Labour [GSEE] and the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants [GESEVEE]) support the
YG, they express serious reservations as to the effectiveness of measures such as, for instance, the “Voucher” scheme, which they consider as subsidised (cheap) labour for businesses leading to the rise of working poor without social insurance rights (Petmesidou and Polyzoidis 2015: 31). Obviously such a stance cannot foster a partnership approach. On the other hand, some stakeholders representative of employers (e.g. Hellenic Chamber of Hotels and the Greek-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry) have been more willing to contribute to “trailblazing” actions, like the Experimental Vocational Training Schools in the field of tourism.

Upgrading the PES as a nodal point for the implementation of the youth guarantee, improve its staff levels and expertise, promote a partnership approach among major stakeholders, develop a single integrated regulatory framework for traineeship that is undertaken by multiple providers, and establishing a monitoring and evaluation system are crucial reform aims. Of particular importance is for OAED to develop sufficient capabilities for monitoring the demand for skills in the labour market, and the needs of young people, and effectively combine a number of service providers and policy instruments (educational and training opportunities, counselling and mentoring, job matching services, etc.) across a range of policy areas (employment, education, social security, health, etc.). In this respect a partnership framework (between trade unions, employers associations, local authorities, public employment services) for designing, implementing and managing STW transition policies is crucial. Equally important is to put in place robust institutional mechanisms for systematic monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

Even though it was planned that in 2014 twelve experimental Employment Promotion Centres (KPAs) would start implementing a comprehensive, personalised approach (improve profiling tools, enrich counselling services, improve the capacity of KPAs to reach out to the NEETs and provide services in accordance to the specific needs of different youth groups), only one such centre in Athens launched an experimental approach as late as in September 2014. In mid- to late-2015 about a handful of KPAs embarked upon an upgrading of their services. But none of them is specifically targeted to the young. Also recently, the Ministry of Labour and OAED launched a survey for identifying labour market needs at the national and regional/local level that is going to be completed by the end of 2015.

(B) The “Voucher” programme (for the 18-24 and 25-29 years groups)

Until late 2015, the “Voucher” is the main programme run under the YGIP. The programme has been in place since 2013, and an evaluation of its first round of implementation took place in late 2014. The aim of the programme is to improve STW transitions through the acquisition of first work experience. It offers school- and firm-based training, guidance and educational mentoring. It is

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5 A new round of the action was launched in 2014-15 under the YGIP.
overseen by OAED, but it is implemented by private Centres of Vocational Training (KEKs) which provide 80 to 100 hours of theoretical training combined with apprenticeship work in a firm of a maximum of 500 hours, within a period of up to 6 months. Firms providing traineeship must not proceed to any dismissal of regular employees as long as they participate in the programme, and also must employ the trainees for at least another 6-month period in the firm after the completion of the programme. KEKs play the role of “of an unofficial employment service, by bringing together job offers and job demand” (Petmesidou and Polyzoidis 2015: 37-38).

Table 2.3.1 Percentage distribution of trainees to firms providing training places, grouped by branch of economic activity (2013-2014)^6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch of Economic Activity</th>
<th>Manufacturing Trade and Energy</th>
<th>Services, Administration (except education and social services)</th>
<th>Education, Sports, Environment and Communications</th>
<th>Transport and Construction</th>
<th>Social services and health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University graduates up to 29 years</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngsters with compulsory education, secondary and upper secondary (non-tertiary) level of education, 18 to 29 years</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Tables 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 summarise some of main findings of an assessment commissioned by the Ministry of Labour to the National Centre for Social Research (Karantinos et al. 2014). Applications by university graduates (up to 29 years) were more than three times the number of places available, while for youngsters with compulsory level or education, secondary or upper secondary (non tertiary) education the applications submitted were four times the number of available places. This indicates the very limited absorption capacity of the intervention.^7

Among young applicants with a level of education less than tertiary, priority was given to those aged 18 to 24, while among university graduates selection criteria prioritised those who graduated up to three years before the launching of the programme. The reason for selecting younger cohorts was

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^6 According to Eurostat data about 28 per cent of enterprises provided any type of continuing training in Greece, in 2010, compared to 66 per cent on average in EU28.

^7 As also indicated in the YGIP, the goal for 2014 was “to provide a quality offer of employment, vocational training, apprenticeship or traineeship, within a period of four months of leaving formal education or employment, to at least 40,000 young NEETs aged 15-24” (Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare 2014: 32). The prospect of addressing the needs of all youngsters not in education, employment or training is linked with future recovery trends, with a time horizon up to 2020. Comparing the about 30,000 to 40,000 places provided in each round of the “Voucher” system to the total number of NEETs 15 to 29 years (about 490,000 in 2014) gives an indication of the big gap between existing needs and opportunities offered by this action so far. Strikingly, in a Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2014, about 97 per cent of Greek young respondents stated either that they have not heard about the YG, or even if they had heard about it, they do not know what it is about (p. 16).
that a work experience for them was most important, compared to older “youth cohorts” who, though unemployed, might have acquired work experience in the past.

Between 84 and 90 per cent of the beneficiaries were trained in a service firm or administration office. Among beneficiaries with lower than tertiary education only 12.2 percent were offered a training place in a manufacturing or trading firm (the respective percentage for university graduates is negligible). As to the size of the firms which provided training, in the case of university graduate trainees, 66 per cent had up to three employees, and these firms absorbed about 56 per cent of the respective beneficiaries. In the case of the trainees with less than tertiary education, 75 per cent of the firms which provided training place had up to three employees and absorbed about two thirds of these beneficiaries.

Table 2.3.2 Percentage distribution of trainees to firms providing training places, by the size of firms (i.e. number of employees) (2013-2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Up to 3 employees</th>
<th>4 to 9 employees</th>
<th>10 to 29 employees</th>
<th>30 to 99 employees</th>
<th>100 to 199 employees</th>
<th>200 and over employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University graduates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to 29 yrs</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngsters with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower than tertiary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level of education</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: As in Table 1.

1= percentage of firms in each category, 2=percentage of trainees in each category of firms, and 3=percentage of trainees who were hired by the firm after completion of training (calculated on the basis of the total number of trainees in each size-group of firms)

The third column presents the percentage of trainees who were hired by the firm after completion of the training programme. The average rate of hirings among university graduate trainees across all size-groups of firms that provided training places is 14 per cent. The respective rate for trainees with less than tertiary education is even lower (about 7 per cent). Obviously these figures indicate a very low efficiency of the programme in terms of labour market integration of the youngsters participating in it. Equally wanting were counselling and mentoring services. As indicated, in the evaluation report, the work load of job counsellors in the private Centres for Vocational Training is high, as KEKs try to keep the cost of the programme implementation low. Trainees indicated that a systematic counselling and placement process is absent, job counsellors seldom visit the firms for supervision and mentoring, while OAED hardly monitors these activities (Karantinos et al. 2014: 99-100). Hence these
aspects of the intervention that are central in a personalised approach have a formalistic character.\textsuperscript{8} Overall, implementation of the “Voucher” programme reflects some major hindrances in introducing a shift towards an integrated, personalised approach and improving the STW transition. A “pull factor” (namely, a domestic debate propelled by social partners and other stakeholders acting as policy entrepreneurs and availing of external stimuli in order to push through a reform agenda) has been absent so far, and “a reform pathology” of the policy-making system has persistently been evident (for more details on these issues see Petmesidou and Polyzoidis 2015 and 2015a). It remains to be seen whether the “push factor” linked to the bailout conditionalities, in relation with the EU initiatives and funding for a Youth Guarantee will facilitate the paradigmatic shift towards a preventative approach (a reform that has been midway for more than a decade).

2.3.3 The Experimental Vocational Training Schools: an externally triggered reform propped up by domestic policy entrepreneurs in the tourism industry

The plan aspires to improve apprenticeship and training by pooling and coordinating the learning venues of the companies and vocational schools involved in these pilot project. It is launched as an attempt to enhance prospects for young people in the growing tourism industry in Greece.

In mid-2013 a new law (Law 4186 on “Restructuring Secondary Education”) introduced an innovative agenda for VET in Greece with the following aims: to increase attractiveness of VET, make VET provision much more demand-led (with regard to the skills needs of the economy), promote more collaborative ways of working between educational institutions, chambers of industry and commerce, and other key shareholders in designing and delivering VET, and tackle high youth unemployment (a social inclusion aim).

As explained in more detail in the Task 1 country report\textsuperscript{9}, the above law introduced the dual system across the full range of vocational education and training institutions. For instance, in the vocational lyceums (EPAL) the curriculum embraced a fourth (apprenticeship) year, and two-year vocational training schools for all specialties (SEKs) included a third (apprenticeship) year in business. The dual system is not new in Greece. It has been in force since the early 1980s, but it has been confined to OAED’s vocational schools. Overall, attractiveness of VET among students, parents and employers, as a suitable educational pathway in its own right, has remained low (the rate of youth that chooses the VET track is lower than 30 per cent, compared to the EU28 average of 50 per cent). Also

\begin{itemize}
  \item[A Eurobarometer (2011) survey shows that about 60 per cent of youth who were asked to assess the effectiveness of training/apprenticeship programmes in Greece express dissatisfaction on the ground that the programmes either did not provide new knowledge to them, or if they learnt new things these were not related to their specialisation.]
  \item[For a detailed discussion of the VET system in Greece and current reform, as well as the views of major stakeholders on the possible success or failure of the current attempt at expanding the dual VET system see Petmesidou & Polyzoidis 2015.]
\end{itemize}
collaboration between educational organisations and business (i.e. sharing responsibilities in the design of occupational profiles and the operationalisation of competency standards, in funding programmes, in carrying out examinations, etc.), which is essential for VET to acquire wide social acceptance, has been limited.\(^{10}\)

By expanding in-work training in all formal and non-formal post-secondary vocational education curricula, in parallel with strengthening the role of the national certification organisation (EOPPEP) that is responsible for the accreditation of competency standards, the above law aims at a systemic change in VET. Importantly, the legal reform constitutes a “reactive” move triggered by “outside” pressures, e.g. the need for Greece to harmonise VET with the ECVET regulations that, together with other aspects of educational reform, was included in the requirements of the bailout deal signed between Greece and its international creditors. The absence of a culture of cooperation between education and business (and of systematic research for the VET system, providing robust national level research data on skills demands and on VET performance)\(^{11}\), as well as the reliance, so far, on EU funding for carrying out the novelty of in-work training raise doubts as to how far a systemic reform will take place in practice.\(^{12}\)

Nevertheless, a widow of opportunity for a more proactive approach is manifest in the context of a “pilot” project aiming to integrate the apprenticeship system in specific VET programmes. Experimentation has been initiated under a bilateral agreement in the field of VET between the Ministries of Education in Germany and Greece, signed in late 2012, with the aim to transfer German dual training know-how to the Greek system. Although this experimental transfer has been instigated in a top-down manner\(^{13}\), its implementation brought to the fore domestic initiatives (domestic policy entrepreneurs, such as the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels and the Greek-German Chamber of Industry and Commerce) acting as “pull factors” of external stimuli and pushing forward significant changes (though, so far, confined in a specific sector of the economy – the growing tourism industry) in essential elements of the VET system.

\(^{10}\) Besides, as we mention elsewhere (Petmesidou & Polyzoidis 2015: 47) an attitude of mistrust to employers’ involvement in education policy is often expressed by trade unions, academics, students and others.

\(^{11}\) Research on VET has persistently been fragmented (mostly studies carried out as a contractual requirement of monitoring EU funded activities, e.g. under the National Strategic Reference Framework), hardly facilitating the gradual accumulation of relevant expertise for systematically reflecting on problems and making decisions on policy change. See also Gregoriades on the need to develop a coherent national policy framework (2014).

\(^{12}\) The new law encourages a wide range of stakeholders to express their views on the skills demands and qualifications provided by the secondary-level vocational schools, but it does not provide any clues about how a partnership approach can be developed. Undoubtedly, a collaborative approach cannot develop by fiat, but requires (long-term) negotiations that can gradually strengthen existing avenues for participation and also open up new ones. Also, as Paidoussi (2014: 51) stresses under the conditions of an unprecedented and protracted economic crisis this is an issue “that requires strong problem solvers”.

\(^{13}\) It is an initiative triggered at the EU level by the European education ministers’ agreement to create the basic conditions for a European Vocational Education Area (through the plan of a “European Alliance for Apprenticeship” –see http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147&langId=en) that aims to integrate EU countries into a reform process placing special focus on practically oriented training, along the lines of the German dual system.
(A) Brief description of the “pilot” project studied

Our case study focuses on one of the two “pilot” projects that started operating under the German-Greek cooperation agreement. This is known as MENDI (Mentoring Dual Training) and aims to develop the apprenticeship model in the tourism sector. The coordinating domestic agent is the Greek-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Athens. The Chamber functions as the “hub” of the transfer process and the “leader” of the collaborative partnership between the major organisations involved in the implementation of the experiment: OAED that provides the infrastructure for the project (namely the two schools – in Athens and Heraklion- that host the pilot apprenticeship programmes), the Greek Ministry of Tourism, the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, Dekra Akademie (a German Training Enterprise), the TUI Group (a multinational travel and tourism company based in Germany), and Osnabrück University (which is the scientific project supervisor).

The project was launched in autumn 2013. It provides class- and enterprise-based training packages in three tourism professions. Table 2.3.3 provides information about the number of students registered in the two “pilot” VET schools in Athens and Heraklion (Crete) by gender and training packages in operation. There are in total 169 students attending the programme. Training positions are provided by 60 hotels (belonging to 20 hospitality enterprises), situated in Athens, the Peloponnese and in the islands.

Table 2.3.3 Enrolment in the Experimental Vocational Training Schools (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professions</th>
<th>Athens (School of Alimos)</th>
<th>Crete (School of Heraklion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant specialists (food &amp; beverages)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism management assistants</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data obtained from the Greek-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The programme is addressed to students 18 to 20 years who have completed compulsory education. It is of three-year duration. Each year there are five months class-based courses (during the winter), and eight months enterprise-based training in tourism and hospitality firms. The “pilot” project is funded mainly by the German Ministry of Education and EU sources. OAED contributes by providing its facilities in Athens and Heraklion. However, a crucial new element introduced by the project concerns the fact that the enterprises carrying out training undertake its

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14 The second project (VETnet) is still in its initial state. It concerns a VET programme on rail engineering skills that is going to be carried out in cooperation with Deutsche Bahn were students are expected to do part of their work-based training. After successful completion of their dual VET course they will be awarded two degrees by the Greek-German Chamber, recognised respectively by the Greek and German educational authorities.
15 Supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.
cost. Apprentices are under contract with the firm that provides training and receive remuneration equal to 75 per cent of the unskilled worker wage (including insurance against work accident).

**(B) Governance and operation**

This experiment develops in the context of a highly centralised system of education in Greece. Yet the governance mode of this pilot project introduces some innovative elements that strengthen the link between education and business and encourage devolvement of decision-making to an incipient network of major stakeholders. As briefly mentioned above, top-down influence has been crucial for instigating the project (EU initiatives and funding, German know-how and funding sources). This encouraged activation of private stakeholders at the national and local level (mainly the Greek-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, but individual businesses as well).

Top-down influence dominates with regard to the curricula structure, content and accreditation. Largely, the knowledge base of the courses, training standards and assessment methods have been “copied” by similar German training packages and adjusted to the Greek case, under the coordination of the Greek-German Chamber. Even though a top-down initiative, the experiment has provided fertile ground for an incipient partnership mode of governance between educational organisations and business (but confined to a specific sector of the economy).

In combination with the provision of the above mentioned law that encourages consultation by stakeholders on skills needs and VET curricula, the “pilot” project promotes, in an informal way, a division of work and responsibilities between existing institutions (OAED, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, individual enterprises at the local level). So far trade union organisations have not been involved in one way or another in the project (our interviewee from the Greek-German Chamber explained this on the ground of the low level of unionisation in the tourism and hospitality industry). Hence, a network of all the relevant players (educational organisations, industry associations and trade unions) that cooperate at various levels (setting up skill profiles, drafting regulations and participate in examinations) is yet to be formed.

Joint funding is an important innovation. At this experimental stage, funding derives mostly from EU\(^{16}\) and German sources. However, the fact that the enterprises bear the cost of training is an innovative element in the VET system in the sense that it encourages the active involvement of the firms in the design of the VET curricula, the quality of the training provided and the matching of specialisations to the skills demanded in the sector. Cost-sharing is a controversial issue though, particularly regarding small enterprises across economic sectors (that are the majority in Greece). The capacity of small enterprises to participate in training is another important aspect to consider.

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16 In OAED’s apprenticeship schools, firm-based training is funded by EU resources, and the same holds for the fourth year in-firm training introduced in vocational training lyceums with the above law.
businesses for new hirings is rather limited with no substantial impact on youth employment; the more so under the conditions of a severe and protracted crisis. Generally, small businesses are less willing to provide training positions, let alone to incur the cost of firm-based training. In this context diverse funding models could be a solution (e.g. different levels of contribution depending on the extent to which enterprises derive net benefit from training). But so far, there is no substantial debate on how to expand and regulate join funding in the Greek VET system.

(C) Effective innovations in the knowledge base of VET

In this incipient division of responsibilities, the Greek-German Chamber, in collaboration with the other partners in the “pilot” project, sets the competency standards for authorizing enterprises to undertake the training of apprentices. It also carries out training programmes for trainers and plays a significant role in operationalising appropriate teaching and learning models and assessment methods leading to valid qualifications in Greece and Germany. Also, in collaboration with the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, it contributes to raising perceptions about the status of VET among young people (e.g. by organizing workshops and public events addressed to interested youth and parents, the use of electronic media and other communication channels). This is combined with an initiative (through the VETnet project, running parallel to the MENDI project) to develop a systematic knowledge base on the growing skills demands in the tourism industry (with the aim to expand such a flow of information with regard to other sectors of the economy).

In the interview we conducted with the president of the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SETE) he stressed the lack of adequately qualified labour available for recruitment in the sector. He emphasised the need for multiskilling, which is very important because of high horizontal (in geographical and occupational terms) and vertical mobility in this sector, and he indicated that “multiskilling” is a strong component of this experimental programme. As stressed by the VET student attending the programme in the Athens Experimental VET School, multiskilling is acquired through placements in different positions and different types of hotels, during the three-year duration of the programme. Social skills, knowledge of foreign languages, skills related to the use of IT and capacity to work independently are also significant parameters of the programme.

(D) Policy learning, transfer and innovation: the challenges ahead

The experimental project aims to trigger a shift towards a dual training system with a vocation-oriented qualifications style. The impact of the overarching European VET policy framework (with the European Qualifications Framework at its core) has significantly influenced the initiative. Crucial innovative elements are the encouragement of the collaborative approach, with a pivotal role played by the Greek-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in providing teaching guidelines and
material, authorizing business to train VET students, setting-up quality standards and administering examinations. Also the financial involvement of the enterprises signposts a significant change with regard to the existing practice of the firms to rely on government subsidies for providing training.

The project could be considered an “enclave” adaptation of some essential elements of the German dual VET system. If further expanded to a broader range of VET units of competency and qualifications, and if appropriate avenues of participation (at the national, regional and local levels) of major stakeholders are developed, it can lead to a systemic change. However, for this to take place, the following conditions are key: First, the incipient process of developing a (formal) knowledge base on skills demand must expand into a broader knowledge base regarding the role of VET in the economy (to monitor and analyze current and emerging skills needs across industry sectors and evaluate the practice and performance of VET), which can feed into the ongoing improvement of the system. Second, for this experimental programme to expand into a national accredited VET system, nationally recognised units of competency and qualifications must be formed that ensure quality and transferability of skills between firms. Third, raising the social recognition of VET is closely linked to the quality of training packages and the extent to which they can secure a professional career. And most importantly, fourth, if the economy consists of a large number of small and very small enterprises, networking mechanisms for developing a common understanding of VET requirements by firms, and extra support structures for helping enterprises to deal with administrative matters and manage the flow of trainees are required. As repeatedly mentioned by a number of interviewees (in the context of our study under Tasks 1 and 2), the profile and partnership of players characterising the German dual VET system cannot be duplicated in Greece. Moreover, the broad objective of vocational training, i.e. to develop occupational skills that contribute to raising economic productivity and promote social inclusion and career development (Euler 2013: 19-20) can hardly be met under conditions of a failing economy. Hence the extent to which this pilot project can emerge as a central policy influencer towards systemic change in the VET system is an open question.

**Bibliography**


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17 The absence of systematic research is the main reason for which many of our respondents (in our study under Task 1, see Petmesidou & Polyzoidis, 2015: 49) cast doubt as to how successful the transfer of the German dual VET system can be.


2.4 Spain – Brief country report

M. C. González-Menéndez, A. M. Guillén, B. Cueto, R. Gutiérrez, J. Mato and A. Tejero
University of Oviedo

2.4.1 Introduction

The report briefly examines the design and implementation of two initiatives focused on improving youth school-to-work transitions in Spain, and more specifically, on increasing their employment and employability: the Youth Guarantee (YG) and the Dual Professional Training (DPT).

Besides the interviews carried out for task 4.1, fourteen new interviews (16 interviewees) were carried out with key actors and stakeholders at national, regional, and local level focusing strictly on these two topics. These were carried out with high ranking officials at the Spanish Ministry of Employment, at the Public Employment Service of the autonomous community of Asturias, at local level employment agencies and departments of the areas of Gijón, Avilés and Lugones, as well as with expert trade unions representatives in Asturias and the Basque Country, and with an expert representative of the employers’ association of Asturias. Four of the interviews focused only in DPT. In this case, the relevant actors interviewed were: a high ranking official at the training system of Asturias, the Training and Industrial Relations manager of a large firm and the Head of a Vocational Training Centre both participating in the DPT experimental pilot project in Asturias (focused on the metal sector only), and a representative of a regional industry association with its own DPT scheme (association of firms of the automotive sector of the Principality of Asturias). All interviews were carried out in person but for one (by telephone); they were over an hour long in average, and took place between 20 April and 3 December 2015. We used MAXQDA 10 for the qualitative analysis of the interviews.

2.4.2 The Youth Guarantee

Beyond the innovation introduced by the YG as to focusing a whole array of national and regional employment and education policies on NEETs themselves (defined as not having worked or not having been in education or training in the 30, 90 and 30 last days before doing the application, respectively), there has not been any innovation regarding “holistic” interventions with regard to supporting measures as to intervention in health care problems, improving access of young people to housing or child care.

As to employment policies, the national YG system was built on the basis of the national Strategy for Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment (Government of Spain 2013), and thus implied a low level of innovation. According to a few of the persons interviewed, national and regional policies that were
already in place were re-oriented to fit the YG scheme and access its funds (only for direct actions with the people targeted by the YG, with policy costing per person and, with a substantial part of it to be spent in 2014-2015, half by the central government and half by the regions). Even the idea of a national one-stop-shop web page had been in the making for a long time. The greatest novelty introduced by the YG approach in Spain is the focus on improving the labour orientation provided to the young, which implicitly demands a much needed modernisation of the national and regional Public Employment Services (PES), itself not funded by the YG but by the ESF, and that paves the way for the use of youth profiling. At the same time, without a doubt, the extant national and regional policy design and implementation structures were not capable of the short-term systemic overhaul that implied spending so much money in so little time in such a different way, and with the hardest to reach youths, which has created numerous frictions and that partly explains the low expenditure of Spain in the YG so far. The not-in-work in the previous 30 days rule has been also criticised as out of touch with the very precarious youth labour market of 2015 where people may be offered a one-day contract and thus be pushed out of the YG.

The web application put in place by the national government as the only means of registering for the YG has been problematic; first, because of its technical difficulty for the user, making it a new barrier to the entry in the system, particularly for those most in need of it; and second, because it implied not using already available sources of information, i.e. the over four hundred thousand young people already registered as unemployed at the PES in December 2013. For the national government to use the latter source of information to access YG participants may have required a greater implication of the regional governments and of other actors than has been allowed; social actors were only consulted at a late design stage (Busi, 2014), and importantly, the Youth Council of Spain has been openly critical with the way the YG was nationally designed and is being implemented, and with having been excluded from the follow-up group created. At the same time, a relevant problem of the initial design of the YG, pointed out by many actors in the first stage of our research (González Menéndez et al., 2015), has been recently addressed in that the age range was extended in July 2015 to 30 years (Resolution, 2015), and the central government is planning to improve on social actors’ incorporation.

Evaluation is still a pending subject. So far there is follow up of actions rather than actions’ impact appraisal. In other words, it will now be possible to know how many more people work after the YG but not to know how many of those work as a consequence of the YG. This is because there are no control groups, and there could be. In that sense, the pilot local projects offered a clear appraisal

\[18\] At 30th of September 2015 there have been 138,179 applications and 119,514 registrations (see http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/garantiajuvenil/inscripcion.html; last accessed 06/11/15). The initial estimation of possible participants by the government was around 800,000.
possibility that was not taken up by the national or regional governments. The European Commission’s (EC) lack of attention to these higher levels of governance in designing the pilot projects can also be criticised in this sense as a missed opportunity to foster innovation. The lack of good public data on policy impact is manifest in Spain. The number of young men and women registered in the YG is the only available data. There is no further information, for instance, as to their educational level or age group. There is equally no public information on what policies have been applied, what has been recommended, how many funded labour contracts there have been, how many young persons have been channelled towards education and training, etc.

Three Spanish municipalities and three Spanish regions acted from outside the system, without the national (or relevant regional) framework, because they accessed EC funds directly with their participation in the early EU pilot projects scheme. The two pilot cases we have studied (Avilés City Council 2014; Gijón City Council 2015) are clearly innovative, partly because they already were to some extent before the pilot scheme, partly because they were given the means to pursue it. In one of the cases, the pilot scheme has been converted into a stable policy (Gijón); in the other, the pilot scheme was itself an extension of a grounded experimentalist policy approach targeting small groups, based, in turn, on the holistic approach of the local council as to employment, education and social services provision (Avilés). As a control, we studied the implementation of the YG at a third locality (Lugones) that did not participate in the EU pilot project. Its PES has a reputation for innovation (for instance with the creation of an employers’ space in the early 1990s) and effectiveness. At Lugones the YG just allowed them to formalise the already well-established practices of providing highly personalised services to the unemployed based on very close relationships with individual local firms and other public services such as schools, shelters, prisons and schools for adults, among others. All innovations here preceded the YG and were a consequence of a team of highly dedicated (‘restless’ in the words of the interviewee) team.

However, to an extent, they are individual success stories. While there is some evidence of cross-learning across pilot projects from different countries and within the country (Aragón imitated the employers’ space of Lugones, and Gijón learnt from Cartagena the value of partnerships, for instance), there has been no substantive knowledge transfer from them to other government levels within the country. In fact, information on the EU pilot local schemes in Spain is more readily available from the EU webpage than from the Spanish government web page. Creating better focused and structured channels for policy knowledge transfer within the country still seems paramount (cf González-Menéndez et al. 2015 for some initiatives in this regard).

As to the local innovations, these have been mostly in the services delivery, in the information and communication systems used (‘street activators’, for instance, in the case of Gijón and focus groups in Lugones), and in their agile response to the employment or training needs of the youth. As to the
governance of the schemes, in contrast with what happened at the national level, the multiple-agent partnerships created to govern the pilot projects, as demanded by the EC, were actively involved from the inception phase, and have been identified as key both for increasing all agents’ commitment with improving youth employment, and for the success of the projects, even when they were more novel in one of the cases (Gijón) than in the other (Avilés). At the same time, Lugones is highly successful with informal network-based one-to-one collaborations and reluctant towards formal overarching partnerships.

Finally, in terms of providing individualised orientation and advice, as the YG aims, it is clear that, in being closer to the unemployed, the local level can often provide a better service than the regional and national PES. Local funds for doing this should be increased in our view.

2.4.3 Dual Professional Training

The building blocks of the modernising agenda are as follows. First, to increase the skills and employability of the youth. Second, to improve employers’ commitment with the training of the workforce and to give firms the freedom to configure the workforce training as they need it. Now firms decide where to get the formal training that will complement the practical training the firm offers to the student-workers, and in what will that training be. Third, to foster partnerships for collaboration and networks for knowledge transfer between firms and training centres. Fourth, to allow DPT to provide more varied training accreditations integrating them better in the overall education system and easing transitions to other studies and life-long-learning. Mismatches in the training provided by the education system and that demanded by firms should, as a consequence, be reduced. The main change agents have been the business sector, the central government and a social pressure to improve professional training and education, all of them long-standing but also motivated by high levels of youth unemployment. The most relevant policy learning partnership driving reform is that among the social partners and with the central government at the many training-specific or more general employment and labour affairs forums that are institutionalised in the country for continued conversation.

As to the main tensions and complementarities in respect to the production and exchange of practice-based and theoretical knowledge, and the demands for skills, experimentation has been high, with some regions such as Madrid that implanted experimental DPT programmes in 2011 before the relevant Royal Decree (RD 1529/2012) was passed, changing aspects of it every year since. The case of the experimental pilot project in Asturias that merged both forms of DPT (within the education system and within the employment system) by integrating the Training and Apprenticeship labour contract in the DPT education system for a reduced number of students in the metal sector is interesting, not just because of merging them, and by being the result of tripartite negotiation of the regional government, the unions and the employers’ regional association, but also because its
renewal or expansion was never expected by the regional administration. It was in that sense a ‘pure’ experiment since inception, aimed at mobilising the business sector in the new DPT environment. It was successful in that it inspired a separate employer-led initiative in a different sector (automotive). The high level of recent and on-going experimentation in Spain with the DPT within the education system is quite possibly connected to the pressures for short-term results created by the 2012 regulation, combined with limited funds and an upwards-downwards very open design.

The lack of formal appraisal in the system/s limits us as to identifying specific problem areas and the degree of improvement in each project within the education system via trial and error. Rigidities in the educational system and lack of commitment and resources by other than large firms, particularly in the service sector, are some of the most common problems identified as to the low participation of firms (Pin et al. 2014). Our own research pointed to rigidities like having to adapt the work placement to school timetables and holidays, particularly difficult when a firm collaborates with different education centres, and a demanding paper workload and complex quality control systems when working with public education institutions. A possible explanation for the low students’ uptake so far (SGOFP 2014) is that the implementation of DPT projects has been tightly connected to the YG funds and thus limited to those fulfilling the YG requirements and registered in the National YG System, both important limiting factors as previously explained.

Qualitatively, the case of the Basque Country is the reference model within Spain, being the model most often cited by interviewees as working best. On one hand, the business sector commitment and firm’s direct links with the training centres are perceived to be high there, having been built over time for some years without the external pressures for short-term results felt since 2012 in other regions. On the other hand, frictions between the education system and firms seem to have been minimised in that the time devoted to the work placement has not been at the expense of formal education time. This has been done by increasing the overall training time of each training cycle from 2 to 3 years as allowed by the regulation.

Regarding effective innovations in the knowledge base of VET (e.g. increased modularisation and flexibility, personalised learning methods, new competence-based qualifications), firstly, the new framework has permitted the development of DPT projects that provide training very tailored to a specific industry needs while removing the rigidities encountered by firms collaborating with education centres. Secondly, interviewees also remarked that the design of DPT allows for easier access to other studies and life-long-learning. The recent promotion of the National System of Professional Qualifications has allowed DVT projects to register the specific training accreditation provided in the national catalogue of qualifications, and thus specific training accreditations can become a gate to higher-level accreditations in the education system. At the same time, the decentralised implementation of the DPT may act as a barrier to competences accreditation by increasing the
system’s complexity.

It is too early to assess the success of the reform amidst an overall process of wide experimentation, and the little available impact data regarding number of participating students, firms and centres\textsuperscript{19}, and of the Training and Apprenticeship labour contracts transformed into open-ended contracts (SEPE, 2015) only permits a very moderate optimism. Qualitatively, it is seen to be working in the right direction by all the actors interviewed. Overall, it is a common observation that participating firms usually become more committed with being active training actors as they see the results of the training and its use as a workers selection mechanism and, some firms' associations are leading their own DPT programmes and obtaining high levels of satisfaction (e.g. ASPA - association of firms of the automotive sector of the Principality of Asturias)

The main pending questions are, in our view, the following. First, small firms are particularly reluctant to join a system perceived mostly as costly (tutor, paperwork), especially when it implies a labour contract, rather than as an investment. Their access to the system may depend on the quality of the support provided by business associations and on further promotion of DPT by central and regional governments. Second, the cooperation between the education and labour authorities needs to increase itself. Third, education centres must become more flexible, adapting themselves to firms, and not the other way around. Fourth, appraisal of results and a more long-term view on the system are needed; the time for experimentation without assessment should come to an end.

\textbf{2.4.4 Conclusion}

Looking now at the design and implementation of both YG and DPT together, the modernisation of the employment and education services with an agenda of improving school-to-work transitions is under way but much remains to be done. While the implementation of the YG has entailed little visible innovation so far, other than at the localities that participated in the EU pilot project, it has backed localised practice working in that direction. At the same time, experimentation with DPT has been extensive and the business sector has been mobilised with it to some extent. Evaluation of impact can only be limited given the short period the schemes have been in place and the overall scarcity of data. In any case the research conducted confirms our previous report observation that the PES need be the focus of further innovations in order to making them able to apply a holistic personalised service to the unemployed, a YG goal that is still pending. For that, greater cooperation between the employment, education and social services authorities is needed at of levels of governance. Overall, the institutionalisation of policy appraisal with a long-term approach to policy results is also needed.

\textsuperscript{19} The number of participating centres increased from 172 in 2013 to 375 in 2014. In the same period the number of participating firms increased from 513 to 1,570 and the number of students increased from 4,292 to 9,555 (SGOFP, 2014)
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Royal Decree 1529/2012, of 8th November, por el que se desarrolla el contrato para la formación y el aprendizaje y se establecen las bases de la formación profesional dual (BOE núm. 270, 8 de noviembre de 2012).


Petmesidou and González-Menéndez (eds.)

Madrid: Subdirección General de Orientación Profesional.
2.5 Slovakia – Brief country report

Marcela Veselkova
Slovak Governance Institute

2.5.1 Introduction

This report is a follow-up to the previous STYLE D4.1 report (see Veselkova 2015), which examined barriers to and triggers of policy innovation and knowledge transfer in Slovakia. Whereas the previous report focused on the policy innovation at the national level and the underlying institutional settings, this report focuses on the local policy innovation and the role of policy communities and policy transfer networks. Following policy innovations, i.e. policies new to Slovakia, were examined: (1) National Project Community Centres and (2) pilot projects, which serve as examples of dual education scheme in Slovakia.

2.5.2 Methodology

Case studies were selected from the list of key reforms and initiatives in the Slovak National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, which aims to provide employment, continued education or training for people younger than 25 within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The emphasis was placed on local policy initiatives, which have been at least partially implemented at the time of the data collection. Each case study is organised along four key questions: (1) why was there a transfer? (2) what was transferred? (3) who was involved in the transfer? and (4) what capacities did the actors draw upon? The following interpretative account is based on translated transcripts of interviews with the relevant stakeholders.

Case Study 1: National Project Community Centres

Out of 168 community centres participating in the National Project Community centres, approximately 63 per cent were run by the municipalities, 27 per cent by non-profit organisations and the rest by church charities. Community centres for this case study were selected based on the internet search using keywords "community centre", "employment", "employability" and/or "social enterprise". The final sample includes community centres run by two civic associations (Association of Young Roma and Civic Association - Club of Roma activists in Slovakia) and one non-profit organisation (Roma Institute).
• Mr. Ivan Mako, statutory representative of the Association of Young Roma, civic association (telephone interview, 21 August 2015)

• Mr. Peter Németh, Acting Manager of the Community Centre Roma Institute, non-profit organisation, Stará tehelná, Prešov (telephone interview, 26 August 2015)

• Mrs. Mária Demeová, Director of the Community Centre Hnúšťa, Civic Association - Club of Roma activists in Slovakia (telephone interview, 31 August 2015)

Case Study 2: Pilot testing of the dual education model

• Mr. Stanislav Pravda, Expert guarantor of Activity 2: Participation of employers’ representatives through professional associations, National Project “Development of secondary vocational education”, ŠIOV – State Vocational Education Institute (interview, 2 March 2015)

• Mrs. Žaneta Surmajová, Acting Director of Department for Legislation and Law Approximation, Ministry of Education (interview, 19 March 2015)

• Mr. Karol Jakubík, State adviser in Department for Secondary Technical Schools and conservatories, Ministry of Education (interview, 19 March 2015)

These interviews were complemented by publicly available interviews with Mr. Jaroslav Holeček, President of the Automotive Industry Association (ZAP SR 11 March 2014), Mr. Peter Chudoba, Managing Director, Miba AG plant in Slovakia (ZAP SR 24 April 2014), and Mr. Radoslav Šebeňa, Human Capital Operation Manager, Miba Steeltec (HRclub 18 August 2015), as well as relevant official documents.

2.5.3 Case study 1: National Project Community Centres

The project aims to support the social inclusion of marginalised social groups though community centres. The special focus is placed on marginalised Roma communities (MRC), which suffer multiple disadvantages due to ethnic prejudice, poverty, low-skillness and unemployment. The Implementation Agency for Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion (2014) identifies community centres as a tool for coordination of necessary interventions at the community level. However, it points out that the quality of services provided by existing community centres varies greatly and the continuity of the activities is at risk because of lack of systemic funding. The pilot project therefore aims to (1) create standards for community centres and (2) fund labour costs of community centres.
(A) Target Groups
The national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan defined the target group as NEETs from Marginalised Roma Communities. However, the Implementation Agency defined the target group more broadly as (1) socially excluded groups and (2) employees of community centres. Thus, the project does not specifically target disadvantaged youth. This was confirmed also by interviewees.

(B) Failed Standardisation Induced Local Policy Innovation
The first phase of the project focused on the standardisation of community centres. The Implementation Agency published the Standards for Community Centres, which were based on the Minimum standards for community centres prepared by a non-profit organisation People in Need Slovakia in 2010. The standards define the community centre, its mission, target groups and activities. In case of services aimed at increasing employability and employment, the standards merely list the following activities: employment counselling, work incubators and social and municipal enterprises. The failure of the Implementation Agency to provide a clear roadmap induced local policy innovation because it allowed community centres to pursue different policy experiments.

(C) Multiple Strategies of Work Integration
All examined community centres provide employment services and training schemes. They help the clients to prepare their CVs, train them for job interviews, assist them in their communication with the labour office and provide informal learning to achieve new qualifications.

Recently, the community centres developed innovative projects to better cater to the needs of disadvantaged job seekers. What these strategies of work integration of disadvantaged people have in common is a business mode of thinking, which actively matches disadvantaged job seekers to low-skilled occupations demanded in the labour market. The Association of Young Roma operates Multifunctional centre Horehronie, a work integration social enterprise, which provides ironing and laundry services and copying and printing services. The Community Centre Roma Institute, Stará Tehelňa trained a squad of ten masons and plans to offer their services at home or abroad. Finally, Community Centre Hnúšťa provides German language training to clients and places them as home carer assistants in Germany. The number of successful work placements is relatively modest and can be counted in tens of people. However, it must be noted that unemployment rates in the MRCs are extreme. For example, 98 per cent of inhabitants of Stará Tehelňa are unemployed.

(D) Transfer of Knowledge and Policy Programs
Policy transfer included transfer of knowledge and transfer of policy programs. All interviewees cited
participation in various training programs. Transfer of expertise was prominent in case of the Community Centre Roma Institute, Stará Tehelňa. The predecessor of the current community centre was established by the Belgian Red Cross in 2001 in response to an increasing number of Slovak Roma asylum seekers in Belgium. The Belgian Red Cross provided initial training to the current Acting Manager of the community centre and eight other workers.

The Association of Young Roma participated in the Flemish Government project “Supporting the development of strong and sustainable social economy network in the Banská Bystrica region” with the Faculty of Economics of Matej Bel University and the Self-governing region of Banská Bystrica (see Matej Bel University 2010). The project was led by HIVA Research Institute for Work and Society by the Catholic University in Leuven and the non-profit association Flemish Platform for the Social Economy (VOSEC) in Belgium – Flanders. In 2009, Mr. Mako participated in the pilot lifelong learning course “Manager of Social Entrepreneurship”, which included the field trip. The work integration social enterprise established by the Association of Young Roma was inspired by similar enterprises in Belgian Leuven (gardening, laundry, ironing, recycling, and restaurants) and German Solingen (production of sheep shears and police handcuffs).

(E) Epistemic Communities and Practitioners Triggered Innovation

Local policy innovation depended on epistemic communities and practitioners. In the first step, epistemic communities (universities and research institutes) and international non-governmental organisations transferred expertise, which enhanced the local understanding of the policy and its desired effects. However, policy innovation depended also on the local knowledge accumulated by managers of community centres. This is documented by the fact that policy innovation was concentrated in community centres managed by people with a decade-long experience, which enabled them to build local trust and establish working relationships with local institutions, such as municipalities, labour offices or private employment agencies.

(F) Funding as the Main Barrier to Policy Innovation

Lack of systemic funding was cited as the main barrier to policy innovation – and even day-to-day functioning of the community centres. The NP Community Centres enabled managers to increase the number of staff and plan new activities. However, it is not clear yet whether this pilot project will be continued. Mr. Mako compared the funding of the community centre to a “puzzle”. Currently, the wages of the staff are reimbursed by the labour office, floors and the furniture of the Multifunctional centre were funded by a one-off financial aid from the Plenipotentiary of the Government of Slovakia for Roma Communities, the boiler room was funded by the non-profit EKOPOLIS Foundation and the
pilot project of ironing and laundry services is funded by Norwegian funds. To reduce the dependency on grant funding, the Multifunctional centre aspires to become "self-sustaining".

2.5.4 Case study 2: Pilot testing of the dual education model

Re-introduction of dual education in Slovakia originated as a number of independent local policy experiments led by Slovak companies in automotive and engineering sector. This case study focuses on the initiatives of the Automotive Industry Association – ZAP SR and the Austrian-Slovak Pilot Project "Young Stars" (see also STYLE D4.1). ZAP SR created the first pilot centres in vocational schools in 2002 in reaction to perceived shortages of skilled workforce. It began to actively push for the reform of the Slovak VET system in 2007. Austrian-Slovak Pilot Project "Young Stars" was initiated by a consortium of five Austrian companies in autumn 2013 in response to perceived shortages of qualified workforce. The project was based on the dual education system in Austria, with the ratio of practical, on-the-job training to formal education at a vocational school of 60 to 40. Eventually, the Austrian companies (MIBA Steelte, ZKW Slovakia, Pankl Automotive Slovakia and HTP Slovakia Vráble) were joined by two German and two Slovak firms (Matador Automotive Vráble, Secop, Bauer Gear Motor Slovakia and Švec a spol) and created a partnership with the vocational school in Zlaté Moravce. Company Miba was chosen for the pilot project based on the majority vote of selected students.

(A) Knowledge Transfer Driven by Non-State Actors

At the national level, there was a transfer of institutions. The so-called "Dual Education" law, which came into force on 1 April 2015, is a hybrid of VET systems in corporatist welfare states, such as Austria, Germany and Switzerland (see STYLE D4.1).

However, there was also transfer of the best practices to the local/company level. To address the problem of low attractiveness of the vocational education in Slovakia, an expert from the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ) helped the vocational school in Zlaté Moravce and Miba with the promotional campaign. In addition to internet promotion and printed brochures, the Miba management and the school director visited primary schools and met with pupils, their parents and school counsellors. Although the meetings were declared only a partial success, the number of interested pupils exceeded expectations and the Secondary Technical School Zlaté Moravce opened two classes instead of a planned single class.

Similarly to community centres, the local policy innovation depended on the knowledge accumulated by the practitioners. For example, Jaroslav Holeček, current President of ZAP SR, used to work as the director of the vocational school of Trnava Automotive Works. Between 2001 and 2005, he helped
to launch the academy of dual education in Volkswagen, Portugal. In 2007, he was the member of the working groups within ZAP SR, which analysed the VET systems in Germany, France, Austria, Hungary and Switzerland to draw lessons for Slovakia. Between 2008 and 2011 he helped to launch dual education training in Volkswagen, Russia. Similarly, Miba has a decades-long experience with dual education. A quarter of employees in the Austrian mother company are former apprentices. Slovak sister company Miba Sinter Slovakia in Dolný Kubín currently employs 33 apprentices. Furthermore, Secondary Technical School Zlaté Moravce was created in 1950 as a vocational school of the company specialised in the production of white goods.

(B) Policy Innovation Enabled by Availability of Funding

Local policy innovation was enhanced by the readiness of employers to use their own resources. The first 13 pilot centres in vocational schools created by the Automotive Industry Association (ZAP SR) in 2002 were funded solely by employers. For example, ZAP SR invested 1.5 million euro in a single pilot centre in Bratislava 2004. As of January 2015, Miba invested approximately 70,000 euro into equipment used in training facilities. However, companies started to rely increasingly on EU funding recently.

(C) Disincentives for Schools to Join Dual Education

Although the student demand for dual education in Miba exceeded expectations, the experience of this company cannot be easily generalised. In April 2015, 130 companies pledged to train 1800 students. However, the demand for these positions was relatively modest. As of September 2015, only 422 students were trained in 89 companies.

Employers are motivated to join the scheme for a number of reasons, such as tax relief or availability of EU funds. Furthermore, according to the estimates of Miba, the costs of dual training per employee are significantly lower than the costs of training per new employee with a non-technical background (6,800 euro vs. 31,500 euro, see Chudoba 2015). Although the costs of training are sensitive to sectoral differences (industry vs. services), the student always contributes work like a regular employee, this way reducing the overall costs of training.

However, the new "Dual Education" law created a disincentive for schools to join because the more hours a student spends at the workplace, the less money per student the school receives from the state budget. This was the main concern of Miba when looking for a school willing to participate in the Young Stars project: once the company takes over part of the training activities, the school will be forced to cut costs or lay off some of its employees.
2.5.5 Conclusion

The policy innovation was driven by the needs of local companies (shortages of skilled labour) and local communities (persistent unemployment). Similarly to the findings of the previous report, (1) epistemic communities enhance policy learning and (2) funding is crucial for the implementation of the project. However, local policy innovation depends heavily also on practitioners, their expertise and their local knowledge. Examined community centres and companies can be viewed as local incubators of ideas. Yet, there was a stark difference in the ability of these two groups to upload the policy innovation to the national level. Whereas pilot centres in vocational schools gradually evolved into the so-called "Dual Education" law, social enterprise initiatives remain local. This most likely reflects: (1) the strength of employers and their professional associations and (2) the European Union’s promotion of dual education (see STYLE D4.1) on the one hand and (3) the low importance attached to the social economy by the authorities (European Commission 2014:26) and (4) the negative connotation of the term "social enterprise” as a result of the misuse of public funds at the end of the 2000s (ibid) on the other hand.

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2.6 Turkey – Brief country report
Fatoş Gökşen, Deniz Yükseker, Sinem Kuz & İbrahim Öker
Koç University Social Policy Centre

2.6.1 Introduction
Turkey's labour market continues to be characterised by low employment rates, particularly among women and youth, and low labour productivity. Despite upturn in employment after the crisis, still less than half of the working age population were employed. The large number of low skilled workers is a key structural factor behind the labour market challenge in Turkey. Complying with EU and international standards in the field of youth employment presents another challenge for the policy makers in Turkey. Although Turkey does not have the right-based approach to youth unemployment as it is the case with Youth Guarantee, it has taken special measures to ensure the participation of youth in the labour force. Compared to the youth guarantee programs in EU, the programs in Turkey are characterised by a lack of holistic approach to youth unemployment. Despite some major principles of youth guarantee schemes, these programs are rather fragmented in terms of both structure and governance.

Within the extensive Vocational Education and Training (VET) system of Turkey, apprenticeship scheme and on-the-job training (OJT) are two fundamental programmes which attempt to somewhat emulate the principles of Youth Guarantee with a particular emphasis on key competences, the use of qualification standards, and close cooperation with the private sector. For a more comprehensive analysis of these two major programs three in-depth interviews were conducted with the experts from the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organisation, and Boğaziçi University, Department of Education Sciences. These interviews informed this document on the recent policy changes, the role of governance, triggers and barriers of reforms.

2.6.2 On the job training
Turkey's labour market continues to be characterised by low employment rates, particularly among women and youth, and low labour productivity. Despite upturn in employment after the crisis, still less than half of the working age population were employed. The large number of low skilled workers is a key structural factor behind the labour market challenge in Turkey. Complying with EU and international standards in the field of youth employment presents another challenge for the policy makers in Turkey. Although Turkey does not have the right-based approach to youth unemployment as it is the case with Youth Guarantee, it has taken special measures to ensure the participation of youth in the labour force. Compared to the youth guarantee programs in EU, the programs in Turkey are characterised by a lack of holistic approach to youth unemployment. Despite some major principles of youth guarantee schemes, these programs are rather fragmented in terms of both
structure and governance.

Within the extensive Vocational Education and Training (VET) system of Turkey, apprenticeship scheme and on-the-job training (OJT) are two fundamental programmes which attempt to somewhat emulate the principles of Youth Guarantee with a particular emphasis on key competences, the use of qualification standards, and close cooperation with the private sector. For a more comprehensive analysis of these two major programs three in-depth interviews were conducted with the experts from the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organisation, and Boğaziçi University, Department of Education Sciences. These interviews informed this document on the recent policy changes, the role of governance, triggers and barriers of reforms.

2.6.3 Apprenticeship programmes

Apprenticeship programme is a dual training system in which theoretical training is given in vocational training centres and practical training takes place in the workplace. Participants must be age 14 and at least primary education graduates. Apprenticeship programme is provided for those who have not been able to continue their education after primary education, or who have been left out of formal education for various reasons. The period of apprenticeship training lasts from two to four years depending on the nature of the profession. Those who complete apprenticeships follow a process including examinations and required work experience to get the foremanship and mastership qualifications. The insurance payment of apprentices is secured by the government. Moreover, the employees and enterprises have to pay at least 30 per cent of the minimum wage determined by the government to apprentices.

The main body responsible for the apprenticeship program is the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), General Directorate of Lifelong Learning. MoNE, General Directorate, and the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) are the bodies responsible for developing the curriculum and the competencies. Vocational Education Law No. 3308, and the Vocational and Technical Education Regulation provide the rules and procedures of the assessment to certify competency on completion. Such a centralised structure of the apprenticeship scheme leads to significant rigidity in the efficient functioning and development of the program.

In spite of its centralised nature the VET system in Turkey shows evidence of lack of communication and coordination between different levels. The dialogue between the MoNE, MoLSS and other organisations such as İŞKUR and the VQA are limited. Policy feedback from local governance structures is met with reluctance by the central policy institutions. Regardless of the well-established legal framework, the majority of the implementations in the VET system, particularly apprenticeship scheme does not work efficiently. Lack of communication between MoNE and Vocational Qualification Authority (VQA) and also the absence of cooperation between policy institutions and private sector have negative impacts on the apprenticeship scheme such as low quality of trainees, skill mismatch,
declining demand for apprentices, and the scarcity of technological infrastructure. One striking example of this lack of communication between different levels is the unforeseen impact of the primary education reform which established an interrupted system of 4+4+4 years of education which created uncertainties regarding the starting age of apprenticeship, or the status, for that matter.

Similarly, MoNE is yet to revise existing training programmes by taking into account the recent standards and competencies developed by the VQA. Also, national measurement and assessment, crediting and certification works for graduates are yet to be implemented. Additionally, the alignment with the European Credit System for VET (ECVET) for formal and non-formal VET also important for establishing integrated system to recognise prior learning (ETF 2014), but very little progress is achieved in this field. There is yet no measurable and transparent quality assurance system whereby graduates can have diplomas and certificates that are recognised internationally. Due to the lack of social dialogue, there are still differences between occupational competencies identified as a result of recent labour market analyses conducted by both ministries and researchers and competencies identified by the VQA. These differences make the validity and reliability of these programmes dubious.

While EU-aligned policy reforms are proceeding on the legislative front, such as the adoption of law amendments and the establishment of new institutions such as Vocational Qualification Authority or the Directorate General of Lifelong Learning, these institutions' policy changes do not integrate fully with either the current education system or the market. Skill competencies identified by the VQA in collaboration with the firms are not followed very closely when developing the curriculum of the training programs.

There are other numerous challenges facing the apprenticeship program. These challenges do not only derive from the content of program, but mostly from fundamental structural problems in governance and labour market dynamics such as informality. While all of the security premiums of apprentices are subsidised by the state, these incentives do not include journeymen, which lead companies to recruit journeymen as informal or unregistered workers (Ünlühisarcıklı 2013). Especially in small-sized companies, apprentices work without apprenticeship contract and social security coverage. Even though monitoring and assessing systems are in place the efficiency of the monitoring system is questionable. Particularly considering the size of the informal market, combatting against the informal apprenticeship needs to be prioritised. However, well-developed monitoring and evaluation systems are still unavailable exacerbating the challenge for ensuring improved quality and status.

Besides the informality issue, the social status of apprenticeship also hampers apprentices from finding decent jobs. They are often from lower socio-economic classes in Turkey and mostly the school dropouts. Roads to further education are very few, and this further decreases the motivation
for apprentices (Vos, 2008). From a gender perspective, the majority of occupations covered in the apprenticeship scheme are male-dominated leading to a gender tracking. Only 18.7 per cent of the trainees in Vocational Training Centres are female and they participate in the programs which are mostly in the fields of beauty and health care (TURKSTAT 2013).

Since the beginning of 2000s, the increasing concentration on VET system brings continuous policy innovations with regard to EU alignment process. The establishment of new policy institutions, subsequent law amendments and new programs and initiatives have shaped the OJT programs and the apprenticeship scheme to a certain extent. There are considerable improvements in the areas of adoption of EU and internationals standards, as well as establishing a closer link between VET system and the labour market. Yet, both OJT and apprenticeship schemes experience similar difficulties in establishing organic ties with other policy institutions. Absence of a holistic approach to youth unemployment which is reflected in lack of supporting measures such as healthcare provisions, access to childcare or housing transform these programs into practical tools of social inclusion and poverty alleviation rather than policies targeting long term youth employment. Therefore, while formulating policies geared towards overcoming youth unemployment and increasing decent employment, the well-designed coordination between policy institutions, the compliance of various policy reforms with the current system and the unique characteristics of Turkey's labour market should be taken into account. In the light of all endeavours to achieve the goals, there is a need for holistic approaches, which take into consideration the diverse set of barriers that stand in youth’s labour force participation.

2.6.4 Bibliography


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3. Innovative schemes in the Group B countries

3.1 UK – Brief country report

Kari P Hadjivassiliou, Sam Swift and Anna Fohrbeck
Institute for Employment Studies (IES)

3.1.1 Introduction

This short report describes two major youth-related programmes in the UK: (i) the Youth Contract (which shares a lot of common characteristics with the Youth Guarantee in that it actively seeks to keep young people connected with the world of either work and/or education); and (ii) the Apprenticeship Trailblazers which, by putting employers at the heart of the apprenticeship system represent a major paradigm shift within the UK context. Special attention has been paid on the implementation of these programmes. Our analysis is based on a combination of desk research/documentary review and interviews with key informants from government departments (notably the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills), employer associations, trade unions and other relevant organisation involved in the programme’s implementation. In total, we conducted five interviews, the details of which are given in Annex 1.

3.1.2 The Youth Contract

(A) Brief description of the Youth Guarantee

Whilst the UK has not implemented a Youth Guarantee based on the Commission recommendations, the Commission notes that the UK’s youth employment aims are broadly in line with those recommended in the national report (European Commission, 2015). The main mechanism through which these goals were to be achieved was the Youth Contract, the UK’s flagship youth employment programme, jointly delivered by the Departments for Education (DfE), Business, Innovation, and Skills (BIS), and Work and Pensions (DWP). Introduced in April 2012, it aimed to support unemployed 16 to 24 year olds with a £1 billion government funded programme over a three-year period. The devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have control over their own youth employment schemes, which continue to operate in some cases (see Annex 2).

The Youth Contract, was made up of seven key strands ranging from wage subsidies and work experience placements to apprenticeships, including apprenticeship grants and additional and
intensive/personalised support targeted at disengaged 16-17 year-olds (a more detailed description of these strands is given in Annex 3). Some of these strands continue to operate even after the discontinuation of the scheme as a whole. The Youth Contract was funded by central government, with a budget of £1 billion over three years. In addition, European Social Fund grants remain available, and £2.5 billion of these were invested in England between 2007 and 2013 (DWP 2013).

The Youth Contract gave, inter alia, education and training providers a mandate to create a programme of support, which would help young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) move into education, training, or a combination of the two. Elements of this support were implemented largely at the discretion of the provider, and would include general employability skills, work experience, and pastoral care/support. Providers worked closely with local authorities to identify young people who most needed this support, and in doing so also gained a better understanding of the local labour market. Providers of education and training were reimbursed via a payment by results method, which saw them receiving up to £2,200 for each young person successfully supported. There was also an emphasis on targeting in particular those who are disadvantaged and most at risk of being disconnected from the labour market long-term.

Originally, the Youth Contract through the payment-by-results mechanism was only available to low-qualified young people, care leavers, and NEET young offenders. A second delivery model devolved funding to core city and regional areas, who established their own delivery model. Eligibility was determined locally, and while these typically focused on vulnerable and disadvantaged NEETs, they did not emphasise low skill levels.

All out-of-work people aged 16-24 were eligible for support under the Youth Contract, with particular focus on NEETs and those aged 16-17. The intention of the removal of the wage incentive was to redirect funds to black and minority ethnic (BME) young people, although it is too early to assess whether this has been effective. The raising of the participation age has led to a reduction in NEETs aged 16-17, with increasingly higher numbers in full-time education as well as many more taking up apprenticeships. Results of some elements of the Youth Contract, notably its Wage Incentive scheme, were disappointing, and due to low take-up and questionable outcomes, they ended a year early.

(B) Changes in governance

The Youth Contract introduced new ways of co-ordination, notably more inter-agency and joined-up partnership working. However, these changes in coordination have had mixed results. Over the course of the Youth Contract implementation, a number of actors were integrated at national and local

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20 Liverpool, Greater Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Nottingham, the North East, and the West of England
levels to best deliver the scheme, with varying results of success. As well as central and devolved
governments, numerous training providers and agencies were involved, leading to “over-complexity
and confusion about where to begin looking for appropriate support and information” (House of
Commons 2012). A weakness was seen to be the lack of a single information and support service;
indeed, the advisory body “Connexions” was closed. One innovative success was seen to be the
“payment by results” (PBR) method that has been associated with both the Youth Contract and the
Work Programme, which incentivised strong performance on behalf of providers in terms of ensuring
that the beneficiaries, including young people, are placed in the most appropriate (and sustainable)
work and/or training placements. However, there is a concern that PBR had led to “creaming and
parking”; that is, providers assisting the easiest to help young people in order to claim the full
payment (Johnson 2013). One stakeholder was critical of any changes made under the Youth
Contract, suggesting it was a step back from the phased out Future Jobs Fund that was a previous
unemployment reduction mechanism.

The UK’s public employment service, Jobcentre Plus (JCP), had an integral role in the
implementation of the Youth Contract, supporting NEETs through work coaches and support into
employment. JCP managers tailored services depending on local labour market requirements, and
offered services to employers looking for new staff. JCP worked closely with the national careers
service (NCS), also designed to support young NEETs into sustained employment. JCPs had a large
amount of autonomy with regards to implementation of the schemes and services, giving them scope
for tailored, local flexibility. However, flexibility with regards to funding was limited; providers had to
undergo an open competitive tender process, which could hinder cooperation. A recommendation
made in the evaluation of support for NEETs was direct allocation of funding to providers from local
authorities, giving them both more control over and enhancing their commitment to support NEETs
(Newton et al. 2014).

The premature winding up of parts of the Youth Contract such as the Wage Incentive together with
the latter’s low take-up would suggest that flexibility alone does not encourage success for this sort of
programme. The local tailoring, however, is largely beneficial, allowing local labour market
characteristics to be better understood and focused on making young people more job-ready by
equipping them with relevant skills. The evaluation of the Youth Contract found that there was
contention around the fact that numerous other agencies were included in the open, competitive
tendering process, and a more co-ordinated local response would have been beneficial (Newton et al.
2014). A locally driven approach, then, has potential, but needs to be better supported and/or funded.
Another recommendation was to widen eligibility and allow JCP discretion in whom to support, which
would likely help more young people. Indeed, it has been suggested that the lack of control from JCP
was a political move, with the government wary about ceding power to PES.

Local authorities (LAs) had a role in providing data and sharing information on local labour market
needs, to ensure young people had relevant information in sectors that were most likely to employ them (EFA, 2014a). LA s were also expected to refer those aged 16-17 on to the Youth Contract itself. Third sector and private sector bodies were also involved, and bid for areas in which they would operate as an education and training provider, with responsibility for enhancing young people’s employability and skills (EFA 2013).

The strengths and weaknesses of Youth Contract partnerships in this approach have been evaluated (Newton et al. 2014). Delivery models were regionally consistent, although facilitating the collaboration needed in delivery was time and resource consuming. LA engagement was crucial, but hindered by the lack of devolved funding to LAs. Stakeholders noted that increased incorporation of schools to identify those most at risk of NEET status would have been beneficial, as would have been increased flexibility regarding the number of course start points. Third sector involvement occurred through the training providers, many of whom were civil society or charitable organisations.

(C) Effective innovation regarding “holistic” interventions

Those aged 16-17 years could access intensive support under the Youth Contract. Young people in this age bracket received £126 million targeted funding, which intended to integrate NEETs into some form of employment, education, or training (NAO 2014). Various actors ranging from the Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency to local authorities and training providers have responsibilities in the delivery of support for 16-17 year olds (a detailed list is shown in Annex 4). In addition, the participation age has been raised to 18 from 2015, creating a legal requirement for those younger than 18 to stay in education or training until the age of 18. One stakeholder noted an indirect innovation was a reinvigoration of “job clubs”, including “youth job clubs” i.e. third sector organisations providing advice to unemployed people as to how to get back into the labour market.

The most innovative aspect of the Youth Contract was, arguably, the Wage Incentive offered to employers who recruited an unemployed young person. This provided up to £2,275 to employers when they recruit an 18–24-year-old who had been receiving Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) for six months or more. However, impact of the subsidy was lower than anticipated (Coleman et al. 2014). In a survey, only 19 per cent of employers said they had created an extra vacancy due to the wage incentive, and only 34 per cent had stated the incentive made them more likely to keep the person on for at least six months. Some felt the eligibility was too restricted, and that “the priority given to selling the wage incentive scheme (and the resources this entailed) was disproportionate to the limited outcomes it could achieve.” Low take-up of the incentive resulted in the scheme ending early, and the £1 billion funding redirected towards other more targeted interventions.

There were no healthcare measures integrated into the Youth Contract per se, although the targeted provision at more disadvantaged youths would be more likely to reach those with physical or mental
health issues. European Social Fund (ESF) grants are available to those with multiple barriers to education or work, including those with mental health problems (EFA 2014b). In addition, young people have been further hampered by cuts in the 2015 budget, which increased the eligibility age for housing benefit to 21 and replaced university grants with loans. As mentioned above, the dedicated careers service (Connexions) was also cut.

One stakeholder suggested that the policy was not innovative enough, and lessons were not learnt from the failings of the “New Deal” of the 1990s; that particular scheme was expected to benefit 40 per cent of young people, but in reality only 14 per cent took it up, a precursor to the low take-up of parts of the Youth Contract. Additionally, any benefits for young people, such as a bursary programme implemented in 2010, were described as “fig leaves” to cover cuts.

Innovations in the Youth Contract have been arguable compared to those in the “New Deal for Young People”; a workfare programme implemented in 1998 by the New Labour administration. It was suggested that the New Deal was far more innovative in that it privileged and helped a larger proportion of disadvantaged young people into the labour market. A key difference, however, is that the labour market in general was more buoyant at the time; the Youth Contract was operating under much more straitened circumstances. Lessons from the New Deal were learned by policy makers and were fed into the Youth Contract about the need for closer stakeholder relationships and more joined-up working. However, other lessons such as about the requirement for a robust programme design and, crucially, implementation, and the need for flexibility; a rapid needs assessment on an individual basis; and a focus on sustained outcomes once a work placement has been found, have rather been overlooked.

(D) Policy learning and evaluation

A strength of the UK’s devolved administration structure means that local experimentation can occur, and the different approaches taken in the devolved regions – such as Wales implementing a Youth Guarantee - demonstrate scope/space for innovation in that regard. Experimentally, the UK has a long history of evidence-based research of policy instruments, and various aspects of the Youth Contract were piloted on a local basis before a national implementation.

As expected, the evaluation of the Youth Contract has yielded mixed results. For example, evaluations of the Youth Contract carried out so far show that the results (in terms of sustained re-engagement post-programme participation) are potentially encouraging, although outcomes are shown to be better when targeted towards the most disadvantaged participants. Moreover, they indicate that those who had received support found this helpful, and the majority of participants offered work experience or a place at a Sector-Based Work Academy (SBWA) received job offers, which they generally accepted. Rates of re-engagement for participants in the Youth Contract element for 16 and 17 years old were also positive.
However, it also became apparent that still a deadweight in excess of 50 per cent remained with young people not receiving any of the Youth Contract offers (Coleman et al. 2013). Moreover, the evidence also shows that the elements of the Youth Contract designed to increase and stimulate employers’ demand (i.e. the Wage Incentive element) failed to attract sufficient employers’ take-up, and have for this reason been since discontinued. Indeed, the Wage Incentive attracted criticism because of the low take-up amongst employers, the high risk of deadweight loss, and a lack of data on the extent to which the wage incentive led to permanent employment for young people after the six months’ time frame for claiming wage subsidy (Coleman 2014).

It appears therefore that, whilst interventions on the supply side may bear some positive results in terms of providing tailored support to some of the most disadvantaged young people and favouring re-engagement with the labour market or the training and education system, a key gap remains in UK policy for what concerns demand-side interventions capable of creating new employment opportunities for young people. Moreover, the evaluation of the Youth Contract found that individuals with a longstanding health condition or disability were more likely than other claimants to say their benefit had been stopped or reduced (42 per cent compared with 30 per cent) (Bloch et al. 2013; DWP 2014).

Some stakeholders also expressed the view that the Youth Contract was underinvested in and not sufficient in scale to address the scale of the youth unemployment problem. In general, it appears that whilst positive, the effects of interventions such as the Youth Contract may be limited in scope to a relatively small demographic of disadvantaged young people. This reflects the general UK approach of targeting support and focusing resources on the most disadvantaged only, with the expectations that the vast majority of young people will be able to make smooth transitions without needing to access specific, structured forms of support. There is, however, disagreement amongst stakeholders about the effectiveness of this approach, with some highlighting how this approach runs the risk of being too ‘reactive’ and restrictive.

It is also worth pointing out that in its recent Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) for the UK, published on 2nd June 2014, the European Commission has recognised that, in relation to the Youth Contract, the UK Government has made the Youth Contract, the government made substantial progress in providing work experience placements and launching more and better quality apprenticeships (European Commission 2014a). Moreover, the Youth Contract is seen as a good practice example and other Member States such as Estonia are currently liaising with the UK Government (Department for Work and Pensions) in order to explore what aspects of the Youth Contract can be replicated in other national contexts (House of Lords 2014). That said, it was accepted amongst stakeholders that central government in the UK does not learn a great deal from other EU Member States, although devolved administrations seem to be much more open and
engaged with the EU-wide mutual learning process. In contrast, international learning comes from the OECD and World Bank more regularly than from the EU.

### 3.1.3 Apprenticeship Trailblazers

**A) Brief description of Apprenticeship Trailblazers**

The (employer-led) Apprenticeship Trailblazers are being introduced as a means to address recommendations from the Richard Review (2012), which noted that employers are ‘best placed to judge the quality and relevance of training and demand the highest possible standards from training organisations’ (BIS 2012a). Indeed, as a result of the ongoing Government reform of Apprenticeship which constitutes the Government’s response to the Richard Review, employers in the UK have now assumed responsibility for setting new apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches which should also provide diverse pathways for young people to enter the labour market and reach higher skill levels (HM Government, 2013). To this end, employers are currently involved in designing and developing new Apprenticeship standards, content, training and assessment systems through the recent Apprenticeship Trailblazers initiative.

Specifically, the Apprenticeship Trailblazers are groups of at least ten employers who together with industry stakeholders such as professional bodies and training providers collaborate to lead developments on new apprenticeship standards for specific occupations in their respective sector, as well as to develop new assessment and delivery models. In March 2014, the government published the first Apprenticeship Standards developed by the Phase 1 Trailblazers. Since then, Phase 2 and Phase 3 Trailblazers have been announced. It is expected that the Trailblazers will pave the way for full implementation of the apprenticeship-related reforms during 2015/16 and 2016/17. The aim is that all new apprenticeship starts from 2017/18 will be on the new Apprenticeship Trailblazers programme (SFA 2014).

**B) Governance and organisation**

The leading role of employers in Apprenticeship Trailblazers is closely linked to the ongoing major Apprenticeship reform and reflects a strong wish within government to move towards greater employer involvement in and ownership of (workforce) skills development. The overall aim is to ensure that vocational/apprenticeship training is relevant to business needs. Apart from employers who lead on Trailblazers to ensure the standards they develop are suitable for both large and small organisations within their sector, other key stakeholders in Trailblazers are the following:

- Professional bodies are involved to help ensure routes to professional registration in occupations where these are available and can be usefully involved in the development of the apprenticeship standard.
- Training providers are involved so that they can contribute ideas from a delivery perspective and also to ensure that are ready to deliver the new (employer-led) apprenticeship standards.
- Awarding or assessment organisations are involved to share their experience of assessment. This is useful for trailblazers when they are drafting their assessment plans.
- Sector Skills Councils are involved in some Trailblazers, and many have been assisting with the facilitation of Trailblazer meetings.
- Each Trailblazer is supported by a Relationship Manager at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (BIS 2015).

Apprenticeships Trailblazers have typically formed an Oversight Group and Operational, Task-Focused Groups. These groups are, in some cases, linked to the industrial partnerships or to established structures within sectors (BIS 2015). Indeed, the infrastructure underlying Apprenticeships Trailblazers – notably the networks required for drawing a broader range of stakeholders into the design process – is based on the Industrial Partnerships established for the Employer Ownership of Skills (EOP) programme.

Crucially, the Apprenticeship Trailblazers approach sought to actively promote and support joint working and peer learning among all involved stakeholders, notably employers. Indeed, as the interim evaluation of the scheme found, the main benefit from the Trailblazer process to date arises from joint working between employers on the skills agenda. While many of the Trailblazer networks built on existing working relationships, such as the Employer Ownership of Skills Pilots, or Industrial Partnerships, the Trailblazers' work has served to increase employer collaboration further by giving a tangible project on which to work jointly, which would deliver benefits to all, while managing to avoid the problems usually associated with competition or confidentiality between businesses (BIS 2015).

Employers have learned from each other and developed a better understanding of sector-wide requirements through the process. Several are now seeking further ways to collaborate in relation to skills, such as in the delivery of Traineeships, sector benchmarking, or developing additional Trailblazer standards (BIS 2015). Moreover, the later Trailblazers were able to draw on the learning from initial Trailblazers through the published guidance which set out a template for the Apprenticeship Standard (BIS 2015).

Crucially, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), which is leading the development and implementation of the Trailblazers scheme, is also a key facilitator in promoting peer learning by holding regular workshops which bring together the early Trailblazers and allow them both to engage in peer learning and get feedback on the functioning of processes and employers’ support needs (BIS, 2015). This process has been described by one informant as involving 'learning on the job' for both BIS and the employer(s) leading or involved in Trailblazers. Indeed, throughout the BIS Relationship Managers have been explicit that this has been a learning process for the Department.
as much as the Trailblazers. For example, through this open policy process (‘building the bridge as you walk across it’), BIS became quickly aware of the need to improve the departmental guidance for future apprenticeship standards developers as well as to revise a standard where it has been trialled and found inadequate for industry needs (BIS, 2015).

(C) Effective innovations in the knowledge base of VET

The Apprenticeship Trailblazers constitute an important innovation as part of the current major VET reform in the UK in that employers have been given a much more prominent role in both design and delivering VET, including apprenticeships. Indeed, by placing employers at the centre of the design, delivery, and assessment process of apprenticeships, they were introduced with the explicit aim of creating a new system for defining apprenticeship standards and conducting assessments in the UK. These employer-defined apprenticeship standards are expected to replace existing frameworks (which are based on groups of qualifications) and to be closely aligned to the skills requirements and employer needs of a particular sector. Moreover, with these new standards the focus shifts from a rather input-based (qualifications) to an outcome-based approach which specifies clearly the employer expectations of the tasks an apprentice should be competent in, skills and knowledge needed to achieve top level performance, the behaviour(s), attitude and approach to work that is essential to fulfil a given job role (People 1st 2014).

As part of the ongoing Apprenticeship reform, there is also a concerted effort to improve not only the labour market relevance but also the quality of apprenticeships by, inter alia, the Government removing programme-led apprenticeships and frameworks lasting less than 12 months (Education Select Committee 2015). As a result, the length of apprenticeships is now at least 12 months, while there is a policy push to expand craft/intermediate level as well as higher level apprenticeships. Indeed, as the interim evaluation pointed out, employers engaged in early delivery of Trailblazers were also keen to test retention and completion; many of the new apprenticeship standards aim to deliver a programme of learning that lasts between two to four years (BIS 2015).

Moreover, greater employer ownership is also supposed to increase the quality of apprenticeships, which has often been identified as one of the key weaknesses of the UK VET structure. In turn, it is expected that this will increase the number of apprenticeship vacancies at different levels and increase the portability of skills that young people acquire through apprenticeships. The labour market returns of apprenticeships are generally higher, in the UK, than those from other vocational qualifications, and indeed, the excessive fragmentation and proliferation of different vocational qualifications is often identified by employers as one of the reasons which make employment of young people difficult, as employers have little confidence in the value of many qualifications currently available and do not find the content of much vocational training relevant to their needs.

In addition to aligning the work/VET related content of the apprenticeship more closely to
employer/sectoral needs, the Trailblazers are also seeking to improve the apprentice’s basic skills which will, in turn, enhance his/her employability and the likelihood of being retained by the training firm. To this end, apprentices under the new Trailblazer standards must study towards level 2 (GCSE A*-C or equivalent) and take the test before completing their apprenticeship (Education Select Committee, 2015). This focus on improving a young person’s basic/functional skills is quite important in view of the UK’s long-standing problem of basic skills deficit amongst young people (European Commission 2014a and 2014b).

The Trailblazers are also used as a testing ground for the government’s new/innovative funding model for apprenticeships and are expected to provide evidence which will help inform how, and at what levels, future apprenticeship-related funding is made available (BIS and SFA 2014). To this end, Trailblazers are piloting a new funding model where employers are given greater control over spending on training delivery and where the Government pays £2 for every £1 the employer invests in (apprenticeship) training (Mirza-Davies 2015; SFA 2015). Crucially, according to the Interim Evaluation Report, employers seem to like the new funding model in that its basic principle of the 2:1 ratio of core government funding for every £1 spent by the employer is a simple principle to understand, while the funding model itself is a lot clearer than the previous one (BIS 2015).

At a more general level, the current push towards a greater promotion of apprenticeships as a desirable post-16 route for school-leavers and towards greater involvement of employers in the skills agenda, for example through the Apprenticeships Trailblazers reforms, is rooted in the expectation that this will lead to a re-vamping of vocational education and training; facilitate smoother school-to-work transitions; favour the acquisition of specific occupational skills which are transferable and recognised, and lower the levels of skills mismatch by ensuring that the competences and skills developed by young people are in line with those required by employers.

**D. Policy learning and innovation as part of the implementation of the Apprenticeship Trailblazers**

The Apprenticeship Trailblazers is a good example of policy learning and innovation transfer for a number of reasons. Firstly, the scheme is highly innovative in the context of the UK with regard to several of the areas of concern to this research. Within the UK context, giving employers a key role on designing, delivering and assessing apprenticeships represents a radical departure from the past, when the apprenticeship arena has been dominated by training providers. Through expanding the role of employers, policy makers hope to create more robust linkages between apprenticeships and the skills required by the labour market.

Secondly, as mentioned earlier, new funding models are being tested as part of the development of the Trailblazers model, which means that, contrary to the past, available apprenticeship funding will
go directly to employers instead of training providers. Employers will be responsible for organising and finding appropriate apprenticeship training. This will represent a major change as training providers had previously tended to deal with the administrative aspects of the apprenticeship (People 1st 2014; SFA 2014). Indeed, according to one informant, the Trailblazers have not been popular with training providers, who experience greater difficulties with selling their training to employers under the new system. Unsurprisingly, as was pointed out by an informant, training providers tend to not be directly involved in the Trailblazer groups.

Thirdly, the Apprenticeship Trailblazers are designed and implemented in a way which explicitly promotes ongoing policy learning and peer learning. For example, the Trailblazers policy has been implemented using a quasi-experimental Early Adopters Model, as opposed to being piloted, adapted based on the experiences of the pilots, and then rolled out in a fully developed form. As a result of this mode of implementation, the relevant government department (BIS) has been engaged in continuous learning about the processes underlying the Trailblazers, the support required by employers as they are expected to take a more central role in the design and delivery process, and the longer-term governance of the delivery process (BIS 2015).

Indeed, this process has been described as one of effectively ‘trialling’ governance and support processes, for instance in the area of funding and review processes of the apprenticeship standards. Moreover, in the absence of models of cooperation for the Trailblazer groups, the employers engaged in extensive peer learning, facilitated by the working groups held by BIS. That said, according to some interviewees, there may be an inherent conflict between formal policy learning and the declared aim of the Trailblazers, to give employers freedom to design and deliver apprenticeships in line with their needs.

It is also worth noting here that previous research has found that it is mostly large employers who have the resources to lead or have large involvement in the Trailblazers process. As was pointed out by some interviewees, multinational businesses often draw on their informal knowledge about apprenticeship and training systems in other countries when designing apprenticeships under the Trailblazers scheme. The openness of the design process gives them the freedom to incorporate valuable features of such systems while developing UK-based apprenticeship standards and assessment and delivery systems. Interestingly, the academic interviewed had been asked by BIS to review the standards developed by the early Trailblazers in order to gauge whether they were of a similar quality to those in dual system apprenticeship systems.

However, it also worth noting that there seems to be little awareness of and engagement with formal EU processes for apprenticeship-related knowledge exchange and peer learning with other Member States, for instance via the Open Method of Coordination. For example, none of the informants were aware of any UK involvement in such EU knowledge sharing processes. They also did not believe
that the relevant policy makers had engaged with EU level organisations and initiatives like the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA). Indeed, the UK (England) is of the two Member States (out of 28) which is not participating in the EAFA. As such, following the Council Declaration of 15 October 2013 on the EAfA it has not submitted to the European Commission a concrete national commitment on next steps to increase the quantity, quality and supply of apprenticeships.

Overall, the interim evaluation of the Apprenticeship Trailblazers found that, for the large part, the process has been very positive since it has engendered a great deal of employer engagement and resulted, in a relatively short time, in a set of new apprenticeship standards and assessment models that are thought to meet employer needs and can act as a template to future developments (BIS 2015). Crucially, employers seem to have welcomed being at the heart of apprenticeship-related developments, despite the resource investment this has entailed. Employers seem to think that the new apprenticeship standards are quite successful by better meeting their skills need, ensuring improved quality within the apprenticeship programme, promoting parity of esteem between training/VET and educational routes, and offering better options for young people’s labour market entry. Moreover, the close collaboration and joined-up thinking both between employers on the skills agenda and between employers and BIS have been welcomed and positive developments within the UK context which has been historically characterised by fragmentation and lack of co-ordination.

Crucially, the Apprenticeship Trailblazers approach has actively promoted peer learning among the key stakeholders, notably employers. To this end, several actors have attempted to formalise insights from the experiences of early Trailblazers and make them available for new Trailblazers as a source of peer learning. The Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (FISSS), for instance, has developed a toolkit for new Trailblazer groups. There are also suggestions that the networks established for the early Trailblazers are active in developing additional standards, taking advantage of their learning and the links established with a range of stakeholders.

However, Apprenticeship Trailblazers have inevitably also faced a number of challenges. For example, the evidence is unclear on whether increased employer ownership is enough to guarantee quality in the new apprenticeship standards. To date, despite the government’s argument’s that greater employer involvement in the design of apprenticeship standards will result in apprenticeships which will better provide for their needs, there is little direct evidence that the standards developed by the Trailblazers will be inherently of better quality than those they are replacing (Education Select Committee 2015).

At the same time, the delivery of apprenticeships which are not linked to any type of qualifications may incur a risk of leading to an excessive level of occupational specialisation for young people, with an excessive focus on job-specific skills which may not be necessarily suitable for the structure of an increasingly flexible and fluid labour market in which skills transferability is particularly important.
Moreover, as was pointed out by the academic interviewed the Trailblazers had missed an opportunity in not upgrading the nature of the work carried out by apprentices, notably those with Level 2 apprenticeships. Such apprentices currently work with little autonomy, but could potentially be given more responsible work, like apprentices in dual training system countries such as Austria and Germany, which tend not to have such low-level apprenticeships.

A risk involved in the current innovations in the apprenticeship framework also concerns whether employers will actually be able or willing to take ownership of the vocational skills system in the way which is envisaged in the Trailblazers model, or whether this will lead again to a non-standardised situations in which provision of apprenticeships will be of high quality in certain sectors with well-developed infrastructures of employer coordination, and more patchy in those in which coordination capacities are lower.

It also remains to be seen whether, despite the revamping and re-design of the institutional framework for the provision of apprenticeships, the demand side will actually hold up to expectations. Indeed, in a context of continued low aggregate macro-economic demand, employers’ willingness to create an adequate number of apprenticeship vacancies of sufficient quality will continue to be low unless interventions focus on the demand side as well. Demand considerations aside, there is also concern (voiced by some informants as well) about an inherent tension between the current policy aims of expanding the number of apprenticeship completions and the need to safeguard and even improve their quality. This, in turn, begs the question of the identified need for a more robust external verification of assessment outcomes.

As has been argued, although there is sufficient oversight of the assessment through which apprentices complete an apprenticeship, the model so far does not provide a method of assessing the quality of apprenticeship provision more generally across different standards (Education Select Committee 2015). Interestingly, according to one informant, UK employers had been reluctant to adopt the assessment model recommended by the Richards Review, which involves external assessment for the practical element of the apprentice’s skills, i.e. to allow assessors from other companies to examine their apprentices.

Moreover, the organic, open policy making approach (‘building the bridge as you walk across it’) adopted for the Apprenticeship Trailblazers is not without peril; it means that the mechanisms necessary to support developments are not established until it is realised that they are required. Indeed, there have already been instances where these mechanisms were either absent or inadequate with regard to Apprenticeship Trailblazers. For example, the BIS Relationship Managers have recognised the need to review the end-to-end process for Trailblazers by, inter alia, providing much clearer guidance for Trailblazers, joining up and simplifying the standards development, assessment development and delivery preparation processes, and developing the most efficient and
effective process possible (BIS, 2015). However, as the interim evaluation stressed, the ability of all stakeholders, notably employers and BIS, to manage a number of risks associated with the Apprenticeship Trailblazers (some of which were described above) and set up a structure and process that allows Trailblazers to truly take ownership of their development remains the key challenge to date.

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ANNEX 1

**Stakeholder Interviews**

With regard to the Apprenticeship Trailblazers, IES conducted interviews with four experts on the Apprenticeship Trailblazers: a civil servant who was involved in the design, implementation, and ongoing revision of the policy based on experiences from the early Trailblazers, as well as the provision of workshops where participating employers can engage in peer learning; a representative of a charity involved in influencing the policy’s design and implementation, and in providing financial support to early Trailblazers; a representative of an industry organisation that has created guidance materials for employers based on the experiences of the early Trailblazers; and an academic who provided evidence on international apprenticeship systems to the Richards Review, which influenced the development of the Trailblazers policy, as well as consulting the Department during the implementation process. A list of the interviewees is given in Table 3.1.1 Table below.
Table 3.1.1: List of Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Type of Interviewee</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>APPRENTICESHIP TRAILBLAZERS</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Hilary Steedman</td>
<td>Senior Research Fellow</td>
<td>London School of Economics (LSE), Centre for Economic Performance (CEP)</td>
<td>Expert on Apprenticeships (both UK and internationally)</td>
<td>16/9/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olly Newton</td>
<td>Apprenticeship Trailblazers Leader</td>
<td>Department for Business, Innovation &amp; Skills (BIS)</td>
<td>Policy Maker</td>
<td>8/10/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Sandford Smith</td>
<td>Director of Education Programmes</td>
<td>The Gatsby Foundation<a href="http://fisss.org/">21</a></td>
<td>Promoter of technical (STEM) apprenticeships</td>
<td>27/8/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YOUTH CONTRACT</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beverly Burgess (Youth Contract)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Department for Business, Innovation &amp; Skills (BIS)</td>
<td>Policy Maker</td>
<td>In process of arranging an interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Excell</td>
<td>Senior Policy Officer for Labour Marker Issues</td>
<td>Trade Union Congress (TUC)</td>
<td>Trade Union</td>
<td>1/10/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Smith</td>
<td>Labour market economist, CBI's Employment and Skills Directorate</td>
<td>Confederation of British Industry (CBI)</td>
<td>Employers' Association</td>
<td>In process of arranging an interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[21] The Gatsby Foundation has provided funding for higher-level apprenticeship standards in the STEM field. It has pursued an agenda of integrating professional registration processes into such apprenticeships. It has also provided funding for some (mainly early, STEM) Trailblazers to finance the facilitator role.

[22] The Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (FISSS, http://fisss.org/) represents, promotes and supports the 21 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) across the UK. SSCs are the employer-led skills organisations covering in total approximately 90 per cent of the UK workforce. They work with over 550,000 employers to define skills needs and skills standards in their industry, including apprenticeships. Utilising the experience of the early Apprenticeship Trailblazers, FISSS is offering resources to support employers with the development of their new Apprenticeship standards.
ANNEX 2

The central government and the devolved administrations have put strategies in place to increase the participation of NEETs as part of either the Work Programme and/or the Youth Contract. The different priorities, schemes, and approaches are as follows:

**England: Building Engagements, Building Futures (2011)**

England’s strategy had five priorities:

1. raising educational attainment;
2. helping partners provide effective support services;
3. incentivising employers to recruit young people;
4. “making work pay”; and
5. implementing a new Youth Contract.

Mechanisms to achieve educational attainment include improving apprenticeships and raising the participation age to 18, funding Level 2 and 3 qualifications, and engaging employers in training design to ensure qualifications are relevant to current labour market needs. On the employment side, the Work Programme and Youth Contract contain measures to support young people into work. An Innovation Fund was also established to help providers develop innovative solutions to problems of youth unemployment. Data sharing improvements and targeted support for particularly disadvantaged groups were also emphasised.

**Scotland: Opportunities for All (2012)**

Scotland’s scheme that more closely approximates the Youth Guarantee has the general aim of broadening the pathways and opportunities available for young people. The scheme outlines areas where improvements can be made, including in early identification of young people’s needs, more relevant training with good accreditation, and strong monitoring, delivery, and collaboration between all relevant stakeholders. Delivery mechanisms and partners include local authorities, a transitions policy framework, and data sharing agreements. There is a heavy focus on local partnerships, and emphasis on the role of local authorities and education and training providers in skills development. A slight diversion is that, alongside the Youth Contract’s Sector Based Work Academies – an employer-provided support mechanism offering training and work experience – Scotland operates its own Sector Based Skills Academies with a more pedagogical focus.

**Wales: Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (2013)**

Wales’ scheme looks to reduce the numbers of NEETs aged 16 to 18 and proportion of young people aged 19 to 24 who are NEET in Wales relative to the UK by 2017. Youth Contract-related similarities
in the Welsh system include greater devolution to local authorities, such as through local prospectuses and an understanding of local labour markets. The most at risk are given intensive support through a specialised worker, and Wales is the only constituent country of the UK to implement a Youth Guarantee. Local authorities, the Welsh government, and schools all have their own remits, as do two employability services (Careers Wales and the Youth Service). Wales also focuses on the usage of the Welsh language, and promotes that through the Youth Guarantee.

**Northern Ireland: Pathways to Success (2012)**
Largely in the same vein as the other home nations, Northern Ireland focuses on an integration of numerous sectors and providers in a locally tailored framework. An evaluation found positive feedback was common, and an overall positive impact from the mechanisms implemented (DELNI 2015). A NEET Advisory Group was praised, as was the evidence-based approach of the implementation. Weaker elements included reasonably poor contacts between support services and schools, fragmented employer engagement, and a lack of flexibility in programme design.
3.2 Netherlands – Brief country report
Ruud Muffels, Sonja Bekker and Marc van der Meer
Tilburg University

3.2.1 Introduction
In an earlier paper (Task WP 4.1) we extensively sketched the way national policies dealt with the rise in unemployment during the crisis and with the recommendations of the European Council of 22 April 2013 on the Youth Guarantee. We concluded that during the crisis the Government seems to be hesitant in creating new policies to combat unemployment and provide employment support to youngsters (Dekker et al. 2015a). Policy makers believed that youngsters regain employment quickly after the recovery will have set in. The few new policies they introduced are notably the regional action plans for youth unemployment, the sector plans to increase job-to-job mobility within the sector and the measures to reduce early school dropout rates. Due to shortage of employment in the crisis all these policies had in common that they aimed at extending the school period of youngsters to prevent them of becoming unemployed (Dekker et al. 2015b).

In this paper we highlight some ‘best practices’ of governance at regional level notably the plan for a youth unemployment free zone and the initiatives taken in the Amsterdam region to innovate VET practices (Dekker et al. 2015b). They constitute cases of innovative attempts of multi-level and public-private governance (multi-helix cooperation). The evidence reported in this summary paper stems from desk research and a large number of interviews held with stakeholders in the Mid-Brabant region and in the Amsterdam region during the first six months of 2015. We held interviews with stakeholders from government, education, societal organisations and business at regional level. We also held some interviews with representatives of the interest groups at national level.

3.2.2 Background: youngsters unemployment rate after the crisis
Below we depict the evolution of youth unemployment after the recovery set in during spring season in 2014. It seems that youth unemployment went down significantly from 14 per cent in the first quarter of 2014 to 12 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2014 and 11 per cent in the second quarter in 2015. The picture is however very different by education level. At the peak of the period (first quarter of 2014), for the low-skilled youngsters (with the lowest education) the unemployment rate was more than 2.5 times higher (18.5 per cent) than for the high skilled (7.4 per cent). In the second quarter of 2015 the unemployment rate went down for both, the high and low skilled, but without changing the relative gap (15.8 per cent against 5.9 per cent). The latest figures from the Central Agency for
Statistics (CBS) on youth unemployment for the third quarter of 2015 (not shown here) show that youth unemployment rates stabilised.

About two in three youngsters work in a temporary job and the majority of these jobs are jobs at the lower end of the occupational distribution with a relatively low pay. For youngsters, the Dutch labour market remained therefore highly segmented (dual labour market) after the crisis (Chung et al. 2012). Young school leavers who were not able to find a job during the crisis have to compete with younger cohorts of school leavers with better qualifications and of younger age (because of which being cheaper for the employer), which competition they might easily loose. Therefore, long-term unemployment among youngsters (for longer than 1 year) remained at a high level also in the recovery (Wilthagen et al. 2014).

Figure 3.2.1 Youth unemployment (15-25 yrs) by educational level, year quarters 2008-2015

Source: CBS data

3.2.3 Youth Guarantee: innovative approaches in two regions

The decentralisation of the implementation of the labour market, welfare and care services to the local communities in the Netherlands creates more room for innovation at the regional level. The various Action Plans on Youth Unemployment carried out since 2009 gave impetus to the local communities to innovate their practices. Much of these innovations were aimed at building bridges between unemployment and employment by creating opportunities for extending the school period or returning to school or by creating dual tracks of learning and training and building up of work experience. In various regions in the framework of the so-called sector plans, transfer and mobility centres were created to improve the mobility from work-to-work within a particular business sector. Fairly successful attempts to improve job-to-job mobility are to be found in the region Haaglanden (around
The Hague), the Ace project in West-Brabant and the Gelderland Labour Market Model (GAM) in the region Gelderland (Nijmegen, Arnhem, Amersfoort). Many of the innovative projects at regional level are however subsidy and project-based meaning that after a relatively short period the project halts without any security that the project will be eligible for a new round of funding. Only very few of these innovative examples therefore seemed to have been able to build up an innovative and sustainable approach. Two examples are the Youth Unemployment Free Zone initiative in the region Tilburg and the local education agenda set up in the Amsterdam. Below, we will provide some more detail (Bekker et al. 2015b).

(A) A Youth Unemployment Free Zone in Mid-Brabant (region around Tilburg)

In 2013 the initiative was launched in the region Mid-Brabant (with Tilburg as the centre community) to set up a new approach that is not project-based but partnership-based in the form of a so-called ‘triple or multi-helix’ (including the clients of services: youngsters) collaborative and sustainable approach. The idea was to commit the relevant stakeholders at regional level, such as the education sector, the government and the business sector to resolve the problem of youth unemployment in a sustainable way by aiming to attain a youth unemployment free region. The idea very much resembles the European initiative of a Youth Guarantee. The realisation of a Youth Unemployment Free Region should be attained in a period of 3 years from 2015 on to the mid of 2018.

Every youngster between 16 and 27 years of age should within 4 months after school leaving get a work offer, or an apprenticeship, traineeship or internship so as to be able to build up the appropriate skills and work experience and by doing so to improve their employability and to make a proper career. The ‘Triple or Multi Helix’ approach should warrant that the stakeholders are committed to this ambitious goal and will give their support to it. In March 2014 the regional stakeholders signed - in attendance of the Dutch Queen Maxima - the Pact of Brabant in which they committed themselves to do and support what is needed to create a region in which every youngster is provided – within a period of 4 months after school leaving - an opportunity to build up the skills needed to fulfil a job and/or to integrate in work and to build up a career. For that purpose a coalition agreement was signed between the political parties in the city of Tilburg represented in the coalition in the end of 2014 to put the Youth Unemployment (JWL) Free Zone high on the political agenda and to reserve budgets for its implementation.

(B) Research

The University of Tilburg has been asked to research and to monitor the experiment. The main focus in the research to date has been on acquiring insight into the barriers and triggers for achieving a youth guarantee for youngsters of 16 to 27 years old. However, because of the focus on policy
learning and policy transfer in WP4 of the STYLE project we decided to take that subject also on board. Stakeholders within the region might learn from each other but also from ‘best practices’ in other regions or even other countries. Part of the research consisted of interviews with stakeholders at regional level. In Mid-Brabant we interviewed: eight business people, nine aldermen and policy officers of the nine local communities, two representatives of the public employment service, one representative of the national institute for collaboration between education and business SBB, four representatives of the main school types at secondary and tertiary vocational level and the university, and two representatives of the welfare, safety and care sector. We also held interview sessions with five focus groups consisting of national and local representatives from the education sector, the business sector, the government, the welfare, safety and care sector and the youngsters themselves. At national level we held interviews with representatives of the Ministries of Education and Employment, the Centre of Industrial Relations of the Public Sector (CAOP), social partners (FNV, AWVN) and national bodies such as the council of the Netherlands Association of VET colleges (MBO-council) and the agency for collaboration between the vocational education sector and the employers (SBB).

(C) Youth Monitor

The broader research aim was also to build up a new regional statistic for the monitoring of youngsters within the education system and the labour market. It should enable to monitor ‘good’ and ‘bad’ transitions in education and the labour market. Youngsters are then followed when they move to another type of education, move to and between different kinds of work activities or when they become ‘invisible’ because of not being in education, training or employment (NEET). Such a Youth Monitor requires the linkage of individual administrative records being administered by the schools, the public employment office and the local community. Such a linkage is technically feasible in the Dutch situation but because of privacy regulations and restrictions difficult to realise. Therefore, instead of such an advanced monitoring system a more limited version was developed that was called a ‘youth dashboard’ and that was based on aggregated data; it provided insight on the youngsters’ labour market situation and the policy challenges to be tackled:

- Especially the large number of ‘invisible’ and ‘unreachable’ youngsters came out as an important finding. There were 2700 youngsters registered as unemployed in the region ‘Heart of Brabant’ but more than 2800 youngsters unemployed without a benefit and not in education, while not being registered at the unemployment office.

- A second conclusion was that about 60 per cent of the unemployed youth had no starting qualification, meaning that their education level is below the level employers demand as a minimum to employ them.

- A third conclusion was that the youth unemployment rate went down since 2014 but much less so for the low and intermediate skilled.
The research report has formed input for an implementation programme to be executed over the 3-year period (cf. Muffels et al. 2015). The project is unique in the Dutch context and appears to be an innovative approach to realise the Youth Guarantee, to which the Dutch national policy makers has committed themselves in Europe.

**D) Knowledge innovation in the Amsterdam region: the local education agenda**

Amsterdam serves as a contrasting case in the STYLE-project being a showcase for the policy innovations on the education part of the school to work transition, notably the role of the apprenticeship institutions. The Amsterdam area is larger and the labour market issues involved are perhaps more profound than those in Tilburg. Here various issues come together: a changing social-economic structure with a decline of industrial production (associated with a pressure on the number of apprentice-positions) and a rise of flexible service-related jobs (associated with a demand for higher skills and project-based organisation of work notably in the creative sectors), paralleled with ethnic and social-cultural issues resulting in elevated unemployment figures for second generation ethnic migrants. The lack of apprenticeships is one of the major issues in the Dutch debate on the school-to-work transitions. This is associated with the slow recovery and the rising flexibilisation of the labour market for which reason the number of regular job openings on the labour market for the new cohorts of youngsters is limited. Because of its bigger size, the numbers of youngsters in NEET are much larger in Amsterdam than in Tilburg and therefore the challenge to tackle the issue. For VET the new local government coalition defined ten ambitions, which all relate to an improvement of the quality of vocational education in the light of the future labour market and the changing skill demands with a view to the so-called 21st century skills (creativity, communication, learning; cf. Allen & van der Velden 2012). The question arises as to what extent such an innovative approach tunes or contrasts the opportunities for economic policy and the policy to fight youth unemployment, policies than have been relatively toothless to date.

**3.2.4 Youth unemployment free zone in Mid-Brabant**

The ideas brought up by the stakeholders in the interviews had to do with the two major transitions: from unemployment or inactivity to work and from education or school to work.

**A) Unemployment to work transitions**

One of the major outcomes of the interviews with the stakeholders was the role of intensive personal mediation and tailor-made approaches to guide youngsters from unemployment to work. The stakeholders made a strong plea for a preventive approach with job coaching or even a ‘guardian-
angel’ (solving youngsters’ social and psychological problems) during a traineeship or apprenticeship to prevent early exit and improve sustained employability especially with a view to vulnerable youngsters with little work experience and low skills. Also the youngsters themselves see personal and tailor-made mediation as a way to successfully integrate them in the labour market because they lack the information about the labour market and the available job opportunities. They expect from the authorities a pro-active approach in which they are offered employment opportunities in proper jobs through which they can build up their skills and make a career and family-life with a normal wage and sustained employment. All stakeholders also stress the importance of realistic expectations with a view to demanded skills at the side of employers as well as to the content of offered work and the career perspectives at the side of the youngsters. In the eyes of employers young workers often lack the basic employee skills like being on time, personal appearance, performing simple tasks properly, being in good physical and psychological conditions and willingness to work overtime, which they consider essential to be able to fulfil the job requirements even at the lowest job level. The stakeholders also stress the relevance of an integrated approach in which the multiple disadvantages and social and psychological problems youngsters face in the domains of work, health, housing, family conditions and security are jointly tackled. Such an integrated approach requires a community or neighbourhood-based program in which the various societal organisations in the domain of work, unemployment and social assistance, health, housing and social care work closely together to provide integrated services to the client.

(B) School-to-work transitions

The availability of internships and apprenticeships in firms and organisations even during the school period is considered a basic prerequisite for a successful school-to-work transition. Employers are recommended to join forces (e.g. through creating employment or employability pools) at regional level to offer sufficient opportunities to students to build up their skills and to prepare for a paid job. Employers themselves stress the need for more collaboration between education and the business sector to be able to organise a more flexible supply of vocational courses tuned to the specific demands of the employers. They also argue in favour of dual learning programs organised in collaboration with the education sector. Many stakeholders also point to the importance of providing adequate information on the labour market opportunities to students so as to allow them to make the right study choices and to better match supply and demand when they first enter the labour market. The government might contribute by relaxing the conditions for schooling during the time of receiving an unemployment, disability or social assistance benefit. All stakeholders agreed that a collaborative regional approach based on partnership and shared ownership might be a novel and better way to establish a Youth Guarantee than a project and subsidy based approach as traditionally been pursued.
The research findings were transformed into an implementation programme with four main lines and ten action lines. These four were the following:

- **Mobilising the region and the youngsters**: that is shifting the responsibility for solving the youth unemployment issue to the network of stakeholders and the youngsters themselves.
- **All youngsters in the picture**: that is to monitor and reach the 'unreachable' or invisible youngsters and to offer them integrated services through the support of a 'youth desk'.
- **Developing talent**: that is to inform youngsters on the labour market opportunities, to allow education while receiving a benefit, to create a flexible supply of courses in education and opportunities for youngsters also by offering dual forms of learning, internships and apprenticeships.
- **Creating employment security**: that is establishing pseudo workplaces, work-to-work mobility, make firms youth-proof, intensive mediation and tailor-made approaches, social job exchange offices and the creation of apprenticeship and flex pools.

### 3.2.5 Knowledge innovation in the Amsterdam region

In the metropolitan Amsterdam region a ‘Triple helix’- approach has been developed in recent years, under the auspices of the Amsterdam Economic Board in which companies, knowledge institutions, government and active citizens collaborate to innovate existing practices. The ambition is to become one of the three leading top-innovative regions in Europe in 2025. Five goals have been formulated to strive for:

- A circular economy
- A healthy population (two additional years of life expectancy)
- Data-driven innovation
- Emission-free mobility
- Talent development

The Amsterdam Economic Board has released a 'Monitor for the education and labour market in Amsterdam'. The report contains a lot of quantitative data on the current markets and focuses on the youth and the elderly (55+) (Cornelisz & van Klaveren, 2015). For our purpose we only refer to the outcomes for youth:

- Between 75-82 per cent of students who leave education in a particular year find a job at the 15th of November in that year.
- Students leaving VET have more difficulties to gain employment compared to other levels of education.
- About one in four 23 to 26 years old are currently unemployed or inactive.
- Most youngsters are not eligible to an unemployment benefit such as school-leavers and therefore are not registered at the employment office.
With a view to their employment the report distinguishes three age groups within youth (15-17, 18-22 and 23-26 years). The youngest two groups are mostly students or marginal workers who are employed in very small temporary jobs whereas the oldest age category is either working or seeking work in secure fulltime employment. The Amsterdam municipality has released a strategic policy report to tackle the current youth unemployment problem in 2015-2018 (Gemeente Amsterdam 2014). To strengthen the Amsterdam youth labour market the local government will focus on four aspects: to strengthen the efforts to help vulnerable youngsters into employment, to expand the opportunities for youngsters in the labour market, to align education to the demands of the labour market and to promote more collaboration between the various partners. Especially the last point is in line with the recommendation of the Noorda and van Dijk report (2014) to introduce Social Impact Bonds to establish public-private partnerships in the funding of ‘employment trajectories’ and therewith to create more efficient and equitable labour market policies.

(A) The emerging VET-agenda in Amsterdam

The unemployment rates are among the highest for the low educated youngsters. To address this problem properly, investments are needed in the vocational education and training system (MBO). The city of Amsterdam has developed ten ambitions to improve the quality of education, to prevent early school leaving and to enable a good school-to-work transition (Gemeente Amsterdam 2015). The key features of this agenda can be summarised as follows:

1. Improve the quality of education

(a) Invest in professional teachers and teams. Establish funds for scholarships for teachers and teams to enhance quality and professionalism.

(b) More attention for talent. The Amsterdam MBO-institutions want to address excellence, as they see opportunities in funding scholarships for talented students (Amsterdam Talent Grant). Talented students will be offered an internship abroad to develop their talents further.

2. Reduce early school leaving

(a) Non-attendance and failure are effectively reduced. However the decline of early school leaving has stagnated and additional funds are created to address this issue better.

(b) Investing in career orientation and guidance is important to enable a good study choice. The risk of dropping out of education is the highest in the transition between secondary school (VMBO) and VET (MBO). More emphasise is put on strengthening the career orientation and guidance and extra guidance is provided to youngsters with a high risk of dropping out during the summer and more guidance in the first 3 months after the transition to VET.

(c) The effort for vulnerable youths in education is strengthened. For youngsters without a starting
qualification facilities are created to enable them to find a proper job match. Examples of these facilities are education or job coaches and the continuation of previous efforts to establish specialised schools.

(d) The home situation will be more actively involved during the education period. The home situation operates as an important social network building resources for the educational career of students in VET. This social network will be activated through the organisation of information- and discussion evenings and by involving peers acting as student mentors during the internship.

3. Better alignment of the vocational education and training system to the labour market

(a) Provision of sufficient internships and apprenticeships of good quality. Students do not only learn practical knowledge but they also learn employee skills. Therefore, the two Amsterdam's ROCs (VET institutions) are provided with extra capacity, more internship brokers are appointed and 5 distinguished Amsterdam located companies will adopt VET.

(b) Youngsters are educated and supplied with the right vocational knowledge for entering the labour market. Youngsters get training in basic employee skills such as being on time and how to deal with rules and structure. Youngsters also need training to be able to adjust to the rapidly changing labour market. The supply of trainings for employee skills is enlarged; the municipality will develop, jointly with regional business, training in employment and in knowledge of the regional labour market. Moreover, an annually organised open day where business and VET students meet has been introduced.

(c) Youngsters are stimulated to continue education after their initial training. To be less vulnerable on the labour market it is important that youngsters invest more in training, especially in certain sectors. The idea is to have talks with all exam candidates about their future and further education. Also, the matching between supply and demand for apprenticeship vacancies (BBL-vacancies) is strengthened. An adequate supply of associate degrees is created so as to enable students to attain a higher level of education.

(d) Education needs to adjust to current changes and technological innovations. The labour market is continuously changing; this is why education and businesses must collaborate closely to improve the match between supply and demand. New forms of public-private collaboration are created; a care pact is launched and more options are established to assist former students to create a business start-up.

The municipality will invest 19 million euros into the various projects over a period of four years.
(B) Requirements for cooperation in the Amsterdam case

In the Amsterdam endeavour collaborative projects and new forms of cooperation and partnerships are to be established. Especially, when it comes to cross-cutting themes encompassing two or more policy domains (e.g. education and work), the demands or requirements for collaboration or cooperation are twofold (Smulders, Hoeve, van der Meer 2013):

- It requires the definition of a new mission and style of cooperation to connect the processes of learning and working. One example concerns workplace learning that is settled in Dutch law through school-based (BOL) and work-based learning (BBL). What is needed here is to define new collaborative ways of integrating youngsters in the labour market (inclusive labour market).

- It requires the deepening of the content of learning and working so as to improve the skill level of youngsters. This points to the role of prevention through reduction of early school leaving, making use of a backbone of labour market information, and a pro-active set of signalling indicators for the labour market of the future. Also new ideas are to be tried out, such as providing more supervision and coaching on the workplace and innovative ways of opening up new apprenticeships. The Amsterdam VET-agenda is trying to implement these novel ideas even though the backside of it also occurs, meaning that solutions are not always under hand reach. And as Kathleen Thelen reminds us: the losers (those without jobs, the NEET’s, the discouraged et cetera) never go away.

Also at regional level, as part of the triple helix approach, a further prioritisation of ambitions and goals is necessary. What does ‘work first’ and ‘schooling first’-approaches really mean? What kind of support at the workplace can be offered? Here misunderstandings occur about the meaning of school-based (BOL) and work-based (BBL) programmes for youngsters’ labour market prospects. The work-based route BBL offer many students a job in the company where they fulfil their apprenticeship, but in the current labour market context, VET-students are likely far better off with a school-based BOL-programme.

3.2.6 Tilburg and Amsterdam compared

The approach in both regional innovative practices is very similar. Both regions adopt a “Triple Helix” network approach in which government, employers and knowledge institutions set-up a network of stakeholders to design new practices and public-private partnerships to achieve fairly ambitious targets with respect to youth unemployment (Tilburg) and the development of talents of unemployed people (Amsterdam). In Amsterdam the network approach is very much initiated by a so-called “Economic Board” in which stakeholders (government, education, business) from various clusters of business sectors, such as Agri Food, Creative Industries, Financial business, ICT/e-science, Making Industries, etc., closely work together to establish public-private collaborative projects and partnerships to create new ways of (talent) development. There have been 60 cluster-meetings between March 2011 and September 2014 with more than 2000 visitors in total. The network is
further organised around four major themes: sustainability; Europe (to develop European focus and projects e.g. in the framework of Horizon 2020), International Talent (to set up a vacancy portal under I-Amsterdam with more than 9500 vacancies) and a Regional Plan for talent development (involving more than 8000 people).

Whereas Mid-Brabant tends to invest in collaborative actions and practices, Amsterdam tends to build-up network communities to set-up collaborative projects such as Make IT work (education of high-skilled unemployed youngsters for ICT jobs), Play2Work (on –and off line platform for young people with intermediate vocational training to improve self-confidence and self–management, MBO Excellence Amsterdam/Lelystad (to learn youngsters to create a start-up company) and Education House Installation Technology (a collaborative project between vocational education and business to train youngsters in installation technology). There are 54 projects set-up between its start in 2011 and September 2014.

**Policy learning**

With a view to policy learning, it appears that a new way of regional and multi-level governance is developing in the Netherlands in which regional partners collaborate from a “multi-helix”, multi-level perspective adopting in a particular way the “Brainport development model” that is primarily network - and project based. The Brainport development model has been elaborated in the late 1990s and early 2000s in the South-Eastern part of the Netherlands. The region is featured by a concentration of advanced businesses in the Making Industries (Philips, Holst Centre), the IT sector (ASML, NXP) and in the Automotive (DAF, VDL) sector and has won the “Smartest Region” Award in 2011. The Amsterdam model seems to have learned from this Brainport model that is featured by a project-oriented approach meaning that the firms and branches develop their own collaborative projects. It also deviates from that model because compared to the Brainport approach the Amsterdam model is heavily relying on network communities developing innovative projects, e-services and organizing cluster meetings within the various business sectors. The conditions for crossovers or innovative designs across sectors are however less easily met in the Amsterdam model because there is no infrastructure to pursue this. In the Brainport region there is “Brainport Development” and “Brainport Industries” creating the conditions for dialogue, interaction and alliances between the various branches and industries.

The Tilburg model is different from both models in that there is a similar infrastructure with Midpoint as the development organisation but one that is not staffed in the same way as Brainport Development is. The actions to be taken therefore heavily rely on the strength of the ties in the network itself and the energy organised with the partners to create new initiatives. The power of the Tilburg model which still needs to prove itself in the years to come is in combining existing initiatives in the network and to create added-value from what is already realised by aiming at the elaboration of
concerted actions by the network partners. In this way the Tilburg model is basically more bottom-up and network oriented than the Brainport model that is more top-down and project-oriented. The Tilburg model therefore also bears a risk of remaining a loose network with weak ties and lack of power to achieve its high ambitions of a youth unemployment free zone.

### 3.2.7. Conclusions and discussion

Youth unemployment is a complex problem without simple one-size fits all approaches. According to European statistics, youth unemployment in the Netherlands is at a relatively moderate level, but compared to before-crisis figures at a rather high level. Youth unemployment is concentrated among youngsters without a starting qualification and among ethnic minorities. A substantial number of youngsters, that is 66000, belong to the “NEET” (not employed, not in education or training) youngsters, but who are also not registered as unemployed (Ministry of SoZaWe 2015). The most important policy change in the Netherlands has been the decentralisation of the implementation of social policies from the national to the regional level. This may be attributed to retrenchment policies during the recent crisis in conjunction with the decentralisation of social-economic policy-making. It created more financial strain on the local community budgets and more need for cooperation and mutual learning between the stakeholders at local/regional level. The main contribution of the mutual learning approach is that organisations need to look beyond their normal repertoire of interventions and learn from each other. In some cases they must even change some of their standard operating procedures while searching for alternative solutions. ‘Problem solving’ is a core characteristic of this system where organisations are redefining their normative structure and search for a deeper understanding of the causal relation between VET investments and the matching of demand and supply of labour. The government is governing this process with budget incentives, e.g. subsidies for public-private partnerships, sector plans which are jointly submitted for funding by public and private organisations, and the like. One of the pitfalls is that monitoring is insufficiently guaranteed, whereas a learning by monitoring strategy is urgent and a critical condition for making the system learning. Here another pitfall occurs, since the Second Chamber of parliament urges the development of a rather narrow set of quantitative evaluation criteria whereby investments in collaborative initiatives are judged on the extent by which they yield a direct and sufficient financial return. This may lead to windfall effects and circular patterns of labour market influx and outflows.

**Experiments**

The challenges on youth unemployment have inspired local policy makers to initiate experiments and innovative local initiatives. One of these initiatives refer to realizing a youth guarantee plan (called a “Youth Unemployment Free Zone”) in the region Mid-Brabant in the Southern part of the Netherlands and innovative VET reform practices in the main capital Amsterdam. The emerging of a ‘Dutch triple
helix’ approach in various regions including the ones mentioned earlier, is at first sight promising since various actors start mutual conversations about the functioning of the labour market and how to improve policies to combat youth unemployment, which they consider difficult to resolve. We argue that these novel ways of ‘governance’ known as the ‘knowledge triangle’ or ‘triple or multi-helix’ (collaboration at local level between the public sphere, the knowledge institutions and the market) can receive common support among stakeholders at local level. This novel approach mirrors a shift with the classical way of governance that is project-oriented and subsidy-based and coupled to financial incentives into a network-based collaborative and more pro-active and preventive approach, that is conducive to innovative ‘best practices’.

Viewing the ideas developed in the two regions and the way they elaborated their own region specific network model, it is shown that all three models are different even though they are designed according to the Brainport model. The Brainport model which got a lot of media coverage in the last five years because of being awarded the “Smartest Region in the World”, has served as a model-case to be followed up in other regions even though in a different way. In this sense policy learning has been achieved in the two regions although in a different way. The results therefore highlight the way policy learning in the two regions has been achieved by partly mimicking the former successful showcase in the South-Eastern Brainport region and partly deviating from that ideal model by creating region-specific models that pay credit to the dissimilarities and specificities of the various labour market and demographic contexts.

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3.3 Denmark – Brief country report

Martin B. Carstensen, Department of Business and Politics, Copenhagen Business School
Christian Lyhne Ibsen, Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen

3.3.1 Introduction

The focus of this analysis is two-fold. First, we describe how the Youth Guarantee was implemented in Denmark through a summary of the different policy measures and their underlying aims as well as the aims of the most recent reforms. Second, we describe a new innovative apprenticeship programme in Danish VET, called Operation Apprenticeships, which has been launched by the main employer association, DI, to increase the uptake of apprentices in Denmark. We base the analysis on documents provided by various public authorities, primarily the Ministry of Employment, and on interviews with Lone Folmer Berthelsen (DI), Niels Trampe (DA), Anne Koefoed Ravn and Anders Bekhøj Hansen (both Ministry of Employment).

3.3.2 Youth Guarantee

The Danish government and Danish policies aimed at young people fulfil the Youth Guarantee that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed (EU Commission, 2013). The good-quality, concrete offer can be either a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education adapted to each individual need and situation. From a European perspective, the Youth Guarantee scheme covers youths until 25 years, whereas the Danish focus on youth employment exceeds to the age of 29 years. Accordingly, there are policy measures – that implement the Youth Guarantee – for 15-17-year olds and for 18-29-year olds, respectively.

Denmark has been a strong proponent for including apprenticeships in the Youth Guarantee at European level – especially the social partners at confederate level, that is, DA and LO, have pushed for this inclusion. Hereby, the Youth Guarantee to some extent came to mimic the Danish approach to fighting youth unemployment through dualist VET and the employer-centred approach to training. According to a DA-representative, Denmark – alongside other dual-training systems – thus became an example to follow because of the employer-relevant skill formation which apprenticeships give. The inclusion also made it easier to comply with the Youth Guarantee for Denmark.
Table 3.3.1 Measures for all 15-17-year olds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-17-year olds must be in education, employment or other agreed activity</td>
<td>15-17-years old are obliged to be in education, employment or another activity in accordance with their personal education plan. The activities shall aim at that the 15-17-year old sooner or later completes vocational or upper secondary education or gain foothold in the labour market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of 15-17-year olds readiness for education</td>
<td>When a young person is leaving primary and lower secondary education to vocational or upper secondary education, the Youth Guidance Centre (explained in detail below) must assess whether the young person possesses the necessary educational, personal and social skills. For young people, who are assessed to be still not ready for education, the municipality must provide training or whatever needed to qualify for a positive assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal provisions for the 15-17-year old</td>
<td>The municipalities must offer young people who are not ready for education special courses aiming at uncovering the interests and competencies of the young person and prepare him/her for education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Employment, 2014: 10

Table 3.3.2 Initiatives for 18-29 year olds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Measures include</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young people without an education</td>
<td>The aim is to get young people to complete vocational or further education.</td>
<td>ː The cash benefit reform: Early intervention and activation ː Initiative ‘Building Bridge to Education’ ː Reform of vocational education and training ː Youth Guidance Centres ː The Retention Taskforce ː Internship Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people with an education</td>
<td>For young people vocational or further education, the aim is to ease their transition into employment.</td>
<td>ː Trainee effort for graduates ː Wage subsidy jobs ː Enterprise training ː Job rotation ː Upgrading in connection with an employment ː Usefulness job (nyttejob)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people without the preconditions to begin and complete ordinary education</td>
<td>Young people without an education and without the preconditions to begin and complete an ordinary education, should be given the needed upgrading of skills to be able to obtain an ordinary education.</td>
<td>ː Better transitions to, and retention in VET ː We Need All Youngsters ː Youth Guidance Centres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Employment, 2014: 11

The initiatives for 18-20-year olds are based on careful screening and early intervention for young unemployed people. If the person already has ordinary education, he or she is placed in activation targeted at ordinary employment. If he or she does not have ordinary education, a screening will be done to determine with the person is ready for education. The result of the screening can either be 1) ‘clearly ready for an education’ or 2) ‘ready for education within one year’. For persons with these results, activation targeted at ordinary education will commence. For young persons that are 3) ‘ready...
for activation’, but not education, social policy measures from a holistic approach apply. This group figures in the lower row of table 2.

The most ‘innovative’ change in recent reforms pertain to the commitment of changing governments to make education beyond primary school mandatory for young unemployed. This move is to ensure that no young person will be ‘parked’ on passive benefits – be it cash benefits or unemployment insurance benefit – if he or she does not have an ordinary education. The early intervention and screening process becomes crucial in this regard and places the municipalities in a key role for ‘vetting’ the special needs the three different groups of young unemployed.

The most recent reform pushing this innovation is the Cash Benefit Reform (Kontanthjælpsreform) from 2013 (implemented 2014), which was supported by all political parties in parliament except the Unity List (Regeringen 2013). All young unemployed below 30 years, who receive cash benefit or education benefit (SU), will have their first interview in the municipal job centre within the first seven days from asking the job centre for support. Young people eligible for education help have the right to an educational activation no later than 1 month after asking for support. Young people eligible for cash benefit will also attend their interview in the job centre within the first seven days from asking the job centre for support. The unemployed is obliged to search for employment. If employment is not obtained within three months, the unemployed will be guided for a so-called ‘public-service job’ (nyttejob) for a maximum of 13 weeks. ‘Public-service jobs’ consist of work for the community, e.g. tidying waste in nature areas, care-work and litter-clearing. Alternatively, training at an enterprise or a wage subsidy job can be offered. The unemployed furthermore has the possibility to receive offers on upgrading of skills and qualifications.

With the Cash Benefit Reform, for vulnerable young people – typically in the ‘ready for activation’-group – are people with a range of challenge, focus has also been on a more holistic approach with closer cooperation between relevant stakeholders. Single parents and young mothers will receive additional support and assistance such as a coordinating caseworker and mentor support. Moreover, the reform introduces a strong focus on the basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills of young people without education, which are necessary for education and employment. The municipal job centre is obliged to test the young people for difficulties in this matter, and afterwards begin the necessary efforts towards upgrading the basic skills on reading, writing and calculating until a level of skills matching the level of skills after finishing primary school is obtained.

As seen in table 2, vocational education and training (VET) is an important entry point for the group of ‘ready for activation’ youths. Focus in the Vocational and Education reform of 2014 was on improving the retention rate of VET-programmes. However, since the reform of VET in 2014 introduced grade requirements for admission, it is still unclear what will happen to this group of young people without the preconditions to begin and complete ordinary education (Regeringen 2014). The Youth Guidance
Centres and the Production Schools have a large role to play for this group, but the transition of this group into VET is still unclear.

The Youth Guidance Centres oversee the young person’s compliance with their education plan. If a young person deviates from the plan, the Guidance Centre must contact them within 5 days of receiving this information, and the young person must receive an offer of an alternative activity within 30 days from the first contact. Monitoring of the youth’s activity is carried out via tax records and educational statuses in Danish register data, which is highly detailed.

A special project has been in force since 2011 which targets youths of ethnic minorities. We Need All Youngsters (WNAY) aims to increase the number of ethnic minority youth that begin and complete an upper secondary education. The initiative primarily focuses on deprived residential areas with large concentrations of ethnic minority youths from homes where parents have little or no education. WNAY has a special focus on the boys as they have a higher dropout rate than the national average.

3.3.3 Operation Apprenticeships – an innovative apprenticeship programme in Danish vocational education?

In March 2015, the Confederation of Danish Industry (DI) announced that it would launch a new programme seeking to raise the number of apprenticeships offered by Danish companies. The programme runs in the period March 2015-2017 and consists of four initiatives:

1) A DI in-house task force contacts 1,000 Danish companies via phone to urge them to create apprenticeships, as well as motivate companies that already have apprentices, to increase their numbers.

2) Help the vocational education programmes suffering from the biggest problems with a lack of apprenticeships by matching qualified students with relevant companies.

3) More broadly inform firms that are member of DI about the necessity of supporting Danish vocational education by offering apprenticeships.

4) Map the scope of the need for vocationally skilled labour in the Danish economy.

Operation Apprenticeship is thus a project that concerns both policy learning on part of DI (notably on how the current system matches the current skill demands among employer), knowledge dissemination and raising awareness among companies of the strategic necessity (on both a company- and societal level) of committing to offering apprenticeships. With its direct contact to 1000 member companies, it seeks to find out why companies are not taking apprentices, or why they are not taking more; it informs and guide companies about the various possibilities of taking on an apprentice; it surveys all member companies (10,000 in total) and follow up with focus group interviews. In all areas, work is on-going and results remain to be seen. The most recent figures for
signed apprenticeship agreements shows a rise in the number of apprenticeship agreements, but it does not indicate that members of DI have taken more apprentices than non-member companies.

The program seems to signify a significant shift in the organisation’s approach on the issue of a lack of apprenticeships in Danish vocational education – a shift that may over time lead to a more central and active role for Danish employers in the management of the vocational apprenticeship system. Apprenticeship contracts are voluntary between companies and students – and they still are – but DI signals that they want to promote apprenticeships with the programme. The debate on apprenticeships in Danish vocational education has long been characterised by polarisation with unions arguing that companies are not providing the necessary amount of apprenticeships and proposing ‘social clauses’ requiring private companies to take apprentices; and employer associations arguing, first, that the problem of a lack of apprenticeships is not that big (emphasizing instead how many students actually have an apprenticeship), and second that the lack of provision of apprenticeships has more to do with a lack of qualifications on part of students than a weak commitment by companies. It is also worth noting that it is not formally the responsibility of the social partners to raise the number of apprenticeships in Danish companies. Rather, it is the responsibility of the vocational schools and school based apprenticeship centres (Praktikcentre) to reach out to companies to increase the number of apprenticeships. However, with the creation of Operation Praktikplads (Operation Apprenticeship), DI acknowledged that more could be done to motivate companies to take on more apprentices, seeing it primarily as a problem of matching apprentices and companies, with the companies in many cases lacking knowledge about the opportunities related to taking on apprentices.

DI's effort to increase the number of apprenticeships is part of a more long-term effort to increase the popularity of vocational education among the Danish youth. Although DI maintains that many employers are taking responsibility in vocational education, the organisation believes that news stories about students in vocational programmes having difficulties finding an apprenticeships and thus being hindered in finishing their education have significantly hurt the popularity of vocational education, not least among parents who want a safe educational choice for their children. It is no coincidence that the branding of VET was high on the employer agenda during the recent 2014-reform. The Swiss VET-system was often hailed by employers to have a higher esteem that the Danish, but the reference to Switzerland did not form the basis for Operation Apprenticeship. During the last decade or so, employers have increasingly reneged on their commitment to the vocational education citing a lack of qualified students as a major problem. With the 2014-reform of vocational education – where the social partners insisted on and succeeded in having a grade requirements for vocational education implemented – DI is ready to take on a more pro-active role in persuading companies to take on apprentices. DI emphasises that Operation Apprenticeship is not a corporate
social responsibility programme. Rather, DI argues that it is both in the long-term interest of Danish companies to commit to vocational education, as well as in the long-term interest of individual companies to ensure that they have the necessary qualifications for their production.

Considering that the program was created in early 2015, it is still too early to gauge the results of Operation Apprenticeship. DI reports an increased awareness and appreciation among its member companies and sectoral employer associations that without a well-functioning vocational education system, Danish companies will lack a highly skilled labour force and face issues of increased wage pressure. Perhaps the most important implication of the initiative, however, is that although there is no formal change to the governance of the apprenticeship system in Danish vocational education, the case seems to signify a shift in Danish employer associations’ attitude to the issue of securing enough apprenticeships. The fundamental challenge facing actors in collective skill formation regimes is how companies can be persuaded to cooperate with one another to reap the joint gains from an improvement in the skill level of the workforce. Here the organisation of companies becomes crucial, because only when firms are able to trust that other companies will not poach the employees that they have invested industry-wide skills in, or in the first place shirk from their commitment to deliver general skills, will they lend support to a collective skill formation regime. Although the social partners have remained deeply embedded in the governance of vocational education in Denmark and committed to maintaining the specific approach of the Danish dual track-system, what is perceived among many employers as a declining quality of students has led to increased resistance among companies to take on apprentices. The more pro-active approach of DI might signal a growing commitment from the peak organisations to encourage employers to offer apprenticeships to vocational students, potentially paving the way for employer associations taking on a pro-active role than has traditionally been the case in Danish vocational education.

### 3.3.4 Conclusion

Denmark has – despite the comparatively low youth unemployment rate – implemented a range of measures that feed into the Youth Guarantee. The new measures are mainly focused on early intervention and screening of the youth’s individual need and situation and tailors the intervention accordingly. A large emphasis is placed on education for young persons without ordinary education, meaning that no young person can be placed on passive cash benefits or unemployment insurance benefits. As such, the reforms follow a path since the 1990s that favours active measures through a mix of education and work-first approaches to fight unemployment. The municipal job centres have a key role to play here as do the Youth Guidance Centres which oversee the activities of young people. A holistic approach consisting of heavy counselling and improvement of basic skills caters for the most vulnerable young people, However, the transition into ordinary education is not clear and a challenge when entry into VET-programs is now based on grade requirements. Specific measures
exist for young boys of ethnic minorities to ensure better education and integration into the labour market. In Denmark, the state and social partners regard the apprenticeship-based VET-system as crucial for labour market integration of young people. However, the uptake of apprentices by employers has for many years been sluggish. Operation Apprenticeships – launched by DI – is an innovative new campaign that targets DI’s member companies to take more apprentices and to realise the importance of doing so for getting highly skilled workers. The initiative can be seen as part of the recent VET-reform that aims to strengthen the image and quality of VET in Denmark. What is new is that DI – the most important employer association in Denmark – takes on a pro-active role.

Bibliography


4. Conclusion

Maria Petmesidou, Democritus University of Thrace
Maria C. González-Menéndez, University of Oviedo

In this concluding section, the main findings of the case studies are briefly discussed with regard to the three dimensions along which policy innovation is examined. Namely, in respect to: (a) any significant changes in the coordination/governance of policy promoting more or less structured forms of cooperation between actors at different levels of government and between major stakeholders, which can give a push to learning, transfer and experimentation; (b) any effective changes in the policy toolkit for reaching out to disadvantaged youth; and (c) the pathways of innovation underlying these policy programmes (more or less intentional policy learning, the role of domestic policy entrepreneurs, EU funding conditionality, etc.).

4.1 Innovative practices under the YG

Table 4.1 summarises the changes and innovations with regard to the policy strands of the YG (or similar scheme) in the two groups of countries. Greece, Spain and Slovakia face major challenges with regard to the effective coordination of the YG and the implementation of integrated and individually tailored services, at the national level. In these three countries, but also in Belgium and France, EU initiative and funding have been very important in formulating integrated interventions. Bottom-up innovative schemes targeting specific groups developed in some localities in Spain and Slovakia. However these are individual cases that have not so far triggered knowledge transfer to other government levels. In the UK and the Netherlands lessons drawing occurs mostly within the country (from previous schemes in the UK; from other regions in the Netherlands). Together with Denmark these latter countries influence EU initiatives in the area of youth policy.

In most countries, interventions with an innovative potential under the YG have developed in a devolved way. These are either project-based (e.g. in Slovakia, the “National Project ‘Community Centres’” developed under the YG as a tool for supporting vulnerable young people to improve soft skills for job searching, with a particular emphasis on the “Multifunctional Community Centre” addressed to Roma youth and operated by the Association of Young Roma); or partnership-based (e.g. the Pact signed among major stakeholders in the Mid-Brabant region, in South Netherlands, to develop interventions that are expected to lead to a “Youth Unemployment Free Zone” within a three-year time – from 2015 to 2018 ).

More specifically, among the Group A countries the Slovakian case of the above “Community Centres” shows how the failure of the coordinating agency of the YGIP to provide a standardised
framework for these Centres nationwide spurred local initiative. Bottom-up interventions, drawing upon the experience of key practitioners (e.g. the manager of the “Multifunctional Community Centre” examined), particularly their extensive work experience, in the past, in similar agencies abroad, in combination with the trust relations formed at the local level between the “Centres”, municipalities, and private employment agencies, constitute the incubators of learning and innovation.

Table 4.1 Summary of findings (YG)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A countries</th>
<th>Changes in governance</th>
<th>Changes in the policy toolkit</th>
<th>Pathways of policy innovation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>Major challenge: coordination at the national level</td>
<td>Major challenge: experimenting with individually tailored services</td>
<td>Bottom-up innovations targeting small groups (but no substantial knowledge transfer to other government levels).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>“Triple-helix” approach to governance and policy formation</td>
<td>Local collaborative, trust-based relationships</td>
<td>“Multifunctional Community Centres” incubators of learning and innovation (no substantial knowledge transfer to other government levels).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>Flanders has the lead in establishing partnerships with non-state actors; while the “Local Mission” of Forest, in the Brussels region, experimented with a bottom-up initiative for easing the STW transition of youngsters</td>
<td>Innovation linked to coordination of measures</td>
<td>Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>“Local Missions” and the “Pôles emploi”: hubs of wider partnerships at the local level</td>
<td>Lessons drawing from previous schemes</td>
<td>Important for local actors – The “Youth Contract” seen as a “good practice” by the EC</td>
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<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>“Local Missions” and the “Pôles emploi”: hubs of wider partnerships at the local level</td>
<td>Emulation/adaptation of the “Brainport development model”- Stakeholders within the region learn from each other but also from “good practices” in other regions / other countries</td>
<td>Important – But also “exporter” of “good practices”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>More joined-up and partnership working / payment by results</td>
<td>Local tailoring important, but collaboration in delivery assessed as “time and resource consuming” / reinvigoration of “job clubs”</td>
<td>Important for local actors – The “Youth Contract” seen as a “good practice” by the EC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>Changes in governance through the “multi-helix” approach (the Pact for a “Youth Unemployment Free Zone” in mid-Brabant)</td>
<td>Lessons drawing from previous schemes</td>
<td>Important for local actors – The “Youth Contract” seen as a “good practice” by the EC</td>
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<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>The Danish YG follows an active path that mixes education/training and work-first approaches in the context of holistic interventions New measures focused on early intervention and screening of the youth’s individual needs and situation so as to tailor intervention accordingly</td>
<td>Emulation/adaptation of the “Brainport development model”- Stakeholders within the region learn from each other but also from “good practices” in other regions / other countries</td>
<td>Exporter of the YG to the EU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Turkey is omitted because there is no scheme similar to the YG.

In Greece and Spain, as in Slovakia, nationwide implementation of the YG is beset with major deficiencies (in terms of system management, the centrally operated web application for registration in the programme is problematic in Spain, while such a central management is not fully in place in Greece). Equally lacking is a “structured” exchange of ideas and information among major stakeholders. However, contrary to Greece, devolution in Spain enables experimentation with innovative interventions targeted at young people. In the three cases studied in Spain, the Avilés, Gijón and Lugones areas, innovations in the service delivery and in the information and
communications systems (e.g. deployment of “street activators” in the case of Gijón and of focus groups in Lugones), as well as a timely and flexible response to the training needs of youth were recorded. Also the proximity of local agencies to the unemployed youth has facilitated the adoption of an individualised orientation and support to vulnerable youth. As to governance, multi-agent partnerships have been systematically involved at all stages (design, implementation, monitoring) of pilot interventions. But the pilot cases show that while formal partnerships may activate firms in some contexts (Gijón), in already dynamic settings may be thought as an unnecessary rigidity, if they were structurally imposed (Lugones).

In Greece, the YGIP has brought within a single plan (with some amendments) a number of separate measures for tackling youth unemployment already in place for some years: e.g. the Voucher Programme for Entry into the Labour Market, entrepreneurship programmes further developing actions such as the “Entrepreneurship Cells” (introduced in the late 2000s), support measures to young people for establishing social co-operative enterprises, and social security contributions subsidies to young people who decide to become self-employed. A significant innovation concerns the recent VET reform introducing a dual system, as a major component of the YGIP. Further to this reform whose implementation is still at an incipient stage, a major innovation challenge under the YGIP in Greece concerns the structural-organisational reforms of the Manpower Employment Organisation allowing for an integrated, personalised approach to be delivered in a joined-up way by the PES and other major stakeholders. This is a reform challenge that has been on the agenda for more than a decade, with little progress so far though. The “Voucher for Labour Market Entry” is the main strand of the YG that has been implemented. However, an evaluation carried out for its implementation in 2013-2014 (before the launching of the YG) indicates very poor outcomes regarding labour market integration of trainees: on average hirings among university graduate trainees across all size-groups of firms that provided training places was about 14 per cent, while the corresponding rate for trainees with less than tertiary education was even lower (about 7 per cent). Highly wanting have been support services under the “Voucher” programme (mentoring and supervision).

In France, the “Local Missions” and the “Pôle emploi” (the French PES) constitute the main institutions through which the central administration manages policy delivery. The capacity of “Local Missions” to play this role very much depends on their ability to form wide partnerships with various local stakeholders and promote intra and inter-regional cooperation. The engagement of social partners (including the trade unions, whose participation in local partnerships has so far has been limited), youth organisations, and relevant private and public employment service providers is key in easing STW transition for disadvantaged youth. Major strands of the YG (such as, for instance, the “Contrat d’Insertion dans la Vie Sociale”) target the NEETs via networked agencies. These provide integrated services for access to education and training opportunities by disadvantaged youth through
personalised coaching and intermediation with employers. Yet, as shown in the brief country report, a commitment to a Youth Guarantee tackles only a small part of unemployed young people and a comprehensive outreach strategy for all young NEETs is lacking. Hence, a crucial innovation challenge under the YG is the development of coordination mechanisms among diverse providers under the leadership of the “Local Missions” and the PES, which could facilitate such a comprehensive strategy.

In Belgium, initiative for policy innovation rests mostly with the relatively autonomous authorities, though there are significant differences as to the scope/space of innovation among the regions and language communities. Flanders has the lead in establishing partnerships with non-state actors; while the “Local Mission” of Forest, in the Brussels region, experimented with a bottom-up initiative for easing the STW transition of youngsters, that later on was expanded to other municipalities under the YG. Yet, there is no systematic exchange of information and experience among the relatively autonomous authorities that could facilitate learning.

Finally, in Turkey the on-the-job training programme (OJT) operated by the PES shares some similarities with the active path under the YG. The role of PES under this intervention is to mediate between employers and job seekers with the aim to promote young people with low skills into available training places in firms registered by the PES. The major aim is to improve skills and employability. However, an integrated, individualised orientation is lacking. The system operates in a highly centralised way with very deficient bottom-up and horizontal (e.g. among relevant Ministries) communication and exchange of information and experience. Moreover, the incidence of OJT in Turkey remains comparative low (only 29 per cent of firms provide training places), while low attendance and low completion rates indicate the poor quality of training. There is also a lack of systematic data on the age and gender constitution of trainees and respective outcomes with regard to labour market integration.

In the second group of countries, the UK case shows that devolved administration facilitates innovative localised practices and eases their spreading within and between regions. Devolved administrations (and local agencies) are also more prone to exchange knowledge on policy processes and tools among themselves and also get involved in EU-wide mutual policy learning, in contrast to central administration for which it is the OECD and the World Bank policy approaches, rather than those of the EU, that serve as inspiration for policy makers in the country. A high density of think tanks, research institutes and policy advocacy organisations and extensive use of pilots, trailblazers and other forms of policy experimentation contribute to the accumulation of evidence and knowledge on issues concerning youth unemployment and STW transitions. But, as shown in the brief country report, this accumulated knowledge is used mostly for fine-tuning policies rather than for strategic decisions.
In the case of the Netherlands, policy learning occurred through the emulation/adaptation of the so-called Brainport model that constitutes a partnership-based development strategy in the Brainport region (awarded the title of the “Smartest Region” in 2011) by forging the conditions for multiple cooperation strands and alliances between governmental authorities, research institutes and various branches of industry. The innovative element of the Pact for an “Unemployment Free Zone” in the Mid-Brabant region lies in the governance of integrated interventions for STW transitions along the lines of a “triple or multi helix approach” that implies the commitment of regional government, employers, knowledge institutions, youth associations and other regional/local stakeholders to closely cooperate in designing, implementing and monitoring policies (while political authorities commit themselves to provide resources for these interventions).

Denmark is considered an exporter of the YG to the EU, particularly regarding the incorporation into the EU-funded programme of a distinguishing element of the Danish Youth Guarantee commitment, namely the dual VET system and apprenticeship opportunities that closely match the skill requirements of the employers. The various strands of the Danish YG focus on an active path that mixes education/training and work-first approaches in the context of holistic interventions, which combine coaching and mentoring with the development of basic skills.

4.2 Innovative apprenticeship practices

In Spain, Greece and Slovakia recent legal reforms for systematically developing the dual VET system provided the trigger for policy learning, transfer and experimentation in specific regions or branches of industry (tourism in Greece and automotive industry in Slovakia). In Spain, experimentation at the regional level aiming at mobilizing the business sector participation in the dual training environment has been high. For instance, in Asturias, a regional government-led experimental pilot project merging two forms of dual professional education (VET and the Apprenticeship Labour Contract) into a single system for a limited number of students in a key industry (metal sector) resulted in the regional employers’ association of another industry (automotive) developing its own pilot project on similar lines.

In Greece, an experimental transfer of dual VET has been instigated in a top-down manner in the context of the German-Greek cooperation for developing dual VET in the country. This triggered domestic initiatives (domestic policy entrepreneurs, such as the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels and the Greek-German Chamber of Industry and Commerce), acting as “pull factors” of external stimuli and establishing experimental vocational education schools (combining class-based and work-based learning) in order to provide the right skills needed in the tourism industry. Close collaboration with employers is key in this experiment, which also attempts to improve the image of VET in the country.

In Slovakia, a collaborative initiative between the Automotive Industry Association, drawing upon the Austrian, German and Swiss dual VET systems was triggered by perceived shortages of skilled
labour force. The Automotive Industry Association played the role of “policy entrepreneur” in creating the first pilot centres in vocational schools in 2002 and push for a reform of the Slovak VET system in 2007 that strengthened dual education and training across vocational education institutions.

Table 4.2 Summary of findings (Apprenticeship Scheme)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Changes in governance</th>
<th>Changes in the structure and knowledge/pedagogic base of VET</th>
<th>Pathways of policy innovation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>“Triple-helix” approach to governance and policy formation</td>
<td>Flexible learning process – Integrated approach</td>
<td>Intentional policy learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>Experimentation in the tourism sector</td>
<td>Flexibility in course-based training so that apprenticeship schedules follow the seasonality of the tourism industry</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>Experimentation in different regions</td>
<td>Individualised learning pathway (Basque region)</td>
<td>Learning across regions (to some extent) – Mobilisation of employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>Experimentation in the automotive industry</td>
<td>New apprenticeship standards</td>
<td>Automotive Industry played the role of “policy entrepreneur” – Key actors drew upon their experience from other countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>The JEEP programme (Jeunes, école, emploi) bottom-up initiative in the Forest municipality of Brussels (network-based collaboration for providing guidance on training and career paths to young people before leaving compulsory education)</td>
<td>Diffusion to other municipalities</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>“Plural governance” of Second Chance Schools</td>
<td>Flexible learning process</td>
<td>The Marseille model diffused to other regions/localities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>The “Apprenticeship Trablazers”, a significant shift in the design and delivery of VET – New apprenticeship standards</td>
<td>On-going policy and peer learning</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>Coalition of key stakeholders in the Amsterdam region – Set vocational training in the context of an integrated system of service provision</td>
<td>Emulation/adaptation of the Brainport model</td>
<td>Stakeholders within the region learn from each other but also from “good practices” in other regions / other countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>The &quot;Operation Apprenticeship&quot; launched by the Confederation of Danish Industry</td>
<td>The emphasis is on matching skills to the needs of the industry</td>
<td>Peer-to-peer learning and exchange of knowledge with training institutions and other key stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Turkey is omitted because it is difficult to fit it into this scheme.

In Belgium, a local initiative with the aim to ease STW for vulnerable youth was studied: the JEEP (Jeune, école, emploi) programme that was introduced in the late 1990s by the “Local Mission” of the Forest municipality in the Brussels region. The programme targets young people before leaving compulsory education and provides guidance on training, job searching, opportunities in the social economy, etc. It started as a bottom-up initiative in the context of a network-based collaboration between local stakeholders under the coordination of the “Local Mission” to be later diffused to other municipalities in the same region (and in 2014 to become an element of the YG programme).
However, the fragmentation (and often overlapping) of policy competences among the relatively autonomous authorities (at the federal, regional, and language-community levels) limits opportunities of systematic peer-to-peer learning across jurisdictions and hampers innovation diffusion.

In France, the case study focused on “l’École de la deuxième chance” (E2C, “Second Opportunity School”). It briefly traced its origin in an EU initiative in the mid-1990s that triggered the pilot project in Marceilles in 1997. E2Cs operate as independent units that are locally embedded. Their experimental introduction, institutional recognition and further diffusion (as a “viral expansion”) is closely linked with the role of local policy entrepreneurs mobilising regional/local stakeholders from the political, economic/corporate and educational world to get involved in the design and operation of these new VET units, in the context of a “plural governance”. Moreover, joint working with the corporate world allows students to acquire work experience that eases entry into the labour market. A recent evaluation study (referred to in the brief country report) shows positive outcomes, as 60 per cent of the NEETs who successfully finish the programme yearly (in the about 45 E2Cs operating in the country) are either offered a job or access to further training. E2Cs are considered an effective innovation in the knowledge base of VET in the country. They signpost a significant shift in the learning methodology: from a qualification based approach (focusing on the delivery of a diploma, in the mainstream educational system) to the acquisition of competences in a flexible learning process following the student’s progression path. Overall, the E2C successful experiment and diffusion involves a combination of external triggers (EU initiatives) seized upon by local policy entrepreneurs (in the case of the Marseilles initial pilot) to push for an experimental introduction of significant changes in the governance and knowledge base of the VET system. Initially an incremental change (with effective outcomes), through their institutional recognition and diffusion the E2Cs have the potential of a radical change.

Finally, in Turkey, the case study highlighted the major barriers to policy learning across institutions, with regard to the VET system, and particularly the lack of communication between the Ministry of National Education, the Vocational Qualifications Authority and the regional/local stakeholders. Moreover, the absence of cooperation between policy institutions and the employers impacts negatively on the availability of apprenticeship places and the quality of training. VET is gender-biased, as it attracts mostly young males, and is addressed to those who are more ready for entering the labour market (e.g. University graduates).

In the three countries included in our Group B (Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK), it is the sluggish provision of apprenticeships as well as the need to adapt VET to the current and prospective skill demands of the corporate world that triggered novel practices. These significantly impacted upon the governance of the VET system by strengthening the role of employers in its design and implementation. In Denmark, further to a recent reform that introduced a grading requirement in vocational education, as an attempt to improve the image and quality of the system, the “Operation
Apprenticeship” by the Confederation of Danish Industry aims to strengthen the commitment of employers to offer apprenticeship places and promote dissemination of knowledge about the matching of skills to the needs of industry. This enhances peer-to-peer learning and exchange of knowledge with training institutions and other major stakeholders. Similarly in the UK, the “Apprenticeship Trailblazers” mobilise employers in collaboration with professional bodies and training providers to reconsider the design and delivery of vocational education and develop new apprenticeship standards for specific occupations in their respective sectors. As stressed in the brief country report, this implies a paradigm shift in vocational training, as it puts employers at the heart of the apprenticeship system. It involves ongoing policy learning among all involved stakeholders and particularly among employers. In the Netherlands, the case study focused on a coalition of local stakeholders in the Amsterdam region with the aim to set vocational training in the context of an integrated system of service provision that combines personalised coaching with support regarding health, housing, family conditions and labour market integration.

To conclude, the innovative interventions examined imply significant changes in terms of governance, policy formulation and content. In the first group of countries, the EU initiative for a Youth Guarantee and the European Alliance for Apprenticeship have fostered more or less structured networks and multi-agent partnerships conducive to (small scale) experimentation and innovation. This effect is clearly stronger in some regions/localities in Belgium, Spain and Slovakia, though a systematic transfer of knowledge to other levels of government is limited. In France, EU influence played a significant role in the establishment of the Second Chance Schools in the past. However, until recently these schools exemplify a significant innovation in VET governance and learning methodology vis-à-vis the mainstream educational system in the country. Lessons’ drawing (e.g. from previous domestic experience and in a fragmented way, most often in the case of the UK; through systematic interaction and feedback between different levels of government in Denmark; or through inspiration/emulation/adaptation of “model practices” – as is the “Brainport development model” in the Netherlands for the innovative initiatives in the Mid-Brabant and the Amsterdam regions) constitute major pathways of policy change and innovation. In the first group of countries (and particularly in Greece, Spain and Slovakia), change and innovation are closely conditioned by the aims of EU programmes incorporated into the funding conditionalities of the ESF and other EU financial instruments. These can change the domestic opportunity structure by opening windows of opportunity for domestic policy entrepreneurs to introduce change.

Many of the cases studied are at a pilot or experimental stage. Nevertheless their “innovativeness” consisting in the push for structured cooperation (mobilising the employers in collaboration with education/training providers, youth organisations and others) and in the shift towards more preventive, integrated practices may have long-lasting positive effects policy-wise. Needless to say,
there are significant differences among the eight EU-member countries examined here as to the extent to which policies aimed at young people fulfil the youth guarantee (of a good-quality offer of a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or further education, within 4 months of young people leaving formal education or becoming unemployed). Particularly among the countries of the first group, with comparatively high unemployment, this is a difficult to be achieved goal in the medium term.

Finally, in all eight countries, there is a close link between the commitment with a youth guarantee and an attempt – though of a different scale and level of success in each country - to strengthen the dual vocational training system, and particularly to actively involve employers.
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