

Newsletter

Summary of Work Progress

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During the past six months we have completed the individual survey (WP3) in all the countries. We have now started to analyze the data on a country level and we wrote some papers focusing on single cities, which are posted on the project website. We have also continued the in-depth qualitative analysis (WP4) by conducting and analyzing further interviews with young long-term unemployed. Work has also progressed on the EU-level analysis (WP5) concerning EU policies and measures. Finally, we have started to implement the policy and practical implications (WP6) by conducting the first discussion groups with stakeholders. We are currently preparing two common publications using data from the institutional analysis (WP1) and the organizational survey (WP2).

Research Outputs

*YOUNEX at a glance:
Three-year European
Project to have better
insights of integration
and exclusion of young
adults.*

We have started to analyze the data at the city level and to write papers reporting the findings. For example, we prepared two papers on Geneva, focusing respectively on political participation and coping strategies to deal with unemployment. These papers have been presented at workshops and are available on the project website. Here we summarize some of the main findings.

In the first paper political participation was studied comparing three groups: young long-term unemployed, precarious workers and regularly employed youth. We found that the most active groups were precarious workers and we confirmed the importance of social capital for political participation. Young unemployed involved in voluntary associations are more likely to be politically active, and the

gap in participation between unemployed and the other two groups is reduced when controlling for associational membership. These results call for further investigation, in particular to understand the stronger political involvement of precarious workers.

In the second paper we studied some negative consequences of long-term unemployment such as financial difficulties, health problems, and reduced happiness as well as the role of social support in alleviating these consequences. Unsurprisingly, long-term unemployment lead to financial difficulties, which can be seen among other things in the fact that young unemployed need to borrow money more often than regularly employed youth. In addition, long-term unemployed more often face anxiety and are overall less happy than regularly employed youth. Concerning social support, we found that partner support and to some extent family support can help reducing anxiety and unhappiness, while partner and family support do not seem to play any role in reducing financial distress. Overall, based on survey data, friend support does not seem to help reducing the problems faced by young unemployed. However, the in-depth interviews suggest that they provide moral support and offer opportunities to keep an active social life. These are two important dimensions of social support that we will analyze in more detail.

In addition to these analyses focusing on the case of Geneva, we are currently preparing two common publications that focus on comparative findings. The first one deals with youth unemployment regimes and presents the findings of the institutional analysis. The second one examines the role of the civil society in the field of youth unemployment and precariousness based on the findings of the organizational survey.

EU-Level Analysis (WP5)

In order to study the role of the European Union on national and local policies in the field of youth unemployment, we analyzed policy documents and conducted interviews with key stakeholders at both the national and European levels. The first results point to a trade-off between the generality and consistency of the European Employment Strategy, on the one hand, and the specificity and effectiveness it can achieve in regard to youth, on the other.

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Newsletter:
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*Policy and practical
implications:*

*Implementing a
broader understanding
of youth unemployment
regulations*

*Strengthening the
inclusion of civil society
organizations*

*Develop a multilevel
governance of youth
unemployment*

The Open Method of Coordination offers a lot of monitoring and bench-marking, and interview partners all evaluate positively the flexibility and openness of the process. Paradoxically, however, little peer-learning is occurring. In particular, national governments prioritize their own measures and seem to value less the opportunities of learning from others.

The role of civil society is seen as crucial in regard to advocacy and social services when the specific problem solving is at stake. However, civil society organizations are not integrated in consultations relating to the European Employment Strategy and the European Union is not concerned with increasing their involvement other than in rhetorical terms.

Policy and Practical Implications (WP6)

An important part of our project deals with the policy and practical implications of our research findings. We therefore aim to provide a number of policy recommendations in the field of youth unemployment and exclusion in Europe. So far we were able to identify three aspects that should be taken into account when dealing with youth unemployment at the political level. These first recommendations concern the institutional and civil society levels that we have studied so far. In this regard, our general advice is to implement a broader understanding of youth unemployment regulations, strengthen the inclusion of civil society organizations in decision-making processes, and develop a multilevel governance of youth unemployment.

More specifically, we suggest, firstly, that policy-makers address the issue of youth unemployment from a perspective that takes into account both unemployment regulations and labor market regulations. This will yield a more comprehensive institutional treatment of youth exclusion and lead to measures improving their inclusion in society through work and offering decent living conditions.

Secondly, we suggest that the practical expertise of civil society organizations in the field of unemployment be valued for both policy design and implementation. Their inclusion in decision-making processes can lead to the definition and

adoption of measures well adapted to the specific local situations of young long-term unemployed.

Thirdly, we suggest to adopt a multilevel approach to youth unemployment. It is important to identify the level at which policy measures addressing certain issues are most effective. Some issues can only be addressed locally in order to respond to specific problems, while others need coordination within or across countries. Finding the right level of intervention should be among the first steps of the policy process.

*Next phase of the
research:*

*Reports on the
individual survey and in-
depth interviews*

*Country-specific and
comparative analyses*

Forthcoming Events

The Younex team will be present at the following international conferences:

- Three-country conference
Basel, January 13-14, 2011
Political Integration, Unemployment, and Precariousness
- 6th ECPR General Conference
Reykjavik, August 25-27, 2011
Youth, Unemployment, and Exclusion in Europe

Greetings

The Younex team is happy to have you as a reader of the newsletter and hopes to keep you interested in our activities throughout the project. The next newsletter will be distributed in April 2011.