

Newsletter

Summary of Work Progress

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The Younex project has officially ended. During the last months of the project we have completed all the tasks. This has involved more specifically completing the in-depth qualitative analysis (WP4) and the EU-level analysis (WP5) as well as spelling out the policy and practical implications of the project (WP6). The results will be available on the project website. In addition, two important dissemination events, among others, have taken place. Finally, we continued to write papers presenting research findings.

Research Outputs

Two common publications using data from the institutional analysis (WP1) and the organizational survey (WP2) have been concretized. The former will appear in one of the next issues of the International Journal of Social Welfare. The latter will be published as an edited book by Palgrave. In addition, we are currently preparing two special issues of scholarly journals: one on the social and political inclusion and another one on well-being.

Other research outputs include a number of research reports showing main findings for each specific part of the project, an Executive Summary Report presenting policy-relevant results and policy recommendations, and policy briefs summarizing the European added value as well and the key messages for policy-makers, businesses, trade unions, and civil society actors. Some of these outputs are already on the project website. The remaining ones will be put on it soon.

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

ECPR General Conference

The Younex team was present at the 6th ECPR General Conference which took place in Reykjavik (Iceland) on August 25-27, 2011, with a section on Youth, Unemployment, and Exclusion in Europe. This has proved a good opportunity to spread some of the findings of the project and to exchange with other scholars working on similar issues in Europe.

The aim of the section was to advance knowledge on the causes, processes, and perspectives for change related to the social and political exclusion of unemployed youth. The section addressed this topic following a multidimensional approach. On the one hand, concerning what is to be explained, it looked at three dimensions of exclusion: social exclusion, political exclusion, and individual well-being. On the other hand, concerning the potential explanations of these dimensions of exclusion, it considered three types of explanatory factors: state policies and practices towards youth unemployment (macro-level), organizational networks and activities by voluntary associations intervening in the field (meso-level), and individual characteristics of unemployed youth (micro-level).

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Final conference

The Younex final conference took place in Brussels on August 30, 2011. Members of the Younex team have presented some of the main findings of the project and dealt with policy issues and solutions to youth employment-related forms of exclusion. Four invited speakers have reacted to these presentations: Christiane Westphal (European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG), Antima Ferro (European Anti-Poverty Network), Santa Ozolina (European Youth Forum), and Pablo Sánchez Centellas (European Federation of Public Service Unions). The presentations and reactions have stimulated a lively debate focusing on existing problems at various policy levels as well as possible solutions.

Concerning the policy-related aspects, which were at the core of the conference, we identified a number of problems at the state-level, such as: a want of resources and activation measures; a shortage of “good” jobs and quality employment; a segmentation of information and units of support for the unemployed; a low quality of counseling; a lack of vision and of

Younex final conference:

*A fruitful dialogue
between researchers
and practitioners*

long-term strategies; a rigidity of the system; and an unequal treatment depending on the skills and capacities of the unemployment. Similarly, a number of weaknesses of the European approach can also be highlighted, such as: existing conflicts of interest between the European Union and the member states or with social partners; no concise and systematic approach to youth unemployment; a strong focus on education and labor market (employment) and little consideration for issues related to social security; a “One Size Fits All” approach; vague European coordination and, with regard to the implementation of decisions taken at the EU level, little incentives to comply with the set goals and little learning across countries and measures; and a focus on bad performing states and little attention paid to better performing states that tend to rely on the acquired status rather than to continue improving their situation.

We also made a number of recommendations concerning the role of civil society organizations (CSOs). With regard to public institutions: CSOs should not only be seen as providers of services and actors implementing policies, but should also be included in the processes of policy-making; CSOs face increased concurrency among themselves due to certain policies, which can have negative consequences on their work; and CSOs services, activities, and work should be evaluated. With regard to the local level: collaboration and cooperation between CSOs should be increased; within CSOs it is important also to involve more their constituency and their members; and CSOs should avoid using activation measures as a “permanent” way of fundraising. With regard to the EU level: increase efforts of inclusion of CSOs in policy processes, especially in the OMC employment; include CSOs in employment policies evaluations; and strengthen infra-policy and infra-actors coordination mechanisms.

Greetings

The Younex team is happy to have you as a reader of the newsletter and hopes to keep you interested in the publications that will arise from the project.