Active Inclusion Learning Network

Interim Report

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Active Inclusion Learning Network

Interim report

Executive Summary

The ‘Active Inclusion’ concept emerged on the European arena in 2005, under the UK’s EU presidency. Since then it became central for many strategies against poverty and exclusion (Gunter and Harding, 2013). Simply put, ‘Active Inclusion’ means that in order to achieve effective strategies for those who are excluded from the labour market, they need to combine adequate income support with access to good quality services and inclusive labour markets.

In order to gather a comprehensive picture of how the concept of ‘Active Inclusion’ is applied in the European Union countries, the European Commission decided to support the Active Inclusion Learning Network. A systematic review; European surveys; peer review meetings; and interviews were organized by the Network to answer the question:

‘What approaches contribute to improving employability and employment outcomes amongst socially excluded groups?’

Over 290 best practices were analysed from across Europe.

In this report the interventions on each vulnerable group are presented using the following structure: findings from the systematic review; findings from the survey; and findings from the interview. Each section ends with a concluding paragraph with some possible suggestions for the future.

Based on this report, important progress can be observed in the area of employability and employment of the vulnerable groups at both levels: policy and practice.

A significant number of principles and approaches were identified as relevant across many vulnerable groups. The ‘whole person’ approach and ‘tailor made interventions’ were identified as the most common principles of work. Derived from these two principles, other approaches could be defined as important: flexibility, networking and inter-agency work, empowerment, connecting training to real job opportunities etc.

Apart from these rather common principles, specialised approaches were also identified for particular groups. For instance, public awareness and image building seem to be important for those groups with a public image deficit (e.g. ex-offenders). Social economy appears to be a good answer for vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities, drug users, ex-offenders and so on. In addition to the principles that can be applied across different vulnerable groups, some best practice tips were also identified: allowing small mistakes
(especially for ex-offenders) and rewarding small progress and not only the grand result etc. More suggestions can be found in this report on how to engage with vulnerable groups; how to prepare them for employment; how to integrate them into employment; and how to support them in employment.

During the evaluations and discussions undertaken by the Network, innovation was frequently observed. However, it was not observed as a revolutionary step but rather as a combination between mainstream services and technology or games or as a ‘different way of making things’. It seems that encouraging vulnerable people to get involved more in the designing and managing of interventions can be a possible path to innovation and progress.

More should be done to encourage independent and robust evaluation of the current practices. Interventions should be designed and implemented locally, based on a paradigm that combines social, educational and entrepreneurial mind-sets. Local interventions should be part of wider inclusive anti-poverty national or European policies. Employers should be more involved in designing employment interventions, starting from their economical interests. More attention should be paid to making employment interventions as economically viable as possible. Innovation should be supported by allowing more risk taking by the funders. Changing the model of financing from funding services and activities to funding individual pathways to decent life looks like a promising line to take.
A. Introduction

The ‘Active Inclusion’ concept emerged on the European arena in 2005, under the UK’s EU presidency. Since then it became central for many strategies against poverty and Exclusion (Gunter and Harding, 2013). Simply put, ‘Active Inclusion’ means that in order to achieve effective strategies for those who are excluded from the labour market, they need to combine adequate income support with access to good quality services and inclusive labour markets. These principles were incorporated in many European Commission (EC) documents, culminating with the EC Recommendation - 2008/867/EC on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market. The concept is also central in the European Employment Strategy (EES) “Europe 2020” which invites Member States (MS) to reinforce efforts to fight poverty and social exclusion and integrate people at the margins particularly through Active Inclusion policies.

With a view to the EC Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, and to the “Europe 2020” strategy objectives, particularly in terms of improvement of employment and poverty reduction, the EC decided to support a learning network dedicated to Active Inclusion. The Active Inclusion Learning Network is an European Social Fund transnational network involving countries such as: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The network is managed by the National Offender Management Service (UK). The aim of the Active Inclusion Learning Network is to support individuals in vulnerable groups, including Troubled Families, Disaffected Youth, and those who are Marginalised in Community, to re-engage with the labour market.

In doing so, the Network focuses on the exchange of information, data, tools and strategies on those approaches that facilitate disadvantaged people to enter and stay in employment. Investing more in people through a life-cycle approach in employment and education, reducing school leaving, providing equal opportunities, and good quality jobs is indeed at the heart of both the EES and EC Recommendation on Active Inclusion, since this is one of the most effective ways to fight inequality and poverty. Thus, though looking at approaches tackling all the three active inclusion pillars, particular attention was paid to aspects like: education, adaptation of competences to the labour market demand, the improvement of health conditions, gender aspects, and age.

This interim report presents briefly the current findings of the research conducted by the Active Inclusion Learning Network. In concrete terms, this report synthesises the results from the systematic review, the reports from the Platform 1 workshops and the interviews with the experts. Each thematic section of the report will conclude with some potential directions for further research or future strategic options for funding.

As decided by the project partners, and agreed by the European Commission, this report looks at how employability and employment can be enhanced for the following vulnerable groups:
1. Disaffected Youth:
   - Disaffected youth inclusion and empowerment
   - Disaffected youth not in employment, education or training

2. Marginalised in community
   - Homelessness
   - Drug and alcohol abuse
   - Offenders / Ex-offenders
   - Mental health, physical and learning disabilities

3. Troubled families
   - Offenders’ families
   - Multigenerational unemployment/Long term unemployment
   - Anti-social behaviour
   - Educational problems

In the text of the report the term ‘grou’p will be replaced sometimes with themes or sub-themes.

B. The methodology

The research conducted by the Network is based on a systematic review, an European wide survey, two series of events attended by experts (Platform meetings 1 – PL1 and Platform meetings 2 – PL2 ) and a number of interviews. Only the findings from the PL 1 meetings will be described in this report.

The Systematic Review

The systematic review is part of a wider research project dedicated to the active inclusion of vulnerable groups into the labour market. The purpose of this systematic review is to inform and support the selection of best practices, across Europe, in the field of employability and employment of vulnerable groups. In practical terms, this review provides ‘hard’ evidence on what works in this area, thus guiding the selection and analysis of the best practices.

The following inclusion criteria were used for the selection of the relevant papers for this review:

1. papers produced and published in EU countries within the last 5 years (2009-2013). When necessary, papers published prior to this year, or in other areas (including the US), have been taken into consideration.
2. papers published in peer reviewed scientific journals have been given priority. For topics where peer-review papers were not available, unpublished reports or other ‘grey literature’ were accepted.
3. to look at the employability or/and employment for the mentioned disadvantaged groups.
4. to present results or impact on employability or employment of the mentioned disadvantaged groups. Papers describing reflections or critical comments regarding different initiatives were included but were not given priority.
5. to be in English but also in some other EU languages. If one report was available in many languages, the English version was preferred.


In addition to the papers identified in the electronic databases, members of the learning network also suggested websites and reports to be included in this review. The review procedure undertook the following steps:

1. the selection of the electronic databases
2. the introduction of the key words
3. generating the inputs
4. analysing the abstracts of the inputs produced
5. reading and extracting the learning points from the inputs that fit the inclusion criteria
6. including the learning points in the corresponding section of the systematic review
7. concluding each section of the systematic review based on the collected learning points.

**The Surveys and the Platform 1 Events**

As part of the Network, surveys were sent out to ESF Managing Authorities, NGOs, charities and Government departments, across the EU, in 35 member states, in order to collect practices in the field of employment and employability of disadvantaged groups. The questionnaire template was designed and agreed by the partners of the Learning Network (Annex 1).

291 returns, across the 10 sub-themes, were received from 17 different member states. The highest proportion of returns came from England and Wales (35%), followed by Northern Ireland (14%); Italy (12%); Lithuania (11%), Sweden (5%); Germany (4%) and Belgium (4%) (see Annex 2 for the map of the submissions).

Of the 291 surveys received by the Network:
• 98 surveys were assessed at the Troubled Families event:
  o 21 surveys were assessed on anti-social behaviour
  o 30 surveys were assessed on educational problems
  o 35 surveys were assessed on long term unemployment
  o 12 surveys were assessed on offenders’ families

• 77 surveys were assessed at the Disaffected Youth event
  o 45 surveys were assessed on (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
  o 32 surveys were assessed on Inclusion and Empowerment

• 116 surveys were assessed at the Marginalised in Communities event
  o 20 surveys were assessed on homelessness
  o 27 surveys were assessed on drugs and alcohol
  o 37 surveys were assessed on offenders/ex-offenders
  o 32 surveys were assessed on Disabilities

For each of the themes, a Platform Level One meeting was organised which aimed to select the eight (top 5, and 3 reserves) most innovative and effective collected practices about the social inclusion for that particular disadvantaged group. The partners of Active Inclusion Network nominated experts in the field of social inclusion to attend each of the three Platform 1 events (one for each theme). The experts were then assigned to a sub-theme group (e.g. homelessness, educational problems etc.), based on the particular expertise of the individual. Experts were then placed in pairs or small groups within their sub-theme group, in order to assess the surveys. Whether the expert was placed in a small group or a pair was dependent upon how many surveys needed to be assessed for their sub-theme.

The design of each event was organised as a peer review process based on the following structure:

a) Plenary session - the events commenced with a plenary session whereby a number of presentations were given:
  o A presentation on the Active Inclusion Network and how the event would run;
  o A presentation on how the Centre for Social and Economic Inclusion would be evaluating the Active Inclusion Network
  o A presentation on the systematic review for that particular theme (e.g. Troubled Families, Disaffected Youth or Marginalised in Communities)
  o Two presentations specific related to the event’s sub-theme.

b) Marking of surveys – the experts worked in pairs or small groups within their sub-theme groups to discuss and score their allocated surveys, using a set evaluation grid. Each pair completed one evaluation grid per survey.
c) **Evaluation grids** - Each evaluation grid had pre-determined marking criteria which included General approach; Structure; Evaluation; Learning; Innovation; The User’s Voice; and Transferability (see Annex 3 for an example of Evaluation Grid). Each marking criteria was then broken down into more detailed criteria. The evaluation grids for each sub-theme then differed slightly as they included up to 5 sub-theme specific marking criteria. All of the marking criteria used in the evaluation grids had been informed by research and debate. As some of the marking criteria were seen as being more important than others, significance multipliers were used to weight the scores. For example, since the European Commission is very much interested in what is innovative, the significance multiplier for the innovation scoring criteria was 6. At the end of the marking workshops the surveys which received the 10 highest scores were then identified and taken assessed by the delegates on Day 2.

d) **Group Discussion** - The participants then discussed the surveys they have assessed and share with their sub-theme group. They were given 5 questions to discuss:

1. What are the **innovative points** that you can draw from these good practices?
2. What are the **learning points** that you can draw from these good practices?
3. What appear to be the **critical factors** that led to success of the good practices?
4. What aspects would you like to be transferred in your own national context, and why?
5. Do you have further **important points** that you would like to stress from these practices?

The sub-theme groups also suggested what additional information we need to retrieve from the collected practices, and what probing questions we should ask them at the Platform Level 2 events, in order to identify which of the practices are truly the most effective and innovative.

e) **Identifying the Top 8 Surveys** – the sub-theme groups then needed to identify the top 8 surveys (i.e. the top 5 and 3 reserves) from the 10 surveys that received the highest scores following the marking workshop on Day 1. They did this by re-assessing the Top 10 surveys using a new marking system they developed based on the criteria of **innovation, learning, critical success factors and transferability**. Some of the sub-theme groups re-assessed the surveys using a new numerical scoring system they had designed using the criteria of innovation, learning, critical success factors and transferability. Other sub-theme groups re-assessed the surveys and identified the Top 8 through a group discussion based on the criteria of
innovation, learning, critical success factors and transferability. The delegates were given the flexibility to identify how to identify the Top 8 surveys, as long as their decisions were based on using the 4 criteria.

The interviews

In order to explore further more different aspects of active inclusion, and also to identify the strengths and the possible future developments in this field, two experts from each sub-group were invited to participate in an interview. The workshop leaders nominated the experts to participate in the interviews.

The interview was based on the appreciative inquiry design whereby individuals were asked to elaborate around the following appreciative protocol, which was sent in advance:

1. Please describe a best practice that you know in the field of employment of the ……. group.

2. What are the critical elements that make that practice so valuable?

3. What would you change in that practice to make it even better?

4. How would you construct an ideal intervention in this field if you would have a magic stick?

5. Please nominate the ingredients of this intervention.

Currently, 14 interviews have been conducted and transcribed verbatim. The interviews took place via Skype, with two exceptions where the experts opted for providing written answers.
C. Findings

C.1 Disaffected Youth

Policy context

At the European level, the European Commission adopted the EU Youth Strategy that promotes a dialog between youth and policy makers in order to increase citizenship, foster social integration and ensure social inclusion. For 2010-2018, the Strategy has two overall objectives:

1. To provide more equal opportunities for young people in education and work,
2. To encourage young people to actively participate in society.

The Strategy covers eight fields of action:

- education and training
- employment and entrepreneurship
- health and well being
- participation
- voluntary activities
- social inclusion
- youth and the world
- creativity and culture

In the area of education and training, the Strategy targets the current skills mismatch and the transition from education to employment. These objectives will be achieved through:

- equal access to high quality education and training
- develop youth work and other forms of non-formal learning opportunities
- links between formal and non-formal education
- improving transition between education and training and the job market
- reducing early school leaving.

In the area of employment and entrepreneurship the EU and its members will act to:

- integrate concerns of the young people into employment strategies
- invest in providing skills employers are looking for
- develop career guidance and counselling services
- promote opportunities for youth to work and train abroad
- promote quality internships / apprenticeship
- improve childcare and shared parental responsibly
- encourage entrepreneurship in young people.

One of the EU initiatives that promotes concrete steps towards reducing the youth unemployment is the Youth Opportunities Initiative. This initiative includes pilot actions on a Youth Guarantee and ‘Your First EURES’ job
scheme. The Youth Guarantee ensures that all young people up to the age of 25 get a good quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving the formal education or becoming unemployed. The offer should be for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship or continued education.

‘Your First EURES’ Job is a mobility scheme to help young Europeans find work in other EU countries. The scheme target young people between 18 to 30 years old.

Other initiatives encourage access of youth to good quality training or apprenticeship.

C.1.1 DISAFFECTED YOUTH INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT

Findings from the Systematic Review

One of the main concerns when working with disadvantaged youth is how to engage with them and involve them into defining their problems, ensuring appropriate and adapted interventions are designed, and ensuring they are involved in the decision making process and in the evaluation procedures. In other words, the main challenge is how to empower them to take control over their own destiny.

Research conducted under the EQUAL programme and also in Italy (Villano and Bertocchi, 2014) and the North of England (Simmons et al., 2013) demonstrate that there is progress in this area but that more real investments should be made in order to recognise youth as real resources. Furthermore, states should provide effective and concrete mechanisms of communication with youth and institutions/organisations should change their organisational cultures and management styles to allow beneficiaries to have a say in the decision-making processes.

As mentioned in Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) sport can be an effective way of engaging and motivating youth to take part in civic matters but only if complemented with education, mentorship, skills training and so on. In other words, sport should be combined with other non-sport programming and investments in order to reach some developmental goals. Research in the US also suggests that community and civic participation among youth can also be stimulated through the involvement of youth into volunteer work (Nenga, 2012) and art-based activities (Batsleer, 2011). Social media can be also helpful in developing social capital and in strengthening the civicness of youth (D’Amrosi and Massoli, 2012).

On the contrary, if state authorities employ exclusive policies and interventions, such as aggressive anti-social behaviour policies, this can lead

to an atmosphere of oppression and distrust. As noted by Deuchar (2010), if the state treats youngsters as ‘second-class citizens’ and keeps them under intense and unnecessary surveillance, the youth will tend to turn towards their own groups that give them access to dignity and positive identity.

However, as demonstrated in Morton and Montgomery (2013), there is only a handful of evidence (3 studies out of 8789 citations) that demonstrate the relationship between youth empowerment programmes and self-esteem, self-efficacy and other social emotional and behavioural outcomes.

Working with young people with a clear empowerment philosophy is not a straightforward endeavor. As suggested by Fitzsimons et al. (2011) facilitating quality youth work, based on the empowerment model, requires a number of professional skills in youth workers such as: reflection skills, facilitation skills and so on. Furthermore, organisations working with young people who intend to be consistent with regard to the empowerment of the young people need to adapt the leadership, structure and culture of the organisation, as well as implementing models of decision-making and ensuring good management of staff. A key element in this respect, therefore, is the value alignment between empowerment and the organisational culture. By using the example of The Warren, a young’s people community, Fitzsimons et al. (2011) illustrate how difficult this cultural shift within one organisation is.

**Findings from the Platform 1 event**

After discussion and debates in the PL 1 meeting the following practices were selected as the most effective and innovative practices for the inclusion and empowerment of disaffected youth:

1. Unga In Swedish Public Employment Head Office -Sweden
2. Supporting People Birmingham City Council - UK
3. Multiregional Operational Programme: Fight Against Discrimination “ACCEDER” Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs (MTAS) and regional administrations - Spain
4. Choices Programme/ Programa Escholhas Spanish Ministry of Education and Science - Portugal
5. Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland YAP Ireland - Rep. of Ireland

The following practices were selected as reserves:

1. AIM Integrated Outreach Support - UK
2. Youth Active - Germany
3. NEET Education in Oakwood Prison - UK

The main concern of these selected practices is how to engage and empower vulnerable people so that they can move closer to, or even join, the labour market. Although some of the practices did not exclusively target youth, they did all cover this age group in their interventions. When looking at how they engaged or got in contact with the disaffected youth, we see a wide variety of strategies. Most of them, however, relied on the geographical proximity with
the vulnerable group. Therefore, they were organised in schools or in the deprived neighbourhoods. An interesting example is offered by Ungå In Swedish Public Employment Head Office intervention, based in Sweden, which employed Youth ambassadors who are people with the same background as the target group. Another example is the Youth Active project from Germany which uses street workers, and also the houses of youth, to get in contact with those in need.

In some cases, before launching wide scale interventions, a careful assessment and planning exercise was conducted. For example, before launching the priorities for the Choices Programme in Portugal, the Council of Ministers took a close look at the Index of Children and Youth Exclusion Risk produced by DINAMIA’CET which is an external academic research centre in Portugal. As illustrated in the next figure, this index reflects which areas are mostly affected by the risk factors:

The range of activities offered by these interventions is also very wide and covers issues like: education, training, housing support, income support, mental health, fight against discrimination and so on. Just by way of illustration, here are the activities included in the Integrated Outreach Support intervention in the UK:

- ‘Access to basic resources (Housing provider)
- Incentives to seek employment (intensive and holistic support for targeted individuals)
- A needs based approach (a tailored approach for individuals with complex needs)
- Enhanced employability (peer mentoring, motivational support, individual coaching)
- Link training and employment opportunities (use of social enterprise to provide work experience, enterprise coaching, training opportunities linked to a care farm programme)
- Links with potential employers (employment coach)
- Employment and training services (provision of accredited qualifications)
- Housing support and social housing (social housing provision)
- Childcare (made available for women’s project)’

What is worth mentioning under this point is that these services are provided in a coordinated manner based on the ‘whole person approach’. For instance, in spite of its name of the intervention in the UK called Supporting people: Housing support programme, it not only covers the housing needs of the
target group but also a much wider range of needs that can be associated with a greater risk of exclusion from the labour market. In order to provide these services, the developers work in close cooperation with agencies such as: the substance misuse services, housing services, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs); Jobcentre Plus; probation services; police; antisocial behaviour teams; occupational therapy professionals; housing services; benefits services; Citizens Advice Bureau; Birmingham Tribunal Unit; council tax service; law courts; libraries; children’s centres; doctors and hospitals. This long list of agencies is mentioned here to illustrate how diverse and wide a multi-agency partnership should be in order to provide ‘whole person approach’ services.

Based on the surveys submitted to the PL1 meeting, the group of experts concluded that the main learning points that can be concluded with regard to the inclusion and empowerment of disaffected youth into the labour market are:

- Thorough, evidence-based prior analysis of the problem, the target group needs (including protected characteristics and gender, as well as geographical location) is important

- From the beginning, projects should seek to embed sustainable governance and funding beyond the short term life of the pilot/ project, and to integrate learning from their pilot (‘programme’ approach vs ‘project’ approach)

- Equally, from the beginning, funders might favour projects with long-term potential, with a clear plan to reflect on and evaluate the pilot, and to integrate learning

- Partnership approach of active co-support towards shared objectives is important

- Genuine consultation and involvement of users and practitioners in the services design, evaluation and improvement is key

- It is important to have resilient, long term, meaningful relationships with one case manager/ advocate/ mentor etc. – for more than 6 months, with optional access after the users individual needs have been met

- Structured consultation, collaboration and reflection between partners at different levels (for the most efficient approach to joint policy and practice) is key

- Transferring proven good practice from one situation to another (e.g. using a young persons’ education course inside a young offenders prison) is important
• Projects should aim to promote wider awareness of young people’s issues, showcasing the value of civil engagement, CSR and volunteering

• Co-location of services or an one-stop-shop approach is useful

• Early intervention is important – projects should reach young people at risk, not just in trouble

• There should be the use of digital technology, tools and social media to reach out to young people, to connect their individual needs plans and to connect the different organisations efficiently

• Local initiatives need to respond to local needs: micro credit and start-up guidance from regional NGOs can hone project objectives on local outcomes promoting positive communities

• Role modeling is important – showing new communities, relationships or employment options which ‘break the mould’ and could have a positive impact

When discussing innovation, the experts agreed that innovation is most often about ‘doing things differently’:

1. Different ways of breaking down institutional barriers for a more effective, holistic path through the services required for diverse needs.

2. Creative ways of involving and motivating private sector partners, blending inclusion work into their regular structure.

3. Approaching organisational learning differently: integrating structured reflective (evaluation from inside the organisation) practice so that the project has the opportunity to learn simultaneously from every failure and every success. External evaluation should be a second step.

4. Using new technologies to improve established practice.

5. Different ways to reach the young people in the project’s target group (and the right rhythm for the relationship – elements of successful contact might be consistency, resilience, user led and answering a need for the user).

Findings from the Interviews

The two experts interviewed for this theme described the ‘best practice’ that they have met in their past as a combination of different factors that place the vulnerable person in a middle of a social network and the decision making process. For instance, one of the experts described family conferencing as an effective way to solve any sort of conflict or social problem. He approached the family conferencing as a multi-level system of intervention, with different circles: circle one - the family and the relevant ones (‘the natural system’), and
circle two — the professionals and so on. An important observation he made was that when dealing with an obstacle, the principle of subsidiarity should be enforced. For example, the first circle that should be called upon to solve a problem should be the person and his/her own informal social network. If this network cannot deal with the issue effectively than the second circle should be asked to contribute. By doing so, the vulnerable person is given back the problem and the responsibility to deal with it. It is only when the person’s personal or informal capacity is overwhelmed then the professionals and the community should step in. In this case, professionals should be well trained, aware of what is considered evidence based practice and able to build up positive relationship with the vulnerable people. Moreover, several experts suggested that the professionals should be aware of the values base of their interventions. As one of the experts stated:

‘when baby when I cried I received a bottle of milk. Maybe other babies when they cried they received a kick or something…’ (expert from Netherlands).

Therefore, people come from different walks of life and have different expectations and different values. Professionals should be aware of this diversity and behave according to it.

Another good example of how to empower youth is the council of youth that can be involved in the decision-making about priorities, funding and in the evaluation of projects that address youth issues. Furthermore, youth can be encouraged to design their own projects and can be involved in fund raising for their own project ideas. By doing so, they show a real commitment to the ideas and the cause they fight for. Evaluation, prioritisation, planning, designing, implementing and evaluating the impact of projects was defined by the experts as a ‘virtuous cycle’ that can be employed everywhere. Self-reflection and continuous adaptation to the new needs and challenges seem to be essential competencies for an intervention to survive in time. But empowerment does not mean that the other stakeholders should be completely left outside the picture. On the contrary, the experts emphasised that local authorities, state institutions, NGOs should be also involved in planning, designing and implementing interventions for youth. Based on the empowerment philosophy, the role and the place of these actors are re-defined in order to allow youth to have a stronger and more responsible voice.

When it comes to dreaming, the experts mentioned the need for a greater integration or ‘connectivity’ between services. In many EU countries services to support youth in becoming economically active are available but they seem to lack a proper integration and communication between housing, education, income support and health services.

Another direction for the future would be to encourage the European Commission to think harder about evaluation and how the lessons learnt could be better disseminated and used in new projects. As one of the experts rightly emphasised: ‘they should stop to overlap their administrative time schedule with the evaluation time schedule’ (expert from Italy). There should be a time for implementation and another time for evaluation. In order to evaluate
the impact of an intervention (especially when talking about empowerment!) one should wait one or more years until making a proper evaluation of the impact. The quality of the evaluation design is another dimension where the expert would like to see some progress in the future. Counting services or people does not tell us the whole story.

**Conclusions on ‘empowerment’ and possible future**

From the research and debates described above, it seems that empowering young people to participate in the civic life of community and move closer to the labour market is a promising practice. Involving youth in national and local debates (via councils or other systematic events) could enhance their confidence and self-efficacy. However, this involvement should be genuine and supported with real investment in structures and opportunities that encourage direct youth participation. The national and local level should work together, based on the empowerment philosophy, if negative experiences are to be avoided. Although strong research evidence is available yet due to the lack of robust studies, there are good indications that youth involvement in defining, managing, implementing and monitoring social initiatives can generate positive personal and social outcomes, some of them directly related to employment.

There is still room for experimenting with new ways of engaging with youth by using social media and other modern technologies. Games can be also employed to engage with youth and to debate the most relevant issues for them. Maybe providing youth with more opportunities to innovate and deploy their own ways of getting into contact with others can be an important way in the future. In the end, empowerment is about allowing and encouraging vulnerable people to express their views. Another useful thought is to think more creatively about evaluation and its meaning and consequences. How good examples can be better identified and disseminated across Europe (e.g. showcases, self reflection etc.) is another important question for the future.

**C.1.2. DISAFFECTED YOUTH EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**Findings from the Systematic Review**

### Social and policy context

According to the European Commission, by 2020, 16 million more jobs in Europe will require high qualifications while the demand for law-skilled jobs will drop by 12 million (European Commission, 2010). In the UK, for instance, these structural changes impacted on the number of available jobs in different sectors of economy. The largest increase in employee jobs has been in banking, finances and insurance industry (from 2.7 million in June 1981 to 5.4 million in June 2006). Significant increases were also in education, health, public administration, distribution, hotels and restaurants. In contrast, the extraction and production industries (agriculture, fishing, energy, water, construction and manufacturing) showed a combined fall of 43% in the same period of time (Office for National Statistics, 2007).
This dramatic decline of manual jobs and the rise of the knowledge-based jobs lead to an increased demand of graduate-level skills (or equivalent) (Farrall et al., 2010).

In the OECD countries, 16% of 15-29 years olds are not employed or in education. This proportion increased considerable in 2009 and 2010 compared with the pre-crisis levels. As anticipated above, in 2011 around 5.5 million young people were unemployed in EU countries, which means a rate of about 21.4%. In 2012, the youth unemployment rate was already 22% and rising due to the economical recession (Howley et al., 2013).

This structural context defines those with no proper education as ‘unemployable’. If this under-education is combined with other vulnerabilities such as criminal history or mental health problems, the prospects of employment are rather slim. Furthermore, low levels of education correlates with numerous health related issues and risk behaviours, such as: drug use, crime and so on (Eiberg et al. 2014).

The European Commission has responded to these challenges through the Europe 2020 flagship initiative called Youth on the Move and the 2012-2013 Youth Opportunities Initiative. Both these documents aim at unleashing the potential of young people and call for a more concentrated action from the states authorities, social partners, employers etc. to tackle the youth unemployment.

Special provisions of these documents refer to pathways back to education and training and also to a better contact between education and employment.

Other relevant documents of the EU on youth employment and education:

1. Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)
2. Council Recommendation on establishing the Youth Guarantee – 2013/C 120/01.
3. European Alliance for Apprenticeships

In order to monitor the youth situation in Europe and to allow for European comparison, the European Commission has introduced new statistical indicators, such as the NEET rate.

In order to tackle this challenge European countries undertook a significant number of measures. Some of them played a more preventative role (such as measures to prevent early school leave) while others had a more reintegration value (measures to remove barriers, incentives for employers etc.).

In a recent report, Howley et al. (2013) evaluated the effectiveness of these measures in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact in nine European countries. One of the most important conclusions of this report was that due to the poor design and the lack of rigorous evaluations it is difficult to assess at the national or European level the impact of these measures on the youth unemployment rates. This difficulty is augmented by the influences of other factors such as the macroeconomic context.
Nevertheless, combining evidence from different evaluations, policy documents, interviews and so on, the authors concluded that youth employment measures were relatively successful. Moreover, they formulated a comprehensive list of ‘policy pointers’ that seem useful in our evaluation:

1. Successful policy measures specify their target group and find innovative ways to reach them, for example by establishing a good reputation or creating a positive ‘brand’ for the measure or working with relevant community groups for hard-to-reach groups.

2. It is important to note that young people vary in their level of labour market readiness and policies have to cater for a range of minor to complex needs.

3. Policy delivery relies on appropriate personnel, who need to be trained and supported.

4. Young people should be set up on a long-term sustainable pathway, for example by providing them with necessary skills and stable employment, rather than low-quality quick fixes.

5. Successful policies offer good quality career advice and comprehensive holistic guidance.

6. Youth employment measures should focus on the client, not the provider, for example by setting up one-stop-shops for young people or by offering tailored, personalised advice by mentors.

7. Inter-agency collaboration and involvement of all stakeholders can be a cost-effective way to implement policies, when the specific roles and responsibilities of different actors are specified.

8. Measures that aim to increase the employability of young people should focus on labour market needs and ensure a buy-in of employers and their representatives.

9. Youth unemployment requires flexible responses, which have to be adapted to economic cycles, whereas social exclusion is a structural issue and has to be addressed consistently.

10. Robust monitoring and evaluation should be used to inform policymaking and development. (Howley et al., 2013: 2-3)

Looking at different national policies and local or regional initiatives, the authors identified 25 measures divided into different categories:

1. Measures to prevent early school leave (address the risk factors):
   - Avoiding the accumulation of disadvantaged students in specific schools,
- Providing additional support for schools in specific geographical areas (‘area-based policies’) – schools receiving 10-15 % more financial support for recruiting more teachers, more teachers assistants, less children in one class etc.
- Alternative pedagogies – such as Learning Communities (Spain) where schools engage with the communities in promoting high expectations among young people together with university students, staff from local NGOs, parents etc.
- Transition support programme – for those who have dropped out school or did not gain a place in an upper secondary school. The aim of this programme is to provide young people with alternative career path, vocational training, employment options, ‘trying out’ different courses etc.

2. Measures to reintegrate early school leavers (back into school, training or employment):

- Alternative learning environment, job shadowing,
- Practical and professional oriented courses,
- ‘Whole person’ approach – vocational training, short work placements, psychological support, counselling, apprenticeship, and other support needed to prevent the ‘yo-yo’ effect.

3. Measures to facilitate the transition from school to work (to ease the move to the first post-education job).

- ‘Youth Guarantee’ (or ‘job guarantee’ in Sweden)– personalised needs assessment, employment plan and other activation measures (e.g. training, information, guidance etc.) offered by public employment services (PES) within a very short period of time after registering.
- ‘One-stop-shop’ services – to ensure a more coordinated approach to the school-to-work progression pathways. The principle of this approach is that all needs are covered in one location.
- ‘Integration into society contract’ (France) – personalized follow-up with an adviser, training activities, work placements, internship etc. offered on a contractual bases.
- Creating networks of training centers strongly committed to effectiveness and labour market demands.
- Improving self-employment opportunities – Spain, for instance, allows young people to receive 80% of their total unemployment benefit entitlement in one single payment in order to start a new business.
- Exceptions from social security contributions are offered to self-employed and companies that hire young or long term unemployed people.

4. Measures to foster employability among young people (to promote skills, attitudes and qualities that enable youth to get a job, stay in that job and progress further in work).
- apprenticeship contracts – receiving ‘hand-on’, practical experience while in education.
- work based training schemes.
- bonuses for the companies that take apprentices and sanctions for the large companies that do not train a number of apprentices that is proportional to the size of their workforce.
- combination between on and off-job training with formal training – development of the occupational soft skills such as: self discipline, ability to concentrate and complete tasks etc.
- ‘supra-company apprenticeship’ – available for those who are not able to find apprenticeship on their own. Accredited providers offer apprenticeship together with training and counselling.

5. Measures to remove barriers to employment (especially for those with disability, learning difficulties, language issues etc.).

- alternative training, work based training.
- incentives for employers to recruit from ‘hard-to-help’ groups (e.g. ‘Chances Card’ - Finland).
- direct wage subsidies to employers, reduced social security contributions or tax payments.

As the authors emphasised several times, the early school leaver population is both diverse and dynamic and therefore ‘individualised, tailor-made pathways back into education and training are at heart of most reintegration policies’ (15). It is only after they are prepared and equipped with necessary skills and qualifications when they can move towards an active and productive adulthood and employment.

Some of these measures were measured in different countries using different methodologies.

The Youth Guarantee scheme was evaluated by Eurofound (2012) in Finland and Sweden. In Sweden the Youth Guarantee (En jobbgaranti för ungdommar) was introduced in 2007 while in Finland (NuortenYhteiskuntatakk) the scheme was introduced in 2005 and revised in 2010. Although the schemes are not identical, they share the same aim: to reduce the time young people spend in unemployment and inactivity. In Sweden, the service is provided by the public employment service (PES) that provides the young person with a personalised needs assessment and an employment plan, followed by a guarantee. This guarantee can be with a job or a study opportunity or some other activation measures. In both states, the program obliges PES to provide these services within three months from registration. Independent evaluations found this service very successful even during the crisis years. In Finland, for instance, during the crisis the workload of many PES become almost unimaginable with the number of customers per adviser increased to 700. With the help of a budget increase in 2010 the situation improved and PESs in Finland were able to recruit more staff and create more training and other support services for young jobseekers. However, it seems that youth guarantee is more effective for young people who are work-ready and...
therefore tend to focus more on the new entrants on the job market than on the long-term unemployed. The authors also record as weaknesses of the scheme: it is focused on short-term solutions and is not addressing the structural problems of young people and the success is too dependent of other institutions and the labour market situation. However, as mentioned above the scheme seemed to work very well in these two countries even in the crisis time.

Using an experimental design, the Institute for Labour Market Policy Evaluation (2011) evaluated the job guarantee (as youth guarantee is called in Sweden) in Sweden and concluded that 24 year olds participating in the scheme found a job quicker than a comparable group registered with regular services. However, the results were not sustained for a long time. The probability of participants to be unemployed within one year proved to be the same for both groups. It can be concluded that this measure acts as a quick fix solution and does not address the structural concerns of the young people (e.g. lack of skills, lack of qualification etc.).

Most of the school dropout interventions fall into one or more of the following categories: school or class restructuring (e.g. creating smaller classrooms, lower student/teacher ratio, individualized program etc.), vocational training (e.g. work-related counselling, career exploration internship, paid employment for students), supplemental academic services (e.g. tutoring, homework assistance, remedial education etc.) or teenage pregnancy and parenthood. The last sort of services may include beside day care centers interventions like welfare payment, incentives and so on aiming at supporting young mother stay engaged with education.

These services were assessed in the US by Wilson et al. (2011) in a very comprehensive systematic review (based on 548 studies that use quasi-experimental or experimental design). The authors conclusions were that:

‘Overall, results indicated that most school- and community-based programs were effective in decreasing school dropout. Given the minimal variation in effects across program types, the main conclusion from this review is that dropout prevention and intervention programs, regardless of type, will likely be effective if they are implemented well and are appropriate for the local environment. We recommend that policy makers and practitioners choosing dropout prevention programs consider the cost-effectiveness of programs, and choose those that fit best with local needs as well as implementer abilities and resources.’ (10)

In 2012, Ecorys was commissioned by the European Commission to undertake a study on the lessons learnt from second chance education. There is no one second chance education model but a number of possibilities that are used creatively in different countries based on principles such as: small group of learners, flexible timetable, diverse activities (sport, cultural and life skills etc.), flexible curricula and so on.
The methodology of the study was a complex one combining: quantitative data analysis, literature review, interviews, fact-finding visits and workshops with practitioners and high-level experts. The conclusion of the authors was that this measure of reducing early school leaving is effective if a number of conditions are met:

- the second chance schemes emphasise the distinctiveness from the mainstream school – avoiding the negative associations with the initial education but ensuring in the same time the learning opportunities in a credible way (e.g. gaining a formal qualification),
- identify and engage with those who left the school system via local community and social networks – use of ‘softy’ approach for contacting the young people (via friends, family members, telephone etc.)
- place an obligation on the local authorities to ensure that young people are engaged in education or training.
- persistence and building up trust are valued as essential qualities.

Using an ad-hoc survey of the beneficiaries, ISFOL (2011) evaluated the impact of apprenticeship scheme in Italy. It found that 70.9% of the apprentices were still employed with the same company within two years after the competition of the training programme and 21% were employed elsewhere. Stakeholders also reported a high level of satisfaction and confidence regarding its impact on employment.

The ‘Supra-Company apprenticeship’ was evaluated in Austria (Bergmann and Schelepa, 2011) and found it to be quite effective: 58% of those completing the programme in 2010 were working after three months and 63% after 12 months. However, the evaluation also identified a relatively high percentage of dropout – 23%. Some of them left for employment or regular company-based apprenticeship but others had no alternative destination. For them the prospects were quite negative: two thirds of them were still unemployed after 12 months. Although these results may seem only partially positive, we should not forget that this scheme was available for the hard-to-reach people.

‘Chances Card’ was evaluated in Finland during the economic crisis and was found to be effective (Pitkanen et al., 2012; Terava, 2011). About 22% of the recipients were able to get a job with the Chances Card. However, not all the young people were using the card when looking for a job. 36% of those who used the card were successful at finding a job. The card was also evaluated against the national wage subsidy scheme and found it to be more effective. Only 21% of the beneficiaries of the national wage subsidy scheme were still in employment 12 months after completing the placement.

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Although it was not always possible to evaluate the outcomes or the impact of all these measures, in general the evidence suggests that they are successful. However, it is important to note that not all the measures are effective with all of the young people. Some measures seem to be more effective with those with low levels of qualifications. Some others seem to work better with those with high levels of qualifications, skills and motivation.

**Findings from the Platform 1 meeting**

On the basis of the Platform 1 discussions, the following practices have been selected as the most innovative and effective for the inclusion of disaffected youth who are not in Employment, Education and Training into the Labour Market:

1. Toolkit for Life - UK
2. Missing Link – an comprehensive guidance for hard to reach young people - Belgium
3. Experimentation in the field of Social Farming – Italy
4. Stepping Stones Programme for Educationally and Economically Disadvantaged Youth - SPEED Youth Programme – Northern Ireland
5. Job in sight – Sweden

The following ones have been selected as reserves:

1. Vocational integration/ increase employability through individual coaching and group training - Germany
2. Youth Employment Agency – Germany
3. Choices Programme - Portugal

The practices selected could be described as having a very complex structure, combining different interventions in order to respond to the multiple needs of the disadvantaged youth, including income support, subsidised employment and so on.

Most of the interventions take ‘the whole person approach’ as a guiding principle. The Missing link intervention from Belgium goes one step further and looks at the person within the context of the family or their community. When working with youth, an important actor of the intervention seems to be the family. For instance, the Missing link intervention in Belgium and the Stepping Stones programme in Northern Ireland both mention family as one of the most important critical elements of success.

Depending of their main target group, each intervention strives to establish contact as early as possible. For instance, in Toolkit for Life project in the UK the intervention with youth starts in prison by motivating, nurturing talent and providing training to young people.

In order to be able to respond to the multitude and complex needs of this vulnerable group, the interventions are based on a strong partnership structure. Most of the interventions mention the importance of private and
public sector cooperation. For example, the Toolkit for Life intervention in the UK counts on ‘around 100 committed construction industry’ organisations. The Missing Link intervention in Belgium works with a ‘network of partners’. Sometimes, in order to enhance the cooperation with services, developers work closely with one organisation that acts as a mediator (see Coldiretti Turin for the Experimentation in the field of social farming - Italy).

Some of the interventions seem to be designed for special groups of underprivileged youth but most of them can work with a wide variety of youth groups (e.g. women, disabled, offenders, drug users etc.).

The activities provided in each intervention are coordinated by a case manager or a network manager.

At least four of the interventions out of the eight focused on the school to employment transition (‘unbroken chain from school to working life’) and the support of the young people into employment. For example, the Job in Sight intervention in Sweden provides company based training; support for young people and also for employers; problem solving meetings and so on.

Based on all surveys submitted under the Not in Employment, Education and Training sub-theme, experts participating in the Platform 1 meeting concluded that the most important learning points are:

1. The importance of being person centred
2. The importance of starting early
3. The importance of cost effectiveness and evidence of return on investment
4. The importance of environment in which young people are comfortable
5. Large scale projects can be difficult to compare to smaller scale projects
6. It is important to involve the target group - participants should be involved with and work with the project on a regular basis
7. It is important to survey the local community / environment to assess the needs and demands
8. A systematic approach of making an action plan with all of the actions that have to take place and who is doing what at the moment, with a lot of responsibility for the young people, is important
9. Involving and capturing young people’s creativity is key

As in other cases, innovation was considered mainly as ‘a way of doing things differently’ or at the principle level. The following ideas were considered useful to be further explored:

1. Cooperation between companies, particularly cooperation between the public and private sector
2. Use of financial tools to empower young people
3. Improving status of part time education (through flexibility and work/family balance)
4. Using IT and gaming tools to collect information and communicate with young people
5. Concept of social farming/agriculture – the ability to multi-target young people; ability to solve more than one problem at one time and being able to do more with less resource; working in a sector that is declining but has lots of potential

Findings from the Interviews

When asked about the best practice in the field of youth who are Not in Employment, Education and Training, the interviewed expert described a project that would combine the following elements in a very flexible manner:

- early intervention – identify the risk situations and work to prevent or diminish the risks,
- provide interventions that would mix education, training with concrete work experience,
- involve the youth in planning and decision making,
- provide counseling and training not only on employment skills but also on the social and personal skills associated to employment (e.g. self confidence, job-seeking skills etc.),
- create a large network of employers willing to cooperate,
- good project management,
- use social partners, informal organisations, NGOs to reach the youth,

As it can be noted, most of the findings from the systematic review are echoed in the opinion of the experts.

When it comes to what can be improved, the expert emphasised the need for more motivational work with youth. It is well known that long term investments (like education) require patience and motivation. Both types of motivation – to engage with the program and to stay engaged – seem to be essential for a successful programme. Another point raised by the expert is the need to enlarge the range of industries involved in the network. The jobs available for work placements should go well beyond the stereotypical or gender associated jobs: constructions for man and textile industry for women. This diversity would first provide more room for exercising the decision making and secondly would enhance the motivation of youth to work in a field close to their interest or aspirations.

An ideal model of intervention with youth who are Not in Employment, Education and Training, is, according to the expert, an intervention that would combine all these elements with a strong family participation. It seems that family can act as an important environment for motivating, stimulating and supporting youth to become more economically active.

Conclusions on the inclusion of youth who are Not in Employment, Education and Training into the labour market and possible future

Research and practice is already replete with evidence on what works and what does not in working with youth who are Not in Employment, Education
and Training. An important number of lessons can be learnt from the past experiences and previous studies. It is not the time or the place to remind all of them here. Howley et al. (2013) can serve as a good summary of these positive interventions. However, a few points seem to be of a crucial importance for almost all categories of youth who are Not in Employment, Education and Training:

1. start interventions as early as possible,
2. focus on school to work transition and on supporting youth and employers to work together,
3. use social media or other informal/non-formal ways of contacting youth,
4. initiate and implement interventions in a place considered comfortable by the young people,
5. involve young people in defining the problem, designing the intervention and decision making processes,
6. design complex interventions that are able to respond to complex needs,
7. prepare to be flexible and approach youth in a personalised manner,
8. create wide and diversified networks of potential employers,
9. involve local and national networks in delivering ‘whole person’ services,
10. involve the family in the network created to motivate and support youth who are Not in Employment, Education and Training,
11. use gaming, IT etc. to collect information and evaluate constantly the intervention.

According to the participants at the PL1 meeting the following directions could be pursued in the future projects or research:

1. Mentoring youth in schools linked to developing vocational skills
2. How to support failures with spotlight projects
3. How to implement complex and multi-partner interventions
4. How to organise and deliver training within different contexts
5. How to be realistic and also ambitious when working with youth who are Not in Employment, Education and Training

C.2 Marginalised in community

C.2.1 Homelessness

Policy context

According to the European Commission\(^3\), the main challenges related to homelessness in Europe are: increase levels of homelessness, the changes in the profile of homeless population, lack of comprehensive data to monitor the homelessness and high social costs of not tackling homelessness.

\(^3\) Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1061&langId=en
In its policy response, the Commission urges the Member States to take primary responsibility in tackling this problem and using the Social Investment Package. The main measures included in this document are:

- Adopt long-term, housing-led, integrated homelessness strategies at national and regional level,
- Introduce efficient policies to prevent evictions.

According to the Commission the most effective homelessness strategies are:

- Prevention and early interventions,
- Quality homelessness service delivery,
- Rapid re-housing,
- Systematic data collection, monitoring and using shared definitions (ETHOS typology).

In order to monitor and provide guidance on the homelessness, the European Commission set up the European Observatory on Homelessness and encouraged the creation of the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA).

**Findings from the Systematic Review**

In one of their very influential reports (Toolkit on Homelessness Strategies⁴), FEANTSA stressed the following ten approaches that could improve policies and practices against homelessness:

1. Evidence based approach
4. Rights-based approach – international treaties, right to housing etc.
5. Participatory approach – involving stakeholders and homeless people.
7. Sustainable approach – adequate funding, public support and political commitment.
8. Needs-based approach – based on the needs of the people and not the needs of the organizations.
10. Bottom-up approach – importance of the local authorities and bring services close to the homeless.

Some of these approaches have already very strong research evidence. For instance, as noted by Quilgars et al. (2008) most often homelessness is a severe manifestation of multiple social exclusion. Therefore a comprehensive response requires services like: counseling, advice, financial support, assistance with health issues, access to education, drug services, housing,

⁴ Available at: http://www.feantsa.org/spip.php?rubrique44&lang=en
employment etc. Furthermore, it seems that there is a strong correlation between homelessness and unemployment. Ferguson et al. (2012) conducted a survey based on 238 homeless young people from five US cities and concluded that homeless young people are more likely to be unemployed if they had been on the streets longer, currently lived on the streets, earned an income from panhandling, and were addicted to drugs. These findings were further explored through focus-groups and the authors concluded that apart from these factors other employment-related barriers are also relevant: geographic transience, previous felonies, mental illness and addiction.

They suggest that the duration of homelessness, street lifestyle, transience (the geographic mobility), drug addiction and high-risk survival behaviors (e.g. panhandling, prostitution etc.) are the most important variables that need to be tackled when working to reduce unemployment among homeless people.

In responding to unemployment amongst homeless people, job-training programs should be completed with other interventions that pay due attention to their street-based and transient lifestyle as well as their substance use and mental health needs. Therefore, providing housing and other residential accommodations will help stabilise the young people geographically whilst enabling them to establish social relationships and pursue the mental health and substance abuse treatment that is so essential for the employment market. The complexity of the needs demand, as mentioned above, a comprehensive response.

‘Local Strategies for the Active Inclusion of Young people facing multiple disadvantages’ was one of the projects funded by the European Commission’s PROGRESS programme. The aim of the project was to provide homeless people with a strong interagency response. To this end, interventions based on active inclusion principles and intensive interagency cooperation were organised for homeless young people, or at risk of becoming homeless, in four cities: Bologna, Hamburg, Malmo and Newcastle. Gunter and Harding (2013) evaluated these experiments and found them very effective. The main practices that were assessed include: ‘one stop shop’, enhanced cooperation with housing companies, preventive services (e.g. homelessness prevention fund – to support furniture, transport etc.), use of informal contacts to go beyond basic needs etc. They also looked at different ways of ensuring cooperation between agencies: case management, network management, steering committee etc. However, the authors warn that the cooperation is much more complex than it seems. For instance, when it comes to ‘one stop shop’ approach, the support system needs to combine elements such as strengthening self-awareness, building social competencies, and eventually creating employability. All these elements are often ‘embedded in the complex and broad landscape of welfare provision, including social security and other services’ (260). In addition to that, family, friends and other social contacts are important resources for any personalised approach to inclusion. It seems that the homeless people experiencing multiple and complex needs (known as multiple exclusion homelessness - MEH) are the most difficult to engage with services. In this category children or youth leaving the child protection systems (‘care leavers’) seem to be
largely included. Those with the greatest needs may get lost in the complex support systems. This requires good design and governance of networks to avoid implementation failure. This finding was confirmed also by other studies such as Dwyer and Somerville (2011) and Harding et al., (2011).

Other studies on homelessness emphasised the correlation between homelessness, employment and some sociocultural dimension of the homelessness. After interviewing 25 homeless women, Shier et al. (2011) concluded that the public holds negative perceptions towards the homeless or shelter-based support services. These perceptions are likely to develop social exclusion from the labour force and housing rental sector. Therefore social service delivery organisations should be aware of these reactions and engage in education and advocacy activities to challenge these perceptions.

Related to the public perception, Bretherton and Pleace (2011) demonstrated how housing homeless families have to take into account the social diversity and the community cohesion. Furthermore, social housing companies need to avoid spatial concentration of statutory homeless households. Both owner-occupiers and social landlords perceive highly the ‘threats’ of housing economically and socially marginalised groups to the cohesion and the attractiveness of the neighborhood.

The importance of the environment is also stressed in a study conducted in US by Brown and Mueller (2014). In their study, the authors aimed at identifying to what extent the personal attributes such as life satisfaction, social self-efficacy and hopeful thinking are important for homeless women when obtaining employment. The study concluded that none of these factors were associated to obtaining employment. The social support provision of social integration and younger age were the only factors predicting women’s self-efficacy to secure employment. This finding is important especially when designing and implementing social justice initiatives.

Once the homeless people are considered ready, they can benefit from employment training, placement and ongoing mental health support (if needed) in order to develop marketable job skills and receive support before, during and after getting employment. Based on Ferguson and Xie (2008) and Nuechterlein et al (2008) it seems that use of social entrepreneurship model (social enterprises) and supported employment (e.g. individual placement and support) improved mental health and employment outcomes in homeless and at risk young adults. Shier et al (2012) demonstrated that homeless people experience numerous difficulties in relation to the job market, even after being employed. Some of them are labour market related (insufficient work, inconsistent payment) but some of them are aspects of the homelessness services (difficulties with sleep, meal schedules in the shelters etc.).

It seems that adopting an integrated approach that follows the stages of employment preparation (prepare the homeless but also his/her environment), training, supported placement and follow-up generated significant success in socialising young adults to the workforce, developing the necessary job skills and increasing the chances to access competitive employment.
Findings from the Platform 1 meeting

The experts participating in the Platform 1 meeting selected the following practices to be further scrutinised at Platform 2 meeting:

1. Growing Lives – UK
2. Supporting People: Housing Support Programme – UK
3. Ready for Work - UK and Ireland
4. Individual counselling, group counselling, training based on experiential education – Lithuania
5. Multiregional Operational Programme: Fight Against Discrimination - Spain

The experts also selected the following practices as reserves:

1. Coloured Roofs – Italy
2. Social Cooperative Enterprise - “I Change” – Greece
3. Basta - social inclusion through social enterprise - Sweden

All of the selected practices provide comprehensive services, from house support to income support, training for soft skills and employment skills, in-work support and access to different services, including health services. Some interventions focus in particular on tackling the issues behind homelessness and preventing the risk of homelessness. The Coloured Roofs intervention from Italy also provides linguistic mediation to immigrants in order for them to be able to understand and sign rent contracts or pay the utility fees.

In order to cover all these needs, the interventions developed large partnership schemes with local service providers but also with other NGOs and employers. In some cases, this partnership also included families and representatives of the local community. The funding of these interventions reflects, in most cases, the complexity of the network. The Growing Lives intervention in the UK, for example, mentioned no less than seven sources of funding.

An important feature of some of the interventions is the involvement of ex-homeless people. For instance, 27% of the support officers involved in the Growing Lives intervention in the UK have been homeless themselves. As described in the survey:

‘They are then well placed to become inspirational role models, and to use pro-social modeling to encourage their clients to move forward in their own lives’.

Another element that seems to be specific for some of the interventions is the gradual movement from ‘little employment’ to ‘more employment’: homeless people are encouraged to take good quality employment for one or two days a week and progressively they are encouraged to volunteer for more days of
work per week. In order to support this a few preconditions seem to be important:

- preparation work: housing, services to remove barriers, motivation and soft skills development.
- a direct link between training and concrete job opportunities,
- a good quality employment and
- in-work support (mentoring, social workers etc.)

Employment is ensured either through social enterprises (e.g. Growing Lives intervention in the UK), ‘friendly’ employers or even from the open market.

All selected interventions mentioned the principle of personalised or customised services. In almost all cases, the services are planned on an individual basis and are needs driven.

Another important aspect to note is that more of interventions compared to the other vulnerable groups (six interventions out of eight) are based on the active inclusion concept covering all three pillars: income support, inclusive labour market and access to services.

Based on the discussions from the PL 1 meeting, the experts suggested the following learning points for a future homelessness policy:

1. Personalised planning and flexibility in the delivering
2. Involving the users / empowerment
3. Non-judgmental
4. Build large networks of partnership where family, friends and the community can play a role
5. Use mentors, peer support
6. Develop clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms/ use of academia

The experts identified the following elements as innovative:

1. Empowerment model and prevention of youth homelessness
2. Use of social enterprise
3. Flexible and context adapted model (e.g. not going above the 16 hours involvement in work in the UK which would mean they wouldn't be eligible to claim benefits)
4. Involvement of housing and health and employment partners
5. Use of the private sector and integrating the homelessness into ‘ordinary’ communities
6. Matching social support and ecological/environmental issues
7. Focus on the quality of housing and the environment around the house – including the use of art. Creating an ‘enabling environment’ with regard to housing conditions for support housing
8. Holistic approach (e.g. involving education, employment, health etc.)
9. Equal focus on supply and demand of employment
10. Focus on user participants
11. Strong inter-agency cooperation, including within the NGO sector, and being able to share tools and measure in a common way.

Findings from the Interviews

These principles of ‘whole person approach’ and the inter-agency work were also emphasised in the interviews on homelessness. One respondent repeated even several times that:

‘The best practice for me is when it is complex… the best practice is when interventions are all combined together… when you have the housing, the employment, the health and all the other aspects that help those people … that is the best practice for me’ (expert from Poland)

Responding to complexity with complexity was also mentioned as a critical success factor and also as an essential feature of an ideal intervention in the field of homelessness.

The Hartz Reform in Germany was cited as the best example of how job centers can be unified with welfare centers to provide holistic services based on the ‘whole person approach’. Although the ultimate goal of this reform was to reduce long-term unemployment the approach was not based necessarily on ‘work first’ or on ‘housing first’ principles but on the ‘individual first approach’:

‘Here the clear goal is the employment but there is more asking the individual what works more for him or her if is treatment first, it is housing first, it is training first’ (expert from Belgium)

What vulnerable people receive from the state agencies is a full package of services according to their needs and not according to some artificially defined organisational priorities.

This new working philosophy requires deep organisational and cultural changes. One of the most obvious change is in the funding logic: the funding is not oriented towards services or institutions but towards individual pathways to self-sufficiency. One of the experts mentioned Netherlands as taking this innovative route to measure success not in numbers but in terms of distance traveled by unemployed people from being economically inactive to coming closer to the job market. Obviously, this sort of approach requires competent staff with strong networks organised at the local level. Employers need to be very much involved in designing and implementing these new arrangements.

When asked about what can be improved in this area, the experts mentioned a more careful approach to multi-culture and migration. Local municipalities and front line workers should be more supported to deal with migration waves and the challenges associated with it. Involving the private sector more could alleviate the pressure on the social housing. One concrete solution in this respect is the developing of the social renting sector whereby:
Landlords can be motivated to rent below the market in return for a guarantee and maintenance for the apartment so in order to get secure rent they accept a lower rent and they also get for the service a general guarantee and maintenance of the propriety’ (expert from Belgium).

The service integration can be further enhanced by promoting the concept of one-stop-shop where service users can be evaluated and receive services in one single place.

When it comes to ‘dreaming’ about homelessness policies and employment, the experts emphasised the need for a more innovative and risk taking behaviour towards funding the individual first approach. Policy makers, front line practitioners, funders (including the European Commission) should be more willing to take risks in testing ‘not services but individual pathways’. This approach requires a large autonomy for the practitioners to define together with the vulnerable people what works on each individual case. Some individuals are on a high need level some others are not. Depending on the individual evaluation, practitioners will have to develop individual packages of support.

Conclusions on ‘homelessness’ and possible future

One of the main learning points from the literature, surveys and the interviews is that there are no simple solutions to complex problems. In responding to homelessness, states should develop integrated services that would respond, in a coordinated manner, to the multi-level and multi-dimensional problems that homeless people face. In designing and implementing these interventions, states should pay special attention to inter-agency coordination and governance. As mentioned in the literature several times, complex and multi-partner networks demand special governance arrangements in order to avoid overlaps and ensure proper coordination.

Innovation in this area seems to be the process by which these complex networks are organised and managed. An interesting example of innovation that should be carefully scrutinised in the future comes from the Coloured Roofs intervention in Italy where the developers will independently manage the leased assets. Empowering homeless people and involving them in managing the premises could be an important step further in homelessness policy. Policies like the ones in Germany or Netherlands can be carefully evaluated and lessons learnt can be extracted.

Focusing more on the interplay between homelessness, employment and public opinion can further develop the understanding of the phenomenon. Bringing the ecological perspective and art closer could also provide a new insight into how to deal with public perception. It is not clear yet how and when one can influence another. More risk taking initiatives can be piloted
and evaluated. Housing vouchers\(^5\), social renting or funding individual pathways can be some of them. It would be useful to test this mechanism in different housing markets to assess how it can help in stabilising the homeless people and support their employment.

### C.2.2 Drug and Alcohol Abuse

#### Findings from the systematic review

**Policy context**

Since around 6 500 individuals die in the EU, every year, because of overdoses and another 1700 die of HIV/AIDS attributable to drug use, the European Commission defines drugs as a complex social and health problem in EU.

EU Member States together with the Commission have developed a set of measures that target\(^6\):

- drug related crime and disrupt drug trafficking,
- manage effectively the emergence of new psychoactive substances,
- share best practices and research,
- assist countries to prevent drug production and drug trafficking.

The main strategic document that focuses on drugs is the EU Drugs Strategy (2013-2020)\(^7\) that sets out the priorities and the objectives for the actions on drugs. The Strategy is centred on two pillars: drug demand reduction and drug supply reduction. Three cross-cutting themes complement these actions:

- coordination
- international cooperation and
- information, research, monitoring and evaluation.

The EU Action Plan on Drugs (2013-2016)\(^8\) is of particular importance for this report since, under the reduction of drug demand, it provides concrete action points that involves access of drug users to ‘continuum of care through case management and interagency collaboration’, focus on supporting re/integration (including employability) and strengthen the diagnostic process and the treatment.

\(^5\) A housing voucher is a program used especially in US to help people under a certain income level to find and lease an accommodation. Under this program, an individual or a family with this voucher will pay only a part of the rent, the rest being covered from the state or the local authorities budget.

\(^6\) Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/anti-drugs/index_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/anti-drugs/index_en.htm)

\(^7\) Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/anti-drugs/european-response/strategy/index_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/anti-drugs/european-response/strategy/index_en.htm)

The EU drug agency, together with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), are the main agencies that offer support to the EU Member States for the implementation of EU drugs policy.

The European Commission is also concerned with alcohol related harm. It seems that 7% of all ill health and early deaths and 25% of all deaths in young men aged between 15 and 29 are associated with alcohol. To fight this phenomenon, the European Commission launched the EU alcohol strategy that aims at helping the national governments and other stakeholders coordinate their action to reduce alcohol related harm in EU. As for the EU Drug Strategy, this document includes measures that focus on the individual within his/her own workplace context.

The EU Alcohol and Health Forum, the Committee for national alcohol policy and action and the Committee on data collection, indicators and definitions are the relevant platforms where information is shared and decision are made to fight alcohol related harm.

Although the literature is replete with studies related to drugs (causality, interventions to reduce the demand etc.), studies investigating the relationship between drug / alcohol abuse and employment is almost absent.

One exception is the experiment conducted by DeFulio et al. (2009) in Baltimore (US) which concluded that employment and drug abuse can work in both directions. The unemployed welfare recipients who used cocaine persistently were divided into two groups: abstinence contingent employment and employment-only group. Employment was used as a long-term maintenance strategy. All participants were enrolled in a 6-month job skills training and abstinence initiation program. After the program the participants were assigned randomly to a control group (n=24) and to a treatment group (n=27). The first group was only assigned to a work place. The second group – the treatment one – had access to employment only contingent upon provision of drug-free urine samples under routine and then random drug testing. If the participant failed to supply a drug-free urine sample than he/she received a temporary reduction in pay and could not work until urinalysis confirmed recent abstinence. The conclusion of this randomised control trial was that abstinence-contingent employment participants provided significantly more cocaine-negative urine samples than the other group (79,3% compared with 50,7%). Therefore conditioning abstinence by employment is effective as a long-term maintenance intervention. Furthermore, it seems that the relationship between employment and drugs work both ways: a drug-free lifestyle can lead to employment but the workplaces can serve as therapeutic agents in the drug treatment.

However, it seems that the importance of employment in changing the likelihood of illicit drug use seems to be gendered. As Thompson and Petrovic (2009) demonstrated, employment may play an important role for men when it comes to desistance. For women, the strength and the importance of a relationship and not employment appear to play an essential role in decreasing the likelihood of drug use.
Findings from the Platform 1 meeting

Participants in the PL1 meeting selected the following practices as suitable to be discussed in the PL2 meeting:

1. BASTA – Social Inclusion Through Social Enterprise – Sweden
2. Working in Handsworth and Shard End (WiSH) – DWP/ Birmingham City Council – England
4. Ready for Work – Business in the Community - United Kingdom and ROI
5. Development and application of tools and methods for social exclusion persons in order to re-integrate them into the Labour Market (Kaunas Labour Exchange) - Lithuania

The also selected the following ones as reserves:

1. My Guru - NGO Social Supports Project – Lithuania
2. Essential Skills Programme - Upper Andersonstown Community Forum - Northern Ireland
3. Psychological and Social Rehabilitation of drug addicts and also returning from prison drug addict persons – Charity Support Foundation – Lithuania.

Most of the learning points derived from these practices were summarized in one of the submissions:

- ‘The “Person Centred Approach” which was key to addressing the barriers that prevented individuals from accessing employment. It allowed a relationship to be established that built trust and enabled a more accurate understanding of the customer’s circumstances and helped to establish more realistic job goals and an improved attitude to work that should lead to more sustainable employment.

  The key features of delivering this approach successfully were considered to be:
  a. Being accessible and the first point of contact for any issue
  b. Being flexible about what can be done and the amount of time spent
  c. Being reliable, supportive (caring) and providing continuity
  d. Having knowledge about benefits and access to benefit information

- Preparing customers for employment - making sure they knew what to expect and were prepared for when they started work. Providing personalised instructions and contact names and numbers, so they know what to do once they started work and who to call for help when things didn’t go according to plan e.g. emergency childcare – was seen as critical in helping individuals sustain employment.

- Delivering from the local area, in venues that were familiar to the customer.
• Working in partnership allowed different experience, knowledge and resource to be pooled, providing added value and greater resource than partners could have achieved individually.

• In particular Department for Work and Pensions involvement was a critical factor in the pilot’s success, as they were able to influence internal decisions and their involvement and advocacy appeared to carry added value with other organisations and employers – allowing them to achieve results others couldn’t.

• A commonly held view amongst partners was that the Pilot’s success was driven by having the right people with the right skills delivering it.’ ((WiSH - England))

Other submissions also provided good learning points to take further. For instance, the BASTA intervention in Sweden demonstrates that the social enterprise model can be self-sustainable. It seems that a part of the solution is to be ready to provide a wide range of services to the open market. The BASTA intervention in Sweden also illustrates the point that work and support are the main ingredients of working with drug users. When working with drug users, specific additional services need to be provided such as: challenging the selfish attitude, personal ecology and so on. The Tomorrows Women Wirral intervention in England describes how the one-stop-shop approach can work when working with women offenders and drug users. Working in an one-single female environment might be also a good solution when working with women with a long history of abuse. The Ready for work intervention in England and Ireland is a good example of how the process can be structured on clear four stages: registration, pre-placement training, work placement and post-placement support. The development and application of tools and methods for socially excluded persons in order to re-integrate them into the Labour Market is another learning point. The intervention in Lithuania explains how IT tools (the game called ‘I choose’) can be used in association with experts and support staff to increase employment amongst young people.

Interventions mainly coming from England described in great detail the financial benefit of the interventions (e.g. Tomorrows Women Wirral, WiSH etc.). WiSH, for instance, provides detailed figures for direct fiscal benefits, indirect fiscal benefits, social benefits, cost benefits saving and so on. This might be a good way to demonstrate that investing in social projects can obtain important economical benefits. Constant monitoring and independent evaluations can also contribute reliable information to the public debates regarding funding allocations.

When describing innovation, projects emphasised again processes or principles that make the interventions attractive and sustainable for the future:

1. use of the social enterprise model
2. the belief in ‘yes we can’ and a clear vision
3. developing interventions that also have a business model behind it.
Findings from the interviews

The expert interviewed for this subject stated that the best practice for drug users may be the Utrecht Underground intervention in the Netherlands. In this project, drug users, homeless people and other disadvantaged individuals act as local guides for tourists. The innovative side of this action is that they show not only the tourist attractions but also the unknown parts of the city and the personal stories. By doing that, the public can get a better awareness of the experience of vulnerable groups while, at the same time, the drug users can turn their personal history into an economic product. Such projects exist also in Amsterdam and Prague.

The success factors associated with this intervention are:

- it is designed and implemented by the vulnerable group
- it is strength-based
- has a strong advocacy dimension
- it can lead to an improvement of the public image for this groups
- represents a good balance between economical viability and low threshold. In other words, it is accessible for vulnerable people but also creates an economic value.
- it is flexible
- supports personal development

When asked about the improvements, the expert suggested that vulnerable people should be more involved into the management of the intervention. This could lead to more innovation and also to more empowerment. Another recommendation was to find ways to reward small steps towards regular employment. Sheltered and supported work strategies should be brought closer to the regular market so that transition between these stages could be possible.

An ideal intervention in working with drug users would be based on a mixed workforce meaning that the employees of this intervention should belong to different vulnerable groups but also to the regular people. This kind of approach could lead to normalisation and a good opportunity for colleagues to coach each other. More stable and sustainable funding should be made available to these interventions in order to develop and produce long lasting impact.

Conclusions on drugs and alcohol and suggestions for the future

As noted above, research is not very generous in capturing the relationship between drug/alcohol use and employment. Practice only started to develop interventions for drug users and employment. Interventions for alcohol users were not identified in our study. However, it may be that principles developed in working with drug users could be successfully applied for alcoholics as well. Based on the limited knowledge, we can conclude that the working principles developed for other vulnerable groups are also valid for this group: individual
approach, flexibility, accessibility, locally developed and so on. Beside these principles, it seems that interventions with drug users need more input on the motivational side of work. Indeed, in order to become economically active, drug users need to come out, and stay out, of taking drugs. Employment can act as a motivational factor in this respect but it is well known that fighting addiction is a long and difficult process. Relapse is often part of this process and, therefore, sheltered forms of employment might be a good option for those in the early stage of addiction treatment. Social economy structures and self-employed forms are only a few examples of such sheltered employment.

Another aspect that seems to be specific to this group is the public perception. More should be done to raise the public awareness regarding drug and alcohol use. Mixing workforce, as explained by our expert, can be a good way to explore.

C.2.3 OFFENDERS / EX-OFFENDERS

Findings from the systematic review

Policy context

Crime and imprisonment are stretching the resources of the EU Member States to the limit. According to Walmsley\(^9\) (2013), the world prison population has increased in the last 15 years by 25-30%. The world prison population rate has risen from 136 per 100 000 inhabitants to the current rate of 144. This increase in penalty has led to prison occupancy levels that exceed the prison capacity by far. The situation seems to be worrying in states like Greece and Cyprus.

Criminal justice is still recognised by the European Union as an essential element of state sovereignty. Therefore, every Member State is free to choose its own response to crime issues. However, in the past few years, the European Union, based on the principle of common area of freedom and security, advanced some framework decisions that can enhance the reintegration prospects of the ex-offenders. One of these framework decisions is FD 2008/909/JHA on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgements on criminal matters imposing custodial sentences or measures involving deprivation of liberty for the purpose of their enforcement in the European Union. According to this Framework Decision, under some circumstances, the execution of a custodial sentence can be transferred to another Member State for rehabilitation reasons.

In addition to the ‘hard law approach’, the European Commission funded several initiatives that aimed at collecting best practices and learning points regarding the ex-offenders reintegration. Two most well known initiatives are:

EQUAL and EXOCOOP. Both these networks produced very valuable advice and recommendations regarding the resettlement of offenders.

The crime-employment relationship is a very dynamic and complex one: while most of the offenders were not employed by the time of arrest, having a criminal record prevents a lot of ex-offenders from getting into employment. Farrington et al. (1986) observed that ‘proportionally more crimes were committed by [Cambridge cohort] during periods of unemployment than during periods of employment’ (351). In the desistance literature acquiring a stable partner, obtaining a suitable employment and moving away from criminal friends play a significant role in the desistance process (Sampson and Laub, 1993). As they were described by Samson and Laub (1993) the desisters had ‘good work habits and were frequently described as “hard workers” ’ (220). Although this theory was developed in US, its basic assumptions were confirmed on the European continent (see for instance Savolainen, 2009, for Finland). Other studies demonstrate that criminal involvement in adulthood has a negative long-term impact on the individual’s life course and career opportunities (Nilsson and Estrada, 2011). On the contrary, being involved in a post-release employment assistance program decreases significantly the likelihood of reoffending even for high-risk offenders (Graffam et al., 2014).

As mentioned above, one of the most visible projects funded by EU is EQUAL – 2006-2008. After looking into the available evidence and the best practices around Europe, the EQUAL experts stress as principles of good practice\(^{10}\):

- The ‘holistic approach’ - involve partnership structures from the public and private sectors.
- The right balance between security and citizenship – more creative practices, involve employers and other actors into the prisoner’s rehabilitation etc.
- The benefit of the European cooperation – European networks could provide effective frameworks for comparing, analysing and transferring successful practices.

One of the most interesting recommendations of this report is to develop an EU Guidelines on Resettlement. Indeed this Guideline could incorporate principles of best practices and a consistent framework for an evidence based practice but also for innovation.

The other influential network, funded by the European Commission, that provides valuable advice on ex-offender reintegration is Ex-Offender Community of Practice (ExOCooP). In one of the final reports of this network\(^{11}\), the experts advance a significant number of recommendations.


from the diagnostic to the sentence planning and networking of institutions. Indeed, as we will see later, it seems that resettlement is a very complex process that should incorporate all aspects of the personal, social and institutional life of the prisoner. Strictly related to employability and employment of ex-offenders, the ExOCoP experts made a few recommendations, such as:

- develop accredited employment focused training programmes at least 6 months prior to release
- these programmes should reflect the labour market opportunities,
- self employment should be promoted as a real option prior and post release
- provide real work contracts with local companies and ensure that prisoners receive a real wage
- develop ‘through the gate’ opportunities with employers or other community representatives
- work with ‘champions’ employers based on a new business case rather than on a corporate social responsibility model.
- work to challenge negative attitudes or other systemic processes that create additional and unnecessary barriers for ex-offenders.

Some of these recommendations are confirmed in the scientific literature. For example, in a recent literature review commissioned by NIACRO, McEvoy (f.a.) found some evidence that education and training in prison can enhance the employability of prisoners, but only under some conditions:

- training and education to be directly related to the work program,
- training and education is linked and supported by good aftercare provisions,
- these activities are ‘mainstreamed’ into the prison planning and delivery process and occupational culture of the institution,
- these programs are formally assessed and evaluated,
- employment and employability programs are integrated in wider comprehensive interventions that target also personal development, accommodation and substance misuse,
- raising job expectations through training without any serious prospects of a job on release may be actively damaging. Thus, targeted interventions to the local market and / or employer involvement in program are essential for the success of the program,
- employment in prison workshops and other activities aiming at keeping the prisoners busy does not appear to increase the chances of employment after release.

The key success factors for ex-prisoners employment after release were identified as follows:

- multiple and secure funds,
- strong management capacity,
skilled and experienced staff,
effective partnerships with local partners,
individualised approach – flexible to the needs of the participants,

As the author noted, one of the most important barriers in ex-prisoners returning to employment is the criminal record. In order to fight the discriminatory power of this factor, some countries developed legislation based on one of the two models: Discriminatory or Rights Based Model and the Spent Convictions Model.

The first model is based on the human rights and some of the European Court of Human Rights, which interpreted non-discrimination on the grounds of ‘other status’ to include the non-discrimination on the criminal record bases. Australia and Northern Ireland, for instance, took significant steps towards recognising the criminal record as a ground for unjust discrimination.

The other model – Spent Conviction Model – is a more complex one and involves a set of measures that would protect ex-offenders against abuse: voluntary code of conduct for employers governing the disclosure of records during recruitment, a smaller number of accepted professions, a reduction and a simplification of the rehabilitation procedures and so on. Applying both models would have the effect of mainstreaming ex-offenders as a protected group ensuring that they are not unreasonably excluded from the job market.

As an illustration of many principles described above, Low Moss Prison (in Scotland) developed a so-called Public Social Partnership (Graham, 2013) where the third sector plays a key co-delivering role with the prison sector. As the author describes, a public social partnership is ‘working together in a structured way which pools knowledge but retains future competition’ (slide 6). The principles of the model are: continuity of support and coordination throughout the prison journey, dedicated one to one support, shared assessment framework and support planning, person centred, responsive and flexible, people at the centre of the planning process and strength of a partnership approach. Some of the most important features of the model stress the co-designing approach where all participants including the prisoners take part in the planning process of the interventions, dedicated case worker, continuity in and out-prison, coordination with the local services and joint working protocols. Although this initiative has not been formally evaluated yet, since it contains most of the success factors described in the literature, it can be credited as a promising one for the time being. Currently this approach is a part of the Scottish Government Ready for Business agenda.

In a comprehensive review, Shuller (2009) demonstrates that lifelong learning can be an effective instrument to facilitate employment and fight crime. However, in order for this tool to have an impact on employment, several measures need to be in place in the same time:

- developing human capital – develop skills and qualifications,
- developing social capital – build useful networks and peer or family support systems,
- improving motivation and self-esteem,
- linking learning with other policies and interventions dealing especially with employment and accommodation.

According to Shuller (2009), employment in the social economy sector is an ideal stepping stone to a job.

However, in a recent review of evidence (Ministry of Justice, 2013) the authors stressed that employment programmes are unlikely to be effective unless they are combined with other interventions that target motivation, social, health and education to help address other needs that may act as barriers to finding and maintaining employment. In particular this is the case for those with learning disabilities, mental illness or drug addicts. As outlined above, vocational training without tangible employment prospects are unlikely to lead to reductions in recidivism. As learning points, the authors noted that in order for the employment programme to be successful, it needs to: have strong local partnership, training needs to be related to local employment needs and opportunities, needs long – term funding and needs to co-ordinate work before and after release from prison.

The literature is already very persuasive in demonstrating that vocational training, individual training on the job or work-based training require complementary interventions on employers attitude, access to accommodation or to health services. At the same time, developing human and social capital alongside improving motivation and hope seem important ingredients for an effective program. Co-operation between different state sectors (justice ministries, health sectors, welfare agencies and so on) and local authorities or the NGO sector seems to be crucial for any successful intervention on ex-offenders. Another important factor that can prevent ex-offenders from getting back to work is the criminal record. As illustrated above, the literature describes at least two models of fighting this unreasonable discriminatory factor.

**Findings from the PL 1 meeting**

Experts invited to PL 1 meeting identified the following practices to come and present at PL 2 meeting:

1. Reintegration of addicted people into society and labour market in the salad bar “My Guru” – Lithuania
2. Choices Programme – Portugal
3. Job Track – Northern Ireland
4. The Chrysalis Programme – England and Australia
5. Ready for Work – Uk and Republic of Ireland
Apart from these practices, another three interventions were selected as reserves:

1. Sartorie Solidali – Italy
2. Directions – UK
3. Youth Advocate Programme

Somehow surprisingly almost none of the practices selected are non prison based. On the contrary, most of them are implemented in the community based on a large network of local and national authorities, NGOs and the private sector. Moreover, the majority of these practices do not target exclusively offenders or ex-offenders but they target a wide range of vulnerable people, offenders and ex-offenders included. As illustrated in these practices, one of the main actors involved in the employer. The employer is present either as a private entrepreneur (as in the Jobtrack intervention in Northern Ireland and the Ready for Work intervention in the UK) or as a representative of the social economy (see for instance the Salad Bar intervention in Lithuania). What seems to be essential is that training is directly connected with concrete job placements or job vacancies.

Another feature of these projects is that apart from the agencies directly related to training or employment, to a large extent they involve services that provide housing, health services, drug addiction interventions and so on. Therefore, the inter-agency and the ‘whole person’ approach are the most important ingredients of an effective intervention with ex-offenders. If these features are in common with the interventions dealing with other vulnerable groups there are also interventions or services that seem to be specific to this category. One example of this sort is the specific counseling provided to ex-prisoners on how to deal with disclosure. As mentioned in the literature, one of the most important impediments in obtaining a job for the ex-offenders is the criminal record. How to disclose this information, when and what are the potential consequences of this are important subjects to be debated with ex-prisoners. Some practices, like The Jobtrack intervention in Northern Ireland, can provide useful insights into these questions. Another important element of a successful intervention with ex-offenders is improving self-esteem and motivation. One of the training modules included in the Chrysalis Programme intervention in England and Wales is dealing with self-confidence and self-esteem. Indeed, prison literature suggests that in order to promote agency prisoners need support to consolidate self confidence and self esteem. In order to promote employability and employment among ex-offenders, some interventions also included activities dealing with changing offending thinking or behaviour (see the Chrysalis Programme intervention in England and Wales).

Some other critical elements of a successful intervention with ex-offenders were summarised very well in one of the completed questionnaires:
‘Partnership between key statutory agencies and major NGO within Criminal Justice that provides structured referral process and risk management information.

- Is based on proven research that demonstrates employment as a significant factor in reducing offending.
- Provides a service that is flexible and tailored to meet individual needs.
- Provides direct support to Probation Officers within custodial settings and all community teams across Northern Ireland.
- Prioritises those assessed as medium–high risk (those most excluded from the labour market).
- Supports individuals to develop relevant skills that support progression onto appropriate labour market initiatives and employment.
- Proactively engages with, trains and supports employers and other providers to work with individuals with convictions, thereby increasing opportunities for positive progression.
- Provides specialist focus for women who offend.
- Provides specialist focus on young people leaving Youth Justice institution and designated as not in education, employment or training -“NEET”
- Provides continuum of services and support from custody to community.
- Acts as broker/link to mainstream services in the community.
- Incorporates specialist advice on Disclosure and Welfare Rights.
- Incorporates Peer Educator model of service delivery.
- Advocates on behalf of Service users.
- Provides & encourages opportunities for “the voice” of the service user to be heard through organisational adults forum.’ (Jobtrack – Northern Ireland).

Findings from the interview

The examples cited by the respondents during the interviews are practices that start inside prison and continue after release. They may be considered examples of ‘through the gate’ interventions.

An important element of these practices is the strong focus on the individual approach. Offenders’ needs are assessed (needs-driven approach) and the intervention plans and delivery are unique. Both respondents emphasised that offenders need ‘individual pathways’ (expert from Italy).

The offender’s role is central in this process but the presence of professionals and a coherent network are also mentioned as important in the process:

‘(an ideal intervention) would include particularly bottom-up approach but with professional expertise to organise and run the initiative’ (expert from Ireland)

In many cases job agencies, schools, local municipalities, social enterprises, vocational training centres etc form the network.
Based on the Sartolie Solidaly example from Italy one of the experts developed some of these points even further:

- mixing ex-offenders with other disadvantaged people,
- creating strong partnerships between prison and local municipalities, local employers and local providers for services such as: mental health, drug addiction, education and so on,
- involving the ex-offenders in designing and implementing their own projects or ideas,
- linking training with concrete employment opportunities,
- building up skills that are transferable in the community and
- promoting real investments in the community.

In all the examples the experts used they always mentioned the local dimension of the interventions. All the planning, designing and the implementation should take into consideration the local community and the local resources:

‘if you solve the issues locally eventually you will solve them nationally’ (expert from UK)

However, although the implementation should be local, the interventions should be part of a wider welfare or public policy. By doing so, all the collaboration between different institutions and agencies could be better coordinated.

Some of the services available to offenders’ are strictly related to criminogenic needs (e.g. drug addiction services, mental health services etc.) but also to non-criminogenic needs (e.g. accompanying, mentoring, placement in the social enterprise etc.). In some cases ex-prisoners receive a small credit to pay for emergency services: driving licence, housing rental, gas, power supply etc.

In order to cover for all of these needs the interventions need to draw on diverse funding schemes. Both experts emphasised that interventions with offenders are very much resource demanding and therefore they need strong and sustainable resources.

Other critical factors identified as crucial for success are:

- motivation and the right attitude of the implementation staff,
- 24 hours support tailored to the needs of the people,
- multidimensional services etc.

When asked about what can be improved, both experts mentioned that independent evaluation is very important. Public participation and public awareness especially in relation to stigmatised people seem to be also critical for a successful intervention. Almost every community has activists, charities,
social entrepreneurs who could be mobilised around the ex-prisoners in order to help him/her is sorting out the issues connected to offending or employment. Furthermore, as a way of improving the current practices the state should establish a social fund that would support social enterprises that work with ex-offenders. Ex-offenders could also benefit from this fund by setting up their own businesses. As one of the experts observed, based on their past illegal history most of the offenders have marketing, planning or selling skills. Inside and outside prison these skills could be further developed and structured in a pro-social way. In order for these skills to be properly captured, the prison assessment should include beside the criminogenic needs assessment a more comprehensive form of assessment that would include also strengths or skills that can be used in finding or creating employment. Beside social funds, other funding resources could be mobilised. Social bonds, crowd funding and so on were mentioned as important ways to be explored in the future.

Conclusions on offenders and ex-offenders and possible ways further

As can be inferred from all three sources, interventions with ex-offenders should be based on the ‘whole person’ approach. In most cases, ex-prisoners are people with multiple and complex needs and therefore require attention on many levels and areas. In order to deliver these services, the interventions need to be strongly based on wide networks of stakeholders able to respond swiftly to issues such as: drug addition, housing, mental health, income deficit and so on.

Based on the literature and the best practices, interventions should start while in prison, prior to release with vocational training and other forms of training for the soft-skills. At the same time, services should be provided to reduce the potential obstacles such as drug addiction, mental health, housing and so on. What is worth mentioning again is that training should be connected to real opportunities and not to the organisational resources or priorities. As suggested by the interview respondent, prisons could develop procedures that would capture more accurately the skills and the strengths that can be mobilised by each prisoner for the labour market. Based on this assessment, the prison, together with the other stakeholders, and the prisoner, can design individual pathways towards employment.

More closely to employment, employers need to be motivated and supported to get involved. One strong reason to do so is to help them overcome the prejudice that ex-offenders are more dangerous or less reliable that any other candidate. One good example of how to involve employers is offered by the Low Moss Prison which includes employers in the social partnership to plan and deliver services to prisoners and ex-prisoners. Employers can be also stimulated to employ ex-offenders in jobs that do not assume direct contact with customers (e.g. opticians, bakers etc.). Helping offenders to create their own businesses or setting up social enterprises seem also promising practices.
Ex-offenders themselves need help in how to disclose their own offending past and also how to become more proactive and self confident.

Community involvement and public awareness campaigns can also help to diminish the stigma and the negative attitude attached to this vulnerable group.

When working with offenders, in particular, due to the public perception and the deficit of self esteem, the attitude and the motivation of the implementing staff seem to be essential.

Another important element of the process is case management. The literature, and the experts, mentioned several times the importance of a coordinated process (e.g. ‘through the gate’, ‘end to end management’ etc.) that would include elements or activities that would deal with offending thinking and behaviour, alongside the ‘traditional’ elements of employment intervention. In this respect, probation services seem to play an important role.

As suggested by the experts, an important aspect that needs to be debated in the future is how to balance the ‘right to know’ of the employers with the ‘right to start a new life’ of the ex-offenders. To what extent, and when the criminal record can be used when recruiting and selecting candidates, are still two questions that need a clear and strong answer. Diversifying funding schemes also seems a priority for the future. Options such as social funds, social bonds, crowd funding and so on could be useful options.

### C.2.4 Mental health, physical and learning disabilities

#### Findings from the systematic review

**Policy context**

According to Jones (2009) the disabled represent about 20% of the working age population in Sweden, Portugal and the Netherlands. The Labour Force Survey\(^{12}\) in the UK records around 30% of the working age population as reporting long-standing illness or impairment in 2011. A part of them (11.6%) stated that the impairment was activity-limiting which means in technical terms disability. From the limited information available on this group, the results indicate that the employment rates among this group are very low in almost all EU countries (see Verdonschot et al., 2009).

After the 90s, the European Commission kept the focus on employment for disabled people. The subject was included in several policy or strategy documents like Lisbon Agenda and European Employment Strategy or European Disability Action Plan. In 2000 the European Commission adopted the Employment Directive 2000/78/EC.

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\(^{12}\)http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/lfs/
In 2008, the European Commission took a step further and set up the Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED) to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit.

In 2009 the Academic Network of European Disability Experts (ANED) published a very comprehensive document titled ‘The labour market situation of disabled people in European countries and implementation of employment policies: a summary of evidence from country reports and research studies’. In this study, the experts coordinated by Greve warn the EU states on the danger of multiple exclusion for particular groups of disabled people: disabled women, older disable workers, those with intellectual impairments and with severe mental health conditions. They noted some improvements in adopting some active labour market policies like the shift from the inactivity compensation towards the assessment of capacity of work or the quota system. There is also evidence of disability mainstreaming in national policies but effective mainstreaming ‘requires attention to implementation in practice, not simply in law…. Additional expertise, resources and training will be required by generic services to ensure the inclusion of disabled people in mainstream opportunities’ (5). Starting from the observation that a large proportion of disabled people are employed in low-skilled jobs, the authors suggest that access to education and lifelong learning for this group is essential. Furthermore, a better combination between benefits and employment should be more attractive and flexicurity should play a more active role.

These observations are echoed in the systematic review published by Achterberg et al. (2009) where the authors identify that the main promoting factors for young disabled people in work participation are: male gender, high education level, age at survey, low depression scores, high dispositional optimism and high psychosocial functioning. On the contrary, being female, low education levels, low IQ, epilepsy, inpatient treatment, motor impairment, wheelchair dependency, co-morbidity, chronic health conditions combined with mental retard are all associated with very low employment rates. However, the review ends on a positive note stressing that education can increase significantly the work participation of young disabled people.

Based on international databases, it seems that interest in the subject of employability and employment of people with health difficulties or disabilities was triggered around the 90s. This movement was helped by different international initiatives (see the set up of HELIOS II Employment Working Group, GLADNET etc.) and also by an increased interest of the European Commission in this area of work. For example, one of the first reviews of the disability employment policies, legislation and services to cover fifteen EU countries was published in 1993 and updated in 1997 including also Canada, Australia and USA (Thornton and Lunt, 1997). The second review was co-financed by the European Commission demonstrating a real interest in this social field. In their report, the authors noted that most countries have increased the range of legislative, voluntary and financial measures and services. One of the most common measure is the anti-discrimination clause.
In other countries, like UK, for example, another trend towards the use of persuasion to change employers’ behaviour was noted. This diversity of approaches have made the authors reflect upon the transferability of policy measures from one country to another and the conclusion was that ‘the appropriateness of a particular measure or broad approach depends on its historical and contemporary place within a country’s provision both for employment and for disabled people’ (397). Another important merit of this review is that it describes systematically employment services or initiatives that seem to work in the fifteen EU countries, Australia, Canada and USA. These services are:

- employment support services – training and placement services, financial incentives, counselling etc.
- supported employment – like offering competitive employer-paid work and continuous on-the-job support
- disability discrimination legislation – based on the civil rights legislation
- accommodation and adaptation of the work place – not only for the physical space but also for the equipment, work schedule, training, personal assistance and so on.
- the quota system – but only as part of a coherent disability employment policy.
- financial support for employers – to recruit and to retain disabled people as a compensation for the reduced productivity.
- financial support for the employees – ‘fares to work’ as grants to cover for equipment, travel etc.
- sheltered employment – special work places for special disabled people.
- new forms of employment – social enterprises, self-help firms, work cooperatives (Italy – especially for people with psychiatric needs).

Although these initiatives or policies are not presented with their results or impact on employment, they can serve as an important starting point for when looking at special arrangements for this target group.

Another review of the implementation of the active inclusion principles within the interventions with disabled or mental health people is the one conducted by the Eurofound (2012). In this review, the experts examined the situation of young people with health or disabilities in 11 countries (Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom). The conclusion of this study was that although the legislation in these countries improved significantly in the last few years, more should be done to reach this target group and service delivery systems need to be much better integrate to deliver active inclusion. Based on the best practices analysed, the experts derived several principles of successful interventions:

- An integrated approach to skills development, training and job placement is needed for the transition to employment.
- After training, rapid placement in a real job must be ensured if momentum is to be maintained and skills are to remain relevant.
- Individuals must be empowered to take control of their career path and to make real choices over its direction.
- Employers need support with the recruitment, training and retention of staff with disabilities.
- All projects should aim ultimately at open labour market participation for those who are able and who are interested.
- Good projects evolve over time to conform to the active inclusion approach.’ (2)

Education, training for market-directed jobs and community involvement were the solutions suggested also in a comparative analysis EU countries and Croatia (Leutar and Buljevac, 2012).

Based on the civil rights concept and on the theory that says that disabled people should be supported to live an independent life, a new scheme of financing services for this population was introduced in UK in mid 90s: direct payment or individual budgets. These schemes provide the disabled person with a budget to employ other people to support them to live independently. The funds are coming from the Independent Living Fund, health authorities or employment agencies. These self operated support systems are recognised as providing disabled people with choice and control over their life. Some researchers focused on the social benefits of this sort of support (Butt et al., 2000). Other studies (Leadbeater at al., 2008) compared the costs of the traditional services with the direct payment schemes and found them over-costly. However, as Prideaux et al. (2009) observed, these studies do not take full account of the relative impact of these schemes on the relatives and family of the disabled person. If all these aspects would be included, the costs of these innovative schemes may be re-evaluated.

Assessing the level of self-employment among people with disabilities in 13 European countries, Pagan (2009) suggests that disabled people are more likely to be self-employed as compared with non-disabled people, especially in southern countries like Greece and Portugal. Therefore, this form of employment for disabled people is very popular in some European countries. Since most of the self-employed disabled people report very high levels of job satisfaction it can be concluded that governments should be encouraged to use this employment strategy. Adding to the job satisfaction, the governments can also combat discrimination, ‘prevent social and labour exclusion and reduce the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people’ (Pegan, 2009: 227).

While most of the reviews or empirical papers approached the disabled people group as one group with similar features and needs, other studies paid more attention to individual sub-groups of disabled people.

In their systematic review, Verdonschot et al. (2009), for example, focused on the people with intellectual disability. They evidenced that the empirical support available to document different interventions for persons with intellectual disabilities is rather scarce. Out of 2936 hits they were able to identify only 23 qualitative studies that met the inclusion criteria. The
aggregated conclusion of this review was that people with intellectual disabilities are 3-4 times less employed than non-disabled peers, they are less likely to be employed competitively and more likely to work in sheltered workshops. The level of community participation of this disabled group is very limited. When they do join the workforce, the people with mild intellectual disability tend to view supported employment very positively, both as ‘work as participation’ (e.g. task variety, belonging, feeling appreciated) and ‘work as structure’ (e.g. working independently, friendly co-workers etc.) (Cramm et al., 2009).

Edwards (2009) is making a solid case in arguing that targeted interventions such as ‘Roots and Shoots’ (in London) can provide people with learning disabilities a good way of getting involved into the labour market. In this project, people with learning disabilities were trained and involved in gardening and woodwork. The project was linked to another project focused on local regeneration where all the terms and conditions were pre-defined in the light of participation and responsibility. The author warns that although people with a learning disability can benefit from this sort of arrangement they also need an environment where they can express their own agendas, where the terms of their engagement is not so strictly determined.

To promote the labour integration for people with mental health difficulties, Burns at al. (2009) found enough evidence to support the individual placement and support (IPS).

### The key principles of Individual Placement and Support (IPS)

1. Competitive employment is the primary goal;
2. Everyone who wants it is eligible for employment support;
3. Job search is consistent with individual preferences;
4. Job search is rapid: beginning within one month;
5. Employment specialists and clinical teams work and are located together;
6. Support is time-unlimited and individualized to both the employer and the employee;
7. Welfare benefits counseling supports the person through the transition from benefits to work.

Using an experimental design, the authors followed up 312 patients in six European centres for 18 months and compared the impact of IPS with standard vocational support. The conclusion of this study was that both forms of helping people with mental health problems to move to employment are useful, with IPS slightly more effective in preventing hospitalisation during the follow-up. Furthermore, it seems that IPS has helped more socially disabled (more unwell patients) people into work than the vocational services. These

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patients who worked had a better global functioning, fewer symptoms, decrease in depression and so on.

However, research is quite strong in stressing that there is a real danger for the disabled integration programmes to follow a medicalised (Holmqvist, 2009) or a individualised (Riach and Loretto, 2009) approach where the program starts from the individual pathology point of view and does not pay enough attention to the social attitudes or social structures that prevent people with disabilities or with impairment to access the labour market (Jones, 2009). Indeed, it seems, most governments have looked to health professionals rather to social scientists for policy advice (see Dame Carol Black and Sir Michael Marmot, in UK, cited in Jones and Wass, 2013).

To conclude this section, it seems that apart from the specific recommendations adopted by the European Commission for disabled people, the concept of active inclusion may also provide a very solid platform for intervention in the area of employment for disabled people. However, as suggested in a very recent review (Eurofound, 2012), in order for active inclusion policy to combat the exclusion of this group it needs to be complimented with education, lifelong learning and also antidiscrimination policies and attitudes.

**Findings from the PL 1 meeting**

The experts participating in the PL1 meeting selected the following practices as the best interventions:

- Spanish Red Cross, ONCE Foundation, Fundación Secretariado Gitano and Caritas, Spain
- Ready for Work, Business in the Community, UK & Ireland
- Reintegration of addicted people into society and labour market in the salad bar “My Guru”, NGO Social support projects, Lithuania
- Eye work, RNIB Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland
- Andra Chansen, Municipality of Uppsala, Care & Education, Sweden

They also selected four best practices as reserves to be discussed in the PL2 meeting:

- Youth Advocate Programme, Youth Advocate Programme Inc., U.S.A. & Southern Ireland
- Farm activities for the social and work inclusion, Mental Health Department of Pordenone, Italy
- Experimentation in the field of social farming, Agricooppecetto, Italy
- Supporting people, housing support programme, Birmingham/UK

Most of the best practices selected are based on strong networks of cooperation between the national and local level, NGOs, businesses and so on. Combining provisions of different policies in order to respond to the needs of the vulnerable people was identified several times as a key success factor.
Employers play a significant role in all stages of the intervention life. The Ready for Work intervention in the UK and Ireland, for instance, involves employers in the planning and the pre-placement stage of the intervention. Employers can take part in mock interviews or in supporting different exercises that prepare individuals to undertake a job interview. They can also take part in the post-placement stage where they can provide support or mentoring to those already on the placement. Beneficiaries are also involved as much as possible in planning, delivering and monitoring the interventions. In the Eye Work intervention in Northern Ireland blind and partially sighted people are using their own experience on the labour market to design the employment intervention.

Another success factor seems to be the individual approach. People with disabilities, like many other disadvantaged groups, face multiple and diverse problems and obstacles. Being able to respond to these complex needs on an individual level was cited many times as critical in working with disabled or people with mental health issues. The idea was captured under different names such as: individualised itineraries (POLCD intervention in Spain, bespoke programme - Ready to work intervention in the UK and Ireland etc.). In order to respond to this complexity, in most cases interventions needed to combine mainstream services with innovation and individual activities.

As mentioned, working with vulnerable groups at the individual level requires projects to react to many needs or obstacles. That leads to another success factor that is to offer a very wide variety of services – from income support to training and education, from counseling to working with families or communities, from working with individuals to working with the society (raising awareness on the societal obstacles) and so on.

In order to be able to create the networks underlining the work with vulnerable people and obtain long lasting effects of the vulnerable population and on the national economies, interventions need to be implemented for a sufficiently long time. Developers need to have solid financial bases to plan and implement large interventions. A good way of reaching this aim seems to be a constant monitoring and evaluation of the intervention’s impact. POLCD, for instance, succeeded to make a strong case arguing that working with vulnerable people is a real investment for the economy: every euro invested created an economic value of 1.38 euro; public administrations have recovered 39 million euros annually in taxes and social contributions, and saved 9 million euros in benefits. The Ready for Work intervention in the UK and Ireland provides regular data on how many individuals started as ready to work, gained employment and sustained work for 3,6 or 12 months. The Eye Work intervention in Northern Ireland uses a comprehensive tool (Rickter Scale Impact Measurement System) to measure the distance traveled towards employment. This information can encourage local and national stakeholders to stay involved in these interventions and could also stimulate funders to continue supporting them.

An interesting example of how services can be combined with concrete job experience is provided by the Lithuanian project called ‘Reintegration of
addicted people into society and labour market in the salad bar “My Guru” where addicted people, and also other categories of vulnerable people, can benefit from a rapid job placement in a social enterprise. Another useful example of a social enterprise are the following interventions: ‘Farm activities for the social and work inclusion’ run by the Mental Health Department of Pordenone in Italy and the ‘Experimentation in the field of social farming’, in Agricoopetetto, Italy.

The experts that gathered together at the PL1 meeting in Athens decided that the main learning points form these interventions are:

- tailored made approach
- good connection at the local level – only the local level is aware of the local markets.
- involving stakeholders and beneficiaries together in co-producing an effective intervention.

Sustainability and flexibility were also mentioned as key ingredients of a successful intervention.

As innovative elements within these practices, the experts noted the combination between different sources of funding and the synergy between partnership and technology. Different sorts of social enterprises or social farming were also considered by the experts as innovation in this field of work.

Findings from the interview
TO BE COMPLETED

Conclusions and possible ways further
TO BE COMPLETED

C. 3 Troubled Families

Policy context

Recognising the current economic downturn and its consequences on children and women, in particular, the European Commission adopted the Recommendation ‘Investing in Children-breaking the cycle of disadvantage’ in February 2013. Among others, the Recommendation provides guidance to EU countries on how to tackle child poverty and social exclusion through actions such as: quality childcare, family support and benefits etc. One of the first principles mentioned in these documents is ‘access to adequate resources – support parents’ participation in the labour market’ (Recital 2.1).

C.3.1. Offenders’ Family

Findings from the Systematic Review

As illustrated many times, offenders are most often recruited from disadvantaged families and marginalised communities. Yet, most of the time penal or social interventions tend to focus exclusively on the end result of the accumulated disadvantages – the offender. The majority of research seems to follow the same trend – to focus on how families are affected by offending behaviour or how the family social capital can be utilised to support desistance. For instance, Martinez and Abrams (2013) conducted a metasynthesis of US literature on the importance of the informal social support for the returning young offenders. It concluded that ‘family members provided the support and comfort of “the ties that bind” but with potentially unrealistic expectations and re-enactment of old roles and negative dynamics’ (p. 169). The authors concluded that the burden of high expectations and the suffocating nature of care can restrict the access of the young ex-offender to a new identity.

Other studies demonstrate how offending can impact on family life. This is most obvious in sex offending cases where the sex offenders are met with a lot of employment barriers and face severe subsequent financial hardship. Moreover, family members living with ex-sex offenders are more likely to experience threats, harassment, stigmatisation and differential treatment by neighbours, teachers or other relevant ones (Levenson and Tewksbury, 2009). In sex-offending cases, it seems that the most effective method of intervention is multi-systemic therapy as opposed to individual therapy. Borduin et al. (1990), for example, followed sixteen adolescent sexual offenders randomly assigned to either multi-systemic therapy or individual therapy. They concluded that multi-systemic therapy is more effective than the individual one due to its emphasis on changing behaviour within the offender’s natural environment.

Hunter et al. (2013) conducted, in the UK, a rapid evidence assessment examining how interventions targeting offender’s families can have an impact on re-offending and other intermediate outcomes (employment included). Although they used quite large inclusive criteria, they were able to identify only 29 studies published in English, after 1992, that cover offenders’ family and other intimate relationships. Out of this already small number, only three studies were looking at family support services. Methodologically speaking, these studies were considered as ‘none scalable’ since they did not fit to any level of scientific quality, as defined by Cook and Campbell (1979). As for the employment or employability, the authors concluded, in line with Borduin et al. (1990), that a holistic approach which includes offenders and their immediate systems of support could lead to desistance and other positive intermediate outcomes.

In 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government in the UK ran an assessment of evidence regarding the impact of family interventions in the UK. In so doing, the Department evaluated the impact of projects like Dundee
Families Project and other Action for Children projects that were developed in partnership with local authorities. Most of the interventions were associated with significant reductions in anti-social behaviour (8 out of 10 families reported reduction in this area); decreasing the risk of homelessness (in 80% of the families); and reduction in other risks to the community (in 88% of the project cases). Between 2007 to 2012, National Centre for Social Research (Natcen) collected information from the families that benefited from family intervention and reported significant improvements in reducing anti-social behaviour (59%); disengagement with crime (45%); reduction in truancy (52%); and also in solving employment or training problems (with 14%). The same results are reported from the families exiting the services in 2008 and in 2012. This data demonstrates consistency in reaching positive outcomes at the moment of exit.

In 2001, Natcen conducted an impact analysis by tracking a comparison group of families who were similar but did not benefit from family interventions. The conclusion was that families belonging to the treatment group reported half of the anti-social behaviour problems. Although it was not measured, it is possible that the other positive outcomes were also more present among the treatment group rather than in the control group. Evidence collected by Natcen also shows that the improvements in anti-social behaviour; education; and family functioning are sustained after 9 to 14 months from the programme exit. Qualitative research also supports this conclusion (Nixon et al., 2008).

Based on these evaluations, the Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) concludes that, in order for a family intervention to work effectively, five factors are crucial:

1. a dedicated worker, dedicated to a family,
2. practical ‘hands on’ support,
3. a persistent, assertive and challenging approach,
4. considering the family as a whole – gathering the intelligence,
5. common purpose and agreed action.’ (p.15)

**Findings from the Platform 1 meeting**

The lack of targeted interventions on offenders’ family was also noted when analysing the returns from the survey. The number of returns speak for itself: only 12 interventions were recommended for this sub-theme. Moreover, as mentioned in the workshop report on offenders’ families ‘employment is not the prime target when working with offenders and their families. (Employment) is a spin-off of a broader intervention’. This can be also interpreted as a positive point since one of the most important success factors identified by the experts was the holistic approach for both the offender and the family. Linked to this principle is the coordination and the non-fragmented nature of the intervention. Other important success factors were: intervention tailored to the family, cooperation with other institutions, interventions based on clear objectives and procedures.
Only three interventions were selected to be invited to the Platform two workshop:

- Integrated outreach support – UK
- Integration of the members of the family of high-quality social risk into the labour market – Lithuania
- Family space (Spazio Famiglia) – Italy

One of the first observations related to these interventions is that they do not specifically target offenders’ families, but individuals and families excluded from the labour market. The Integrated outreach support intervention in the UK, for instance, addresses multiple disadvantages of offenders and their families. The first objective of the Integration of the members of the family of high-quality social risk into the labour market intervention in Lithuania is to encourage families with high social risk to participate in the public life and in the labour market. Therefore the focus is not the individual, but the whole family.

Recognising that offenders and their families have numerous and complex needs, two of these interventions start their activities with a comprehensive needs assessment activity covering dimensions such as: housing, training, education, childcare, income and so on. Based on this exercise, the project staff design individual tailor made interventions. Since the needs are very diverse, the activities or the services provided within these interventions are also very diversified: training, education, job placement, mentoring, incentives to seek employment, motivational work, coaching, use of social enterprises and so on.

One of the main challenges of these interventions is the coordination. In this respect, at least two interventions mentioned among the difficulties that coordinating between partners and funders was a difficulty at least in the early stages of the project life.

The Integrated outreach support intervention in the UK was externally evaluated and the findings are very encouraging. It seems that the integrated approach developed by the pilots have proved to be effective in addressing the barriers faced by the ex-offenders and their families. Vocational training, work experience and employer brokerage can play an important role in strengthening the ex-offender’s position in the labour market, especially for women. When it comes to innovation, the evaluators identified the following elements:

- the delivery partnership between YSS (Youth Support Service) and FIP (Family Intervention Programme);
- co-location of offender and veteran support;
- a holistic intervention model for working with women, which included

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\[15\] In the final report, all these best practices will be presented in the Annex following the structure that we will provide in Platform 2 meetings.
personalised work experience;
- delivery through a social housing provider;
- the development of a new course in enterprise peer coaching;
- the establishment of a peer-led social enterprise for working with ex-offenders.’

Combining comparative research with study visits, the Integrated Outreach Support intervention in the UK identified a number of potential innovative practices with a transnational vocation:

- foster families for adult resettlement from long-term custody,
- combining job support with employer engagement,
- family conferencing services,
- mentoring,
- social enterprises for women,
- self-employment
- through the gate approach etc.

Overall, the identified practices confirmed and extended the findings from the systematic review. They also demonstrated the huge potential for innovation in this area.

**Findings from the Interviews**

Both experts interviewed for this subject emphasised that working with offenders’ families should start from the principle that the family is a social system (‘as a whole group’). An interesting perspective was provided by one of the experts who stressed that the best interests of the child should be used as a main principle in the family interventions. Therefore, even when employment is the final aim of the intervention, issues such as time spent with the child, good parenting and so on should be taken into consideration. While most interventions in this area work exclusively with the mothers and the children left outside the prison, the experts stressed that working with the imprisoned fathers is also important:

‘The child, if he has two parents, they need both to be strong and able to have an appropriate relationship with the child’.  
(expert from UK).

By providing the prisoner with appropriate employment services while in prison (e.g. education, vocational training, job placements etc.), he/she can preserve the self respect and the sense of identity. These both can help the relationship with the child.

As in other interventions with vulnerable groups, the role of the employer is crucial. In this case, in particular, employers would need to be more flexible to accommodate family crises, prison visits and childcare arrangements. In order to better explain the particularities of this group and also to support employers in getting and staying engaged, they can be organised in different
networks. The Family Friendly UK\textsuperscript{16} scheme may be a good example of how employers may be mobilised in working with different categories of vulnerable people.

Furthermore, when working with offenders’ families stigmatising and labelling should be avoided. Families should be treated as vulnerable families that need help in different respects. Even using the word ‘offender’ may be stigmatising.

Because having a family member behind bars is a traumatic experience (some specialists even compare this experience with bereavement), in most cases, before moving into employment, families need emotional support and coaching in order to deal with their emotions first. It is only after this stage when an integrated plan – that would include both parents – for moving closer to employment could be designed.

Developing trust and working with emotions were actually identified as the main areas of improvement for ex-offenders interventions. Designing accessible interventions for all the members of the family was also mentioned as an area that can be improved. Accessibility may be developed in many ways. It can be developed around the prison visiting space or it can developed through the support groups or information centres organised around the local authorities. As one of the experts suggested, these services can be advertised in ‘toilet cubicles, in public places such as libraries, supermarkets, schools, children’s centres, doctors’ surgeries, health clinics, petrol stations, shopping malls etc. so that families can record the information discreetly’ (expert from UK).

One of the experts summarised in a few sentences how an ideal intervention should be designed:

‘Accessible and holistic for both parents and the family with the view of what is best for the child and its employability and emotional parenting capacity. If you can merge that together that is great and not stigmatised in terms of support.’ (expert from UK).

**Conclusions on offenders’ families and suggestions for the future**

Although it is severely affected by adverse consequences of offending, the offenders’ family is not yet fully analysed in the literature as a natural system that needs intervention in order to develop or grow. The research accent is still placed on the family as instrumental in reducing re-offending. In spite of the fact that research shows that supporting the functioning of the families generates important improvements in the employment area (Natcen, 2012),

\textsuperscript{16} More information is available at: http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/Pages/Category/family-friendly-uk-scheme
there was no single empirical study or practice identified in Europe on the employability or employment of offender’s family. There is already a handful of evidence that family-systemic interventions, covering more than just employment, can lead to success but there are still many unanswered questions. Involving all the members of the family into the intervention – including the imprisoned one – is essential for a systemic intervention.

Another critical element of a successful intervention with offenders’ families is the childcare system. In most cases, the women are outside the prison with their children while the men are inside ‘doing’ time. If the mothers are to be moved towards employment a lot of attention should be given to the children. As one of the respondents asked: ‘Where is the quality of parenting?’ Another element that seems to be missing from the interventions with the offenders’ family, but was emphasised in the interviews, was the emotional support that the family needs in these circumstances:

‘... we know that families of prisoners suffer huge emotional trauma as a result of imprisonment. So to expect them to go straight away into work without some kind of support is really asking too much.’ (expert from UK).

In these circumstances, peer support or coaching seems to be essential before starting any employment intervention.

One important question that was raised in the workshop discussions was when, by who and how should be the offenders’ family be contacted? When is the best time to do that? Is the visiting centre a good place for this operation? The Family Space project demonstrated that yes, the visiting centre or the waiting room in a prison could be a good place to engage with the family, under some special conditions. But isn’t it too late? What happens in the case of women offenders with small children under their care? By the time the prisoner is entitled to receive visits some months will have gone by and numerous negative events could have taken place. What happens when the prisoner does not receive visits? How can these families be contacted? How can the associated stigma that is extended to the whole family be avoided? Some respondents usefully suggested that the word ‘offender’ should be skipped all together. We should only speak about disadvantaged families. Closely linked to this question of when and where the family should be contacted is the issue of accessibility. As one of the respondents stressed this can be the main obstacle for an intervention targeting families who are under huge pressure. Because the lack of time, emotional trauma and lack of resources, these families can not invest much time in searching for the services they need. Therefore these services should be organised as close as possible (to avoid travel issues) and should be as open and friendly as possible in order to encourage individuals with often low self esteem and stigma issues to get in contact with them. Maybe information centres within local authorities is an answer.

Another challenging but resourceful suggestion coming from the experts is to design interventions with disadvantaged families that take the ‘best interests
of the child’ as the starting point By doing that, all objectives will follow a certain set of priorities and a different dynamic of the family system. As it can be seen there are still many questions to be answered at both practice and research levels.

C.3.2 MULTIGENERATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT/LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

Findings from the Systematic Review

The so called ‘intergenerational culture of worklessness’, defined as ‘three generations of families of where no-one has ever worked’ (p. 2), was put to the test by MacDonald et al. (2013). In doing so, they selected 10 families from Glasgow and 10 families from Middlesbrough where there was at least one family member of working age and out of full-time education who had never had a job. Forty-seven people across twenty families were interviewed and the conclusion was that ‘intergenerational worklessness’ is a political concept rather than a sociological one. With all their effort to locate twenty families where three generation have never worked, the authors were not able to do so. Even two generations of extensive or permanent worklessness in the same family is a rare phenomenon (Shildrick et al., 2012). This made the authors describe the search for ‘intergenerational culture of worklessness’ as ‘hunting the Yeti and shooting zombies’ (MacDonald et al., 2013: 1). Although they were not able to find evidence for the ‘culture of worklessness’ that is passed from one generation to another, they describe how the impact of complex and multiple problems, rooted in the long terms experience of deep poverty can distance people from the labour market (Shildrick et al., 2012).

In this context, the concept of ‘intergenerational unemployment’ seems to be a political notion or theoretical construct rather than an empirical one. Therefore, it can be usefully replaced with a broader concept with a more solid empirical support – the long term unemployed. The definition of this concept depends largely on the geographical or legislative frameworks. Different states define long-term unemployment differently. For instance OECD and the European Union (EU) define long-term unemployment as referring to people who have been unemployed for 12 months or more\(^\text{17}\). The same concept is defined in the US as including those who have been unemployed more than 27 weeks\(^\text{18}\). For the purpose of this paper we will use the EU definition of the concept.

In June 2013, OECD released the report ‘Tackling Long-Term Unemployment Amongst Vulnerable Groups’ where a set of useful recommendations was produced. These recommendations were based on an online survey among Public Employment Service in Europe and outside Europe and a collection of

\(^{17}\) Definition available at: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/factbook-2013-en/07/02/02/index.html?contentType=&itemId=/content/chapter/factbook-2013-58-en&containerItemId=/content/serial/18147364&accessItemIds=&mimeType=text/html

good practices or learning models. Most of the recommendations focused on the approach or the context:

- Understand the area and the context – use of the labour market intelligence,
- Strategic leadership – the development should be a part of a strategy and not in isolation,
- Target limited resources to those most in need,
- Seek sustainability and added value,
- Person-centred – develop personalised interventions, involve mentors or coaches,
- Make training and support work-focused and engage employers – combine paid employment and work experience with training to build up skills and develop attachment to the labour force.
- Joined-up offer – pull together provisions (such as advice, placement, training, welfare) under a single banner.
- Partnership – interventions should be based on strong partnerships between local communities and organisations.
- Involve workplace representatives and trade unions – involve mentors and ‘buddies’ in helping people overcome problems in an unfamiliar work environment.
- Embrace changing public sector roles and finance mechanisms – involve the state in the co-production of interventions with people and for people.
- Evaluation and dissemination – lessons are captured through evaluation and disseminated in an active manner.

Another useful contribution of this report is on innovative financing. In their report, the authors detail some modern funding examples such as: payment by output or results, incentive and reward system, contracting out, private or social enterprises, using loans to replace grants, social investments and social impact bonds. If the first forms of financing are self-explanatory the social impact bond may need some explanation. By social impact bond (SIB) the investors pay for the project at the start, and then receive a payment based on the results achieved in the project.

The report also gave a few examples of ‘wacky finances’: social media, peer-to-peer and crowd funding.

Some of these findings are confirmed by the empirical research. Korsu and Weglenski (2010), for example, demonstrate that the urban spatial factors are very strongly connected to the employment problems experienced by low skilled workers. The research based on data collected from the Paris-Ile-de-France area shows that, all else being equal, a ‘low skilled worker faces higher risks of long term unemployment if he/she suffers from poor job accessibility and if he/she experiences long term exposure to high poverty neighbourhoods.’ (p. 2301). The importance of connecting the labour force to the demands of the local employers was also underlined by Clarke (2014). While acknowledging the impact that welfare-to-work, workfare and work-first approaches (all of which focus on moving unemployed to the first labour
opportunity as soon as possible) on employment, the author also warns that a large proportion of those captured within these approaches remain trapped in ‘secondary’ labour markets where work is low skilled and low paid. This means that they often bounce from welfare support to work and back again, or are confined to in-work poverty. Moreover, Clarke (2014) used participant observations and semi-structured interviews with participants in a call centre training programme and concluded that, as many other programmes delivering welfare-to-work contracts, the schema benefited those who were most employable or ‘job ready’. Being focused only on developing technical and impression skills, the programme failed to develop soft skills that are crucial in moving into employment (e.g. self confidence, language confidence, IT skills etc.) and also neglected the support transition into work. In this respect, it seems that Human Capacity Development (HCD) approach that focuses on the assisting the participants overcome their individual barriers to employment are very beneficial for long-term unemployed. Evidence suggests that benefits associated with introducing alternative activities, such as voluntary work-based placements are very effective in moving individuals into employment (Lindsay and Sturgeon, 2003). Another criticism of the programme was the ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach that fails to deal with the complex needs of the unemployed. This observation confirms that conclusion of the above mentioned OECD (2013) report that suggests that a person-centred approach is more beneficial in promoting employment among long-term unemployed.

As the labour market is becoming more and more integrated at the European level, the phenomenon of long-term unemployment among immigrants seems to become visible. Using data from Eurostat, OECD and the conclusions of the studies published in five Western European countries (Italy, UK, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium), Reyneri and Fullin (2011) conclude that immigrants are penalised in the transition to and from unemployment. Less immigrant penalisation can be found in those countries where the employment protection legislation is stricter, the labour demand is more focused on low skilled jobs and the welfare state is less generous for the unemployed.

**Findings from the Platform 1 meeting**

35 surveys were assessed under the Long-term unemployment sub-theme. Based on the evidence collected in the systematic review, and also on the criteria set by the experts in the workshops, the following five practices were selected as best practices in this area:

1. Growing Lives – UK
2. WAW trajectory. An integrated approach to work, poverty and welfare – Belgium
3. Supporting people: housing support programme – UK
4. Choices Plus – Northern Ireland, UK
In addition to these five best practices, another three practices were selected on the reserve list:

1. Restart 2 Transfer of Innovation Project – Northern Ireland, UK, Germany and Lithuania
2. Working in Handsworth and Shard End – UK
3. Essential Skills programme – Northern Ireland, UK

Although not all of them explicitly target long-term unemployment, they all share the common objective of preparing unemployed people for the job market or assist them to move to employment. As they all deal with ‘hard to reach’ vulnerable people with long experience of unemployment, all these interventions were classified as long-term unemployment programme/projects.

Most of the principles mentioned in the OECD report (2013) were also confirmed and developed further in these practices. The person-centered approach, for instance, was mentioned in almost all the practices selected for the Platform 2 workshops. The bottom-up design and the need to flexible approach were mentioned in four out of the eight best practices selected.

The experts working on this particular sub-theme also emphasised the importance of using IT tools to collect information about the needs and the strengths and the progress of individuals undertaking a programme. The Whole System Approach Toolkit as a monitoring and evaluation tool seems to be one of these tools (see the Support people: Housing support programme intervention in England and Wales). Also related to the personalised approach, experts noted that involving the individual in designing the interventions and also in decision-making is crucial for a successful intervention. In this respect, incorporating the motivations and the aspirations of the unemployed people into the trajectories towards employment seem more than welcome. Involving employers and the local communities were also mentioned as important success factors. However, more independent evaluations should be conducted on these practices to ensure objectivity and validity.

**Findings from the Interviews**

Both interviewees gave examples of best practices that assume to a large extent the principles identified in the systematic review as principles of best practices:

- well structured,
- well design interventions.
- value-driven approach whereby all project staff share the same mission and values,
- mentoring and employer brokerage,
- use of social enterprise,
- combining labour skills and non-labour skills training with real work experience.
The ‘whole person’ approach was captured by one of the respondents under a different name. As he stressed, all interventions should start from ‘what do you need?’ and then form a wrap around system of intervention around the vulnerable person to address all these needs.

Although the final goal of the intervention should be the employment, the soft outcomes should not be neglected. It may be that for some hard to reach people getting close to employment is a huge progress. Therefore, self-esteem, planning skills, taking instructions, working with colleagues etc. are not to be neglected when it comes to employment of long term unemployed. As a way of delivering these services, one of the experts mentioned the ‘one-stop-shop’ approach where all the services are available in the proximity and where a case manager negotiates and coordinates all the inputs.

As a way to improve the current practices the respondents stressed different points. One point was connected to evaluation and measuring success. In order to ensure sustainability, projects need to be independently evaluated. States – either central bodies or local authorities – should be informed or even involved in these evaluations. Once the projects showed success, the states should be ready to take them over and mainstream them. If a project demonstrated success that means that this is a good and effective way of spending taxpayer’s money. States should play a more active role in designing, co-funding, implementing and evaluating the interventions. By doing so, the state can take a more informed and more responsible decision about how to spend money of effective interventions. Another role that the state should play is in connection to employers. It is only the state that can financially incentivise the employers to take vulnerable people aboard and keep them for a long time. The state can also support the activity of the social enterprises. As suggested by one of the experts, social enterprises can be a very good and fast solution for the hardest to reach vulnerable people (e.g. single mothers, drug addicts, ex-offenders etc.). The state can also set up a fund or a grant system that can sponsor disadvantaged people to start small businesses.

One improvement in this area is that the social enterprises could be closer to the mainstream companies so, when possible, they can transfer employees from the protected environment to the open labour market.

As one of the respondents suggested, most of these recommendations or success factors may very well apply to other interventions or other groups of vulnerable people. Indeed, as we have noted in the sections above there is a lot of common place for all these interventions at the level of principles, at least.

**Conclusions on Multigenerational unemployment/Long-term unemployment and possible ways to the future**

It seems that when working with long term unemployed people special attention should be paid at making them ‘job ready’. In this respect, developing soft skills (such as confidence, self esteem, planning etc.) and
training play an important role. Moreover, as suggested in the literature and the practices selected the local employment landscape is crucial. Creativity in designing new jobs at the local level may also help in socializing vulnerable people into the working culture. In this respect, one of the experts interviewed made some very useful suggestions:

‘… establish even better ways of employment designed for their special needs and capabilities, e.g. casual, short-term jobs; support little jobs they already do, such as neighbourhood help in shopping, moving, gardening; establish formal structures to create casual jobs at this informal level for people who would not be able to deal with a permanent job, but also full-time jobs for those who want to work full-time’ (expert from UK).

However, moving people to the first job available should not be the final destination. As emphasised by Clarke (2014) low paid and low skilled jobs can only be the front door of the labour market. Once inside, people need to be supported to move up towards more complex and better-paid jobs. In this respect, mechanisms to support people in employment should be also available for the most disadvantaged people. Work ‘buddies’ or mentors could be very beneficial in this direction.

As suggested by research, and also in the best practices (see Social Cooperative Enterprise-SCE-I change), self employment or setting up social enterprises can also be effective ways to move long term unemployed people into the labour market. A word of caution should be made in this respect, though, regarding the need for coaching and mentoring to support motivation but also to assist individuals in navigating through the economy forces. Getting these social economy structures closer to the mainstream labour market can be identified as a good way for the future.

As mentioned in the recent studies, in the times of economic downturn, finances play an important role in starting up new initiatives and in sustaining them. Most of the descriptions of the best practices mentioned ‘budget cuts’ or other financial difficulties as their main obstacles. In this respect, the experts involved in this sub-theme suggested that creative funding might be a solution: personalised budgets, pooling funds and so on.

Furthermore, as mentioned by one of the respondents in the interviews:

‘…support of the existing structures that are based on local initiatives and are already working well by permanent funding, not just on short term bases.’ (expert from UK)

As emphasised in some of the European Commission documents, effective and evidence based initiatives should be mainstreamed and not left with short term financial bases.

The relationship between Europe, Member States and the local communities could be also re-configured in a way to stimulate states to be more active and
more responsible for the sustainability of the good projects. In this respect, one of the respondents suggested a more present role for the state in deciding what projects should funded but also in the implementation, evaluation and the continuation of those with strong evidence of effectiveness and value for money:

“So before you even get the funding from Europe you need the State to say “ok, I’m part of this” for the beginning of it, not “Ok, I’ve read your project and I think it is a good practice; now you are asking me to invest money on it.” ... And I think they need to be at the beginning in it, they need to be a part of it. The part of the project co-funding requires you to approach the state and then you get them involved and you get a sense for them right at the beginning. Not only is it helpful for the individuals but is also helpful for the European funding too, “why I am investing in this exactly?” (expert from Northern Ireland).

It may be that a stronger partnership with the State (e.g. employment services, local authorities etc.) could lead to more responsibility towards public expenditure and more sustainability for effective interventions.

**C.3.3 Anti-social behaviour**

**Findings from the Systematic Review**

In England and Wales the anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) was introduced in 1998 as a civil order made against a person who has been shown to have engaged in anti-social behaviour. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, anti-social behaviour is defined as follows: ‘caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household’.

As a concept, anti-social behaviour has a rather vague definition. For Berger (2003), for instance, anti-social behaviour is a behaviour that causes damage to society, whether intentionally or through negligence. According to this definition, some of the legal actions undertaken by financial investors might be seen as anti-social. The literature seems to be concerned with how informal (warning letters, contracts etc.) or formal court-based interventions impact on subsequent behaviours. The relationship between anti-social behaviour and employment was explored briefly in the literature dedicated to family interventions (see the Offender’s family section). Based on this literature, it seems that family and systemic interventions are effective in reducing anti-social behaviour while improving the employment and education situation (National Centre for Social Research, 2012).

Another empirical study that looked at anti-social behaviour and employment was conducted by Agnew (2013) who evaluated the impact of two diverse projects based in the East of England and funded by the Department of Children Schools and families (DCSF). The aim of these two projects was to
provide positive opportunities for young people while also reducing the anti-social behaviours, helping young people to enter education, employment or training. One project delivered its activities from Monday to Friday and the other one was active during Friday and Saturdays nights. The management structure in both locations involved steering committees with members drawn from key agencies: police, education, welfare, probation etc. Both projects involved sport-based activities (e.g. football, dodgeball, street dance etc.). The projects also aimed to motivate young people to volunteer for other activities such as: life skills development, one-to-one career and emotional support etc. The evaluation concluded that, while both projects managed to comprehensively exceed the headline target of engaging with a particular number of young people, there were some key learning points:

1. Strong and active engagement of all stakeholders seems to be essential.
2. The location of the project has to be familiar to the participants.
3. Evaluation has to be based on clear and concrete expected outcomes.

The lack of good quality data about reoffending or other hard results, like employment, prevented the author to advance strong conclusions. However, based upon the participants’ feedback and the level of participation among young people, these projects were considered at least partly successful.

**Findings from the Platform 1 meeting**

After debates, the following best practices were selected:

1. The Pathways Project – UK
2. Tomorrow’s Women Wirral – UK
3. Toolkit for Life – UK
4. Reintegration of addicted people into society and labour market in the salad bar – My Guru – Lithuania
5. Youth Advocate Programme – Ireland

As reserve best practices the following three interventions were selected:

1. New meaning-New Horizon – UK
2. Meeting Place 2020 – Sweden
3. Progetto Re-Start – Italy

What seems to be the common for these projects is the continuous adaptation to the needs of the users and the existing budget. The adaptation was mentioned in almost all the selected practices. Words like: bespoke, personalised, tailor-made, mobile working etc. were mentioned to suggest that ‘one size fit all’ intervention are not recommended. However, the adaptation is most of the time in terms of content and not in terms of the concept. As one of the description emphasised:

‘The project is re-branded and personalised to suit the school but the concept and delivery is the same’
Another example of adaptation to the user’s needs is the place of the interventions. For instance, the intervention with young students at risk takes place in school and the intervention with women offenders takes place in a female only centre.

Other crucial elements of the projects are the strong support of the stakeholders and the ownership of the users. Involving users in the design of the intervention and the continuous adaptation of project during its lifecycle seem to be important to ensure success. Stakeholders can be from the public sector (schools, probation service etc.) or an NGO or the private sector (employers). As one of the descriptions have stressed:

‘Multi-agency working enabling support for complex and multiple needs’

Working in partnership was mentioned by all of the selected practices. However, in most cases they listed the agencies or the organisations that cooperated in that particular intervention without describing how and when they cooperate, who ensures the governance, how decisions are made and so on. As illustrated several times in the literature (see Gunter and Harding, 2013) these aspects are crucial, especially when dealing with many partners.

Another learning point from the selected practices is that, in designing an intervention, it is essential to pay attention to the local institutional and social architecture. For instance, in the Reintegration of addicted people intervention in Lithuania, the developers succeeded to bring together drug addition services, inclusion services, local authorities and the local social businesses. By doing so the developers are able to provide comprehensive services connected to employability and employment but also an optimum environment for blended learning – combining theory and practice in the same place (the salad bar).

During the debates the aspect of innovation was also touched. In this respect, the experts were of the opinion that the virtuous circle of innovation, practice and learning can be useful. In several cases, the developers provided evidence of testing new ways of delivery or new contents, observed how they work in practice and learnt from this. Later, this learning documented new changes and adaptations (see for instance The Pathways Project intervention in the UK). As it can be noted, innovation is mainly associated to processes and adaptation and not necessarily to new devices or programmes.

Innovation can be also observed under the financial section. In some cases the sources of funds are very diverse. For instance, the Progetto Re-Start intervention in Italy has funded its activities from the local municipality, private banks and other foundations. Opening up for new sources of funds, mixing them under one single project and managing them can be considered innovative.
Findings from the Interviews

When asked to describe the best practice in the field of anti-social behaviour, the experts described practices that combine training/education with working experience and practices that are based on individual offers (treatment) within a group context. The last point is important, in particular, because the group can provide individuals with a context where they can learn about the others, other strategies and ways to solve problems. They can also act as a resource by providing help and suggestions for those in need. By doing so, the individuals can grow their self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation to keep searching for solutions. As one expert suggested:

‘… people are learning more about other people as well, the troubled families, the antisocial behaviour with maniac depressive …. And interesting thing happens’ (expert from The Netherlands)

Closely linked to the group experience, the experts emphasised the importance of providing experiences that grow and maintain motivation. Some useful suggestions come up in this direction when asked the experts to ‘dream’ about an ideal intervention. Two of these suggestions seem important:

- to provide short term incentives for those making progress (‘I think we should see progress before we reach our goals’). People need to be rewarded for getting and staying into the programme. Most of the people, and offenders, in particular, live on a hear and now bases (‘For our clients is very difficult to see long term goals. They want to see direct results’). In this case they need small rewards to keep them interested and motivated into the programme.

- to allow people to make mistakes. Especially with people with behavioural problems this suggestion can be of a significant importance. Most of the ex-offenders or offenders de-escalade or commit less severe crimes. Instead of putting them back into prison or expel them from the programme we should acknowledge the small progress they made from more serious to less serious crimes. Before waiting to see if they will stop offending within 5 or 10 years and then clean their record we should acknowledge and reward shorter period of time of crime-free lifestyle. As one expert stated: ‘it is not a Monopoly game’

Conclusions on anti-social behaviour and possible ways to the future

As anti-social behaviour is a new concept in both legal and sociological ways, research on how interventions on anti-social behavior relate to employment is not yet fully developed. More studies needs to be conducted, especially focusing on the relationship between anti-social behaviour and different variables, employability/employment included. It is possible that the relationship between anti-social behavior interventions and employment works
in both directions: people with anti-social issues become more law abiding as a consequence of employment interventions and the law abiding citizens become more employable as a consequence of a more stable residence and the absence of the obstacles (e.g. stigma etc.).

Since anti-social behaviour is a concept that applies mainly to youth, it is also associated to a certain extent to offending. It is worth applying the learning points from these two fields to anti-social behaviour domain, therefore.

The suggestions formulated by the experts in the interviews have a great potential for innovation. It would be useful to pilot some interventions that incorporate short-term incentives and also flexibility in dealing with mistakes.

C.3.4 Educational problems

Findings from the Systematic Review

Education and training has become crucial in a changing world where the nature of employment has been transformed in many European countries. For instance, in the UK some structural changes impacted on the number of available jobs in different sectors of the economy. The largest increase in employee jobs has been in banking, finances and insurance industry (from 2.7 million in June 1981 to 5.4 million in June 2006). Significant increases were also in education, health, public administration, distribution, hotels and restaurants. In contrast, the extraction and production industries (agriculture, fishing, energy, water, construction and manufacturing) showed a combined fall of 43% in the same period of time (Office for National Statistics, 2007).

This dramatic decline in manual jobs and the rise of knowledge-based jobs has led to an increased demand for graduate-level skills (or equivalent) (Farrall et al., 2010). For example, in the US, for adults, 70% of job openings that pay a living wage require moderate-to-long-term post-secondary education, vocational education or both (Employment Policies Institute, 2000). According to the European Commission, by 2020, 16 million more jobs in Europe will require high qualifications while the demand for low-skilled jobs will drop by 12 million (European Commission, 2010). This structural context defines those with no proper education as ‘unemployable’. If this under-education is combined with other vulnerabilities such as criminal history or mental health problems, the prospects of employment are low.

The European Commission has responded to these challenges through the Europe 2020 flagship initiative called Youth on the Move and the 2012-2013 Youth Opportunities Initiative. Both these documents aim at unleashing the potential of young people and call for a more concentrated action from the states authorities, social partners, employers etc. to tackle youth unemployment. Special provisions of these documents refer to pathways back to education and training and also to a better contact between education and employment.
In order to monitor the youth situation in Europe and allow for European comparison, the European Commission has introduced new statistical indicators, such as the Not in Education Employment or Training rate. Good short to medium-term results are obtained under certain conditions and with some beneficiaries by short-term skills training programs. An example of such a program was the Career Workforce Skills Training (CWST) in the US, based on a partnership between four community colleges and the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Oregon. The program was conceived to provide a post-secondary training option that would result in improved employment outcomes for vocational rehabilitation consumers. The program was also set up also to support and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. Flannery et al. (2011) evaluated the program using a longitudinal follow-up and concluded that certain student and program factors were associated with positive employment outcomes. Female, older participants and those receiving financial help were more likely to complete a certificate, be employed at exit and maintain employment for at least 90 days. On the contrary, individuals with psychiatric disabilities and other skill barriers were less likely to obtain positive outcomes.

The issues of readiness and employability were also tackled in the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme in the UK. The programme targeted those who are not in education, employment and training (NEET). E2E can be defined as a market-led programme that offers work-related learning opportunities for young people considered not ready to enter employment, an apprenticeship or other forms of further education and training. E2E was a publicly funded programme and it was delivered by a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations. The learning comprises three core areas: personal and social development, basic skills development and vocational development. Each of these stages is aligned to the level of development of the learners.

The study of Russell et al. (2011) focuses upon the lived experience of E2E learners drawing on data from an ethnographic research of E2E programme conducted during 2008-2009 in two neighbouring local authorities in Northern England. The study was conducted in four case study sites with all three forms of organisation included (public, private and voluntary). The ethnography involved 87 hours of observations and 58 tape-recorded and transcribed interviews with learners, managers, tutors etc. In terms of employability, the great majority of the learners reported benefits such as acquiring vocational qualification, increased confidence and improved basic skills. However, these benefits were qualified in two ways. Firstly, for most learners E2E directly enhanced employability in a limited way, largely for routine and semi-routine work requiring few or no qualification. Due to the learners disrupted school career, the road towards ‘knowledge-based’ employment would be long and fragile. Secondly, learners directly entering the job market faced intense competition from the adult workers and also from other young people with higher levels of education and personal capital. Therefore the ability of E2E to deliver employment, rather than employability, was severely constrained. In the concluding section, the authors call for
reconciliation between accessible learning with opportunities for progression to employment or mainstream education. Furthermore, the relationship between low-level vocational education and other areas of the educational system needs to be carefully considered.

In 2012, Eurofound published an analysis of the labour market situation of young people in Europe with a special focus on NEET. Although the report acknowledges that Member States employ a huge diversity of measures to support NEET into employment or education, the authors identified a number of principles that could be considered as good practice:

- ‘Policy measures have to be diversified, tackling different issues along the pathway to employment and paying attention to vulnerable groups that are more likely to cumulate multiple disadvantages.
- Especially important is to take the labour market readiness of the beneficiaries into account. While those more ready will profit from initiatives that are strongly grounded in the needs of the labour market, others need to address personal barriers first before participating in employment programmes.
- Young people have to be set on a long-term, sustainable pathway. It is not enough to find short-term solutions. They need good-quality, stable and sustainable employment. This includes equipping them with qualifications needed for successful labour market integration.
- The involvement of a range of stakeholders in the design and delivery of youth employment measures is essential. In particular, a strong level of engagement with employers and their representatives is needed for measures that focus on fostering their beneficiaries’ employability.
- Youth employment measures should be client-centred, not provider-focused. This means catering for different pathways, for example, from mainstream learning to tailored, supported learning.
- Successful policies are innovative. They introduce new ways of reaching out to their target groups, with outreach activities forming an important part of efforts to engage disfranchised young people, while incentives, ‘branding’ and marketing campaigns can be useful in the context of more universal youth employment services’. (p. 2)

A further reflection is provided by Thomson (2010) who argues that NEET is a social category defined by structural factors and social inequalities. Indeed, as noted by Spielhofer et al. (2003), there are three overlapping categories of NEET: those with low attainment (e.g. few or no qualifications), those with difficult personal circumstance (e.g. alcoholism, drug abuse etc.) and the disengaged or socially marginal (e.g. lacking confidence or with ‘barriers to progression’ such as parenthood). In this context whereby most of the determinants are socially defined, the individualisation or placing the responsibility only on the individuals seems to be wrong. Individual level solutions cannot justify social inequalities. Subjective factors are important but they are embedded in objective conditions such as local structures or opportunity, the social distribution of the educational achievement and the labour markets. Therefore, there is a need for a stronger approach to social exclusion that would focus also on inequalities within education, the effects of
unequal access to economic, social and cultural capital throughout childhood and young adulthood. Increasing social mobility and developing choices may be good ways to proceed in reducing social inequalities.

**Findings from the Platform 1 meeting**

After the debates in the PL 1 meeting, five practices were selected:

1. Choose your future – Poland
2. Toolkit for life – UK
3. Europe value added training – UK, Italy, Norway and Cyprus
4. Reintegration of addicted people into society ‘My Guru’ – Lithuania
5. ESF OP Fight against discrimination – Spain

Another three practices were selected as reserves:

1. Choices Programme – Portugal
2. Meeting Place 2020 – Sweden
3. Action Plan Youth Unemployment - Netherlands

In some of the descriptions, education was approached from a larger perspective and not necessarily as connected to school or employment. For instance, in the Choose your future intervention in Poland, teenagers and youngsters were trained to understand and tackle the learnt helplessness and also other social and financial issues such as: how to save money, what are the children rights and so on. The Meeting Place intervention in Sweden provided non-formal and cultural activities that targeted primarily self-confidence, life structuring and other general skills. By developing these soft skills, the developers provided training and education that is directly relevant to the life of the vulnerable groups, and therefore, relevant for the employability of these people. Furthermore, some of the developers were concerned with testing and evaluating different ways of providing education on these life skills. Once they were assessed as successful, they were mainstreamed so that many vulnerable people could benefit from them. This in itself is an innovation, since many specialists from the local community and also beneficiaries are involved in the developing a new way of providing social and economic education. Families could play an important role in many ways: as facilitators to contact the youth, as co-workers or even as recipients of the educational interventions. Topics like learnt helplessness, discrimination and so on can be better understood if debated within the school, family or community context.

The ESF Operational Programme Fight Against Discrimination – POLCD – intervention in Spain combines support (including income support) for vulnerable people with partnerships with local and national employers and also with a national campaign that aims at raising awareness on the consequences of discrimination. Combining top-down with bottom-up initiatives, the intervention deals with the most pressing issues associated to a free and just access to the job market. The Choices program in Portugal is also concerned with discrimination. Most of the projects that are funded through this program aim at increasing school success, promote vocational
training and employability, develop civic engagement, promote digital inclusion and foster the empowerment of the participants.

Other interventions approached education more closely at the intersection between employers and vulnerable people. For example, the Toolkit for Life intervention in the UK trains, coaches and provides mentoring and advocacy for young ex-offenders while in the same time works with employers to engage with this vulnerable group. The Reintegration of addicted people into society and labour market in the Salad bar ‘My Guru’ intervention in Lithuania also covers training and support for ex-drug users while providing direct access to either the free labour market or to a social enterprise – The Salad Bar. The European Value Added-Training intervention explored new ways of informal, non-formal, pre-vocational and employability programs based on the feedback provided by the socially disadvantaged people and previous best practices.

Findings from the Interviews

Both experts interviewed for this subject stressed the importance of an intervention on education that has the local context and the local networks as starting points. Two types of interventions were mentioned under the education headline: prevention of early school leaving and support for school to work transition. In both these interventions the local features of the labour market are important. Involving local employers in the network was also mentioned as an important success factor. Another important player mentioned by one of the respondents is the family. Parents and siblings can play a significant role in motivating and supporting young people to go back to education and live a responsible life. Schools should be also part of the network. As one of the respondents stressed: ‘school can create the problem but it can also solve the problem’ (expert from Italy). Indeed, one of the factors associated with school drop out is underachievement or school failure. Youth with this sort of negative experience are difficult to pull back to school. Therefore, as literature and one of the experts seem to suggest, education interventions should not look like school interventions. On the contrary, they should look, as far as possible, different to a traditional school and take place in ‘neutral and easily accessible meeting places’ (expert from Ireland). This observation implies that teachers involved in these initiatives need to forget to a large extent the traditional school role and embark on a new role that is much closer to the labour market.

The relationship with the employers and the other stakeholders should make the education highly relevant for a future real job of even facilitate the transition towards a real job. These jobs can be regular ones but they can also be ‘casual jobs’ (e.g. helping neighbours, gardening, shopping for vulnerable people etc.). Moreover, individual with required skills can also be supported to set up their own businesses.

Although the final aim of the intervention is getting into employment, interventions should not neglect the development of the soft skills that are
needed for finding, getting and keeping a job (e.g. team work, following the procedures etc.).

Both experts interviewed mentioned the importance of ‘permanent’ or ‘long-term’ funding. The outcomes of education are not easily measured on a short timeframe. Therefore, long-term commitment is advisable if long-term and sustainable outcomes are expected.

Thinking about education from the employment perspective may provide more room for innovation. As one of the experts puts it: ‘we (educators) have some ideas and some dreams about jobs’. If we involve more employers, economists, anthropologists and so on in designing employment interventions we might reach a more complex and multi-cultural result. Replacing the social and the education mind-set with an entrepreneurial one may give us more realistic and more adapted answers to our questions.

**Conclusions on education problems and possible ways to the future**

Based on the literature and the selected surveys we can conclude that education for vulnerable groups is a large social construct that should incorporate fundamental topics such as human rights, social and life skills, discrimination and so on, whilst at the same time it should cover skills, values and attitudes directly linked to the labour market. One strong learning point is that these education-based interventions should be immediately followed by concrete working experiences either on the free market or in a protected environment. In providing these opportunities, local partnerships with employers seem to be essential. Local authorities and agencies could contribute significantly in mainstreaming those interventions that proved to be effective. As a way of delivering these projects, empowerment and the involvement of the users and the stakeholders proved to be very successful.

However, none of the submitted interventions provided evidence that once the job placement was finished more supporting activities are still available. As stressed by Thomson (2010) and Russell et al. (2011) vulnerable people need continuous support to maintain and progress into the career. This job progression towards more knowledge-based or complex positions seems essential from at least two perspectives. First, progression could be a sign of job adaptation: people enter a job, become better and better in doing that job and, as a consequence, they move up into the career path. Secondly, progression could be associated to better income and less risk of in-job poverty. This would decrease the probably of the person bouncing back into unemployment. Supporting vulnerable groups into employment may be the next step in the new generation of employment programmes.

Since the education deficit is mainly a subject affecting youth, it will be useful to look at this section in dialog with the conclusions for the NEET.
D. Conclusions

Although the concept of Active Inclusion as such is not mentioned often as expected in the literature or in the practices analysed, the three pillars (income support, access to services and inclusive labour market) are in reality part of most of the best practices identified in our study.

Looking cross-sectionally, we can note some recurring themes or principles that can support people from vulnerable groups to move closer to the labour market. What is essential to observe from the beginning is that getting people into the labour market is a long process, which involves many actors. In the case of vulnerable groups this process is even more complex than for other groups, mostly because people belonging to this group face a huge variety of personal, social, legal, geographical and cultural obstacles.

*Individual first!*

Although initiatives like ‘work first’, ‘housing first’ and so on seem to be helpful, the ‘individual first’ approach seems to be the only one that can summarise the most important critical success factors of any intervention addressing employability and employment. In short, this approach places the individual in the center of the process, allows him/her to be involved in defining and solving the problem and design the interventions based on the particular needs of the person in a bespoke fashion. Under different wording, the idea that interventions should be tailored to the individual needs is common across many groups.

*The whole person approach*

Related to the needs of the person is another principle that can be found in almost every section of this report: the ‘whole person’ approach. According to this principle, the vulnerable people should be treated as a whole and not in separate sections. All their needs have to be acknowledged and addressed in a coordinated manner.

*Networks and coordination*

As most of the vulnerable people have many and complex needs, coordination proves to be a big challenge. In most cases, interventions are based on large networks of collaboration between local/regional/central authorities, service providers, NGOs, employers and so on. The larger the network, the more difficult it is to coordinate and avoid duplications or other malfunctions. The employers play a key role in this context. They are the ones who know the labour market better, they can predict the changes in the labour market and they know what skills they need. In this respect, interventions based on the combination of social/educational and entrepreneurial philosophy may create a more realistic and market-led designs. As one of the experts suggested, educators and social specialists may have ‘some idea or dream about the jobs’ but the real experts in this area are the employers.

*Local and national*

The interplay between the local and national is another idea that stems from the literature, best practices and interviews. In most cases, the intervention
design and implementation were described as bottom-up and strongly placed in the local context. However, as mentioned many times in the previous sections, these interventions should be part of a wider anti-poverty or inclusion policy. At this level, governments are the main actors in adopting these strategies but only after a careful consideration of the local evaluations.

Funding
Besides designing policies, governments and local authorities also play an important role in funding the interventions that proved to be effective. The State is still seen as being responsible to ensure the sustainability and the mainstreaming of the best practices. Other sources of funding can be further explored: private sector, peer-to-peer, crowd funding, direct payment from the beneficiaries etc. Innovative forms of financing such as independent budgets or direct payment look also promising. Social economy seems to play an important role for some vulnerable groups (e.g. ex-offenders, people with disabilities and so on). What is important to mention under this point is that these structures should be placed as close as possible to the private labour market. Anytime it is possible, vulnerable people should be motivated to move towards the mainstream labour market.

Most of the best practices included in this report are based on a large number of funding sources. In this case, how to coordinate these resources and how to address issues such as accountability, transparency and so on are important challenges. A ‘Single pot’ approach may be part of a solution in this respect.

Evaluation
Independent evaluations should be available to inform the decision making process. Two forms of evaluations seem to be of particular interest when discussing vulnerable groups: outcome analysis and economic evaluation. In the context of outcome analysis both types of results are relevant: the hard results (directly linked to employment) and soft results (e.g. increasing the level of skills, barrier removal etc.). Methodologies such as distance traveled and so on could be further developed and adapted to vulnerable groups. Practical guidelines should be available for those in charge of evaluations. Economic evaluations are particularly important within the economic downturn context but also in the new ‘value for money’ cultural environment. Cost-benefits analysis seems to be very useful in persuading the funders to continue funding or attract new funders. Put simply, this form of evaluation measures what is the return rate for 1 Euro invested.

As mentioned in the literature and also in the interviews, evaluation should be redefined to produce the answers that we need at the European level. A few practical suggestions could be inferred:

- independent evaluations. In house evaluations may be useful but are not convincing enough for objectivity and validity.
- evaluation should be detached from the project lifetime. Some outcomes can be measured only after one or more years after the implementation.
- evaluation is costly. Special budgets should be reserved for this activity.
- evaluations should use complex methodologies and measure to the extent possible the impact on individuals, families and communities.

In most cases, the intervention process is structured on the following steps:

- general approach and engagement
- preparation for the labour market or enhancing employability – Getting job ready
- getting into employment
- staying and progressing into employment

A good part of these stages are described in many interventions. For instance, the Ready to work intervention in England and Ireland presents its working methodology as based on four stages:

- Registration: Programme managers meet prospective clients, referred by agencies such as homeless hostels, probation and other charities, to ensure they are work-ready.
- Pre-placement training: Training takes place over two days to prepare clients for their placement, building confidence to succeed in the workplace. Companies host training and employee volunteers provide practical support.
- Work placements: Companies provide two week work placements, supporting clients with a trained ‘buddy’ and offering constructive feedback. They provide a written reference to help clients in their future job search.
- Post-placement support: The Ready for Work club offers all programme graduates access to job coaches, job seeking support and further training. Companies provide employee volunteers to act as job coaches and deliver training.

**The general approach and engagement**

In general terms, the principles relevant for this stage look into how interventions with vulnerable groups should be constructed and how the unemployed people belonging to these groups could be contacted and engaged in the employment journey. In this respect the principles mentioned above seem to be supported by research evidence and also by the practice accounts:

- personalised or customised approach
- flexible approach – seems to be linked with the previous one and refers to the need of the project managers and practitioners to adapt the interventions to the dynamic needs of the vulnerable people.
- ‘the whole person’ approach – whereby all the needs of the individuals are attended in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
- use the empowerment philosophy – it seems that people from vulnerable groups need to be encouraged to develop self esteem and self efficacy and empowerment provides a good opportunity in this direction. In this respects, it seems to be useful to involve vulnerable groups not only in decision-making but also in defining the problems, designing the interventions, budgeting and so on.
- evaluation and external evaluation. Further more, in order to assess the effectiveness of the programme, some interventions (see for instance Support people: Housing support programme) uses specialized methods or toolkits such as the Whole System Approach toolkit 19.
- wide and strong inter-agency cooperation. From the descriptions it seems that 360-degree partnership is required for a successful intervention. Stakeholders that should be involved in the interventions can be divided into:
  - contact stakeholders – that facilitate contact with the vulnerable groups (e.g. school, probation services)
  - service provider stakeholders – that covers the ‘complex and multiple needs’ (e.g. employment agencies, hospitals etc.).
  - funding stakeholders (e.g. local authorities)

Regarding contact, both research and practice provide evidence for sport activities as an effective way to engage with youth. Cultural, artistic and civic initiatives appear in the literature as promising ways of engaging with people of all ages. What needs to be mentioned here is that non-sport activities need to be built sport in order to enhance employability and employment (e.g. skill training, counseling etc.).

Interventions with some particular vulnerable groups seem to require specific types of actions or principles. For instance, groups that suffer from a severe public reputation defici, t such as ex-offenders, offender’s families, people with disabilities and so on, demand intensive work with the public attitude and discrimination. Legal action or anti-discrimination policies should be more aggressive in fighting these obstacles.

Preparation for the labour market and enhancing employability

What the research and good practices seem to suggest is that before moving to employment people need to be ‘job ready’. If they are not ready, they will either not find a suitable job or they will not be ready to stay in that job for a long time. Therefore, before getting employed, individuals need to solve or start solving their problems such as drug addiction, mental health issues, abuse, stable accommodation and valid identity papers. As mentioned in the

19 explain what is this. The Whole System Approach toolkit includes a range of measurements to help assess the effectiveness of the programme’s services, including: financial and other quantitative data, but also qualitative information such as individual case studies.
project WAW trajectory: An integrated approach to work, poverty and welfare intervention in Belgium, before searching for a job people need to work on their ‘wounded inside’. Another example is provided by the interventions with drug users who sometimes need help in getting the personal hygiene done.

Further more, individuals from the vulnerable groups may need support in developing the so-called soft skills, such as: confidence, reliability, time-keeping, team-working and so on. In this respect, the example provided in the project New Meaning – New Horizon in the UK can be very useful. Based on cognitive behavioural, positive psychology, NLP, the research conducted by Richard Bowles on advanced job hunting skills and so on, the project provides lessons such as: beliefs and attitudes, creating better future, money and value, choice and reaction, understanding relationships and so on. After attending these classes, the students are able to develop their own plan of action and change.

Only after this foundation is solid enough, people can benefit from education and training. In this respect, evidence seems to stress the importance of connecting the training with the real vacancies available on the local labour market. In other words, training needs to be work-focused. In supporting people at this stage, mentors, peer-mentors and coaches proved to be effective.

**Getting into employment**
TO BE DEVELOPED

**Staying and progressing into employment**
TO BE DEVELOPED

**Innovation**

When talking about innovation, as many participants in the PL1 meetings noted, there is no revolutionary example as such. Further more, what is innovation in one area is already mainstream in another. Looking closely to the research and practice, one can observe that innovation is a rather complex and careful adaptation of the interventions to the dynamic needs of the vulnerable groups, local context and the demands of the labour market.

The same idea was mentioned in one description:

‘What is innovative here is not a “magic bullet” formula that can be programmes. It is instead a patient, step-by-step progression and consideration of proven therapeutic and counseling exercises, models, examples, experiences that prove the points being made.’

Therefore, innovation that is observed in our investigation is not merely a special type of intervention or a device but a process that respond swiftly and in a coordinated manner to a wide spectrum of needs that are specific to vulnerable groups.
An useful learning point is the need to implement the so-called virtuous circle of innovation, practice and learning. New practices or processes can be tested in practices, studied and then learnt from them.

Innovation was also observed in some cases under the financing strategies. Since funds are scarcer and scarcer during the economic crisis, developers started to access different sources of funding (local authorities, private banks, other foundations, the beneficiaries and so on). This in itself is not an innovation necessarily but how these multi-sourced initiatives can be managed from the financial point of view. In this respect, the single pot approach can be a good example of good and effective management. According to this approach, many funders can fund a project but the use of funds is flexible and adapted to the needs of the target group and is not captive to fixed budget lines. At the end, the developers are kept accountable through a general financial report that goes to all funders.

Some interventions in this report identified some innovative ways of getting in contact with vulnerable groups. A core principle in this respect seems to be ‘target the people where they are’. Therefore, youth, for instance, can be contacted on social media, with the help of their friends or in the sport facilities. Sport and art can be effective ways to engage with different groups. Gaming can be also a way to engage and inform youth about networks or programs. The game ‘I choose’, developed in Lithuania, can be also used as a tool to assist people make the right decisions.

**TO BE DEVELOPED**

**Transferability**
Research is quite scarce in discussing the transferability of the interventions from one place to another or from one group to another. In the PL 1 meetings and in the interviews, the experts, however, emphasised several times the need to consider the environmental factors (cultural, social or human factors) that can influence the performances of an intervention. For instance, an intervention from the south of Europe based on family cohesion might need significant adaptation when transplanted in the north. Adding to that, institutional differences need also to be taken into consideration before transferring one idea to one place to another:

‘When I first see it I said, “that is great, it should be done exactly the same in Italy” but in Italy is not possible. We have all these regional differences; we have other problems because our institution organization is rather difficult. Then I told myself, that even though you cannot put in place such a process at national level, you can use it at regional level and it could be more successful than the national level because is much more focused and you have much more control on what is going on the field.’
(Expert from Italy)
As illustrated above, in most cases the experts were of the opinion that employability and employment interventions that were discussed have a good potential to travel from one place to another if they are carefully adapted to the features of the destination area.

**Difficulties**

TO BE DEVELOPED

**References**

**Annexes**

Annex 1
The questionnaire template

Annex 2
The map of the submissions

Annex 3
The Evaluation Grid

Annex 4
The selected best practices