

Barriers to and triggers of policy innovation and knowledge transfer in Spain

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Executive Summary

The report presents an exploratory analysis of the institutional aspects and social learning processes influencing exposure to new information, knowledge management and policy change in Spain regarding youth employment, training and welfare. Barriers to and triggers of policy innovation and knowledge transfer in the overall institutional governance architecture as well as in the specific areas of labour market, education and training, and welfare are of particular interest. The analysis presented is based on interview data obtained between mid-December 2014 and mid-February 2015.

Institutional rigidity and path dependency are two salient characteristics of policy change in the Spanish case, both likely derived from a strong administrative culture with little exposure to results' evaluation as the main barriers to innovation. Besides the policy inertia thus generated, the other structural barriers to innovation identified are: limited renewal of actors representing civil society; no incentives for active policy cross-learning among administrations; limited availability of funds for policies outside the script provided by the national government; lack of co-ordination between the education system and the employment policy system; and a political, not linked to results, competition between different levels of government for decision-making capacity. Thus, for instance, administrative ritualism and competition among levels of governance explains the failure of the policy information systems currently used to reach the young as to the Youth Guarantee.

While there are some instances of innovative behaviour at some regions and localities (in connection to information systems, profiling, appraisal of policies impact, youth guarantee pilot schemes and dual training), exhibiting better administrative co-ordination and social actors' co-operation, these processes are thought necessary but not sufficient conditions for innovation. Since the EU and the ESF are found to be the main motors of policy change in Spain, funds' conditionality to specific policy instruments, goals or appraisal is clearly a most powerful driver of innovation. However, it remains to be seen if any subsequent innovations and examples of policy transfer, for instance connected to the Youth Guarantee pilot projects, become actual improvements in policy once the funds are withdrawn.

Even though the impact of the Youth Guarantee in Spain is yet to be assessed, views are generally pessimistic. In the mix explaining these negative views, beyond the barriers highlighted above, a further argument appears prominent: the limited potential for addressing the employment and training problems of the youth in Spain of a scheme designed for countries institutionally and economically different (i.e. the Nordic ones). In essence, the EU design is found lacking in that, first, it is a framework ill-suited to tackle the urgent problem of the high proportion of low-skilled youth with a high risk of chronic underemployment, especially given their group characteristics (difficult to reach and to motivate to participate); and second, it is a framework that requires the business sector co-operation, itself a significant systemic challenge.

In fact, the low engagement of the business sector with youth employment and training policy was identified as a further structural obstacle to policy innovation and effectiveness in the study. The high presence of micro-firms in the Spanish economy, often ran by persons with low educational level themselves, may be mentioned as a further connected barrier to policy innovation and learning. In this type of organisation, with less capacity to obtain the institutional and financial support available for training, training is often seen simply as a too costly activity.

In any case, employability concerns are high in Spain and have been present in recent reforms of education strengthening the role of work experience. Much is particularly hoped of the new Dual Professional Training (the training contract is fully operational while the education branch entailing

traineeships in enterprises from the first day is in the pilot phase.) However, in regards to civil society, the conflicting views of the social actors on trainees' extant situation need be balanced. At the moment, this would imply tightening the control of the training contents and improving the quality of the mentoring at the organisations offering training placements, and a lower minimum wage for those under nineteen in training. Furthermore, the regulation of training contracts, dual training placements and grants is variegated and full of gaps as to the applicable labour legislation (such as health and safety, holidays, etc), creating multiple juridical situations at the same firm and a fear of social dumping among the staff.

A further current reform of the training system signifies a path shift towards life-long learning and tries to address a mismatch between training supply and firms' needs. The reform aims to improve the access to and the quality of the opportunities for training and life-long learning. As a consequence of some prominent corruption scandals, this reform also weakens the social actors' previously most prominent role on the implementation of training programmes.

Few of the policies affecting the youth have been considered a key issue for either tackling youth unemployment or easing STW transitions, with the partial exception of ALMPs and, to a much lesser extent, unemployment protection. When key actors are considered, the crisis has witnessed a clear impoverishment of the policy-making process due to the haste with which reforms had to be adopted: this has posed major barriers to dialogue and consensus building. Thus, decision-making has been restricted to governmental action in most policy domains. Hence, changes have tended to be largely based on transfer processes (or rather impositions or recommendations issued by the EU/Troika) than on learning ones. Last but not least, no relevant changes may be ascertained in the domain of welfare protection during the crisis. In any case, it is suggested that a consideration of the effort put by Spain in increasing the levels of youth access to tertiary education and of unemployment protection throughout the economic crisis may render the 'subprotective' comparative tag as somehow misleading in that it underplays the systemic concern about and the associated efforts to reduce the risks among the young in transition.

From the assessment of barriers to and enablers of policy innovation and learning carried out in this exploratory study some policy recommendations may be derived. In general, innovation and knowledge transfer may likely be fostered in Spain by creating a framework of funding that, first, allows for greater experimentation, since creative policy-making may be curtailed in the current system; second, that puts incentives for inter-administration collaboration since existing policy-making and policy-implementing epistemic knowledge communities are currently underplayed, even by its own members, as a result of centrifugal political forces; third, that increases the policy system accountability, implying an extensive assessment of policies by results, and regular reviews of the suitability of the policy performance indicators used, in order to increase effectiveness; fourth, that promotes the professionalization of employment agencies' staff as effective counsellors and match-makers; and fifth, that fosters a greater connection between education and employment policies and with the business sector, with a focus on employers' social responsibility in preventing social exclusion in the long-term, rather than on the capacity of the education system to respond to market demands in the short-term.

Key words:

Economic crisis; dual VET system; innovation; path dependence; policy learning/transfer, school-to-work transition; youth guarantee

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction.....	9
1.1	Aims and organisation of the report.....	9
1.2	Technical note.....	9
2.	Dynamics of policy change/innovation: the macro-level perspective	15
2.1	Governance and socio-economic structure.....	15
2.1.1	Structural obstacles and enablers of innovation	15
2.1.2	Aspects in the policy environment conducive to policy transfer	17
2.1.3	Role of a decentralised structure on promoting knowledge diffusion	18
2.1.4	Major socio-economic structural shifts reducing the number of jobs for young people, framing of the problem and solutions by major stakeholders.....	18
2.1.5	Polarisation of the skill employment structure: impact on youth employment.....	18
2.1.6	Relevance of an education-driven “supply-push”	19
2.2	The policy learning framework.....	19
2.2.1	Policy learning presence in the policy agenda	19
2.2.2	“Developers” & “facilitators” of innovation	20
2.2.3	Recent cases of policy development with a focus on STW transition.....	21
2.2.4	Main channels of policy diffusion from supranational bodies	21
2.2.5	Importance of peer-to-peer policy learning/transfer among social actors	22
2.2.6	Conditions that prevent or facilitate learning	22
2.2.7	Regions/localities differences in the innovative or learning ability	22
2.2.8	Major institutions involved in VET, STW, and youth labour market policies as effective “learning organisations”	23
2.2.9	Learning-driven instruments (or conduits of “knowledge” informing policy) within and across various levels of governance	23
2.2.10	“Negotiated” and “coercive” policy transfer/innovation	24
2.2.11	Cognitive obstacles to innovation among major actors regarding STW transitions and youth labour markets	24
2.3	Outputs from policy learning and policy change	25
3.	Policy change within and across institutions	26
3.1	Institutional structure of the labour market affecting policy change/innovation, particularly as to STW.....	26
3.1.1	Employment protection legislation (EPL)	26
3.1.2	Unemployment benefits.....	26
3.1.3	ALMPs	27
3.1.4	Labour contracts	27
3.1.5	Working time	28

3.1.6	Wage setting institutions	29
3.1.7	Minimum wage	29
3.1.8	Labour taxation	30
3.2	Institutional structure of VET and behind transition processes.....	31
3.2.1	Issues in the policy debate	31
3.2.2	Recent path-shifts	31
3.2.3	Incremental changes.....	32
3.2.4	Key actors in policy change / innovation.....	33
3.2.5	Strength of and changes in institutionalised links between VET institutions and the social partners	33
3.2.6	Change in the governance of VET.....	34
3.2.7	VET structure and qualifications connection to low-end job traps	34
3.2.8	Changes to the STW transition system logic	35
3.2.9	Flexibility and proactiveness of education and training systems	35
3.2.10	Employability concerns embeddedness.....	35
3.2.11	Presence of direct recruitment from education	35
3.2.12	Most urgent problems and barriers to more participation and achievement in education and training.....	35
3.3	Welfare policies	36
3.3.1	Description of safety net for young people at risk	36
3.3.2	Recent relevant changes.....	37
3.3.3	Innovations effectiveness	37
4.	Conclusion.....	38
5.	Bibliography.....	40
6.	Annex	41
6.1	Interviews' Questionnaire in English (translated)	41
6.2	Interviews' Questionnaire in Spanish.....	46
7.	Recent titles in this series	51
8.	Research Partners.....	56
9.	Advisory Groups	57

List of tables

Table 1 Pre-fieldwork assessment of barriers to and triggers of policy innovation and knowledge transfer in the institutional setting of Spain	10
Table 2 Part-time employment as a percentage of total employment by age	28
Table 3 Full-time employment as a percentage of total employment by age	28
Table 4 Temporary employees as a percentage of the total number of employees by age	28
Table 5 Average number of usual weekly hours worked in the main job (full-time) by age.....	29
Table 6 Average number of usual weekly hours worked on the main job (part-time) by age	29

Abbreviations

ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies
CVTS	Continuing Vocational Training Survey
EPL	Employment Protection Legislation
ESF	European Social Found
ESO	Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria (Compulsory Secondary Education)
FEDEA	Fundación de Estudios de Economía Aplicada (Applied Economy Studies Foundation)
FORCEM	Fundación para la formación continua (Foundation for the Continuing Training)
FP	Formación Profesional (Vocational Training)
LAB	Local Advisory Board
LOMCE	Ley Orgánica Para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa (Organic Law for the Improvement of the Quality of Education)
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
PES	Public Employment Services
PCPI	Programa de Cualificación Profesional Inicial (Initial Professional Qualification Program)
SEPEPA	Servicio Público de Empleo del Principado de Asturias (Asturias' Public Employment Services)
STW	School-to-work
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores (trade union)
VET	Vocational Education and Training

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and organisation of the report

The report presents an exploratory analysis of the institutional aspects and social learning processes influencing exposure to new information, knowledge management and policy change in Spain regarding youth employment, training and welfare. Barriers to and triggers of policy innovation and knowledge transfer in Spain are of particular interest. The methodology followed is explained in the next subsection.

The remainder of the report is organised as follows: first, the dynamics of policy change and learning are explored as to the overall governance and socio-economic framework. Second, we turn our focus to the same aspects regarding the specific areas of the labour market, VET, and welfare policies. Third, the main results of the study are presented in a concluding section.

1.2 Technical note

In 2014 an expert initial assessment was carried out by the Oviedo team of the barriers to and triggers of innovation in youth employment, education and training policies. The main results of this initial assessment are summarized in Table 1 and were greatly confirmed by the fieldwork carried out afterwards.

In a second phase, a total of eleven interviews were held with key experts, actors and stakeholders at national, regional, and local level, either in an independent capacity or representing public agencies and social actors. Thus we interviewed representatives of the national public employment service, of the regional public employment services of Asturias, Catalonia, and Madrid, and of the local public employment services of Gijón City Council. We also carried out interviews with three independent experts on employment policy, one based at the University of Salamanca, another at the FEDEA think-tank, and the third at a relevant tripartite national body. Finally, we also interviewed representatives from the main employers', trade unions and youth associations' federations at the national level. The interviews, carried out most often in person and some by telephone, were one hour long in average and took place between 17 December 2014 and 10 February 2015. At the same time, we also gathered relevant information at the first Local Advisory Board Meeting of the project, held on 4 December 2015, where regional representatives of both trade unions and the employers' federation were present.

The focus of the interviews was the identification of barriers in school to work transitions, paying special attention to innovation and policy transfer processes. The objective was to identify changes regarding youth employment policies that required innovations or which emerged from policy transfer processes. In addition, we tried to determine the effect of the institutional structure of the labour market on youth unemployment, as well as its impact on the changes and innovations in youth employment policies in Spain.

The questionnaire that was used as a guide in the interviews was always sent beforehand by email to the prospective interviewees. The questionnaire used in Spanish and its translation to English can be found in the Annex. Finally, we used MAXQDA 10 for the coding and qualitative analysis of the interviews.

Table 1 Pre-fieldwork assessment of barriers to and triggers of policy innovation and knowledge transfer in the institutional setting of Spain

Diagnostic	Triggers of innovation	Barriers
Labour market characteristics		
Regulation is national. Employment policies mostly regional	The majority of the changes are based on political views of the programmes, as opposed to evidence-based policy making	In terms of policy impact, follow-up procedures of evaluation are used. There is room for improving the appraisal of policy impact considerably, for instance, using control groups
Low geographical mobility	Economic crisis has led to wider diffusion of job opportunities in other countries. Policy: two-year reduction of the income tax base to those registered as unemployed that accept a job in another city	-Some regional specialisation of skills linked to industrial base - Residential pattern : preference to live in owned properties - Regional minimum income schemes : recipients must fulfil a residential condition - Internationally : unemployment benefit being nationally provided; within the EU lack of clarity as to tax and social security situation in fragmented work lives; foreign languages skills
Temporality as a universal pattern of transition	Successive reforms to increase flexibility that liberalized the use of fixed-term (or temporary) contracts since the 1980s, while leaving largely unchanged the legislation affecting open-ended (or permanent) contracts. Those reforms have modified all the items of temporary contracts (causality and costs of dismissals, mainly) and have encouraged open-ended contracts in all possible ways, modifying their protection only slightly, at least until the significant and most recent reform in 2013. The most innovative policy to address this problem has been the proposal to simplify de	The political debate about potential pros and cons of 'a single contract' has taken the form of a fight between an 'evidence-based' stance, represented by academic and experts from the pro side, and a 'normative' stance, represented by unions in the contra side, emphasising the risk of deterioration in employees rights and protection. Government and employers have a less enthusiastic response to the single contract.

Diagnostic	Triggers of innovation	Barriers
	<p>variety of labour contracts, with the main goal of reducing the duality of permanent and temporary ones. The core of this proposal has been that a new permanent contract, or 'single contract', should be the most common and normal type of labour contract, with increasing costs for firing by tenure.</p>	
<p>Low extension of part-time work and most of it involuntary</p>	<p>Successive reforms have tried to promote the use of part-time contracts without success: it remains unattractive for employers and workers (predominantly involuntary part-time work). Recent ruling of the European Court of Justice should make its regulation as to benefits more equitable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunistic use of part-time contracts by employers (hiding a full-time job). - Predominantly offered for low skilled jobs and also temporary.
<p>Low levels of self-employment among the young</p>	<p>Some recent programmes encourage transitions of young persons into self-employment. Most consist of financial subsidies to facilitate the start-up of the business. Support in subsequent steps of the business is scarce. They are targeted to the unemployed population as a whole, differentiating only in the amount of the subsidy. The lack of accurate targeting means that workers in greater need of support (for instance, young workers) have less probability of survival.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bureaucratic requirements to open a business: safety norms, branch-specific regulations, obligation to comply with multiple administrations' requirements, official waiting periods, and reduced time windows. - The non-productive costs that entrepreneurs must assume: land prices and electricity costs in particular. Policies aimed at reducing establishment costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single payment at present of future unemployment benefits to the unemployed who start a business (since 2002). - The recent 'entrepreneurial contract' introducing a flat Social Security rate for entrepreneurs under 30. <p>Both are shaped by the workings of the</p>

Diagnostic	Triggers of innovation	Barriers
		<p>administrations involved. It is often the case that conditionality for subsidies puts off the entrepreneur, who prefers to open the business without those funds, while escaping some of the norms involved – e.g. saving sales tax money when providers allow it, or making use of social networks instead of legal providers of services. Regarding the entrepreneurial contract, it may have helped to increase self-employment, at the expense of facilitating false entrepreneurship, since the reduced Social Security payments may promote the substitution of salaried contracts by commercial ones.</p>
Education & Training		
<p>Continuing/on-the-job training: an important deficit at SMEs</p>	<p>Public subsidies have acted as a trigger for firm or on-the-job training. Spain is one of the advanced economies where the perceived effect of subsidies appears to be largest, according to the European CVTS. It is unclear to what extent this should be interpreted as firms' dependency on government funding, or as the existence of an actual effect of public training subsidies on firm training activities.</p>	<p>Firm size, together with deficits in HRM among Spanish firms. The differences in training provision between SME and large firms are especially acute in Spain, as compared to other European countries. Most SMEs, especially the smaller ones, rely on external firms for HR-related activities, and this makes it more likely that they also subcontract training. Therefore, training is seen as a costly activity, rather than as an opportunity for skills development. There is room for policy development on measures that help extending firm training among SMEs, since the perceived influence of subsidies on training takes place mainly through large firms (despite efforts taken in the past 11 years in this respect).</p>

Diagnostic	Triggers of innovation	Barriers
<p>University: unnecessarily long tertiary education and a high proportion of degrees providing low professional skills</p>	<p>Bologna reform: Focusing more in learning capabilities and less in the transmission of information, new degrees should provide better quality graduates and an earlier entry to the labour market. Appraisal by employers of the Bologna cohorts would be interesting.</p>	<p>Reform may not have been as radical as intended because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The university governance system gives some actors, mainly university employees and regional authorities, a prominent role in the university governance in detriment of the role of other actors. - University funding is unconnected to performance indicators and provides little incentive for universities' specialisation and competition. - European-wide recognition of some studies still pending (e.g. engineering) - European mobility of students diminished by the crisis
<p>VET and Bachiller: a quality problem and a dropouts problem, with a general feeling that efforts undertaken by previous educational reforms as to promoting inclusive education have lowered average standards</p>	<p>Recognition that programmes to reduce school drop-outs needed to cover earlier phases such as 12-15 years old, and that there was a barrier to getting a degree before (between the ages of 15 and 25) if the basic one was not obtained at 15 (such as Garantía Social).</p> <p>Successive schemes aimed at preventing early dropout, i.e. Garantía Social (in the nineties), PCPIs (in the past decade), and the future FP básica. Apparently PCPIs have outperformed the old Garantía Social, partly because they allowed getting a degree (the second year in PCPI led to an ESO degree). However, the impact of the economic cycle, and the sharp rise of NEETs in the past decade, may make it difficult to assess this matter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The repeated changes introduced by different governments in the school curriculum. The last reform (LOMCE) even incurred in design problems. - VET is not attractive for students or their parents. Still stigmatised as being for 'bad students' even though insertion rates are high and, in the case of upper vocational training, they are similar to those of graduates - Geographical distribution of VET centres – less opportunities of easy access than to study academic track. In fact the greatest part of current growth in FP enrolment is taking the form of distance learning programmes. - No remuneration of VET students at firm placements

Diagnostic	Triggers of innovation	Barriers
		<p>- Inadequate orientation at compulsory secondary education on VET. It would also reduce drop outs at university.</p> <p>- Economic cycles tend to downward bias the perceived value of middle-level educational degrees, either by promoting the employment of unprepared youth in the booming years, or by promoting over-education of higher level graduates, at least in some sectors.</p>
Work-life balance	<p>Maternity, paternity and parental leaves all contemplated in legislation (latest Law on Equality 2010). Parental leaves possible for one year to regain same work position or for two to three years with reincorporation to a 'similar' work post.</p>	<p>Long-hours work culture - complying with the official workday would improve work-life balance considerably</p> <p>Scarcity of childcare services in and around the workplace. Childcare centres tend to be located in cities, and usually they are placed nearer to residential areas than to industrial centres or workplaces.</p> <p>Maternity leaves are remunerated (100% of previous salary) and so are daddy leaves. However, the latter are still very short and not widespread in comparative terms. Parental leaves are not remunerated; only social security contributions are paid by the state while on leave.</p>

2. Dynamics of policy change/innovation: the macro-level perspective

2.1 Governance and socio-economic structure

2.1.1 Structural obstacles and enablers of innovation

'Institutional rigidity' can be used to wrap up the several obstacles to innovation identified by the interviewees as to the architecture of policy design and change:

- *Not enough dialogue with civil society.* Introducing new agents in policy design (other than the social actors) seen as desirable. At the same time, it is found difficult to get the business sector to commit: this may explain the decision to introduce the chambers of commerce as a new agent in the Youth Guarantee.
- *Administrative culture:* Not enough long-term planning in public policies, they are administered rather than designed.
- *Intermediation services provided by the public employment services seen as inefficient.* Both expertise and technological resources are lacking. Public servants are not trained to be innovative and have little incentive to be.
- *There is no evaluation of policy impact.* Policy design is greatly inertial, generally proceeding on the basis of small addendums to previous policies, and never informed by previous policies' impact analyses.
- *Within country policy transfer across sub-national regions is limited at best.* No specific channels or spaces of communication are devoted to sharing good practices and success stories among regional governments. A programme on Exchange of Good Practices (Programa de Intercambio de Buenas Prácticas) is operative since early 2014 but information on which good practices have been selected is not available to the public. Even interest on other regions' policies and practices is limited, commonly arguing that there is little difference in practice. A history of competing with each other for the central government money has not helped. Thus, formal cross-fertilisation appears to be negligible, although informally policies from other regions may be looked at and even imitated, if not necessarily acknowledged.
- *Money.* In 2013, changes have been made both in the lines of action within which employment policies are framed and in the criteria of territorial distribution of resources.¹ The Sectorial Conference on Employment and Labour Affairs agreed on a new programming assessment and financing model, which is set to define a broad range of indicators for the measurement of goals' achievement, and financing is conditioned upon the meeting of these goals. Until 2014,

¹ Order ESS/2198/2013, dated 21 November 2013, with which subsidies in the labour area financed from the General State Budget are distributed territorially for their management by autonomous communities with assumed powers.

when conditional funding started, doing something distinct from that contemplated and budgeted by the central government programmes had to be financed from the regional budget, which explains the similarities in regional programmes and the low level of innovation in policy. Since then, regions enjoy more room for manoeuvre within the Annual Employment Plans.

- *There is no co-ordination between the education system and the employment policy system*, neither at national, regional or local level. In a context of high levels of school drop-outs and of high proportions of people with low qualifications, job mismatch is often present in terms of overqualification.
- *There is no profiling of the unemployed*, i.e. the development of an adequate policy design is hampered by the lack of knowledge as to the specific characteristics and employability of unemployed people. Besides, few policies tackle specifically the employment problems of the young. Relatedly, policy communication and information to the youth need improving. Yet, there is a lack of professionals specialised in providing policy information to this age group. In addition, no systematic information on the relative effectiveness of different ALMPs according to this profiles is available to case managers.
- *Policy inertia*. There is a tendency to make new things fit old casts.
- Excessive levels of sub-regional government make co-ordination of policies by regional governments difficult in the larger regions, where the national government also plays a role through province-level policy. Decentralisation of employment policies to local government is very limited. This has been seen as an obstacle to innovation by some interviewees not involved in government, particularly in connection to the Youth Guarantee. At the same time, strong criticisms to the central government's (institutionally innovative) management of the Youth Guarantee are pervasive.² For regional actors it is important to think of labour markets as regional. Yet, it is also possible that the decentralisation of employment policies to the regions may have fragmented the Spanish labour market and limited the geographical mobility within it, including that of policy makers and technicians, which could also limit innovation. An illustration: the attempts at building a common web portal for the whole territory bringing together all job openings managed by regional PES faced strong reluctance. Nonetheless, it could be argued that the culprit for labour market segmentation is not decentralization per se but rather lack of co-ordination among regions, due to the reluctance shown by some of them.

There is a perception that the economic crisis and the subsequent budgetary cuts paired with social pressure have fostered some policy innovation. At the same time, some institutional capacities and recent institutional changes were identified as enablers or potential enablers of innovation:

- *Money*. The European Union, through its policy funding, is the key agent identified as to policy transfer. It may also be fostering dynamism and innovation at all policy-making levels. The aforementioned new model of conditional funding of regions introduced in 2014 means that the annual funds distributed among them by the central government are now conditional on performance results (namely, 40% of funds in 2014; 60% in 2015; and 70% in 2016). However, no information on whether this new model is producing an impact for information is not available.

² People interviewed seemed to associate often policy innovation with effectiveness, rather than with policy change. Also, generally, when listing what could be considered incremental innovations they quickly question their innovative character.

- *There are attempts to collect and analyse more and better data*, which should improve decision-making processes and as a consequence strategy and policies' design.
- *The full liberalisation of employment intermediation services allowing private services firms to operate*. Managers of regional public employment services could and should become more professionalised as a consequence.
- *Policy evaluation is growing*, mostly as a consequence of EU funding conditions, which will foster learning and innovation.
- There are some European-level channels for transfer of best-practice, and the sub-national governance architecture of Spain provided by the Autonomous Communities could foster systematic cross-learning and innovation easily if oriented towards it. As informed by an interviewed central administration public official, so far, four sessions of the National Programme for Best Practice Exchange (created 2014) have already taken place, in particular devoted to profiling, advanced training, connection to business and a general conference with OECD participation on effectiveness of activation policies. There are also plans for the exchange of best practices within the Youth Guarantee domain.
- *Local level flexibility*. Local-level policies are often implemented with a use of profiling for tracking the needs of the unemployed (e.g. Barcelona, Gijón); public intermediaries can be more proactive at contacting local firms for job placements, and more supportive with paperwork.

2.1.2 Aspects in the policy environment conducive to policy transfer

First, social dialogue and social concertation, at the national and, where present, at regional level, can be conducive to policy transfer, as forums for economic management where employers, trade unions and governments share their knowledge, in two ways: first, within those forums themselves; and second, as knowledge generated there may spill-down via actors' participation in other forums and within their organisations.

Second, the Youth Guarantee has provided an instance of new framework for policy transfer across several levels of government. At the national level, the Operative Programme for Youth Employment calls the regional governments to present the best practice of the six pilot Youth Guarantee projects in Spain, in which local governments' agencies are particularly active. The national level can therefore be proactive as to fostering communication between regional policy makers. Local governments and regional governments can work together in other ways. An example is Valnalón, a co-ordinated effort between a regional and a local government to foster entrepreneurship among the young while re-industrialising a geographic area. This is also an instance of cross-fertilisation with education: they designed modules later introduced in the regional schools curricula. Regional governments are also innovating in regards to focusing on school early leavers, for instance with a School Workshop format combining obtaining a professional certificate while in a part-time contract.

Finally, there is certain interest in looking abroad for success stories too since several examples from other countries or international projects were mentioned in interviews, such as: the French Second Opportunity Schools, McKinsey's Training Programme (currently being piloted at Spain), the EU's Peer Review & Mutual Learning Program, and the OECD's programme for exchange of good practices. European projects were also pointed out as a source of best practice cross-national information.

2.1.3 Role of a decentralised structure on promoting knowledge diffusion

The Spanish decentralised system shows more evidence of clashing between levels of governance and of competition for competences among them than of co-ordination. While these inter-level clashes and competition could foster same-level of governance co-operation and diffusion of knowledge there is no strong evidence of it.

Local governments are generally perceived to be better at managing employment policies than other levels of government because their smaller populations of workers and firms make it easier to know their needs and to do follow ups. However, regional governments criticise the EU's direct transfers of knowledge to local levels because local governments lack channels to, in turn, transfer that knowledge to other levels of government. Furthermore, from the central government level the lack of channels and of disposition for sharing knowledge between the regions is observed as a limitation of the current institutional structure, oriented towards the higher level as to sharing information. The regional policy development system mirrored closely the national one thus reproducing the same problem as to local government, i.e. not fostering horizontal dialogue.

In sum, the decentralisation of the Spanish policy-making system did not put in place horizontal channels for communication and best practice exchange among same-level governments, and vertical communication from local governments to other levels of government is also limited as is in turn communication from regional to national government.

2.1.4 Major socio-economic structural shifts reducing the number of jobs for young people, framing of the problem and solutions by major stakeholders

While the costs of the reconversion of industry and agriculture in the 1980s and 1990s were socialised to a much greater extent than in the UK through early retirements and the like, Spain had since a high level of structural unemployment. Still, before the recession and with a record low level of unemployment (8%) simplified low-skilled jobs in construction, manufacturing and services for school drop-outs were abundant. The lack of young workers with middle skills and the high numbers of university graduates also created an overqualification job mismatch among the latter. In general, the main restriction on jobs for young people before the recession was on their quality more than on their number, due to the so-called Inter-Generational Pact by which young workers provided flexibility through temporary contracts while their parents remained protected from firing.

While it may not be desirable to return to the pre-recession low skill-low productivity productive model, the jobs-training mismatch, and the lack of mid-level skills in particular, is a greater worry of actors. Improving VET and the perception of it (a negative view of VET is pervasive in Spanish society), particularly by linking it to jobs, is thought to be a solution. It is also admitted to be very difficult to change. Furthermore, with the crisis many unemployed university graduates have turned to VET studies putting pressure in the system. One of the interviewees raised the question of whether access to studies that are not good portals to employment should be limited.

2.1.5 Polarisation of the skill employment structure: impact on youth employment

The skill job structure polarisation was not mentioned as a key problem by interviewees or LAB

members. Recent job destruction in Spain has affected mainly low-skilled workers. The impact of the crisis on the young has been severe but has been much bigger for those with a low level of education. The skills of the young in Spain are also polarised, with great numbers of low and high qualified, and a disproportionate low number of mid-level qualified. In practice, the latter is the greater worry, particularly in blue-collar jobs in manufacturing.

All interviewees referred to the Spanish labour market dualisation at some point, in attention to the high presence of short-term contracts, particularly among the young. Generally, the high temporality among the young is criticised as failing to provide a successful transition from school to work in so far as it does not guarantee staying in the labour market. A regional employment services director pointed out that temporality creates a continuous cycle of entry and exit of the labour market and that it damages in particular the more qualified who cannot update their training and get in a vicious circle of temporary jobs. National trade unions representatives complained that while the regulation of temporary contracts is very strict by OECD standards (it requires the work to be done to be temporary, for instance), in practice there is no supervision or penalties, and organisations use them fraudulently most of the time, for instance as a first contract. At the same time, employers criticised the lack of a lower minimum wage for the young, particularly when in training contracts.

2.1.6 Relevance of an education - driven “supply - push”

None of the interviewees signalled that there had been a policy to improve education as a way to improve the employability of the young per se. There have been changes in education and training (Bologna reform at university, Dual Training at VET, entrepreneurship contents in secondary education reform to foster equality) but it cannot be said that there has been a strategy around education to foster youth employment. In fact, the education system has been reformed too often in the past for any real strategy to be built. The text of the latest legal reform (LOMCE) clearly states its objective of improving employability. However, it is too soon to know whether it will render results and whether it will remain in place or it will be substituted by yet another reform.

However, all interviewees point to low levels of training and education among the young as a main cause of low employability. They often raised the need to adapt education and training to the new realities and needs of the labour market, and of a greater co-ordination between training and education and labour policies. At the same time, the difficulty to do this was sometimes acknowledged, particularly as to the speed of change in curricula and the available skills of trainers themselves.

In general, however, it can be said that the discourse in public debate is dominated by the supply-push effect and a general belief that investing in education and training is the only way forward for the Spanish economy. Whether this discourse has been more conducive to innovations such as the Dual Training programmes than the pressures placed by the recession is impossible to determine. More likely they have acted in combination. Also, due to a lack of evaluation of the impact of policy changes (in education or other areas) it is not possible to determine the impact of these very recent changes or of previous ones on STW transitions in general.

2.2 The policy learning framework

2.2.1 Policy learning presence in the policy agenda

Perception on the extent to which policy learning is part of the current political agenda in Spain

depends on the interlocutor: interviewees that are directly involved in the design and implementation of youth employment policy (professionals in local and regional administration) believe that policy learning is indeed present in current debates on (youth) employment policy; they remark that European Union funding and demands are a driver for learning and the implementation of new programmes, and that the increased importance of policy appraisal shows a greater willingness to learn.

On the other hand, some interviewees (trade unionists and Youth Councils representatives) point out that learning is not explicitly part of the political agenda on youth employment policies. For instance, Antonio González (UGT) argues that policy learning is not yet formalised, even if there are some current examples that show an increased degree of interest in policy learning. He mentions in particular the Spanish Strategy on Activation for Employment (which includes a public employment services best practice programme), the Strategy for Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment, and the Youth Guarantee pilot projects.

Miguel Ángel Malo (University of Salamanca) also notes the limited experience in youth employment policy learning: there is systematic knowledge of how to fulfill policy framework rules, but a lack of knowledge on the effectiveness of the programmes. The dominance of an administrative approach means strict application of legal rules, without emphasis on knowing the effects of the programmes implemented. He therefore stresses the need for evaluation in order to be able to develop effective learning, and identifies the EU and ESF as drivers of this learning, in that they require evaluation of the impact of funding programmes.

Enrique Hernández (Youth Council) also thinks that learning is not a central theme in youth employment policies. He argues that the implementation of the Youth Guarantee is an example of the fact that there is more learning and coordination with the EU than with the central government.

2.2.2 “Developers” & “facilitators” of innovation

If we understand “facilitators” of innovation as agents who contribute to innovation diffusion among the intended recipients of the innovation, the local context is the most frequently referred to by interviewees. In particular, interviewees highlight the role of local professionals that provide policy information to the youth, and of the local frameworks in fostering this. The town of Cáceres is mentioned as an example of good practice regarding its user-friendly website for accessing information. Interviewees pointed out the need to train and employ such professionals. The limited success so far of the Youth Guarantee may partly be explained by the lack of these professionals as channels of information and communication, which limited awareness of the programme and of how to participate in it among young people. While it should be noted that the Youth Guarantee is only starting to be developed (hence, it is soon to assess its impact), it is also true that a scarce number of youth enrolled through the web page managed by the central government, that no co-ordination with the instruments managed by SPEs was attempted, and that the electronic application is of no easy use for low-skilled youth. Also, lack of coordination between employment policy information systems is often mentioned as a fundamental barrier to the diffusion of innovation.

The developers, or actors initiating innovation, vary between regions and by level of government. In any case, a commonly identified pattern is that having a greater access to European funding for youth employment policies increases institutional capacity for innovation, particularly at the local level.

2.2.3 Recent cases of policy development with a focus on STW transition

The Youth Activation Agency of the Gijón local authority is a pilot programme funded 90% by the European Commission and 10% by the local authority, connected to the Youth Guarantee. The project has also involved the regional public employment service (SEPEPA), the regional education authorities, the regional employers' federation, the local Youth Council and the council of Gijón.

The Youth Activation Agency aims to perform very direct interventions with a specific group of young people. This involves a very individualised service: personalised advice, professional coaching, unpaid work experience in firms, and employment intermediation services. Thus, the specific characteristics – profiles, cvs, motivations, orientation to employment, etc - of individual young people are well known. At the same time, the Agency aims to obtain in-depth knowledge of the labour needs of businesses. The goal is to implement a programme that takes into account both the needs of the young, and those of businesses in the Gijón area.

The programme targets young people who are neither in employment nor in training, as requested by the Youth Guarantee. The EU stipulates that the policy be restricted to those under 25 years old, but given the characteristics of the Spanish labour market, the Gijón authority was given permission to widen the target group to those under 30. This can be considered an example of policy development. Further policy development can be seen in the decision to assess how effective policy would be by the recipient's level of qualification. To do this, it was decided that a third of the beneficiaries would be people with low levels of qualification, another third would have intermediate to high level VET, and another third with university degrees. Finally, two specialised tutors and advisors were trained and assigned to each of these groups.

In 2014 the budget covered the participation of 40 people in this project, although it was eventually widened to include 42. It was a complete success as to the participant's insertion in the labour market. The goal for 2015 is to extend the programme to 100 youth each semester.

The person responsible for the Agency sees the programme's success lying in very detailed knowledge of the young people and of the concrete needs of businesses. This allows a very effective and well-matched selection of individuals' and firms' profiles.

2.2.4 Main channels of policy diffusion from supranational bodies

When trying to assess the influence of supranational bodies and the fulfillment of their recommendations/suggestions, connected funding is the key factor to consider. In other words, those bodies that propose a policy innovation or change and attach funding to do it, with a greater or lesser degree of conditionality as to results, secure better implementation at all levels (local, regional, state). This is the case of the European Commission initiatives that also generally focus on very specific measures.

Bodies such as the OECD and the ILO, on the other hand, are generally taken to provide more general policy patterns that are considered effective in international comparison. Miguel Ángel Malo (University of Salamanca) says that their recommendations are "like a big lighthouse showing the way", particularly since they provide general guidelines for employment policy rather than specific policies. A recent example is the ILO recommendation to Spain of reforming the public employment services to better address youth and long-term unemployment. However, this has not happened yet,

given budgetary restrictions.

In this sense it is also worth mentioning the European Commission programmes such as the Mutual Learning Programme, that extend knowledge and understanding of specific policies that have had good results in a specific country and reflect on their applicability/transferability to another country. Thus, for instance, the Youth Guarantee in Spain is in fact a direct result of the availability of European funds. The requirements accompanying these funds generate innovation in youth policy in Spain.

2.2.5 Importance of peer-to-peer policy learning/transfer among social actors

Currently, the implementation of the Youth Guarantee and of the Dual Training are giving impulse to peer-to-peer policy learning, particularly between different levels of administration and in social concertation. Pilot projects are a good example of this. However, lack of formalisation makes it impossible to talk about peer-to-peer learning in a generalised manner. Recently, the national employers' federation has led the Dual Training (Dual-T) European project, focusing on the identification and transfer of best practice in dual training from countries with traditions in this domain. The goals of the project are to define the key aspects associated with dual training (selection of participant businesses, characteristics and role of tutors, businesses' training needs, and results of the dual training practices) and to compile examples of best practices. On the basis of the knowledge thus generated, pilot dual training projects will be carried out with 100 young people in Spain, Italy, and Romania. The results of this project will be used to elaborate a methodological guide for the implementation of Dual Training.

2.2.6 Conditions that prevent or facilitate learning

In general, obstacles to learning are also structural, and therefore similar to those affecting innovation and transfer of policies. Thus, a characteristic low level of innovation and the lack of institutionalised and standardised processes of evaluation are key factors driving the low level of learning among Spanish administrations.

Very little new knowledge is generated, because there are many barriers to innovation. A greater connection and coordination between employment policies and education policies is needed, as well as better knowledge of employer needs. Improvement in these two areas would link training to market needs, and to the needs of young people.

2.2.7 Regions/localities differences in the innovative or learning ability

While more innovative regions or localities may be identified (see below), they cannot be considered drivers of innovation so far, since there is no explicit process of institutionalised benchmarking that could foster imitation.

In general, interviewees point out that successful cases of innovation are dependent on high levels of knowledge of the labour market, based on direct and individualised contact with young people, and with employers. As one of the interviewees specifies, this could be summed up as "a more satisfactory labour market intermediation".

The local administration of the city of Barcelona provides an example of innovation in ALMPs, and the regional Catalan administration has also been identified as innovative, especially for its development

of profiling based on online tools. The region of Aragón has also been mentioned as innovative in youth employment policies, in having specialised VET tracks in professions linked to new technologies, thus adapting training to market needs.

Some interviewees also identified the Basque country as an innovative region in youth employment matters. Here, reference is often made to the high degree of multi-level governmental coordination. This coordination allows for greater cooperation between the many different agents involved in the implementation of youth employment policies, and for avoiding duplication, therefore achieving greater levels of effectiveness and efficiency.

Also, the Basque Country and Catalonia were the first regions to pilot a dual professional training programme in 2007-2008, although no evaluation of impact has been published. Madrid followed in 2011, and by 2014 all regions had a programme in place (Pint et al., 2014).

In the region of Asturias, the councils of Gijón and Avilés are singled out as innovative because of their carrying out policy impact evaluations for some years now. The Gijón representative interviewed remarked on the importance of innovation-oriented leaders in the administration. She also pointed to a certain path-dependency in the attitude towards innovation when mentioning that Gijón tends to innovate because there have been leaders showing a proclivity towards innovation and the structures have enabled the maintenance over time of an “innovative attitude”.

The town of Cáceres was mentioned as an example of employment policy innovation because of its employment portal and model of information. We may also consider innovative the regions implementing the Youth Guarantee pilot projects (Aragon, Asturias, Murcia, Galicia, and Valencia) in that they show a clear willingness to learn. In turn, the pilot projects, once evaluated, are expected to be positive experiences that will turn into innovation drivers, transferring experiences to other places.

Cities that are involved in cities networks of cooperation and in best practice programmes and the like are more inclined towards innovation. Regions where there is a greater degree of coordination between different levels of government also exhibit greater effectiveness in the implementation of innovation. However, multi-level coordination is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for innovation. It is also worth mentioning that many of the cities participating in the Youth Guarantee pilot programme have a manufacturing tradition; whether the greater proclivity to innovation in these cities is due to established networks of cooperation between the public and private sectors is a question for further research. Finally, given that funding is the most important driver of innovation, the levels of government receiving more funding for youth employment policies will also be those which develop a machinery more inclined towards learning.

2.2.8 Major institutions involved in VET, STW, and youth labour market policies as effective “learning organisations”

This is an emerging debate. Many institutions and bodies are beginning to take learning processes into account. However, it cannot be said that “learning organisations” are a characteristic of the Spanish institutional landscape.

2.2.9 Learning-driven instruments (or conduits of “knowledge” informing policy) within and across various levels of governance

A number of interviewees have signalled that the transfer of employment policy competencies from the state to the regions was a missed opportunity to institutionalise a framework for sharing

information and best practice between regions. The institutional logic created has, instead, rather centrifugal tendencies: each region looks mainly to central government, which in turn fails to provide formalised channels for regional policy exchange. Some specific channels that have appeared (mutual learning programme, and youth guarantee) have been driven by the EU. Although inspired on the European mutual learning programme, the Programme of Best Practices Exchange can be considered as nationally driven, designed and implemented. It is yet to be seen how able this attempt is to counteract centrifugal tendencies.

2.2.10 “Negotiated” and “coercive” policy transfer/innovation

First, social concertation and negotiation are possible at each level of government with the relevant social actors. Dual training in Asturias, for instance, is considered a successful result of regional social concertation.

Second, the twice a year meetings of the Conferencia Sectorial de Empleo y Asuntos Sectoriales is the main forum for negotiation between central and regional governments on the implementation of new policies, or of changes to existing policies, in employment policies. In practice, since employment policies’ design, such as active labour market policies, are a state competence, and their implementation is a regional competence, this mainly acts mostly as an information and consultation body. However, this forum is becoming increasingly important both for decision-making and for exchange of information among peers. Some examples of decisions taken here are the distribution of funds conditional to commonly adopted indicators, and the extension of the Youth Guarantee to those under 30 on April 2015.

Third, an example of Troika conditionality is the 2012 Labour Reform. The contents of the reform itself were nationally defined but pressures were present as to further flexibilisation of the labour market. The reform, added to a context of very high unemployment and extreme economic conditions, has likely contributed to the lowering of wages for new entrants to the labour market since at the same time as it may have improved the opportunities for the young to find employment.

Finally, the best examples of policy transfer with conditions are those financed by the European Social Fund. Generally ESF conditions are met, which often means some level of innovation as to policy goals or measures, and evaluation.

2.2.11 Cognitive obstacles to innovation among major actors regarding STW transitions and youth labour markets

The main cognitive obstacles to effective innovation among major actors regarding STW transitions and youth labour markets are threefold: first, an administrative culture dominates policy design and implementation, showing little appetite for strategic innovative or radical change; second, the lack of specialised training among the professionals of the public employment services; third, social actors have quite different perspectives on the obstacles to innovation, As an illustration, – while employers point to trade union reticence to having a lower minimum wage for the young as one of the main obstacles to what would be an effective youth employment policy, the trade unions think such policies’ only goal would be to lower labour costs.

2.3 Outputs from policy learning and policy change

This section focuses on considering any significant policy changes in STW transitions and youth labour market over the last few years that may be defined as: (i) Incremental, marginal adjustments; (ii) changes in policy instruments; (iii) changes that redeploy old institutions to new purposes; (iv) radical changes in the actual goals of policies.

The main recent policy changes in youth employment and training policies mentioned by interviewees are the Youth Guarantee and the Dual Professional Training. The impact of both cannot be yet fully assessed since they are either being implemented (Youth Guarantee) or partly at a piloting stage (the Educational component of Dual Professional Training VET). The use of the training contract (the other component of the Dual Professional Training in Spain) has doubled its use since the reform of Dual Professional Training in February 2012: this is salient when STW transitions are considered. The system of recognition of individual competences accredited by the labour authorities via Certificates of Professionalism was mentioned as a most relevant innovation by the LAB. Coordinating competence recognition with VET degrees is however a pending reform, delayed due to changing labour and educational regulations. The three of them (Youth Guarantee, Dual Professional Training, Certificates of Professionalism) can be said to present types (i), (ii) and (iii) of changes.

Next we summarise the main changes by type as identified in interviews:

Incremental change - Type (i) change are: introduction of private sector firms as training providers; increased importance of practical (vs. theoretical) training at VET through reform of the training contract; certification of narrower competences and by experience.

Instruments change - Type (ii): intensification of legal incentives/subsidies for the employment of young workers; in some regions, such as Madrid, Workshop Schools were abandoned as inefficient.

Re-orientation of institutions - Type (iii): legal changes (*Ley de Racionalización de las Administraciones Públicas*) establishing incompatibilities between levels of government has meant a stricter approach to policy implementation and forced local councils to search for the regional government approval of some of their youth employment programmes; recent budgetary restrictions meant local councils having to use some of their own budget in order to keep some ALMPs; the Youth Guarantee as a composite of previously existing measures (with the likely exception of the national job intermediation web page) has also been mentioned here.

No interviewee identified an example of radical change in policy goals - Type (iv) in Spain.

3. Policy change within and across institutions

3.1 Institutional structure of the labour market affecting policy change/innovation, particularly as to STW

At the beginning of 2015, all members of the Oviedo team were asked to fill in the table included in the Style questionnaire (see Annex) which constitutes a summary of this section. The objective was to obtain an initial assessment of both perceived relevance of and change in the policy areas included in it. The analysis of the interviews shows that interviewees responded with different levels of detail to the aforementioned table, but, in general, fieldwork confirmed the information previously gathered. Among interviewees, academic experts tended to be more prone and able to provide fully-fledged answers.

3.1.1 Employment protection legislation (EPL)

Changes have been both enacted (2010 and 2012 labour market reforms) and used in the domain of EPL in the last few years, but they were not necessarily aimed at promoting youth employment, albeit the 2012 explicitly refers to it in its declaration of motives. It is too early to assess their efficacy in this respect.

Key actors involved in reforms throughout the crisis include the central government, while change was driven from EU conditionality, especially in what regards the reduction of dismissals costs, rather than learning. Consensus could not be reached through collective concertation because of the opposition of trade unions (general strikes were called).

3.1.2 Unemployment benefits

Changes in the unemployment protection system have not been aimed specifically at promoting youth employment, rather reform was embedded in a more general strategy to activate beneficiaries of unemployment benefits (in particular, a reduction of the replacement rate of contributory unemployment transfers for the period starting after 6 months of unemployment was enacted in 2012) and greater conditionality (as regards access to unemployment subsidies). Furthermore, a 6-month unemployment subsidy amounting to 400€ per month was introduced at the onset of the crisis and renewed ever since, first as PRODI and from 2012 as PREPARA programme. This subsidy is aimed at those unemployed having exhausted all (contributory and non-contributory) unemployment transfers and it will be in place until the unemployment rate is reduced below 20%.

Change has been introduced also through the PREPARA programme (a system of bonuses established for private labour market intermediaries or temporary job placement firms that help in finding a job for the long-term unemployed who take part in a specific programme). This programme is not focused on young workers but it includes an activation component which was very much absent beforehand in unemployment protection schemes. It is too early to assess their efficacy in improving STW. Further, an Employment Activation Programme (*Programa de Activación para el Empleo*) was introduced in December 2014. It is run by the public sector and aimed at those unemployed with

family dependants. The duration is of six months and individual profiling and counselling is part of the activation actions.

This is a centralized policy and, therefore, key actors include the central government. Social concertation has had a role, for instance in what regards the 400€ extraordinary subsidy.

3.1.3 ALMPs

Innovation has taken place in this policy field, especially at the sub-national level, and ALMPs have been used to promote employment among the youth. Examples cited in the interviews include: fostering entrepreneurship (incentive reinforcement), agreements with professional associations to promote training (human capital investment), introduction of diagnostic mechanisms to elicit the needs of the unemployed (employment assistance), elaboration of itineraries to assign active policies (employment assistance), design of personalized measures (employment assistance), provision of special contracts by public administrations. However, changes remain unimplemented in many cases, especially in the domain of employment assistance.

Key actors involved comprise: central, regional and local governments (and, for the two latter, their public employment services), the social partners, some enterprises and also the EU through recommendations. Depending on the level of government and the region, social concertation has played a more or less intense role. Nonetheless, unions consider that social dialogue has constituted a very ample and intense process, while representatives of public employment services also confer great importance to collective negotiation during the last few years. In turn, employers find that further promotion of ALMPs and their evaluation is of crucial importance, provided regions will receive financing according to it, and they underscore the need to take into account the needs of firms in their design. Transfer may be detected as regards the introduction of private employment agencies. This particular change has been motivated by EU conditionality. Its impact is yet to be seen, while unions regard it as a decision with likely negative consequences.

3.1.4 Labour contracts

Innovation has taken place (2012 labour market reform) and changes in labour contracts have been used for employment promotion purposes among the youth. New types of contracts have been introduced, namely the so-called entrepreneur's contract and the renewed training contract (2012 reform) Yet, these contracts entail a move in the opposite direction to that indicated by existing evaluations, i.e. that new or renewed types of contracts should lack incentives to employment, such as social security deductions and exemptions. Changes in the mix of contracts has but been intense, with the exception of the fostering of part-time contracts.

Efficacy is yet unknown but there are signs of a positive impact. However, in many stances, follow-up actions are confused with effects and impact. Furthermore, some interviewees see renewed contracts (both job training and work experience ones) as conducive to more precariousness among the youth: more contracts but not an increased number of 'real' jobs (equivalent to full-time permanent jobs). Unions believe that there has been a de-regulation of work experience contracts and that such change bears the danger of allowing firms to benefit from them without providing much learning. Conversely, employers find that such contracts plague firms with rigidities, such as the need to appoint a tutor and to link training to the conditions imposed by the national system. Hence, they welcome the deductions coupled to them but they complain about the difficulties of the management involved.

Key actors involved include only the central government, while change was driven mainly by EU conditionality (for instance, fostering part-time contracts), rather than learning. Consensus with the social partners, though sought for, failed to be achieved through social concertation.

The following tables (2, 3 and 4) offer information on the labour contracts' mix among young workers:

Table 2 Part-time employment as a percentage of total employment by age

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
15 to 24	14,7	20,9	21,1	21,3	23,0	25,6	29,7	32,7	35,5	39,9
25 to 54	8,2	11,2	10,7	10,5	10,6	11,7	12,2	12,8	14,1	15,6
55 to 64	7,1	10,2	10,2	10,1	10,3	10,3	10,4	10,8	11,2	11,8
65+	19,5	35,5	31,4	31,3	29,3	30,5	28,0	26,7	27,6	29,6

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey).

Table 3 Full-time employment as a percentage of total employment by age

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
15 to 24	85,3	79,1	78,9	78,7	77,0	74,5	70,3	67,3	64,6	60,1
25 to 54	91,9	88,8	89,3	89,5	89,4	88,3	87,8	87,2	85,9	84,4
55 to 64	93,0	89,8	89,9	90,0	89,7	89,8	89,6	89,3	88,8	88,2
65+	80,5	64,5	68,6	68,7	70,7	69,5	72,0	73,3	72,4	70,4

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey).

Table 4 Temporary employees as a percentage of the total number of employees by age

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
15 to 24	65,6	66,2	65,9	62,7	59,1	55,7	58,4	61,1	62,2	64,6
25 to 54	31,4	32,2	33,0	30,8	28,8	25,5	25,1	26,1	24,4	24,3
55 to 64	14,3	15,6	16,4	15,4	14,2	12,0	11,8	11,7	11,2	11,2
65+	12,7	19,4	18,5	16,4	14,9	13,0	15,4	18,5	16,1	15,9

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey).

The tables show a sharp increase in part-time employment among the youth (15 to 24 years of age), which has almost doubled from the period right before the crisis to 2013. Conversely, full-time employment has decreased by almost 20 percentage points. Temporary employment decreased to reach a minimum in 2009 to then grow again and almost recover the levels of 2004.

3.1.5 Working time

If part-time contracts are considered, as well as the removal of restrictions to overtime work in these contracts, then changes in working hours have been introduced and used to promote employment among the youth. Nonetheless, take-up is mostly involuntary and no knowledge of their efficacy is yet available. Moreover, working time has been affected by the crisis through collective procedures for working time reductions and for employment (temporary) suspension. Employers see the 2012 labour

market reform as enhancing internal flexibility in this respect.

Key actors include the central government, and, seldom, the social partners (sometimes through collective bargaining), firms and public administrations. Neither learning nor transfer has been present, despite much public debate about German Kurtz Arbeit and other foreign formulas.

Tables 5 and 6 include data on the average number of usual weekly hours of work in the main job by age group. In the case of full-time jobs, the figures are very high. Part-time jobs show a sustained decreasing tendency in average working time from 2004 to 2013.

Table 5 Average number of usual weekly hours worked in the main job (full-time) by age

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
15 to 24	41,0	41,6	41,3	41,1	41,0	40,7	40,5	40,4	40,4	40,4
25 to 54	41,5	42,1	42,0	41,8	41,7	41,6	41,5	41,4	41,3	41,5
55 to 64	42,5	42,8	42,6	42,4	42,3	42,3	42,3	42,1	42,0	42,0
65+	42,4	44,1	45,5	44,8	44,1	44,0	43,9	44,9	44,6	45,1

Source: OECD.stat (Labour Force Survey).

Table 6 Average number of usual weekly hours worked on the main job (part-time) by age

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
15 to 24	17,5	16,6	16,8	16,7	17,0	16,6	16,3	16,4	16,1	15,8
25 to 54	18,3	18,4	18,4	18,5	18,6	18,5	18,4	18,5	17,9	17,8
55 to 64	17,1	16,4	16,3	16,5	16,6	16,4	16,4	16,7	16,3	16,3
65+	15,7	14,0	14,1	14,1	14,6	14,4	15,1	15,6	14,9	15,3

Source: OECD.stat (Labour Force Survey).

3.1.6 Wage setting institutions

Major changes have taken place, mainly in the hierarchy of collective agreements and as regards the linkage of salaries to productivity, but they have not been used to promote employment among the youth and their impact is not known as yet.

Changes have been produced by the central government, following EU recommendations, and social dialogue (to mention, the Social Partners Agreement of January 2012 but others have been signed during the past three years). The II National Agreement for Employment and Collective bargaining of January 2012 linked wage setting to economy-wide and firm performance. However, academic experts find that collective bargaining has become much more intense than prior to the crisis as wage setting is concerned.

3.1.7 Minimum wage

Spain has had a one and only minimum wage for more than one decade now. There used to be a specific wage for young people under 18, lower than the general one, which grew gradually on a yearly basis. However, in 1990, the wage for 16 year-olds was equated to that of 17 year-olds, and later on, in 1998, the whole arrangement was ended.

No changes have taken place in recent years other than the positive implications of its nominal

stability. Another positive aspect, as understood by academic experts, is the reduction of inequality from below.

The minimum wage is the same for all workers, irrespective of age and also of region. Its level is decided by the central government around the time when the budget is presented to Parliament. There is not a specific course of action to negotiate this matter. The process of determining the minimum wage is part of the general budgetary procedures, which may entail political negotiations whenever the ruling party has no absolute majority in the Spanish Parliament.

3.1.8 Labour taxation

Change has taken place as regards taxation on income, affecting low salaries, but no real innovation. The central government was responsible for this change with no role for collective concertation. Learning/transfer may not be ascertained.

However, a decrease in the rate of employers' social security contributions when employing young workers has occurred (including both social security deductions and fiscal discounts). Academic experts point out that there was an abandonment of the strategy of lowering the rates of employer's social security contribution at the beginning of the crisis given that evaluations at the macro level showed their total lack of usefulness to promote employment and show their surprise for the reformulation of them in 2012. This may be interpreted as a backlash in learning processes. Conversely, the government claims that only a handful were saved, in particular those aimed at young and disabled people and that this decision was grounded on the advice of the National Evaluation Agency of Public Policies and Quality of Public Services.

To sum up, none of these policies, with the partial exception of ALMPs and, to a much lesser extent, unemployment protection, present a distinctive character in its targeting youth unemployment or easing STW transitions. As one of the academic experts interviewed points out, this may be due to the fact that unemployment is such a huge and general problem in Spain that it is not surprising that worries fail to focus on the youth, even those most disadvantaged. The existing inter-generational pact would also provide an explanation for the lack of attention to STW transitions. Furthermore, academic experts also point out the reduced capacity of the youth to exert political pressure due to their low and decreasing numbers and to their pretty spread apolitical attitudes. However, these explanations lose sight of the fact that the young population and, especially, households headed by young people with dependants, have been hit by the crisis more severely than many other social groups and types of households, obliging them to resort to family and/or social protection policies.

As actors are concerned, the crisis has witnessed a clear shift of focus of the policy-making process since May 2010, when EU conditionality/recommendations/influence began to be applied, and, especially since 2012, when it reached its highest point and the haste with which reforms had to be adopted impeded any kind of dialogue or consensus building. Thus, in most of the policy domains analyzed above, decision-making has been restricted to governmental action, while the role of parliaments, organized interests and other civil society actors has been minimized. Consequently, changes have tended to be largely based on transfer processes (or rather recommendations issued by the EU/Troika) than on learning ones. It is true, as well, that institutional arrangements do not tend to favour learning, as already noted in section II above. Furthermore, academic experts claim that transfers are enacted because they come from Europe, because they have worked well in other member states but without a realization that the policy itself cannot be successful without transferring as well the conditions that allowed for such a result.

3.2 Institutional structure of VET and behind transition processes

3.2.1 Issues in the policy debate

Training is very much present in current policy debate since the Government began working on a new reform, namely that of the reformulation of training contracts and the change in the educational aspect of VET (this latter in a pilot phase at present). There have been other attempts at reforming VET in recent years although all without success. While the debate on the effectiveness of VET in helping unemployed workers return to work is long-standing, recent corruption scandals in the management of training funds in some regions, in the view of many, have driven the Government to accelerate the reform of the current training system.

One of the main issues is the role of trade unions and employers' associations in the system. Since 1993, social actors participate in all stages of the policy process, from design to implementation. Also, a substantive proportion of the budget for training is set aside for social actors to manage as to its implementation. The idea was that employers and unions were the agents best placed to determine the training needs of workers (employed and unemployed) in an industry by industry basis.

The reform reduces the role of social actors in the system of governance and in their access to funding. In terms of governance, a renovation of the institutions that manage training is envisaged, and future norms will decide the role of social actors in terms of training planning and dissemination. In terms of funding, there will not be a part of the budget set aside for social actors. All training centres will have to apply in a competitive procedure for the budget to training. If trade unions and employers' associations would like to participate as training centres, they will have to compete with the rest of centres. As a consequence, trade unions and employers' associations opposed the proposed reform. Nonetheless, it was adopted in March 2015 (Royal Decree-Law 4/2015, 22 March).

The low impact of training on the employability of workers has also been a topic of debate. Thus, in 2013 results and funding were connected for the first time: that year the Sectorial Conference on Employment and Labour Affairs agreed to a new model of assessment and financing by which 40% of ALMPs funds were to be assigned based on the degree of fulfilment of some indicators. The proportion of funds linked to impact assessment will continue to increase and reach 70% in 2016.

A third important issue in the debate is the integration of the lifelong learning perspective in the training system. The current training system operates under the design of training for unemployed and for employed workers as separate types. The reform removes the distinction and considers a single supply of training for workers (employed or unemployed).

3.2.2 Recent path-shifts

Reforms of training have incrementally increased the integration of training for unemployed and employed workers. Before 1993, training was oriented to unemployed individuals, with training for employed workers playing a residual role. From 1993, new institutions result of social concertation were created to encourage employed workers training (first FORCEM and in 2001 the Tripartite Foundation for Training in Employment; both were merged in 2004 under the latter's name), and successive reforms proceeded in the direction of integrating training for employed and for unemployed individuals, although with little effect. It was in 2007, with the Royal Decree 395/2007, that both types training were integrated in a single model of vocational training, which is the system

now being reformed.

There are three basic types of training:

Demand training: company training and individual training permits. In this case, the companies have the initiative to organise training, which is financed through a rebate system on the Social Security payments made by workers and companies.

Offer training: training promoted by public administration, social stakeholders or social entities, and private collaborators, subsidised by the Autonomous PES. These activities include training activities for the unemployed, activities with an employment commitment, training plans for employed workers, and specific programmes for persons with special training needs or with difficulties in integration or qualifications.

Traineeship: training activities included in the formation contracts and public programmes of occupational training where workers can link training activities with professional experience in the workplace. These activities are basically Workshop Schools, craft centres, and employment workshops.

The reform implies a new approach in that no division is established between demand and supply training. Instead, the focus is on training for workers with a lifelong learning perspective. In brief, a path shift towards the full integration of training for employed and unemployed workers is currently in the making, even if the steps in that direction were initiated in the 1990s.

3.2.3 Incremental changes

Incremental changes through recent reforms aim to improve the links between education and labour market in vocational education. First, the dual professional training increases the weight of work experience during the educational stage. The Royal Decree 1529/2012 regulates this scheme, which is yet to be fully implemented. One of the main changes introduced by this decree is the possibility that students enrolled in the dual system follow it entirely at private firms. It is not a radical change: in the previous VET system, there was a compulsory three-month in-work apprenticeship period. That system faced difficulties in finding firms that would take the students. Whether the dual professional training will meet greater co-operation from employers remains to be seen.

Second, an ongoing reform is the coordination of VET degrees designed by the education authorities with the system of recognition of individual competences accredited by the labour authorities. The recognition of competences is made via Certificates of Professionalism, which were designed by the national labour authorities (RD 34/2008) in keeping with the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications (RD 1128/2003). The objective of coordinating competence recognition with VET degrees dates back to 2002 at the least (Act 5/2002). This is a key issue for young people who may have left the educational system early and that could get some official recognition of skills acquired at work. It is also important regarding a desired increase of labour mobility in Spain. However, the difficulties encountered in this coordination by changing labour and educational regulations make it a complex subject, and delay the achievement of an important goal. To make it more intricate, Certificates of Professionalism, designed by the national authorities, are nevertheless issued by the regional authorities.

Third, educational reforms and training reforms aim to improve the bridges between general education and vocational learning. The Certificates of Professionalism can help to obtain an educational certificate through the recognition of modules.

In brief, the overall trend in reforms concerning vocational education is towards strengthening the links with firms in terms of work experience.

3.2.4 Key actors in policy change / innovation

Non-formal training for employment is one of the three pillars of professional education, together with unofficial professional training and university education. Its unofficial nature means that it is included within the ALMPs in the PES competence framework. However, its closeness to formal education makes coordination with it necessary, and in some occasions, it has been the remit of the Education Council rather than of the PES.

Law 56/2003 on Employment is the main regulatory framework of ALMPs, as it organises their decentralisation framework and defends the need to establish and define the collaboration and cooperation mechanisms with the PES of the regions. The process of transferring powers began in 1991 and was completed in 2010. Certain regions had all prerogatives transferred in 1997, while others only recently acquired them. As the decentralisation process has followed different schedules, the experience and the know-how of each region are different, which to some extent has resulted in a variegated implementation of the National Employment System policies.

The policy regarding professional training in Spain can be characterised by the decentralisation of course provision. Even before the process of decentralisation of competences in ALMPs to the regions, training was provided by them and by the collaborating centres accredited by the National Employment Institute. The regions, for their part, conducted (and still do) training through training centres linked to the social actors (trade unions and employers organisations), local councils, foundations, and various types of associations.

Social actors participate in regional PES through committees. In these committees, the main guidelines concerning employment policies (including training) are discussed. They decide about programs for training and specific actions for employed and unemployed workers. However, there is some variation on the role of the committees depending, mainly, on the political orientation of the regional Government.

The role of local authorities is less clear. The decentralization process means that active labour market policies (including training) is a responsibility of the autonomous communities. While the regulatory framework points out that the employment policy should have a local dimension, nothing is said about how this local dimension should be considered in the policy process. For years, some local entities signed agreements with the regional authorities to develop their own employment policies with regional funds. The crisis and the subsequent cuts to the regions' funds have meant the end of such agreements. Thus, at present the participation of local entities in the system is at a low and depends of them using their own resources to implement employment policies.

3.2.5 Strength of and changes in institutionalised links between VET institutions and the social partners

Public training funds for employed workers are managed through the Tripartite Foundation for Training in Employment created in 2001, whose board is constituted by the Central State Administration through the national PES, and the most representative employers' organisations and trade unions. The reform currently underway of the training system implies its substitution by a new body (*Fundación Estatal para la Formación en el Empleo*). Their members will be the same but the

role of each actor is yet to be determined.

Training for unemployed workers is provided by the regional PES, using their own or collaborating training centres. On an annual basis, a public tender is held to finance the Intersectorial and Sectorial Training Plans and Actions linked to professional certificates. The national PES signs training agreements with beneficiary entities so that their Sectorial and Intersectorial Plans and Actions associated with professional certificates can be developed.

The participation of social partners is really strong in all VET processes. They participate in the design of the policies, on decisions about funding, and also in the implementation of the policies since both unions and employers' representatives have their own training centres for unemployed workers. As previously stated, the reform that the Government is currently discussing reduces the role of social partners, especially in the implementation of training.

3.2.6 Change in the governance of VET

During the nineties, there was a process of decentralization of competences from the national to the regional authorities in education and in active labour market policies.

The Sectorial Conference of Labour Affairs is the general collaboration, coordination, and cooperation instrument between the State Administration and the administrations of the autonomous communities. It has become a highly relevant body for defining policies and for exchanging experiences among regions.

With respect to training, there can be agreements between regional and local authorities to develop local-level training plans, although they are rare since the beginning of the crisis for lack of funds.

The participation of the social actors in training is high. They are present at those boards and committees where the orientation and planning of training are discussed (Fundación Tripartita para el Empleo and regional boards of PES). Further, the General Council for Professional Training (Consejo General de la Formación Profesional) brings together representatives of the social partners, autonomous communities and national authorities responsible for VET and employment policies.³

3.2.7 VET structure and qualifications connection to low-end job traps

All the interviewed persons point out that early drop-out is a major problem in Spain. Spain has the highest proportion of early school leavers in the European Union. Job destruction has affected mainly low-skilled workers. Therefore, more than half of the unemployed individuals have a low educational level. Moreover, there is a lack of activation in employment policies in Spain, meaning that, usually, participation in training is voluntary. This voluntary nature of training has an impact on the type of worker receiving the training. Despite the low educational qualification of the majority of the unemployed in Spain, individuals participating in training usually have secondary education levels (Cueto and Suárez, 2011). That is, the persons with the greatest need for training and re-training are the ones benefitting the least from training schemes. As a consequence, the probability of being long-term unemployed of those with low educational qualifications increases. There are not barriers to participation in training but there are no incentives to do it either.

Labour market reforms in 2010 y 2012 have stressed the role of PES in developing an activation

³ <http://www.mecd.gob.es/ministerio-mecd/organizacion/organismos/consejo-fp.html>

perspective of ALMPs through personalised itineraries. They have also recognised that low-qualified workers and young people are priority groups. This was further stressed by the National Strategy on Activation Policies adopted in September 2014 and in the annual Employment Plans.

3.2.8 Changes to the STW transition system logic

Educational reforms are strengthening the role of work experience in VET. As we have mentioned before, in the previous VET system there was a compulsory three-month apprenticeship period. The Dual Professional Training combines formal classes with work experience, reinforcing the link with private firms. There is a tendency to increase the relevance of work experience in vocational education.

3.2.9 Flexibility and proactiveness of education and training systems

The flexibility and proactiveness of the education and training systems (or lack of) are not prevalent in the public policy debate. They could be said to have increased overall.

3.2.10 Employability concerns embeddedness

All the actors involved in youth education and training policies are concerned about employability. One of the aims of the recent reforms of education is to improve the employability of the youth. The Dual Professional Training is a good example.

However, there is still a mismatch between the training supply and what firms need. Employers' representatives are very critical about the connection between the training needs of firms and what the educational system offers (in vocational training and in the University). Recent reforms increase the participation of firms in education (Dual Professional Training).

The training reform also focuses on employability and on the mismatch between the training supply and what firms need.

All in all, thus, employability concerns are high.

3.2.11 Presence of direct recruitment from education

Traineeship programmes in the University have experienced a progressive development in the past decades. The VET system had a compulsory apprenticeship period and the Dual Professional Training reinforces it.

Some firms use this period as a recruitment channel. For instance, González Veiga et al. (2006) found that 24.2% of students of vocational education were hired by the firms where they did the compulsory apprenticeship period.

Some training programmes include the collaboration with firms with a hiring commitment. The training centres sign agreements with firms to train unemployed workers in occupations the firms need. After the training action, there is an apprenticeship period and the firms have to hire a given proportion of the participants.

3.2.12 Most urgent problems and barriers to more participation and achievement in education and training

First, there is a social perception that training is not useful to return to work. Employers think that the

link between training and firms' needs is low. Workers perceive that employers do not value training. Therefore, there are no labour market incentives to participate in training. Personalised itineraries are necessary to make low qualified individuals more motivated to engage in training. Also, making training compulsory or linked to receiving benefits may be worth of consideration.

Second, the supply of training seems to be insufficient given the figures of unemployment . The insufficient supply of training leads to a competition for vacancies between unemployed workers and high educated individuals are more likely to finally participate in training than low-qualified unemployed.

Third, vocational education is still perceived as a second option for poor performance students. Therefore, the majority of students prefer the academic track in the educational system (to follow university studies) instead of the professional one, leading to a low percentage of medium-level qualified workers. The new dual professional training is an opportunity to improve the situation through the collaboration with firms.

3.3 Welfare policies

3.3.1 Description of safety net for young people at risk

As portrayed by interviewees, the safety net for young people at risk shows some gaps despite past efforts at closing them. In terms of economic transfers (it is difficult to speak about income maintenance in the case of young people who have never joined the labour market), it consists mainly of unemployment benefits (contributory) and unemployment subsidies (non-contributory but only accessible when contributory benefits have been exhausted).

In Spain, unemployment insurance is contribution-based, while unemployment assistance is a means-based scheme with conditionality, duration, and amounts being dependent on worked time, age and family conditions. There are no explicit age differences in the Spanish system. However, young people are usually worse-off than older unemployed workers due to the system structure: youth unemployed usually have relatively shorter contribution periods, and therefore the benefit take up is rather low. Also, given that young people are relatively less likely to have children and to have contributed through high salaries, the young unemployed end up receiving lower benefits during shorter periods.

During the crisis, an extraordinary 6-month unemployment subsidy amounting to 400€ per month was introduced for all long-term unemployed. In 2012, access to this subsidy was made more stringent in a way that especially affects young people. Previously, means-testing took into account the per capita income level of the household, including the candidate's income, his/her partner's, and their children's. Since 2012 parental income is also included, which has reduced the access of the young who returned to the parental household or who has not emancipated as yet.

Minimum income schemes (many of them including activation measures) are in place at the regional level, but their protective level is low due to strict access conditions (especially household income thresholds) and the low amount of the transfers. Moreover, high heterogeneity among regions characterizes these schemes. Demand on this protective mechanism has mushroomed during the crisis, many times posing difficult challenges to administrations. The latter were used to deal with cases of low-skilled and low-educated applicants and they were soon faced with the problem on how to proceed when faced with professionals having lost their jobs. Finally, family allowances are limited

to very low-income households.

Housing policies are of scant relevance for young people. Social housing programmes, emancipation subsidies and discounts for renting were either diminished or discontinued due to fiscal discipline. No innovation in reconciliation policies has taken place during the crisis but rather a slow-down (or almost stand-by) of implementation processes in the field of dependency protection and daddy leaves.

It is to be noted, though, that, besides the crucial role played by families to deal with the risks among the young in transition, neither access to tertiary education nor unemployment protection speak of a 'subprotective' entourage in Spain, albeit access to and quality of the opportunities for training and life-long learning show a lower protective capacity than the former. However, interviewed academic experts insist on the need to improve the protection of young people at risk (due to low-skills/education) before they confront severe difficulties to join the labour market: social protection tends to arrive when the problems confronted have become acute. Moreover, finding a job that means joining in-work-poverty should not preclude the suppression of social protection but rather the opposite.

Interviews show that there is an increasing consciousness of the need to design policies aimed not only at improving education and employment opportunities for the youth but also those related to social protection for youth at risk. Central government representatives defend that both the National Youth Policy Plan and the Youth Employment Strategy are based on the 2020 Youth Strategy and the First Action Plan 2014-2016 and, therefore, they bear an 'integral' (our quotation) approach to STW transitions. The Spanish National Council for Youth representative states the importance of deploying childcare policies further as soon as possible. Employers point at the convenience of further developing reconciliation policies and the protection of dependency to enhance women's integration into the labour market: in other words, such declarations betray their view that reconciliation is an issue limited to women, hence a very dubious gender equality perspective.

3.3.2 Recent relevant changes

In general, no relevant changes may be ascertained in recent years in the safety net, despite increasing difficulties in STW transitions and massive unemployment among the youth. The only (restrictive) changes have been spelt above.

3.3.3 Innovations effectiveness

As also noted in section III.1, it is too soon to assess effectiveness of (not radical but relevant) innovations in ALMPs. Rather than an innovation, unemployment transfers entailing the enjoyment of a subsidy of 400€ for a period of six months constitute a temporary measure to tackle social needs only until unemployment decreases.

4. Conclusion

The report presents an exploratory analysis of the institutional aspects and social learning processes influencing exposure to new information, knowledge management and policy change in Spain regarding youth employment, training and welfare. Barriers to and triggers of policy innovation and knowledge transfer in the overall institutional governance architecture as well as in the specific areas of labour market, education and training, and welfare are of particular interest. The analysis presented is based on interview data obtained between mid-December 2014 and mid-February 2015.

The Spanish policy-making and implementation system in the areas under study is found to be characterised by a low-level of policy innovation and a low level of learning. Institutional rigidity and path dependency are two salient characteristics of policy change in the Spanish case, both likely derived from a strong administrative culture with little exposure to results' evaluation. A lack of institutionalised channels devoted to cross-learning between administrations is also identified. Still, evidence of informal channels for cross-learning and of the existence of a policy-making epistemic community of knowledge can be inferred from the knowledge of policies elsewhere in Spain and abroad that policy-makers and implementers exhibit. Social actors have quite different perspectives on the obstacles to innovation, although the crisis may have aided co-operation. Overall, the system is perceived as in need of improvement.

While there are some instances of innovative behaviour at some regions and localities, exhibiting better administrative co-ordination and social actors' co-operation is thought a necessary but not a sufficient condition for innovation. Since the EU and the ESF are found to be the main motors of policy change in Spain, funds' conditionality to specific policy instruments, goals or appraisal is clearly a most powerful driver of innovation. Qualitative improvement of the human resources at public employment services and at administrative employment and education services, with more specific profiling of their staff, would also improve the learning and innovative profile of policy makers and implementers.

As for change in specific policy areas, few of the policies affecting the youth have been considered a key issue for either tackling youth unemployment or easing STW transitions, with the partial exception of ALMPs and, to a much lesser extent, unemployment protection, despite the fact that the young population and, especially, households headed by young people with dependants, have been hit by the crisis more severely than many other social groups and types of households, obliging them to resort to family and/or social protection policies.

When key actors are considered, the crisis has witnessed a clear impoverishment of the policy-making process due to the haste with which reforms had to be adopted, thus posing difficulties for dialogue and consensus building. Consequently, in most of the policy domains analyzed above, decision-making has been restricted to governmental action, although re-integration of actors has increased during the past year. Hence, changes have tended to be largely based on transfer processes (or rather impositions or recommendations issued by the EU/Troika) than on learning ones.

Employability concerns are high in Spain and have been present in recent reforms of education strengthening the role of work experience. Training policies are socially perceived to be of little use to find employment and thus fail to reach in significant numbers those with low educational levels. Another reform of training is underway that considers these issues and also signifies a path shift

towards life-long learning. The bill will weaken the traditionally very strong role of social actors in the training system. This is a likely consequence of the recent corruption scandals detected in the social actors' management of training funds in some regions.

No relevant changes may be ascertained in the domain of welfare protection during the crisis, despite increasing difficulties in STW transitions and massive unemployment among the youth. The only (restrictive) changes have affected access to housing, emancipation subsidies, and reconciliation in an indirect way: because of economic barriers to further advances in the implementation of expansionary legislation adopted just before the crisis outbreak). It is to be noted, though, that, besides the crucial role played by families to deal with the risks among the young in transition, neither access to tertiary education nor unemployment protection speak of a 'subprotective' (Walther and Pohl, 2005) entourage in Spain, albeit access to and quality of the opportunities for training and life-long learning show a lower protective capacity than the former.

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6. Annex

6.1 Interviews' Questionnaire in English (translated)

STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE - SPAIN

The Department of Sociology of the University of Oviedo is conducting a study on youth labour market inclusion in Spain and Europe, in the framework of the research project STYLE (Strategic Transitions for Youth Labour in Europe). The main objectives of the investigation are to diagnose the main problems that hinder satisfactory school-to-work transitions for young people, to identify the most innovative and effective changes in policies in this field, and the most favourable processes for policy learning and transfer in the Spanish context (at the national, regional, and local level).

Changes in the objectives, specific programmes, and management instruments of policies are considered to be innovative and effective when they maximise youth employment level and minimise exclusion from the labour market, particularly of those in less favourable situations. Such changes may be either radical, when it is the objectives or the basic instruments of policies that change, or incremental, when they add resources or action instruments in the same direction and under the same forms of management.

Policy learning encompasses the institutional contexts and the deliberated actions of policy actors (administrations, social agents, and others), that are more favourable or effective in changing the objectives or the instruments in response to previous experience and new information available, either based on new scientific evidences or on benchmarking processes. Policy transfer is the effective capacity to apply the results of policy learning to the context itself.

To achieve these objectives, a questionnaire was designed to serve as a guideline at the interviews. It includes the following questions, which are grouped into six sections below, according to the specific objective they pursue.

1. Policy innovation and policy transfer

First, focusing on policy innovation and policy transfer processes aimed at promoting youth employment:

- Could you mention any structural factor that hinders the innovation of these policies (labour market, training, etc.)? And what about structural factors that fosters such innovations?
- Could you identify policy transfer processes (best practices, benchmarking, etc.) at any governance level (national, regional and/or local)?
- In reference to the process of dissemination of information and knowledge, could you tell us what is the effect of centralization/decentralization of the system? Regarding the adoption of innovative programmes and practices (e.g., vocational training programmes, activation programmes, etc.), would it be easier in a more or less decentralised system?

2. Youth employment policy learning

Second, referring to the importance of policy learning processes in the implementation of youth employment policies:

- Is policy learning a major theme of the political/policy agenda in Spain (at the national, regional or local level)?

- Could you identify the factors that facilitate lower risk of unemployment and more opportunities of training and employment in transitions from education to employment?
- Considering the development of policies that drive the processes of school-to-work transitions in recent years, could you identify any specific case?
- Thinking specifically of school-to-work transitions:
 - Could you identify the regions and/or localities that are characterised by greater promotion of innovation in these policies?
 - Which factors have been relevant to encourage these innovation processes?

3. Outputs from policy learning and policy change

Third, could you mention any case of school-to-work transitions and youth labour market policies where any of the following changes have taken place within the last years (particularly during the recent crisis)?

- a) Progressive adjustments, not very pronounced, to the current situation.
- b) Changes in the policy instruments themselves (amendments, revisions, and additions to existing policies).
- c) Changes that divert old institutions to new purposes: the core features of institutions remain formally intact but their impact changes because they stop working as they used to.
- d) Radical changes in policy goals.

4. Institutional structure of the labour market and its impact on policy change and innovation

Next, the questionnaire includes a battery of questions regarding specific labour market policies that may be used to fight youth unemployment, namely employment benefits, active labour market policies, types of employment contracts, working hours, wage setting mechanisms, minimum wage, and labour taxation. The objective is to determine the effect of these policies on school-to-work transitions and on levels of youth unemployment.

Anticipating the questions that will be asked for each policy, we intend to know, first, which policies have been employed to fight youth unemployment. Second, whether there have been changes or innovations in any of these policies in recent years. And, third, should any changes have taken place in any of the policies considered, we intend to know whether these changes have been effective in terms of school-to-work transitions; who the key actors have been; what has been the role of social dialogue in the introduction of these changes; and whether these changes arise in a context of policy learning and transfer processes.

When answering these questions, we would like you to take into account labour market policies aimed at young people and school-to-work transitions.

	Unemployment benefits¹	Active labour market policies²	Types of employment contracts	Working hours	Wage-setting mechanisms	Minimum wage	Labour taxation
Have they been used?							
Have changes or innovations been introduced?							
<i>If there has been any change:</i>							
Has it been effective?							
Key actors?							
Role of social dialogue?							
Policy learning and policy transfer processes?							

¹ *Changes may involve, for instance, changes in:* the access conditions (more or less strict), the policies fight against unemployment and/or inactivity entrapment, the duration of unemployment benefits, the duration profile of transfers, the mechanisms for job search and work availability, etc.

² *Changes may involve:* reinforcement of incentives (positive employment incentives through tax credits, the conditionality of benefits, penalties, etc.); assistance to remove barriers to employment and to facilitate entry/re-entry into the labour market (e.g. through the expansion of Public Employment Services that provide assistance, job-counselling, job-seek programmes and job creation schemes to keep unemployed young people occupied; investment in human capital (basic education, apprenticeships, traineeships, and other work experiences provided by Public Employment Services and other public or private entities); or any other specific schemes.

5. Institutional structure of vocational training

- What are the key issues in the debate on vocational training policies in your country?
- Where should policies affecting school-to-work transitions go?

6. Welfare policies

- What welfare policies act as bridge between education and the labour market (e.g. provision of social transfers, in-work benefits, family and housing policies)?
- Have there been any changes with regard to such policies in recent years?
- Have these changes been effective for youth employment? And, how have they affected the social exclusion of young people?

THANK YOU

6.2 Interviews' Questionnaire in Spanish

CUESTIONARIO STYLE – ESPAÑA

El Departamento de Sociología de la Universidad de Oviedo está realizando un estudio sobre la inserción laboral juvenil en España y Europa en el marco del proyecto de investigación STYLE (Strategic Transitions for Youth Labour in Europe, Transiciones Estratégicas del Empleo Juvenil en Europa). El objetivo principal de la investigación es diagnosticar los principales problemas que dificultan una buena transición entre la educación y el empleo de los jóvenes, identificar los cambios más innovadores y eficaces en las políticas en ese terreno, y los procesos más favorables para su aprendizaje y transferencia en el contexto español (nacional, regional o local).

Se entienden como innovadores y eficaces, los cambios en los objetivos, los programas específicos y los instrumentos de gestión de esas políticas, que consiguen los máximos posibles de empleo juvenil y reducen al mínimo su exclusión del mercado de trabajo, especialmente de los grupos de jóvenes en situaciones menos favorables. Esos cambios pueden ser más radicales, en el sentido en que cambian los objetivos o los instrumentos básicos de las políticas, o incrementales, en el sentido que añaden recursos o instrumentos de acción en una misma dirección y bajo las mismas formas de gestión.

Se entiende como aprendizaje los contextos institucionales y las acciones deliberadas de los actores de esas políticas (administraciones, agentes sociales y otros), que son más favorables o eficaces para modificar los objetivos o los instrumentos en respuesta a la experiencia previa de sus resultados y de la nueva información disponible, bien sea la basada en nuevas evidencias científicas o bien en procesos de “comparación con los mejores” (benchmarking). La transferencia es la capacidad efectiva para aplicar al propio contexto los resultados de ese aprendizaje de políticas.

Para la consecución de dichos fines se ha diseñado el siguiente cuestionario que será la guía de la entrevista a realizar.

1. Innovación y transferencia en políticas

Poniendo el foco, en primer lugar, en los procesos de innovación y transferencia de las políticas orientadas al fomento del empleo juvenil:

- ¿Podría mencionar algún factor estructural que obstaculice la innovación de estas políticas (mercado laboral, formación, etc.)? ¿Y algún factor estructural que la impulse?
- ¿Podría identificar procesos de transferencia de políticas (buenas prácticas, benchmarking, etc.) en alguno de los niveles de gobierno (nacional, autonómico y/o local)?
- En referencia a los procesos de difusión de la información y el conocimiento, ¿podría decir qué efecto tiene el nivel de centralización-descentralización del sistema? La adopción de programas y prácticas innovadoras (por ejemplo, de programas de formación profesional, de programas de activación, etc.) ¿se produciría con mayor facilidad en un sistema más o menos centralizado?

2. Aprendizaje sobre políticas de empleo juvenil

En segundo lugar, en referencia a la importancia de los procesos de aprendizaje en la implementación de políticas de empleo juvenil:

- ¿Forma parte el aprendizaje de políticas de la agenda política en España (a nivel nacional,

regional o local)?

- ¿Podría identificar los factores que facilitan que las transiciones entre la educación y el empleo se den con menor riesgo de desempleo y/o con mayores oportunidades de formación y empleo?
- Atendiendo al desarrollo de las políticas que impulsan los procesos de transición de la educación al empleo en los últimos años, ¿podría describir algún caso específico?
- Continuando concretamente con las transiciones de la educación al empleo:
 - ¿Podría identificar las regiones y/o localidades que se caracterizan por un mayor impulso de la innovación en estas políticas?
 - ¿Qué factores han sido relevantes para animar estos procesos de innovación?

3. Resultados del aprendizaje y cambio de políticas

En tercer lugar, ¿podría mencionar algún caso de políticas sobre transiciones de la educación al empleo, y del mercado laboral juvenil, en el que, en los últimos años (particularmente durante la reciente crisis), se hayan producido alguno de los siguientes tipos de cambio?:

- a) Ajustes progresivos, no muy acusados, de la situación actual.
- b) Cambios en los propios instrumentos políticos (enmiendas, revisiones y adiciones a las políticas ya existentes).
- c) Cambios que reorientan las viejas instituciones hacia nuevos objetivos: las características principales de las instituciones se mantienen formalmente intactas pero su impacto cambia porque dejan de funcionar como lo hacían hasta el momento.
- d) Cambios radicales en los objetivos de las políticas.

4. Estructura institucional del mercado laboral y su impacto sobre el cambio y la innovación en las políticas

A continuación, se realizarán una serie de preguntas sobre algunas políticas concretas del mercado de trabajo (prestaciones por desempleo, políticas activas de empleo, tipos de contratos laborales, jornada laboral, mecanismos de fijación de salarios, salario mínimo y la imposición fiscal sobre el trabajo) que pueden ser empleadas en la lucha contra el desempleo juvenil. El objetivo es determinar el efecto que han tenido estas políticas sobre las transiciones de la educación al empleo y el desempleo juvenil.

Anticipando las preguntas que se harán para cada política, se pretende conocer, en primer lugar, qué políticas se han empleado en la lucha contra el desempleo juvenil. En segundo lugar, si se han producido cambios y/o innovaciones de alguna de estas políticas en los últimos años. Y en tercer lugar, en el caso de que se hayan producido cambios en alguna de las políticas tenidas en cuenta, se pretende saber si estos cambios han sido eficaces respecto a las transiciones de la educación al empleo; cuáles han sido los actores clave en el cambio; qué papel ha tenido la concertación social en la introducción de estos cambios; y si surgen estos cambios en un contexto donde se producen procesos de aprendizaje y transferencia de políticas. Para las respuestas, nos gustaría que tuviera en cuenta las políticas del mercado laboral orientadas a la población joven y las transiciones de la educación al empleo.

	Prestaciones por desempleo¹	Políticas activas de empleo²	Tipos de contratos laborales	Jornada laboral	Mecanismos de fijación de salarios	Salario mínimo	Imposición fiscal sobre el trabajo
¿Se han utilizado?							
¿Se han introducido cambios y/o innovaciones?							
<i>Si ha habido algún cambio:</i>							
¿Han sido eficaces?							
¿Actores clave?							
¿Papel de la concertación social?							
¿Procesos de aprendizaje y transferencia de políticas?							

¹ *Los cambios pueden implicar, por ejemplo, cambios en:* los derechos de acceso (más o menos estrictos), en las políticas para luchar contra el atrapamiento en el desempleo y/o la inactividad, en la duración de las prestaciones por desempleo, en el perfil de duración de las transferencias, en los mecanismos de búsqueda y disponibilidad de empleo, etc.

² *Los cambios pueden implicar:* refuerzo de incentivos (incentivos positivos al empleo a través de créditos fiscales, de la condicionalidad de las prestaciones, de sanciones, etc.); asistencia al empleo para eliminar los obstáculos al empleo y facilitar la entrada/re-entrada en el mercado laboral (por ejemplo, a través de la expansión de los Servicios Públicos de Empleo que proveen asistencia, asesoramiento laboral, programas de búsqueda y creación de empleo y programas para mantener a los jóvenes desempleados ocupados); inversión en capital humano (en educación básica, en formación, en periodos de prácticas y en otras experiencias laborales provistas por los Servicios Públicos de Empleo y otras entidades públicas o privadas); o algún otro programa específico.

5. Estructura institucional de la formación profesional

- ¿Cuáles son las cuestiones clave en el debate sobre políticas de formación profesional en España?
- ¿Hacia dónde deberían ir las políticas que afectan a las transiciones de la educación al empleo?

6. Políticas de bienestar

- ¿Qué políticas del estado de bienestar hacen de puente entre la educación y la entrada en el mercado laboral (por ejemplo, provisión de transferencias sociales, prestaciones vinculadas al empleo, políticas familiares y de vivienda)?
- ¿Ha habido algún cambio con respecto a estas políticas en los últimos años?
- ¿Han sido eficaces estos cambios en referencia al empleo juvenil? ¿Y cómo han afectado a la exclusión social de los jóvenes?

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