

European report

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Abeona

AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE
TO CARE LEAVERS' PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION



Erasmus+

Poland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, France, Spain

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La Plateforme Insertion



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PART 1: ABEONA PARTNERS NATIONAL CONTEXT AND INFORMATION

Introduction

This report is written as a part of the project “Abéona”. It is about a strategic partnership Erasmus+ aiming at supporting the professional inclusion of young people in residential care by means of the youth welfare tools. The project was launched in September 2015 and is carried out by the “Platform Insertion”. Platform Insertion is an “expertise pull of the S.O.S GROUP dedicated to professional inclusion, [it] accompanies the companies and the inclusion stakeholders in their search for social innovation for sustainable employment. It proposes strong and value added actions of inclusion the aim of which is to enable improvement of the individual and collective performance of its target group”

The starting point of the Abéona project is the finding that there is a “lack of solutions for the professional inclusion of the marginalised young people. *Recent studies showed that the care leavers were more vulnerable and needed a specific support in order to prepare their transition to adulthood and their professional inclusion in a more effective way. In fact, these young people face socio-professional difficulties (absence of family support, school drop-out, lack of self-esteem) which constitute genuine obstacles for achieving their autonomy and effective entry on the labour market*”. In addition, it is noted that sometimes the social workers lack resources for helping the young people work out a solid professional project.

The Abéona project involves several countries: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, France and Poland. It has several aims:

- to make an inventory of open issues and “best practices” existing in the partner countries relating to the question of professional inclusion of the young care leavers.
- To identify the social workers’ young and people’s needs in terms of professional inclusion.
- Starting from the inventory and needs identified, to develop and test new training methods and new “tools” for the social workers of the sector meant for the best possible support of the young people in their transition. These experiments should consequently improve social workers’ competence but also provide impact evaluation of these innovative trainings targeting care leavers.
- Finally, this project aims to establish an European network and to develop proposals to send to the European institutions.

The national reports were used as a basis for the studies contained in this report which, in the first part addresses the various policies of child welfare in the six countries concerned and continues with their analysis and putting them into perspective with the European recommendations. Furthermore, an analysis was carried-out in the respective countries of the tools and various existing structures in this field as well as the methods of support for transition towards adulthood implemented in these structures, in the respective countries.

The second part elaborates the access to independence by making an inventory, both for the general population and the youth placed in care in the six respective countries.

The third part elaborates the public policies and social innovations in favour of the youth professional inclusion, both for the general population and the care leavers in the six countries subject of this study. This part concludes by an analysis of the European directives and recommendations in the area of professional inclusion of the young population.

The final part is an attempt to determine the role of the social workers in the countries subject of this report, in the area of professional inclusion of the young care leavers.

1 COMPARISON OF THE CHILD WELFARE POLICIES AND THEIR COMPLIANCE WITH THE EUROPEAN GUIDELINES

1.1 National legislations

The structure of the social policies in the 6 European countries involved in this project shall be analysed in the light of their respective state structure. Some of the countries have a federal state structure while others are more centralized, although a certain decentralisation policy has often led to a regional sectioning which has resulted in redistributing the decision-making powers.

Germany

Germany is composed of 16 Länder and more than 320 urban and rural authority districts, the social protection in Germany is regulated on a federal level which imposes to the local level the responsibility for implementation of the welfare services. The basic federal legal framework for child welfare is the Social Code (Child and youth care act issued in 1991); its central point is the right to assistance in the upbringing and education pertaining to young people aged up to 21 and by exceptions until 27.

This right is granted very different in the single municipalities. We call it local disparities in offering child and youth care for young adults. That makes it really incalculable. On the other hand cases which are brought to court often succeed because the act itself only asks for low conditions to participate in child and youth care for adults. Even a first-time child and youth care for over 18 year old young people is possible.

In common the practical procedure is to encourage or "to oblige" young people to leave care quick after the 18th birthday.

On the local level, the implementation of the state's policy is carried out by the Youth Welfare Office. Although service providers are often private institutions with mainly their initiative for most of the child welfare actions, the responsibility and leading role for the overall management process belongs to the Youth Welfare Office.

The fact of becoming independent, the transition to adulthood and the vocational training are of vital importance for the young person. Therefore, for purpose of allowing the socially disadvantaged young people who are often found in disproportionately high numbers in child welfare facilities, the articles in the Social Code II provide advantages for the young job seekers while those of Social Code III promote the employment and are of essential importance. Both are considered to be of great importance. The Social Code II was in force since 2005.

Austria

Austria is a federal republic composed of nine states (Bundesländer) with their own government and administration.

On the basis of a statutory provision in the 19th century each of the Austrian states were considered responsible for the protection of children. Thus, an overall structure was developed to serve the purpose. Some reforms were implemented after the Second World War and in 1990 some new ones broadly oriented to living conditions and individualised and regionalised social pedagogy were put in place.

Significant milestones were first the enactment of the law in 1989 (Federal Youth Welfare Act - Bundesjugendwohlfahrtsgesetz) and second the law enacted in 2013 (Federal Children and Youth Welfare Act - Bundes-Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz). The federal law represents a legal basis for each state for putting in place its own legislation for implementation of the youth welfare system. Consequently, the systems and services of the youth welfare may differ within the country.

The following 5 principles are regarded as the basis of the respective federal legislation:

- Subsidies and support for family
- Promotion of non-violent education
- Professionalised youth welfare
- Specialised service guidance with trained professionals
- Confidentiality

On the basis of welfare sought for the children, four basic principles of the Children's Right Convention are added:

- Right to equality,
- Child and youth welfare,
- security of livelihood,
- Respect for the opinion of minors.

The fundamental principle is the well-being of the children. State services are clearly the responsible ones for the child protection.

The Austrian Civil Code specifies 4 age groups:

- Child: from birth to the age of 7
- Underage minor: age 7 to 14
- Adolescen (teenager): age 14 to 18
- Young adults.

In 1992 Austria ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and since January 20, 2011 the children's rights have been integrated into the federal constitution.

The Federal Constitutional Law stipulates that every child is entitled to:

- Protection and care;
- Regular personal contact with both parents;
- Assistance and protection in residential care;
- Effective participation and consideration of its opinion;
- Non-violent upbringing

Moreover, the Constitution prohibits the child labour and stipulates that children with disabilities are entitled to protection and assistance appropriate for their special needs. The government is responsible for the implementation of the fundamental principles of the law, the constitutional law on the children's rights as well as the federal law on children and youth.

It is important to note that in 2013 the Law of Youth Protection has been replaced by a Federal Law on Protection of Children and Youth.

This Law outlines 8 orientations:

- Information on supportive care and education offered for children and adolescents;
- Advice on education and development issues and family problems
- Supervision of parents, families, children, youth and young adults in dealing with family problems and crisis situations;
- Risk assessment;
- Support in upbringing for children at risk;
- Cooperation with the institutions, state agencies and public services;
- Implication of children and adolescents in the adoption procedures;
- Public relations promoting the objectives, tasks and operational methods of the children and youth protecting services.

It is important to remind that the young adults aged between 18 and 21 can benefit the services of youth welfare authorities, if they had already been their beneficiaries before their maturity age. Previously, the support for young adults used to stop at the age of 18, regardless whether the young person had completed its training or not.

Belgium

Belgium is also a federal state, composed of 3 communities, 3 regions and 4 linguistic regions. Each of the authority levels takes its own decisions and monitors the implementation of the public policies within the scope of its competence). The youth in general is a community competence¹.

Although the notion of a minor at risk appears after the Second World War, it is not before 1965 when a new federal law which underlines the notion of youth welfare. The decree regulating youth social assistance dates from 4 march 1991; it comes in response of the communitarisation of the youth welfare. At this moment it is in process of amending.

In 1990 the age of majority is lowered from 21 to 18.

Some of the key principles of the decree are:

- Principle of dejudicialising (idea of consented assistance instead of coercion).
- Priority to prevention;
- Priority given to prevention in the regular environment of the young person.

The structure of the youth welfare as stipulated in the 1991 decree is developed in two large sectors:

Public services and private sector services.

The public services are made of:

¹ The source of the data in this report on the youth welfare is, with few exceptions, the Federation Wallonie Bruxelles (FWB)

- Youth welfare Services (Service de l'aide à la jeunesse - **SAJ**) as non-coercive aid accepted or requested by the young person or the family
 - Judicial Youth Protection Services () responsible for coercive assistance related to the youth court
 - Public institutions for youth welfare. "The IPPJ take responsibility for youth who have committed a "particularly reprehensible act (an act which, if it were committed by an adult, would be characterised as an offence)."
- Private sector services are subsidised and accredited by the FWB (Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles); they are authorised by the SAJ-Youth Welfare Services or SPJ- Judicial Youth Protection Services except the services of open environment as non-mandated services. The private sector services make an important part of the youth welfare sector.

Spain

Presently, Spain counts 17 autonomus communities (Comunidades Autonomas), 50 Provinces (Provincias), 8 111 municipalities (Municipios) and two autonomous cities. The Canary Islands enjoy the status of an outermost region according to the primary law of the EU. Thus, the state is organised in provinces and autonomous territories with their own political structure with jurisdiction over various legislative matters but whose authority is generally limited to implement regulations of the national law.

In this sense, the national law of reference in regard to the protection of minors is the Organic Law enacted the 22 July 2015 which introduced an amendment to the previous Organic Law of 15 July 1996 on the Judicial Protection of Minors, partially amending the Spanish Civil Code and the Spanish Civil Procedure Code.

Prior to the amendment to the law of July 2015, there was no national law in place that specifically addressed the group of care leavers. Thus, this amendment brought a substantial improvement in the previous national regulations as it allowed proposing measures for encouraging processes of getting independence of youths in care as provided for in Article 22-*bis*.

Public authorities should offer –independent-life-preparation-programmes- for the young persons living under a welfare measure and especially those in residential care or in situation of particular vulnerability. These programmes are aiming the youth starting from the age of 16 and demanding their active participation in order to be beneficial. The programmes should provide socio-educational mentoring, housing aid, socio-professional inclusion, psychological support and financial aid.

However, a great disparity can be seen in the implementation of these provisions as it depends of the budgetary constraints of the different territories and autonomous communities. One can also see great disparity in the policies for -independent life preparation programmes- for the youth.

We noted that hardly a few of the provinces have specific legal provisions, nevertheless, the young adults have the possibility to prolong their stay in the residential centres for minors, for a period of few months up to a year or even two if needed.

The legislation of Catalonia is a pioneer in this area, i.e. it stipulates assistance to the young care leavers since 2010. By doing so it reaffirms the need to provide assistance for young adults, encouraged by its government since 1994 by the creation of the interdepartmental plan for young adults, which changed its name in 2005.

The Catalan Law of 27 May 2010 on children's and teenagers rights and opportunities stipulates the following measures in the area of support to young adults preparing for independent life:

- The support measures are usually removed at the moment of reaching adulthood but may be extended upon a specifically motivated request;
- The welfare measures may be of financial, legal or social nature or may consist of allocation or accommodation in a residential centre for minors. Such measures may be extended till the age of twenty-one.

France

France is organised into 17 regions: 12 regions in metropolitan France composed of several departments, 1 territorial collectivity sui generis (Corsica) and 5 overseas regions, plus 6 communities and 1 overseas territory. At the same time France is composed of 101 departments, out of which 5 are overseas and one metropole with a special status (Lyon). The department is a territorial collectivity managed by a departmental council elected for 6 years on direct universal suffrage.

Starting in 1945 the system of child welfare has been organised around a body of specialised magistrats (judges for children) and specific measures (social surveys and measures of residential care).

The decree of 29 November 1953 abolished the assistance and substituted it by a social assistance for children (child welfare) by unifying the administrative procedures. Each department of the French territory was equipped with a child welfare service. Two legislative texts fifteen days apart, the first enacted in December 1958 and the second in January 1959, organized the child welfare in two segments: The protection defined "judiciary" (Ordinance of 23 December 1958 on the protection of children and youth in danger) and the so-called "administrative" protection (the decree of 7 January 1959 amending and supplementing the Family Code and Welfare in the area of child welfare).

Till 1982/1983 as the moment of the first laws on decentralisation, the child welfare was responsibility of the state. The law of January 6th, 1986, known as "Loi particulière", is a completion of the above stated laws by specifying the role of the departments in the state and adapting the health and welfare laws to the transfer of competencies in the respective areas – welfare and health.

The Law No. 2007-293 of March 5, 2007 introduces a reform to the child welfare, as stated in the article 1 reading: *"The child welfare aims to prevent the difficulties parents may face in performing their upbringing duties, to support families and ensure, when necessary and according to their needs, a partial or total care for the minors. To this effect, it disposes with a set of interventions for the children and their parents. This kind of interventions may also be implemented for young adults (less than 21 years old) facing difficulties/AT RISK that may become a threat for their balance. The child welfare aims also to prevent difficulties that may incur to minors deprived, temporarily or permanently, of their family protection and to ensure they are taken care of.*

The article 12 of the same law has amended the prerogatives of judges for children in the area of child welfare. In fact it delegates to the President of Departmental Council (at the time, according the law - the General Council) the authority to organise the child welfare on its territory (Article 12:- The President of the General Council is assigned to gather, process and evaluate, at any moment and of any origin, any disturbing data relating to minors in danger or at risk of being. *The representative of the state and judiciary lend him their help*).

Each department disposes with legal welfare which is The Child Welfare and optional aid which is not an automatically granted right. Each department can make its own specific decisions on granting the optional welfare benefits.

During the years 2000, many reports stressed the lack of knowledge in the area of child welfare showing a need to set-up observations, studies and development; a decision was made to create an Observatory for children at risk (ONED). It was launched in 2004.

The legal framework of child welfare in 2016 comprises:

- Child welfare is a legal social aid and is part of the Department Councils competence; its task is to protect the minors of age 0 to 18; the administrative competence means implementing the decisions of the judiciary authorities as well. The Child Welfare as social service has also empowered to propose to young adults of age 18-21 assistance and support in a form of signed contract.
- The judicial protection of the youth remains a state competence and is a decentralised service of the Ministry of Justice. These services are responsible for implementing civil and criminal legal measures until the adult age.

Poland

Since 1999 Poland is organised in three administrative levels. The Polish territory is organised in voïvodies (provinces) which are segmented in powiaty (county); the last ones made-up of gminy (municipalities). The most important cities have, for the majority, at the same time the statute of gmina and powiat. Poland is divided into 16 voïvodies, 379 powiaty (including 65 cities with the statute of powiat), and 2.478 gminy.

Historically, the system of child welfare worked mainly in direction of separating children from their parents with no interest to work with the families. At the end of the years 1990 was introduced a reform concerning placement of children in residential care which shifted the focus on rehabilitating the role of the family with possibility to choose many options other than the placement of children in care.

On January 1, 2012 the provisions regulating the placement of children in care were defined by the Act on Family Support and Foster Care System. Thus, the objective is to support the families in their upbringing role and to limit the withdrawal of the children; the placement in care is ordered only in case of substantial risk for the child.

According to the stated law, the objectives of the residential placement in care are:

- Working with the families for the return of the child;
- Preparing the child for decent, independent and responsible life;
- Develop capacity to overcome the difficulties of life;

- Establish acceptable relation with its family and acquiring social competences;
- Meeting the emotional needs of the child, with emphasis on nutritional, health, education and cultural needs.

In terms of organization, the municipal and county centres have the responsibility for receiving and placing minors in residential care.

Analysis and compliance with the European recommendations

It is advisable to first of all refer to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child² (C.R.C) which goes back to 1989. The world's leaders committed themselves to building a world fit for children: on November 20 the Convention on the Rights of the Child was unanimously adopted by UN. For the first time in the history, an international text recognizes explicitly the **younger than 18 years** to be individual human beings, entitled to **social, economic**, civil, cultural and political - **basic rights**, as mandatory and non-negotiable. This convention contains 4 fundamental principles which one can find in the legislations in the area of child welfare of all the 6 countries subject to this study given that this convention has been ratified by these countries as by 195 other countries in the world (actually the one missing is the United States):

1. The principle of non-discrimination;
2. The best interest of the child;
3. The right to life, survival and development;
4. To respect of the views of the child;

This convention extends the obligation of its taking into account to the **private institutions working in the area of child welfare** (social assistance, NGOs, etc).

As an addition to the previous one comes the Council of Europe's - European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (E.C.E.C.R.) dated January 25, 1996 which came into effect July 1, 2000. Unlike the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which recognizes new rights (e.g. right to protection of the identity...) to children without limiting them by duties, European Convention on the Exercise of the Children's Rights is a procedural text aiming only to facilitate children's access to their rights without granting them additional rights.

The legal texts regulating this area are completed by the European Social Charter³ (EUSC n°035) and the European Social Charter (revised) (ESC n° 163)⁴ and various recommendations of the Council of Europe that we'll quote more particularly:

²The actual text has been amended upon Polish initiative since 1978, on the basis of ideas of a Polish pediatrician, Dr. Janusz Korczak

³ The European Social Charter of 1961 is equivalent of the European Convention on Human Rights in the area of economic and social rights.

⁴ The Charter (revised) guarantees the fundamental economic and social rights of every individual in the daily life. It takes into account changes in European society since the establishment of the Charter in 1961.

- The Recommendation CM/Rec(2011) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on children's rights and social services friendly to children and families
- The Recommendation Rec (2005)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the rights of children living in residential institutions. It states the general guiding principles applicable for child placed away from its family, in particular in a residential institution, and stresses that any residential placement must guarantee full respect of the child's human rights.

According to this recommendation, the placement of the child is justified only if remaining within the family exposes it to risk. This instrument sets-up quality standards applying to the residential institutions, such as the one requiring to "have small family-style living units".

The overall of the legislation on child welfare of the 6 countries subject to our study are of national level, but one can find all sorts of variations due to the fact that the implementation is carried out by institutions dependent on local authorities (autonomous länder, Bundesländer, powiat, provinces, territories, department, community, etc...) Protection may be judicial, such as for example in Belgium and France, but more often administrative i.e. in form of a contract between the family, the young person and the local authority.

The child welfare tools of our report pertain first of all to minors (majority in the 6 countries being at 18 years) but one can notice that taking in residential care in all the 6 countries may be extended up to the age of 21 and in Germany even up to 27 years.

It is significant to note that the dejudicialising has often been a strong axis of these policies with a tendency, during the last few years, towards the de-institutionalisation thus joining the recommendation⁵ of the Council of Europe's Committee of the Ministers to the Member States on the deinstitutionalisation and community living of children with disabilities.

Indeed in the 6 countries, intervention of care in natural environment is systematically proposed in order to avoid the residential care of children at risk. Thus, one notes a priority to bring the assistance and support to the family or the regular living environment of the young person in Austria, Belgium, France and Poland, or programs for young persons as of 16, with socio-educational follow-up, help with housing, socio-professional integration, psychological support and financial aid as the case is in Spain.

The child welfare interventions subject of our study are carried out by professionals in educational, social or psychological intervention, but lately one can see willingness to integrate volunteers in these interventions (sponsorships, placement with a trusted third party⁶)

When the placement is inevitable the solution must be of a model the closest possible to the family way of life (placement in foster family, small community living unit) and the provisions of the aforementioned Recommendation⁷ on rights of children living in residential institutions is essential.

⁵ Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)2

⁶ LOI n° 2016-297 of March 14, 2016 on the protection of the child in France (Article 13)

⁷ Recommendation Rec(2005)5

With regard to the subject of this report, it is to stress that according to the same specific Recommendation the children placed in residential care have:

“right of access to all types of education, guidance and vocational training under the same conditions as all other children”

But also:

“Priority is given to the physical and mental health of the child and its full and harmonious development, considered also essential conditions for the success of placement in residential care programme.

*To develop a project of individualized residential care based on both the development of the child’s capacities and abilities and on the **respect of its autonomy**, maintenance of contacts with the external world and **preparation of the child for the future life outside the institution**;*

As conclusion to this chapter, it seems important to emphasize that the Committee of Ministers adopted on March 2, 2016 the new Council of Europe Strategy for the rights of the child (2016-2021). It was launched at the high level conference organized in Sofia on April 5, 2016 within the framework of the Bulgarian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. The five priority areas to tackle, as identified by the Strategy are as follows:

- **equal opportunities for all children ;**
- participation of all children;
- life free from violence for all children;
- child-friendly justice for all children;
- rights of the child in the digital environment.

It seems important to us to underline the first area of the new Strategy, the one on equal opportunities for all children, as it aims to allow to youth in residential care under the child welfare programme in Europe to have equal chances for professional success as their peers who have stayed with their families.

Summary

In the 6 European countries one observes chronological coherence, i.e. similar dates and periods when the child welfare legislation was evolving: The World War II, the 1990's, followed by the evolution in the period 2011-2013. Thus, there were a harmonisation of the national legislations with the European recommendations. (the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the revised Social Charter, fundamental principles recalled as well as the affirmation that the basic rights of the minors are not negotiable). Furthermore, the Strategy of the Council of Europe (2016-2021) points out the equal opportunity for all the children.

In most of these countries there is a tendency towards the dejudicialisation and desinstitutionalisation with a privilege given to the assistance and the support to the family.

1.2 Institutions: inventory of existing structures and analysis of the choices made by countries

Germany

The same plurality of protection services with or without accommodation is provided for very young children as well as for teenagers and to young adults. Furthermore, most tools allow an individual or group accommodation support with the help of social workers or assistance without accommodation in the form of listening and counselling.

The welfare system provides two forms of child placement: accommodation in children's homes or with foster families in a proportion of 50% each.

These institutions are thus divided as follows:

- Congregate housing in a home;
- Living units offering therapeutic support and intensive education;
- Structures like "children's villages";
- Assisted individual residential care;
- Apartment structures with semi-autonomy for young people in the process of independence.

Austria

Welfare services represent a heterogeneous field because the federal states have a different organization with their specific requirements and needs.

Nevertheless, one can identify in the new law, at national organization level, the following services: social services, socio-educational facilities and services, foster care families, adoption assistance services, care services, support services for the education of children, which are divided as follows:

- Structures for prevention;
- General educational services;
- Residential placement services;
- Support and educational / therapeutic advice;
- Outpatient educational and therapeutic intervention service ;
- Continuous educational services .

Concerning outpatient and open-environment services, service offering includes family counselling centres, monitoring centres for minors include therapeutic support, social assistance and learning, and crisis assistance services.

The range of services is large and very diverse in Austria regarding both service offering for families and services specific to children and adolescents.

In each province accommodation services offer is composed of shelters grouped into networks, children's villages, homes for crisis situations, accommodation with educational support; there are also, but only in the southern part of Austria, specialized services for minors with addictions as well as an intensive program for young people.

Continuous services also offer young people, who are out of the system, tools for assistance and foster families; this means that the institutions accommodating young people organize their own support system towards autonomy in supporting them once they leave child welfare.

The young care leavers have two options available: the first one is to return to their biological family and the second is to start an independent life on their own. A third possibility is offered to young disabled people who qualify for specific support of social assistance for adults.

In general, continued education services are aiming to provide assistance to young people in accessing their autonomy and independence or prepare their return to their families of origin.

Child welfare services are available to all persons who have their habitual residence in Austria.

Belgium

Belgium has public services and private services ones which are of the voluntary sector:

Public services offer the following modalities:

- Assistance services for youth with a non-compulsory assistance;
- Judicial protection services with compulsory assistance;
- Public institutions for youth protection (intensive management of residential youth who have committed an offence and is under rehabilitation).

Private services receive grants and approval; this sector represents an important part of youth support and mobilizes around 4 times more social workers than the public sector. It offers a wide range of assistance:

- Open-environment services (prevention, counselling and educational support to youth and families);
- Educational services that intervene in a criminal context;
- Guardianship services;
- Foster care services;
- Accommodation centres (emergency reception, first reception, observation and guidance) ;
- Reception and educational assistance services;
- Centres for assistance to victims of abuse;
- Specialized reception centres;
- Day centres (educational assistance, open-environment guidance);

- Support services and intensive mobilization of alternative placement for youth who have committed an offence.

Spain

Although national law is applied differently in different territories, the services offered to young care leavers can be broken down as follows:

Concerning accommodation:

Several projects for young people in child welfare, for care leavers and those with social problems; the young people can be housed, continue their education, gain independence and professional and social integration.

- Accommodation structures based on aid and education for young people between 16 and 18 working on a gradual process of becoming independent.
- Residential structures that provided for the young people between 18 and 25 years deprived of resources and family network that, once adults find themselves obliged to stay in the same household as during their minority. An educator is responsible for each apartment that functions in semi- autonomous manner to enable beneficiaries to gradually gain independence.
- Homes for minors who work or are in training for the 16-18 age group and under the child welfare system as well as for adults 18 and older that were previously in care. Each tool offers pre-vocational training, integration into the labour market as well as educational support for training.
- An integrated family service; a tool that offers family accommodation for young foreigners who have previously been under child protection; the program selects the candidates and their host families and provides training and support.
- Specific assistance and alternative accommodation service for young people still supported by the child welfare system or who have just left it. The specific needs of some young people have led the authorities to offer diverse forms of accommodation and support such as shared apartments; this particularly concerns young migrants who are seeking employment or are already working and sometimes maintain links with their families of origin. This concerns young adults with a level of independence higher than for young people placed in residential care.

France

We have seen that the organization of the protection of minors in France is organized around two areas: Social Aid for Children (ASE) and the Judicial Youth Protection (PJJ) to conduct educational administrative and judicial measures for the former and only judicial for the latter; they relate to both placement measures and open-environment ones also called at home (measures).

Concerning placement measures, there are 2 main types of accommodation: placement in institutions and placement in foster care families; these manners of placement fall under either the Social Aid Service for Children, which is a public service decentralized and managed by the department, or the authorized voluntary sector and funded by the department.

Regarding placement of young people in residential care, several types of structures exist:

- Children's homes;
- Children's houses of social character;
- Semi-autonomous apartments for young people of 16 years and older;
- Boarding schools;
- Children's villages;
- Places to live for the most troubled and highly disengaged youth.

For placement in foster families, we identify:

- Foster care services;
- Placement with a trusted third party;
- Related services working on adoption.

Services for judicial youth protection provided for young minors and for some offenders propose placement in institution:

- Collective accommodation with educational units;
- Diversified accommodation with educational units;
- Closed-type educational centres (alternative to incarceration);
- Intensified educational centres (preparing for a social and professional inclusion).

Open-environment services provide a large number of measures in the national territory; they are mainly managed by authorized associations, but some of them depend directly on the services of Social Aid for Children (ASE) of the respective departments.

The domestic help measures (AED) differentiate as: implemented with the agreement of the family by the Presidents of Department Councils and measures for open-environment educational assistance (AEMO) taken by judges for children following a court hearing in chambers and in the adversarial principle when a family does not want to cooperate. Finally, there are services for family therapy, for therapeutically treatable addictions that complete the child protection tool.

Poland

The authorities of the county organize the children's placement tool and manage the placement institutions as well as family-type care services; adoption and pre-adoption services are managed by the county institutions.

The placement in residential care in Poland is organized as follows:

- Family reception mode that includes accommodation by family members, by reception families that are non-professional care givers, by professional reception families as well as children's homes (8 children maximum) run by a married couple or individuals;
- Institutions that include care and education centres; therapy and treatment centres; pre-adoption centres.

Summary

The organization and the nature of the structures and the programmes concerning the child welfare are organized, in each country, around structures of accommodation, family placement, adoption services and open-environment services; follow-up services are available to the young people aged between 16 and 18; the services of accommodation in apartments in semi-autonomy for the young people from 18 to 25 years complete the programmes.

2 YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO AUTONOMY

"In moral philosophy, autonomy (from the Greek word *αὐτονομία*, *autonomia*) is the ability to act by oneself by adopting own rules of conduct, one's own law. Autonomy means freedom; it is characterized by the ability to choose on one's own, without being dominated by certain natural or collective tendencies or without being dominated in servile manner by an external authority. However, the proposal of autonomy cannot be built only on education (education on autonomy, eco-citizenship).

The first form of autonomy for a child to be able to reconsider the rules of the social and natural environments.⁸

Martin Goyette, in his doctoral thesis at the School of Social Work, Laval University, entitled "Portrait of interventions to prepare for autonomous living and socio-professional integration for young people of the Quebec youth centres," offers us some idea of the accession to independence and employability:

*"...to think in terms of social and professional problems of the youth, is to enrol in an understanding of the erosion or collapse of social ties, particularly in the relationship between youth and society, the integration remaining the key to cohesion and social reproduction (Dubar, 1991 Molgat, 1999 Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger, 1995). In addition, evoking so combined social and professional integration reminds at what point **work determines the social situation** of people (Castel, 1995; Dubar, 1991). Indeed, youth employability difficulties generate precarious situations, unpredictability, and discontinuity that hinder the exercise of full citizenship (Monette et Fournier, 2000).⁹*

The authors agree to consider that the issue of employment does not just refer to economic problems but also to social problems to the extent that the lack of employment limits a full exercise of a citizenship. Qualified by social disaffiliation (Castel, 1994), by deinsertion (Gaulejac and Taboada-Leonetti, 1994) or by social disqualification (Paugam, 1991), the situations described always refer to a reading of poverty in economic, but also in cultural and social terms.

Thus, studies multiply to describe the difficulties of social and professional inclusion of young people (Gauthier, 2001; Molgat, 1999; Roulleau Shepherd et Gauthier, 2001). Indeed, young people appear as a particularly vulnerable group to the impacts of changes in the labour market, especially because they are the first affected by insecurity and job flexibility (and Monette Fournier, 2000; Gauthier, 1996; Gauthier, 2001)"¹⁰

For young people in residential care under the child welfare system, " *The injunction to their independence can then turn into its opposite, and invalidate further those who, lacking*

⁸ Autonomy through <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autonomie>

⁹ Portrait of interventions to prepare for autonomous living and socio-professional integration for young people of the Quebec youth centres - Martin Goyette, Ph.D. Candidat at the School of social service, Laval University - October 2003 – review of the Quebec Youth Centres Association - page 2

¹⁰ Ibidem page 2

resources and so the rights to be independent of need, cannot satisfy this requirement. Independence so controlled is then not independence itself, but a new way of domination" says Robert Castel.¹¹

"Individuals left to themselves then face the weaknesses of civil society and an "individualism of disconnection".

2.1 Current situation for the general population; collecting and analysis of data on the transition to adulthood, inclusion and challenges faced by young people

The young become independent increasingly late. Given longer studies, the precariousness of the working world, the housing difficulties for example in the Paris region, one third of men aged 26 and four in ten women aged 24 or less have not yet left the home of their parents (Villeneuve-Gokalp, 2000)¹².

The historic collapse of the employment that we have been through with the crisis of 2008, has hurt mainly the young people in Europe. The employment rates for young people aged 15/24 in Europe in 2014 are 32.5%, with large differences between the Netherlands (58.8%) and Greece (13.3%)¹³. Those who are active have no other choice but to get a precarious employment: internships, fixed-term contracts, temporary, part-time work, etc. In this sense, the youth employability challenges constitute a concrete example of the failure of public policies to ensure socially sustainable development.¹⁴

"There are reasons directly related to the crisis, but also long-term threats due to weaknesses in the education system and a lack of innovative policy for youth entrepreneurship" indicates in this regard Branislav Stanicek, of the R. Schumann foundation.

In December 2015, 4.454 million young people under 25 were unemployed in the EU, or 19.7%, of which 3,057,000 (22%) in the euro-zone area.

Germany

Social services interpret their role differently and this is not without consequence on the beneficiaries; several employment settings with widely different action fields are offered to young people; this makes it difficult for professionals involved to work together and agree on common projects to help young people get training and find job.

¹¹ Robert Castel « The autonomie, Aspiration or Condition ? » quotes Alain Ehrenberg, « The society of discomfort, Mental and Social », Odile Jacob, Paris, 2010

¹² Villeneuve-Gokalp C., 2000, « The youngsters still leave the parents' home at the same age », Economie and Statistics, Insee, nos 337-338

¹³ http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?reg_id=98&ref_id=CMPTEF03135

¹⁴ <http://encyclopedie-bd.org/encyclopedie/economie/politiques-de-la-jeunesse-quelle.html>

There is an impression of a "transition jungle" in which different actors refer to different texts of the Social Code following their own logic (actors at the federal and the state level, municipalities, foundations, for employment, employment centres, professional associations, school services). In this jungle, proposed programs can have significant variations and suffer from lack of logic and consistency.

Since the 1990s, the emphasis is on the importance of linking the different projects in a functioning network; moreover the stakeholders are invited to propose networking activities; this relates to the project promoters, but also schools, businesses, training centres that are encouraged to work together. Coordination between all these institutions remains difficult given the fact that in some areas there may be as many stakeholders as networks.

Austria

The situation in the labour market of Austria of young people aged 15 to 19 and that of young people aged 20 -24 is better than in other European countries; the youth unemployment rate is around 10% which is one of the lowest in Europe with an efficient training system and tools and initiatives to reduce youth unemployment; nevertheless, unemployment for young people between 15 and 24 years increased by 6% in recent years. In addition, the overall unemployment rate is 10.2%

Looking more specifically at the youth unemployment rate for persons between 15 to 24 years of age, we can see that those in the 20-24 age group face higher unemployment than youth in the 15-19 age group; the reason may be that those in the 20-24 age group have completed their compulsory education at that age and are faced with their job search.

The duration of unemployment (figures are as of October 2014):

Up to 19 years - 57 days

19 to 24 years - 72 days

Adolescents in total - 69 days

The duration of unemployment of young people in both age groups is less than 3 months; there is no significant difference between the sexes. These data indicate that young people benefit the possibilities of, in one hand, internship and training carried-out in companies or, on the other hand, the integration itself in the labour market.

One of the federal government's priorities is to maximize employment opportunities for young people as one more means to reduce unemployment. A wide variety of employment policies is available to all and especially to young people under 18 and up to 24-year olds, waiting to enter the job market. The federal government has defined "an education strategy and compulsory training" in a government program that shall begin in 2016. This includes early proactive intervention and capacity building in the key aspects.

Belgium

The professional inclusion of young people is an important issue for each level of power. The social and professional inclusion is considered as public policy area with a legal framework and specific objectives to be met. Therefore, in Belgium there is one sector on professional inclusion composed by many and various institutions which target the adult population. Although they are not specifically targeting young people, these institutions address low qualified population having trouble in finding a job which makes them privileged interlocutors for many young people with employment problems.

When young people reach majority and need financial aid or social support, they turn to the Public Centre for Social Action (CPAS); some young people take this step even before adulthood.

These Public Centres for Social Action (CPAS) are part of the public administration, their mission is to guarantee human dignity to citizens, they are in charge of granting the social integration income in Belgium for beneficiaries over 18 years of age; these centres provide various financial aid under the health-care, accommodation, and psycho-social support as well as support in promoting employability. The aid provided by these Public Centres for Social Action (CPAS) is heterogeneous and may vary depending on the municipality where given Public Centre for Social Action (CPAS) is located, as their jurisdiction is communal and their modes of organization may vary.

Spain

Spain has one of the highest rates of young school drop-outs in the European Union; 23.5% of young people between 18 and 24 do not complete their secondary education and in 2013 did not attend neither school or training. This was a decrease of 1.4% compared to 2012 but remains far from the 2020 target for reducing the number of school drop-outs to 15%. Currently in the seven Spanish autonomous regions, the rate is about 25%.

In 2012, the unemployment rate of the working age population between 25 and 64 having a level of education below a secondary school was approximately 31%.

In 2014, the youth unemployment rate for those under 25 went up, while in 2008 it was under 30% i.e. this percentage almost doubled. It is a decisive factor for youth independence; 51% of young people between 16 and 29 had temporary jobs; the employment rate for young people of the 16 to 24 age group was 68.5%.

Access to employment is considered a factor for young people's transition to adulthood but is also linked to self-esteem and social recognition and a key factor for access to citizenship.

The youth employment rate remains at a historically low level. In the second quarter of 2014, in Spain the employment rate for youth under 25 was 18.3%, down from 38% in 2007. At that moment the figure was slightly higher than the European average (37.4%); in 2013

the average employment rate in the EU was double or 32.3%; in 2013, Spain had the lowest employment rate in the entire European Union after Greece and Italy.

However, the latest data show a slight decline in unemployment rate and announce maybe even a slight recovery.

Youth education conditions have also been improved by measures promoted by the Education and Training Contract which enables young people to make their way into employment by improving their training.

For a population of over 46 million, Spain has 1,793,500 young people who attend neither school nor work.

Concerning the age of becoming independent in Spain, only a one fifth of young people under 30 are independent. According to a study carried-out in Catalonia, 42% of dependent young people between 30 and 34 years justify their lack of independence by a lack of material resources or by unreliable and unsustainable resources. Among youngsters of 20-24 age group, that is the main reason given.

The youth independence process is characterized by the age of graduation, the age of integration in the labour market and the values of society. This is accompanied by the ability to make decisions and assume sentimental and financial commitments. The same survey involving the Catalan youth in 2012 made simulation on poverty rate for young people aged 15 to 34 in situation of being independent. The figures show a difficult reality. The independence rate is above 30% for young migrants.

France

Many young people need support to improve their employability. However, this support sometimes remains limited. Out of all the population of age between 16-25, only 5.7% are received for a first time by local missions and by information and guidance hotlines (PAIO); on the other hand, this figure drops to 2.5% for young people without degrees; in 2008 only 11% of low-skilled or non-qualified young people monitored by local missions and PAIO had at least one interview per month and 50% had only three interviews over 1 year.

In France, young people face many difficulties in access to employment.

The youth unemployment rate in France was 23.9% in 2013 (this means about 650,000 unemployed young persons) and 24.5% in 2015¹⁵; moreover the unemployment generally affects more the young people with little or no qualifications. Indeed, the employment rate of the young graduates three years after completing school is 80% while for unskilled youth (college level) it is 30%.

¹⁵ France is in the upper average of countries with high youth unemployment rate, nearly one in four persons under 25 (25.9%) were unemployed in December 2015. (<http://www.touteurope.eu/actualite/le-taux-de-chomage-des-jeunes.html>)

There are several reasons explaining the crisis professional inclusion of the young people, hitting the most vulnerable:

- Economic and financial crisis since 2008
- Jobs precarity
- Gaps in education and training systems, failing to adapt to the new needs of a labour market in constant evolution
- Difficulty of public employment services to provide sustainable solutions for vulnerable populations
- Paradox between the need for specific skills on the labour market and the lack of qualifications of young people.

The French employment policy has longtime followed two major trends: the decline in youth labour cost and training improvement; the concept of employment support has appeared in the 1980s. Many tools have emerged since then.

Poland

The youth unemployment rate was 22% at the end of 2014, which was 2.5 higher than the one of 8.3% of the general working age population. At the end of 2014, there was a rapid decline in the unemployment rate of young people compared to the same period in 2013; the youth unemployment rate is the highest of all age groups. In this it is like most European countries.

Only 25.9% of young people aged 15 to 24 have a job.

The figures show that youth activity is low, only 33.1%, with a low employment rate also. Only a ¼ of young people aged between 15 to 24 have a job, compared to 82% employed persons in the age group of 25-45 years.

In 2014, the percentage of young people aged 15 to 24 who were neither employed nor continuing their education or training (NEET) was 12%; in 2013, this percentage was 16.2%. Furthermore, in 2014 5.4% of young people between 18 and 24 had dropped-out school or training. This rate has remained the same for several years.

Summary

Young peoples' access to autonomy is an important stake for all the countries; there are variations observed in the means to encourage this process in different countries but also within the same country; consequently the question of coherence, clarity and equal treatment in the framework of the same instrument may be raised. In this respect, certain countries have a proactive policy like Austria for exemple.

2.2 Current situation in the participating countries for young people in child welfare; collecting and analysing data about transition to adulthood, inclusion, challenges faced by young people

Germany

The transition to training and work are major challenge for socially disadvantaged young people. These transitions have become more fragile and uncertain yet also increasingly open-ended

In the area of child welfare, the young people's transition to employment is the responsibility of the social work sector; the law specifies the necessity for socially disadvantaged young people to receive very strong support in terms of education and vocational training to counterbalance the social disadvantage; the task of social workers is to provide vocational training tools and employment support for young people. Those measures can be complemented with accommodation; however, these aids are now fragile and became known as "the jungle of the transition"; indeed responsibilities are not clearly defined and differences of views among the various social services have adverse consequences. The system lacks logic, consistency, and coordination. The term "transition/al system" covers all job creation tools that do not offer vocational training; in 2008, 34% of young people who did not go to university have joined these tools.

In reality only few measures helping youth in their transition to vocational training and employment are funded by social services for child welfare; this organization does not really address the needs of young adults concerned but rather those of decision makers; which leaves a feeling of a lack of ideas and initiatives on the part of the policymakers.

Although the Social Code provides a clear legal priority guaranteeing the best interests of the child, in practice we can see that municipalities manage services for young people between 16 and 18 in a manner that is much stricter. Consequently a lot more young people leave prematurely the child welfare tool and are subject to the measures advocated by the Social Code II which implies stricter measures for young adults below 25.

Profile of young people in child protection system. Figures for in 2013 in Germany.

Table 1: Monitored and placed children

Age	Children placed	Percentage
0-17	161 233	1.2%
18-26	28 181	0.3%

Table 2: placement completed

Age	Children placed	Percentage
0-17	35 818	0.3%
16-17	10 790	0.7%
18-20	13 247	0.5%
21-26	981	0.0%

International studies show that young people supported by the child welfare leave or have to leave the institutions only between 16 and 18 while young people living in family stay there much longer. In Germany there is the same significant difference between young people living with their parents until adulthood and young people in care by the child welfare system; however, a significant proportion of protective tools and accommodation ends abruptly (approximately 50% of young people aged over 18 and 45% of those aged 15 to 18 leave the child welfare accommodation facilities without further monitoring or educational support); About half that of those leaving between 18 and 21, return to their parents.

In 2012 there were 9 436 situations where support and accommodation were offered to young people aged over 18; a small number of young adults aged 18 to 27 benefited: 766 young people aged 21 to 27 were then in accommodation structure i.e. residential care. Out of 8 670 projects for accommodation of young people aged 18 to 21, around 16% have been implemented by means of shelters for young adults. The near future of becoming an adult is a major criterion for seeking help.

The statistics highlight the fact that there is a sharp decline in demand for support from young people as they become adults. While 325 of 10,000 young people aged 17 receive educational assistance, only 197 young adults benefit from this, which is a decrease of 40%. This trend remains at essentially the same level between the ages of 18 and 19 and then between 19 and 20 years.

For many teenagers in placed residential care facing their transition to adulthood is a critical moment; as a matter of fact, although they may continue to receive help, the majority of the aid measures end at 18. 57% of young adults have no longer support after their placement in residential care meaning there is not even educational monitoring without accommodation after the placement in residential by the child welfare services.

This raises the question of how to carry on the transition and support towards adulthood for young people under protection (care leavers) even at a basic level.

Even among youngsters aged 15-to-18, educational support follow-up is only offered in 46% of cases; 10% of young people receive only very general advice from the social service. In just 1/3 of cases (33%), young people and professionals prepare a project of intervention follow-up. Therefore, the fact that educational support monitoring is not primarily offered to youth aged 15 to 18, shows that the educational measures of support and placement follow-up are not a regulated procedure. The growing number of young people under 25, who are saved by associations working for the "homeless", may indicate that young people leave prematurely the child welfare services without being offered any substitution.

The statistics of child welfare system does not give figures on the support, offered by other aid services - such as those that help budget management, psychotherapy of children and adolescents and for the homeless. These services are specialized and do not work on the

transition of youth to adulthood in a comprehensive manner. Thus, there are very few educational monitoring programs which assess the challenges of adolescence and young adulthood. It also seems that the continuous educational follow-up would be difficult to achieve when a young person is no longer placed. Besides, the current forms of continuous educational support may prevent activation of social ties and family network, while studies in Germany as well as globally show that social ties play a major role in successful transition between the placement and life as adult.

The latest statistics on youth in child welfare system and receiving vocational training are from 2005.

This table shows the situation of education and vocational training of young "care leavers."

Age group	School	Vocational training	Neither
15-18	61%	19%	20%
18-21	25%	43%	32%
>21	10%	46%	44%

The few current statistics on education and vocational training for young "care leavers" are a sign of the interest that the policies assign them.

Austria

Data from 2014

Total number of Austrian minors of age between 0-18 years	1 492 457
Number of minors supported by child welfare system	39 219

Number of young people under 25 in child welfare system:

age of minors	educational care	placement
0 to 5	6 706	381
6 to 13 years	15 849	2 902
14 to 18	7 222	6 159

The number of young people of age between 18 and 24 in Austria who have no second-degree diploma, who are not learning and who have no qualifications is 7% in this age group.

According to Eurostat statistics, in fact only 7.3% of young adults aged 18 to 24 have simply completed the compulsory school curriculum. However, this percentage is well below the EU level, which is around 11.9%.

This is a major problem for the young and for society with regard to opportunities in life and employment as well as risk of social exclusion and unemployment.

The situation of young migrants that combines at the same time a lack of good proficiency of the German language, a lack of skills and their lack of information on training opportunities, is particularly difficult. So while the unemployment rate of youth under 25 is 8.1%, in 2013, it is 13% for young people of immigrant families; among young people looking for an apprenticeship more than a third comes from immigration.

The percentage of NEET¹⁶ in Austria is 7.4% and refers to young people who have no job, are not in school and do not attend any vocational training.

Belgium

The aid granted by the youth welfare sector stops when adulthood is reached at the age of 18; this automatically terminates the aid unless a young person requests an extension that can be granted until maximum the age of 20. Hence, what happens is, regardless whether they're prepared or not, whether their requested it or not, young people are set towards their independence.

The transition to adulthood is particularly problematic because it brings all sorts of changes including change of stakeholders, structures, ways of thinking and the help of the public authorities in charge of this population.

Some institutions offer support even after the age of 18.

Various aid agencies make up what is called the adult industry and are the interlocutors to the young people after they leave the youth support.

Thus, the "Public Social Action Centre" (CPAS) is in charge of granting the minimum income and providing other much-diversified and front-line aid. A memorandum of understanding between the youth support service and Public Centres for Social Action (CPAS) exist for young people seeking financial assistance or social support prior to becoming adults. However, as relevant as these collaborative frameworks are, it seems that they are not sufficiently used by professionals and do not have enough impact on the young people.

Since the introduction of majority from the age of 16, young people usually leave at 17 their AAJ¹⁷ hosting institution for the next step to assume their independence especially in terms of accommodation. During this phase, they are supported by social workers and can use the benefit of supervised accommodation. Minors have their benefit before 18, while young adults can apply for the social inclusion income at Public Centres for Social Action (CPAS); it is slightly higher than the one granted by the youth welfare service.

Professionals involved in supporting young people towards their independence believe that this aid is not sufficient given the current economic context.

¹⁶ NEET: not in Education, Employment or training

¹⁷ AAJ: Aide à la Jeunesse

AAJ institutions should prepare young people for their independence six months before they leave the system.

A preliminary draft decree proposes to turn the prevention into a specific policy. The age of youth monitored by AAJ could increase from 18 to 25, which would allow young people in greatest difficulty to continue to be supported. The aim is to reduce the increased risk of poverty among young people; the fact is that the share of young people aged 18 to 25 who seek help from Public Centres for Social Action (CPAS) is in significant increase.

In 2011, at the FWB¹⁸, out of a total of 983 630 young people under 18, 40 234 or a percentage of 4%, were supported for at least a day under the youth assistance.

This figure coincides with that of young people considered to be in risk or in danger, which is also 4%.

The number of young people supported at least a day by the youth assistance program in 2012 is 42 578 for a total of 992 772 young people on the territory of the FWB, or 4.29%.

In January 2011 the average age of supported young people is 10 years and 9 months.

10% of young people in risk or in danger taken in care on 01/01/2011 were 17 and older;

In 2014 the youth unemployment rate in Belgium was:

- 32.1% in Wallonia (for a total unemployment rate of 12%)
- 39.5% in Brussels (for a total unemployment rate of 18.5%)
- 16.5% in Flanders (for a total unemployment rate of 8.6%)

The youth unemployment rate was 23.2% for Belgium.

The school drop-out rate or quitting studies before the end of the secondary school has fallen in Belgium in the last twenty years. Indeed, if in 1992, 18% of young people were early school drop-outs, this related to about 14% of young people 18 to 24 year old in 2000, and 11% of young people in 2013.

This trend is consistent with the decline of the dropout rate observed for the European Union, which in 2013 was 11.9%

The number of NEET

In Belgium in 2014, Eurostat estimates that population counts 159.000 young people; the rate of NEET in Belgium is 12%.

Almost 6 in 10 (59.2%) aged between 18 and 24 in the French Wallonia Brussels (FWB) , attend school or training. Among the 40.8% of those between 18 and 24 years old who have left school and do not attend any training, half is employed (51%) while more than a third is unemployed (36%). If we add the part of inactive youth on the labour market in Brussels and

¹⁸ Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles

Wallonia to the unemployed, we get 20.2% of all young people aged between 18 and 24 who do not have any job nor continue their study or training within the two regions.

Spain

Profile of young people placed in residential care

In 2013, there were in Spain about 30 000 children and adolescents admitted in child welfare system. More than 5 000 were in a process of becoming independent and more than 3 800 reached adult age. It must be emphasized that the young people who have been placed are in a situation of vulnerability unlike the majority of their 18 years old peers. The demands for young people who have been placed are different from those for other young people.

A number of young people who have been placed and have become adults are forced to be self-sufficient without the much needed family support or resources. In these situations the transition to adulthood and enforced independence, puts the young people in a particularly vulnerable situation. In such situations, chances of success for young people are minimal.

As there is currently no official statistics on young care leavers, we have collected data on 2 200 young care leavers who participated in various youth independence projects in 2013-2014.

The age tendency between 2013 and 2014 was as follows:

2014

Young people between 16 and 18	Young people between 18 and 21	Young people between 21 and 25
43.3%	43.8%	12.9%

2013

Young people between 16 and 18	Young people between 18 and 21	Young people between 21 and 25
37.2%	55.2%	7.6%

In 2014 the number of youth in protection between the ages of 16 and 18 increased by 6% the same as the number of young people aged 21 to 25 (increased by 6%).

Tendency relating to youth training in 2013 and 2014:

2014

Employed and students	Only students	Only employed	Unemployed and not attending training
7.3%	60.4%	12.7%	19.6%

2013

Employed and students	Only students	Only employed	Unemployed and not attending training
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students			attending training
6.4%	55%	11.4%	27.2%

Duration of placement

Less than 6 months:	17.8%
Between 6 months and 1 year:	22.5%
Between 1 and 2 years:	44.7%
Between 2 and 3 years:	10.8%
Over 3 years:	4.2%

Assistance in accommodation essentially consisted of semi-independent apartments for young people between 18 and 21 years which represents approximately 39.5%. The accommodation duration is mainly 1 to 2 years. The apartments are rented in 55% of cases; 40% of young people have no source of income.

France

If professional inclusion is sometimes the logical continuation of education and training, it is not always among the priority concerns of structures whose purpose is to overcome the socialization problems of youth at risk; measures to support vary according to the territories but help focuses on the material aspects such as financial assistance and the provision of accommodation.

There are few figures in France on education and professional integration of young people covered by the child welfare system.

Nevertheless, the figures on youth employment at the national level are alarming; social and professional difficulties of young people supported by the child welfare system are particularly important and lead to consider this population as extremely vulnerable.

If the employment rate of young higher education graduates is 80%, it is 30% for unskilled young people who have completed compulsory schooling.

NEET from 15 to 29 years in France would be about 2 million and would represent 17% of this age group.

140 000 young people leave the education system without qualifications; currently 900 000 young people are without qualifications.

The school drop-out is three times higher among young proteges of welfare system than among other teens of their age; dropping out of school often accentuates the first year of placement and tends to decrease later on with time spent in the institution.

Academic and professional situation of young people placed in 2008

Dropped out of school

- 15% of 16 year olds

- 27.5% for young people of age 18 - 21
- 44% for youth 21 and older

Among the young people placed, aged 15 and older, we note a strong tendency to favour shorter studies and vocational courses;

Among young people placed:

- 20% are at school
- 4.7% are in the 2nd general or vocational cycle
- 1.8% are following a vocational baccalaureate
- 0.7% are in higher education
- 14.5% attend in vocational courses
- 14.3% are out of school

However, placed young people are 2,5 times more often in vocational education.

Regarding placed young adults, there are no more dropouts than the rest of their peers.

Many young people need support to improve their employability, except that this support still remains quite limited; out of the youth population of the age group 16 to 25, only 5.7% are received for a first time by local missions and PAIO (information and guidance hotlines) offices and this figure drops to 2.5% for young people that are not graduates. In 2008, only 11% of young people with low or without any qualifications monitored by local missions and PAIO had at least one interview per month and 3% had only three interviews a year.

Young people covered by the child welfare system are more vulnerable than others due to the social and professional difficulties they accumulate. At their adulthood or at 21 years after becoming a young adult (“Contrat jeune majeur”), they do not have access to tools of common law that apply only to persons over 25 years. They are often left destitute and the risk of both social and professional breakdown is high.

The situation of young unaccompanied foreign minors

These young people are supported by the services of the administration; in recent years due to the large influx of young people, some departments have been particularly affected by an influx, which has led to a phenomenon of overcrowding the structures. The young unaccompanied minors are entitled to claim social and educational support in terms of accommodation, schooling, training, and help for professional inclusion.

Poland

In Poland, there is little statistical data on the school curriculum and the employment situation of all young people in care.

A study carried-out in 2012, about 402 young people in care who have gained their independence, showed that 50% of these young people got training, with some who got higher education; 29% of them were not studying nor working.

In Poland, there is very little data on the youngcare leavers; the figures are more explicit on the resources committed and the age and number of young people in care.

Moreover, if the number of young minors in care tends to decrease, the number of young adults still supported, tends to increase.

This same research, conducted on a very small scale therefore not completely relevant, suggests a slight increase in the youth unemployment rate among the care leavers;

Summary

Despite the poor statistical data concerning the professional integration of the young people placed in residential care, the available data indicate that the the specialized instruments are hardly of any use to the young people placed, although those instruments remain a priority in the social policies of the countries. The professionals seem to privilege material and psychological support to the young people which accentuates the difference between those and the young people living with their families. Such a situation is on detriment of the young people placed in residential care, due to the fact that since the moment of reaching maturity gaining independence becomes imperative for them.

3 PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIAL INNOVATION FOR THE PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION OF YOUTH

3.1 Youth in the general population. Inventory of tools and innovative practices for the professional inclusion of youth.

Austria

There are many tools to promote the professional inclusion of youth. Institutional mechanisms to assist the professional inclusion of youth: Austrian labour market policy concerning youth:

A government priority is to promote opportunities for young people and fight against youth unemployment; a variety of measures is available to all young people and especially for those between 18 and 24 who are seeking employment.

The federal government adopted "a mandate for education and training" to be implemented in 2016. It includes early intervention, activation and a capacity building as key objectives.

- A national strategy to fight against dropping out from school

Adopted in 2012, this strategy seeks to reduce the drop-out percentage to less than 10% (which is the European target for 2020); this goal has already been achieved, since 2012 the figure has been 7.6%; to further reduce this rate, a government demand was addressed to school officials and partners to work closely. A new law goes in this direction and regulates the work of all professional stakeholders.

- A strategy for lifelong training

For the purpose of implementing it, political stakeholders together with social services and families, as well as regional financing partners should contribute to this lifelong training strategy;

In 2013, the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation to establish the so-called Youth Guarantee, which is an important step to reduce high youth unemployment rate in Europe;

This recommendation states that every young person under 25 is entitled to: job offer, continuing training and apprenticeship of good quality.

To finance this measure, Austria has spent 610 million euros; the "Austrian Youth Guarantee" is comprised of inter-institutional arrangements that promote the integration of

young people both in the education system and in the labour market. To carry out this youth guarantee policy, different measures of coaching, support, training and apprenticeship are offered.

Examples of some arrangements:

- Learning and training centres (high level);
- Integration centres for training and learning (fairly high level);
- Future for the youth (specialized in employment advice);
- Coaching for youth (support and advice for choice of profession);
- Projects for NEET (low level; work with those dropped-out of school);
- Coaching for apprenticeship;
- Preparation for education and training (low level; young people do not have the prerequisites for training or for facing social, family, health problems);
- Applied schools (low level; primarily aimed at youth from 15 to 19 years and offer work on motivation, knowledge, and basic skills).

These arrangements have enabled young people to increase their chances of completing their vocational training; to complete the arrangement there is a program for the unemployed to set up one's own business with the aim of becoming self-employed. 5% of participants are under 25 years of age.

In addition, numerous information services around the technical and vocational training are there to facilitate the transition between school and working life.

The success of these programs is shown by the fact that for years, Austria has the lowest youth unemployment rate in the EU. The initiatives that target specifically young people and promote both apprenticeship and schools of technical and vocational training have become a model for all European countries.

All these programs are part of a future action campaign and target young people of 19 to 24 years; the main objective is to prepare disadvantaged young people to integrate themselves into the vocational training systems and the labour market.

All these programs have been evaluated positively and are open to all young people in general.

The professional inclusion of young people is an important and open issue for each level of power but also a concern for many social workers; nevertheless, the social and professional inclusion must be understood as an area of public policy and thus regulated by a legal framework and meeting specific objectives.

Belgium

Employment and training are regional competences. Our purpose fits well with the description of the region Wallonia Brussels.

We present various organizations that are not specific to the Youth Welfare and are not targeting specifically the youth under child welfare system. However since they aim a population that is unskilled and facing difficulties, they are important interlocutors for young people passed through the youth welfare when leaving the system after become adult.

Public institutions for professional inclusion

Two public employment services receive job seekers:

ACTIRIS in the Brussels region that works to "identify, gather, and fill in the vacant jobs available on the market" and offer a tailored employment support in the form of a personalized action plan.

FOREM in the Wallonia region offers to job seekers counselling, personalized guidance and information intended to assist them in their job search.

The professional inclusion sector offers training that should lead to integration on the job market. The founding principle is to provide the least skilled and the most remote of employment, with training using specific teaching methods and flexible learning environment.

Financial support and employment help for young people:

In Belgium a young person can benefit from labour inclusion allowance after a professional inclusion course of a year; it must be applied for before the 25th anniversary of the beneficiary.

Employment help for young people:

- The Rosetta plan is a comprehensive measure for young people under 26 involving first employment contract, reduction of employer's charges and "active start" that ensures a further costs reduction for employers hiring very low qualified young people.
- The status "subsidized contractual agent" are positions funded by ACTIRIS that support a portion of the payment.
- Aid for the employment promotion is a similar measure in the Wallonian region.
- The ACTIVA plan is another measure that grants benefits to the employer (reduction of employer's contributions...)
- The career transition program: it proposes qualifying training of 2 years structured around an employment contract in a company in the non-commercial sector. A formula is intended for jobseekers under 25 years.
- The training and inclusion plan allows the job seeker to benefit from business training with a contract; the element "young" of the measure allows to extend enterprise-training period to 52 weeks; eligible for this measure are young job applicant under 25 years old with low qualifications.
- The professional transition course is for young people under 30 who do their professional inclusion training; this is a training of 3 to 6 months, half of which is to be done in the workplace.

Spain

At the national level, an inter-ministerial commission for youth was established in 1986; this commission was the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, Social Affairs, and Equality. This institution was in line with the other ministries dealing with youth to promote measures in favour of youth.

Under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the Institute for Youth (INJUVE) is also responsible for implementing actions relating to youth. INJUVE promotes equal opportunities for young men and women, participation of youth in child welfare system in the political, social and cultural life, and, works in partnership with other ministries and bodies dealing with youth.

This underlines the importance of cooperation with youth organizations in the autonomous communities and municipal councils as well as youth associations through the Council of the Spanish youth.

One of the priorities of the Institute for Youth is to ensure that employment policies do not begin with a job search but with a formal and informal training and with an education policy, which supports young people from adolescence. This priority calls to develop positive attitudes and motivated behaviour towards entrepreneurship and innovation.

Regarding the inclusion and training of young people at a national level, any public policy implementation must respect the "Europe 2020" strategy that has the following objectives:

- 75% employment rate of the population aged 20 to 64 years;
- Lowering the number of school drop-out to less than 15%; allow 40% of adults aged 30 to 34 to have a graduate level;
- Combating poverty and social exclusion; reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 20 million.

The first two axes of the 6 main areas decided by the Ministry of Health and Education are education and training, employment and entrepreneurship; they contain and specifically target lines of action for the professional inclusion of young people.

One of the current challenges of the education system in Spain is to reduce the number of drop-outs and ensure that those who enter the labour market are sufficiently trained.

Measures have been taken following an education reform approved in 2013 by the Organic Law of Quality Improvement of Education and the establishment of a dual vocational training (so called sandwich training) inspired by models from other countries.

A system of scholarships is set up to promote equal opportunities for young people in access to education.

Strategy 1 Education and Training

Objectives: measures to improve the Spanish educational system:

- An important measure that comes from the Erasmus + vocational training program that focuses on training abroad and learning languages. Programs promoting also the university research;
A dual vocational training (sandwich training) was gradually adopted, it combines training in school and in business;
- Promote informal education system
This informal education system is based on a model of learning social skills that enables young people to acquire knowledge, qualifications, and new skills. Business recruitment services are very attentive to these skills when recruiting.
The creation of the "Youth Pass of the Erasmus + program" ensures validation of acquisitions.

Objective: To identify and promote new opportunities to create jobs through training.

The digital economy provides actually the greatest potential for job creation and business creation.

Young people are now very well trained in the digital domain and advanced technologies. The "Inngames" program launched in 2014, which concerns the training, innovation, technology transfer, is likely to boost the sector and to enable young people to be the main beneficiaries in terms of jobs.

Strategy 2: employment and entrepreneurship

Despite the efforts made in the field of the economy of employment, which have enabled the country to overcome the crisis, the youth situation requires other measures. The youth unemployment rate is 50% in the 16-24 age group and 37.7% among 16-29 years olds; this situation makes youth unemployment a national priority.

The measures adopted as Strategy for Employment and Youth Entrepreneurship 2013 -2016 and the creation of "National Youth Guarantee System" to encourage employability and enterprise culture among young people highlights the importance given to youth employment policies.

Other objectives are offered:

- Strengthen opportunities for job creation for young people by promoting youth self-entrepreneurship and by helping companies that hire young people under 35 years;
- Develop youth inclusion on the labour market;
- Promote entrepreneurial culture and spirit;
- Promote the "Youth Guarantee Sytem" in compliance with the recommendations of the Council of Europe, which encourages providing employment opportunities to young people who are neither in education nor in employment or training.

Strategy 3

- Foster youth independence

Strategy 4: health, leisure and sports

- Promote healthy lifestyles;
- Reduce drug and narcotics use;
- Combat violence and discrimination.

Strategy 5: Integration and equality

- Promote equal opportunities

Fight against social exclusion in areas where young people are the most disadvantaged

Strategy 6: institutional cooperation by facilitating cooperation of:

- inter-ministerial youth commissions;
- inter-territorial youth councils;
- of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces;
- of the Spanish Youth Council;
- of the European Youth Council
- new international spaces.

France

The French policy on youth employment has long followed two major trends: the decline in youth labour cost and improving training; the notion of support towards employment has appeared in the 1980s.

Ever since, many tools following two different logics have emerged: the first is to act upstream of employability by improving training and qualification of young people and supporting them to their first job; the second logic applies to the labour market itself and its actors: companies are encouraged to recruit by reducing the cost of youth work.

A regional public service for guidance has been set up; its purpose is to coordinate the different actors but mainly to support young people in a more efficient manner.

Training and support tools

- Campaign against dropping out of school with a right to return to training for young people of 16 to 25 age group, who have no diploma or qualifications;
- Internship and apprenticeship are rewarding experiences (70% of young apprentices find sustainable employment after the training);
- Internationally mobility is an asset but cost of this experience is not always accessible to the most disadvantaged young people;
- The school of second chance;
- Public institutions for inclusion at the Defence; the voluntary and adapted military service that provides access to vocational training;

- Local missions and PAIO (reception and guidance hotlines) support young people towards employment;
- Local missions can offer young people to sign a civil contract for integration in social life; they can also offer the Young Guarantee; the objective is to support the young people who are neither in education nor in employment or training

Helpful employment tools

In order to lower the labour cost of young people and to encourage companies to hire them, various tools have emerged:

- The so-called Generation Contract introduced in 2012 for the professional inclusion of young people but also keeping seniors employed;
- Civil service that allows young people of 16 to 25 to engage in a task of general interest and benefit from professional experience;
- The jobs of the future aimed at developing the professional experience of young people aged 16 to 25 who are not qualified and have them acquire skills to accessing a temporary (CDD) or permanent employment contract (CDI) from 1 to 3 years;
- The single inclusion contract, social support contract and starter's contracts are aimed at young people under 30 years; they combine education and socio-professional support for beneficiaries and financial support for the employer.

The "Youth Guarantee" tool

Originally, this tool comes from the plan against poverty and for social inclusion in 2013 and targets the young people affected by all of the following criteria:

- Young people 16-25 years old ;
- Do not have job, do not study, do not attend training;
- Little or no education;
- Resources of a concerned youth must not exceed € 524.16.

For a year, the youth enjoys:

- intensive group support over several months to prepare for the world of business. A phase provided by the local mission on which the beneficiary depends;
- regular immersion in business (internship, learning...) to confront the young person with real situations in business;
- financial support of € 461.26 a month to facilitate the beneficiary's access to employment procedures. A declining support as and when the beneficiary receives income from own activities.

It is implemented by local missions.

These tools have given rather positive results in recent years but have their limitations. Although so many tools have been developed to support career development of young people, and bring the education system to the workplace, these tools remain unknown and have limitations.

Poland

Employment issues are regulated by the April 2014 Law that specifies the role of the state to promote employment, vocational training and mitigate the effects of unemployment.

Among the many institutions in charge of the labour market, the most important ones engaged to help young people in care are:

- Public employment services
- Voluntary work organization

The voluntary work organizations offer employment assistance tailored to young people, to graduates of the second degree and students for temporary and often-seasonal jobs during school holidays.

By registering with the employment agency, an unemployed person gets entitled to the following aid:

- Unemployment benefits;
- Vocational training proposals;
- Financial assistance for starting a business;
- Financial assistance for graduating;
- Loans to finance business;
- Free health insurance;
- Employment advice;
- Access to employment services.

The employment offices of a given county in accordance with the 2004 Law may also provide individual assistance to a person unemployed or seeking employment to facilitate professional opportunities.

In 2014, 35.1% of young unemployed people benefited from job creation programs. This figure is 13% higher than in 2013. Young people typically use these aids to obtain professional qualifications or get experience such as: training, internship, financial assistance for graduate exams or studies. 40.7% of young people under 25 who have been helped by the employment agencies found jobs.

However, despite a wide range of assistance programs, employment agencies are ineffective to help young unemployed persons; typical feature of this group is a very low rate of professional activity and also a low rate of young persons with an employment contract.

Summary

The social policies of the various countries set up various instruments to support social innovation as regards professional integration:

- Lifelong Training Strategy;

- National Youth Guarantee System;
- Public services proposing guidance and advices;
- Actions implemented by the institutions and associations;
- Erasmus and Europe 2020 Programs
- Generation Contract

3.2 Care leavers: Inventory of tools and innovative practices in favour of professional inclusion of young care leavers.

Germany

In most care institutions living skills trainings dominate the transition process in general. Before educational plans are made it is the most important category of independence if somebody is able to live on his/her own and manage everyday practices. Collaborations between care facilities and e. g. secondary schools are not arranged mandatory. So it could be emphasized as a good practice that in some child and youth care institutions special staff members are attended to advise young people in care about opportunities in the educational system and to prepare their educational and vocational pathway. Some care institutions, which do not have own staff for the professional integration of young people in care attend good relationships to local companies to arrange for example interships for their youth or prepare vocational trainings.

The transition system between school and vocational education is very complex in Germany. There are different accesses to the offers of trainings, assisted education, vocational schools and types of compensatory school offers in order to fill the gap between the end of school and the beginning of an apprenticeship or work. Those young people who leave school without or with a low degree often move in the vocational transition system. A lot of care leavers belong to this group. The straight way to study or pass a vocational education in a company (dual apprenticeship) or a vocational school needs often a middle or higher school degree. For all others the recourse to a training or alternative offer for disadvantaged young people is the common way after they fulfilled or failed compulsory education. The offers can be part of the child and youth care system (= Jugendsozialarbeit, youth work with the emphasis on vocational integration of disadvantaged young people, not necessarily have been in residential care) or part of the employment system (for example job center). There are complex and locally very different structures in this field. That makes it difficult for youthworkers in residential care institutions to get through this structures and offers. Special expertise is necessary in the field of youth employment and supported vocational education/training. The challenge for child and youth care is to build up networks to special vocational services and to build up structures during care to support education continuously and early enough before care ends. It depends on the local structures and the standards of each residential care institution how much they focus in the care process on educational support and outcomes. Even the cooperation between school and residential care could be more structured and a self evident-part of care planning.

Austria

Disposes with comprehensive system of programmes and measures for professional inclusion like those specific practices described below concerning young persons in child protection programmes.

Group homes Therapeutic Communities (BTG):

1. Support during the stay within the alternative care facilities:

In those facilities care is usually provided by social pedagogues on a 24 h/ 7days a week basis. The focus at this step is to support school or vocational training as well as social- and life skills, including the development of self confidence and self-efficacy as a pathway to independence.

2. Semi independent housing program:

Usually at the age of 16 the young person has the opportunity to move to a separate living space in the same building or situated nearby. This phase usually lasts another one or two years. During this period the young person should gain more life skills and psychosocial competencies. By teaching self development skills and by simultaneously reduce care units self organizing skills and independence will grow.

3. Semi independent housing program outside of the care facility:

The final step for the young person is to move out of the care facility. The social support is reduced to a minimum. The overall aim is to fully integrate the young person into his or her new living environment.

These 3 steps are mostly seen as an option and not so much as a rigid scheme. Most important to assure success is to plan the appropriate steps together with the young person. Some clients stay for quite a long time - up to the maximum of 21 years - in residential care facilities, whereas others are moving out very quickly to start an independent life.

Supported Living at Penzingerstraße (Municipal Department 11 - Youth and Family Office, City of Vienna)

Their concept of supporting young people to live a responsible and self-determined life is based on three pillars:

- Strengthening of the self-confidence: together with youth worker they detect personal strengths and job-related competences, that way youngsters get a positive attitude towards themselves and develop self-confidence, furthermore they learn how to cope with personal weaknesses and how to deal with frustration.
- Instruction for processes in everyday life: Youngsters obtain autonomy in learning of time management, organisation of leisure time and train their daily duties, that way they learn how to use their finances in a proper way, to pay the bills on time, to do their laundry, to know whom to call in cases of emergencies etc.
- Establishing a social network: They build up a good network of people, friends and care givers so that youngsters have different channels and strategies when seeking advice or help.

- KreativwerkstattKreativwerkstatt (Gesellschaft zur Förderung seelischer Gesundheit)

This is a low threshold project where youngster can join to spend their time. It is a timely and structural frame to learn how to self organise their day. They can chose from different activities like cooking, sewing, drawing, taking pictures, dancing, reading, working with wood

or stones, writing etc. This should help to get the creative process going so that they discover their talents and interests. Indirectly it supports them for rising their employability.

Belgium

In the Federation Wallonie Bruxelles the professional inclusion of youth is not seen as be one of the missions of youth welfare (YA); in fact the professional inclusion is one of the components of a more general type of aid provided for the youth.

The private services do not have a mission to assist in professional inclusion, however the services of open environment assistance may decide to assist the youngsters in their professional inclusion within their mandate for taking the young person in residential care extended beyond the majority age. The issue of professional inclusion seems to be inseparable of the one of school reintegration and career guidance.

The services dealing with school reintegration are NGO sector private services subsidized by the FWB. Their mission is to receive young school dropout persons and take care of their school reintegration and vocational training.

A cooperation protocol was signed November 21, 2013 between the teaching sector and youth welfare. This Protocol insists on improving the cooperation and communication between and among the respective sectors in order to achieve a better exchange of positive practices.

Studies show that young people find increasingly difficult to integrate themselves permanently on the labour market. Their lack of experience as well as poor mastery of research techniques are factors playing against them. The economic recession has also a strong impact on this situation. Obtaining a diploma remains to be the main asset for a successful job search.

The main obstacles for finding a job are the lack of professional experience, lack of job searching skills, low education level, mobility problems.

Particular problems related to job searching are having the young persons faced with difficult economic circumstances, legal problems and/or housing problems, persons with mental disabilities located far away from the job, persons with poor social competencies for job search.

Moreover, is already mentioned that the break with the Youth Assistance Sector, for a young adult turning 18 is experienced as an abrupt transition. The young people face too many challenges for which they don't feel ready yet, i.e. they seem not to have the necessary maturity. The professionals explain that it's very difficult to help the young protegés of the welfare sector or the care leavers at the moment they're facing several social difficulties (housing problems, health issues, family...)

This brings us to the important social-professional linkage and the challenge to develop principles and work jointly in this area, given the youth situation analysis shows us that the social and the professional part of life are linked and interdependent in a systemic way. It is important to underline that it is indispensable to take care of both social and professional; denying either the social or the professional dimension of the inclusion would be a big mistake.

Also, opening up and connecting of sectors and institutions could promote the support of young people towards employment; the idea is to create conditions to jointly build a public

action with participation of all the stakeholders, enabling symmetrical and transversal partnerships and for boosting the local development.

The constantly stressed need for generalized approach to the youngsters, points to the importance of the networking. Such approach is supposed to enable a continuous 'follow-up' of the young person instead of abandoning him/her after leaving the care institution of AAJ and being sent to other stakeholder/s.

The studies in this area show the limits of the logic of "clinical approach" in the area of inclusion when implemented with the least employable youth. Consequently, this target group requires tailor made, intensive and experience based measures. The experience based specific measure supported by professionals works very well, regardless whether the objective is socialisation or employment. Those may be experiences of immersion in communities, artistic, entrepreneurial, sport or developmental projects which trigger young people with social problems reflect on themselves.

The researchers X. Brike and Y. Verbist emphasise the importance of introducing recognized, valorised alternatives which provide qualification and integrate the notion of immediate utility and employability for young persons that are not interested in education. We should think of a new and innovative inclusion practice such as the programme Solidarité which will be further explained in the second part of this report.

Spain

If besides the social and economic context we take in consideration the characteristics of the youth care leavers, we need to pinpoint some specific/PARTICULAR lines of work/ focus as our objective.

That implies better empowerment for becoming independent adult, better access to housing, to vocational training and to the labour market.

However, we can't avoid the conclusion that the support policies and programs for care leavers are unevenly implemented on different national territories; therefore it is indispensable to harmonise the implementation and to provide to young adults training programmes with potential to lead to a social improvement.

Moreover, it is of utmost importance to pay special attention to the personal development to the youth in residential care as often they face difficulties to keep-up with the vocational training or to accept the numerous internships necessary for inclusion on the labour market. These young people are often focused on the moment and have difficulties to remain persistent in their efforts and build working habits as well as to develop creative thinking on their competence and the labour market demands.

The characteristics of the youth in residential care have to be taken in consideration in order to provide housing and education adapted to their needs.

Undertaking preventive actions is indispensable before they reach adult age.

The young care leavers need to be given time for the mandatory education in order to increase their employability.

The implementation of the national "Youth Guarantee Plan" provides new opportunities for these youngsters, however the trainings proposed are often incompatible with the education level of these young persons.

Regarding the young foreigners in care, the legislation in force stipulates that they need to submit an employment contract for at least one year before obtaining the work permit; this

measure aggravates the exclusion problem of these youngsters. As a matter of fact, the general unemployment level of youth younger than 25 is close to 52%. In such circumstances, a job offer is practically impossible.

The major difficulties for the educational intervention are:

- Motivating the young persons and up-keeping the motivation until reaching the goal;
- Make young people understand the need to invest themselves in studying;
- Help young persons to get to know themselves better;
- Help young persons improve their competencies and employability for a better professional inclusion.

France

The issue of professional inclusion and becoming independent adult for the young persons in care is a multi-layered problem.

These young people face the same general difficulties as the other young people (the economic crisis, precarity) on top of the obstacles imposed to them by their already difficult life.

The services of child welfare and youth residential care structures vary in methods of taking in care, problems targeted and funding; some of the young persons in care have the benefit of inclusion of a coach or scholarship while others have only educators in specific area; others develop partnerships with specialised bodies and delegate their task of inclusion.

Financing was provided for 48 projects working in the area of “residential care of specific target group in order to provide adapted care to children and teenagers facing multiple difficulties and support for care leavers in their process of getting independent”;

Unfortunately this call to projects could not be renewed due to reduction of funds.

The public employment service faces troubles in keeping pace with the increasing number of young people in need of help. Despite the many associations emerging to support the local missions, there are very little coordination and linking between them.

Poland

The support provided to youngsters under the child welfare programme with regard to access to labour market requires a complex organisation. The young persons may indeed have some benefit of this programme either in form of support to gaining independence, or as help of the public employment institutions or by means of projects proposed by NGOs.

According to the law regulating the child welfare, each young person in situation of gaining independence is entitled to a support in finding a job. As previously stated with regard to job searching, all the Polish youth can benefit the help of public employment services and the voluntary labour bodies. The aid provided may be financial or non-financial, in practice it is, most often, a minimum financial assistance.

There are two types of financial support:

- One-off payment in form of tangible assets for gaining independence, depending on the period spent in residential care, with no obligation for the young person to justify how

it's spent. It's is mainly used for housing space, purchase of furniture and education equipment or equipment for the work.

- Monthly allowance for continuing education.

This kind of financial support can be allocated to young persons up to the age of 26. The non-financial aid may be in form of aid and counselling for housing or finding a job;

As stated in the 2014 report, the counties' employment agencies propose help in finding job, they also encourage the young care leavers to join the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development which proposes: optimisation of the professional qualifications, career consulting , psychological and legal counselling, personal development workshops, internship.

A research of 2014 (M.Abramowicz, A.Strzalkowska) points out that most of the young care leavers declare they hadn't been supported in the choice of their profession by their social workers, therapists or professors;

Numerous NGOs and foundations propose aid for bridging the financial and social difficulties of these youngsters; they offer programmes for improving professional competence of the youth in residential care. The mission of these institutions is to develop good practices for helping the youth on the labour market.

Some of the proposed projects are:

- Activity: a chance for employment and independence
- transition to independence;
- Action: a chance for the future
- The human being: an investment for the society;
- a gateway to the labour market;

These projects were implemented by CCFS and different cities, before 2015; the goal was to help the young care leavers in their efforts towards their independence i.e. in finding job. Most of the projects were subcontracted by the CCFS to local vocational training bodies or NGOs.

Summary

Concerning the young people placed in care, it is reported that the most often the transition to independence after the age of 18 is highly brutal experience; the recommendations would be to develop networks and to train professionals specialized in the field of professional inclusion.

Another measure would be to simultaneously implement the social and professional inclusion.

One more measure would be to establish co-operation and communication protocols in order to optimize the networking.

3.3 European directives and recommendations on the issue of professional inclusion of youth, with accent to taking in residential care by the child welfare services

The Council of Europe...

At the end of the first chapter of this report we have described the European policies in the area of children's right and Council of Europe recommendations. Indeed these are the instruments within the European organisations dedicated to social rights, therefore - we have named it The European Social Charter.

The European Social Charter, a treaty of the Council of Europe which guarantees the fundamental social and economic rights, is the equivalent of the European Convention on Human Rights. It regulates the civil and political rights. The focus of the Convention is on protection of vulnerable persons such as the elderly, children, persons with disabilities and migrants. It requires that these rights are fully enjoyed in a non-discriminatory manner.

It has been ratified by 43 of the 47 countries of the Council of Europe (with exception of Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Switzerland) while the respect of the engagement taken by the member-states is controlled by the European Committee on social rights¹⁹. The control is achieved either by collective agreements of the social partners and other non-governmental organisations either by means of reports prepared by the members states.

With regard to the professional inclusion of youth, the Council of Europe has adopted, June 22nd, 1992, a Recommendation²⁰ on the basis of the fundamental principles stated in the first article of the European Social Charter. This Recommendation focuses on the phenomenon of labour market exclusion which affects certain categories of youth, as well as the instability of revenues and the status of youth without family support.

It is mentioned that the difficulties the young persons are facing are often due to inadequate level and type of training which handicaps the least trained youth in their employability but also fails to meet the needs of businesses for increasingly skilled labour force,, underlying the inadequacy between trainings and employments.

The education system needs an action in form of introduction of permanent professional orientation counselling services in line with improvement of methods of professional inclusion. Preference should be given to active measures over those of passive character and especially the cash benefits; e.g. developing the internship finally enables creating the "inclusion path".

During the final Declaration on the "Future of the Youth Policy" of the Council of Europe: "Agenda 2020" adopted at the 8th Conference of the Council of Europe, the ministers responsible for the youth (Kiev, October 10-11 2008), expressed their determination

¹⁹ The 285th Session of the European Committee of Social Rights shall take place in Strasbourg, 17-20 May, 2016. du Comité européen des Droits sociaux aura lieu à Strasbourg du 17 au 20 mai 2016

²⁰ Recommendation n° r (92) 11 of the Committee of Ministers and member states on the social and professional inclusion of youth.

to pursue the objectives of ensuring the youth access to education and quality training, to job and decent life circumstances and to create conditions allowing them to contribute to the society development.

In 2009 the Council of Europe launched the project “Enter!” With a goal to define responses to exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people, as part of the employment and youth policies, ,

January 21, 2015 a Recommendation²¹ on Access of Young people from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods to Social Rights, emphasizes the need to modernise curricula to better suit the needs of young people for their professional inclusion and the difficulties they face when entering the professional world, to making the vocational training more attractive and relevant for young people not used to academic methods and improve the reputation, recognition and resource donation for the vocational guidance within the education system.

One section is devoted to the employment and occupation noting the need to encourage the competent authorities (local communities, educational institutions, etc.) to work in partnership with the social stakeholders (local companies, big companies, trade unions, chambers of commerce) in order to develop programmes for acquiring professional experience for the benefit of young people who would have difficulty acquiring it without extra help. The same section proposes a feasibility study for creation and implementation of a “Youth Guarantee”, which would undertake the necessary measures to ensure that not a single young person would be excluded from education, training or employment for longer than four months. Hereinafter we are elaborating the concept of “**Youth Guarantee**” the principle of which has been adopted by the EU.

The European Union...

Regarding the European Union (EU) The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union brings together in one document the fundamental rights and freedoms protected in the EU. The Charter elaborates the rights and freedoms under six headings Dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizenship and justice. Proclaimed in 2000, the Charter became legally binding in the European Union with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009.

The EU strategy for youth, agreed by EU ministers, defines a framework for cooperation for the period 2010-2018, fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States in the field of youth. This Strategy has two main objectives:

- creating more possibilities and equal opportunities for all young people in education and on labour market;
- encourage the youth to actively participate in the society;

In this context some youth strategies are directed to strengthening the vocational guidance and counselling, developing opportunities for youth to study and train abroad and

²¹ Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on Access of Young people from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods to Social Rights

promoting quality internships/learning but also encouraging entrepreneurship among young people.

Among the recent strategies for youth inclusion, let us mention the Youth Guarantee; the EU member states have approved the principle of **guarantee for the youth** in April 2013.

The **Youth Guarantee** is a new approach to the struggle against youth unemployment which ensures that all young people under 25 – regardless their registration with the employment services or not - can get a concrete job offer within 4 months of their leaving school or loss of their jobs.

The total estimated cost for the guarantee schemes for youth in the euro-zone is 21 billion euros per year, or 0,22% of the GDP²². The EU can support national spending through the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative with 6 billion for the period 2014-2020.

Indeed the initiative for youth employment is to increase the amount of financial assistance through the EU Structural Funds to regions with youth unemployment rate exceeding 25%.

An additional program "Your first EURES job" which is in fact a "targeted mobility scheme" is a complement to the Youth Guarantee. The objective of this programme is to fill in the vacant jobs in some labour sectors, some professions, certain countries or groups of countries, or to support particular workers' groups with propensity towards mobility, such as the youth. The aim is to help young EU citizens aged 18-30 to find a job, an internship or apprenticeship all over the EU countries.

The European Alliance for Learning is designed to improve the quality and offer internships, it proposes ways to facilitate young people to live and work more easily in other EU countries;

In this perspective the Erasmus + program is the only mobility program. Since 2014 and following the agreement reached in June 2013 between the Parliament and the Council, "Erasmus +" becomes the only EU program for education, training, youth and sport. Hence, the seven mobility programs are merged into a single device. "Erasmus+", this new programme 2014-2020, brings together the action programs in the field of education and longlife learning (such as Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius and Grundtvig), the program "Youth in Action" and five international cooperation programs (Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink and the program for cooperation with industrialized countries).

Summary

- Giving priority to proactive measures;

²² Source: BIT report - employment crisis in the euro-zone
European report

- Implementation of the Project “Enter” to fight against the exclusion, the discrimination and the violence towards the young people;
- Follow-up on the 2015 Recommendation concerning the access to the social rights of the disadvantaged young people.
- The Youth Guarantee

4 THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE TOOL OF PROFESSIONAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

4.1 Roles, missions, ...

Concerning the place and involvement of social workers in inclusion measures for young care leavers, different practices can be seen throughout the national reports, ranging from support to participation. We can also notice that their place is sometimes formally established and implemented, as in Germany where access to employment for young care leavers is one of the competencies of the youth welfare services: “This support shall promote their scholastic and vocational education and help them enter work and achieve social integration.”, or leave it at the discretion of the stakeholders as the case is in Spain for example.

In Poland, we can point out that if support for the inclusion of young people is a mission of social workers, they find little time to fulfil their mission.

In Belgium as it has been described in the first part of the report the youth social workers are not entitled of the specific mission of assisting young people towards vocational and professional integration.

It is the adult public sector which is rather in charge of this mission.

Actions led by social workers towards professional inclusion assistance will depend of the institutions they are working in and will mostly consist in school integration.

In private institutions like open environment assistance services, social workers may decide to assist youngsters towards professional integration but it is not systematical. It depends both on the young adult situation and the freedom of manoeuvre of the social worker.

Concerning Spain In Catalonia the social workers will support and advice young people regarding education and labour options and opportunities; The social workers will help youngster to realize which are their interests and strengths and help them to find the most suitable options. The youngsters should choose by themselves what they want to do, it should not be imposed by the social worker.

The youngsters that are in residential care, follow a working plan that is agreed between them and the social workers in order to progress in their vital trajectory. This work plan includes options and paths for studying and or working.

Concerning Austria: role of youth workers:

Youth workers have to fulfill a broad range of tasks and roles to holistically assist their clients. One major aspect is the focus on job integration issues. Therefore youth workers have several responsibilities:

- being the most important contact person for the youngster
- providing emotional assistance
- motivating the young person to look for a job
- finding out interests and talents of the youngster
- searching for job opportunities and using their personal network to get information on job vacancies
- assisting the youngster with writing a CV and an application
- preparing the young person for job interviews (role games, discussing their strengths etc.)
- helping to cope with rejections
- assisting the young people with stabilizing and integrating new alternative behavior patterns
- assisting their clients with building up a professional network
- bringing together good practice examples (young care leavers who successfully managed to get and hold on to a job) with their clients in order to give them access to role models
- help them to find solutions for financial support

Summary

The countries developed differently the role of social workers concerning the accompaniment of young people towards professional integration, it shows oscillations between formalization and strong incentive (as it is the case for Austria and Germany) and recommendation which suggests but does not oblige the professionals to propose a suitable support in this field; therefore it seems that the accompaniment towards occupational integration depends on the will of the young person as much as on that of the respective professional.

4.2 Funds spent by institutions for promoting professional inclusion

If the social workers are a key stakeholder when it comes to professional inclusion of young care leavers, as one of the conclusions of the national reports, the next conclusion is the importance of networking, coordination and synergy between the various stakeholders and tools implemented. Thus, on the basis of the reports we can highlight positive experiences:

Belgium

Belgium is an example that sectors and institutions connecting in cooperation may become the factor boosting the support of youth towards employment. Hence, it is proposed to “create possibilities for developing joint public action with the overall of stakeholders on board, to open up possibilities for symmetrical and transversal partnerships in direction of integrative local development”.

Spain

The coordination brings added value of the welfare actions. Thus in Catalonia, collaboration between the government and the field stakeholders enabled to set-up positive dynamics of welfare support for young people.

Despite the two examples where networking worked well, that is not yet the case in all the countries. Germany seems to have a serious lack of coordination and gateway between the different tools in the field of support towards employment and the residential care in the framework of child welfare. There are attempts for networking, nevertheless all the initiatives are individual and local. Consequently, there is a lot of network overlapping which makes them ineffective.

CONCLUSION

It appears first of all that if there are some nuances between the child welfare legislations of the 6 countries participants of the Abeona project, their structuring follows the same stages to convergent dates; among the similarities observed we can note that all the legislations envisage an accompaniment beyond the majority: 18 years for all the countries; thus within all these countries the children under a child welfare measure can ask to be accompanied until they're 21 or even 27 years old. Nevertheless the implementation of this policy of taking the young adults within the framework of the child welfare remains inconsistent.

What seems to make consensus is that the transition of these young people towards autonomy is a heavy and prematurely imposed obligation whereas the young people of the general population enjoy the comfort of a later and gradual gaining of autonomy; Thus in order to accompany them during this passage to the adulthood, the childhood welfare programmes of the various countries provide structures tailored to their needs in the attempt to support them in their acquiring autonomy.

In addition to the child welfare policies, the inventory of facilities, programmes and instruments listed in this report, indicates that the 6 countries engaged in this project have quite different unemployment rates and their respective evolution. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the countries with the lowest unemployment rate are the one who have developed many instruments in favour of training and education of the young people as well as access to vocational training.

With regards to the specific needs of the young people proteges of the child welfare concerning their access to training and employment, the 6 countries partners of Abeona have national strategies oriented to the youth in general and not any specific programs for the young people under child welfare protection. Such a reality does not encourage the social workers to privilege the problems of integration with this segment of the youth population. However the professionals have already reached the conclusion that these young people do have the need for a concrete accompaniment which takes into account their specific difficulties to become autonomous. However the professionals work rather on the material and psychological dimension of the autonomy of the young people. The question of the accompaniment of those young people towards professional inclusion seems too often random and depending of the desire or personal commitment of the professionals.

Thus the good practices stated in this report are mainly initiatives in the framework of generalised goals such as employment for all the young people and it seem that in the 6 countries concerned with the project, there is no any any initiative specifically targetting the young care leavers or proteges of the child welfare. However, their particular situation, which is result of their history of life, deprives them from family support and often from their institutional path but also from any personal network, requires finding the ways to give to these young people access to specific actions to build up and develop their networks and bonds;

In this context, taking into account the European social policies which stress the importance of access to employment for the youth, it is urgent to build tools adapted to the

professionals of educational and social domain as well as a methodology for use of those tools. As a matter of fact, the lack of networking and communication between the programmes and the actors, weakens the effect of all actions of this kind in favour of these young people.

The professionals of the 6 partner countries got together in order to find better solutions for the needs of the educational and social professionals, to share the results of their observations and exchange the good practices; the outcome of which will be described in the second part of this European report.

NB : The bibliographical references are stated in the national reports.

PART 2: EUROPEAN REPORT YOUTH WORKERS EXCHANGE AND FEEDBACK

1 YOUTH WORKER EXCHANGE FEEDBACK

In this summarising report, this feedback focuses mainly on the different target groups which participants came across during the exchanges or to which the institutions visited were dedicated. It also describes the basic structural conditions for care leavers in the welfare system or in the transition to VET and work which came to the attention of the youth workers during the exchanges.

1.1 Different target groups among care leavers

The range of institutions visited underlines the fact that the experiences gathered by the young people, the professional actors within the welfare system and other stakeholders can vary widely in terms of accompanying transitions to VET and work.

1.2 Care leavers with particular need for therapeutic support

Young people with particular therapy needs have greater need for support during vocational education and training than other young people. In the VET process, a special understanding is required of these young people's living situation, and individual support. This must also be taken into account when designing programmes for the transition to VET and work.

Example from Austria:

The target group are young boys that have a mental disease and/or behavioural disorders which are not certified as handicapped. Thus, their cared youngsters show traits like aggressiveness, low impulse control or attention deficit, which severely hinders their chance of staying in a school or at a job. The problem is that they also do not fall into special protected services granted to handicapped people.

“Border crossers”

Some target groups in residential care face such serious impairments that regular integration into the VET and labour markets cannot be expected when they are young adults. These young people, who do not necessarily have a diagnosis or attested disability, require longer-term support within the child and youth welfare services, plus safe VET programmes presenting them with tasks adapted to their needs. With these young people, their longer development period, part of an otherwise extended adolescence, needs to be taken into special account.

Example from Austria:

Clients who are temporarily not feasible in larger, structured entities, because they require more intensive therapeutic interventions, need special offers. These clients have a state of delayed or incomplete development of mental competences; such as cognition, language, motor and social skills. Special emphasis is placed on the interaction and cooperation of the offered therapies. By linking the work of various professions synergy effects of the core competencies of each therapy and pedagogical offer can be made.

1.3 Care leavers with an educational disconnect

Young people and young adults who are disconnected from education, whose motivation and skills make it questionable whether they can go on to VET or a job.

Example from Belgium:

In one care group were accommodated young girls who are out of the school system and therefore present in the center. As the meeting progresses, it is becoming increasingly obvious that these young people are generally far removed from the education system. Indirect preparation is required for initial or renewed access to the school and VET system, by means of character-building schemes:

The time after dinner was devoted to activities relating to self-esteem/the body. The child care workers pluck the young girls' eyebrows and give them a manicure (nails, etc.). This constitutes the focal point of the work on "prerequisites" to develop the ability to anticipate the social and vocational integration of young people in great difficulty with their academic experience and with institutions, notably educational, via: connections, relationships with others and their own body, self-esteem and self-confidence, notably by working on their self-image (manicure, hair removal) to help them acquire interpersonal skills and learn social codes.

Unaccompanied, underage refugees

Young, unaccompanied refugees are affected not only by their life experience in their native country and during their flight but also by issues related to immigration law as they prepare for and are supported through the transition to VET and work.

Example from Germany:

Coaching programmes directed at young refugees and others with a migration background can also give model incentives for the vocational integration of care leavers as a whole:

Young people who come to Germany as new immigrants are regarded as having above-average motivation to start training and learn a profession so as to be integrated into society and live a life of economic independence. Although this is possible regardless of residence status, young refugees and new immigrants often meet with a number of obstacles. This project is intended to support young refugees and new immigrants who seek a suitable training opportunity or vocational qualification, lack of skilled labour and demographic factors being among the underlying incentives.

Example from Austria:

Supported are unaccompanied refugee minors with behavioural or other mental health problems. Preferably taken are young people from other educational institutions who are no longer feasible in these facilities for psychological and social reasons. The unaccompanied minors obtain a defined daily structure, embedded in a suitable personal framework. Special treatment is often indicated due to the trauma of young people which shows in post-traumatic stress disorder.

Since most young people have enormous psychological problems, a special learning program for them is developed, which helps them with a proper integration into society. In particular emphasis is placed on learning the German language. Additionally the focus is put on monitoring and learning about the new culture to cope with everyday life and to learn the associated roles.

1.4 Motivated care leavers with an interest in education

Some care leavers do not lack the prerequisites and skills to fulfil the expectations of the VET system (punctuality, reliability, meeting working requirements, etc.) and tackle the theoretical aspects of VET. Instead, they need suitable access to the VET market, financial security and a stable social environment. Access to higher education (university), especially, is frequently cut off by barriers in the care system. This means that their needs for vocational support may vary greatly. These different initial conditions for every individual, and the different aims and opportunities offered by each occupation, need to be taken into sufficient consideration during transitions from child and youth welfare services and from general education into the VET system.

The responsibility taken on for their upbringing by the child and youth welfare services must be extended to include the educational support usually provided by parents and schools of general education. Educational support is an element of character-building which needs to be integrated into the child and youth welfare services. The more nuanced and specialised the management of transitions to VET and work becomes, the harder it is to meet the particular needs of young people growing up in the care of the child and youth welfare system in an inclusive, continuous and comprehensive manner.

1.5 Basic structural conditions in practice

Specific programmes for the transition to VET and work

In some countries there are specific programmes dedicated explicitly to supporting care leavers during the transition to VET and work:

Example from Poland:

There is a programme which involves finding care leavers work experience in companies:
www.samodzielni.pl

Example from Spain:

ASJTET is a service offered by the government of Catalonia. It provides different programs and projects for the vocational integration of young adults who were in care measures, for minors under guardianship as well as for youngsters at high social risk. Their main tasks are social and educational monitoring, housing, social and labour integration (VIA LABORAL), psychological monitoring, economic support and legal accompaniment. The members of the project VIA LABORAL try to figure out and combine the skills and wishes of the youngsters, so that their possibilities can be put into concrete terms. Afterwards they find fitting offers for them or prepare them for working life.

Example from Germany:

Grünbau describes itself as a “social vocational support company” and does commissioned work for the entire Dortmund municipal area and the surrounding district. It offers a wide variety of different kinds of assistance for young people. The area of particular interest as part of the visit program linked to the Abeona project and one that was dealt with in some depth in the presentation was the activity called “Jawoll- Beruf und Wohnen”, meaning something like “Job & Housing – No Kidding!” Grünbau gGmbH has run this activity for the past 20 years. The main pillars of the programme are daily structured vocational orientation and assisted living, building a basis for autonomous living. The program targets in particular German adolescents and young adults and unaccompanied underage refugees who are school-weary or who refuse to go to school. One of the strong points of this activity is its high degree of professionalism in the vocational preparation of care leavers.

As well as special programmes for care leavers in the child and youth welfare services, there are also opportunities to improve transitions to VET and work.

1.6 Mediation between young people from the child and youth welfare services and companies offering traineeships / the labour market

The close connection between the child and youth welfare services and the VET and labour markets can improve those actors’ acceptance of the young people’s special needs and any difficulties they have with VET and work processes.

Example of Austria:

As might be expected, those stakeholders more related with the care and after cares system did worry much about the lack of empathy and second chances for youngsters with mental and behavioural problems. Only the fact that there was a structure (the BTG) giving support to both the youngsters and the employees could grant a certain guarantee of success. But their main concern was that, after a certain age, this structure was not able to continue with providing assistance. In most cases that meant that any further conflict would be difficult to handle for both parts probably ending in the youngster being fired.

The professionals defined certain “red lines” that everyone who wanted to enter the professional world has to achieve: following a schedule, respect the boss, no arguing with colleagues and behaving in the work place. These core points can often not be fulfilled by youngsters in care. Therefore, the aforementioned presence of a structure that supports

both the youngsters and the employees is absolutely needed to increase the chance of success.

Example from France:

The protection of childhood is presented in a patchwork form where everyone has their own particularities. The different elements are but very little connected. The field of handicap, childhood and mental health are very rarely cross, whereas we are led to ascertain that the young people in need of protection find themselves very often at the crossroads of sectors.

1.7 Youth workers as a constant and as key figures

When it comes to preparing care leavers for the transition to VET and work, two factors are important for their successful access to VET and (in the long term) their completion of the programme. The first is direct resources such as professionals' knowledge of programmes and means of support for the transition to VET, and the second is indirect categories such as stable relationships with carers or a safe financial basis on which to live.

Example from Spain:

The youngsters receive constantly support and help from the youth workers. Youth workers are often the linking persons, who mediate between the youngsters and other organizations, or who make the first contact between them. The youth workers help the youngster to write CVs and to search for companies, where the youngsters can apply for a job. The youth workers give emotional support, which is very important for the youngsters. They need to know, that there are persons they can rely on. The main support activities for vocational integration of young care leavers are provided by other organizations/institutions, external to the structure the youth workers establishes the contact and transfers the young adult to the support program/project.

The varied, confused nature of support programmes for the transition to VET and work makes it difficult for both youth workers and care leavers to see the bigger picture. Low-threshold advice covering all aspects of paths to VET, prerequisites and means of support during VET would be helpful. Guaranteed support from a trusted advisor during the VET process could be a great help in ensuring that care leavers can make use of opportunities for vocational education and actually achieve their learning targets.

Example from Germany:

The area of counselling, supervision and training of young girls and women on their way to shaping their own lives from school to work and in their search for appropriate social services continues to be one of IN VIA's main focuses. IN VIA programmes aim at helping women in particular to develop their strengths, look after their interests and find their own way. The Advice Centre for Youth and Employment is a particularly important base in the Unna region for assisting young people on their path through training and work.

The Advice Centre for Youth and Employment addresses the needs of adolescents and young adults who require individual support in their transition from school to employment by the provision of:

- counselling oriented towards the individual case
- one-to-one discussions
- support in overcoming job-related and personal difficulties
- discovering personal strengths and use of available resources
- involvement of and social-pedagogic support for parents
- networking with all individuals, institutions and organisations involved
- vocational orientation and job interviews, help in compiling interview documentation
- provision of information on various occupations
- accompaniment to advisory bodies, training establishments, companies and authorities.

In many European countries, however, there are cooperation gaps between child and youth care and vocational support for young people. There are also some serious structural barriers making it hard for care leavers to access the VET and labour market:

1.8 Structural barriers preventing care leavers from accessing the labour market

- Educational qualifications often below average
- Social skills, psychosocial stability
- Financial / material uncertainties

Example from Spain:

One of the main problems for the vocational integration of young adults with immigrant background is the restrictive access to the labour market for immigrants in Spain/Catalonia.

Example from France:

With respect to dropping out of High School, the actor brings a polyvalent aid that may consist of a pedagogical aid, of programs focussed on the monitoring of the high school students and absenteeism situations. There are steps to fight against dropping out of school: from 16 years old, one re-questions the young person's path in terms of dropping out. It is about support work that is relatively "forced"²³. Furthermore, when there is a problem within the school institution, the young persons may take an immersion internship in another institution to allow them to "turn elsewhere if it suits him better". And if the young person says that "school is not made for me", they either guide him towards the local mission, or the civic service.

²³ If we compare this monitoring with the support suggested in Belgium by the Centres Psycho-Médico-Sociaux (Psycho-Medical-social Centres) (PMS).

1.9 Support limited by age

Finishing assistance after a certain age makes the transition of care leavers to vocational training and employment even more fragile. The situation that (in most countries in the Abeona project) child and youth welfare services come to an end whatever stage of VET a person has reached poses a critical biographical risk for care leavers. In Germany, for example, young people's family background is growing increasingly relevant for their educational success. Educational institutions themselves do not guarantee general school education and VET in line with a child's abilities. Educational success is strongly dependent on the social conditions in which they grow up. Their transition to the VET system is also greatly affected and promoted by their family environment. In the case of higher school qualifications especially, these transitions often take place after a person turns 18. For care leavers, this focus on providing support until they reach majority means their personal development is restricted and, in the end, their vocational education options are reduced.

1.10 Access to vocational education and the labour market

Example from Poland:

One basic point which stands out is that the VET system in Poland is very different to that in Germany. In Poland there are no schemes for in-company VET. Care leavers can go to university, like about 60% (?) of young people in Poland. There are also scholastic VET routes. Most care leavers do not study at university which, considering the high percentage of young people who do, means that they can be said to suffer an additional disadvantage in terms of educational opportunities.

1.11 Background situation of youth workers supporting care leavers

Example from Spain:

More training and better working conditions for the youth workers and more time dedicated to the young adults professional integration topic as well as social and economic security for the young adults are some of the issues that could help to improve the vocational integration of young care leavers in Catalonia/Spain.

Integration into VET and work may in some circumstances not be experienced in daily work, or seen as a primary aim. Behavioural problems, health problems, conflict with young people's family of origin etc. may at first push issues around their education and vocational prospects into the background.

Example from Belgium:

In short, this exchange may suggest that the specific issue of the social and vocational integration of young people is only of moderate interest, as it is addressed, notably within team meetings, as one topic among many others.

It may help if there are youth workers in the institutions who act as educational partners, ensuring that educational planning and support do not fall behind other concerns, and can ultimately be used by some as a means of dealing with their biographical burdens by improving their educational results (see research results from University of Hildesheim).

2 VOCATIONAL TRAINING: WAYS OF SUPPORT

- What are the specific missions of social workers towards employment for youth in care?
- Do social workers engaged in this employment support have specific additional training?
- By which means do child protection institutions support young people in employability?

Efforts to integrate into work cannot be seen independently of other aspects of care and basic pedagogical concepts, or of the community culture in the institutions or foster families. This involves a wider understanding of education. The transition to VET and work is part of a continuous character-building process which cannot only be focused on the specific “measures” aimed at entering VET and work. Young people need to be motivated to enter vocational education and encouraged to aim at a career which is realistic for them.

Example from France:

The support goals are:

- To suggest an individualised support program adjusted to the young adult within a collective and/or individual framework.
- To support the young adult towards his progressive autonomy and his registration as a citizen.
- To make the young adult part of social and professional success dynamics.
- To promote parents’ participation to the takeover.

Example from Austria:

All interviewed youth workers point out that besides vocational education, finishing school is the first and most important step. Without a school certificate (e.g. junior high school diploma) it is almost impossible to find any job. Furthermore, for them the topic of professional integration is not the most important one in their daily work with the young people.

In general the youth workers do not have specific experience with professional integration of young care leavers. However, youth workers support their youngsters indirectly with professional integration issues in helping them e.g. with learning the language (German and English) or discussing different interests, goals and wishes for their future.

In this chapter, structural prerequisites for successful transitions to VET and work thus need to be outlined, along with a description of care leavers’ individual biographies with regard to their socio-cultural and educational experiences during care.

Frequently, the promotion of formal education is not suitably integrated into residential care institutions. As a result, it is not taken for granted or experienced on an everyday basis. An educational example needs to be set in residential care institutions, as well as professionals having an education-promoting attitude.

Example from Austria:

However no structure organizes special vocational workshops, events or projects within their facilities as integrative part of their daily work. They do not have an integrated location in their facilities that provides information for professional integration. Mostly they use private contacts and networks to support their youngsters in matters of professional careers.

Example from Spain:

The youth workers help the youngster to get in contact with different companies, projects and organizations – they act as linking persons. Youth Workers support the youngsters in preparing their job applications. They offer support with writing the CVs and cover letters and instruct them on proper behaviour in working life. While the young persons are going to school, youth workers provide them with learning support. Sometimes the youngsters just need emotional support, or someone who can listen to them. Thus, another main part of their work is talking with the youngsters about their life, difficulties and wishes. This is an important method to figure out what youngsters imagine when it comes to their vocational integration.

Twice a year a reflecting meeting between a youth worker and a youngster is very important for the vocational integration. The youngster has the possibility to explain his personal aims, put milestones for reaching them and discuss them with the youth worker. This is very efficient, because the youngsters make their own rules and want to follow them on their own.

Furthermore, Plataforma Educativa offers after care support for care leavers who do not live in an assisted flat anymore.

2.1 Partnerships and Networks

Professional partnerships of residential care institutions and personal networks of the youth workers are an important resource for care leavers getting an access to internships, vocational trainings or jobs. So anyhow beside structural support and apprenticeship programs for care leavers they need acquainted counterparts as well as individual advocacy and reliable assistance.

Example from Spain:

Plataforma Educativa has many partnerships who are helpful for integration of care leavers to the labour market.

Example from Poland:

The Robinson Crusoe Foundation maintains a lot of business contacts in the assisted internship program. In the summer and winter camps people from local companies are involved in the simulation games. These contacts are a base for preparing internships and decisions on vocational perspectives.

Example from Austria:

Using of the personal network (people or businesses). The youth workers ask individually in his or her own personal network if a certain care leaver could do an apprenticeship or an internship. This option depends highly on the youth worker's network.

Other ways of integration:

The youth workers activities concerning their support for professional integration can be divided into three parts:

- 1) Identification of the youngster's wishes and interests and matching with realistic chances,
- 2) Helping them in finding a professional school/apprenticeship/... by doing profound research,
- 3) Supporting them in their struggle to keep the studies or a job, and to help them overcome frustration if they fail to do so.

3 ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

For the youth worker exchanges, the different national reports compiled by the countries taking part in the Abeona project analysed, among other things, care leavers' various needs during the transition to VET and work. The various needs which come up in the reports can be divided into three categories: formal structures required, support required by the young people and skills required by the youth workers. The central results from the reports are set out below. The different categories cannot always be examined separately, as the various needs are often closely connected.

3.1 Needs of formal structures

General structural needs

Firstly, all reports basically underline the importance of **access to information** when it comes to supporting care leavers through the transition to VET and work. In this respect, a lack of information is identified regarding the following aspects:

- existing apprenticeships and the process of acceptance
- professional integration programmes, initiatives, organisations and projects that give support in vocational/professional integration
- knowledge about the access to information for youth workers as well as for the youngsters, as well
- statistical data about life courses and barriers regarding integration in the labour market of care leavers.

Since the training system and the options for vocational support are very complex, youth workers need to have a good overview of the local services and the people to contact. Youth workers have to search and find organisations, projects and information without any support. It would improve the effectivity of the youth workers, if they knew where they can find the different offers. In connection to that **closer networks with employers and companies taking on trainees** could help in two ways, not only better identifying VET options even for disadvantaged care leavers and helping to place suitable applicants but also improving acceptance among employers and companies when it comes to the situation these young people find themselves in. Without **good networking of the actors** involved in transition management but also with the general and vocational school and training companies already, there can be no guarantee that young people give sufficient thought to their career perspectives and go about choosing the right career and applying for a trainee position or a place at college successfully. According this the Belgian partners desire to bring together all partners working with young people into a giant 'toolbox', notably when it comes to social and vocational integration.

Another aspect which was mentioned in the reports is the need for **simplified procedures**. To have "less papers to fill in" would allow a better support especially for the creation of the link with the private partners.

Another structural demand-side gap can be found in the reports regarding **finance / financial support**. What is mainly required here is economic security for care leavers. After leaving residential educational care and particularly during vocational training, the financial situation of care leavers is very fragile. Sometimes even foregoing training and opting for full social benefits to safeguard livelihood can be a more secure financial basis. The varying funding sources from which trainees and students finance themselves and the lack of legal entitlements to additional payments during training (i.e. for a laptop, study materials, etc.) causes great material uncertainties which can jeopardize achieving a vocational qualification. In this area better financial provision for care leavers during their training or the possibility of saving money during the care period would be important steps to improving training and education outlooks.

Furthermore, if someone is undergoing in-company training and already earning money during this period, this should not be penalised like in Germany. The money can either be offset against residential educational care or used as an opportunity to allow care leavers to occupy a flat of their own and then no longer receive financial support from an assistance programme for children and adolescents. From that point in time the situation of care leavers becomes more difficult and this can have negative effects on their training path.

As well as information gaps and a lack of financial support for care leavers, another aspect which seems to have a central role in the reports is the call for **needs-based, extended, flexible transition management**. Care leavers emphasise during discussions that in view of their previous personal experiences, it can be helpful to have some flexibility and alternatives on ways to achieve educational and training certificates and qualification. Concerning this it is obviously that the journey towards vocational and professional integration is long and requires seamless and permanent support as well as the utmost vigilance. If a young person decides to open up about his or her personal situation in talking to teachers or during in-company training, this could smooth out any detrimental effects. This could prevent someone giving up school or training altogether by, for instance, substituting school attendance with a traineeship or a way of extending training duration

and special support (i.e. by trusted supervisors). The conversations with care leavers showed as well that they want help and need spaces in which to experiment also for preparing for independent living as a whole. It is difficult to see these two aspects separately: success at school and at work can only be achieved if the young people can prepare appropriately for their future life and have a certain degree of self-confidence. Equally, they will not succeed in gaining an independent life unless school matters and preparation for vocational educational training have been sorted out. Additionally lower thresholds at contact points for care leavers with differing counselling requirements in all local administrative units could make for better transitions from support.

Ultimately, however, it is also important that young people who leave residential educational care programmes need **the chance to be able to return there after assistance** has ceased. Re-visiting this holistic, individual form of support, particularly if problems and crises occur during vocational training, can help bring stability back into the lives of these young people and help them achieve their vocational qualification. This need for support is completely normal up to the third decade of life and should in the first instance be supplied by the educational care with which the care leavers are familiar if the young people want a continuation of educational care /support for young adults by the assistance for children and young people programme.

Structural needs in child and youth welfare institutions

The national reports also list structural changes in child and youth welfare institutions which could lead to better support and guidance for care leavers transitioning to VET and work.

Basically, what is initially needed is **better working conditions for youth workers**. Good working conditions means, that on the one side there aren't too many youngsters in one flat – small groups may help young care leavers to get a closer support and therefore would increase their chances of success. On the other side youth workers do not have to work alone. Because if they have a colleague they can share their problems and solutions and cover the needs of the others. Youth workers as well need more time for working with the youngsters. The work is often stressful and because of many time constraints, they have to rush the youngsters most of the time to reach the given or appointed goals. Moreover for youth workers it is important, that their methods and competences are improved. The best way to do this would be to offer courses for youth workers that are provided by professionals who detected their needs and developed tools and steps accordingly.

As well the **support for the training objectives of care leavers** during the residential support period is a key factor for any later training successes. It is particularly important to create a positive training environment during residential assistance. Support must be firmly anchored within the residential educational care programme. This could, for example, take the form of special kinds of homework supervision and private tuition. In larger establishments it should be ensured that training planning is carried out by specially trained skilled staff and that other actors in the education field are involved. The youth workers who were interviewed also were of the opinion that **workshops for care leavers** on various different topics could improve preparation for leaving residential educational care. In this context group settings and specific rehearsing of skills by means of exercises and role games could contribute to a reflected critical involvement with the challenges of taking responsibility for one's own life. The following workshop topics serve as examples:

- what should I watch out for when signing contracts?

- how should I go about telephone calls and discussions with authorities?
- how do I look after my health care (make doctors' appointments, etc.)?
- how can I take the initiative when I need information?
- how can I avoid getting into debt?

As well as workshops of this kind, another important means of support mentioned is a **better connection to external support and networking**: group homes should be able to obtain more external help, giving young people more opportunities to gain some initial work experience. Some of the interviewed youngsters are worried, that they have not yet collected enough work experience to be a good worker, so they would need more possibilities to participate in an internship.

Structural needs in school, vocational training and employment

Similarly to child and youth welfare institutions, **small groups** are also seen as helpful for care leavers in schools, companies offering traineeships and businesses. Both in schools and at jobs small groups may help young care leavers to get a closer support and therefore would increase their chances of success:

- For schools: Previous experiences show that large groups of youngsters tend to end in conflicts and displays of violence.
- For jobs: It has been proved that small businesses (familiar business) are much more successful than big companies, as youngsters can easier feel as an individual that belongs to that group. In large companies the care leavers find it difficult to fit in and to adapt to the defined role expected of their position.

Regarding scholastic aspects the main difficulty that is described by youth workers initially relates to **basic school education**. Not finding a job is seen as a logical consequence of dropping out of school too early and not receiving a high school diploma. Care leavers want to work, but they are often not allowed to. Other interviewed youth workers and stakeholders say that **professional integration should begin earlier in school**. Youngsters don't have the knowledge of what they want to do as a job and can't choose their education accordingly. Concerning this matter, youngsters should meet people who actually work at different places, so they can speak not only about the techniques needed, but also about the circumstances of that work.

The National Reports list the following needs once care leavers have actually started VET or a job. Basically, an ideal partnership would be a place where the working schedules and the stress level of the work could be adjusted to the resources and capabilities of the youngsters. In this regard challenges described by the youngsters are the **high goals and standards at work**. Many youngsters are not able to reach them. Furthermore apprenticeships are composed of different areas and that they are not motivated for all of them. Failing in some areas means that they are unable to finish the apprenticeship. This leads to personal frustration and the motivation decreases. Another problem is the social **stigma of being a care leaver**. Most people don't give them a chance in their business when they know that they come from a home group. Moreover the intensive care the youngsters need during his or her professional formation is always a handicap at work. That's why the reports analysed a **lack of partners who would integrate the youngsters**. Often they are

seen as additional time and administrative costs for organisations. Maybe it would be an incentive for companies to hire and integrate young care leavers when they get special promotions and bonuses from the state.

Structural support required for unaccompanied underage refugees

Finally, in the context of the “structural requirements” category, one particular group of people should be mentioned: unaccompanied underage refugees. In the Austrian National Report especially, it is clear that these people make up a significant part of the target group taking part in the youth worker exchange. As well as the structural barriers faced by most care leavers transitioning to VET and work, unaccompanied underage refugees face other, additional structural challenges.

In the case of minor refugees there are many legal facts, which decrease their motivation and withhold them in their processes of autonomy, confidence and responsibility. Due to their emotional difficulties and to language barriers of immigrants those youngsters basically need more time for the same achievements as others. Concerning this it is difficult for them to stay at school and to finish their grades which in the long run hampers a good integration into the labour market. According to employment the needs of youngsters with migrant background all concern the same topic: the working permission. This is a huge problem, because the youngsters want to work, but are not allowed to.

3.2 Needs of support for the youngsters

The National Reports also identify various needs with regard to supporting care leavers transitioning to VET and work. One central point in this respect seems to be **social support**, which can be provided by various people and groups of people.

Social Support

From the point of view of the care leavers surveyed, it is especially important to have **one or more trusted advisors** (e.g. youth workers) who are there for them, listen to them and improve their motivation and courage. For the youngsters it is also important that they can rely on someone who helps them figuring out what they want. That is to say, they need someone who gives them advice, guidance and support in making a concrete plan, especially regarding vocational training and employment. Even after leaving the care facility, there should be someone they can contact when help is needed. After care service as well as a continued and open contact with the former group home give the young care leavers the emotional security that they are not alone. In the French report so called “housekeeper” were mentioned. They are not educators, they “just” come to help the young person take care of himself, but they find themselves in a position of humility and do not service the young person, they are “by the side” of the young person. Some also wish to have certain **role models**, because it is quite helpful to learn how others work with similar situations. When someone is starting in-company training, it can be useful to try and gain understanding for the young trainee and maybe look for any regular **contact persons or**

mentor there who can monitor training from the perspective of the training company and maintain contact with a supervisor or vocational school teacher. Such contact person/supervisor/mentor can also be useful for giving qualified assistance during preparation for examinations for the duration of training. Often those responsible in training companies can play a key role in assisting care leavers during training.

Beside professional persons also **friends, girl- and boyfriends as well as siblings** are highlighted as being important. The elder siblings feel responsible for their younger brothers and sisters, and to have them “within sight” brings them a plus for serenity. What these kind of persons create at the emotional level has to be taken into account as an aid. Furthermore for some young people, the fact that the educators allowed the contact with the family of origin is very important. Therefore, it would mean reflecting about the support one can provide parents with.

Support in vocational training and employment

Difficulties in vocational training or employment arise from special needs and the low attention level of young care leavers. Legal problems are derived from the high level of aggression, which result in property damage or even personal harm at work places. As a result some interviewed youngsters tell about problems with bosses and authorities and that they may feel alone with their problems at work or maybe even misunderstood. Thus one recommends that if there are problems or conflicts at work it is important to **talk with the colleagues and the boss**. Furthermore it would be good to **ask external people for help** like e.g. the work inspection. That’s why it is basically important to **be prepared for the power relationships in the companies**. Youngsters have to get along with orders and commands. They need to learn how to respect authorities and how to avoid conflicts with bosses. Youngsters say that it would help them to focus on a bright future and to not let the others provoke themselves. Moreover it is important to get along with the pressure to get achievements. Therefore interviewed stakeholders agree that for young care leavers **small goals** shall be defined which kind of guarantee a certain success to keep the frustration of failing (which will surely occur a few times) to a minimum.

3.3 Needs of competences for the youth workers

Finally, as well as structural requirements and care leavers’ need for support, the skills required of youth workers also need to be examined.

Training youth workers

The National Reports show clearly that requirements have been identified from an early stage, when youth workers develop these skills during their training. Some youth workers emphasise a **better education in the youth worker education** like at university (Social Pedagogy, Social Work etc.). The Austrian report shows that some youth worker attended trainings for other important issues like prevention of physical or verbal violence, de-escalation, management tools, trauma pedagogy or psychodrama. Thus on the one hand some youth workers show interest in further education and training and are willing to

increase certain skills to improve their daily work with the youngsters. In their opinion courses with a focus on professional integration would be useful. This may help to increase the awareness concerning the importance of labour market integration of young care leavers. A stakeholder adds that there is also too much theory in the youth worker education, which is why again it is important to receive better trainings and enhanced education. At university they need to do **more internships** (practical work) and to **get in contact with different companies and organisations**, so their knowledge is not just theoretical. That is to say, experience is very important for the work of youth workers, even during their education and trainings.

General support for the youngsters

Another proposal in the reports regarding the analysis of youth workers' required skills is to improve their skills in dealing with care leavers. Generally speaking they claim that everyone should make the effort to **better accept the failures of the youngsters** and be more supportive to them when their performance isn't optimal. In this respect, the most helpful point seems to be **emotional support**. The youngsters often do not have role models and thus no idea on how to act in different situations. In nearly every case, the care leavers come from difficult family conditions which means they normally did not have positive role models before. Because of that it is important that youth workers try to offer different kinds of acting or living – and the youngsters can choose. What is also needed is the **capability to handle different crisis situations** when young people start to lose the motivation for attending school, internships or when they have to deal with challenges at their work places. That's why on the one hand a specific competence is **motivating the young adults**. Motivation is an important issue in vocational integration, because the youngsters often do not have enough motivation on their own. Youth workers should support the care leavers to know themselves better so they can motivate themselves to integrate and improve their social skills to gain confidence. This competence is also important for supporting the youngsters to hold on to a formation/job once they get it. Most of them say that the easiest part is to obtain a job opportunity. What's difficult for them is to deal with minor conflicts, challenges and frustration in order to stay there for a longer period of time. On the other hand **good coping with frustration** for both the youth worker ("I'm no good at helping him") as well as the young person ("Why should someone want to contract me?") is important. Therefore some knowledge about basics of therapy could be useful, as well as knowledge of what external services are available like psychologists from the own organization or external support professionals. Closely connect to this youth worker should be able to **manage the immediacy**, because the young people often ask for immediate solutions. Therefore, the social workers are frequently faced with the frustration of the young people when they are unable to provide them with these immediate solutions they expected. The social workers are therefore obliged to learn to restore stages in the support process towards the integration and to (re)work the temporality with the young people. In a more concrete manner, it is about getting the young person to temper and visualise the various stages. This means that the professional has to be very precise about the manner in which he shall reintroduce stages and time in the aid relationship.

Analysis of talents, interests and skills of the youngsters

As well as youth workers' need for training, including how to deal with care leavers, the national reports also focus on analysing care leavers' talents, interests and wishes. At first

youth workers should have **knowledge on how to work together with the youngsters on their abilities, interests, talents and wishes** to help them find an access to vocational training and work. For some youngsters it is hard to figure out their competences and interests which is why they need support in collection and analysing different ideas. Therefore they need **tools to detect talents and skills** of care leavers as early as possible (see structural needs). Additionally youth workers should obtain **information about alternatives** to school, professional schools available, job offers for inexperienced people etc. The more focused this information could be, the less time would be wasted just in the research. Besides it would be easier to find something meaningful for the youngster, without the chance to lose a fitting opportunity only because the information wasn't easily available. For this purpose an individual (or small group) who gathers information for professional integration could be established in care facilities. Furthermore the application and practice of the care leavers' talents in their daily lives is important so that the youngsters put them to test. Afterwards a **profound reflexion about those interests/skills** regarding how they can be made useful for a future job is also needed. Finally a **detailed plan** in cooperation with the youngster could be designed that includes realistic goals with at short, medium and long term milestones. Topics like current studies, next professional school options, finally job opportunities and chances should be included. It would be helpful to split these plans into achievable and tangible steps. Finally, it is always important also to include the young people's point of view regarding all these aspects.

4 GOOD PRACTICES

By visiting different institutions and talking to youth workers, care leavers and stakeholders during the youth worker exchanges in the various countries, the exchange partners discovered various examples of good practice which could have a positive influence on care leavers' transition to VET and work. The structures, programmes, forms of cooperation and working methods offer a good opportunity to close existing demand-side gaps (structures, support for care leavers, youth workers' skills). This section presents the central forms of good practice.

4.1 Structures and programmes in child and youth welfare institutions

First, the work in each group, and the groups themselves, are described as supportive, e.g. when it comes to integration into VET and work. In Austria, it is underlined with regard to the therapeutic communities (BTGs) offered there that they really give the youngsters a so called home. Most of the group homes have at least one professional who lives next to it or even in the same building. So in urgent situations the youngsters have a stable and constant person available. A **stable living situation with reliable carers** is thus a key prerequisite for social work, both preparing the young people for their transition to VET and work and accompanying them through the process. Creating a basic relationship of trust with youth

workers can mainly be achieved by **accompanying the children and young people in the long-term**. This is clearly illustrated by the example of the Belgian institution INDL, which takes in children as young as 2½ and offers care until they reach the age of 18. When a youngster is no longer worried about the availability of caregivers and knows he/she can rely on these persons, he/she becomes increasingly open to exploration in the broad sense. In Belgium, again in the institution INDL practices were identified, such as stimulating desire, creating an experimentation context, from a very early age, which are once again important in the work on prerequisites for social and vocational integration. As such, placing **emphasis on everyday activities** (washing, cooking, etc.) is essential, albeit insufficient. In this regard, it should be pointed out that the INDL establishments employ no technical staff to prepare the meals and place the orders. This is the responsibility of the child care workers, in conjunction with the young people. The head of technical services, a former child care worker in one of the establishments, has significant technical skills, which provides the children with a genuine opportunity to practice tasks related to professions they may be interested in, at least initially. Their first attempts at practising these tasks are therefore carried out under the safe and supportive supervision of the adult, a reassuring "figure of attachment", without taking any excessive risks and with no direct consequences, which helps avoid extra pressure. A safe space in which they can prepare for adult life (e.g. through experimentation) is also provided in Poland by the Robinson Crusoe Foundation in the form of special **group work** for care leavers. This group work fills a gap in the current support system by preparing young people from residential care for independent living. Developing stable, long-lasting relationships between the carers and the children and the young people among themselves is a particularly important prerequisite for a successful transition from residential care. This relationship work is an especially important element of group work at the Robinson Crusoe Foundation. As well the group works offers the opportunity to experiment with everyday matters. The young people often do not learn to cook, to go shopping themselves, to wash their clothes, to deal with money etc. These social skills and practical everyday abilities are, however, vital if they are to run their own household. The group work brings up and tries out these skills to the extent that the setting allows. Special simulation games and camps (see later on), in particular, are involved in extending care leavers' horizons of experimentation and experience. Concerning the preparation for independent living (including entry to working life) the Robinson Crusoe foundation issued **various types of information material**, e.g. about how to deal with money, which could be transferred to other countries. Their basic information about entering vocational education and training, and about the labour market (looking for an internship, looking for work, job applications, interviews, preparation, how to behave when in employment, etc.) could also be developed as a basis for the different countries of the Abeona project.

In Belgium, the institution visited also has special therapists. A (social and vocational) integration in the broader sense is only possible if one's body and image are sufficiently positive. The presence of an academic tutor within the institution was less surprising than the work on the body and image (massage, hair removal, manicure, etc.), notably with the presence of a "body" therapist within the team, who organises a relaxation workshop. In damaged young people, self-image and how to restore it to gain self-esteem and respect are key stages with a view to social and vocational integration. Additionally a psychomotor therapist visits this establishment one day a week to work with the young people cared for, in accordance with a relational approach. These good practices mean that young people's interpersonal skills have an important place in the care process, resulting notably in the acquisition of social codes and therefore social integration.

4.2 Personal commitment of youth workers

A good practice is often described as a working relationship with the care leaver in which the talents of the young person are recognized and developed. Interviewed youngsters in Austria feel well supported by their youth workers and the care facility they are living at. One interviewed youngster mentions an online testing of interests which youth workers did with him. The majority say that social workers talk with them about vocational education whenever they have questions. Although there is no specific time reserved for that issue in care facilities, youth workers provide information anytime. The Austrian report also describes how, although there are official ways of job placement assistance by the Municipal Department, mostly personal networks of the youth workers are more helpful in integrating young people into society. Related to the professional integration of the care leavers, the youth workers use their personal networks to help in finding employment opportunities and apprenticeships. Moreover they are frequently supervising and checking on the development of the agreement. Regarding this the interviewed youngsters answered that the residential group had helped them achieve their goals with a rating of 5 over 5. As far as the interviews reflected, non had gotten a job thanks to the Public Employment Centre (PES). Certainly that option highly depends on the youth worker's network and ability to get in contact with important stakeholders. As well it goes hand in hand with certain risks in case of failing. Youth workers may risk to lose their reputation or friendship to potential employers.

4.3 Role models as motivators

Role models are also mentioned as being a good inspiration for young people. If there is already someone who was in a similar situation and managed to professionally integrate into the labour market it seems to be quite valuable to youngsters. Belonging to this environment means they benefit from a socialization approach within a group of young people as well as more generally, restoring the sense of belonging that their troubled school experience had eroded. Incidentally, the vast majority of young people interviewed view the connection with adults as THE integration solution, overshadowing all other aspects, be they academic, technical or otherwise.

4.4 Financial support

In terms of substance, the existence of the Social Integration Allowance in Belgium given to young people from the age of 18 constitutes a "safety net". While it only amounts to approximately 700 €, at least it prevents young people from being terrified by the idea of ending up on the streets without any resources when they come out of schemes such as the INDL's SAAEs or CAS. It involves an approach and duration of care in the broad sense. In Spain, care leavers who have spent at least three years in care also receive about €700 a month in financial support between the ages of 18 and 21. If they have not been in care for three years on their 18th birthday, they receive financial support only for six months. This fact is on the one side hard to understand for them and on the other side nearly not bearable. If they cannot immediately find a job, these conditions can threaten their life situation.

4.5 Partnerships and cooperations

Furthermore, partnerships and cooperative ventures involving the residential groups or the youth workers and, for example, companies which might offer traineeships, are described as central to care leavers successfully transitioning to VET and work. Most successful are **particular and direct partnerships**, which support one youngster at a time. In Austria there is not any kind of structure, company or organization that could employ large numbers of care leavers with mental illnesses. As those youngsters can only enter a work place one at a time (the special and personal supervision needed makes it impossible to have large groups in a single job), the partnerships that worked have always been a solution for just one youngster. Therefore, for other youngsters new partnerships have to be looked for every time. If a care leaver successfully maintains a job, then this place is already occupied by him.

4.6 Projects and internships

Almost all the National Reports emphasise the importance of internships and chances to gather work experience on certain projects. The following projects and types of internship are described:

- **"Restart and Space-lab" (Austria):** is a creativity place which offers young unemployed people meaningful work. They work with materials, which are considered as trash and make creative products out of them. After selling those products young people obtain some pocket money. Social workers assist with support and counselling.
- **Cooking school (Austria):** already exists for 17 years. It is composed of three grades, of one year each. They prepare caterings in Vienna, meals for schools and organize a

thematic dinner once every two months, with live music and a large number of customers.

- They are both workplaces where the care leavers can work for some hours or even for a few days (there has to be a minimum commitment). At the end they get their money in cash. They can go there anytime, without any previous appointment. The difficulty of the work is low in order to keep frustration low. The tasks there are quite simple like sewing bags. If the youngsters make some kind of planning for the week and fulfil it, they obtain a higher payment.
- **“Contrat jeune majeur” (France):** protection during the integration test, that is the possibility to keep actual administrative and social support for young adults, because the young person often struggles with the handling of loneliness and with administrative steps he/she does not understand and as it seems that the administration actors do not always show empathy for young people and for the difficulties they are faced with.
- **CIO (Centre d'Information et d'Orientation – Centre for Information and Guidance) (France):** advisors have permanent jobs in school institutions and go back and forth between various school institutions. There is also a large room to accommodate young people that is provided with an Internet connection. The CIO has furthermore information, guidance, as well as support missions for school dropouts.
- **Local mission (France):** advisors conduct interviews and coaching with the young adults starting from the age of 16 years old up to 25 years old included. These interviews aim to find again a valid guidance for young people that drop out of school and/or quit their job. They work in partnership with various training centres. They only work upon the young adult's request. If the young adult loses this re-integration path, their mission is not to involve them again. The local mission also benefits from “technical platforms”, experimental areas with professionals in cooperation with the CIO.
- **Summer and winter camps with simulation games (Poland):** Many young people who grow up in care have few opportunities to get to know special activities such as travel, sports and culture. However, it is precisely the experience of carefree life events and group processes which motivates them to achieve something in their lives, and which opens up the opportunity for them to deal with the biographical experiences which weigh upon them. For many care leavers, taking part in a camp is a step in their development which has a lasting effect. Among other things, this particular setting is more likely to stimulate learning processes than their everyday living environment. This intensive time at the camp thus also means, for example, a chance to set off some career prospects and perhaps continue the process through a subsequent internship. As such, the camps help, if indirectly, with their character-building and for some are thus an important step in their integration into the vocational training and labour market.
 - The simulation games for care leavers are extremely challenging and motivating with great pedagogical value. They produce direct results and are interactive. They could be used during work with the residential groups themselves. Simulation games during the camp, and the involvement of volunteers, make this learning environment more intensive. Alongside other elements from the camps, they could be transferred to other countries as preparatory material. This material could also be supplemented by a handout on group work with care leavers which could also be used in other countries.
- **Assisted Internships (Poland):** Educational support and vocational integration for care leavers needs to be a matter of particular concern in child and youth welfare to prevent

these young people from being left behind before they have even entered working life. The Robinson Crusoe Foundation's model of assisted internships provides a good opportunity to bring young people into contact with a working environment, so that they can reflect on their occupational interests at an early stage and gain insights into what they are required to do at work.

- **“Via Laboral”, “Estaciò espai jove” (Spain):** These projects help the youngsters to integrate into professional life and support the youngsters in figuring out what they are able to do and what they want. Furthermore they support them to write the CV and to find a fitting job or education place.
- **“Prepara’t” (Spain):** is a school, which prepares the youngsters for their apprenticeship. They get prepared as a cook, waiter or gardener. They can join the course any time throughout the year. This means, they can continue their vocational training without interruption, when they lose their previous job or training place.
- **EINA and Ecosol (Spain):** These are projects for young migrants to get access to the labour market. These projects offer young migrants the opportunity to work for one year, so that they can obtain a working permission afterwards, which is very hard to get in Catalonia and Spain. The youngsters work in fixing bicycles. If they do not find employment after one year, they can get a working contract with the organisation.

4.7 Lobbying for care leavers

The internships and engagement with actors from a working environment, e.g. during the group work in Poland, not only open up opportunities for vocational integration for the care leavers themselves but also raise the actors' awareness of the care leavers' situation. Networking with other companies (e.g. during sponsoring or when participating in the camps) helps care leavers come into contact with the business environment and benefit from its resources. This could become part of youth worker training, in that the aim is not only to give care leavers access to the working environment in individual cases but also to create structural openings and support for disadvantaged young people on the local vocational training and labour market. Lobbying would be a medium-term tool for this purpose.

5 CONCLUSION

At the end of this report we will name four aspects which could sophisticate guidelines for a youth worker training regarding the support for care leavers in their transition to vocational training and employment:

- (1) professional attitude and competencies of youth workers
- (2) relationship between youth worker and care leavers
- (3) structures in child and youth care institutions
- (4) networks between the practical fields of care and education

(1) Thinking care and (vocational) education as two parts of a whole

To prepare care leavers for a good transition from child and youth care to adulthood on one hand and from school to VET and work on the other hand youth workers have to be prepared for these complex tasks as well. The residential care system in common has not enough knowledge about different opportunities of apprenticeships, trainings, scholarships for higher education as well. The lack of knowledge is a systematically lack of chances for care leavers which should be reduced with the youth worker training.

The child and youth care system sophisticates its care and upbringing tasks, not an educational order in the first line. Additionally the staff in residential care institutions does not have precise knowledge about the complex vocational systems and offers of trainings and support during apprenticeships for young people. Experts in the educational system / the field of vocational training often are not or too late involved in the care process. In that point youth workers will have to be made aware of the importance of an educational guidance for care leaver during the training.

(2) Relationship between youth workers and care leavers: coaching and supporting

Working with young people in care makes it necessary for carers (youth workers) to assume responsibility for planning and supporting educational decisions like families or other private social networks do. In the meaning of a corporate parenthood the child and youth care institutions and their youth workers have to supervise and support educational topics. Towards other stakeholders youth workers could become advocates for the educational interests of the young people in care. So offering a good (educational) support is a question not only of skills and attitude, but of the quality of relationships between carer and youth as well. During the training could be arranged reflection units to discuss and for example play good practice of a supportive and motivating relationship between youth workers and young people in educational topics.

(3) Education concepts in residential care institutions

The care institutions and its leaders themselves will have to be sensitized on structural needs for supporting educational and vocational success of care leavers – still prepared during their time in residential care institutions (and foster families). The trainings could be part of developing institutional support for the care leaver's needs in education.

The preparation for an independent live can't be separated from questions about education and vocational goals. The support regarding school and other educational topics is streaked by other topics of the child and youth care.

The child and youth care has to conceive themselves as a supporter of education in a wider sense and frame the care tasks better in that direction: assisting homework, learning infrastructure (learning places, media and other resources), supporting out-of-school activities

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(4) Strengthening of cooperation between care and (vocational) education system

The awareness of youth workers regarding educational options during the training could open ideas for close mandatory local cooperations between residential care institutions, educational system and the vocational training institutions and maybe companies. These networks can be helpful for single cases, but for assessing the local needs for disadvantaged young people as well.

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AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE
TO CARE LEAVERS' PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION